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**TO: ALL POSTAL BRANCHES**

Dear Colleagues

**Your Voice in the Workplace – December 2024**

Please find attached the December Workplace Bulletin. It rounds up our first year of producing a monthly workplace orientated communication.

As per normal we will be sending out a limited print run (approx. 10 per cent of branch membership) of this Edition, which should reach you by the end of the 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.

<https://www.cwu.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/08230-your-voice-RMG-10-Dec-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 TEN, DECEMBER 2024



## LOOKING FORWARD IN UNITY

*"It is not uncommon for the CWU to deal with big issues impacting our members, we do this practically all the time," writes your DGSP Martin Walsh...*

**H**owever, it is rare for the union to deal with not one but two issues of great magnitude in such a short time frame. This is the situation we currently face as we discuss both the potential takeover with EP group and the USO change planned for next year.

The union has been in parallel discussions with both Royal Mail and EP group over the future of Royal Mail. Our aim is to be consistent with the emergency motion carried unanimously at our annual conference earlier this year – that if the takeover is to happen, we need an agreement that protects our members going forward.

In its September report, statutory regulator Ofcom confirmed that the current universal service obligation (USO), which delivers all mail six days a week, is financially unsustainable. It is therefore expected that Ofcom will make a decision on what the USO reform will be.

Royal Mail's preferred USO change is a speed-of-delivery option and is based on the following:

1. 1st class letters and all parcels will continue to be delivered every day Monday to Saturday.
2. Non 1st class letters will be delivered to an address every other day Monday to Friday.

As I write, we're holding a national briefing to update all our senior Royal Mail Group CWU reps on the talks with EP, the discussions we are having over the USO and the potential 37 delivery units who will pilot this in early 2025.

### CHANGING OUR UNION

A second national briefing the following day involves all our CWU branches – our colleagues from BT Group as well as ourselves – to start on the next steps in our union's restructuring process. Our general secretary Dave Ward has been leading on this and the central aim is to ensure the CWU makes the necessary changes to be able to remain as a single, standalone trade union. This briefing will set the scene and kick off a national debate which will culminate in a special CWU conference next year. Your branch will be giving you a full report back on this and how you can take part in this debate.

### AND FINALLY...

It's been a year now since you elected me as your DGSP and I want to say a massive thank you to every one of our hard-working postal members and all our reps, at all levels. It's also been a year in which we've welcomed so many new members into the CWU as well – let's welcome more of them in next year.

We're looking forward in unity and we're determined to work together to win a better deal for all in 2025.



**INSIDE: FOCUS ON FLEET & DELIVERY REVISIONS UPDATE**



**SCAN ME & JOIN THE CWU**



## FOCUS ON FLEET



Fabian Mullings and Youness Guemmar renewing a cam-belt

## KEEPING OUR FLEET REPAIRED, SERVICED & SAFE

*Your Voice was invited to a Royal Mail Fleet workshop recently to meet with members and reps...*

**W**e've got four Fleet workshops serving inner London," says CWU postal executive member Alan Tate as we arrive at the Kentish Town site. "This one looks after the north London area, there's the east London workshop in Poplar, one in Acton, west London and the south London workshop in Nine Elms.

"Altogether, we've got 120 RM Fleet sites in the UK and about 1,100 technicians, looking after circa 57,000 company vehicles," he continues, adding that the number of electric vehicles (EVs) currently stands at "around 5,000 and increasing. Our members work on every type from the CDVs (car-derived vans) up to the HGVs, the larger lorries/units and trailers."

"But," adds Pete Concannon, CWU Fleet London & South East territorial representative: "At this time, we're not carrying out the planned maintenance and repairs on all the EVs, as many of them have been leased with an external maintenance arrangement. Our Fleet members who are trained to IMI Level Three on EVs do undertake the maintenance and repair of EVs that is within their knowledge and skill set."

Tom McKenna is the site shift supervisor here and tells us that Kentish Town repairs and maintains vehicles at all of the key RMG sites in north London. "We've got 14 technicians, including two who provide a Fleet Support Service going out to on-site repairs, and we've got one based at Mount Pleasant," he says.

"We carry out planned and unplanned maintenance, so scheduled services and inspections as well as fault repairs. It's difficult to say what the most often recurring faults are – probably at this time of year there are more battery problems."

In the main workshop, we meet technicians and apprentice mentors Mohammed Mughal and Fabian Mullings. Mohammed is on a scheduled service of a 7.5-ton lorry and, with the front cab lifted, he takes first-year apprentices Mohammed Ali and Alista Hodges through its EGR (exhaust gas recirculation) valve, DPF (diesel particulate filter) and water pump inspections, before going onto check the wheels, tyres and axle. Fabian is showing another apprentice, Youness Guemmar, how to renew a CDV engine's cam-belt.

The apprentices tell us that their training period is three years, and explain that they have a full week at college every two months to complement their on-the-job training.

