

No. 081/24

Date 27th February 2024

Dear Colleagues,

Royal Mail & CWU Joint Communication Regarding Delivery 2.0 Trials

Branches, Representatives and members will recall the commitments contained in the Business Recovery, Transformation and Growth Agreement, in relation to Section 7 – National Agreed Trial Indoor Delivery Methods Changes, the core details of which were outlined in LTB 184/23 (Letter To Branches).

In line with the terms of this Section of the BRT&G Agreement, a joint trial was held from July to October of last year covering the four different indoor method options, which took place in 10 Delivery Units. Alongside this, a further limited trial covering 2 Delivery Units was also agreed and held in October on the former Back-to-Back Prep and Delivery method, which Royal Mail had previously trialled in 2018.

Based on the trial feedback, including Industrial Engineer studies to test each of the methods 'actual time taken' against the current 'planned time' it was clear that none of the methods being tested produced the Royal Mail stated efficiency improvements, nor the outlined time reduction of 20-25 minutes per delivery, per day, which was referenced as one of the success criteria within the BRT&G Agreement.

Given this and during subsequent discussions, Royal Mail has informed the union that at this juncture these trials have ended and none of the indoor methods trialled will be moved forward or deployed.

However, alongside these agreed Indoor Delivery Methods trials, the CWU had equally been pressing Royal Mail in terms of its continuing plans to seek to move forward with its indoor design concept previously entitled 'Ringwood or BluePrint'.

Branches may recall that the initial 'Ringwood or BluePrint' design had first surfaced during the back end of last year's bitter dispute, with Royal Mail seeking to impose the indoor design changes, which remove individual RM2000 Frames and replace them with a continuous Frame layout. Since then, Royal Mail has re-titled and revised the concept along with the programme, now called 'Delivery 2.0', as well as further advanced the design to include geographically aligned delivery loops along the continuous Frame layout, using the GeoRoute revision system to plan the outdoor delivery arrangements.

Despite very difficult initial talks, it would be fair to say that recent discussions have been far more positive, but it was still very clear that there was some resistance on the part of Royal Mail to have in place a joint national framework and oversight covering any further activity on Delivery 2.0.

Indeed, whilst we continue to hold talks in good faith, Royal Mail has sought in the background to move forward with its plans to roll out the Delivery 2.0 design concept in some 21 Delivery units, including a full outdoor GeoRoute revision and the testing of parcel sortation solutions.

This backdrop has proven both frustrating and difficult, given our attempts to secure the relevant national framework, while at the same time knowing that Royal Mail has been pressing forward with local level planning in several Delivery units on the Delivery 2.0 design. Nonetheless, we felt this was still a necessary approach and the correct one to adopt. During this period, we have equally sought to informally influence some of the earmarked Delivery units based on feedback from our Divisional Reps.

However, following further discussions held late last week, we have now agreed on the following Joint Communication with Royal Mail to cover the Delivery 2.0 trials, which has now been endorsed by the Postal Executive. Whilst the attached Joint Communication and its remit and aims are self-explanatory, with the list of the 21 Delivery units involved, it is relevant to further highlight that the trials aim to define mutually beneficial outputs, which will be jointly reviewed as part of further national discussions before any wider move or further deployment in terms of the Delivery 2.0 design.

In setting out the above, Branches and Representatives will note that Royal Mail has moved forward with some of the initial planning linked to the Delivery 2.0 trial activities and that once again we find ourselves undertaking an element of catch-up in some of the listed units. Whilst this is not satisfactory, a judgment call was made by the union in this regard to ensure that we remain engaged with Royal Mail in this wider trial activity, noting that the initial 'Ringwood or BluePrint' design and concept, was deployed in some 12 Delivery units without any form of CWU engagement.

It has also been confirmed with Royal Mail that a National Joint on-line launch meeting will take place on Thursday 29th February, which will involve the appropriate CWU Representatives and Royal Mail Managers within the trial units, the link details and confirmation of the time of this will be issued in due course.

Finally, at the time of issuing this LTB, we continue to hold talks in respect of seeking to secure a joint position in terms of GeoRoute revision planning, both linked to the Delivery 2.0 trials and separate revision activity that Royal Mail has outlined. This remains a matter of ongoing frustration and we will update Branches and Representatives as soon as possible.

Any queries to the content of the above please contact the Outdoor Department reference 540, email address: JRDRIGUES@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Baulch
CWU Assistant Secretary



RM & CWU National Joint Communication regarding Delivery 2.0 Trials

Introduction

Following initial trials on Indoor Delivery Methods Changes as outlined in RMG/CWU Business Recovery, Transformation and Growth Agreement - Section 7, both parties are now committed to carry out further trials of the indoor design entitled Delivery 2.0.

The trials will be carried out in line with all National Agreements and take place in the units detailed in Annex A to explore an indoor floor plan layout and RM2000 geographical layout to seek to improve space and layout to continue to support parcel volume growth, whilst at the same time a better more efficient way to sort letters.

The trials will also review how the RM2000 geographical layout can support more efficient ways to allocate workload and a more balanced workload at route level against traffic fluctuation over the year, taking fully into account wider aspects such as Model Week profile and Seasonal Variation.

In addition, the trials will assess if new Indoor Methods can provide opportunities for Short Term Leave. During the trials, the emphasis will be to ensure continuity of Customer service.

In terms of concerns raised regarding Walk ownership, whilst the trial methods will evaluate and test new ways of Indoor working, including Loop preparation, they will also ensure that individuals Delivery expertise and walk familiarity is maintained and maximised to ensure that continuity of Customer service is not adversely affected.

The trial will also look at the 'portering' of keys and PDAs, in six of the Delivery 2.0 trial units which will be communicated separately. In addition, other nominated units will also be asked to trial Parcel sortation solutions, designed to improve the handling and transporting of parcels both within the units and outdoor on delivery. The Parcel Sortation solutions are in the early scoping phases and further information will be issued separately.

Delivery 2.0 units will undertake an outdoor GeoRoute revision to support the RM2000 geographical layout and a more balanced workload.

Both parties have agreed that any units operating Dedicated Parcel Routes will be subject to further guidance in due course.

Given the nature of the trial, both parties accept the need to retain an open mind and adopt a refreshed approach to the trial activities and aims.

Any trialled activity will be managed fully in line with the Royal Mail safety and quality standards. This will be done through risk assessment, SSOW and ergonomic assessment and the input of the CWU HSE (Health, Safety and Environment) Department.

The trial will focus on the following areas:

Indoor Methods – Re-design indoor prep for letters and Parcels assessing the total time taken to sort and prep, whilst reviewing space improvements in the units.

Productivity – To Review the overall impact of the trialled design on the unit's current reported productivity and to ensure that feedback is measured on overall performance against the delivery operation.

Way of Working – To support better ways of working and to offer employees a better understanding of workload changes to their delivery route over the year against traffic fluctuation.

Process / Involvement

The trial will be overseen by National Leads for Royal Mail & CWU and each trial unit to have in place a Local Joint Working Group as detailed below:

CWU

Local Delivery Representative
Area Delivery Representative
Area Health & Safety Representative
Nominated Divisional Representative

Royal Mail

COM
OPL
RM Safety Manager
Regional Operations Director

In addition, the units will have support from:

- Industrial Engineer(s), including CWU trained IEs
- Ergonomist
- Royal Mail Safety professionals & CWU Health and Safety national nominated representative

As part of the trial, joint IE studies will take place to allow the measurement of the new design compared with the traditional methods measured in the Industrial Engineering Planning Values Database, both for the indoor and outdoor operation. This will measure what benefits and efficiency can be achieved through the revised changes. This will also include indoor and outdoor IE studies of a sample of walks in advance of the trial to support this feedback.

Necessary training will be provided for all Delivery OPGs engaged and Workplace Coaches involved in the trials.

Review

The trial will be jointly reviewed on an ongoing basis by the National JWG (including feedback from the Local JWGs), who will meet on a regular basis to discuss and review the progress of the trials.

The trials aim to define mutually beneficial outputs, which will be jointly reviewed as part of further national talks before any wider move or further deployment in terms of the Delivery 2.0 design.

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Shaun England
Operations Programme Director
Royal Mail



Mark Baulch
Assistant Secretary Outdoor Postal Department
CWU

Date: 21st February 2024

Annex A

Delivery 2.0 Trial Units

Abercarn DO
Belfast East DO
Chorlton DO
Cleckheaton DO
Earl Shilton DO
Finchley Church End DO
Hedge End DO
Keighley DO
Ludlow DO
Morden DO
Newmarket DO
Pershore DO
Pinner DO
Plaistow DO
Plympton DO
Preston South DO
Ringwood DO
Royston DO
Sheerness DO
Stourport on Severn DO
Woodbridge DO