

# Royal Mail workers at Mt Pleasant and Salisbury condemn USO pilots: “It can’t keep going on like this”

Our reporters  
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Communication Workers Union (CWU) officials are continuing their imposition of Universal Service Obligation (USO) pilots at 37 targeted delivery offices across the UK. They are waging a massive PR campaign to conceal the implications of the pilot scheme.

A *CWU Live* online event last week hosted by *Novara Media*’s Michael Walker, saw the union’s outdoor secretary Tony Bouch parrot claims by CWU leaders Dave Ward and Martin Walsh that the USO pilots are to improve quality of service and alleviate workloads.

CWU officials claim that Royal Mail’s new Optimised Delivery Model will give delivery workers more Saturdays off. But they will pay for this “privilege” through expanded duties and heavier workloads on weekdays.

Today’s update follows campaigns at delivery offices in Inverness and Glasgow in Scotland; Bradford North in West Yorkshire; Oldham Road in Manchester; Mount Pleasant in London; and Salisbury in Wiltshire.

*World Socialist Web Site* reporting teams distributed statements there from the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (PWRFC). The committee is calling for workplace meetings at all pilot sites to block the reforms being enforced by the CWU aimed at dismantling the USO and transforming Royal Mail into a gig economy company under billionaire Daniel Kretinsky.

*Please send information about the USO pilots or any feedback using the form below.*

At **Mount Pleasant Mail Centre and delivery office in Farringdon**, a WSWs reporting team distributed 100 copies of the statement by the Postal Workers Rank-

and-File Committee (PWRFC), “Call workplace meetings at Royal Mail delivery offices to oppose USO .”

There was broad recognition that the scheme is targeting Royal Mail’s entire workforce, and receptivity toward the committee’s call for a boycott of the pilot scheme. A worker said, “It’s going to affect the entire Royal Mail workforce and we’re going to fight it.”

Another young worker took the leaflet saying, “Dave Ward needs a kick up the arse. Power to the people. I will read this.”

Postal workers were scathing about the CWU’s collusion with USO reform and the union’s support for Kretinsky’s £3.5 billion takeover of Royal Mail. “Kretinsky’s here all the time surveying his kingdom,” a worker said. “It’s difficult to stop privatization, but what I do know is the union are in on it.”

A senior postal worker said, “The union don’t care about us, so why should we care about them? About 25 percent of my colleagues are considering leaving the union. I read these leaflets you put in and I will look at signing up. It can’t keep going on like this.”

A temporary postal worker said, “I’ve been offered a full-time post by management six times over the past five years, none of which has materialized into a full-time post. I would estimate about 20-25 percent of staff at Mount Pleasant are on casual temporary contracts.”

Another worker said, “This is the biggest sorting office in western Europe. There are 250 vans underneath that building. Drivers for W1, West Central and EC were getting a drivers’ allowance for 30 years. All of a sudden they just stopped that. It’s going to court now. They broke three laws. It’s like the post

office scandal recently. This should be in the papers. The public should know about this.

“You have to remember that 30 years ago the union used to fight for us, now they are part of management.”

Another worker commented on the USO pilots, “We are not told anything. The atmosphere is not very nice, in fact it’s awful. I will take a bundle of these, many of my colleagues will be interested in this. I’ll flash over this QR code and look over it.”

At **Salisbury delivery office**, postal workers took leaflets, including a stack for the canteen and noticeboard. Everyone was aware they were included in the pilot, but weren’t sure what it would involve. CWU officials had handed out a few leaflets, but very few workers had heard any details beyond a joint union-management “briefing”.

A worker who took a stack of leaflets for inside said, “They’re getting rid of the old contracts so they can bring in the new slavery. The service is disgraceful now. They don’t care about the customers. It’s all about parcels now.”

Another said, “In the last few months it’s got so much worse.” His colleague reported they are already not delivering second-class post on Mondays and Tuesdays (under the Optimised Delivery Model agreed with the CWU). She said, “It’s not good for the people, they should continue second-class deliveries as before.”

A senior worker said, “When I started, if you had even one letter left at the end of your walk you’d be done for wilful obstruction of the mail.” The state of the vans was also unacceptable, “There’s no care taken over anything.” Even before their duty starts, they have to walk 20 minutes to get the van, then after that they have to walk another 20 minutes to hand back the keys.

Workers told WSWS reporters it was obvious the USO reform pilots were about job cuts, “If you’re making three men do four people’s jobs, then obviously the fourth will go.”

Another delivery worker said he agreed the rank-and-file need to oppose the pilots, “The service has gone out the window. They made first class expensive so nobody will use it, so they have an excuse to stop delivering letters.”

When WSWS reporters reminded him of Ward’s claim during the strike that a Labour government would improve things, the delivery worker laughed and said, “Labour aren’t going to do anything. Starmer doesn’t

care. They [the government] took the trains back [under public control], but only when the franchise expired.”



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