

No. 118/26

22nd April 2026

For the Immediate Attention of All:

Postal Branches
Divisional Representatives
Area Distribution Representatives
LGV Representatives

Dear Colleagues

Joint Statement between RM National Distribution and the CWU on the Deployment of the 2026 National Network (Linehaul) Review

Branches and representatives are informed discussions have been taking place with the business in relation to progressing arrangements for the 2026 Network (Linehaul) Review activity.

Building on the processes developed in previous reviews, all aspects of the process will mirror previously agreed arrangements. Attached for information is a Joint Statement covering the details along with the agreed process for the deployment of this year's review, which has been endorsed by the Postal Executive.

As with the previous Network Review Joint Statements, the process fully recognises the role of the CWU at all levels and all activity will be overseen by the Network Working Group.

A Joint online launch event will take place with National Network Managers and Divisional/Area Representatives on Wednesday 29th April 10:30-11:30.

Colleagues will note that the Stage 1 Data Gathering will commence on Thursday 30th April 2026 and representatives are therefore requested to engage with management accordingly in relation to the activity and release arrangements.

Any enquiries in relation to this LTB should be addressed to Davie Robertson, Assistant Secretary, email: jrodrigues@cwu.org or jmansell@cwu.org quoting reference LTB 118/26.

Yours sincerely,

Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary

JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN RM NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION AND THE CWU ON THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE 2026 NATIONAL NETWORK(LINEHAUL) REVISION

Introduction

Royal Mail and the CWU continue to work together at all levels within RM Distribution. A key indication of effective collaboration has seen the successful deployment of National Network Revisions. The agreed process detailed within the annexes below this Joint Statement aims to build on previous successes and refine the processes used for Network revisions as appropriate to Linehaul activity based on our collective experience.

Background

Royal Mail Distribution and the CWU agree that to achieve a successful Network Revisions deployment by the end of June, activity will have to be undertaken at pace and will require a positive and pragmatic approach that balances immediate operational requirements and considers future ambitions and growth opportunities.

Any adjustment to the external customer requirements or internal business operational footprint during the review will have to be factored in and considered in respect of a robust Network operation.

Where any workload proposed for inclusion in the review has migrated from existing Regional/Area Distribution services, Royal Mail National Distribution commit to identify this to the CWU Nationally at Stage 2 of the process and equally ensure that concurrent notice of the intention to transfer the workload is given in the appropriate functions to ensure that timely discussions can take place

Following feedback, it is acknowledged that joint data gathering within a Network Review based on one specific Nationally agreed day, does not give a true reflection of the workload across the different days of the week. It is therefore agreed this year's joint data gathering will encompass a designated week as agreed by the NWG.

Current VOC's and Mini VOC's

The review will be based on the current RDC and VOC Network and will include all 17t Mini VOCs established in Area Distribution PAD Revisions. We are seeing significant volumetric and cube growth, and it is important we utilise the scale advantage that our network offers. Equally, this revision will ensure that where such solutions are either in place or required that the employees providing any 17t and above services are on the full Professional Network Driver terms and conditions.

Commercialisation of Empty Legs

It is recognised that extensive joint working has been undertaken in relation to the Commercialisation of Empty Legs and as such it is agreed that the planning activity in relation to the Network 26 review will take account of this. The revision activity will therefore ensure that availability is built in to revised duty sets in order to continue to fulfil existing customer commitments in this regard.

Vehicle Scheduling

As in previous reviews Network Scheduling will utilise Paragon.

Review Process and Revision Programme of Works

The detailed staged process for the progression of this revision activity can be found in Annex A along with the Network Revision 'Programme of Works' – Re-sign Process detailed in Annex B

Any questions of interpretation, implementation or application of this agreed way forward shall be referred to the signatories of this agreement for resolution via the IR Framework.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Dunn', written over a horizontal line.

Nick Dunn
National Distribution Director
Royal Mail

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Davie Robertson', written over a horizontal line.

Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary
CWU

Date: 22nd April 2026

The Review Process

The review process will be conducted over 4 Stages.

Where there is a concern or issue regarding the interpretation and/or the application of this agreement then the issue should be referred to the Network Working Group (NWG) for clarification.

The role of the CWU representatives within these processes is fully recognised, as is the requirement for appropriate release in order for them to meaningfully prepare, participate and obtain the views of their members. It is agreed that in line with the IR Framework, CWU representatives undertaking this work will not suffer financial loss. To this end it is agreed that local managers will facilitate this release and that all reasonable requests for release will be agreed.

Management and CWU representatives will agree locally on a weekly basis, the period of the release required.

Stages

1. Launch of a joint local data gathering exercise and collection of current state data at each VOC/Mini VOC. This activity should provide a robust baseline as a reference for analysis of the Paragon outputs and will cover data for the full working week.

