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## TO: ALL POSTAL BRANCHES

Dear Colleagues

### Your Voice in the Workplace – July 2024

Please find attached the July Workplace Bulletin.

We will be sending you out a limited print run (approx. 10 per cent of branch membership) of this Edition, which should reach you by the end of this week for distribution to your reps to take into workplaces.

You also have the link to print immediate copies and/or to print off more copies.

It is crucial that branches are distributing the monthly bulletin in every workplace. The purpose is to ensure members are receiving written content from the union directly into their workplaces, so your role in that process is integral.

Thank you for your support and please contact us with your feedback on the Bulletin.

<https://www.cwu.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/08130-your-voice-RMG-issue-6-July-2up.pdf>

Yours sincerely,

**Martin Walsh**  
Deputy General Secretary (Postal)

**Chris Webb**  
Head of Communications



# YOUR VOICE IN THE WORKPLACE



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

ISSUE SIX, JULY 2024



## FRESH START FOR THE UK – FRESH START FOR OUR UNION

Your general secretary Dave Ward on how we make the New Deal for Workers a reality...

**A**s I said at the *Organising & Recruitment* event recently, it's a fantastic feeling to see the Tories kicked out of power and to welcome the new Labour Government under Keir Starmer.

There are reservations among some members, or even some scepticism, but I think our new Prime Minister Keir and his team have started immediately with some important key decisions.

Our new Labour Government's got a lot of tough problems to solve. Problems caused, let's never forget, by 14 years of rule by the Conservative Party. A party of the wealthy and powerful governing in the interests of the wealthy and powerful.

Of course, there will be challenges for Labour in power and it won't be easy, but we, the CWU, will be using all of our powers to apply pressure in the right way. We'll be using all of our influence and, most importantly, our ideas, to help make sure Labour's New Deal package is implemented in full.

People are talking about the need to hold the Labour Government to account – and of course we will – but we need to also hold ourselves to account. To ask ourselves: "What can we do? How can we help to make a difference?" I will be making sure this is a debate within the TUC as well. This moment isn't about relying on politicians to deliver change. Trade unions must step up and deliver it in every workplace too.

And this was the key theme of the successful *Organising & Recruitment* event that many of your branch reps came to last week, which launched what will be a major new national project to strengthen the CWU and expand our work.

*And every member can help:*

**RECRUITMENT:** Every time you meet a new colleague in your workplace or in your work team, ask them if they've joined yet. Speak to them about the benefits of CWU membership and, if you have a copy of this Bulletin with you, ask them to use the 'SCAN ME & JOIN' QR code on the page.

The bigger the membership, the bigger the CWU can win at work.

**ORGANISING:** Support your local rep. Offer to help. And, why not find out about becoming a CWU rep yourself? Contact your local branch, who will be able to advise and assist."



**INSIDE & BACK:**  
NETWORK CHANGE, COPING ON THE FRONTLINE



AND READ THE LATEST FROM YOUR DGSP MARTIN WALSH



**SCAN ME! JOIN THE UNION**



## FRONTLINE FOCUS

# NETWORK CHANGE – COPING ON THE FRONTLINE

*Your Voice was invited to mail centres and neighbouring delivery offices in Kent and Scotland to speak with members on the frontline about Network Window changes...*

### MEDWAY MC, GRAVESEND & ROCHESTER DOS

**W**e meet unit rep Tammy Payne and area delivery rep Matt Riddall at Gravesend, which has 133 staff in post, 73 walks and serves the DA11, 12 & 13 post code areas. Network change here is pushing Delivery out by an average of about half an hour, Tammy explains, with last-lorry arrival now considerably later.

"That used to get here at 6.30am, but now it's 8.15 and can be 8.45 and it may have 9am specials on it. For our Delivery members, getting out later means they can get caught up in the morning schools traffic."

In terms of finishing times, the unit rep says that this has been "not too bad Monday-to-Friday" – at around 20 minutes – but that the change is up to 50 minutes on Saturdays.

Matt Riddall's ADR patch covers 11 units across the DA and BR post code areas and he says that impacts on finish times have been more apparent at other offices within his remit, citing Sidcup and Swanley as examples.

The office's two night-shift workers are the ones whose hours have changed the most, their start time having shifted later, with a correspondingly later finish, due to the last-lorry change.

Speaking with members around the floor, several say that the impact on them personally has not been significant. Although one member remarked with hindsight that the seasonal variation should have been delayed until after polling day and another told us that she had completed the sorting that she had and was now awaiting that last lorry – a common theme in several conversations.

"The union leadership and all of us reps have all done our best to protect members from the changes and I think members do recognise this," says Tammy, "although other areas have been affected a lot more."

**Onto Rochester and we catch up with unit rep John Farrell and area delivery rep Phil Wright. John explains that the D.O. has 100 staff in post and serves post codes ME1, 2 & 3.**

Phil, who covers nine units across the ME postal area, says: "It's not as bad as we'd thought it might be. It's about a quarter extra on average across the area as a whole" and he makes the point that this unit in particular is the closest to the mail centre.

"Our members here are getting out on delivery about half an hour later than before," says John, adding that "the union's done a good job minimising this, but some of the business customers have been complaining."

Walking the floor with John, we speak with John Butcher, who tells us that his round is mostly business mail. "We've been told by our top management that customers want their mail later, but businesses tell me they want it earlier," he says.



John Farrell (right) speaking with a member at Rochester

Other members tell us they are waiting for incoming mails, while another postal worker says that the election period was not a good time to have introduced changes to the daily schedule. The overall impression, however, is broadly in line with the ADR's assessment that the impact has not been hugely significant and not as much as had been feared – with some positive comments on the efforts made by the union.



Tammy Payne (left) at the Gravesend office

At the mail centre, we're joined by Kent Invicta Branch secretary Dave Banbury and early shift rep Becca Hufton, who tell us that this site serves delivery offices across the DA, TN, ME and CT post codes and employs approximately 300 staff split into three shifts, earlies, lates and nights.

We meet sub-area processing rep Stacy Harris and we also speak with late shift rep Andy Smith, who talk about the night shift start and finish times having been moved half an hour and the half-hour change to the late shift.

Area distribution rep Phil Ditch explains the shift changes for his 93 drivers, that Saturdays now finish at 6pm and night shifts finish at 9am – which used to be 8am.

Phil also raised concerns over Special Delivery items arriving loaded incorrectly, causing delays to that service and this matter has been referred back to the national joint working group for resolution.



Medway Mail Centre shift reps Becca Hufton and Andy Smith



Andrew Bell and Robert Tombe at G1-5

One of his members, driver Tyler Vaughan-Woolley, tells us that the changes had, initially, caused difficulties. "I had to ask for an adjustment because of family commitments," he said, "but it all got sorted out. The union's very helpful for us here."

Among our processing members, we meet Tim Skillen, who praises Becca and the union – "she takes the time to listen to us carefully and always does her very best to help if she can" – but criticises the way the unit's work has recently, at times, been organised by management, commenting: "It's as if someone's invented a game show!"

### GLASGOW MC, SEDO & G1-5 DO

**We meet unit rep (and sub-area delivery rep) Robert Tombe, Glasgow Amal Branch secretary John Carson and Scotland divisional representative Tam Dewar at the G1-5 office.**

Tam says: "The ending of the flights has meant mails traffic that previously arrived at around 2am now arrives 5.30am to 6am or sometimes later. As to the effects on members' start and finish times, in most units in Scotland it's below 60 minutes, but we've got 36 between 60 and 90.

"We've got an enhanced post-implementation review (PIR) process up here, which has kicked in already."

The time change in this unit – which has 88 staff in post and 62 walks – is 48 minutes and, walking the floor with Robert, most members we speak to want the mail flights resumed – or at the very least a shift to rail rather than road.

Stephen Paton tells us: "Robert does a really good job here, but there was not enough pre-planning by management – we're getting our sequenced mail last," while Andrew Bell, gesturing towards the mail he is prepping, says: "This is all business mail and they're not happy about getting it later. Royal Mail are telling us customers want their mail later – but that's not what I'm hearing from them when I deliver."

On impacted members' caring responsibilities, Robert tells us the business had put in an 'exemption' process which people could apply for, "but of the ones who've applied across my ADR patch, only two or three have been accepted – and none accepted in this unit."

Glasgow Mail Centre has 80 workers on the early shift, 125 on lates, a night team of about 170 and 40 on weekends and the site serves the G, KA and PA post code areas.

Here, we meet sub-area processing rep Jim Leverage and late shift rep Dave Hainey and Jim says that the later last network arrival "created a big backlog at the end of the night shift and start of the early shift."

The original company plan was to bring early shift starts forward from 6am to 5am and push night shift starts to 12.06am from 10pm, he continues, saying that "members were up in arms at first, but we negotiated better duties, bringing some night shift members onto a four-day week, others onto earlier finishes, and keeping a significant number on a 10.30pm start."

And, for early shift workers without their own transport, the union negotiated an "understanding" that they can remain on their 6am start or become part of a car-share arrangement.

We speak with several members as Jim and Dave walk the floor and, while there is frustration at the changes, there is strong support for the CWU's efforts.

It is late-afternoon and Raj Singh is busy, telling us: "The dispatch has to be done by 9.20pm and we're rushing around here. The workload this last few weeks has been unachievable."

She is on a 4.30pm to 10pm shift and speaks about how the shift changes have reduced the help she gets each day. Jim promises to raise the issue and Raj tells YV: "The union's brilliant and they do their best, but it's too busy towards the end of the shift."

