



# POST WORKER



*Stop management bullying...*

# SUPPORT THE ACTION AT EXETER

**T**HERE IS an important battle going on in Exeter which you need to be aware of. Exeter mail centre postal workers have walked out unofficially to defend their union and their local rep Fran Choules.

Fran is the CWU area distribution rep. He works at Exeter mail centre and has had his pay docked and been threatened with disciplinary action because he was off sick.

Fran had originally asked for time off to attend two union meetings.

All other union reps were released but Fran's release was refused on the grounds that his job could not be covered. Fran did not attend the meetings.

The next day, Wednesday of last week, Fran fell ill.

He was off for three days and followed all the correct procedures.

While he was still off, and without any contact to discuss the matter, he received a letter saying that management did not believe that his sickness was genuine.

It also said that he would have to immediately attend a disciplinary hearing on his return, and that his pay would be docked for the time he was off.

This was completely against normal procedure. Fran wrote a response stressing his innocence of

all these charges and came back to work.

Without any prompting some 30 drivers from Fran's section sat in and refused to work until Fran's money was restored and the charges against him dropped.

They also wanted action against bullying and harassment by management.

## Disciplined

Meetings between union reps and managers produced no progress and later on Tuesday the whole mail centre, some 350 workers, came out on strike.

Some Exeter workers whose place of work is the airport picketed it on Tuesday and turned away mail.

This has led to further threats of disciplinary action and accusations that the union is organising secondary action.

Plymouth postal workers have refused to handle Exeter mail.

Bristol SWDC (which handles bulk mail) has also not touched it.

Drivers from other offices have refused to cross picket lines at Exeter.

This is an important battle for union rights. There is a history of attacks on the CWU in this area.

Plymouth and East Cornwall

branch secretary Jeff Thomas was disciplined earlier this year after entirely legal strike action in his office.

## Solidarity

Exeter branch has been centrally involved in battles against management attempts to impose changes without agreement.

Every office should give Exeter the fullest possible support. In the past refusal to handle the mail of strike-bound offices and solidarity walkouts have proved effective.

Action must continue until Fran's money is restored, the charges against him are dropped and management's behaviour is investigated.

Support for the reinstatement of Franch Choules, such as messages of support, can be sent to CWU Exeter No 1 branch by e-mailing [cwusw1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cwusw1@yahoo.co.uk) or by faxing 01392 448 225.

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