

Letter to Branches

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General Secretary: Billy Hayes (www.billyhayes.co.uk)

No. 689/2009

Ref. 13000

Date: 6th August 2009

TO: ALL BRANCHES WITH POSTAL MEMBERS

Dear Colleague

NEGOTIATIONS WITH ROYAL MAIL

It has been drawn to our attention that Royal Mail is selectively handing out, in workplaces, letters that have been written to the Union, explaining their view of what has taken place in negotiations.

We do not believe that this is the way to conduct proper industrial relations, but unfortunately we have no alternative other than to respond by enclosing recent correspondence and providing our Branches and members with the full picture.

We have seen similar tactics, from the company, in other disputes and they really do epitomise some of the underlying problems which makes industrial relations very difficult.

The company are prepared to meet the Union and it is progress to see that they now recognise that the 2007 Agreement was not the end of the negotiating process on modernisation. This was not their position a few weeks ago. The problem is once the meetings commence the company revert to their position of we make the decisions and you do what you are told. This attitude prevails at the very top of the business and it is little wonder that managers across the UK adopt a similar stance.

In announcing today's national industrial action ballot timetable we all know that Royal Mail will fully utilise all of their normal propaganda tools. Their central tactic being to split people in offices, areas, regions and the country.

The Union will respond to Royal Mail's propaganda throughout the next few weeks with detailed communications that will make it clear that the issues involved in the national dispute are fundamental to the future of all CWU members.

Please ensure our members are aware of these developments.

Yours sincerely



Dave Ward
Deputy General Secretary (P)



Ray Ellis
Assistant Secretary

COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION
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From the office of Dave Ward | Deputy General Secretary (Postal)
Email dward@cwu.org | Direct line 020 8971 7303
Web www.cwu.org/dgsp

Our Ref : DW/JDD
6 August 2009

Mr Dale Haddon
HR Director
Royal Mail Letters
HR Director
35 Rathbone Place
London W1P 1HQ

Dear Dale

I am in receipt of your letter dated 6th August.

You have been aware for weeks that the Union was on the brink of a national industrial action ballot.

In January 2009, the Union wrote to the Chief Executive calling for an Industrial Relations Summit, following the criticisms which were levelled at both of our organisations in the Hooper Report. We knew then that it was essential we had a completely fresh approach to industrial relations. This was rejected by the company.

In recent weeks the Union has made a series of genuine offers in an attempt to avoid both current strike action and a national dispute. Included in these offers was the opportunity for sensible local change, a three month moratorium on strike/managerial action and intense national negotiation to move forward, at pace, the transformation of the business. All of these offers have been rejected by the company.

Instead, you have made it absolutely plain that you intend to proceed with change on your terms and your terms alone. This is hardly the environment for constructive negotiations. What this means, in practice, for many of our members is the company ripping up local agreements that were an integral part of phases 2 and 3 of the Pay and Modernisation deal. This has resulted in them facing arbitrary job cuts, unacceptable reductions in pay and people's jobs changing on a daily basis.

When are you going to realise that your whole approach is completely alienating the workforce, and demonstrates a prevailing managerial culture of unacceptable bullying and intimidation. No company can be successful in the environment that you have created.

Turning to national negotiations, you know that I have written to you endlessly in recent months calling for national negotiations to be intensified in line with the Pay and Modernisation Agreement.

Whenever we do meet you show no initiative, urgency or desire to resolve the differences between us. We can demonstrate factually that it is always the Union that puts forward solutions with Royal Mail frustrating our attempts at every turn.

General Secretary: Billy Hayes | Weblog: www.billyhayes.co.uk

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It seems to me that your whole approach is aimed at external audiences which is backed up by the fact that your managers show letters you have written to me to our members. It's a real pity that they don't also show the letters that we have written to you. This is hardly the way to conduct industrial relations but unfortunately the Union has no alternative other than to respond.

What lies at the heart of the fundamental differences between us is that more than 3 years after securing Government investment, Royal Mail's Senior Management Team has completely failed to set out any clear or joined up vision of what modernisation really means. All we see is damaging cuts to the service and endless attacks on our members' jobs, pay, pensions and conditions.

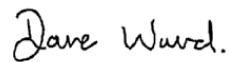
Nobody in their right mind would support such an approach and nobody in their right mind would call this modernisation.

Ray Ellis will respond to your letter and set out clearly the Union's view of what took place at the last meeting. My understanding is that we agreed to meet again but that your team was not available until the 11th August.

I want you to know that this Trade Union remains totally committed to building a successful and modern Royal Mail. The livelihood of our members depends on it. However, we cannot support your current approach and we have never been more determined to ensure that we bring about a vision of modernisation which benefits all stakeholders, including our customers.

