

# ROYAL MAIL DISPUTE – UPDATE



LETTER TO MEMBERS IN ROYAL MAIL

23.10.09

**Dear Colleague,**

We want to thank all of our members who have solidly supported the strike. In talks this week the union made progress in two key areas:

- Royal Mail finally accepted that imposed local change could be unpicked
- Royal Mail accepted that a final agreement must include improved job security, improved reward and a fair workload based on objective standards

When talks broke up late on Tuesday, both parties knew that whilst progress had been made no overall agreement had been reached. We also told Royal Mail that there was no prospect of us setting aside our national ballot until we had a full and final agreement on all outstanding issues.

The union's negotiating team were due to report back to the Postal Executive on Wednesday 21st October. The only decision we would have considered was whether or not the progress made was sufficient to postpone this week's strike and enable further negotiations in a calmer environment. However, prior to the meeting a letter was received from Mark Higson the Managing Director – who had not been at the negotiations. The letter completely wiped out the progress made.

The content of Mr Higson's letter, which was also released by Royal Mail to the media confirmed the following:

- That Mr Higson's view was diametrically opposed to his own negotiating team when he stated "there is no going back on change"
- That Mr Higson was completely aware that whilst progress had been made there was no overall agreement
- That Royal Mail were only interested in going to ACAS to talk about future relationships – not the substantive issues involved in this dispute

As a result of Mr Higson's letter the National Officers of the union unanimously agreed to place a document before the Executive Council announcing further strike action. We also agreed to formally request the assistance of ACAS without any pre-conditions. This document was unanimously agreed.

We then held a media conference to explain the position. This was covered live on both BBC News 24 and Sky News and lasted for approximately 40 minutes. It was only after the media conference that Royal Mail made their claims that an agreement had been reached. This was clearly not the company's position earlier in the day.

In the last couple of days the company has continued to put out misinformation. The union has responded by issuing a press release challenging the company to bring forward all of their documentation and place it before ACAS, where it can be fairly examined by an independent party. The CWU has nothing to hide.

The situation is very fluid and we will keep you abreast of further developments.

**UNITY IS STRENGTH.**

Yours sincerely,

**Dave Ward**  
Deputy General Secretary (Postal)

**Martin Collins**  
Assistant Secretary

**Ray Ellils**  
Assistant Secretary

**Bob Gibson**  
Assistant Secretary

**Terry Pullinger**  
Assistant Secretary