

# Royal Mail workers call for No vote against CWU negotiators' agreement with Kretinsky

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The Communication Workers Union (CWU) has confirmed the ballot on its “negotiators’ agreement” with Royal Mail will take place between May 11 and 29 covering Universal Service Obligation (USO) “reform” and the supposed “equalisation” of new entrants.

The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (PWRFC) is calling for a mass No vote to defeat the intended sellout. The 9-page agreement is the product of two months of closed-door talks between CWU General Secretary Dave Ward and his deputy Martin Walsh with Royal Mail executives acting on behalf of the new owners, billionaire Daniel Kretinsky’s EP Group.

Following these backroom manoeuvres Ward and Walsh are attempting to relaunch their Framework Agreement with EP Group. This will enforce brutal restructuring through a new delivery scheme based closely on the Optimised Delivery Model (ODM) of job cuts, ramped up workloads and an entrenched two-tier workforce, tied to gutting the mail service.

## Postal workers push back

As soon as details of the “groundbreaking agreement” were released on April 15, opposition went viral among postal workers who slammed the proposed deal.

Many called out the claim made by Walsh that the CWU would not proceed with the ODM, stating they had repackaged it as “DM26”:

“Am I missing something but isn’t the 3 people on 4 duties the exact same as Royal Mails ODM that has been trialled in the pilot offices and that has failed and that the union said they would never agree too? If I am mistaken CWU could you please explain to me how the agreement you have come up with RM is different to what they’ve wanted all along”

Others raised the inevitable question of associated job cuts:

“How many job losses [will] this make once it gets finalised? 3 people doing 4 rounds leaves a lot of spare staff. Or will we just not recruit for those that leave?”

New entrants exposed the lie of “equalisation”:

“Farce. That’s not even close to equalisation. Removal of higher OT (overtime rate) makes this a pay decrease. Union has caved massively. All pomp and bravado for the TV cameras, then you manage to get a worse deal for new entrants, who you’ve been begging to join the union. Comical!!!”

Ward and Walsh will respond with disinformation and threats, citing the financial challenges of company, just as they did in 2023 to ram through the sellout agreement to end the national strike.

The trickle-down economics promoted by the CWU apparatus, claiming that increased profitability will be shared by workers, stands exposed by the legacy of that pro-company agreement. It took a torch to established terms and conditions, slashing sick pay and introducing seasonal hours around business needs and the two-tier workforce.

## Organise a unified fightback, say workers

The PWRFC is holding a Zoom meeting on May 17 to discuss conducting a unified fightback against the collusion of the CWU apparatus with EP Group. The suppression of the collective will of the rank-and-file must be ended. To prepare the meeting, the Committee interviewed several postal workers to sound out the issues.

At the centre of the rotten deal is the rollout of Delivery Model 2026 (DM26)—a repackaged version of the widely hated Optimised Delivery Model (ODM), already rejected by 96 percent of workers in a ballot of the 35 pilot offices put through the “trials”. They were given no say over its implementation, drawn up between Walsh and Royal Mail management.

Under DM26, three postal workers doing four duties becomes the national standard across 1,250 delivery offices—cutting one in four jobs and imposing unmanageable workloads to save £300 million in “restructuring”, set to be reaped as profits by EP Group.

James, a postal worker in Scotland at one of the 35 pilot offices, described the reality:

“In April 2025 our office took part in the trial for the

Optimised Delivery Model. We had no say in whether we wanted to participate in what some workers could see was a management-union stitch up (a point made at a joint management/ union meeting). There was no opposition or push back from the union officials present. We were told by them there was ‘no plan B’ and ‘it has to work’.

“After a few weeks, with posties buckling under increased workloads, a private company was employed to carry out heart monitoring using devices worn by delivery staff. No results were published and the whole thing was quickly brushed under the carpet. Since then, there has been a massive rise in long term sickness, especially among older workers. Around 14 percent of staff have quit during the pilot citing the ‘job is now impossible.’

“Now a year down the line we are being told that there is another scheme being put in place: DM26. It still means 3 people doing 4 jobs, however the union dress it up. It’s a way to get more work; heavier, longer deliveries, with no thought to health and safety or conditions that we need to make a decent work life.

“I would say that postal workers should organise an opposition to this stitch up and let the managers and union officials know that you’re against the destruction of your jobs”

The agreement’s claims of “equalisation” are a travesty with only an additional 1.75 percent on pay offered. New entrants remain trapped on inferior pay and conditions, barely above the minimum wage, with no meaningful timetable for parity.

Steve, a new entrant in the South Midlands, explained:

“There is no mention of paid meal breaks or allowances in this deal, just a minor gap-closing on the pay.

“The CWU are going to come up with a poster to promote a Yes vote that will be full of lies. The last one said, ‘the first union in the UK to reverse large scale two-tier working’. Shocking and unforgivable.

“You can already see the Royal Mail culture of bullying starting to intensify. Our manager cannot string two sentences together without mentioning conduct. Jobs still being advertised on Indeed that mention shift patterns that are nothing like the reality. Sundays will be on a rota basis—but they don’t say that you cannot see this rota and will only find out your day off for the following week on Thursday or Friday.

“I love the job itself but there is no point in being naive about everything.

“I’ll leave you with a quote from another new starter who, looking puzzled but sincere, said to me, ‘I’ve never seen anything like it. I honestly think Royal Mail hates its employees!’”

The PWRFC insists that a No vote must be the starting point for a broader mobilisation. The widespread anger now emerging cannot be allowed to be bled out, with the bureaucracy left in charge. The ballot must become a rallying point for resistance.

Postal workers must organise independently—building rank-and-file committees in every delivery office and mail centre to take control of the struggle.

The removal of Ward, Walsh and the unaccountable CWU bureaucracy is essential to mount a real fight against the biggest restructuring in more than a decade of privatisation.

The stakes are not only jobs and conditions, but the future of the mail service. The dismantling of the USO, already agreed by Ofcom last July—with alternate week-day delivery for all letters other than First Class—is intended to convert Royal Mail into a profit-driven parcels operation.

Royal Mail’s restructuring has been facilitated at the highest political level. The Starmer government’s rubber-stamping of Kretinsky’s takeover of Royal Mail signalled its commitment to making Britain “open for business” to global capital.

This is a part of an offensive waged against postal services globally. In America the United States Postal Service stands on the brink of insolvency—citing \$9 billion losses a year to make the biggest cuts in its history—as the Trump administration has ploughed \$50 billion on its illegal war against Iran.

Canada Post is being prepared for privatisation by the Carney government with 30,000 job losses planned. The ruling class declares mail services cannot be maintained as a public service but must be turned over to profit making, an outcome accepted entirely by the trade union bureaucracy, like the CWU, in every country.

As part of the globally integrated postal and logistics sector postal workers have tremendous power to defeat these attacks. The key to mounting a co-ordinated fightback is breaking the domination of the pro-corporate bureaucracies, as advocated and fought for by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

We encourage Royal Mail workers to write in to the *World Socialist Web Site* with their workplace accounts and calls to reject the sellout deal. Register for the PWRFC Zoom meeting on May 17 at 7 p.m.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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

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