



WE ARE STILL HERE

A NATIONAL AGREEMENT DELIVERED BY YOUR SUPPORT



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The Communications Union



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SETTING THE SCENE

THE DISPUTE WITH ROYAL MAIL GROUP HAS BEEN THE MOST BITTER, INTENSE, AND HIGH RISK IN OUR HISTORY. THE COMPANY SET OUT ON A WELL-FUNDED, COORDINATED, AND DELIBERATE CAMPAIGN TO RIP UP YOUR TERMS AND CONDITIONS, TURN ROYAL MAIL INTO ANOTHER GIG ECONOMY EMPLOYER AND DESTROY THE UNION.

As we stand here today your support has overturned that plan.

No agreement or negotiation ever results in one party getting everything they want and you know change is necessary and was always going to happen - but we can confidently say we have shifted Royal Mail on every single one of their original positions.

This has not been a normal industrial dispute - but we are not a normal union. No industry, this far into a period of unfettered competition and privatisation still has the terms and conditions you have. That is because we are organised, confident and we refuse to see our jobs and the service destroyed.

In truth, this was the dispute that has been coming since the privatisation of Royal Mail. A dispute that has been played out against the backdrop of a self-inflicted financial crisis, takeover rumours, and the assembly of a vicious anti-union management team. In short, the odds were stacked against you.

To deliver this agreement we know an immense toll has been taken on you. 3 national ballots, 18 days of strike action, workplace intimidation, social media goading and the suspension and dismissal of colleagues.

Take a moment to think back over the last year and remember their original plans. Compulsory redundancies, 3 hours later start, total flexibility, imposed pay and the removal of all allowances, abusing performance data, refusing an independent review of conduct, ripping up all of our agreements and removing the union from the workplace.

Thanks to your support the final agreement is completely unrecognisable from the one tabled at the start of this dispute and even their so called 'best and final offer' in December 2022. Strike action and your solidarity delivered this.

Royal Mail Group's plan was always to call on this dispute and, in the process, they spent millions and millions not to settle the dispute but to crush their own workforce – this was a huge error of judgement. They wanted to create a totally compliant workforce. What they have ended up with is 120,000 workers who stand unequivocally with their union. We have created the next generation of CWU representatives, and they have ensured that our culture of togetherness will continue into the next generation of postal workers.

Honesty has got us through this period. That is why it is right we are up front with you and say we know some members may not be pleased with individual aspects of this agreement – this is always the case. This dispute was never about avoiding change – it was about change by agreement not imposition. But set against the magnitude of the dispute, the unprecedented set of circumstances surrounding it and the self-inflicted but very real financial crisis the company now finds itself in - this is an agreement that will stand the test of time. This ends Royal Mail Group's appalling mantra of 'It's our business to run' and means we can move on to creating a business that truly aligns the interests of workers, customers, and the company.

Finally, thank you - to every member and representative who refused to bow down. They came for the postal workers and your union, but we are still here.

Yma O'Hyd.



Dave Ward
General Secretary



Andy Furey
Acting Deputy General
Secretary (Postal)

We Are Still Here – A National Agreement Delivered by Your Action

WHAT YOUR ACTION HAS ACHIEVED...

JOB SECURITY

Royal Mail Group set out to turn the company into a gig economy employer, rife with owner drivers. They also announced 10,000 job losses and refused to give a no compulsory redundancy commitment beyond March 2023.

Your support has completely reversed this position. We have a renewed no compulsory redundancy agreement until at least April 2025 and a range of other commitments from the employer that make this one of the most comprehensive job security agreements the union has ever achieved.

As part of this we have protected the existing resourcing and now have the best opportunity ever to remove the reliance on agency workers, self-employed and casual labour.

There will also be no outsourcing and no franchising.

Nothing is more important than job security – this is a huge victory.

PAY

We know you deserve more on pay than this settlement provides. We also know you will see this agreement in the round. 10% on base pay over 3 years plus a £500 lump sum is well in excess of the employer's original position.

Another huge issue for CWU members will be backpay. There is no point in glossing over this, however we have opened a discussion around a potential additional lump sum at some point in the near future. This is not guaranteed and not linked to this agreement. We will explain more on this as the situation develops.

ALLOWANCES

Royal Mail Group wanted to remove every single allowance.

Every single allowance remains.

A complete reversal of their position.

PROFIT SHARE

The decision by the Board last year to hand £600 million to shareholders when fully aware of an impending financial crisis was reckless and irresponsible.

The union has delivered an agreement that will see the first 20% of future profit delivered in a lump sum payment to the people that created it – you, as frontline workers.

Never again can we let them repeat the mistakes of the past.

NETWORK CHANGES

Royal Mail wanted up to 3 hours later starts – right across the whole network. It was in their so called 'best and final' offer.

You have defeated that.

Their proposals were based on blanket start times of 8am and later with a 5pm last letter time and in some geographies even later than this up to 7pm.

This was to be introduced this Autumn in 2023 with further phases over two years.

What we have achieved through your fantastic support;

- Network Changes pushed back until March 2024 – No changes in localities during 2023 unless these are due to specific circumstances and subject to the Industrial Relations Framework.
- Later starts restricted to up to a maximum of 60 minutes – thanks to a CWU developed concept (Royal Mail reserve the right to seek 90 minute later starts in minimal cases if the developed concept cannot be fully deployed)
- A Last letter time of up to 16.30 with the majority deliveries across the UK planned to complete by 15.30 with the vast majority by 16.00.

