

# CWU pushes “relaunch” of partnership with Kretinsky, based on sellout “negotiators agreement” with Royal Mail

Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (UK)  
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The Communication Workers Union (CWU) has reached a “negotiators agreement” with Royal Mail on national deployment of USO reform and equalisation of new entrants pay, terms and conditions, announced in a Letter to Branches (LTB) on April 15.

The nine-page “final agreement” makes clear what CWU general secretary Dave Ward and deputy Martin Walsh have been up to in their talks with management over the past two months, shielded from rank-and-file oversight by the official Dispute Resolution Procedure.

It states: “RMG [Royal Mail Group] and CWU reaffirm our commitment to delivering in full all aspects of the rebuilding Royal Mail Part 1 & Part 2 agreements.

“In particular it is recognised that the EP Group/CWU Agreement of the 18th of December 2024 (rebuilding Royal Mail Part 1) is a crucial agreement that set out a new and positive vision of the future under the new owners, including major commitments to employees, new governance structures and assurances from the UK government.”

The negotiators’ deal is aimed at implementing that Framework Agreement based on the demolition of the Universal Service Obligation (USO) and a new delivery model geared to parcels, entrenching low pay and gig economy work practices.

## ODM Mark II

Postal workers who were forced to trial Royal Mail’s Optimised Delivery Model (ODM) at 35 pilot delivery offices voted to reject the ODM by 96 percent in a ballot of members this February. But CWU negotiators have signed up to an ODM Mark II.

Section 2.2 on the “New Delivery Model 2026 (DM26)” states: “Singleton shared van and High-Capacity Trolley

(HCT) Town Walks will be organised in groups of four walks. Two of these 4 walks will deliver 1st class and parcels only Monday to Friday and 2 will deliver all mail Monday to Friday. Three individuals will be allocated to these four walks.

This is simply a repackaged ODM blueprint to cut 1 in 4 jobs, increase workloads by 25 percent to implement £300 million in structural cost-cutting.

Walsh’s belated objections to ODM in January were aimed at deflecting opposition. He had already agreed the terms of the ODM pilots rolled out from March 2025, insisting at a *CWU Live* event last April that “the principles work”. Postal workers at the pilot offices did not agree and pushed back against delivery spans of five hours and call rates hiked by 30 percent.

Under the terms of the negotiators’ agreement, the new ODM will be rolled out nationally across all 1,250 delivery offices. It states: “Royal Mail and the CWU are jointly committed to completing the deployment of DM26 in readiness for Peak 2026”. An additional 240 delivery offices are to be added to the existing 35 pilot sites immediately.”

Royal Mail has announced that DM26 will proceed “while the CWU consultative ballot is taking place”. As far as they are concerned, our votes count for nothing. Kretinsky is confident because he knows the CWU bureaucracy will enforce to the letter this pro-company agreement against members. Postal colleagues must put a halt to these plans!

Royal Mail has already announced that Saturday delivery of all letters other than First Class will be scrapped by the end of the year, delivered instead on an alternate weekday basis. They are implementing the downgrade of the USO that was agreed by regulator Ofcom last July.

## Jobs cull

The national hourly wage for new entrants of just £13.06, dipped closer to the national minimum wage, uplifted to £12.71 for adults 21 years or over this month.

The “first step” toward a supposed equalisation of new entrants’ pay and employment terms is an insulting 1.75 percent uplift on the 3 percent pay increase due to all postal workers from April this year (as part of the three-year deal). This leaves new entrants on a rate of approximately £13.68, £1.81 behind legacy workers and still without a paid meal break or supplement for delivering business flyers.

The agreement states that the “next step” in equalisation will not be reviewed until January 2027! CWU officials have shamelessly strung new entrants along. The section of the December 2024 Framework Agreement known as Part 2 promised a first step toward equalisation last September and a final plan by December. Even the pittance now offered is only backdated to April 1 this year.

### **Low pay with productivity strings**

The agreed pay award is a pay freeze for all Royal Mail workers, even based on the CPI rate of inflation which stood at 3 percent in January.

Section 4 of the agreement, “Pay 2026”, presents the payment of 3 percent ahead of updated CPI figures through to April as a supposed act of generosity to avoid “delay” for postal workers. This is risible.

It states that the extra money workers are entitled to based on increased CPI will only be “considered for payment following the successful deployment of the USO reform”.

Walsh has spent months gaslighting postal workers, denying the CWU’s three-year pay deal would be linked to restructuring. It would be a “no-strings” deal. These claims have been exposed as lies. The agreement means pay increases in the second year will be contingent on meeting company targets for job destruction and increased workloads as part of USO reform.

### **Vote “No”! For a rank-and-file challenge!**

The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (PWRFC) calls for a resounding No vote. But rejection alone is not enough. Opposition must be mobilised demanding the removal of Ward, Walsh and the entire CWU Postal Executive who serve as Royal Mail’s enforcers.

This rotten agreement has been endorsed by the entire CWU Postal Executive. Briefings have been held with full-time officials and local reps, but a ballot date has not been announced for members to decide. This is deliberate, as the CWU prepares to launch a PR blitz based on lies, disinformation and threats to crowd out rank-and-file opposition with pro-company messaging.

Postal workers must seize the initiative. Rank-and-file committees should be established at all delivery offices and mail centres. Decision making must be transferred to the rank-and-file, based on a fighting strategy to protect the mail service, not EP Group profits!

The PWRFC advances these demands:

- Disband the pilots at the 35 delivery offices. Full disclosure by postal workers of the impact on their health through fatigue and staff forced out the door.
- No to Walsh’s ODM Mark II of intensified workloads and job cuts.
- Equal pay for equal work. The immediate levelling up of new entrants on the basic pay and terms of legacy workers.
- End Royal Mail’s breach of its statutory duties on the USO. The public has a right to a dependable mail service.

Postal workers confront a political fight. The Starmer government rubber-stamped Kretinsky’s takeover as one of its first acts in government. Starmer’s Blairite cabinet wanted to make clear to global money markets that Labour was “open for business”. Now this government has been plunged into crisis. The working class must intervene with its own program, otherwise the initiative will be seized by the right.

The profit mad interests of Kretinsky and the billionaire oligarchy are incompatible with secure, well-paid jobs, safe working conditions and a reliable mail service. The return of militant workplace organisation based on rank-and file power over the pro-company apparatus means developing a new leadership in the working class that will fight for the socialist reorganisation of society. We urge Royal Mail workers to contact the PWRFC to take forward this fight.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**