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6th September 2024

TO: ALL POSTAL BRANCHES

Dear Colleagues

Your Voice in the Workplace – September 2024

Please find attached the September 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/2024/09/08160-your-voice-RMG-issue-7-Sept-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 SEVEN, SEPTEMBER 2024



NEW DEAL FOR NEW ENTRANTS, NETWORK PIR & A SAD FAREWELL

Your DGS Martin Walsh on key industrial current issues and some sad news that was announced last month...

I begin with expressing my deep sadness at the passing of Andy Kerr, who died last month following a serious illness.

Andy spent the majority of his life fighting on behalf of CWU members and the working class. He was passionate, kind and had a unique sense of humour which would lighten any room.

Whilst Andy was the T&FS deputy general secretary, he was a strong ally for postal workers and would always take an interest in what was happening in the Postal Constituency. He would often then raise this in his position on the Labour National Executive and fight our corner in these discussions.

Andy will be sorely missed as he had such an impact on the CWU, our predecessor unions, the wider movement and everyone who met him. I hope you will read our general secretary's tribute on the back page to a very honourable and decent man.

NEW ENTRANTS' TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Royal Mail imposed the new entrants' terms and conditions without agreement during the last dispute for two distinct reasons. They wanted to reduce the wage bill by employing new entrants on reduced terms and they wanted more flexibility and compulsory Sunday working. The company's original position was that they did not want new entrants to be subject to collective bargaining and members of the CWU.

The BRT&G agreement stated:

'New entrant employees will be part of the CWU collective bargaining unit and will be covered by all future bargaining and agreements with the CWU.'

The agreement also committed to review new entrants' terms and conditions.

These review meetings have recently commenced. It is clear that Royal Mail have an attrition problem, with 16 per cent of new entrants leaving the company each year and over 20 per cent within the first 90 days. These are national average data, but there are hotspots with a far higher attrition rate.

In our opinion the attrition rates are linked to three main issues.

- 1. The hourly rate for new entrants is only 54p above the Real Living Wage and £1.17 above the National Minimum Wage. The role of a delivery postal worker is challenging and there are other similar or better-paid jobs which do not require an individual to walk up to five hours per day.**
- 2. New entrants are having to work too many Sundays.**
- 3. This a combination of not being properly trained, not being given the expected contracted hours and the general treatment of new entrants.**

The current attrition rates for new entrants are not only a significant cost to Royal Mail but are having a significant impact on quality. The CWU is determined to improve new entrants' terms and conditions and our long-term policy is to have them on the same Ts&Cs as those employed prior to 1st December 2022.

New entrants employed after 1st December 2022 can help the union to improve their Ts&Cs by joining the CWU. There are significant challenges which all employed by Royal Mail will face. These include the potential take over and USO reform and, therefore, being part of the collective voice of the CWU is crucial.

In just over 19 months, 17,000 new entrants are now in post, and we are offering an introductory offer from membership which is £9.41 per month without political levy and £10.38 with political levy. If you join the CWU as a new entrant, your contributions will only go up to the full rate once we have improved your terms and conditions.

This campaign will be announced this month and branches should be looking to recruit new entrants as part of this campaign.

NATIONAL NETWORK PIR

The Post Implementation Review (PIR) of the impact on later starts will begin from week commencing 9th September and will conclude by 11th October.

Local mail centre catchment area will firstly review each delivery unit to determine whether there is an opportunity to move start times earlier across the days of the week based on the data and experience so far. The Joint Statement provides the metrics which can support this review.

The PIR will have a three-tier escalation process – local, regional and national. And there will be a second PIR, following peak, to review the period of 2nd September 2024 to 10th January 2025. This will commence from 20th January 2025 and conclude by 21st February.

We're meeting all the local reps for Scotland in Perth on Friday 13th September where we will update them on the Enhanced PIR for Scotland.

INSIDE:

DELIVERY 2.0 PARCEL SORTATION TRIAL
RM PFSL PAY DEAL ON THE TABLE

BACK:

YOUR GS PAYS TRIBUTE TO ANDY KERR



SCAN ME & JOIN THE CWU



PARCEL SORTATION TRIAL IN DELIVERY



Jermaine Bagaloo and Lee Kaffell

USING D2.0 SPACE TO IMPROVE PARCEL OPERATION

Report from two offices trialling a new Format Two sortation method...

