

Postal worker explains reason for Royal Mail Glasgow G1-5 walkout, breaking news blackout by Communication Workers Union

Steve James
6 June 2023

In response to the appeal made by the Postal Workers Rank-and File-Committee, a postal worker from Glasgow has explained the reasons for the walkout at Royal Mail's G1-5 delivery office in Glasgow's Baird Street on May 19 for several days.

In the face of a news blackout by the Communication Workers Union (CWU), the unofficial walkout was discussed by postal workers on social media with messages of solidarity and calls to join the action.

The *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) reported on the unofficial action in its June 2 article "CWU silent on unofficial strike and witch-hunt at Glasgow G1-5 Royal Mail delivery office", generating widespread interest with over 10,000 views on the WSWS and thousands more on social media.

The postal worker wrote in to clarify what provoked the walkout and explained the solidarity action it won locally. A work colleague had reported becoming unwell which led to a heated exchange with a manager and the postie went home sick. He was suspended by Royal Mail management. Hearing of this, workers at the delivery office defended their colleague and opposed the victimisation of a sick worker by refusing to go out on their delivery duties. Management was informed by the CWU members that they were not allowed to suspend workers who were already sick.

Workers set up an unofficial picket line outside the delivery office. This was respected by workers at Baird Street and other Royal Mail sites. A driver from Glasgow Mail Centre (GMC) at St Rollox, the main mail processing centre for letters and parcels in Scotland, refused to cross the picket line when picking up documents. On return to the GMC, which employs hundreds of processing workers and drivers, the driver

was also suspended.

Hearing of their colleague's suspension, workers and CWU reps at GMC threatened to walk out. Workers at Wishaw Mail Centre in North Lanarkshire were also reported to be willing to join any action by GMC staff.

Faced with this, Royal Mail management partially backed off. The GMC driver was reinstated to try and contain the spread of the dispute, while agency staff and managers were drafted in to break the strike at Baird Street.

It is not known whether the threat of suspension has been lifted from the sick worker at Baird Street.

The regime of management intimidation and crippling workloads has been a constant theme from the hundreds of postal workers writing in to the WSWS: Additional loops and extended delivery spans, unprecedented levels of physical exhaustion, undelivered mail piling up, lucrative parcels given precedence over letters regardless of their priority, understaffing and many other pressures.

In addition to the CWU's censorship over the walkout and cover-up of the scabbing operation, postal workers are now faced with a witch-hunt. As reported to the WSWS by postal workers starting their shift at Baird Street, managers and union reps had been pulled in from other parts of the country as workers at the delivery office were being interrogated by management one-by-one. Such "interviews" were reportedly continuing as of June 2, as managers look for names and a scapegoat.

Postal workers from around Glasgow have written in to the WSWS speaking out against the impact of cost cutting revisions, condemning the sell-out deal to end the national dispute and the second postponement of

the ballot by CWU leaders Dave Ward and Andy Furey. Comments include:

- They are still prioritising packets over Mail. My street didn't go out on delivery on Thursday. Luckily for me I went and got my mail myself as it's my Delivery Office. Then when asked why no mail delivery told postmen hadn't enough time as they were told to do parcels near the end of their time span.

- The national Royal Fail is an absolute disgrace. Extorting money from Customers paying for a service that has no chance of getting delivered on time as there ain't enough time or hours in the day for postpersons to complete deliveries as only one walk out of 2 gets done. Let's see Mr Ward and a couple of shareholders try a delivery for a week... Thought not.

- No matter how they dress it up its a poor deal for postal workers.... How long do we have to wait for ballot? Get voting done now so we can move on and use mandate before the company damages itself anymore. The union can't hold the tide back.

A postal worker from the Parcelforce division of RMG in central Scotland commented:

- Parcelforce Perth workloads are absolutely ridiculous. In less than a day the union and management totally ruined 75 percent of the routes by doing their joint revisions. The 2 of them were useless when they done multi drop. Drivers with 15 to 25 years doing deliveries shafted, failed deliveries on a daily basis, morale all time low, pure toxic environment. Well done CWU, your deal sucks. Vote no.

The CWU is already ushering in the sellout agreement without a single vote cast by 115,000 postal workers. The "negotiators agreement" by Ward and Furey, backed by the CWU Postal Executive, was cited as the basis for a new round of revisions "at pace" in a joint letter by Parcelforce Managing Director Aaron Barnes and CWU national officer Davie Robertson.

This exposes as a fraud the CWU's claim that its postponing of the ballot was to tackle the "toxic" environment in the workplace and unrelenting attacks on postal workers.

Since its June 1 announcement following closed-door meetings with Royal Mail that "agreed actions" had been reached over a review of "failed revisions," the CWU membership remains completely in the dark. This gifts the upper hand to Royal Mail while the union bureaucracy resorts to undemocratic measures to

trample over the rank-and-file, suppressing the renewed strike mandate from mid-February and postponing the ballot on the sell-out deal twice to prevent a massive No vote.

To break the stranglehold of the unaccountable union bureaucracy, postal workers should convene workplace meetings, elect rank-and-file committees to coordinate the struggle against Royal Mail and demand the removal of Ward, Furey and company. We urge Royal Mail workers to contact the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee to coordinate this counter-offensive. The committee's next online Zoom meeting is on Sunday June 11, 7pm. Register here to attend.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact