

# Postal workers condemn sweatshop conditions at Royal Mail rubber stamped by Communication Workers Union

“Sold out by my union and put out with the rubbish by Royal Mail.”

## Our correspondents

21 March 2023

*The World Socialist Web Site continues to receive a steady stream of correspondence from postal workers over the back-breaking increases in workloads demanded by Royal Mail. They are also speaking out against the Communication Workers Union (CWU) enforcing the cost cutting exercise of revisions by the company and the betrayal of the fight they have been waging since last August against low pay and sweatshop conditions through 18 days of nationwide action.*

*The feedback comes from across the UK showing the broad constituency for a fight against a sell-out by the CWU. The latest batch of emails are from Feltham, Moseley, Bournemouth, Finchampstead, Wareham, Derby, Livingston in Scotland and Graigavon in Northern Ireland.*

\*\*\*

Impossible workloads to be introduced for the new financial year. Duties USO'd on a regular basis and covered by agency workers delivering only tracked parcels when the duty holder is on holiday or day off. The de-prioritisation of mail is now accepted as company policy, with permanent staff returning from a day off or holiday to face multiple days of mail. Changes to start times in September and the annualisation of hours in our office will mean longer working days in winter with rural duties finishing in the dark. Not just challenging working conditions but potentially dangerous ones. Any considerations of health and safety are to be wilfully dismissed.

The annualisation of hours achieved by PDA data tracking smacks of a return to the age of the Victorian mill owner with workers seen as no more than cogs in Royal Mail's corporate machine. And these are the working conditions accepted and supported by the CWU... as long as local reps give a perfunctory nod to management's unworkable plans.

(USO is the Universal Service Obligation, the statutory requirement for letters to be delivered to every address in the UK six days a week at a uniform price and parcels five days a week. PDA stands for Postal Digital Assistant, which are hand-held devices used by delivery staff. They collect data and produce reports known as “Outdoor Actuals” on individual routes covering start and end times, planned and actual routes, distances covered

and times of completion.)

\*\*\*

Royal Mail has had no intentions of complying with its USO obligations since Covid. Its current staffing arrangements mean that mail is failing every day. When I started 10 years ago nothing was ever left. Parcels are prioritised over mail despite the CEO lying to parliament saying this is untrue. Simon Thompson has turned Royal Mail from a place where people were happy and proud to work to a place where no one wants to work. Staff are leaving in their droves. I am now doing over 30% more work than when I started, walking 23km a day. Royal Mail's answer to their own failings is ever increasing demands on its workforce and ever decreasing pay and conditions.

\*\*\*

I've read most of nightmare postings from Royal Mail colleagues. These are spot on. I work in mail centre where the union only care about friends, lackies, the common saying by our Area Process Rep. Are there different levels of representation depending who you are? Worse still they represent people and give advice who are not in union. They turn a blind eye to managers who work then deny postmen overtime because they are given overtime to keep them happy and not rock the boat.

\*\*\*

Revisions already implemented at my office, becoming physically very difficult to complete duty.

\*\*\*

Took 4 walks out of office giving us an extra 180 drops each. Absolutely shocking.

\*\*\*

I was bullied so bad by management I had to leave after 20 years. Racist comments by them, sexist comments constantly. Told to f\*\*\* myself by a colleague and the boss blamed me. Had IB follow me on my round constantly. Put more and more on me 12 miles a day, 16 kilos on my back trolley, caused me back damage. They mentally broke me. I want to hear from you soon.

\*\*\*

Been with Royal Mail now for 5 and a half years. It's always been hard work but now it's completely unacceptable not to

mention unachievable.

So many staff leaving because of the conditions and not being replaced. Walks being made bigger so can never be completed within your contracted hours.

New working practices introduced without consultation, customer collections, scanning your tracked parcels at your frame. All this takes time so you're getting out on delivery much later than you used to. Number crunching desk jockeys making these ridiculous decisions. Never been a postman in their lives. The job is now so demoralising and soul destroying.

\*\*\*

No overtime been given because of strikes. Letters building up into a mountain of mail in the week before Mother's Day. Appears to be wilful delay of mail. Dorset mail centre.

\*\*\*

Our office has just removed 14 deliveries. The deliveries left have to cover these deliveries in what is being called "a carve up."

There is no planning. There's no time for it and they've removed the vans for the jobs that have gone from the office. If the customers thought we were struggling during covid they should look around there local offices now. Send in the local MPs to their local offices because Simon (Thompson chief executive of Royal Mail ) and his boys are laughing at you! You're powerless and they know it!

It was mentioned that Royal Mail is ignoring disability rules.... it's true... I've been on a ring-fenced job due to a disability, and they have taken it from me, giving it to someone else. I too went to my rep who smiled and walked away!! They are still replacing us with casuals..... they're just trying plan B 22 years of being proud to work for the Royal Mail. Sold out by my union and put out with the rubbish by RM. MPs are just doing a PR session.

\*\*\*

The job is getting worse day by day. Royal Mail doesn't care about the workforce, they only want to put more money into their pockets. We have area managers who have no idea about the "work frame," who treat people like slaves. Telling people to do light duties when they are brutally attacked by dogs. Telling people to work faster and harder.

We all been treated like slaves for the good of Royal Mail bosses.

Walks are bigger and bigger, some even unable to finish it on time. They impose ideas without knowing if they will work and then blame the workforce when they go wrong.

\*\*\*

The public need to know what service they are getting. It is a disgrace. They are paying for a service which is not being provided. First class next day delivery a joke, just not happening.

Mail left in the office daily and priority is being given to tracked mail and the service will only get worse with the new revision being introduced which increases workload to impossible to do in allocated work time.

\*\*\*

The job is ruined. We had a revision pushed through in my small delivery office of 9 duties, so now we are down to 8. I go back tomorrow after my long weekend, I am dreading what I am going

to be faced with. A few weeks ago I had 1 week of annual leave, I came back to work on the following Monday to find that absolutely no letters or ordinary packets had been delivered, only Tracked and Special deliveries.

Absolute shameful and an embarrassment of a company to work for now. All duties are too big and they constantly ask, and I always refuse, people to work their rest days. If they don't, most of the time the duty doesn't go out and you get double bubble the next day. I am at my wits end but am struggling to find other full time jobs in my area, so am stuck. Don't know what to do anymore, if you don't book extended delivery overtime and work to your time then you get bullied by management. Sorry, rant over, I just dread going in now!

\*\*\*

Our manager is pushing through a revision which is adding more onto our delivery when we struggle to complete what we do now. Daily we are leaving part walks and when it gets busier it will get worse. They are deliberately cutting costs, knowing we won't be able to fulfil the USO. It is sad that this once great company is being decimated in the name of shareholders' profits.

\*\*\*

In our office we have lost well over half the staff through either sickness (long term) or people leaving because of how toxic the company has become.

Due to all the walks not going out posties are being sent to areas they have never delivered to with no guidance or idea where to start. Management just tell them to do what they can, but it's hardly fair on the employee to be dumped out in the wilderness trying to provide a service for the hard working public.

Every branch has recruitment freezes and overtime freezes so that the company will fail. I honestly believe the Royal Mail is being set up to crumble so the shareholders can cash out and it can be resold and chopped up by a new company for maximum profit.

\*\*\*

If the CWU accepts these changes for all of us that went on strike and lost money just to be sold down the river, hang your head in shame Dave Ward (CWU General Secretary)? Member becoming non-member! CWU won't survive because of your backhanders, shame on you!

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



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**