

No. 123/26

24th April 2026

To: All Postal Branches

Dear Colleagues,

CWU/RMG AGREEMENT – FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS

As you are aware, the union has been undertaking a series of briefings across the UK to explain the agreement reached with Royal Mail to our Local, Area & Branch Representatives.

A key part of these briefings has been a detailed session on the USO element of the agreement – explaining why the new model is different and better than ODM, the extensive safeguards that have been negotiated, as well as what it means to our members' daily workload.

To further support the explanations that were given during the briefings, please find attached a document that provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs). This document should also be seen as a Representatives brief when discussing some of the key points, particularly on the USO, with our local members.

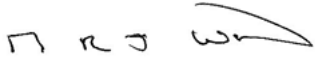
These FAQs are being uploaded to our website today to support our members' understanding of the agreement and to answer their frequently asked questions. You can find them on the website [here](#).

Next week, the union will be sending out further communications to our members and representatives on all elements of the agreement.

Finally, we will be announcing the ballot timetable on Monday.

Any enquiries regarding this LTB should be addressed to the Postal Department, Hayley Ford on hford@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Walsh
Deputy General Secretary (Postal)



Dave Ward
General Secretary



Tony Bouch
Assistant Secretary



Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary



Andy Furey
Assistant Secretary

RMG BALLOT 2026- FAQ

Delivery model

1. How is the new model different from the Optimised Delivery Model (ODM)?

The new model, DM26, is different from the ODM for the following reasons:

- It is based on a more manageable distribution of daily workload, creating reduced call rates and additional capacity to support the '4 into 3' structure.
- It includes major safeguards to support employees, both pre and post deployment.
- It allows postal workers to stay on familiar routes.
- It addresses the problems that occurred in the ODM pilot sites.

The ODM proposed that a CDV pairing delivered **all mail** Monday to Friday. This caused fatigue and workload issues due to the increased number of delivery points.

The new model, DM26, proposes that 10,500 routes (rurals, firms and HCTs) will move to a new delivery pattern, based on the union's heavy and light model. Under this model, four **revised** duties will be carried out by three postal workers. A CDV pairing will deliver 50% 1C mail and parcels and 50% all mail Monday-Friday, rotating fairly between the two postal workers. A third postal worker will cover a single duty along the same pattern. This pattern, alongside the new delivery requirements brought in by Ofcom, **will reduce the delivery points in a walk compared to both ODM pilots and current arrangements.**

Unlike ODM, this model also allows postal workers to stay on familiar routes.

There has been understandable concern about three postal workers absorbing four duties (i.e. '4 into 3') and the workload issues this will create, due to some routes already being unachievable. However, the absorption planned under DM26 cannot be viewed on the basis of a postal worker having to absorb 4 into 3 of either their existing workload or the workload planned under the ODM. **Across these three**

duties under DM26, postal workers will collectively perform less work than they did under the old USO model.

This is because the DM26 significantly reduces the delivery points in a round. The three duties can be supported by firms, rural and HCTs who will now be delivering less work than they were under the old USO requirements, as well as being supported by the additional measures laid out below.

In addition, postal workers will be able to locally decide how the fourth duty will be absorbed, as each delivery office is different and flexibility is important to find what works for each area. ***If the unit cannot absorb the fourth duty or cannot clear their workload, they will have flexible options to put more resources into the unit or change delivery patterns to assist with this.***

These reconfigured 10.5k duties in the new model will create capacity and flexibility to both help clear workload and manage it more effectively.

The DM26 model also creates additional support measures that will help support operation overall, which are as follows:

- The addition of 3.5k new routes
- Moving 10.5k walks to the 50/50 model (i.e. heavy and light)
- 6k uplifts from part-time to full-time

2. Has the model been trialled?

Several of the USO pilot offices performed the DM26 model during the peak period and reported it was better and more manageable than the ODM. Several of the CWU reps from the pilot units have spoken in support of the new model during the local reps meetings.

3. How will this work in offices already struggling to complete duties?

The principle of this model is that DM26 walks will perform 50% of their duty delivering 1C and parcels and 50% all mail Monday to Friday. This is a **reduction of the current workload**, which requires postal workers to deliver all mail Monday to Saturday.

Consequently, the rural, firms and HCTs will now be delivering less work than they were under the old USO requirements. This will create capacity to flexibly support colleagues in other duties.

Town walks which cannot be completed in the current planned outdoor span, will be reviewed locally and addressed by either the reintroduction of walks or the transfer of delivery points to the walks with additional capacity.

As above, there will be an extra 3,500 duties deployed and 6,000 part-time to full-time uplifts to support this change and there will be more accurate planning regarding workload in delivery offices.

4. How will this help workload issues?

Less products will be delivered daily under this model, due to the proposed new delivery patterns and the USO changes introduced by Ofcom, freeing up capacity to help redistribute workload. Those on the 50/50 split (i.e. heavy and light) can therefore potentially share a proportion of the fourth walk, subject to workload. Duties which currently do not complete will have options to help support their completion, including switching to the 50/50 model.

