

No. 203/26

17th July 2026

Dear Colleague,

UPDATE ON DM26

It is now just over six weeks since the membership ratified the USO reform agreement. The attached report is designed to give reps and members a full update on the 120 Delivery units that were deployed up to Monday 13th July.

This is without a doubt the biggest-ever change to deliveries, and the full terms and safeguards of our agreement must be applied to every single delivery unit.

The agreement is crystal clear; no units should deploy until they have completed the following processes (details are explained in the report) and have received approval from the Regional Steering Group.

- Rapid Base Data Validation
- Unit Health Check
- Scoping Exercise
- Go/No Go Process

Even once a unit has navigated through this process no unit should deploy unless the delivery unit is clear on deployment and each duty is resourced to and the reserve level is fully staffed. Depending on the size of your units, the above is a lengthy process which all units must complete in advance of deployment.

The agreement is designed to allow for local input, recognising that each delivery unit is different and therefore you are best placed to influence what will work in your unit. The agreement clearly allows for bespoke/non-standard solutions to be cleared by the Regional Steering Working Groups, which will ensure that DM26 lands better in the unit and achieves the quality targets.

The agreement has been planned on the basis that your unit will have the full support of all reps - local, area, divisional and national, to ensure that your unit is in the best possible position to deploy DM26, which includes ensuring on deployment that you have a clear office and full resources, including, as a minimum, a one in six reserve level.

We have asked the Divisional Reps to work with their Area Delivery Reps to complete proformas on how delivery units are working under DM26 and how the Regional Steering Groups are working. This information will be used to provide you with further updates.

The reports and data demonstrate that most of the deployed units are working, and delivery point coverage has improved. However, it is very much early days, with only small and medium units deployed thus far.

The feedback from members in some of the units has been good, especially in units that were previously failing every day, with members coming into frames of mail that did not go out.

There are also reports that a minority of the units have not landed well and need to be fixed, including, if necessary, by introducing extra hours, duties or equipment. The most common theme for those not working is they did not follow all the pre deployment checks in full. The agreement also states that there must be a mandatory review, and no surplus employees will be removed unless the unit is achieving all its quality targets.

We can also report that 338 part-timers have either got a permanent or temporary full-time job, and a further 134 have got an increase in contracted hours in the first 85 delivery units deployed (RM systems run 2 weeks behind which is why this is not for the 120 units deployed). There are a further 1,165 Delivery units to deploy, so this will significantly increase with further deployment.

One point of clarification which will be a clear benefit for some units is delivery units that currently start later on one or more days than the current Wednesday start time can, on deployment, start at the Wednesday start time across the week and we are sharing as much information with CWU Divisional Reps to help support this activity. For example, the DDS (Delivery Duty Scheduler) is showing that:

Glasgow Rutherglen starts 15 minutes later on a Monday compared to Wednesday, 45 minutes later on a Tuesday, 15 minutes later on a Friday and 15 minutes later on a Saturday. They will now be able to start earlier on those days, at the same time as Wednesday start times.

Leyland is starting 50 minutes later on Monday and Tuesday than on Wednesday, and 20 minutes later on Friday and 36 minutes later on Saturday. They will now be able to start earlier on those days, commencing at the same time as on Wednesday.

We realise change is always difficult; our commitment is that we will support you through this process. The agreement is designed to ensure that USO change is successfully delivered across all units and fixed if issues arise.

The CWU at all levels are committed to ensuring that your delivery unit is not only in the best position to deploy but also sees the benefits of extra Saturdays or days off, and that your unit is clearing daily.

We will provide further updates on how units are progressing, including which units have completed their review.

Any enquiries relating to the content of this LTB should be referred to the Deputy General Secretary (Postal) department hford@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Walsh
Deputy General Secretary (Postal)



Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary



Tony Bouch
Assistant Secretary

Now the USO agreement is six weeks old this document sets out to give all Branches and members a full update on the introduction of DM26 and how it is initially working.

There is a lot of information that must be completed, linked to DM26 and then signed off before any unit goes live. This process must be overseen by the Regional Steering Groups, consisting of the relevant Regional Operations Manager and Divisional Rep, supported by the Area Reps and managers who have the final say on whether that unit is in the right position to deploy.

All delivery units must complete the following as part of the pre-deployment process:

1. Rapid Base Data Validation (utilising the base data captured in 2025)

This involves a comprehensive overview of your unit's performance and operation.

This includes:

- A joint review of the number of routes.
- The average delivery span against planned.
- How many CDVs, Singleton, HCTs, Firms and Rurals an office has.
- The number of collections on delivery per route.
- The amount of overtime and SA used to complete deliveries.
- Actual indoor time against planned.
- Out on delivery time against planned.
- Yard to yard time.
- Number of Saturday retentions.

2. Health Check (Appendix C of the annex)

The Unit Health Check is a deep dive into the unit including understanding the following:

- Is Route Manager accurate?
- Are you aware of any future delivery point growth in the next 6 months?
- Does the delivery unit have an indoor plan, including a prep plan?
- Ensuring that all duty holders know their go out on delivery time.
- Is there a plan for D2D items, including being prepped and delivered each week?
- Are resourcing meetings taking place?
- Does the delivery unit have an effective manpower plan in place?
- Are USO failures being accurately recorded?

3. Scoping Exercise (Appendix D of the annex)

This allows for part timers to put themselves forward for an increase in hours up to full time and for employees to express an interest to move to another office on a voluntary basis where there is a vacancy.

4. Resourcing Flow Charts (Appendix F of the annex)

This process is a crucial part of the agreed process and covers the following:

- CWU members select a duty pattern.
- Inputting any extra routes which the unit need.
- Introduce a reserve level of 1:6 including ensuring there are enough full-time reserves to cover annual leave etc.
- Ensuring Rest Day Covers are in place.
- Allowing for flexible working requests and reasonable adjustments based on OH advice.
- Ensuring that any Sunday operations are planned into attendance patterns/duties.
- Deciding if the unit wants a temporary repick (full repick will take place as part of the review process).
- Ensuring every duty is resourced on deployment.

The agreement allows for local involvement and local solutions as each unit is different. However, you have the full support of the Regional Steering Groups.

No unit should go live without following the above processes that need to be agreed by the Regional Steering Group.

Go/No Go Process

Prior to any unit going live there must be a joint review which includes the following:

- Agreed the number of routes.
- Whether they need any additional walks back in as part of the validation exercise.
- There is an indoor plan in place.
- The mail centre will provide the work appropriate and at the right times.
- Resourcing plan in place for the first six weeks.
- Frames are colour coded.
- Plan for D2D.
- Plan for collections.
- Plan in place on weekend of change to ensure offices are all clear.

DM26 UPDATE



The above are just several considerations and there are 30 points which need to be checked and cleared before deployment.

Under no circumstances should a unit deploy without going through this Go/No Go process.

How many units have deployed?

So far 120 units have deployed DM26. To date, it is mainly small and medium delivery units that have deployed.

There are 12 Regional Operations Directors, and the following table is a breakdown of how many units have been deployed per ROD Area.

REGIONAL OPERATIONS DIRECTOR AREA	HOW MANY UNITS DEPLOYED DM26
North West	32 units deployed
Wales	18 units deployed
Scotland	13 units deployed
Northern Ireland and North East	11 units deployed
Yorkshire	12 units deployed
Midlands	10 units deployed
Greater London	6 units deployed
South West	6 units deployed
South Central	6 units deployed
South East	2 unit deployed
South Midlands	2 unit deployed
Anglia	2 units deployed

Are the units which have deployed working?

The majority seem to be working. Our reps are reporting this and the statistics on USO delivery point coverage seem to confirm it, as the business is reporting that the 4 week rolling average on Delivery Point USO coverage is 96.8% compared to the National DP USO coverage being 84.7%.

However, a minority of units are not working for a variety of reasons, ranging from high sick absence to singleton vans and increased parcel volumes.

We have put in place a pro forma that must be completed each week by the Area Delivery Rep to ensure we have a more accurate picture of how the unit is working from local members on the ground.

Our senior reps reported at a meeting last week that most deployed units are clearing traffic due for delivery, and the feedback from members is positive, especially in those units where before DM26 they would come into their office to work that had not gone out previously and caused greater problems.

How many part time employees have been given a contract uplift in the deployed units?

Shown below are the number of part timers who have either been given a permanent or temporary uplift to full time in 85 units. The reason some are temporary is that the unit may have a surplus. Until the end of the review it will remain temporary, once it is needed going forward it will become permanent.

Royal Mail systems run two weeks behind so we cannot see as yet the impact from all 120 units deployed.

We have also listed those part timers who have had an increase in their contracted hours but have remained part time, both permanent and temporary.

- **PT to FT** – 202 OPGs given permanent changes, 134 OPGs given a temporary variation of contract pending the offices' review.
- **PT increasing contracted hours less than FT** - 99 OPGs given permanent changes, 35 OPGs given a temporary variation of contract pending the offices' review.

Listed below are the numbers per Regional Operations Director Area.

ROD AREA	PERMANENT FULL TIME UPLIFTS	TEMPORARY FULL TIME UPLIFTS	PERMANENT INCREASE IN PART TIME HOURS	TEMPORARY INCREASE IN PART TIME HOURS	TOTAL
Greater London	4	4			8
Midlands	17	8	9	3	47
Northern Ireland and North East	23	13	14	2	52
North West	36	67	15	22	140
Scotland	17	6	13	7	43
South Central	14			1	15
South West			8		8
Wales	55	19	38		112
Yorkshire	36	7	2		45
Total	204	134	99	35	470

Going forward we will continue to provide you with regular updates of part time increases in hours.

What are the improved attendance patterns that the units have selected for DM26?

The agreement allows CWU members to vote on the duty pattern they want. The units which have deployed have chosen to vote for the following patterns:

NUMBER OF UNITS	ATTENDANCE PATTERN OPTION
71 Units	2 in 5
15 Units	2 in 5 Banked
2 Unit	4 Day Week
25 Units	9 Day Fortnight Option 1
5 Units	9 Day Fortnight Option 2
1 Unit	9 Day Fortnight Option 3
1 Unit	Other (2 patterns deployed)

What is the review which units must undertake?

There is a formal review process which is mandatory for all units. The review for small units commences three weeks after deployment and it is aimed to be completed after six weeks.

For medium units it commences after six weeks, and it is aimed to conclude the review by nine weeks.

For larger units the review commences after nine weeks and is expected to conclude by twelve weeks.

The review will cover the following:

- Delivery unit achieving all quality targets.
- Reviewing any indoor or outdoor failures and USO coverage.
- Ensure duties have fair, manageable and achievable workload.
- Review go out on delivery time.
- Yard to yard time.
- Accidents on duty.
- Sickness levels.
- Route classification and method.
- Review the improved attendance patterns.

There is then an opportunity for the 183 units most impacted by the Network Review (when Royal Mail ceased the use of airplanes across the mainland) to start 15 minutes earlier Monday to Saturday. 118 of these units are in Scotland.

All other units can, as part of the mail centre pipeline review of the revised CSS operations, assess their start time on Mondays and Saturdays.

The agreement is clear, until a unit is achieving the quality targets then any surplus of employees will remain and remedial action will be taken to fix the duty.

Once a unit is working and jointly signed off then any temporary part time contract uplifts will be made permanent and a full resign will commence.

Points to remember with DM26

The following are all points which are confirmed in the agreement or the Points of Clarification document.

- That the maximum Saturday working day under DM26 is 7 hours 40 minutes.
- There is no requirement to start later.
- Units who have a later start time on one or more days of the week than the Wednesday, can align their start times to that of the Wednesday.
- You can review the Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday daily attendance length within the formal office review.
- You can review the Saturday attendance length in January 2027.
- You can retain a Wallington/banked duty set by selecting the 2:5 banked attendance. This applies to where a Wallington/banked duty pattern is a minority duty set i.e. below 40% of the total delivery unit's attendance pattern or where it is the majority duty set i.e. over 60% of the delivery unit attendance pattern.
- The remaining 37 units operating a Wallington/banked duty pattern will be reviewed by the Regional Steering Groups.
- That it is anticipated that 183 units (118 in Scotland) will be able to start earlier Monday to Saturday within the formal review.
- All other units can review their start times on a Monday and Saturday as part of the CSS review.
- Units only have to maintain their indoor performance when deploying DM26, there is no requirement to achieve 100BSi.

The role of the Assurance Team

This is an area which is causing some problems. As with all significant change programmes there will always be a need for an assurance team whose role would be to ensure that the whole programme is on track and is going to deliver the agreed goals.

However, the national agreement is quite clear that all units are different and there may be the need for different solutions which work for their unit. The Regional Steering Groups has full autonomy to agree or reject planned changes.

Conclusion

Whilst it is early days the agreement seems to be operating well, and most of the deployments seems to be working well. However, it is essential that the units which are not working are fixed quickly.

In addition, we must recognise now that the units being deployed are small to medium units and we may face bigger challenges when the large units are deployed.

Our collective aim at all levels of the union is that we will support all our members through this change in line with our collective agreements.