

Postal workers denounce mass sackings at Royal Mail's Prenton Delivery Office

Our reporters
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Six workers remain sacked from Royal Mail's Prenton Delivery Office in the Wirral. Eleven posties were initially suspended for taking their legally entitled tea breaks at two local pubs. Their treatment is part of a wave of company victimisations, with reports confirming that Royal Mail is targeting workers to enforce its brutal restructuring agenda.

Over the weekend, postal workers in the area described an intimidating atmosphere in the Prenton office since last month's ending of the national dispute. The Communication Workers Union's (CWU) pro-company deal with Royal Mail has greenlighted a major new offensive against postal workers.

One postal worker said, "This all started as lads used to go to Caernarvon pub for a break and management said you can't do that. What happened then was some lads went to the Swan pub car park and then they got suspended. A day later they did the same and got told by a manager they weren't allowed back at the office. Then they all got suspended and got a letter saying they couldn't congregate again. Then some lads went to McDonalds and then they used that against them too." The McDonald's is on the same road as the Prenton delivery office.

"This all started with the revisions [cost-cutting/productivity measures imposed by management during the strike]. They said you can't go off route for your break. They took eight walk duties out of the office and obviously it wasn't working, so mail was getting delayed. They needed someone to blame. You used to be able to go anywhere on your break.

"I think there will be industrial action if they don't get their jobs back."

Asked if the CWU was defending the sacked workers, the same worker said, "The union haven't done anything to help. They backed up Royal Mail and said

you can't congregate, you couldn't meet up, and that's what got them sacked. The union won't do anything for us."

Another postie said, "I think most of them have been sacked and three are back in there now. Another one got suspended again. But even before they got sacked, another three workers got sacked at that DO.

"The atmosphere now in the office is bad, there's bullying. The workload you can't meet, and they will bully people to do it. Anyone could be sacked because of the workload. The atmosphere is bad on all levels.

"Everyone will appeal who lost their jobs and if not, by the sound of it there will be industrial action and the office will go on strike. The way it is now, individual offices go on strike, not the whole of Royal Mail."

Another postie said, "I think people who got sacked were targeted. They've not gone after everyone. They are picking out people who are going against the grain. They want people there who will do whatever management ask them to."

Asked for his thoughts on the CWU, he replied, "The CWU are not standing up to any of this. The CWU said on the deal [reached with Royal Mail to end the strike] 'vote yes, vote yes, vote yes'. Now as soon as the deal has gone through, they started acting like they're on our side again now, saying, 'This deal wasn't what we asked for' and trying to play the good guys again."

Another postal worker told WSWs, "We don't know what is happening with the ones who got the sack. We would like to know but we don't get told anything".

At the shopping centre in Prenton, NHS midwife Kay told WSWs she supported all the sacked postal workers: "The people have to go on strike so they get their jobs back, but the unions are there in name only, nothing's being done, there's no fight.

"We used to think [former prime minister] Thatcher

was bad, but this is far worse. It's an unfair world.

"It's inspiring to see some people take on society. I support any striker whose conditions are being eroded while the rich are getting richer."

The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee is calling for a public defence campaign to reinstate the sacked Prenton posties. Their fate cannot be left in the hands of the Employment Tribunal. Less than five percent of all unfair dismissal cases before the Employment Tribunal result in reinstatement.

The rank-and-file at Prenton DO must take control, drawing up plans for a work-to-rule and other measures, including strike action, to win their colleagues' reinstatement. This must be linked to a political and industrial campaign by Royal Mail workers everywhere for the unconditional reinstatement of all 400 workers sacked or suspended during the dispute.

We urge postal workers to read and distribute the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee statement, "Reinstate all victimised reps and postal workers! End the CWU-Lord Falconer conspiracy at Royal Mail!"

Do you have any information about the sackings at Prenton Delivery Office or the victimisations of postal workers elsewhere at Royal Mail? Get in touch using the form below. Your anonymity will be protected.



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