In our June Edition, *Your Voice* visited three of the 21 delivery offices taking part in the Delivery 2.0 (D2.0) trial, one of the aims of which was to redesign the office floor to create more space for parcels.

A further, smaller-scale, parcel sortation method trial has been under way at two of those 21 units – Preston South in Lancashire and Morden in Surrey. The aims are to make the fullest possible use of the extra space created, while also improving parcel efficiency.

Your Voice went to both units last month and some key themes emerged from the frontline postmen and women we spoke with. And there was a distinct difference in the feedback received from the two locations.

Morden is a smaller than average office, with 32 staff in post and it serves the SM4 post code. We meet CWU area delivery rep Ian Novell, area safety rep Phil Boyles, unit manager Keith Gentry and project/programme manager Tony Brimson.

Morden's four dedicated parcel routes (DPRs) and Format Three (F3) and F4 items have gone to nearby Wallington D.O. This leaves Morden with F1s – which go into the frames – and F2s – which are scanned and placed into mailbags hung on trolleys.

These F2 items – typically defined as too large for the letterbox, but smaller than a shoebox – are organised on the basis of one trolley of mailbags per four walks, with the trolleys located in the space created by the D2.0 redesigned layout. The idea being that they can then simply be lifted off and taken out with the manually sorted mails.

From the members we spoke to here, the trial method system seems very unpopular, with criticisms of the suitability of the method and of the capability of the postal digital assistant (PDAs) devices.

Ian Wilson, who has worked here for 36 years, says that he thinks putting the parcels into the bags is a good idea, but that he feels that confusion can be created by the scanning system – whereby one person scans four walks-worth of F2s. "I find I'm handling more than before," he says and adds that the PDAs do not sound alerts when he is at a parcel-delivery address and that sometimes the device runs out of battery during his delivery span.

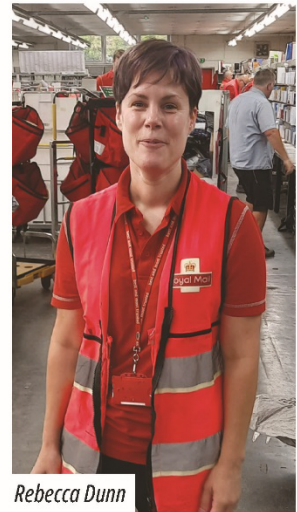
His colleague Nicole Joseph, who has been here six years, agrees that putting the items into the bags is a good idea, but she also says that on delivery, "things can get confusing," while Jermaine Bagaloo tells us: "We don't know where the packets are in the bag. It can get pressurising, with too much to worry about" and Lee Kaffell makes the point that "we have to check on our PDAs all the time, so battery life can be an issue and even reading it can be difficult at times."

Others make similar points, that they appreciate the idea of the parcels going into the mailbags on the trolleys, but that out on delivery it can become an extra task to locate the parcel, that the PDA is now used more, its battery runs down more often and it does not sound a parcel-delivery alert.

Taken together, these various reported drawbacks lead most of those we spoke with to the conclusion that the trial method is less efficient than the old system.

Up in Preston, we meet CWU executive member Saf Khan, area rep Richard Wright, unit rep Rebecca Dunn and covering office manager Edward Hobson. This office is a little larger than Morden, with 46 staff in post and serving the PR5 post code area. Their DPRs, along with F3s and F4s, have gone to Chorley D.O.

Richard tells us that, "overall, I'd say the trial here has been going well. The management and union have worked together – people have been listened to and the geo-route revision we had was helpful. The overall 'getting out' times are similar to how they were, but within that, there's been an equalising effect as the skills gap has narrowed."



Rebecca Dunn



Saf Khan, Pete Leary and Richard Wright

Explaining the different impacts on the members here, Rebecca says that the new method seems to be "working well for park and loop, but not really working out for rurals, firms or HCTs (high-capacity trolleys). With the D2.0 layout, it's nice having more space. I'd say most like it, although some don't."

We hear a first-hand example of how this method affects different types of delivery when we speak with Abbie Clarke while she preps. Abbie, who has worked here for six years, says: "I used to do a rural delivery and this system didn't really work for me. But I've been transferred onto a town, park and loop and it's better, quicker, organised all ready."



