

Royal Mail workers speak out: “My life is turned upside down. Will I survive?”

Our reporter
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The *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) is publishing a further round-up of comments received from UK postal workers condemning the Communication Workers Union (CWU) sellout deal with Royal Mail.

After closed door talks with the company since Tuesday, the CWU issued a statement today announcing, “The employer has accepted the need for a joint statement” and “a set of agreed actions” on the imposition of workplace revisions. This joint statement “will be launched via a joint zoom meeting of every manager and CWU representative in the UK.”

This confirms the warnings of the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee that the sole purpose of the ballot postponement was to 1) evade a massive NO vote by the membership and 2) cobble together an agreement with the reps and management which they will dress up as a “concession” to try and push the deal through.

Ward and Furey are trampling on the democratic rights of their members. No mass meetings of postal workers, but a Zoom meeting with Royal Mail executives and reps! We urge postal workers to write in and share their views on this by completing the form at the end of this article.

Keighley: This rank-and-file initiative is the most sensible and genuinely constructive approach to taking back and winning the dispute that I have seen, and I support it 100%. Demoralised workers should get involved rather than sink into despondency. The union leadership has sold us out beyond belief, the only alternative now to their surrender document is that we TAKE CONTROL of the dispute directly. Management bullying and victimisation in DOs continues apace. The CWU was letting a lot of local management abuse pass unchallenged prior to the dispute, which was then capitalised on prior to the first strike ballot.

Management abuse, as the union leadership acknowledges, has increased massively during the dispute on all fronts, from disregarding company procedures, statutory regulations and employment law, to victimisation of militants and abuse of disciplinary process. The fact that this continues shows the weakness of the CWU's hand with this horrible negotiators' agreement. From June 2023 Royal Mail has announced it is no longer providing paper wage slips to its workers. This appears to have had zero response from the union, despite the fact that

Royal Mail is attaching conditionality to a statutory right (download its app onto your personal device in order to see your pay details), and despite it not having been agreed as a change to T&Cs (presumably not possible because your employer cannot tell you what to do with your own property). Fundamentally though this is Royal Mail management betraying the USO, and a letters service for the UK generally, by signalling to businesses that letters are dead as far as it is concerned. If Royal Mail, which has no delivery cost to posting out wage slips, stops doing so, why would other businesses bother? What we are sold as “convenience” is no more than management cost cutting, erosion of workers' rights and betrayal of the letters service.

Staffordshire: The management review put people in who didn't want to be at our office. So acting managers ended being put in place. The area manager right hand man who has never run an office assessed them and removed them to put in his pal from West Bromwich office and he doesn't know his arse from his elbow. In the meantime, four walks have been removed through natural waste and others leaving. So we had to share across the office as enforced absorption/revision. The amount of oversized has compensated the decline in letters but as the majority of members work to time this means not all walks are completed. Hence shared duties prioritise tracked packets and leave letters which get an alternate delivery. Our office has had a bad reputation forever as members don't tow the party line as we implement what is common sense. Everything has been imposed from pay to revisions. They have casuals in to do what we don't take on the enforced absorption as well as LAT [latest acceptance times] parcels. How they expect 5% savings on office budget year on year we are cut to the bone. Now we have casuals and early sorters we are always overspent on the budget. This manager hasn't got a grip of how the office performs and so is relying on workplace coach to run the floor for him to get the work through.

Newcastle: You are right, older people are being forced to quit because of heavy workloads being forced upon them, greedy the CWU! The EVR package bans workers aged 65 and over from taking them lump sum, not the formerly agreed two years pay but a derisory nine months, above all, this is AGE DISCRIMINATION. What is the CWU solicitors doing sweet

FA! What happened to the legally binding agreements the CWU had with our former boss? Chucked aside without any challenge from the CWU. WE MUST GET RID OF WARD AND FUREY BUT FIRST VOTE OUT THE AGREEMENT.

Slough: The “deal” is unacceptable.

