

Royal Mail delivery workers explain why they are attending Sunday's online meeting

Our reporters
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Royal Mail delivery workers have explained to WSWs why they are attending this Sunday's Zoom meeting (May 14 at 7pm) called by the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee. The meeting will discuss "A Fighting Programme for Royal Mail Workers". Postal workers can register for Sunday's meeting [here](#).

London

"The CWU has not pushed back the Royal Mail on anything. How are we meant to survive on a 10 percent rise for 3 years. They accepted the 2 percent imposed last year, that has not changed. Then 6 percent for this year and 2 percent for 2024-5. The £500 lump sum will be £300 after tax.

"There is speculation about chief executive Simon Thompson leaving Royal Mail [he has since resigned]. The CWU will say 'look what you have achieved'. But there is no bright future with this deal, the company is getting what it wants.

"The union has given them flexibility—they call it seasonal hours, but it is still annualised hours. We will be working in the dark on deliveries in winter. We are told we have to work later like the competition, everything is about competition.

"The revisions [changes in working conditions] have gone through unopposed. If we fight to reinstate duties or hours the union reps tell us the company will come back at us through other ways by changing our start and finish times. The management use a computer system "Route Manager" to work out the delivery rounds. Based on this system a postal worker is meant to complete a 25-floor tower block in 20 minutes, you cannot do this unless you are Superman.

"Royal Mail is becoming more like Amazon, with the company using the PDA tracker to monitor our every second. They say they are losing money but if they are it is through mismanagement. How can we believe they are not making a profit when they hand over £600 million to shareholders. There are no shared interests between workers and the company, all they care about is profit. We care about the customer, about the service to the community.

"The workers do need to get together. We face the same problems in every country. Look at France with Macron, he just imposed the pension cuts. The people are still fighting, there should be a General Strike but the unions there seem to be working side by side with the government, they will not fight for that.

"It is down to the rank and file. I would say around 70 percent of workers are against the union because it sides with the company. I speak to Parcelforce workers as well who feel the same way. DPD workers are also backing us. They tell me 'Don't give up, don't accept this treatment you are an example to society.'"

Glasgow

"Myself and a majority of my colleagues think the CWU deal is a sell-out and worse than a previous deal that was called a surrender document. To suggest it's the best deal available doesn't ring true.

"Also, the ballot has been put back a further week to give management time to change their attitude, although this won't happen. I believe Simon Thompson will resign in this period and the CWU will claim this a victory. Thompson is just the latest CEO picked by an out-of-touch board who should all follow him out the door, with a large cheque I'm guessing.

"Ideally, I would like Royal Mail renationalised and can see a large exodus from the union. I have already left in disgust. I am skeptical that we will have any say in the future of the company. The USO [Universal Service Obligation] has been abandoned by both parties. After two years making Royal Mail huge profits during Covid while planning these changes. I think all trust has gone for good."

Asked about what a rank-and-file committee could achieve, the worker commented, "I don't know if I'm being honest. It would need a mass movement within Royal Mail to organise an alternative to what we have."

Greater Manchester

“A lot of people in my delivery office are not happy with the deal and are voting No. It is worse the last one we were offered in November. That was 9 percent over 2 years. Now its 10 percent over 3 years.

“But it is mainly about the conditions. When you are 50 odd years of age and being worked into the ground. It is totally wrong.

“You are meant to work to live, not live to work which is what the job is becoming. It is crippling us. The company is laughing at us. It is okay for them sitting behind their desks and going on their rounds of golf on their £100,000 bonus.

“I don’t believe they have not got the money. When they say they are losing £1 million a day that is probably compared to the profits they made during the pandemic. They say we are all in this together—why don’t they come down and do our walks then?

“The profit share is a joke. They say we can have 20 percent when they are claiming to lose money, so that is 20 percent of nothing. We had the Colleague Share scheme years ago when we were supposed to get £5,000 but that was in return for productivity, and we always seemed to *just* miss the target.”

Parcelforce

“I work at Parcelforce in London. The workload has gone up enormously. 80 parcels a day was standard in the past, now it’s well over 100, which used to be only at peak periods like Xmas or Black Friday.

“For the last 6-8 months they’ve been adding extra drops. For example, if your route has 80-90 drops—which is already a lot—they’ll give you another 10. And there might be 10 parcels in one drop. The size and weight of parcels is increasing too, probably because people are ordering more online. I had a ridiculous situation last week where I actually delivered a small motorbike—35 kilos. This weight used to be prohibited, in fact the box said, ‘to be lifted by two people’, but it’s just us on our own.

“Right now, we are delivering exam papers to schools. One drop might have eight or nine heavy parcels. But each drop is calculated at two-and-a-half minutes. This is all monitored via the PDA handset. When I first started at Parcelforce, I would receive a message on the PDA saying, ‘why are you taking so long?’ You are then given just two-three minutes to get to the next address. The pressure is enormous.

“Now with the revisions, they are adding extra routes too. You are talking about a massive increase in workload. Certain drivers have had their area changed by adding another

postcode—it doesn’t sound like much, but it’s potentially hundreds of houses. Drivers are having to travel to these areas after they’ve finished their own route. Some refuse, but it’s imposed regardless.

“Sometimes you cannot finish, and you have to bring them back as failures. You see cages and cages of undelivered boxes piling up in the depot. It’s complete chaos. I get back to the depot now at about 6.30pm or 7.00pm, but there are others who finish even later, and you can’t just sign-off, you then have to unload and sort the parcels. Our start time is 7am.

“You can see the outcome of this with drivers off sick with back injuries or strains in different parts of the body or even coming to work limping and taking paracetamol to get through the day. That’s the norm for us. You see blokes walking around with long term injuries sustained from these dangerous workloads. It’s all to meet targets. There’s no concern over our health, as far as they are concerned, we can just drop dead, and you will be replaced by the next person.

“We are even expected to pay for parking tickets which we get on the job, and which we cannot avoid if we are going to complete our deliveries. There is always a list of who has parking tickets, which is handed out every morning by the manager. There’s a lot of effing and blinding and drivers demanding the company pay, which they used to. But not anymore. We are treated like slaves. We are supposed to stop for a half an hour lunch break, but hardly anyone does, I am stuffing food down my throat between deliveries as I go.

“With the agreement the CWU has signed with Royal Mail these conditions will become the norm. A lot of what is in the agreement about making Royal Mail a parcel-led company, with flexibility and so on, is being spearheaded at Parcelforce. It has already been imposed here with the CWU’s blessing. There is huge anger. People are spitting bullets. Everyone where I work knows about the WSWs articles and agrees with what the rank-and-file committee is saying.

“We all oppose these new conditions. The question is what leadership is needed to oppose it. This has to come from the rank-and-file. We are being kept in the dark and not even being told anything by our union rep so the Zoom meeting on Sunday is critical to bring workers together from across all areas of Royal Mail and discuss what we are facing and organise to stop this. I urge all colleagues to attend.”



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