Abbie Clarke

Working nearby, van-share partners Mark Warren and Elliot Emery say that they like the method as well. Elliot, who has been here nearly a year, comments: "It works better than before and for me, the new layout's better. I'd say stay with this system."

And Mark, with 10 years' service, tells us: "It works on this park and loop. I can't fault it and I want to keep this system going."

"We just need to start getting these alerts on our PDAs," he adds.

Darren Whiteside, who works from a HCT and has 18 years' service, says: "Bag loops are perfect for vans, but not for HCTs. We need time to get used to this and the PDAs don't alert us."

Stephen Jones, who works a shared van, says that this way works better, although he also expresses concern as to whether people may struggle in the busier autumn period and comments on PDA battery life when out on delivery, while Alison Kitchen says that she finds the new system can be confusing at times – but that PDA alerts "would help."

Speaking with Rebecca again, she explains that she has taken up several of these issues and that PDA parcel-delivery alerts have not yet been built into the device, but that this is planned to happen if the method is rolled out more widely. She adds that sequence-based, rather than location-based is expected to be the next step.

CWU outdoor secretary Mark Baulch: "It's good to hear the overall positive report from Preston South. Unfortunately, the report from Morden, in line with other feedback, is challenging to say the least. Due to this, as well as other difficulties, the CWU asked for the trial at this unit to be ceased at this time."

"Also, given the feedback about confusion on delivery, we've asked for time to be built in for a pre-delivery pouch check of F2 scanned items. At least until the PDA parcel alerts are introduced."

"I'm grateful to members and reps taking part in both trials and welcome all their feedback, along with my thanks to PE members Luke Elgar and Saf Khan for their work overseeing these trials."

"A brief update on D2.0: It became clear from feedback that the absence of the 'wings' from the single-trail layout led to excessive back and forth movement by individuals on sorting and was also less efficient. So, the joint D2.0 working group decided that these will be re-instated at the appropriate points along each frame –with the caveat that this depends on practicality and sufficient space."



Stephen Jones

ROYAL MAIL PFSL 2024/25 PAY DEAL ON THE TABLE

Positive shopfloor reactions as negotiated deal goes out to ballot...

A pay deal negotiated between the CWU and Royal Mail's Property & Facilities Solutions management has been formally approved by the union's executive and members will be casting their votes in a ballot over the next few weeks.

The union's leadership is recommending a YES vote in favour of the deal, which, if endorsed by members, will see cleaners' pay rise to £12 per hour outside London and £13.15 within the capital. Mobile, or 'Relief', cleaners' wages will be subject to a 50p per hour differential that increases their pay to £12.50ph (London £13.65ph).

Your Voice visited the company's large Mount Pleasant site recently, just the day after the deal was announced and we spoke to several cleaners about the forthcoming ballot and the importance of CWU membership.

John Hart, assistant secretary of Phoenix Branch, meets us there and takes us around to meet some of the cleaners, starting with Anne-Marie Elmes, who has been with the business eight years and is currently on the 2pm to 10pm late shift.

"The union's very helpful to us cleaners and every cleaner should join," she says. "And from what I've heard so far, the deal sounds good."

Judian Blake, with 21 years' service comments: "I'm glad to see a deal on the table. We're doing a good



Judian Blake



Patrick Sarpong

job and we should get more. The cost of living is too high these days.

"You're more safe and secure when you have a union. They're always there for us," she adds.

Valerio Novas and Nosa Izevbizua – having done this job for two and 15 years respectively – tell us that they plan to attend the planned meetings with reps, ask questions and then consider which way to vote. "I've worked in so many places before and this is a tough office," says Nosa, before adding: "The union does a good job. If there's no union, we can't stay here."

And Patrick Sarpong, here 19 years, remarks: "We deserve the pay rise. It's a step forward. In a place like this you need a union. It helped me personally with an issue I had – it was John Hart who did it. I'd urge every cleaner in the country to join today."

"If you're not in it, they can't help you."

John Hart sums up: "It's a good news story for our cleaners on pay. This is the power of being in the union."

"Make your workplace better. Join the CWU."

(Article continues on back page...)

PFSL REPS SPEARHEAD RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

'We'll build on pay progress, strengthen union and push forward' says CWU...