This stage will include a detailed review of all ad-hoc and scheduled collections workload.

In addition, workload excluded from scheduling (e.g., shunting) will also be reviewed at the data gathering stage as an input to the review.

A non-binding preference exercise to be run at appropriate VOC's/Mini VOC's as determined by the Network Working Group.

2. The NWG will carry out generic analysis of Paragon "first cut" outputs; identify high impact or problem sites. At this stage the NWG will look to aid the development of local, area and National scope/solutions which may form a counter proposal for deployment. Where appropriate the NWG will consider the utilisation of Paragon in the formulation of such options. The NWG will then make a representation to the National parties regarding the status of issues. The agreed National deployment date will be targeted. The deployment date will allow sufficient time for local negotiations and re-signs to conclude prior to deployment in line with above and in line with current agreements.
3. NWG to commence work on future National Network revision process and approach for recommendation to National parties

Stage One

Local managers, local planners and CWU representatives will jointly collate and sign off a site-specific information pack. The scope and details of the data to be gathered will be agreed with the NWG in line with previous Network review activity. This information will be

used to assist the planning process and provide a reliable reference point for the assessment of first cut plans and deployment issues.

The expectation is that this process should be concluded over a two-week period.

The planning for this revision will be based on the current Network operation as defined in the data capture exercise at Stage One and does not encompass Network work currently performed by Area Distribution other than work that has been agreed to transfer via separate Area Distribution discussions.

The joint data gathering will commence on 30th April 2026 to 8th May 2026.

Stage Two

The NWG will review the first cut planning outputs to assess and where possible anticipate potential problem sites and look at the potential solutions. These potential solutions may not necessarily be restricted by individual unit or area boundaries but will always seek to maximise business efficiency whilst reconciling job and standard of living security. It is expected to conclude this process in two weeks where a status report/update will be advised to the national parties. This stage will also include a 'check in' session with the national parties to ensure Ambition and Growth activity is not being compromised by the suggested first cut planning.

Stage Three

Local negotiations will commence in line with this agreed revision process and the IR Framework including the use of mediation as appropriate. The NWG will support this process and be available to help conclude local/area solutions.

A traffic light process will be deployed to monitor progress and identify at the earliest opportunity potential problem sites. Implementation of the revisions at all sites will take place on the same day coordinated by the NWG.

This negotiation process should be concluded at pace within two weeks in line with the IR Framework. Re-signs will then commence at all sites to be concluded by the National implementation date. Re-signs should be conducted in line with the process contained in Annex B.

Stage Four

The NWG will review the effectiveness of the above process and assess opportunities to refine the approach for future revision activity.

The methodology for this piece of work will be based on the ACAS guide to problem solving and will allow relevant expertise to be used where the NWG agree it would be beneficial.

When a joint recommendation has been developed it will be jointly presented to the national parties for ratification and agreement. The process will then become the agreed approach to Network revisions going forward.

Network Revision 'Programme of Works' – Re-sign Process

When Stage 3 of this Joint Statement has been achieved arrangements should be made where necessary to commence a re-sign of duties. Re-signs will be conducted in line with existing National Agreements.

Where agreed duty structures at any site have resulted in a surplus being declared and people's processes at such sites have identified transferees or where a transfer to another VOC has been agreed then these individuals should be included in re-signs at the receiving office, even if this is in advance of their substantive move.

Where the re-sign process can be completed in full prior to the National implementation date, all individuals will take up their new duty/rotation from that date.

Contingency Arrangements

While it is anticipated that the National implementation date will allow sufficient time to conclude the re-sign process, past experience has indicated that circumstances can occur where re-signs run past the implementation date. In such circumstances the following contingency arrangements should apply.

Where due to annual leave a full re-sign cannot be completed prior to the National implementation date the following process should apply:

- re-sign arrangements should progress until process stalls due to leave commitments. On the National implementation date those individuals who have successfully selected a duty/rotation as part of the re-sign will take it up.
- All remaining individuals should participate in a temporary resourcing process. This may take the form of either a best match exercise placing individuals on attendances similar to their current duties.

or

by individuals selecting from the remaining available duties following the implementation of the revision and thereafter on a weekly basis in seniority order until the conclusion of the full re-sign.

- The exact nature and application of the temporary resourcing process should be agreed locally.
- The re-sign process will continue as individuals return to work with subsequent successful applicants taking up their duty/rotation from the start of the next week prior to the next temporary resourcing process.

The temporary resourcing process should be progressed as a joint initiative to enable re-signs to be completed in the most expedient manner and to fully assist in the temporary resourcing process.

Notwithstanding the contingencies detailed above the efforts of all parties should be focused upon completing the re-sign in advance of the new duty structures being deployed.