

Royal Mail workers oppose Communication Workers Union's sell-out deal: "This will never be forgiven."

Our reporter
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The World Socialist Web Site (WSWS) is publishing correspondence from postal workers exposing the brutal exploitive regime being imposed by Royal Mail, with the help of the Communication Workers Union (CWU). The latest comments are from postal workers opposing the CWU's sell-out joint agreement with Royal Mail announced April 21.

Correspondence has come in from Royal Mail delivery offices and depots across the UK, including from Scotland, Wales and England.

A postal delivery worker of nearly four decades from **Manchester** wrote, "I feel I'm struggling after every year goes by trying to reason with managers constantly but getting nowhere because they are constantly playing silly games with you all the time. Spent time on the picket lines for what? The worst deal in history. We have been sold down the road and the future is very bleak. I'm prepared to carry on fighting no matter what. Voting NO!!!!!! Very angrily".

Another wrote from **London**, "The 1996, 2007, 2009 and now this latest dispute ended with major concessions to the employer. The 'militants' who opposed the old right-wing leadership of the CWU achieved top positions in the union hierarchy only to then sell out the loyal membership."

On the day the deal was announced a postie wrote from **Kilmarnock, Scotland**, "Our office is corrupt between CWU and managers getting worse". At his office "about 75% would leave CWU for a better union."

Another commented from **Jarrow**, "We have been sold down the river by our so-called delegates again sack them all. They are firm's men."

On the revisions being imposed, a postie from **Maidenhead** explained, "2 hours sorting. 2 hours prep. 5 hours 30 minutes delivery. That's without travel time in and out and then a legally binding break. All in an official working day of 7 hours 24 minutes. You might as well say a 10-hour day. Not a chance. And 99% of my office will not do it."

In the days leading up to the CWU's sell-out agreement, dozens more RMG workers submitted feedback exposing the super-exploitation already in place:

Bristol: "What is and has happened at Royal Mail UK is replicated in all firms to a similar extent, some greater, some less so. The British workplace approach is to be offered terms of employment, often changing over time with unspoken or spoken premise that consequences will follow if you do not comply. Take it or leave it. Divide and rule, doubling or halving assigned work. Being singled out. Management by force, immediate or slowly over time. Start by saying it doesn't matter if time constraints prohibit you delivering all your assigned letters, then later using that evidence for future redundancies. There are many ways to reduce your workforce but to do so at minimum cost to the firm is a natural process."

Cardiff: "Workloads in our office are becoming unmanageable, people will be off work with issues soon. After being told to take out mail bags with 3, 4, 5 and sometimes more days' worth of built-up mail as they clearly do not have enough staff to manage workloads. Selling services and then not providing said service!"

"You will clear one round and then the next day you will be told to leave that round and focus on another round with days and days' worth of mail as they only focus mainly on tracked and special delivery parcels and letters. Imagine carrying mail bags on a round with 5 or more days mail--the weight in that is going to cause problems with workers' spines and I personally have developed a really bad neck. So bad that I need time off but I'm afraid if I do that, I will not have a job to go back to. Really appalling conditions that are only set to get worse if the company keeps going the same direction!"

Wiltshire: "They've been told to implement, and the workloads are unachievable most of the time. We are also short staffed, short of equipment and short of vans."

Chatham: "Many staff are off due to workplace stress, and the office atmosphere is so toxic, that even the office managers want out! Completely understaffed with ridiculous workloads, the whole industry that is Royal Mail is a shambles!"

Reading: "I've worked for RM for 26 years, been on delivery for just under 2 years. It's the only job I've had that changes all the time, for the worse. Delivery should be a good job, but the workload just gets heavier and heavier, walks being

absorbed with no regards for the workers.”

Hastings: “Mail in my sorting office is a disgrace. Letters & packets fail every day. Lost many duties in our revision so walks are too big to cover every day. Overtime seems to be offered to the same people to go in early. Needs sorting out as Posties are not happy.”

