

# “The CWU treat us like nothing and bow down to Royal Mail demands”

## Postal workers speak out against revisions and pro-company agreement

**Our reporter**  
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The *World Socialist Web Site* has received further write-ins from postal workers around the UK speaking out against the ramped-up exploitation being enforced through cost cutting revisions agreed between the Communication Workers Union (CWU) and Royal Mail.

Mounting anger against these sweatshop conditions is fuelling intense opposition to the CWU’s 35-page agreement with Royal Mail announced last month. The deal would end the 10-month dispute by 115,000 postal workers on surrender terms to the company. The CWU will ballot its members from May 25-June 14.

The CWU’s PR exercise has resorted to scare tactics, with officials trying to beat postal workers into submission. On May 4, CWU General Secretary Dave Ward told a livestreamed members meeting in Portsmouth, “If this deal goes down then we’re on the path to some sort of mutual destruction of the company.”

Reports from postal workers show what a hell hole the workplace has already become.

The Universal Service Obligation (USO), legally requiring Royal Mail to provide letter deliveries six days a week, has been trashed, with increased workloads disabling workers through injury and forcing many senior staff to leave. Those facing victimisation at the hands of management receive little or no protection from union officials. Postal workers have reported coming under pressure from local CWU reps to vote Yes.

The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee has issued a renewed call for a No vote, including counter-demands to take forward a fightback by postal workers against the CWU-Royal Mail agreement that is based on plundering the postal service and its workforce for shareholder profit.

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**Worcester, Warwickshire:** It is kind of heartening to know that the terrible revisions are country-wide and not just our office. That’s it though, the rest is absolute outrage. To say that I trust managers more than union reps after 24 years breaks my

heart, but it’s true. 200 delivery points added by those corrupt clowns. They’ve taken £22m in subs during this dispute, plus crowdfunding, and we’ve seen nothing.

Their complicity in putting staff on Statutory Sick Pay, deducting Special Leave for redundancy payments, presenting a massive pay cut, and destroying the job through introducing ludicrous revisions when they never leave the office unless it’s to walk their dog or go to Greggs is obscene. I am (thankfully) a very fit bloke and I can’t get anywhere completing my job now, even at full tilt. That is on the Union, they are finished, and they know it, their greed and idleness is now in plain sight. Never mind Ward, the whole corrupt clique needs to go, and go now. This betrayal will never be forgiven or forgotten.

**Exeter, Devon:** I work at Exeter mail centre. We went on strike to protect our terms and conditions, and for a better pay rise. I did not expect to lose our annual leave and to lose many days pay though strike action only for the CWU to treat us like nothing and bow down to Royal Mail demands. Losing sick pay is our terms and conditions, and they said it would only be a no strings pay deal. I understand people now just want this to be over, and so do I. However, we now have CWU reps aggressively asking a few of us why we are not voting yes. Let me tell you, unions of yesteryear would not let these managers/rep team building games happen. People should be allowed to vote for whatever way you want.

**Loanhead, Scotland:** Letters now failing every day until an audit. Then magically every letter in office disappears until the day after audit, and then back to letters in frames overnight again. Managers actively encouraging this pathetic practice.

**Blackburn, Lancashire:** Having worked for Royal Mail for 24 years and being so passionate about the company and its customers, I now fear the end of my postal career. Having arthritis in my hip and knees I am unable to walk for 5,6,7 hours as my body just can’t take it. Having watched the CEO of the company tell blatant lies under oath in parliament, I now know he is untouchable and can do whatever he likes to ensure he gets his massive bonuses while we continue to visit food

banks. I now must take a Comfort softener bottle out on delivery to use as a urinal. That is how bad things have got. My time with Royal Mail has been a privilege and I wouldn't have wanted to work anywhere else. Sadly, the future is all about profits for the already rich and the dole queue for the rest of us. It breaks my heart that royal mail is on the path to destruction. R.I.P. Royal Mail.

**Warrington, Cheshire:** Lapsing in our workplace is on average 45 mins to an hour, leaving less time to complete our deliveries, and walks failing completion every day.

**Oldham, Greater Manchester:** CWU not a good deal. Let's get Royal Mail back where it belongs: number 1 for delivery, to every house, all year, 6 days a week. All the rest can't compete. But high management want us to do more, for less pay and worse conditions. Would they vote yes to a deal that cuts their work life balance? Takes money out of your pocket. Makes you work longer in all weather and then cut sick leave and other work conditions to help when you are ill through the impossible workloads they have set. Not one of higher management could stand for a week doing what I do for the public.

**Rotherham, South Yorkshire:** Conditions are horrendous within Royal Mail... management rule by intimidation and sick leave amongst staff is at an all-time high... I left recently after 32 years and wish I'd done it sooner.

**Newport, West Midlands:** There is more delivery points but less time to deliver... yes, it's a good idea for the customers to have a second delivery but that puts more workload on us... management don't care. They forget they are expendable as well. The sickness has tripled with any staff leaving replaced by agency staff of which they must be paying agency a premium. Staff morale is not low, it's absolutely rock bottom. Nobody cares anymore. The goodwill from staff has gone and it is not only management I don't trust, but the unions as well. There is more leaving the CWU. Who does the deal help? Definitely not the staff. I feel ashamed to see the failed mail tracked not just for one day but 3-4 days letters not going out, only packets... even bringing mail back. My time frames are bigger with double slots, D2D's (business flyers) failing. How can you put that many D2D's in a slot? How can we go on like this when we are at breaking point? Maybe that's the plan to break us and replace us with agency staff. Shame on you Royal Mail.

**London:** Totally agree, and by the way, just last week I was diagnosed with plantar fasciitis, and I have been off sick. Some delivery rounds in our office have seen a 45% workload increase. How are supposed to continue doing this kind of job for another 25 years, when at 40 we are physically worn out.

**Birmingham, West Midlands:** I worked for Royal Mail for over 20 years and paid into the union accordingly. At my office two guys got suspended at the same time, one of them happened to be the Union Rep. Leaving the guy who wasn't the Union Rep with no one to represent him in the meetings. Apparently, he asked the higher Union Rep at the head office to

go in with him for his meeting but the higher Union Rep refused. The higher Union Rep, however, was on the phone to the suspended Union Rep of the office and was giving him all sorts of information but wouldn't even talk to the other guy who was a paying Union member.

How do I know all this information? Because I was the "other" guy who got suspended and my best mate (who was suspended at the same time) was the Union Rep. I was in my best mate's car (the Union Rep for the office) when the big Union guy was phoning him up, giving him pointers on his case, but for some reason didn't want to represent me... a paying member for over 20 years?

This is how that conglomerate operate and I got front row seated to it. The only problem was the head Union guy didn't know I was listening into his monologues with HIS Union Rep. They are reptiles and only care about themselves or anyone in their orbit. For anyone who is struggling with mental health issues though? I've been locked up because of it.

Please get out of that job, they don't care about you (RM or the Union) even if you care about them. The Union is a joke and only look after their own (my case in point). The Union are a business at the end of the day (£14 million a year?), They are in survival mode at the moment and really shouldn't be trusted. If you are looking to get out of that job? Please do. You guys and your work ethic really would be appreciated elsewhere. You guys are better than that.

**Another delivery worker from Birmingham writes:** I work on the bulk parcels. I'm picking up between 28kg and over 35kg. I'm covering over 37 routes. Between two people it should be manned between 4 to 5 men. It's killing us. Every time I tell my manager he says there's no money for extra help, so I suffer. It's put me in hospital so many times going off with torn muscles to knee surgeries and still that won't get me any help. It's gonna kill someone on this job because we're not being listened to, it's all about profit saving. Money at the risk to my health and my colleagues, this should not go on. It is nothing short of slave labour profit.



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