

# Attend UK Postal Workers Rank-and-File meeting Sunday: “They want Royal Mail on a par with Evri and Amazon”

Our correspondents

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Hundreds of copies of the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (PWRFC) statement “Oppose Royal Mail’s Assault on the USO! Defeat CWU’s Collusion!” have been distributed at Royal Mail delivery offices in Bradford, Keighley, Sheffield, Barnsley, Leicester, Glasgow and Manchester.

The appeal to attend the PWRFC’s Zoom meeting this Sunday, April 28, met with a welcome response, prompting pointed comments and wider discussions with postal workers who spoke with WSWs reporting teams about impossible workloads, the manufactured crisis of the mail service and prioritisation of parcels. They were critical of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) for last years’ sellout agreement tearing up terms and conditions and driving out thousands of postal workers.

## South Yorkshire

At Sheffield North delivery office on Capel Street, one worker said, “We’re just the little guys. The CWU sold us out last time.”

In relation to the plan unveiled by Royal Mail to break up the USO, posties reported they had not been informed about its content by the union, “I haven’t heard anything about it,” while others warned this was only the start: “It’s never ending,” “Customers aren’t necessarily concerned about the six-day service, but it is a slippery slope, it’ll be five days, then four, then three...”

At Pond Street delivery office in Sheffield city centre, a postal worker explained how delivery rounds had been extended up to 15-20km per day. They raised concerns about the treatment of new entrants, citing a recruit made

to work a difficult parcel delivery route with insufficient training and job experience. “Many are now leaving the job and new ones are being brought in on rubbish terms.”

At Barnsley delivery office in Pitt Street, discussion focussed on opposition to the two-tier workforce enshrined in the CWU-Royal Mail agreement. A new entrant listed the inferior terms—mandatory Sundays, unpaid meal relief, and non-payment of the functional supplement for unaddressed mail. They expressed little faith in promises of improvements made by the CWU. “They agreed this contract in the first place. We’ve been treated unequally from the start for doing the same job.”

“I thought the strike had been about stopping a two-tier workforce!” a long-standing postal worker stated. Many held the CWU responsible, describing union leaders as “colluding” or “in bed” with the company.

A young postal worker pointed to the Royal Mail emblem on their uniform, “What does it say: Royal Mail. We are not a parcels company!” They were on the “old” contract and described the new entrants’ terms and conditions as “disgusting”. Asked what he thought about the CWU leadership he replied, “They have not got a backbone; it is all about money and profits, they are more interested in the shareholders than representing members.”

## West Yorkshire

At Bradford North delivery office a worker said, “I totally agree that the unions are tied up with the management; we went on strike last time and disagreed with everything, but the union pushed it through. The

unions have become part of the problem rather than the solution.”

On plans to reduce the USO agreed by the CWU, a colleague explained, “They are going to break our backs. The people need to know, we need to make a stand because they are throwing us under the bus. You have got to hit them in the pocket.

“This is not a UK problem, it’s a global problem. How many people are going to lose their jobs with this new model they are introducing? They are going to get rid of a good 30 to 40 percent.”

A young postie said, “I don’t know what’s happened in the last few years since Covid. The company used Covid as an excuse to ride roughshod over workers’ rights and stuff like that.”

While postal workers were classified as key workers during the earlier lockdowns, delivering test kits, basic workplace protections were not provided, with unofficial walkouts required to even to enforce social distancing and mask mandates.

A longstanding postal worker of more than 20 years added, “The changes are horrendous.” After returning from sick leave, “I came back and the mail was piled sky high. A union guy came and took a photograph. I try to keep up with getting everything done but when I came back it was a meltdown. Over the years you had the chance of getting everything done, now it is totally overwhelming, but everybody has totally given up. Now I just work to my time.”

At Keighley delivery office the running down of basic infrastructure was contrasted to shareholder pay outs: “They just want more and more out of us. When we have said we cannot do it like that, they have turned round and instead of saying, ‘Fine, we’ll help you,’ they responded, ‘We are going to add extra.’ There are literally people who cannot complete that have had another half round added on. It’s just ridiculous.

“And if they say they can’t afford to pay us, it’s because they’ve wasted all that cash. They gave half-a-billion pounds away to shareholders and they’ve said they can’t afford anything else. That cash ought to be reinvested in the business. We’ve got 12-to-15-year-old vans in our delivery office. It’s a joke. No other business has got vans that are falling apart.”

“If we can’t get the mail out they say leave it! They really do not care. When I first started, if you left one letter behind, you could lose your job. You have got people now leaving tons.

“Management wants to turn it into the likes of Evri and

Amazon where it’s just the cheapest labour and workers have got very little rights. It’s not what it was, it used to be a good job. You always had a turnover, but we have got guys that have been here for 15 or 20 years that are leaving now. They can see what’s going to happen. It’s getting worse. They are just going to drive the company down even more.”

## Manchester

The consensus was the same at Manchester Delivery Office, Oldham Road.

“We haven’t got a post office anymore, it’s gone. We owned it, the post workers. Why are we buying shares? I’ve been in the union 40 years, whose representing me to cut sick pay? There’ll just be casuals going out in vans at this rate. This all started with Thatcher when the unions abandoned the miners.”

Another long-serving postal worker was scathing: “It’s just ridiculous now. They used to hide their lies. Grant McPherson [the former chief operating officer who oversaw the largest cost-cutting revisions in company history last year] got his money, now he’s gone. He destroyed everything. They got a £750 million bailout but they’re losing £1.7 million a day. Where’s it all gone?”

A colleague added, “How can we compete when the prices of postage is going up; this is a disaster.” In response to the WSWS reporting team explaining workers should not be divided in the name of competition he responded, “It is all about the profits of these companies; they should not have been taken out of public control. It is the system itself that is the problem and the system needs to change.”

**We urge postal and logistics workers to attend the next online meeting of the PWRFC on April 28 at 7 p.m., “Oppose Royal Mail’s Assault on the USO! Defeat CWU’s Collusion”. Register here to attend.**



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