

No. 190/26

6th July 2026

Dear Colleague,

Points of Clarification USO Deployment

Over the last few weeks, several Divisional Reps have raised questions through the Regional Steering groups or contacted us directly for clarification on parts of the agreement. Given the complexity of the USO Agreement, further guidance was always expected, especially when dealing with 1,250 different delivery units.

Negotiations took place over the last two weeks and we reached agreed positions on the Points of Clarification. We then put this before the Postal Executive and whilst they welcomed the overall points of clarification and progress, they believed there was an over promotion of the Assurance process which was not compliant with the words within the national agreement.

Further exchanges took place with Royal Mail and the CWU offered alternative words, which would have met the approval of the Postal Executive to resolve the issue of Assurance. However, the business has confirmed they are unwilling to make the required changes and therefore as a result we do not have an agreed Joint Points of Clarification.

As a result, Royal Mail have informed us that they now intend to issue the Points of Clarification document to their managers and the Regional Steering Groups on Monday morning at 10:00am. Therefore, it is important to outline to Branches that the wording in the following document was negotiated by the union.

The Points of Clarification covered the following:

1. Units can align with Wednesday start times on USO deployment across the whole week.
2. Units can, as part of the formal review, propose changes to the standard attendance length from Monday to Friday.
3. Units can review the standard length of Saturday in January 2027.
4. A pragmatic approach will be taken if units go past the 4:30 last letter to select a duty option.
5. Confirming that if you are in unit where a Wallington /banked duty makes up less than 40% of the duty set that you keep your banked duty and move to the 2 in 5 Banked duty.
6. Confirming that if you are in a unit where a banked duty is between 60% to 100% then you will be able to move to 2 in 5 banked option.

7. There are 37 units where Wallington/Banked duties make up between 41% and 59% of the total duty patterns, these will now be reviewed by the Regional Steering Groups.
8. Clarifying that indoor performance should be based on the unit's current indoor performance.

It is important that all Divisional, Area & Local Reps as well as Branches fully understand that the 2.4 of the main USO and Equalisation agreement holds the field along with the third bullet point in the Annex on USO principles, which all confirm that Regional Steering Groups have full autonomy to agree or reject any planned changes made by the assurance board.

For reference these are the lifts from the agreement:


Each Delivery Office is different, and both parties recognise the benefit of local knowledge. This agreement will allow local knowledge from Customer Operations Managers (COMs), CWU Reps, and all employees in the DO to influence key decisions to ensure successful deployment within the framework of principles laid out in the full deployment agreement, appendices, and via the joint review and governance processes.

As part of the planning and deployment processes, Dos can recommend localised solutions via the Regional Steering Groups (RSGs) (as outlined in the full Deployment Agreement). All Dos will be assured via a standard process, the purpose of which is to identify non-standard solutions and refer to the RSGs which will have full autonomy to agree or reject the changes.

We have now put in place a process with Divisional Reps to give us regular updates on the progress of the regional steering Groups, to ensure that the above commitments are honoured by their Regional Steering Groups and where assurance is not adhering to the wider application of the agreement, it will need to be escalated to the National CWU for resolution.

Any enquiries relating to the content of this LTB should be referred to the Postal Department at hford@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely,



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Deputy General Secretary (Postal)



Tony Bouch
Assistant Secretary



Andy Furey
Assistant Secretary



Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary

USO Deployment – Points of National clarification arising from initial deployment activity.

Both parties remain fully committed to the deployment of USO reform changes before the end of October 2026. This document has been prepared to address several areas requiring early clarification to help build momentum with deployment activity.

The assurance criteria will be updated to reflect the points of clarification contained within this document and both parties reaffirm their commitment to the principles outlined in point 3 of the main USO deployment agreement - “USO principles”.

Any remaining points of clarification arising from this document must be escalated to the NDJWG for review.

1. Duty starts and finish times (Monday to Saturday)

National Standard

Both parties recognise that finish times remain a contentious issue and that by design, as a trade-off for working fewer and shorter Saturdays, weekday attendances will increase in length.

To minimise the impact on finish times (Monday to Saturday) and on the basis the current Wednesday start time is accepted as the anchor point for the week, it is agreed that all DOs will have the opportunity to standardise Monday to Saturday start times to match Wednesday start times where this would help improve performance. (NB - no start times will be earlier than the current Wednesday start time)

A high-level assessment of current start time data across all DOs shows this change benefits approximately 50% of DOs on Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday and around 25% of DOs on a Thursday. In agreeing to this change D2D prep will be split across Monday /Tuesday high call rate days and WTL/L will be aligned to indoor time on Tuesday.

To enable this change to be implemented without causing delay to the deployment plan the following approach has been agreed:

- Where DOs have already deployed, they can standardise Monday to Saturday start times as part of their formal post deployment review.
- Where DOs have completed their pre-deployment checks, have been assured and the RSG has agreed a deployment date, they will deploy as planned and standardise Monday to Saturday start times as part of their post deployment review.
- Where DOs are still completing their pre-deployment checks and have not yet been assured, they can standardise Monday to Saturday start times as part of their deployment planning activity.

Monday & Saturday start time changes will be further reviewed following any changes to weekend CSS operations and post the initial deployment review period in line with the USO National Deployment Agreement.

The start time review for the 183 DOs, as outlined in Appendix J of the USO National Deployment Agreement, will be held once the review period is complete and the DO has been jointly signed off as complete. The assessment criteria for proposed changes are as described in Appendix J of the USO National Deployment Agreement, and below.

Careful consideration must be given to the following criteria, in respect of any proposed start time changes:

- No additional workload can move from Core to LAT
- No deterioration in indoor productivities
- No increase in outdoor service failures
- No deterioration in departure times

The following should also be considered;

- The current Wave 1 / Wave 2 workload splits
- If a meal relief is scheduled before Wave 2 arrives in the DO
- Where quality of service targets are regularly being / not being achieved

2. Standardisation of long and short daily attendance times (Monday to Friday)

National Standard + Review Process

Historically delivery DOs have operated with a significant variation in long and short attendances, often not aligned to daily workload with associated risk to achieving productivity and Q of S targets. Through jointly reviewing the deployment of the 35

pilot DOs, our modelling and the development of the DM26 model, it was apparent that a longer attendance time was required Monday to Saturday to enable us to better resource to workload, acknowledging that Wednesday is now the heaviest day of the week for parcel traffic (**Appendix A**). We jointly recognise that each DO is different and have therefore agreed to the following review steps post deployment.

On initial deployment, the agreed 9 duty patterns, described in Appendix E of the USO National Deployment Agreement contain standardised day lengths that will be adopted by all DOs. Variations are permitted in Northern Ireland and North Scotland linked to T48 service specification (**Appendix B**)

To move forward on this issue, all DOs that deploy their USO changes prior to the end of August 2026, (c750 DOs), will have an opportunity to review weekday attendance lengths (Monday to Friday) as part of the post deployment review. This activity will include an assessment of how current day lengths are impacting on performance, utilising financial, productivity and Q of S performance data and insights gained from IWT, SISO & PDA OA.

All DOs deploying after August 2026 (c500 DOs) will have the same opportunity in January 2027.

As part of this review, against the standard day lengths contained in the 9 duty options, it is agreed that a maximum of +/- 10 mins variance in weekday attendance would be permitted, based on local assessment. The need to vary the day lengths-must be justified in the DO's proposed submission which will be reviewed and signed off by the RSG and assured via a standard process.

The assessment criteria for proposed changes are as described in Appendix J of the USO National Deployment Agreement, and in section 1 above.

3. Length of Saturday Attendance

National Standard + Review Process

Given the Quality of Service underperformance on Saturday and the opportunity presented by the resolution to the start times, section 1 above (c50% of DOs with scope to start earlier than today) there is no further scope at this stage to review the length of Saturday attendances.

In January 2027 all DOs will have an opportunity to review Saturday attendance lengths, to understand the impact on performance utilising financial, productivity and Q of S performance data and insights gained from IWT, SISO & PDA OA. Any such changes to a Saturday attendance length will be limited to a maximum of +/- 10 mins from the duty lengths described in Appendix E of the USO National Deployment Agreement.

Proposals developed by DOs will be reviewed and signed off by the RSG and assured via a standard process.

