

2 June 2020

Catherine West MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

Royal Mail Headquarters
100 Victoria Embankment
LONDON
EC4Y 0HQ

Dear Ms West

Thank you for your time last Tuesday to talk with myself and John Tipler about mail deliveries in your Hornsey and Wood Green constituency during the coronavirus pandemic. As you know postmen and women are working flat out across your constituency to keep business and communities connected at this time.

As you are aware the North London Delivery Centre, which serves the N4 and N8 postcode areas of your constituency, saw parcel volumes increase by c.100% since the start of the pandemic. For example the delivery centre would handle on average 9,500 Tracked24® and Tracked48® parcels per week at the beginning of March, since the government measures were introduced this has risen to on average 22,000 items. Standard parcels averaged 35,000 parcels per week at the beginning these too have increased to around 60,000 parcels per week.

At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic staff sickness increased and at the peak around 50% of the workforce at the North London Delivery Centre were absent. Sadly a colleague who delivers mail to the N8 postcode area passed away on holiday with coronavirus which impacted colleagues in N8. Sickness levels at the delivery centre are still high at around c.20% compared to c.5% in normal operating circumstances but this is continuing to improve, albeit slowly.

In relation to the indoor operation at delivery centre our sorting capacity decreased significantly to enable us to adhere to the Government's 2m social distancing guidelines. For example before these guidelines came in to force in the N4 and N8 postcode areas we had the capacity to manually sort in excess of 6,000 small parcels, letters and large letters an hour, this has now reduced to 3,000 items.

Finally the location of the North London Delivery Centre relies on all deliveries for the N4 and N8 postcode areas being made by shared Royal Mail vehicles, two postmen or women per vehicle. Following the introduction of the social distancing guidelines this reduced our

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capacity by half with the abolition of shared vehicles. This meant that overnight our capacity to deliver letters and parcels across your constituency was reduced.

As a result of this our ability to deliver the Universal Service across your constituency was significantly impacted. As John mentioned a number of measures have been put in place to ensure, moving forward, more deliveries can be made daily. These include:

- Changed some colleague start times so that the Government's 2m social distancing guidelines can be adhered to whilst bringing in temporary workers so that more deliveries can be made daily;
- Obtained additional vehicles to support the delivery of mail in single vehicles as well as purchasing additional delivery trollies;
- Deliveries are rotated across the week to ensure all addresses receive mail and parcel deliveries each week whilst staff sickness is still high.

The delivery centre has delivered mail every day since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, excluding Easter Sunday where we respected the religious holiday. On Easter Sunday we isolated working to indoors, to increase capacity for delivery for the following week.

I would like to reassure you and your constituents that we are continuing to improve the service to customers as sickness levels improve. Should there be any specific issues in relation to individual constituent's mail deliveries please do let me know and I will ensure this is investigated on your behalf.

I hope this update is helpful. As always if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Michael Hogg
Senior Public Affairs Manager

CC - Hornsey & Wood Green Labour Party, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL