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Comment

No satisfaction

Why have the Royal Mail and the Post Office so few really satisfied customers? Even banks and their current accounts gain greater favour with Which? members – arguably placing postal services on a par with estate agents.

Now we have, of course, encouraged our members to be as discerning as possible over the past 50 years but they remain a barometer of opinion that cannot be ignored.

Postal managers claim the number of first-class letters arriving on time is increasing but that is just part of the story – and it is clearly not having a major impact on the perception of what is actually happening. Too many closures (with more coming, as we went to press); too much junk mail and lost post; too long queues – our members are clear about their concerns.

Can the Royal Mail and the Post Office regain the public trust they seem to have lost? For this to happen, much has to be achieved quickly – and reconnecting with their customers' needs might be a good start.

Just one route for Norwich Union

It's not often that financial institutions are faced with such a morally easy question as the one that Norwich Union is currently seeking to answer. It's found itself with a tidy nest egg of £4 billion of orphan assets (p41) – wealth that technically belongs to no single individual but that has been created by the cash of thousands of its investors over the years.

The company is now seeking to decide who benefits. Under the current rules we believe there is no argument – 90 per cent should go to policyholders and 10 per cent to shareholders. But Norwich Union is looking to see whether it can change that balance by buying out the policyholders' rights.

If you are affected, ensure Clare Spottiswoode hears your views. Her decision should be simple. The majority of benefits should be for policyholders and no one else. Any other route for these funds would be a moral travesty.

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18,221

The number of seconds spent waiting for our 20 kettles to boil a litre of water. Enjoy a relaxing cup of tea (or coffee) as you pore over our report on p68.

150,000

The number of times we operated the mechanisms of our 19 locks to check durability. For lots of other facts on locks, turn to p52.

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The number of pence a pack of six Best Buy Lidl AquaPur sponge scourers costs. At 8p a sponge, this may be our cheapest Best Buy ever. See p66.