

CWU Bradford & District: Strike Ballot Brief: Deliveries **Walk Sequencing: Info & Questions to ask**

In 2007, when the ***Pay & Modernisation Agreement*** was signed up to by the CWU and Royal Mail nationally, it included four separate Phases. Phase 4 was a clear commitment by Royal Mail to negotiate a new set of National Agreements covering the impact of future Automation and Modernisation on CWU members. Royal Mail has now reneged on Phase 4 of the ***Pay & Modernisation Agreement***, and has refused to negotiate with the CWU over the future of our jobs.

This ***Strike Ballot Brief*** has been drawn up to explain why the CWU is insisting that Royal Mail must negotiate a new set of National Agreements on the Modernisation of the industry.

The impact of Walk Sequencing Machines:

Over the next couple of years, Royal Mail plans to introduce over 1000 Walk Sequencing Machines (WSMs) across the country. Back in August 2008, Royal Mail managers were planning to introduce 3 WSMs in Bradford South Delivery Office, and 3 in Harehills Delivery Office (Leeds), in October and November of that year.

The plan was that Bradford South office would sequence sort the mail for four offices: Bradford South, Cleckheaton, Halifax, and Hebden Bridge. A similar number of Delivery Offices in Leeds would have their mail sequenced by Harehills.

In September 2008, this 'project' was put on hold, but it became clear to the CWU at this time that the introduction of WSMs would have major implications for all who work on deliveries.

Each WSM will need 3 trained operators (or 4 including reserves), who will be full-time. So the good news is that this will mean a total of 9 (or 12) new full-time duties for every 3 machines, in those offices which actually get WSMs. However, there's no such thing as a free lunch, and Royal Mail is not planning to introduce these machines just to make all our jobs easier. The effect of these machines will be:

- 85% of mail will be walk sorted, leaving 15% as manual
- this 85% will then be prepped by machines into delivery order, leaving 15% to be prepped manually
- IPS manual sorting workload will be reduced by up to 2/3, or if your duty has 1.5 hours IPS per day in it now, then this could be reduced to 30 minutes
- Walk preparation workload will be reduced by around 50% per walk, or if your duty has 1.5 hours prep time per day in it now, then this could be reduced to 45 minutes

This reduction in workload will apply to ***all*** delivery offices across the country. Royal Mail has also been introducing Flats Sorting Machines into Mail Centres, which cut the amount of manual sorting of flats.

Deliveries: A part-time future?

It should be obvious that the effect of this new wave of Automation on Delivery Offices will be to cut the number of full-time duties, and cut the size of part-time contracts.

That is why it is vital that the CWU is able to negotiate a new National Agreement covering this next Phase. This alone will ensure that we defend full-time duties, by introducing a Shorter Working Week, and a new delivery model. Below is a list of questions that you might like to ask at your next Work Time Learning session.

Questions on Walk Sequencing:

1. Is our office getting any Walk Sequencing machines? If so, then when?
2. If our office isn't getting any machines, then which office will be Sequencing our mail? What affect will this have on our office?
3. What savings will Royal Mail make in our office by introducing Walk Sequencing?
4. How many Full-Time jobs will our office have after Walk Sequencing is introduced?
5. What contracted hours will a Part-Time duty have after Walk Sequencing is introduced?
6. Does Royal Mail plan to make all delivery duties Part-Time? How will Royal Mail maintain Full-Time duties?
7. What start and finish times will delivery duties have after the introduction of Walk Sequencing?
8. What about Saturday attendances? What time will duties start and finish?
9. The CWU wants to introduce a 35 hour Shorter Working Week without any loss of pay. This would help maintain Full-Time jobs and Part-Time earnings levels. What has Royal Mail got to say on that?
10. Why is Royal Mail refusing to negotiate with the CWU over how these Walk Sequencing Machines will be used, and their affect on our duties?

Vote YES in the National Strike Ballot!