# UK postal workers condemn corporate greed at Royal Mail and betrayal by Communication Workers Union

## “Ironic that a union with communication in its name has failed to communicate with its members.”

**Our correspondents**
**23 March 2023**

*The World Socialist Web Site (WSWS) is publishing correspondence from postal workers exposing the systemic run down of the service by Royal Mail and the unbearable workloads imposed based on an agreement between Royal Mail and the Communication Workers Union (CWU).*

*The latest correspondence is from Leicester, Exmouth, Duporth, Sully, Yate, Malvern Hill, Beccles, and Craigavon, Northern Ireland.*

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I've been a postie for 32 years and the changes I've seen in that time are incredible. Now they expect me to complete my duty on time even though they have added another 300 odd calls, saying the mail volume is down.
Rubbish! Can't finish now and bullied to work your day off because of staff shortages.

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Worked for Royal Mail for 25 years, now accepting their poor Voluntary Redundancy payment just to get out. Signed into a duty 10 months ago which was impossible to complete in the time given. Just had revision and now given an extra 80 calls. What is the logic in their policies?

As for the CWU I think they've sold us down the river. No news from them for weeks.

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It is blatantly obvious that Royal Mail’s objective is to drive existing staff out the business by means of bullying and harassment and replace them with new contracts on more hours for 20% less, two-tier workforce. Managers are wilfully delaying the mail on a daily basis, priority services being left, Tracked parcels being scanned on the wrong stream to gain more credit, Staff bullied daily. Managers ignoring all past agreements, harassing people who are off sick, conduct coding people who have been ill, doctors note ignored, Equality Act ignored, no flexibility, special leave stopped. Never in my 33 years has morale been so low.

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As a postman with over 20 years’ service, it saddens me to see a once great service in such rapid decline. Enforced changes have increased the workload on an already overwhelmed workforce to unmanageable and indeed impossible levels. Our entire office has trays of mail either kicked under the bench, taken out for a spin in the van and brought back again, or left in frames for days. Management do not care so long as packets get delivered. There are absolutely no standards anymore and it does feel as if the business is being run into the ground.

The staff are suffering physically and mentally as we are the ones who still want to provide the best possible service to our customers. But our hands are tied and it is grossly unfair that customers are clearly not getting the service they deserve and are paying for. The working environment is toxic and people who loved their jobs are now deflated, demoralised, dismayed and unmotivated. Where once we were the best in class, top of every poll for our performance levels and quality of service and envied by our competitors, Royal Mail now want us to be just as bad or worse than our competitors.

As for the CWU? They've had a year to negotiate a deal for us and seem further away than ever. We as members feel totally let down and betrayed by the CWU and the path it has led us down. Ironic that a union with communication in its name has failed to communicate with its members. We've never even been told what pay deal would be accepted, or even had an opportunity to vote on any proposals put to us by Royal Mail. Shame on you Ward & Furey!

*Dave Ward is CWU General Secretary and Andy Furey CWU Acting Deputy Secretary (Postal)*

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I work in a delivery office with only 17 walks. One of those has been split between the other 16, and now we face another walk being shared between the remaining 15. I already walk 30,000 steps a day, and it is already exhausting, I don't want more.

I can vouch for all the stories I've read in this article, including...

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Our Vans are old. RM must be spending just as much money, if not more, trying to keep these vehicles on the road, rather than by replacing them with new ones.

The money being spent dealing with complaints caused by untrained RM staff and agency workers must be at a record high.

Tracked parcels continue to be priority.

The delay in mail and parcels leading up to Christmas 2022 was blamed on striking posties, but the truth was that it was exactly the same Christmas 2021. [Royal Mail CEO] Simon Thompson insisted that this period was not classed as 'pressure'. Therefore, no extra staff was hired anywhere near the numbers that all previous years CEOs acknowledged.

Average Holiday Pay. Have a look into that. Royal Mail only take part-time staff on. Rarely does anyone get made up to 'full-time'. Everyone has to rely on overtime (OT), but none of those extra hours gets broken down and added to your annual leave. The union, amazingly, accepted a deal, with RM, only recently which allows us to receive OT hours IF you have worked at least 8 hours above your contract every month, for a block period of 6 months.

So, if you are unfortunate to be ill or injured, on annual leave, or work within one of the offices that cancels ALL overtime at the drop of a hat, then you lose all chance of claiming any average pay for an entire half year. A lot of posties work more than 48 hours a week. Many 60 hours. So when you are on 25 hour per week contracts this loss is a big deal.

#CorporateGreed

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Management constantly bullying work staff, forcing extreme workloads on us daily punishment if we don't get finished loads leaving daily. I'm next to leave. My mental health suffering while working there, can't take no more this. All happening at the Leicester Meridian delivery office.

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Been a postman for over 20 years. Since the revision the rounds are way too much as a lot of extra calls have been added on. The same old crap. The mail is down, stamped items yes, junk mail still as bad. Parcels and packets ridiculous. How the hell can you keep gaining more and get back on time? Many rounds don't complete. Many don't take their breaks so can finish on time. Mail gets left. Public have paid for that service but don't get the delivery. A disgrace and management don't give a shit. And as for the union what are they doing exactly? No wonder so many are pissed off and looking for other jobs.

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I started with Royal Mail in 2011 on a full contract of 36 hours per week. On the second day of service I was told by my manager that the hours I was employed to do were not available, so I could take a 30 hour contract or leave. I stayed with the company unaware that this would be the first act of bullying in my 8 year stay with the company. The bullying would come from management and DOM (Delivery Office Manager) for the office. If you refused to work your rest day you would be put on rounds you did not know without training. Just a piece of paper with a bundle plan on it. They would follow you to do health and safety checks and check your pace around the route.

This was before privatisation. Once this happened, we were told that we should be grateful for a job and were lucky to have free shares. Overtime was never paid. The union rep worked with management to ensure he finished early to get to his second job. The round started getting bigger, increasing both my partner and my walking mileage to 18/19 miles a day. You were constantly threatened with your P45, told to leave if you didn't like it.

Eventually all this led to a mental breakdown for myself and finally being fired on medical grounds after an attempted suicide. I still haven't been able to return to any employment after 3 years and being diagnosed with CPTSD [Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder]. While Royal Mail didn't cause the CPTSD they did manage to magnify the problem within a short period of time. If I could advise anyone on a career, I would suggest you stay well clear of Royal Mail.

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We have 24 duties and are now down to 20. Workloads have had to absorb this and are now unachievable. Morale is at its lowest I've known in 25 years. Rounds are being left on a daily basis, vans not replaced. Where is the CWU? How is Thompson still in a job? Very desperate times.

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*The WSWS has provided the only platform for postal workers to speak out about the brutal exploitation imposed by Royal Mail with the collusion of the CWU. The breadth of correspondence from across the UK shows there is a constituency to fight, but this must be mobilised.*

***The WSWS has published a statement by the Socialist Equality Party inviting postal workers to an online meeting (register here) on Monday, March 27 at 7pm outlining how a fightback can be mounted. Please register to attend. Confidentiality will be preserved by the format of the meeting to prevent victimisation. We encourage further comments, including on this perspective for a way forward.***

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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