

UK postal workers continue to speak out against punishing workloads and CWU collusion with Royal Mail

“The Royal Mail and CWU are colluding together and cannot be trusted.”

Tony Robson
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The *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) has continued to receive correspondence from postal workers around the country speaking out against the crushing increase in workloads facilitated by the collusion of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) with Royal Mail.

The new write-ins come from across the UK: London, Lincoln, Peterborough, Coventry, Nottingham, Hull and Antrim in Northern Ireland.

Many postal workers have spelt out how the agreement on revisions activity based on the March 2 Joint Statement between the CWU and Royal Mail has harmed their health and wellbeing, with impossible new work targets drawn up.

This is leading to the trashing of letter deliveries as parcels are prioritised for profits and to postal workers suffering management harassment, stress and exhaustion to complete punishing new workloads.

“My delivery has got 100 extra calls. How am I to complete my delivery in my hours?”

One worker described how their workload had trebled, start times had been altered with no respect for their life-work balance, and how overtime was enforced on pain of having annual leave requests denied.

“Changed our start times, usually allowed to use our break to take kids to school. Lies from management – take 3 days’ mail in one day. Poor management – telling us to get a job somewhere else if we don’t like it. Intimidating atmosphere with regards to taking out mail when there is lots. Expected to work overtime or

this will be used against you like not taking holidays when requested, swearing at employees made to look stupid. Also being paid differently to other workers, an hour for one and 1 hour and 15 for others. Days off missed and moved not being paid correctly. All done on a paper sheet then inputting as they see fit. If we are ill we are constantly being called every day even with sick notes asking us if we are coming back tomorrow? We aren’t psychic – constant harassment.”

Contrary to claims made by the CWU that revisions would no longer be imposed through “executive action” by management, one postal worker explained, “Changes have already been pushed through in Chippenham. Workloads are unmanageable and many rounds uncompleted every day.”

Another described having to work over their shift time to complete deliveries: “Our walks have been increased, and the way they do this is to close down a walk and split it between a few other walks. So your part will be in a completely different area. I try to do it but usually go over my time in order to complete the walk. The job I was doing for one and a half years is turning into a nightmare.”

In a desperate attempt to deflect attention from their complicity in the cost-cutting exercise, the CWU announced on Wednesday it was conducting a “revisions feedback” exercise, stating, “Our reps across the UK are doing an incredible job ensuring Royal Mail stick to the terms of the joint statement.

“We can clearly see though that many of you are

under unbearable pressure. We have developed the form below for you to let us know if there are major issues in your office so we can allocate a representative to support you and deal with them.”

This was derided by postal workers who pointed out it only serves to illustrate how divorced the union officialdom is from those on the shopfloor if they need a questionnaire to establish what all postal workers know and are reporting about the sweatshop conditions.

One worker commented on the CWU Facebook page, “So in reality the truth is you don’t like the negative comments on the Facebook pages and that’s why you’d prefer members to fill in a form,” and received many likes from colleagues.

That this was an exercise in sweeping everything under the carpet was quickly confirmed by a desultory CWU announcement later that day reporting that 800 responses would be received, and meetings would take place at the national level.

As another postal worker commented regarding the pathetic questionnaire exercise being carried out by the union while it suppresses the renewed strike mandate returned by members last month: “Powerful set of data, powerful Yes vote from the ballot, powerful posties all over the country standing up for ourselves, but powerless CWU letting RM [Royal Mail] walk all over them, says it all, complete joke for everything us posties have sacrificed!!!!”

In the comments received by the WSWS, postal workers have expressed their opposition to the way the CWU’s leading officials Dave Ward and Andy Furey have placed a straitjacket over the dispute using the arbitration service ACAS.

Ward has promoted former leader of the Trades Union Congress Brendan Barber, brought in to oversee the backroom talks and block further strikes, as an experienced “facilitator”. The CWU has meanwhile maintained a complete silence over the more than £500 million paid out to Royal Mail shareholders and investors, while repeating company talking points about the “financial challenges” and difficult “market conditions” facing Royal Mail.

In response to the article “Sell-out being prepared in closed door talks between Royal Mail and CWU” exposing this anti-worker line-up, a postal worker stated:

“Absolutely spot on, we stood firm and followed the

rhetoric of our union leaders, stamped our feet and cheered their hard stance in London, got suspended for being a leader in the office, for what. This union were grand until outside elements were introduced, Brendan Barber, and now we are in bed with the same Royal Mail who have tried to starve us back into work during the strike action. Should what we believe happen and we are sold out, be prepared for the greatest exodus of members the unions have ever seen because this is not just a change to our workplace, it’s an attack on our families and home life.

Another commented: “The Royal Mail and CWU are colluding together and cannot be trusted. Only a few months ago the Royal Mail paid Simon Thompson [CEO] and shareholders million. Now they saying the company’s struggling and CWU are saying the same thing so can someone answer me this question, if this was the case why did you Simon Thompson take the money as well as the shareholders. So now you are making the posties pay the money you stole, and ACAS and CWU are all in on this shame on you all.”

We encourage postal workers to contact the WSWS to report on their conditions and discuss how to take forward the fight.



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