The assessment criteria for proposed changes are as described in Appendix J of the USO National Deployment Agreement, and in section 1 above.

4. Ability to select from 9 Duty options where delivery spans breaches 16:30pm

National Standard

When deploying ENW we established a 16:30pm last letter time (not end of duty) as a reasonable finish time for next day delivery, whilst recognising that some geographical areas around the UK were already finishing closer to, or later than this time.

Given the increased length of weekday attendance times contained in the national USO deployment agreement standard duty sets, we anticipate more DOs will move closer to or beyond the 16:30pm last letter time.

Both parties recognise that the resolution to issue 1 above, will help bring forward finish times in many DOs, aside from a Wednesday, which is established as the earliest permissible weekday start time.

Pragmatism will be applied by the RSG with support from the assurance team, assessing the significance of the 16:30pm breach (number of days and by what extent). For example, if a DO was to move from a 1:6 to a 4-day week attendance this would extend the working day by up to c2 hours which could have a significant impact on delivery completion times. (from 15:30 today to 17:30 in future. The selection of a duty pattern that would breach 16:30 on the majority of days would not be accepted. However, the RSGs and the Assurance team will be pragmatic when reviewing less significant/frequent breaches to ensure the greatest possible choice of duty pattern is afforded to DOs.

It is agreed that no further start time changes will be accepted beyond what is agreed above, solely to enable a wider selection of duty pattern.

5. DOs seeking to retain a Banked option which is a minority (1-40%) banked duty set today

National Standard

Where a DO has a banked duty option, as the minority (1-40%) duty option today, it is agreed that they cannot select the 2:5 banked option as the new majority duty set. However, the 2:5 banked option can be retained as a minority duty set but may not be extended beyond the current duties operating a banked system. For e.g. if currently 10% of duties performed a banked option, this percentage cannot increase unless this helps create a “complete set” of duties for ease of resourcing.

Some DOs may have a minority of standard duties performed with a majority of banked duties. It is agreed that DOs which have a majority banked pattern today can select the 2:5 banked option. As above, a minority of duties can retain the standard 2:5 version, in complete sets.

6. DOs seeking to retain a Banked option which is a majority (61-100%) banked duty set today

National Standard

The agreement and subsequent correspondence are clear on this matter. All DOs currently operating a majority (61-100%) banked duty pattern will have the option of retaining a banked duty pattern by selecting the 2:5 banked option. The initial 7 duty options were extended to 9 duty options to cater for a retained banked system. Adding a 10th duty option at this stage, post agreement and in the deployment phase, does not align with the goal of simplifying duties options across the delivery operation.

There are around 20 DOs currently operating the Hereford duty options, some of which are seeking to retain this as their predominant duty set. An additional review of the 2:5 banked options shows that this pattern provides for an extra c8 Saturday’s off per year, something that we know is important to colleagues. The slightly shorter working day assists with any potential impact on 16:30 last letter time and supports a reduction in fatigue by providing more consecutive rest days. Those DOs on the Hereford duty option who wish to retain a banked duty option should therefore select the 2:5 banked option as outlined in the agreement.

Comparison of Hereford v 2:5 Banked options.

| | 2 in 5 Banked | Hereford |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Full Week Off | Every 5 weeks | Every 4 weeks |
| Days off per cycle | 7 days every 5 weeks | 6 days every 4 weeks |
| Days off (ave) | 1.4 per week | 1.5 per week |
| Weekly Attendance | 3 weeks x 48:10hrs | 3 x 49:20hrs |
| | 1 week x 40:30hrs | |
| Daily Attendance | | |
| Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri | 8:00hrs | 8:15hrs |
| Wed | 8:30hrs | 8:40hrs |
| Sat | 7:40hrs | 7:40hrs |
| Saturdays off (per year) | 20.8 | 13 |
| Saturdays off per cycle | 2 every 5 weeks | 1 every 4 weeks |
| Days worked consecutively | 23 | 18 |
| Consecutive rest periods | 7 days | 6 days |

7. DOs seeking to retain a Banked option which is a neither a minority (1-40%) or majority (61-100%) banked duty set today

National Standard

We recognise that some DOs have banked duty patterns that do not fall into either the minority (1-40%) or majority (61-100%) criteria.

