

PRESS CUTTING

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POSTAL STRIKE LATEST - Royal Mail mounts ad campaign to encourage staff to defy union

by Noelle McElhatton, marketingdirectmag.co.uk

LONDON - Royal Mail took full-page ads in national newspapers yesterday urging its staff to turn up for work tomorrow in defiance of the Communications Workers Union's national strike call.

The CWU has called out its 120,000 members on two more days of national strikes, on Friday this week and Monday next week.

Negotiations between Royal Mail and the union are continuing at the TUC headquarters but unless a breakthrough is achieved, the national, all-out strike will go ahead tomorrow.

The ad, which appeared in the Daily Mirror amongst other newspapers, was headed: "From Royal Mail to its people" in large black type. It claimed that a quarter of Royal Mail's postmen and women had chosen to continue working throughout the strike.

"We need to face the future together - not try to turn the clock back, as the union wants to do," the ad said.

The campaign comes as the CWU is preparing for a hearing in the High Court tomorrow in which its lawyers will challenge Royal Mail's hiring of 30,000 temporary workers as an illegal move.

One lawyer told Marketing Direct that the case will depend on whether Royal Mail can prove that the temporary workers are carrying out additional duties, rather than replacing striking workers, and have not been hired through an agency.

"The Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Business Regulations 2003 makes it illegal for an agency to supply agency staff to do work carried out by employees on an official strike," said **Emma Clarke**, a senior associate at City law firm **Fox**, which specialises in employment law.

"The legal position will therefore turn on whether or not Royal Mail are recruiting the temporary workers through an agency and also whether they are recruiting them to cover the Christmas rush or to cover those staff on strike."