

IMPORTANT UPDATE FOR CWU MEMBERS IN ROYAL MAIL GROUP



Today, the CWU has written to the Royal Mail Group Board ahead of their meeting tomorrow making it clear that if they do not change course, we will serve notice for strike action. They must step back from their relentless attacks in the workplace and reach a national agreement with the CWU.

This is a hugely significant moment – the stakes have never been higher. We therefore want to tackle some of the most important issues in this communication.

ROYAL MAIL FINANCIAL POSITION

You will have seen reports in several media outlets that Royal Mail Group are 'threatening' to put the business into administration if they cannot reach agreement with the CWU. Most articles deal with the political and economic barriers to such a move, and it should be noted that the company haven't given any statement on the record about the potential for going into administration.

The CWU acknowledges the serious state of the company's finances, but the word of the employer is not enough. As such, we have requested independent access to their grounds for this claim. The truth is the senior managers who led us into the crisis have no right to lead us out of it.

Let us be clear – the CWU are a responsible union. It is our members who are the backbone of a once great company. We want an agreement, but it must be the agreement our members deserve, not one that is forced on you and gives you less security as a result of gross mismanagement at the highest possible level.

CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

Firstly, we have made progress in several areas – this is because of your outstanding support. But we are not in a position where we could recommend an agreement to our membership. The company has moved on some issues that are core to the dispute including on job security, later starts/finishes, performance management, and an optimised parcels network. But the fundamental problem remains: senior management's obsession with its 'our business to run' mantra and removing the voice of postal workers in changes that will affect them.

Some members are saying 'all the change has already happened' – but nothing could be further from the truth. This document sets out a future that, if unchecked, will see Royal Mail Group turned into just another Uber-style gig economy employer. If we don't win this dispute, this will be your future.

Pay: the offer on the table is not enough. Royal Mail Group have made a three-year offer, but it includes no further money to cover last year and no back pay. We will table a fresh proposal on pay to Royal Mail Group this week.

Network / Later starts: Royal Mail are pursuing a policy of demanding later starts / finishes well beyond where we believe they need to be and although there has been significant movement from their original proposals it is still not enough.

New Entrants: the company have indicated they are willing to look at a different approach to the imposed new entrants' terms and conditions. However, this remains completely inadequate. We remain very concerned about this not just for new workers coming into the industry, but because it will undoubtedly lead to further attacks on the pay, jobs, and conditions of our existing members.

Sick Pay / Attendance Standards / Ill Health Retirement: The company's position on all the issues related to absence and ill health remain unacceptable to the union. The union is preparing a fresh proposal on these issues.

Indoor Method Change: Royal Mail want trials on reducing the levels of indoor prep but even before those trials take place, they want the CWU to sign up to circa 20-25 minutes of indoor time being removed from every delivery duty on a daily basis. How can you sign up to the outcome of a trial before it has even taken place?

Owner Drivers: Royal Mail Group has started to move on the issue of owner drivers in Parcelforce and Royal Mail from their 'best and final' offer but are still refusing to give the commitments that we require to protect your future and ensure the company does not become another gig economy employer.

REVISIONS

The current revisions programme is a national embarrassment for the company. USO failures are rife, and the service is being sacrificed to kick the financial powers that savings are being made.

But you need to know that Royal Mail plans to commence yet another round of revisions imminently with the continued threat of imposition and even more unachievable targets.

We must once and for all change this approach as part of a new agreement or what you see and feel in the workplace right now is what you will see and feel for years to come. Any agreement must also give you the right locally to revise some of the disastrous plans managers have already implemented.

CONDUCT CASES

Hundreds of CWU members and representatives have been conducted on trumped up and coordinated charges in recent months. Some have already been disgracefully dismissed.

Ask yourself one question – is this the way that a company wanting to reach an agreement would behave?

We came into this dispute together. We will come out of it together. Any agreement must safeguard members and representatives who have been unfairly and disgracefully treated during this period. We don't just need an independent review of all conduct issues to protect our members – we need it to expose the shameful actions of managers at the most senior level.

SUMMARY

The Royal Mail Group Board meet tomorrow, and they must choose between ending the disastrous approach that has alienated its own workforce which means reaching an agreement that is in the interests of our members, customers and company - or they continue along the path that will destroy the company.

Our members are under more pressure than ever, and we know many of you will be worried about the current situation. We hope that this update assures you we are striking the right balance between working to end the dispute but also refusing to let you pay the price for gross mismanagement.

Later this week we bring you video updates and a live briefing. We will also launch plans to embark on a series of gate meetings in every office in the UK.

Your resolve has moved the employer. Your continued backing will deliver the agreement you deserve.

In solidarity,



Dave Ward
General Secretary



Andy Furey
Acting Deputy General Secretary (Postal)