Analysis shows that there are 37 units (**Appendix C**) that have the potential to fall into this category. Duty proposals for these DOs will be reviewed for resourcing and operational complexity and signed off by the RSG and assured via a standard process.

8. Indoor Performance

National Standard

Whilst USO deployment is a method change; it is important to review indoor performance to ensure that the DO has an efficient and workable indoor plan in place and at the very least maintains the current BSI performance on deployment.

Both parties recognise that there are both performance and structural (e.g. layout, multi-floor working and parking) issues, which impact on the ability of a DO to achieve 100BSI. In addition, the deployment of DM26 will change the indoor set up within each unit which will need to be reviewed, following guidance issued by the Joint Productivity Working Group. This should not delay the deployment of DM26.

Further guidance on this subject can be found in the Royal Mail and CWU Joint Guide covering Model Week – IWT Lite – Traffic Challenge Process: USO Reform DM 2026 – 1st June 2026

Appendix A – Parcel Demand Profile by Day



Appendix B – T48 Service Specification (>Day C)

| T48 Mon-Sat delivery coverage postcodes with delivery on day C & D or shared C/D/E New from 13/4/26 | | | |
|--|-------------------|--|------------------|
| Due day of delivery | C | D (new from 13/4/26) | E |
| AB | 1-29, 39 | 30-35, 36-38, 41-45, 51-53, 54-56 | - |
| BT | | ALL | |
| DD | 1-7, 11 | 8-10 | |
| DG | DG1-4,5, 6, 10-16 | 7-9 | |
| FK | 1-7, 9-14 | 8, 15-17, 18-21 | |
| GY | | ALL | |
| HS | | | ALL |
| IM | | ALL | |
| IV | | ALL | |
| JE | | ALL | |
| KA | 1-26 | 27-28 | |
| KW | | 1-14 | 15-17 |
| PA | 1-19 | 20, 21-27, 28-38 | 41-49, 60-78, 80 |
| PH | 1-9, 12, 15-16 | 10-11, 13-14, 17-18, 19-26, 30, 31-40, 41, 49-50 | 42-43-44 |
| TD | 1-14 | 15 | |
| TR | 1-20, 26 | 21-25 | |
| ZE | | | ALL |

Appendix C

DELIVERY OFFICE

BEXLEYHEATH DELIVERY SUMMARY
BOGNOR REGIS DELIVERY SUMMARY
BURTON ON TRENT DELIVERY SUMMARY
CARDIFF DELIVERY SUMMARY
CARDIGAN DELIVERY SUMMARY
CARMARTHEN DELIVERY SUMMARY
CHEADLE SK DELIVERY SUMMARY
CHESTERFIELD DELIVERY SUMMARY
CHRISTCHURCH DELIVERY SUMMARY
CLIFTON NG DELIVERY SUMMARY
COLCHESTER DELIVERY SUMMARY
DAVENTRY DELIVERY SUMMARY
DENBIGH DELIVERY SUMMARY
FAREHAM DELIVERY SUMMARY
GLAISDALE PARKWAY DELIVERY SUMMARY
HAVERHILL DELIVERY SUMMARY
HAYLING ISLAND DELIVERY SUMMARY
LEATHERHEAD DELIVERY SUMMARY
LERWICK DELIVERY SUMMARY
LICHFIELD DELIVERY SUMMARY
LONGTON DELIVERY SUMMARY
MAIDENHEAD DELIVERY SUMMARY
MARCH DELIVERY SUMMARY
NEWPORT PAGNELL DELIVERY SUMMARY
NORTH TYNESIDE DELIVERY SUMMARY
NOTTINGHAM NORTH DELIVERY SUMMARY
PONTARDAWE DELIVERY SUMMARY
POTTERS BAR DELIVERY SUMMARY
RAINHAM RM DELIVERY SUMMARY
READING DELIVERY SUMMARY
RUISLIP DELIVERY SUMMARY
ST LEONARDS ON SEA DELIVERY SUMMARY
SWADLINCOTE DELIVERY SUMMARY
SWANSEA DELIVERY SUMMARY
TIPTREE DELIVERY SUMMARY
UPMINSTER DELIVERY SUMMARY
WATERLOOVILLE DELIVERY SUMMARY