Royal Mail rolls out new fully automated parcel sorting machine in Southampton

19-04-2022

A new fully automated parcel sorting machine which can process 157,000 parcels per day has been installed by Royal Mail in Southampton.

The parcel sorting machine – officially opened by Paul Holmes, MP for Eastleigh - is an intelligent system of conveyor belts and scanning technology that automatically sorts parcels for despatch within Royal Mail's network.

Based in Royal Mail's Southampton Mail Centre, the parcel sorting machine can process up to 7,500 parcels per hour to local delivery offices across the south of the UK and the rest of the country.

Built by automated technology company Solystic, the parcel sorting machine can handle a variety of parcel shapes and sizes weighing up to 20kg.

The installation is part of Royal Mail's multi-million pound investment programme to replace significant manual sorting processes that can be both time consuming and physically demanding and help the company meet the surge in demand for parcels and online shopping.

Royal Mail is rapidly scaling up its automation levels. In March 2022, it reached the milestone of 50% parcels automated - up from 33% last year. The company is aiming to reach its overall target of 90% parcel automation by 2023-24. Using parcel automation can mean that parcels are sorted up to four times more quickly than manually sorting them.

Sarah Coulson, Parcels Automation Programme Director, Royal Mail, said: "We are transforming the way Royal Mail processes parcels given the rapid growth in online shopping in recent years. Our investment in state-of the-art parcel sorting machines will help us better meet the growing demands of our customers in Southampton and the rest of the UK and is a vital part of the ongoing reinvention of Royal Mail."

Paul Holmes, MP for Eastleigh, said: 'I was delighted to visit Southampton Mail Centre and see the new state of the art parcel sorting machine with can handle 157,000 parcels per day. This is welcome investment by Royal Mail, and one which will serve many of my

constituents and businesses who rely on efficient and worry free parcel handling as part of their daily lives."

A total of 39 Royal Mail parcel sorting machines are set be in operation by October 2022 – nearly a 100% increase in a year. This includes installations at new hubs being built in Warrington and Daventry, which when operational, will be able to process more than 1.5million parcels per day.

Source: Royal Mail

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