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TX: 03.03.03 POST BOXES CHANGE TO COMPLY WITH DDA BUT CONSUMERS ARE NOT HAPPY

PRESENTER: WINIFRED ROBINSON

ROBINSON

Some of you have noticed, like Martin Green who wrote to us from Penzance, that the information on your local post box has changed. New plates display information about collection time in large letters and bold print, useful for people with sight problems, but they no longer give details of all the collection times - only the last collection time. And what's more the metal tabs, which showed you whether a collection had actually happened, have been removed. Martin Green says he complained to the Royal Mail.

GREEN

I received a letter from the Royal Mail's customer service centre. They said the reason they were making the changes was to meet the needs of the Disability Discrimination Act. They said the intention is to make them far more user friendly for both customers and staff of Royal Mail. Now if they remove the metal tabs from the box you don't know whether your post has been collected or not and this is particularly worrying at the weekend when there's only one collection on Sunday and if there's no metal tab there you've no idea whether your post has been collected or not.

ROBINSON

Well Andy Frewin is from Postwatch, the postal industry watchdog. What do you think of what Martin Green has had to say?

FREWIN

Winifred, lots of other customers have complained as well as Martin. They've rushed along to shove post in at the last minute, they want to know whether they've missed the last collection or not, there is no way of now knowing. What should happen is the metal tags should be replaced with something that says that the last collection has happened on the Monday, the Tuesday or the Wednesday or whatever but there should be the information given so the customer knows whether the last collection has actually taken place.

ROBINSON

Well Royal Mail tell us that they've made the changes in the lettering to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, I suppose that leaves the question of why the tabs had to be taken away but they do say that it would cost an awful lot of money to put them back.

FREWIN

They could stage it. This is something that customers are asking for. There was no consultation undertaken when the Royal Mail made these changes, customers are asking for it, we're asking for it,

they could introduce this change - they could phase it in gradually so that people would know when the last collection has taken place.

ROBINSON

Andy Frewin from Postwatch many thanks. Well we did, as you'd expect, ask the Royal Mail if they would like to come on but they declined but they did say that nothing had changed about the number of collections or about the times or about the services, it's simply these metal tabs that have gone.