I repeat that all strike action and the potential for a national dispute can be avoided if you pick up the Union's offer for a period of calm and create the environment for constructive national negotiations. This would immediately restore customer confidence and bring about the successful transformation of the business with the support of the workforce.

Yours sincerely



Dave Ward
Deputy General Secretary (P)

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PTC/RE/dj/420

6 August 2009

Dale Haddon
HR Director
Royal Mail Centre
35 Rathbone Place
London, W1T 1HQ

From the office of Ray Ellis | Assistant Secretary
Email rellis@cwu.org | Direct line 020 8971 7455

Dear Mr Haddon

I write in response to your letter of 31st July.

The union team emphasised when we met we are keen to proceed with meaningful talks without delay. We were disappointed therefore that your suggested date for a first meeting is not until next week. We made it clear last Thursday that we were available to meet this week. Clearly it is incumbent on both parties to prioritise this issue.

We emphasised at our meeting that we see this as a single set of talks which will address all the issues confronting us including workload measurement, completion of Phase IV of the 2007 the Pay & Modernisation Agreement, encompassing issues of job security and reward. Whilst we recognise that it will be necessary to establish meetings of sub groups to tackle individual elements it will first be necessary to establish common ground on these fundamental issues. We are clear that these talks need to take place under a single umbrella.

I would reiterate the point that we made at the end of our meeting, which is that for these talks to be taking place against a background of continuing executive action by the business in imposing unagreed revisions can only make our task much harder. We reiterated our offer of cessation of industrial action and executive action in order to enable the appropriate climate for the national talks and to enable meaningful local talks to take place. I am disappointed that the business remains unwilling to take up the union's proposal.

Yours sincerely

RAY ELLIS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

General Secretary: Billy Hayes | Weblog: www.billyhayes.co.uk

COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION
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6th August 2009



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Dear Dave

I am deeply disappointed to hear of your decision to call for a national ballot for industrial action.

We met with your deputy, Ray Ellis, and your team last Thursday. At that meeting we agreed a way forward to conclude the discussions arising out of Phase 4 of our Pay and Modernisation Agreement. This meeting followed a succession of discussions over recent weeks, and more than fifty meetings in recent months, and we finally agreed a framework to take this important issue forward – something we all realise is vital to the future of Royal Mail and its people.

Your team asked us to follow this up with a letter confirming what we had agreed. We did that on Friday (copy attached).

I cannot reconcile your announcement today with that agreement. It is quite clear that all your protestations that the union are committed to change and modernisation have been shown to be untrue.

Once again I urge you to reflect upon your position and change course from this very damaging action.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale Haddon". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dale Haddon
HR Director

COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION
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31st July 2009



Ray Ellis
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Dear Ray

At our meeting yesterday, we agreed that we would commence a new programme of talks about the final stage, phase 4, of the 2007 Pay and Modernisation agreement, and I said I would summarise the approach we discussed. This has the following key steps:

- An initial planning meeting, ideally within the next week or so, when we confirm the framework for the talks and lay down the ground rules to guide our discussions.
- A meeting to identify the big issues, areas of common ground and opportunities – to follow soon afterwards.
- Meetings of sub groups as agreed to tackle individual elements in the way we originally envisaged. We recognise that progress in one such group can be dependent on progress in others.
- The overall process to be supported by a dedicated manager to ensure it runs smoothly. I would hope you might appoint a similar lead on your side.

We also discussed your concerns about the transparency of our approach for dealing with volume fluctuations in the way we adjust resource requirements in local offices. I think we reached a broad understanding on there being a close linear relationship on indoor work, but that the nature of outdoor work and the need to cover the ground regardless of the number of items means that whilst there is a correlation, it is less direct. We confirmed that current revisions were based on the scope to utilise spare time in the current delivery span of three and a half hours coupled to the indoor opportunity, rather than a calculation based on a fixed volume/resource ratio. We accepted your point that we can do more to provide transparency to our people.

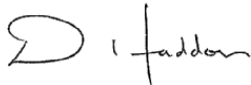
We also had a discussion about the impact of the changes on earnings. One of the considerations in developing proposals is always the impact on take home pay. However we cannot agree to maintain levels of overtime when there is not the work to be done, and indeed you did not suggest that we do so.

Cont...

This is an issue for us to work through together; it is one of the reasons I have urged you to allow local representatives to re-engage in talks on revisions, so that the balance between headcount and variable pay can be looked at as part of an informed discussion of the right mix in the local office.

I look forward to hearing from you that the proposed approach is acceptable, and will be in touch about a date for the first meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale Haddon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Dale Haddon
HR Director

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