Birmingham: Whatever is going on at the moment between RM and the CWU? You can be rest assured that once after the fact, this awful deal is voted through and workers are complaining about the conditions and working environment, the CWU will retort with, “well, you voted it in, and you had the chance not to. We are just working in your best interests”. Speaking of “your best interests”, I think it wouldn't be totally unacceptable to ask the CWU if they will be prepared to work Sundays in their offices to obtain legal advice from when a manager is playing up (which they clearly see as a working day through their new negotiations). I'm guessing their offices will be closed. They've probably got breakfast or something planned down the pub on a Sunday, no time for that working nonsense. Just remember when you're working Sundays and paying union fees, the manager is on your back, your legs are tired and you've had enough. At least the big guys at the Union have had a nice day off and you can always talk to them on Monday (if they can be bothered to listen to you that is).

Grimsby: Royal Mail Grimsby office full of bully boy management robbed me off many hours overtime to line their own pockets. When I refused to work overtime was told I'd be moved off delivery, was then moved off duty after refusing to work beyond my time and was again verbally abused by management. When reported to senior management was just ignored. Royal Mail management are 100% bullies and senior management not only turn blind eye but also support this disgusting behaviour.

Milnthorpe, Cumbria: Impossible duty spans, deliberate failure to deliver mail, yet still taking money off people for a service they have no intention of providing, fraud comes to mind. Bullying and harassment by managers, no concern for workers' welfare. Health and safety, not a concern.

Barnsley: No revision is complete where I work. We have 10 staff on long term sick, 2 left and took redundancy; 2 staff who left and got other jobs. We have had no replacements for these 4 staff. We have no help re the 10 staff that are not there plus 2 staff are on light duties. Over worked, under paid.

Liverpool: Parcelforce worker here. Things are so bad, we were forced to work with minimal staff, changes happening every day, staff put onto lines they don't know and then chastised for failing on that line. How they expect anyone to remember what goes where when managers are changing routes every day is beyond me. Pushing things to the limit when lines are overflowing with parcels. You're not allowed to stop to clear the ones that fall to the floor. I myself fell over such a parcel and again was chastised for stopping the line (excuse me whilst I get up). Now I am on the sick losing even more income in this current climate. My life is turned upside down. Will I

survive? Not if Royal Mail get their way.

Gillingham, Kent: I work for Parcelforce, part of the Royal Mail group. We have just had our hours cut by approximately 50 mins per day and still expected to do the same amount of work. We are all hardworking drivers and we have effectively had a pay cut. The CWU deal is a big con. Please expose them and the Royal Mail for treating staff as numbers and not the hardworking people we are.

Caerphilly, Wales: The USO is being failed daily with new revisions being made that are not achievable. In my last ten years serving as a postman in South Wales I have never seen so much mail being brought back on a daily basis. Management don't seem to care and we are still being told to make sure that tracked items are prioritised. Also told that if we cannot deliver next day special deliveries by 1pm that we are to scan them in the office as inaccessible and deliver them when we get there. It feels like they are deliberately trying to get us to fail so we will leave the industry and so they can argue to the government that the USO is not working but they are deliberately making it fail. I have seen a lot of long term people leave in the last few months as the job is becoming unbearable.

Birmingham: The union is a joke. Me and many posties have been kicked off the CWU Twitter because we have criticised the CWU and all the revisions are mostly already in offices, so why let the Royal Mail do these revisions in the first place. Sold down the river AGAIN. Lost 2 grand for what?

Swindon: I wish the media would understand the workings of Royal Mail. They are picking on the foot soldiers who deliver the final mile, the USO [Universal Service Obligation] agreement to every house. As they have made around 10,000 redundant, it is leaving offices short staffed. They didn't want the old staff, the ones who had local knowledge, because they are not cost effective. One walk has a thousand delivery points on it, unobtainable, so therefore the plan is to deliver every other day. They still want parcels vs letters, so hiring casuals to fulfil this. As you've said, a company over 500 years old, should go back into the government hands as with utilities in my opinion.

Huddersfield: Go brother!!!

Morecambe, Lancashire: Having recently leaving the CWU after this debacle, I'm interested to hear the views and thoughts of the Postal Workers Rank and File Committee.

Northampton: I think that Mr Ward and Furey have led us a merry tune. It's been a farce and I was a union rep for St James in Northampton. It's us posties that have been left out to dry and them negotiating in board rooms up and down the country.



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