Devon: “The USO [Universal Service Obligation on letter delivery] is blatantly being ignored in our office, with management stressing that parcels, particularly tracked ones are the priority. Frames are left full of mail on a daily basis, and most rounds will only go out 3 times a week – that’s if there are staff available! Management have cut rounds and spread them around the office making most deliveries now unachievable!”

Glasgow: “My office like all the rest, a riot, between 7&9 duties failing a day, meaning between 3000/4000 customers a day getting no mail, some not receiving mail till 3/4 days later. RM’s only concern is tracked packets and parcels which they prioritise as I am sure you’re aware. Revisions being pushed through, start times changing, callers office has already changed. Our union seem to be unaware these changes are happening, and we believe they will accept any offer from RM, pass it on to us, say under the circumstances with RM being apparently skint, it’s the best deal there’s going to be.”

Manchester: “Workload unmanageable, having to take lapsing and large packets knowing that you will be going over your time. Managers not interested. Spend ages arguing, getting stressed and at the end of the day am completely shattered in body and mind. Dread coming to work.”

Dorchester: “My already unachievable round had 75 calls and 40 minutes extra added to it. Low morale in office. Zero communication from CWU rep etc. No pay rise and struggling to pay bills and being flogged to death.”

There is enormous anger, with many posties denouncing the CWU’s collusion with the company in pushing through backbreaking revisions to work practices:

London: “8 months of talk. What the hell are they discussing? It’s like modern day slavery. Keep your head down and keep on working. The changes are happening as they are ‘discussing’ the issue.”

Swindon: “The union are a complete waste of time. The reps in our depot are a complete waste of time and can’t give any honest answers about anything. I think they are more concerned with themselves rather than employees who pay them.”

Worcester: “Last week I terminated my 24-year CWU membership in disgust at what is an absolute betrayal by [CWU General Secretary Dave] Ward and the Postal executive. Back in January we had the company right where we needed them. The renewal of the strike mandate was a “win the ballot, win the dispute” moment, as Ward infamously said.

“We should have been dictating terms, yet we entered talks without strike dates announced, without an amnesty for 100’s of members vindictively suspended for trivial offences, and

ludicrously allowing ‘our’ reps to assist with revisions. Of course the reps, preserving their much cherished union release time, collaborated with the bosses, sold us out completely. My own ‘revision workload’ saw a ×4 increase overnight, thanks to my local rat. The only place in our office that hasn’t been absolutely hammered is the union room, where they have mysteriously kept all their 6 full-time release positions.

“Many of my colleagues were bemused or even a bit angry at my stance but they are catching on now, and quickly. There is real anger at our representatives for their traitorous sell-out, reps that talk tough, but won’t meet with us to explain their self-serving, traitorous capitulation. We have been through 3 years of hell, from Covid, where the reps forced us back into unsafe practices while they worked from home, and now this. We backed them all over the country and they’ve done the bosses’ dirty work for them. This will never be forgiven. Genuine grass-roots local organisation is the only way forward. The CWU is finished. Ward, his £100k+ salary and £26,000 pa pension bonus needs to be finished now. Up the workers not the rats and the collaborators.”

Harrogate: “Being sold down the river by the CWU.”

Newport: “Union have taken a back hander again. CWU top brass have let every postal worker down big time.”

Scotland: I am 36 years in the job. I am currently off work with severe depression and osteoarthritis both registered disabilities. I am also my wife’s carer. Whilst I have been off sick, I have been informed by my line manager at a meeting where I was represented by my area rep that my duty has been removed from our office. I was told I can have an all-day parcel duty or go part-time losing half my wages. My union reps input was I should go part-time. I think I’m being managed out the business. What has happened to disability discrimination? PS, my union rep is ok, his duty never gets touched. CWU turning its back on the workers. Needs an overhaul.”

Another postie from **Sheffield** wrote, “Send info on how we as postal workers can fight against the collusion between Royal Mail and our union, the CWU.”

Postal workers, sign up and support the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee and find out more about its work here. The Committee’s email address is rmpw.rfc@gmail.com



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact