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To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues

NEW CWU WORKPLACE BULLETIN – FOR WIDEST CIRCULATION POSSIBLE

Please find attached and in the links below, issue one of the new CWU workplace bulletin – Your Voice in the Workplace.

These will be produced monthly for members in both the Telecoms and Financial Services and Postal constituencies. We are working closely with the industrial departments on this.

We believe that a written communication into every workplace on a regular basis will be very impactful for the union and useful for representatives and members.

The bulletins will be shared with Branches who will have the responsibility for their printing and onward distribution. We understand that some telecoms branches will want to Email the bulletin to members where they do not have a workplace.

We also understand that some Branches do not have printing facilities. If that is the case, then please contact Marcia Murray mmurray@cwu.org and we can discuss the options available for printing them and dispatching to Branches.

After each edition is shared, we will leave a gap in time before sharing the publications online and letting members know to look out for them in their workplaces.

We are also planning for some future editions to have space allocated for Branches to add in your own local content.

The primary and key focus of the unions communications strategy in recent years has been to reach the workplace. The new bulletin enhances that plan.

Thank you in advance for your support in distributing this new communication. Thanks also go to our Editor, Karl Stewart for his hard work getting this off the ground.

Postal Bulletin <https://www.cwu.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/08020-your-voice-RMG-01.pdf>

Telecoms and Financial Services Bulletin <https://www.cwu.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/08019-your-voice-BTG-01.pdf>

Yours sincerely,

Dave Ward
General Secretary

Chris Webb
Head of Communications



YOUR VOICE IN THE WORKPLACE



FOR CWU MEMBERS WORKING IN RM GROUP AND THE WIDER P&L SECTOR...

ISSUE ONE, FEBRUARY 2024

YOUR GENERAL SECRETARY DAVE WARD INTRODUCES THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS EXCITING NEW MEMBERS' PUBLICATION AND SETS OUT THE MANY CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR 2024...

- A sharper, tighter and more frequent industrial publication
- Delivered to you at your branch or workplace
- A communicator, an engager, an organiser

Welcome to the first Edition of *Your Voice in the Workplace*. This represents a key part of our union's communications strategy. These workplace briefings will sit alongside a new weekly YouTube show, podcasts and more.

There are two, parallel, *Your Voice in the Workplace* publications; this one for our members working in RM Group and across the wider postal and logistics sector; and the other one for members working in BT Group and across the wider telecoms and financial services sector.

We'll be featuring key workplace issues, opinions and views from offices and out in the field, your concerns, your news and what's happening across the union. We're planning a monthly production schedule initially – with the aim of more frequent publication going forward – and we'll be sending the completed PDF product to branches and asking them to print locally and batch out to reps for direct distribution to you at work.

Most importantly, we want to hear from you - please send us your comments, ideas, suggestions etc using the 'Your union, your voice' section on the back page.

I'm writing this as I prepare to head to Manchester for our CWU Restructuring National Briefing as we set out a programme of change which will ensure the CWU remains the strongest workplace union in the UK.

It's been a very tough past few years for all of you – national disputes in RM Group, BT Group and the Post Office coming just after the end of our nation's worst public health crisis in living memory. This all came off the back of a life changing global pandemic.



CWU members kept the UK connected and posted during the pandemic and then stood up and fought for a fair deal at work.

Now we need to get ourselves in the best possible shape for the struggles ahead.

In RM Group we've got to prevent Ofcom and the failed mantra from the previous senior management team from destroying the postal service. We will put forward our own agenda of meeting the needs of the public, of businesses and our members. You have a massive role to play in shaping that.

In BT Group, we're getting ahead of the game in recognising the profound changes happening and working as hard as we can to protect our members' jobs and job security.

And we're focussing on the other vitally important sectors of our union too, building our presence across the financial services and tech sectors, defending the Post Office Crown network

and building a stronger base among postmasters – so cruelly treated by those at the top.

So 2024 will be a year of change, change for the CWU and also, hopefully, a change of government too.

Dave Ward.

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- WE'RE RECONNECTING & REBUILDING**

FOCUS ON DELIVERY



DAILY STRUGGLES ON THE DELIVERY FRONTLINE

After a tough Christmas pressure period, Your Voice made New Year visits to units in different areas to hear at first-hand how members are coping...

At Sevenoaks Delivery Office (TN 13/14) in Kent, area delivery rep Andy Comben and south east divisional rep Steve Wisely tell us last year's imposed revision was "the toughest we've ever seen" taking staff-in-post numbers down to 60 from 75, which they calculate as nearly a 25 per cent cut in terms of hours taken out.



Frankie Orzelleca

"We've come up with a proposed new revision which would collapse-back the five dedicated parcel routes (DPRs) into general workload and re-instate rounds to this office. The manager's told me he's in broad agreement in principle, but higher-level management won't allow it."

Some of the members around the office tell us how the revision increased their workloads. John Creek says: "My round is rural - about 28 miles start to finish. It was challenging already, but since the revision, it added up to two hours on my workload," while Julie Taylor, also on a rural round, says she now has to travel extra distance - estimating "about an hour extra."

Recruitment is also in crisis here, with, we are told, all seven of 2023's new starters having now left the business. The longest-lasting of them stayed "four or five months" and "four of them left within a week." Their worsened terms and conditions - Sunday duties, insufficient notice of rest days, longer standard hours each week and different arrangements for breaks - are clearly the major reason.

With current staffing at 53 - below even the level imposed by the revision - efforts are being made locally to mitigate future new recruits' conditions - a weekend duties rotation and improved rest day notice - but it's felt that, without fundamental reform, retention problems will continue.

Postal worker Alex Bryant says: "They've got to do better retaining new starters. I got my sister a job here last year, but she struggled and was sent out on a round too soon and she quit after just five weeks." And on his own situation, he adds: "I do more than full-time hours, but I'm still on a part-time contract. They should offer proper full time contracts to part-time people."

His colleague Frankie Orzelleca explains how the new policy is affecting her. "I live in Bletchingly, about a half-hour to 45-minute drive both ways, so I'd like to transfer to a nearer office. But I've been told if I transfer, I'll be put on one of those new contracts."

Over in Northern Ireland, we meet Damien Simpson and Gary Hannaway, CWU unit rep and deputy at Derry's delivery office (BT47/48) - another unit struggling to complete due to the legacy of an imposed revision, which, Damien says "took out 400 hours."

Damien tells how he and Gary spent considerable time before Christmas on a review of the revision and calculated that, if four removed duties were returned, the office could have a chance of meeting its USO obligations and Quality of Service criteria.

But in contrast to Sevenoaks, the reps here say local management are blocking a resolution that higher-level management approved. Gary explains: "At Northern Ireland level, the four returned duties were agreed, but here at local level, management designed and built the duties without involving either of us and they only staffed them part-time, not full-time, so, operationally, we're pretty much back to square one."

As well as this, the reps also say local management are not holding weekly resourcing meetings with them. Damien says: "I think there's only been one weekly resourcing meeting in the past seven months - the view from management here is 'it's our place to run'."

They say that the population of the Derry area is growing, which will further increase volumes and necessitate a move to a new premises and more recruitment. But the reps report that new



Damien Simpson and Gary Hannaway

starters are leaving, disappointed with their terms and conditions in comparison to their established colleagues and attracted by alternative job opportunities.

"We've had 12 people leave here in the past couple of years and only two new people started," says Gary.

Busy prepping, Geraldine Harris talks about her round, saying: "I like the customer contact, they're friendly and it's good to see them. But the company needs to improve on family-friendly policies," while her colleague Gavin McDaid says: "My customers are all friendly – a lot of them are farmers. But since the revision I've got about an hour and a half added and this was the toughest Christmas period of all my 29 years here – they need to get more people in."

Aaron Hegarty says: "We need more manageable workloads. Get more people in and make sure they're properly trained," while Rhuari McKinney says: "If I could change one thing for the better it would be a better way of helping people – better-organised workloads and duties."

At Basingstoke Delivery Office (RG21-26 & 28) in Hampshire, unit rep Ady Stevens says: "They took 35 duties out in last year's revision and sharply reduced our staff-in-post numbers, and as a consequence, our USO compliance is now one of the worst in the UK – although our QoS on tracked is quite good.



Phil Gordon and Ady Stevens

"What we need is a back-to-basics revision and that's what we're pushing for. We haven't been having the weekly resourcing meetings. I want us to be having them, but they've not been happening."

New recruits here are being put onto LAT (late afternoon tracked/traffic) duties and so Ady has to return to the office after his own shift to speak with them.

"I introduce myself to them, explain about the CWU and what my role is as the rep, give them a form and then I say I'll give them a couple of weeks to settle in and then come back and speak again. If they haven't joined a week or so after that, then I'll see them again – but the trouble is sometimes they've left the job before I get the chance to have that second conversation.

"Previously, workplace coaches used to be able to train up new starters properly, but now they're just putting them onto LATs with no training – which is also a key part of the reason why some of them don't stay.

"Unfortunately, it's become a bit like a two-tier workforce, but we're trying to bring it back all together."

Deputy unit rep Phil Gordon says: "It's tough for new people with the workloads and getting used to a new job. The unrealistic workloads since the revision are tough for all of us, those of us who've worked here for a

long time and have lots of years' experience are finding it a hard challenge. So for new people it's even more daunting."



Terri Harper and Leanne Magee

Belfast's Tomb Street building hosts three units – West (BT10-12 & 17), South Central (BT1-3 & 7-9) and North (BT13-15 & 18) and Fra Martin, CWU divisional rep for Northern Ireland, meets us and takes us around.

"Our members in all three units – around 400 in total – had revisions imposed last year, plus they're dealing with the massive amount of parcels, so the problems are over-burdened workloads, resourcing issues and the retention of new recruits," he says.

The imposed revisions caused real difficulties in all three units, and, with five full-time duties having been taken out from South Central, this unit's rep Terri Harper talks about the very tough challenges this presents.

Members are struggling with higher workloads and, as well as the effect on them, Terri also regrets any deterioration to customer service, saying: "We have a good rapport with our customers, which is really important – sometimes with the elderly or isolated people, we're the only person they see or talk to."

Her colleague Leanne Magee says: "I love the job, the people here and the customers. This was the toughest Christmas period and we put the work in, but more is always expected."

Parcel and packet growth – already substantial across the UK – is boosted further in this region by traffic from Chinese-owned online retailer Temu and several members we speak to around the three units comment on that.

Gary Ramsey says: "Since last summer, packets have gone through the roof. And it hasn't eased off after Christmas as much as it has before" and David McGinn says: "They need to put hours back in, as we're currently not able to complete, with such high volumes, especially coming from China. Approximately 350 tracks per day on a two-person van-share.

"But new people are being thrown in at the deep end without sufficient training and they don't like the different terms and conditions."

And Colm McAuley adds: "On entry, it's not known to them, but they find out from colleagues."

"WHAT COMES ACROSS LOUD AND CLEAR FROM THESE OFFICES IS OUR REPS AND MEMBERS NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE REVISIONS PROCESS – OTHERWISE THEY FAIL. THE OTHER MASSIVE ISSUE IS THE FAILURE TO RETAIN NEW STARTERS – DUE CLEARLY TO THE WORSE TERMS AND CONDITIONS IMPOSED BY THE COMPANY. AT NATIONAL LEVEL, WE'RE WORKING AS HARD AS WE CAN TO MAKE PROGRESS IN BOTH THESE TOP-PRIORITY AREAS."

Mark Baulch CWU Outdoor Secretary

OUR VIEW



"IT'S A RARE OCCASION WHEN I CAN COMPLETE ON THE DAY."

Edward Sennungi, Sevenoaks



"NEW PEOPLE ARE BEING THROWN IN AT THE DEEP END WITHOUT SUFFICIENT TRAINING."

David McGinn, Belfast



"WE NEED MORE MANAGEABLE WORKLOADS."

Aaron Hegarty, Derry

AGREED REVISIONS THE BEST WAY FORWARD

Unlike at the other offices featured in this Edition, the most recent revision carried out at Shepherds Bush was negotiated and agreed, rather than imposed...

Shepherds Bush, or W12, Delivery Office is contained within the large West London Delivery Centre (WLDC) just off the North Circular, along with five other units which deliver to the W2, W8, W9, W10 and W11 post codes.



On arrival, we're met there by CWU rep for W12 Steve White (pictured above), who tells us: "We were lucky that our revision was in process before the 2022 strikes. We were getting ready to introduce it as the dispute was looming and fortunately, we were able to bring it in – before the company began unilaterally imposing revisions."

He recalls "there'd been months of work putting it together, obviously with help and support from our area rep Gerry Owens and our divisional rep Mark Dolan, and I think, working together, we managed to put right many of the previous problems in the unit."

Dedicated parcel routes – or 'DPRs' – were collapsed back into general workloads, Steve explains, and longer shifts were agreed to in exchange for a nine-day fortnight attendance pattern, which gave everyone a four-day weekend once per four-week period.

"We brought start times forward to 6.30am so the latest finish – on Wednesday and Thursday – was 3pm," he adds.

"And, we managed to even out the deliveries – 29 walks in the unit – to a certain extent, which I was pleased about. Things are a lot fairer than they were here, although of course they're not perfect and there are still issues from time to time."

Speaking with some of his members as they begin their early-morning prep, it's clear that Steve's – and the union's – efforts are appreciated. "He's wicked!" comments his next-frame-neighbour Khush Senghani (pictured below), who adds: "We have ups and downs here, but overall it's perfect to have a long weekend every month and Steve does a good job for us, for sure."



Michael Dixon says the revision "worked out good" and adds: "We had options, which is important," while Mohammed Sama tells us he "usually can complete. It's good – I hope it doesn't change for the worse" and Tony McGinn describes his workload as "doable and achievable," adding: "I like having a good long rest on my long weekends."

Saleh Rebba says: "Since Steve became rep it's improved because he knows the job well and the area very well and because he had involvement in the revision" and the unit's senior person Arthur Barroga says: "From my perspective it's OK, although it can be a struggle for some newer colleagues."

While we're speaking with members at their frames, Steve White introduces the WLDC person in charge (PiC) William Boyle to us and he also expresses approval of what's been happening in the W12 unit, saying: "They've certainly turned things round – it's a positive story for sure."

Commenting further, CWU Outdoor Secretary Mark Baulch says: "It's significant that the only successful revision featured here was where the rep was fully involved."



DGS MARTIN WALSH

RECONNECTING AND REBUILDING

Hello everyone and once again it's such a privilege to have been elected by you as your new DGSP.

What we've tried to do right from the start is to reconnect with you in your workplaces and both myself and our Postal Executive members – supported by our general secretary Dave Ward, have been out and about as much as possible, visiting branches and reps and members, listening to concerns and making every effort to try to move things forward with the business.

At unit level, the major issues of imposed revisions causing unachievable workloads, USO and QoS failures and high levels of stress must be fully resolved and we've made this a number one issue, along with pushing as hard as we can to improve terms and conditions for new starters.

And while this is happening at grassroots level, we've also got the massive issue of the latest Ofcom report, which was extremely disappointing in its recommendations. This is a priority area and one in which we will be making the strongest possible case in defence of our industry and in defence of postal workers, our customers and the whole country who depend on this service.

M R J W

SCAN ME!
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YOUR UNION, YOUR VOICE

Let us know what you think of your new publication, what do you think of the subjects covered? Comments to: Publications editor, kstewart@cwu.org