

## COLT AGREES FULL UNION RECOGNITION RIGHTS FOR NETWORK OPERATIONS EMPLOYEES AT POWERGATE

### NEW DAWN AT COLT

A brighter future beckons in the CWU's relationship with COLT following the signing of a far-reaching recognition agreement with the company and a highly successful follow-up meeting.

The agreement was signed in April followed by a signing ceremony which took place at the company's Powergate site in Acton on May 9th 2006. This followed a hard fought recognition battle which was finally won by the CWU after the legal body which rules on union recognition ruled that the Union had met all of the criteria to negotiate on behalf of its members in the bargaining unit.

Sally Bridge, said; "The fact that we've been able to sit down with COLT and discuss how the agreement will work in practise demonstrates how far we have come in such a short space of time. I hope this is the start of an exciting relationship – and the CWU certainly looks forward to working positively with COLT in the future.

Yours sincerely,



**Sally Bridge**

Assistant Secretary [sabridge@cwu.org](mailto:sabridge@cwu.org)



**Smiles at the signing ceremony** – CWU Deputy General Secretary Jeannie Drake (centre), COLT HR director Mike O'Dell and Sally Bridge. The CWU national officer with responsibility for COLT.

### The main points of the recognition agreement are as follows:

- The CWU will be the sole Trade Union recognised by Colt in the UK for the purposes of collective representation of non-management staff employed at Powergate.
- Regular joint dialogue will take place with Colt and the CWU on the company's business development plans and performance.
- The company will negotiate with the union reps on changes and proposed changes to working practices and conditions.
- The Company will have agreed to encourage team members joining the CWU.
- The CWU will elect Union representatives who will negotiate on all aspects of terms and conditions with Colt.
- Network Operations union reps have the right to paid time off to prepare and meet with management, talk to members, go to training and represent members in their section
- The company has and will provide Network Operations union reps with the office facilities to carry out their union representative work
- Network Operations will have an independent union health and safety rep to work with the company to ensure their workplace is safe and hazard free.
- Network Operations union section has the right to appoint union learning reps who will be able to work with COLT and the government to get funding for training and education for union employees at Powergate.

## What about the rest of the company – when can we have union rights?

The answer to that question is in the hands of you and your colleagues. The CWU aims to achieve full union negotiation rights for all COLT employees but this will only be possible if enough of you and your colleagues join the union.

In the past COLT management have sometimes taken an old fashioned and hostile attitude toward your union. This is despite the fact that the company is unionised across its European Operations. At Network Operations your colleagues had to use the industrial court (the CAC) to get their rights.

Things are changing though. Already your union and management have met and are building a good working relationship. The union hopes that over time management will see that you and your union want the company to be a success as much as they do. We want our members to have a stake in that success and a say at work. We believe that should be a basic right for all employees.

## What can the union do for me until we get union recognition rights in my section?

All our members whether they have collective rights or not are still entitled to individual representation at COLT. **This means:**

- Members can ask to be accompanied to a internal company grievance or disciplinary by a union officer
- All our members are entitled to advice and support on all work related issues from our expert team. At COLT we have successfully supported our members on a whole range of areas from checking their contracts, to advising and accompanying them on redundancy, sickness absence, redeployment, bullying from managers.
- Members are entitled to free legal advice on work and non work related issues.

- All our members are covered by our free 24 hour accident insurance scheme inside and outside work
- The CWU supports and makes claims amounting to millions of pounds annually for our members. This service is free there is no 'no win, no fee' nonsense.
- Members at COLT can access free training to become union reps, health & safety reps and union learning reps.
- Members' next of kin are entitled to funeral benefit and we have a free will service to all members.

## Where next?

The CWU continues to recruit and to increase its members within Colt.

We would prefer to try and persuade COLT that a voluntary approach is better for all involved. Our best way of doing this and your best chance of getting the same union rights as your European and Network Operations colleagues is by employees joining the union today and getting involved.

## Most of all you will be taking a step towards getting union recognition and an independent and strong voice at work.

## What parts of COLT now have an independent union voice?

Network Operations  
Network Management Centre (NMC)  
NMC – Data Services  
NMC – Voice Services / Carrier Switching  
NMC – Back Office  
Solutions Management Centre  
Security Operations Centre

To join the CWU contact **Nick**  
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