

National Agreement between POL and CWU for the Upskilling and Transition of Postshop Retail Sales Consultants to Customer Service Consultant.

Introduction

The number of PostShops and the nature of their responsibilities are due to change progressively over the next 18 months due to the refurbishment programme together with the streamlining of retail products sold.

Additionally floor space previously used for PostShops may be required for conversion to a customer engagement area for FSS and the sale of important Financial Services products.

As a consequence of the above we have agreed that to create greater flexibility within Crown Offices all Retail Sales Consultants (RSC) will be given the opportunity to upskill and in turn enhance their basic pensionable pay to the status of Customer Service Consultant (CSC).

Purpose

This collective agreement which is structured on the basis of two distinct sections, interim and transitional arrangements and end state solution, outlines the process for creating a multi skilled PostShop employee together with the necessary steps needed to achieve advanced CSC status.

Additionally necessary safeguards have been constructed to protect those RSC who do not have the capability to perform the tasks of the new CSC role.

Interim Measures and Transitional Pay Progression Arrangements

From 1st December 2008 Postshop employees in addition to their RSC duties will be expected to perform an extended range of activities as part of the steps towards multi-skilling. The following arrangements are designed to increase flexibility to alleviate pressure in Crown offices and in particular queuing times to ensure a better customer experience during the busy Christmas period.

In recognition of PostShop employees taking on additional responsibilities and higher value work, from 1st December 2008 all RSC's irrespective of current pay rate will be paid a monthly allowance of £83.33 (pro-rata for part timers). This allowance will flow through to hourly pay rates which in turn will enhance overtime and Saturday Premium rates where applicable.

To facilitate these transitional arrangements all RSC in advance of December will be specifically trained in selling all mails products including the Pricing in Proportion module and necessary mails integrity training. Each PostShop will have electronic scales linked to Horizon installed to allow RSCs to sell inland and international mails products including Special Delivery. Additionally where practical RSCs will also process bill payments.

From the commencement of the new calendar year all RSCs wishing to remain in POL employment will be scheduled to complete the 2 week counter training course in order to be able to sell the full range of products and perform all responsibilities applicable to the CSC role. We will aim to complete the training by April 2009.

RSCs will continue to receive the £83.33 allowance until they have successfully completed the training and assessment and continue to provide the extended range of services.

Following full training for those RSCs on either the entry rate of £14000 or the fully competent rate of £15,000 per annum a formal assessment (slightly revised and to be agreed) will be conducted for the purpose of permanently moving to the CSC 'Fully Competent' consolidated pay rate. Thereafter they will be regarded as CSC working towards pay progression for the 'Advanced' consolidated pay rate.

For those ring-fenced RSCs who are currently on £16,000 following training and assessment they will be considered 'Fully Competent', however they will continue to receive the £83.33 allowance and work towards the assessment to achieve the CSC Advanced pay rate. In both of these situations the Career Path agreed timescales for pay progression will apply.

Any RSCs who initially fails the 'Fully Competent' assessment, will have up to 6 months (can be earlier at the request of the individual) from completing their counter training course to be reassessed. They will continue to perform the additional duties and receive the £83.33 allowance for up to 6 months. At this stage should an individual be unable to acquire the additional skills required for the CSC role they will be offered either suitable redeployment within Royal Mail Group or Voluntary Redundancy terms in accordance with the MTSF terms.

End State Solution

The PostShop RSC grade will from 1st April 2009 be a redundant grade and the previously agreed Career Path will be amended to remove the RSC role.

There are 3 options available to RSCs:

1. All RSCs who have completed the training and assessment will be re-graded CSC and will receive the terms and conditions applicable to this role. Their contractual hours and times of attendance will not be changed as a result of this agreement. They will be expected to perform the full range of CSC activities including:
 - Full counter duties
 - Meeter/Greeter
 - Queue hosting
 - Post and go customer support
 - Retail sales/activities in the postshop area
2. For RSCs who are either unable or unwilling to take on the responsibilities of the CSC but wish to retain employment within the Royal Mail Group reasonable and sensible redeployment opportunities will be actively sought, options could include FSS, Supply Chain Cash Centres and Customer Services Contact Centres and other appropriate administrative jobs. In redeployment circumstances full excess travelling expenses (ete) in line with MTSF will be paid.
3. RSCs who are unable or unwilling to acquire the additional skills required to fulfil the multi-skilled role of CSC and do not wish to be redeployed will be offered Voluntary Redundancy in accordance with the MTSF terms.

To help with development and ongoing training all former RSC grades will be scheduled to attend formal WTL and sales capability sessions. Duties to facilitate this will be constructed as part of the 'Review Stage' of the current major Duty Review Programme which is due to be rolled out from January 2009.

Joint Communications and Deployment Plan

To facilitate the changes a full preference exercise will be conducted with all RSCs at a date to be agreed.

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