"These guys receive high-quality training on the whole range of vehicles and it's something the CWU wants to see more of," says Pete, who adds: "Unfortunately, the technician vacancies that have increased over the past few years are not being replaced quickly enough and so Fleet are either outsourcing work or hiring in agency technicians, which isn't the solution in the longer-term."



Pete Concannon, Alan Tate, Alista Hodges, Mohammed Mughal and Mohammed Ali

We then walk through to the body repair workshop – now the only one of its kind in Royal Mail Fleet – and we meet Jack Roxburgh, replacing a front bumper and hand painting some of the detail on the back of a van before it goes into the paint shop for its main respray. Jack tells us that the shop is always busy and that his most often recurring repairs are panels and doors. We also speak with shift supervisor Simon Streames, who shows us some of the body-frame damage that regularly occurs on our vehicles and explains that something that may look like minor damage can often mean a whole panel needs to be renewed.

He suggests that the smaller wing mirrors on today's CDVs may be a reason for the number of side-scrapes and dents, pointing out that the driver cannot now see the whole side of the van as they used to be able to.

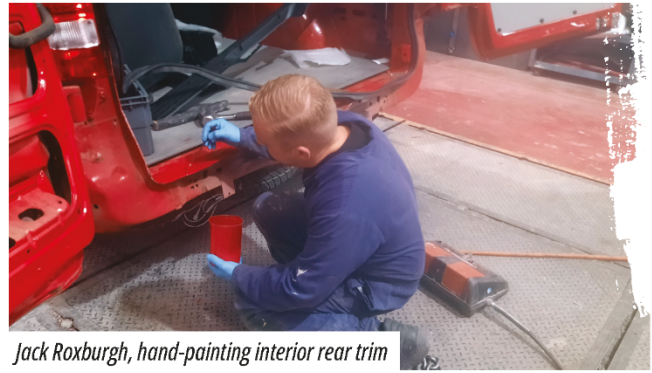
Another issue is the rising cost of spare parts and the increasing difficulty in sourcing them, Alan tells us, adding that the operational pressures in Delivery are also a factor in the challenges of keeping our vehicles roadworthy.

"Our members in Fleet do a superb job and they want to keep our vans and lorries on the road and get repairs done as promptly as possible, while ensuring the safety of our Delivery, Distribution and Logistics members and of course the safety of other road users.

"In Fleet, what we need from the company leadership is more investment for the future, the training of more apprentices, ensuring we keep work in-house. Also crucial is the much-needed alignment of terms and conditions for all new starters.



Newly resprayed Delivery van



Jack Roxburgh, hand-painting interior rear trim

## TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR WORKPLACE REPS

**C** WU head of equality, education & training Kate Hudson spoke to Your Voice about the new approach to delivering the Postal Agreements & Procedures training for CWU reps, which will cover the essential aspects of the unit rep's role. Presented in five modules, these will cover:

- IR Framework*
- Conduct Code Agreement*
- Attendance Procedure*
- Raising Concerns Procedure / Staff Resourcing*
- Ill-Health retirement / Maternity & Paternity rights*

There are residential Postal Agreements rep training courses scheduled to take place in February, April and October at Quorn Grange, Loughborough, Leicestershire, and an online course timetabled for July. These courses are five days in duration. Kate also advised that local training can be provided on a one-day-a-week basis over five weeks, or a full week which can be organised at divisional level.

"Reps, especially new reps, need on-the-ground practical training and it's my job and the job of my team to ensure this is provided. The choices as to where and when are there to suit people's individual circumstances, but the course content is fully standardised," she explained, adding that reps wanting to undertake this training need to contact their branch in the first instance.



## WORKING TOGETHER FOR DELIVERY REVISION SUCCESS

*CWU outdoor secretary Tony Bouch updates us on where we are as we approach 2025...*

**F**irstly, I want to thank every Delivery member for your strong support for the union and for facing up to another demanding peak pressure period in offices all around the country. While there's a great deal going on at national level, the Outdoor Department has been working hard with the business to try to make sure we have a realistic approach to the current and forthcoming set of geo-route revisions.

There is now an agreed list of 66 offices – in every part of the UK – with revisions scheduled to be completed by April. There's a new training package in place for unit reps at these offices and we'll also be monitoring the progress of these revisions through the Royal Mail Delivery Revisions Progress Trackers. So, if your office is on this list, you'll have a trained unit rep supported at area and divisional level and the progress of the revision at your office will be monitored and discussed at local, area and divisional joint meetings.

On this subject of reps' training, I particularly want to thank Paul Dugdale (North Wales/North West divisional rep), Paul Bosworth (Worcester Branch ADR), Postal Executive member Luke Elgar and Steve Sheldon, North East divisional rep, for their hard work in developing and presenting the training and building the course modules. This is invaluable work, which will ensure that every area and unit rep has access to the training they need.

Also, none of these 66 Delivery revision offices will be included in activity linked to USO pilot activity as part of ongoing talks between Ofcom and RM/CWU as part of the USO review.

