

Oppose Royal Mail's assault on the USO! Defeat CWU's collusion!

Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (UK)
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The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee invites workers across delivery offices, mail centres, Parcelforce and Fleet to attend an online meeting on April 28 to discuss a fightback against Royal Mail's assault on the USO and the jobs and conditions of postal workers.

Royal Mail has unveiled plans to dismantle six-day letter deliveries, escalating the war against postal workers that has been ongoing since at least 2022 with the complicity of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) postal executive.

In its submission to regulator Ofcom on April 2, Royal Mail calls for the USO's reduction to a 2.5 day or 3-day-a-week service for second class and bulk mail and is demanding a decision from Ofcom by April 2025.

A jobs massacre is underway and is set to intensify. Royal Mail states: "the total number of delivery routes is expected to reduce by c. 7,000-9,000." The CWU estimates job losses of between 13,700 and 17,800, based on cost "efficiencies" of £750 million to £975 million targeted by Royal Mail. But "frontline job losses could be considerably higher than this."

The job cuts are part of a global war against postal and logistics workers—including at Amazon, UPS, Australia Post, Canada Post and the US Postal Service—as corporate boardrooms seize on new technology to reduce the workforce and slash costs.

While Royal Mail executives justify their plans as "modernisation" and the inevitable result of declining letters in a digital age, its social vandalism is motivated by one thing only: shareholder profit for billionaire parasites such as Vesa Equity and Blackrock Inc.

Charities have described Royal Mail's plans—backed by Ofcom—as "disastrous". On April 4, NHS leaders warned: "two million people may have missed medical

appointments in 2022-23 due to late delivery of letters, and this will only deteriorate under the proposed new plans."

Citizens Advice (CA) has protested that millions are being harmed by missed NHS appointments, court notices and welfare benefits decisions. It is the poorest and most vulnerable who are hardest hit, with CA reporting 21 percent of disabled people have experienced "negative consequences" because of letter delays.

Royal Mail is being converted into an Amazon-style parcels business, based on gig-economy conditions and wages. Its new Super Hubs are aimed at driving this through. Labour saving technologies which could make our lives easier and improve the postal service are instead being used to squeeze maximum profit out of postal workers and reduce letter deliveries, throwing thousands of colleagues onto the scrapheap.

This was the real purpose of last year's national agreement co-authored by CWU officials Dave Ward, and Andy Furey, backed by the postal executive and national reps meetings. It was a sellout of monumental proportions that introduced a two-tier workforce, reduced sick-pay, a new performance regime, later start and finish times, seasonal hours, and which approved the shift to 24-7 parcel delivery, ending any work-life balance.

If Royal Mail is saying there will be "no forced redundancies" this is only because the CWU is already helping the company drive out thousands of "legacy staff" through impossible workloads and a hostile regime of management bullying and victimisation, sanctified by the Falconer Review.

How are postal workers to fight? The CWU accepts the market-driven dictates of Royal Mail. During the dispute Ward told members they would face

“Armageddon” if they did not accept the CWU’s surrender terms. Failure to “accept change” would force Royal Mail into bankruptcy with the loss of thousands of jobs. This is exactly what Royal Mail is now carrying through, with the CWU on its knees, obediently putting forward its own proposals for a reduced five-day USO, slower mail delivery speeds and other “efficiencies”.

No-one else is going to step in and resolve this crisis. The CWU, Ofcom, the Tory government and Labour all support Royal Mail’s war against the USO and postal workers. The CWU’s submission to Ofcom on the USO’s future states: “Ideally, Royal Mail would be in public hands and the net costs would be subsidised by the government, but this is difficult under privatisation.” [!]

CWU headquarters endorses Ofcom’s stated position that the USO is “an unfair financial burden on Royal Mail”. Hence Ward’s proposal to Ofcom of an “industry fund” to support the USO with contributions from Amazon, Evri and other parcel companies that are leveraging profits off Royal Mail’s delivery network. This is a “pigs will fly” proposal. Amazon’s main UK division paid *zero* corporate tax last year, for the second year running, despite receiving £7.7 million in infrastructure investment under the Sunak government’s super-deduction scheme.

The CWU is nakedly touting for the Labour Party, writing to Ofcom: “We are pleased that the Labour Party has agreed to a comprehensive regulatory review of the sector, as part of their National Policy Forum process.” How this sits with Sir Keir Starmer’s praise for Margaret Thatcher, and his insistence that she “set loose Britain’s natural entrepreneurialism”, is a question the CWU cannot answer.

Workers have already shown their willingness to fight. The year-long Royal Mail dispute was part of wave of strikes at the NHS, railways, airlines, buses, ports, oil refineries, warehouses, colleges and schools that was betrayed by the trade union bureaucracy. “Left” officials such as Ward and RMT leader Mick Lynch blocked unified action while concluding backroom deals with the Tory government and employers to impose massive attacks on jobs, pay, terms and conditions.

The lesson is that the working class must intervene with our own strategy through the creation of rank-and-

file organisations to lead a fightback. Either our interests prevail, or those of the capitalist financial oligarchy. There is no in-between.

Join the Zoom meeting called by the PWRFC to discuss and plan this fight. Register at [wsws.org/post/rfc](https://www.wsws.org/post/rfc)



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