5. What safeguards are in place for the new model?

Managing change can be challenging so the CWU has ensured that there are extensive safeguards for the new model. DM26 cannot be deployed unless delivery offices are fully resourced across all duties, including having more reserves in place.

Units must also complete mandatory operational requirements prior to any deployment, which must be signed off jointly by a ROD and Divisional Rep. There will also be continuous reviews to fix problems when they arise (informed by local decision making) and a mandatory formal review no later than 12 weeks after deployment and important daily/weekly reviews in place to address issues as they occur. No surplus of staff will be declared unless your unit is achieving all quality targets and clearing workload daily. ***If the office still cannot clear its daily workload, the agreement allows for additional solutions including extra hours and duties to be put in and flexibility around the delivery model.***

There will also be no compulsory redundancies as a result of USO deployment.

Working hours

1. I am a new entrant full-time worker, will my hours/pay go down?

No. Royal Mail has agreed to end the practice of hiring full-time workers on 40 hours per week. From 1/6/26, all full-time new starters joining Royal Mail ***after this date*** will be on 37 hours a week. Those employed before the 1st of June 2026 will still be on their existing hours. This is an important step towards equalising terms for new entrants.

If you are a new entrant (joined after Dec 2022) and on a full-time contract at 38/39/40 hours, our aim as part of the wider review is to reduce your hours to 37 hours, with no loss of pay.

For part-time new entrants, you will have an opportunity to increase your hours in the near future. Royal Mail has agreed to bring the average hours for part-time new entrants from 31 hours to 35 hours.

2. How/when will part-time workers be offered an uplift to full-time?

The 6,000-part time to full time uplifts will be offered based on seniority for all employees. As part of the pre-deployment plan, capacity gaps will be identified and additional full-time roles will be deployed in these units ***before the new model goes live.***

The new model also provides an ongoing opportunity to uplift a part-time worker when an existing full-time worker leaves Royal Mail.

3. I am working a Wallington week; how does this affect me?

If you are an existing Wallington duty holder, you will be able to retain this duty pattern.

4. I am currently working a four-day week, how does this affect me?

If you are on a four day week currently, you will be able to retain this.

Pay, equalisation, contracts

1. When will I get a pay rise and when will it be backdated to?

The 3% pay increase is not dependent on the ballot result, as it was agreed last year as part of a multi-year pay deal. It will be paid as soon as Royal Mail's pay roll can confirm that they are able to do so. This will be backdated to 1st April 2026.

2. I am a new entrant; do I get an additional pay rise?

New entrants (joined after Dec 2022) are being offered an additional 1.75% pay rise, on top of the previously agreed 3%, to help reduce the pay differential between them and longer-serving postal workers. This is an important step in achieving equalisation of pay and conditions.

New entrants will vote separately on their additional pay rise. Provided the result is a yes vote, the 4.75% pay increase will be backdated to 1st April 2026.

3. I am a new entrant; how does this affect my overtime?

The average hours of new entrants are 31 hours. To receive overtime as a new entrant, you must work above 43 hours and only a small minority of new entrants work over these hours. Out of 28,000 new entrants, only approximately 988 work over 40 hours in any week. Over 10,000 new entrants have never worked overtime. Therefore, an extremely small group of workers will be affected by changes in the new entrant overtime rate.

However, the CWU strongly believes securing an increase in base rate pay for new entrants is a priority. As such, we have prioritised a higher pay increase, which will be paid every month and not subject to fluctuation in overtime availability and workload changes.

4. When will new entrants be fully equalised with legacy contracts?

This agreement reaffirms Royal Mail's commitment to equalising new entrants' pay, terms and conditions.

The journey to equalisation was always agreed on incremental steps over an agreed period of time. The CWU and Royal Mail will work together on the next formal review of new entrants' terms and conditions which will take place no later than January 2027 and the output of which will be the next step and the plan to achieve equalisation.

Wider RMG

1. How does this affect non-drivers?

This model is better for non-drivers. Royal Mail's original model, ODM, proposed that non-drivers would be surplus.

Our new agreement allows non-drivers to play a full, active part in delivering the service.

2. How does this affect Fleet members?

New entrants in Fleet are currently on higher pay than old contracts because they work 39 hours, as opposed to the 37 hours in the old contracts. Further negotiations will take place to discuss how we can take a first step in equalisation in Fleet.

3. How does this affect weekend staff?

There is no change under the new model or steps to equalisation which will impact weekend staff.

4. How does this affect long-term part-time staff?

There will be an opportunity for part-time staff to increase their contracts on a voluntary basis. However, part-time staff who want to remain part-time will continue to be able to.

Ballot Process

1. Who gets to vote on the agreement?

There will be two votes.

All Delivery, Processing, collections, DPR routes and Area Distribution members will vote on the agreement, including the USO deployment model.

However, only new entrant members (joined after Dec 2022) will vote on the additional pay rise.

2. When do I need to return my ballot?

We will be announcing the ballot timetable early next week. You will receive a ballot paper at your home address and then can vote online.

3. My contact details may be incorrect/I'm not receiving emails from you; how can I fix this?

You can check your details using the Members Portal here(link) or contact the Membership Department at membership@cwu.org.