Delivery revisions are always a difficult time, and the union very much appreciates your support and input. With the now reduced total number of units, the new training for reps and the robust monitoring, we're more confident now that these revisions can be successful – if we all work together.

### DELIVERY 2.0

Many thanks to members and reps at the 21 units who took part in the Delivery 2.0 trials. Among the issues that came up during these activities was the need for retrofits in terms of some of the physical layout.

Specifically, this was the agreement to re-install 'additional frame-wings' where possible and where practical in regard to the specific unit. This work has now completed at 20 of the 21 D2.0 trial offices, with the retrofit at the remaining unit to be completed early in the New Year.

We're currently in discussions with the business as to the next steps on this project and we'll keep you fully updated in due course.



## RECONNECTING: MIDLANDS & SOUTH EAST

Successful meetings of all unit reps from the Midlands and South East Divisions last month brought the first part of DGSP Martin Walsh's nationwide Reconnecting tour to a close...

**R**epresentatives from the frontline of Royal Mail's operations and all functions heard the latest updates from Martin on all of the big national issues – potential company takeover, possible USO changes, and the CWU's agenda in the period ahead.

Our other CWU national officers also updated the reps on the current situation within their respective parts of the business, ranging from Delivery to Processing, Distribution and Logistics, as well as subjects around conduct, attendance, sick pay and the company's policy on drink and drug testing.

Top priority for the union will be stepping up efforts to win a fair deal for post-2022 new entrants, enabling them to achieve parity with their longer-serving colleagues. While the CWU will also prioritise the key issues of job security, striving to prevent any break-up of the company and maintaining and increasing membership and recruitment.

Guest speaker, the Honourable Member of Parliament for Rugby & East Northamptonshire, Lee Barron, received a warm welcome, having previously served the CWU in various capacities for many years. He talked of how he had become a postal cadet on leaving school, had joined the union and had always "stood shoulder to shoulder with my fellow postal workers.

"I still stand shoulder to shoulder with postal workers today and our new Labour Government is going to make sure we make a positive difference to workers," he vowed and described Labour's new employment legislation as "the biggest uplift in workers' rights for a generation."

Our CWU head of equality, education & training, Kate Hudson, also spoke to reps about the new Postal Agreements training course (see inside page).

### LIVELY Q&A SESSIONS

At both the Midlands and South East gatherings – held in Birmingham and Faversham respectively – Martin Walsh's and the other officers' presentations were followed by, and interspersed with, questions and opinions from the floor. With over 30 such contributions, both events heard a range of viewpoints and experiences.

Sick pay was a recurring subject, as was the continuing difficulties caused by various management impositions – such as the sick pay policy and, of course, regularly mentioned was the issue of lower terms and conditions for new starters and the unfairness it brings in its wake.

Other reps asked for more details as to how duty patterns might change if there is USO reform, while another rep posed the question of how the union could make future industrial action more effective and there was a rallying call from the floor for a renewed campaign for renationalisation of Royal Mail Group.

Speaking with some of the audience members after each briefing, there was unanimity on the value and usefulness of the nationwide tour, and strong support for the DGSP's intention to do this on an annual basis.

### REPS' FEEDBACK

Tracey McNally, from Walsall Delivery Office, said: "As reps, we sometimes feel isolated, so it's nice to come to something like this and meet up with other reps from different places," adding that she'd found the sections on Attendance Procedure and training particularly helpful, while Storrington DO rep Scott Murphy pointed to the potential for USO reform as outlined by



DGSP Martin Walsh speaking to reps

Martin, saying: "USO changes are a big factor. There's lots of information for me to report back and these briefings are a good idea."

Wolverhampton Mail Centre sub-shift rep Michael Jhalli said: "The Conduct information was useful and it was good to hear the update direct from our leaders," while Jo Glaysher, from Maidstone DO felt that "the information on the revisions and resourcing were the most important parts for me" and Rainham DO rep Jordon Hartley told us: "The new entrants' unfair terms and conditions issue is big and part-time to full-time is also a major struggle as well."

Deborah Thornhill, from Redditch DO, said: "I really liked hearing Kate's bit about training, which is something we definitely need to happen" and Midlands Super Hub area rep Amandeep Kooner commented on "the positivity here with everyone in unity and determined to turn things round. It's a good feeling after we've had some really tough times."

With seven Divisions visited in a busy Autumn and the remaining three – South Central, South Wales/South West and North East – to journey to in the New Year, our DGSP told Your Voice that "it's been great to meet face-to-face with well over a thousand of our fantastic frontline reps over these past few months and I want to thank every one of them for coming along to meet me and our officers and for their contributions to the debates.

"I'm also more convinced than ever before that CWU reps are the best in the business and that, although it's a tough fight, we can succeed, together, in our aims for 2025."



Jo Glaysher



Armandeep Kooner

# SCAN ME! JOIN THE UNION