Eleanor Hipson, CWU national cleaners' rep, tells *Your Voice*: "It's a big positive on pay, particularly that the business has agreed to lift wages in accordance with the Real, rather than just the National Living Wage. This makes a significant difference financially."



"And although they haven't committed to RLW going forward, they have committed to RLW being on the negotiating agenda in future talks – so it'll be down to us to ensure we try to keep to this as a base negotiating point."

"In raw money terms, if this deal is endorsed as recommended, it'll mean that a full-time cleaner will have become around £40 per week better off over the past two-year period."

Eleanor goes on to flag up another aspect of the deal, pointing to the annual leave improvements. "There's an agreed pathway to equalisation of annual leave entitlement and accrual, which will benefit those who started working for the company after 1st April 2016," she says.

"I'm hoping there'll be a solid YES vote and that, going forward, a good deal like this will show cleaners who have not yet joined the union that the CWU does a good job for them."

Eleanor has a team of three regional cleaners' reps supporting her work and she says that they will be focussing on winning support for the deal among members and also building up membership among the workforce as a whole.

"Nikki Booth, Chris Imms and Cathy Chilcott are our three regional reps and, between us, we represent all the Royal Mail cleaners in nearly 1,300 workplaces around the UK."

"We get out to as many units as we can, but there are a lot of workplaces – many of them small delivery offices often with just one cleaner working part-time, so we also really appreciate the great help and support from delivery unit reps," she says.

"We're aiming to build on this pay progress by making a big push on recruitment and we'll be stepping this up over this coming period."

"If you're already a member, we're urging you to vote YES, but also we're asking you to speak with any new colleagues you have who have not yet joined and tell them about the deal the CWU has achieved and why they should join up."

"Ask them to use the 'scan me & join' QR code on this page."

Outdoor secretary Mark Baulch, national officer for Royal Mail PFSL cleaners, says: "It's good to hear the positive feedback from members and also the enthusiasm of Eleanor and her team to push forward on recruitment."

"I'm also asking all our delivery reps to do everything they can to help in this campaign."

"While we're pleased at the progress on pay and other issues, we still need to pursue pension rights equalisation with the rest of Royal Mail Group."

Only by having a stronger membership density will enable us to make that case more strongly, whilst also pushing the company for better pay going forward.

Please join the CWU if you are not a member"

Acting assistant secretary Bobby Weatherall, whose role covers PFSL engineers and admin members, says: "We've managed to negotiate an across-the-board consolidated percentage increase on basic pay as well as a £250 unconsolidated lump-sum (prpt) for engineers and admin."

"We've also achieved a firm commitment from the business to a formal Joint Review of the Technical Pay Structure in Engineering. This is scheduled to conclude before the next round of pay negotiations in April 2025."

"As well as this, there is progress for all PFSL members on achieving the same pay rates for new starters from Day One on top of the PFSL-wide improvements on annual leave."



Like all those present that day, I'll never forget the passionate speech Andy Kerr made to delegates at our Annual Conference earlier this year, talking with such feeling about his lifelong commitment to working class people as an active trade unionist and socialist.

These words of his in particular...

"I've been a socialist all my life and I'll be a socialist until the day I die"

...will remain in my memory for a very long time – summing up as they did, a life dedicated to fighting for his fellow workers and for all of those values this union and our wider movement hold dear.

Serving as DGS of the T&FS side of our union from 2008 until his retirement earlier this year, Andy was also supportive of the Postal side and, in his role as CWU representative on Labour's NEC, he fought hard in support of our long campaign against Royal Mail privatisation. So, as well as heading the CWU's T&FS section, Andy was also a well-known and popular figure among our Postal members.

During the national industrial dispute of 2022, we attended several BT/Openreach members' pickets together and it always struck me how pleased he was at the determination and enthusiasm of activists – the vast majority of them on strike for the first time in their lives.

He was a member of this union for 49 years and, in his words, "some kind of rep for 47 of them." An inspiration to so many, but yet talking about how he found new inspiration from the new generation of trade unionists and reps coming through.

And in that farewell speech to Annual Conference, when an emotional hall stood as one to applaud and cheer him, it was so characteristic of Andy that he thanked this union and said: "It's been an honour to work for this union on behalf of our members."

Andy, it was an honour to have worked with you, protested and picketed alongside you, laughed and joked with you, and to have been your friend.

Thank you from all of us.



SCAN ME! JOIN THE UNION