Lynn Black talks about how her specific duty times can now change regularly, adding that she worries that her caring responsibilities can be impacted. "My rep Davie doesn't have a magic wand, but he always listens and supports," she says.

Jim tells us that this mail centre has a delivery office attached (G21/22) and explains how these members have been offered a 5am start to help with the last-lorry offload.

We return early the next morning – this time with ADR Robert Tombe – to speak with some of these Delivery workers and this feedback is all quite positive. Members are glad to help with the operational bottleneck and pleased to be either earning some extra overtime or an earlier finish, or, for 15 of the 25 volunteers, being made up to full-time from part-time as a consequence.

"It's a good example of Delivery and Processing working together and making a difference," says Robert and night shift Processing rep Andrew Bell agrees, going on to tell us about the night shift workload and the pressures on members.

Out on the loading dock, night shift Distribution rep Archie McLure tells us that the shift used to be midnight to 7.36am and is now 2am until 9.36am, and, as we speak, there is a rush to offload a lorry carrying specials, which has arrived after 7am.



Archie McLure at Glasgow Mail Centre

With Robert, we then head to the city's South East Delivery Office (SEDO), which serves the G31-40, G69 and G72/73 post codes and has 223 total staff in post.

As at the G1-5 office, there is a lot of discontent with the changed operating times. Out of around a dozen members we speak with, a common complaint is that the later schedule makes multiple-occupancy-residence deliveries more difficult, although there is appreciation for the efforts of Robert and the CWU in general.



Dave Hainey, Jim Leverage and Raj Singh at Glasgow Mail Centre



Adam, Ellie and Tamsin

Tamsin Tweeney, Ellie Banks and Adam Airlie tell us how the changes have affected them, Tamsin saying: "It seems we don't have enough time," while Ellie talks about how difficult it is to complete the daily duties and Adam refers to the impacts on people's social life.

### PRAISE FOR REPS & MEMBERS FROM UNION OFFICERS

Assistant secretaries Mark Baulch and Davie Robertson respond to the points made, Mark saying: "It's good to hear that our frontline members are recognising the efforts local reps are making to mitigate this," and Davie adding: "It's positive that different functions are working together on this too" and adds: "Our reps at all levels are making every effort to assist and support members."

Davie continues: "Network change was always going to be difficult and it's been very tough for members having to cope with this," while Mark makes the point that "there's no doubt the changes have been massively challenging in many parts of the UK."



Mark Baulch



Davie Robertson

Both national officers highlight the importance of the post-implementation review (PIR) process and the fact that the National Joint Working Group continues to meet regularly to work through and address the Network issues identified following deployment.

Derek Potter, unit rep for G31-40 members, explains: "The tenements' service buttons go off at mid-day, so if we don't get there by then, we have to ring other numbers and ask residents for access."

This means access is sometimes not achieved and that, when it is, it takes longer at each building, adding to daily stresses.

Other issues expressed include impacts on family life, particularly childcare, as well as receiving complaints from businesses.

Stephen Munn tells us: "My customers are about 50/50 residential and businesses – and the businesses want their mail early," while Richard Greer says: "It's affecting members' childcare arrangements" and Lindsey Campbell says: "Luckily, I've got my dad helping with childcare, so the impact on me in that respect is not too bad."

Gordon Burt, a workplace coach here, says the network window changes come on top of other issues such as increased workload due to new builds in the area and difficulties in retaining new staff.

## WORKING TOGETHER FOR A STRONGER CWU

Your DGS Martin Walsh on the union's new national campaign...

**A**s I stated in last month's **Your Voice** column, the Network Window changes have been the biggest issue facing members over this recent period. A challenge which has come on top of so many other challenges that frontline postal workers have had to face during what have been probably the toughest four years we've ever seen.



What does come across from reading this article – and the first-hand feedback I've received from all across the UK – is the fantastic work done by local reps, and by reps at all levels of the CWU in fighting for and supporting members through this difficult period.

It's that day-to-day, bread-and-butter struggle that makes a difference, members and their reps standing together and gradually turning things round. Mitigating the impacts of change, putting forward other ideas, persuading the company to change tack. Winning what may seem like small victories at local level, but which, when added up, can start to turn the tide.

This is why it's so important that the union's new national campaign to increase our membership and strengthen our organisation is actively supported in all workplaces and by all branches, as our general secretary has explained on the front.

Many of your branch representatives were at last week's national campaign launch and will be reporting back to you on the particular initiative that we in the Postal Constituency of the union are undertaking.

And everyone in the union can help.

If you meet a new starter, speak to him or her about our determination to win a fair deal for new recruits.

If your nearest colleague is discontented about aspects of the BRT&G national agreement, have the conversation about how we can only make things better at work with a strong and unified CWU.

And if your workplace doesn't currently have a rep – why not consider volunteering for the role yourself? Speak to your branch and ask for details.

**Let's work together and let's build a stronger CWU.**

**SCAN ME! JOIN THE UNION**

