LETTER TO BRANCHES

The Communications Union @CWUNews #TheCWU CWU.ORG

No. 311/26

12th November 2026

For the Immediate Attention of All:

Postal Branches
Divisional Representatives
Area Distribution Representatives
LGV Representatives

Dear Colleagues,

JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN ROYAL MAIL NATIONAL LOGISTICS AND THE CWU REGARDING BANK HOLIDAY RESOURCING FOR NETWORK PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS, CHRISTMAS 2026/27

Colleagues will recall that as an integral part of the 2007 Professional Drivers Agreement, Bank Holidays effectively became normal working days for Network LGV Drivers and while we have long had an understanding with the business that, where possible, attendance would be on a voluntary basis, in reality our members can be compelled to attend on those days where sufficient numbers fail to volunteer. In line with the PDA, all staff who attend are credited with a lieu day.

Branches and representatives will be aware that, in addition to the generic Christmas Arrangements Agreement, the department has in previous years reached agreement with Royal Mail Logistics on specific guidelines covering the resourcing of Network LGV duties across the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays.

In line with previous arrangements, discussions have therefore taken place with the business, and the attached Joint Statement has been concluded and endorsed by the Postal Executive.

The Joint Statement reaffirms the following commitments:

- Advance planning;
- A wholly voluntary approach to any attendance on Christmas Day;
- The use of the full range of resourcing options to reduce the burden on our members;
- A commitment to only run essential services on Bank Holidays;
- A commitment to minimise any mandatory attendance – no driver asked to attend on both the Boxing Day and New Year Bank Holidays.
- Given that this year Boxing Day falls on a Saturday and the Bank Holiday moves to Monday 28th December, drivers who work on 26 December, which is not a Bank Holiday will have a day added to their annual holiday or alternatively can claim pay for the hours worked on the day as overtime

Additionally, in line with last year's activity we have also confirmed the wording concerning the business decision to offer a temporary minimum 8-hour paid shift for LGV external resource during the period

CWU 150 The Broadway | Wimbledon | London | SW19 1RX
E: info@cwu.org | T: 020 8971 7200 | F: 020 8971 7300
General Secretary: Dave Ward | @DaveWardGS | Dave Ward CWU

26th October until 20th December. Royal Mail stated that they have had to do this to secure sufficient additional resource to cover increased workload during the peak period.

The department argued that Royal Mail was treating Agency drivers more favourably than employed drivers and following discussions we have secured the extension of the minimum attendance of 8-hours to Royal Mail Drivers performing duties less than 8-hours, subject to full compliance with Driver Hours and Working Time restrictions.

For Royal Mail Drivers any extension to 8 hours will be voluntary and will be dependent on coverage of available workload during the extended hours. To confirm, this is a temporary arrangement that does not alter any existing terms and conditions and applies only within the specified dates.

In light of reports that RM were offering enhanced rates to agency workers in Delivery during peak we asked for confirmation that no enhanced rates would be offered to agency drivers covering Professional Driver Grade work. Royal Mail have confirmed that they have no current plans to do so.

Much like in previous years, the department believes that the attached clarification provided in relation to the arrangements for 2026/27 will be welcomed by representatives and members.

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 311/26.

Yours sincerely,

Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary

JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN ROYAL MAIL NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION AND THE CWU REGARDING BANK HOLIDAY RESOURCING FOR LINEHAUL (NETWORK) PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS

Christmas & New year 2026/27

Background

The National Agreement for the Implementation of the Road Transport Directive and the Introduction of the Professional Driver (PDA) created the Professional Driver as a new and distinct grade. For Linehaul (Network) Professional Drivers, in return for industry leading terms and conditions, this progressive agreement between Royal Mail and the CWU predicted the growth of customer activity during the weekends and on Bank Holidays and provided the commitment and the remuneration for drivers to attend on these days as part of normal working.

Since 2007, attendance during the weekends and on Bank Holidays has progressively increased due to retail activity and increased customer demand as internet fulfilment has grown considerably. The deployment of the Professional Drivers Agreement in this regard and the utilisation of its full range of resourcing options has ensured that the business has been able to meet its commercial commitments, however both parties recognise that the significant increase in Bank Holiday attendance has created some challenges in regard to a fair approach to allocation and attendance.

In particular, it is recognised that the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays are in general viewed as distinct and special by Professional Drivers and their families. Given the increase in demand for services on these days in recent years both Royal Mail National Distribution and the CWU believe that it is appropriate to agree supporting guidelines to the PDA, to ensure fairness in resourcing, maximise opportunities for time off and limit individual mandatory commitment whilst maintaining efficient customer service.

The safety, health and wellbeing of all employees remains jointly our 1st priority at all times and throughout this year's peak operation.

Approach to Christmas and New Year Resourcing

The business has a clear commitment to provide robust resourcing arrangements to ensure customer and operational needs and USO obligations are met during the Bank Holiday period over the Christmas and New Year, while balancing the aspirations of the workforce to spend time with their families over the festive period.

A consensus has therefore been reached between Royal Mail and CWU to maximise the availability of leave on these critical Bank Holidays to Professional Drivers over Christmas and New Year. The following principles have been developed between the business and CWU in order to ensure fairness in resourcing for Linehaul (Network) Professional Drivers at all of the Vehicle Operating Centres and Distribution Hubs. These should be utilised to shape local resourcing arrangements for the Christmas and New Year holiday period, the aim being to work collaboratively in order to achieve the optimum agreed outcome in line with these principles.

- Both parties reaffirm that there are no current plans to operate a nationwide service on Christmas Day; as such no Professional Drivers will be compelled to attend on this day. Exceptionally where any customer driven services are required on Christmas Day, it is agreed that our aspiration for attendance will be on a wholly voluntary basis with work covered utilising the full range of resourcing options detailed below.

- Forward planning is becoming increasingly difficult and customer volumes and product volatility is a particular challenge over the critical Christmas and New Year period. As far as possible, Royal Mail will commit to planning attendances well in advance providing certainty to the Professional Drivers and enabling them to arrange their personal work life balance in as much time as is practically possible.

- Resourcing plans will be reviewed and agreed locally as a matter of urgency and no later than Thursday 15th December 2026

- Royal Mail has the aspiration to ensure that the resourcing requirement for our directly employed Professional Drivers is as low as possible and commits to using the full range of existing agreed mixed resourcing options available. Equally workload will be scheduled on the basis of commercial or operational necessity, as such non-priority work will not be scheduled during these Bank Holidays.

- On the Bank Holidays where a National Linehaul (Network) operation is run it is anticipated that most VOCs will be open and operational. There may be instances however where for operational reasons a VOC remains closed. In such cases it is agreed that such closures should not result in a net increased workload obligation at neighbouring operational VOCs.

- Royal Mail will seek to resource the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays through volunteers as far as possible. Where there are insufficient volunteers an open "fair share" approach will be developed across the Professional Drivers. (Driver hours' limitations may restrict the pool of available drivers).

- With regard to Boxing Day (28/12/2026) and the New Year's Day (01/01/2027) Bank Holidays it is agreed that wherever possible, any mandatory attendance requirement in line with the PDA Agreement for any individual will be limited to only one of these days.

- The business will look to complete operations as early as possible on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, and it is expected that drivers will support modified attendances to support this objective. Drivers will take a maximum of two Bank Holidays for Christmas and one for New Year (two in Scotland).

- Both parties recognise the context for Bank Holiday attendance over Christmas and New Year is covered within the Professional Drivers Agreement and the remuneration has already been addressed. Where a driver is required to attend during a Bank Holiday a day will be added to that employee's annual leave entitlement to be taken under current arrangements where authorised in line with operational requirements. However in line with local arrangements in recent years, for the festive Bank Holidays only, where it enhances the availability of volunteers, drivers may elect to receive remuneration at overtime rate for the hours worked on the Bank Holiday as an alternative to the days leave.

Saturday 26th December 2026 & Saturday 2nd January (Scotland Only)

To support contract customer requirements the National Distribution Network will run a significant operation on the non USO day (Saturday 26th December). This will require more drivers than normally scheduled to attend on a Saturday. Exceptionally therefore resourcing arrangements for attendance and remuneration for the 26th December will mirror those defined above for Bank Holidays in recognition of the importance that our drivers and their families place on this day.

Resourcing arrangements will prioritise volunteers in the first instance supported by the full range of mixed resourcing options available. Where this still results in a shortfall resourcing arrangements will be made in line with the terms of the Professional Drivers Agreement.

Therefore, although not a bank holiday, drivers who work on 26 December will have a day added to their annual holiday or alternatively can claim pay for the hours worked on the day as overtime. The same arrangements will apply to Scottish based VOC's on the 2nd January 2027.

This Joint Statement covers the scheduling and working of Network Professional Drivers within National Logistics only. It is recognised that any requirement to resource MGV workload on Bank Holidays will be progressed in line with the terms of the generic National agreement on Christmas Arrangements 2026

From 26th October to 20th December 2026, to support operations and make use of additional peak-period vehicles, the business has agreed to a temporary minimum 8-hour paid shift for LGV external resource. This will also apply to Royal Mail drivers on duties under 8 hours, subject to full compliance with Driver Hours and Working Time restriction. The aim is to help absorb increased workload.

For Royal Mail Drivers any extension to 8 hours will be voluntary and will be dependant on coverage of available workload during the extended hours.

This is a temporary arrangement that does not alter any existing terms and conditions and applies only within the specified dates.

Local discussions on resourcing should be completed at the earliest possible juncture to give the maximum levels of certainty to all our drivers. Discussions should be progressed in line with the IR Framework and the Network Working Group will be available to assist should it become necessary.

This Joint statement covers the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays only. Resourcing for all other Bank Holidays will continue to be progressed in line with the terms of the Professional Drivers Agreement.

Any issues of interpretation should be referred to the signatories of this agreement.





Nick Dunn
Network Director
Royal Mail

Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary
CWU

Date: 11th November 2026