We have improved their position by two hours – that is because of your action.

We have also delivered:

- A phased approach to flight removals.
- A site closure agreement with enhanced terms for affected Air Hubs.
- A phased program for change in the upstream areas to accommodate the network changes.
- A commitment to no Mail Centre Rationalisation proposals for the life of the agreement.

FLEXIBILITY

Royal Mail Group's original proposal was a suite of flexibility proposals that would have meant you were at their beck and call every minute, every day, and every week throughout the year. Annualised hours and their proposal on flexitime would have seen our members finishing when the work dictated by management was completed and you owing them time whenever they wanted you to work.

This situation has now been reversed. Annualised hours have gone, flexitime has gone, and it has been replaced by agreed seasonal variations - proposals put forward by the union and a legitimate way to align hours to workload – with you knowing your work schedule months in advance.

There will be a pilot of this approach to learn and hone the approach in a way that works for our members as well as the company.

We Are Still Here – A National Agreement Delivered by Your Action

SICK ABSENCE AND ILL HEALTH

The position on sick pay, standards and ill health retired whilst less favourable than the current arrangements are materially better than the employer's original proposals – which they pursued right until the closing moments of the negotiations.

Crucially, we have established a protocol where the new arrangements will be monitored and reviewed every six months with the opportunity to reverse the sick pay arrangements if absence levels fall below 5.5%.

A joint working group will also review attendance standards.

The ill health retirement arrangements now guarantee 16 weeks compensation for all. This is also underpinned by up to 12 weeks' pay in lieu of notice and payment for untaken annual leave. This means members who take ill health severance are guaranteed at least 30 weeks compensation on top of the 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay which has been fully protected. Again, this is an improvement on Royal Mail Group's original position.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF CONDUCT

The agreement contains a full and completely independent review of all conduct cases arising from the dispute.

What you, your families and your colleagues have been put through is unforgivable and we will seek justice for you.

We came into this dispute together – we will come out of it together.

THE USE OF PERFORMANCE DATA

It was clear from the Business Select Committee that management were intent on using technology to track you every single moment of the day. We have now secured guarantees that Royal Mail Group will only use individual data in a supportive manner for coaching purposes.

We have also agreed to work with the employer to design and implement a suitable and consistent performance procedure, taking best practice from ACAS.

This is a complete reversal of their original proposal.

REVISIONS AND THE CULTURE OF IMPOSITION

We know that Royal Mail Group's culture of imposition and their treatment of you on a daily basis was designed to demoralise and intimidate our members and take the union completely out of the workplace. It has led to massive quality of service and USO failures that means Royal Mail will now be held to account by OFCOM.

We have made it a priority in the agreement to deal with these issues as the first step towards rebuilding trust and ending Royal Mail Groups unacceptable 'our business to run' mantra.

The company have now agreed – as a matter of urgency – to address quality of service and USO issues in every office where this is a major problem. We have completely re-established the role and influence of our local representatives with this agreement.

TRUST

For the last year Royal Mail Group have acted with a complete lack of integrity. Many of you will be asking the question – can they be trusted? The simple answer is workers trusted bosses completely then there would be no need for trade unions to exist. But what we must do is give them the opportunity to change their approach and the agreement recognises the only way the company can be successful in the future is by taking the workforce with them.

The ball is firmly in the employer's court on this issue. Onus to rebuild trust with the workforce is on them. The early days of this agreement will be crucial. But, at some point we have to reach agreement and attempt to move on – that point is now.

We have moved Royal Mail Group from a strategy of decline to one where they have agreed to look at expanding the role of a postal worker, growing the business, and jointly approaching the government on putting postal workers at the centre of the economic recovery and the levelling up agenda.

PARCELFORCE

We have moved the company from a position of a gig economy resourcing model for PFW based on Owner Drivers. All Headcount reduction as a result of revisions and short term activity will be achieved through the removal of agency, couriers and Owner Drivers.

We have delivered:

- A commitment on the future of PFW as part of an Optimised Single Large Parcel Network.
- A review of current operations based on a CWU agenda in preparation for the move to a Single Large Parcel Network.
- A review of the best approach to create a single Large Parcel Network incorporating the 346 Parcel Hubs and PFW Depots

On the Single Optimised Parcel Network we have achieved a review including the following.

- A commitment to create a Single Large Parcel Network
- Maximise synergies between RM and PFW
- Review the potential for reintegration of PFW into Royal Mail.
- A commitment to develop alternative hybrid reward mechanisms for performance beyond standard based on a price per item.
- Based on the outcome of the review a commitment to the aspiration of a fully employed model for the single large parcel network

FLEET AND ENGINEERING

Royal Mail Group's original position was not to include our Fleet and Engineering as part of this agreement. We have changed this position and now the agreement explains that all Engineering issues will be dealt with jointly and we have reached an extensive separate appendix covering Fleet members.

NEW ENTRANTS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

You will be aware that Royal Mail Group introduced a new entrants' terms and conditions contract on 1st December 2022. The company has now agreed that we will consider alternative approaches to this contract through a joint working group over the next 6 months.