

**READING'S new one-delivery postal system could force many small businesses to go bust, say bosses.**

**Entrepreneurs running small firms, especially those who work from home, say they risk losing business opportunities because Royal Mail's new one-delivery-a-day system is not up to scratch.**

**Tina Woollard, who runs TMW Secretarial Services from her Whitley home, told the Evening Post she sometimes gets her post as late as 4.30pm.**

**Ms Woollard, whose work includes word processing documents for clients from as far away as Ireland, said: "If the post is always going to be late, that's going to have a dramatic effect on small businesses.**

**"Because we are a secretarial business, we have work sent by post. If you receive it late in the day and the client wants it for the same day, you are stuck."**

**The decision by Royal Mail to replace twice-daily deliveries with a single service came into force in Reading two months ago and follows the closure of several post offices across town**

**Karen Durcan, of the Federation of Small Businesses Thames Valley, said small firms still relied heavily on Royal Mail for their livelihood.**

**She said: "These days, businesses still receive the majority of their cheques and invoices through the post.**

**"When they receive the post at 11am they only have half a day to pay them into the bank."**

**Ms Durcan added: "The Post Office continues to cut services because they want to be a profitable organisation.**

**"With other services you can say 'I am not using your service', but with Royal Mail you have not got a chance because there's no alternative at the moment.**

**"They are a private company and I do not see any way of us getting them to change - if it was a Government-run organisation we could protest."**

**She added that although businesses are now looking at alternative ways of posting like e-mail, there is a security issue, and cheques have to go in the post.**

**Royal Mail spokesman Dan Panes said the two deliveries were scrapped because it was too expensive.**

**He said: "Our aim is that deliveries will take place between 9am and lunch time.**

**"This is clearly not happening at the moment in some areas but I would ask people to remember these are some of the biggest changes that the post office has seen in a decade.**

**"These changes are in their infancy, it's a learning curve and improving**

**day by day."**

**He added: "If it's imperative for businesses to have their mail at a specific time, for example early in the morning, there are obviously premium services that are available."**