

BRANCH OFFICIALS BULLETIN

COMMUNICATION
WORKERS UNION

Weekly information from the Communication Workers Union

150 The Broadway Wimbledon, London SW19 1RX Tel: 020 8971 7200

Fax: 020 8971 7300 Email: info@cwu.org Web: www.cwu.org

General Secretary: Billy Hayes Weblog: www.billyhayes.co.uk

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GENERAL

1

Headquarters Printing and Reprographic Services

Branches and Representatives will wish to know that CWU Headquarters have recently acquired new reprographics equipment. The purpose of broadcasting this information is to inform you that we are now able to offer a print service to branches that we believe will be within a price range that you will find competitive. Amongst the services we can provide are colour or black & white posters, leaflets, booklets etc. It is not possible to produce a price list as prices will vary dependent on each individual job based on quantity, timescale, delivery requirements etc. If you would like more information about this service or wish to receive a quote for a particular piece of work then please ring or email Kevin Slocombe, Head of Communications.

020 8971 7497 or KSlocombe@cwu.org

2

Liaison Meetings With CWU Group MPs

Meetings up to the Summer Recess have now been arranged with CWU supported MPs and, for your information, I list below the dates of the meetings and those nominated to attend:

24 January

Carol Alcock, Dave Warren, Beryl Shepherd, Maria Exall and 1 representative from the Eastern Region

14 March

Peter Donaghy, Graham Colk, Andy Kerr and 1 representative from Scotland

9 May

Steve Fishwick, Graham Colk, John Holmes and 1 representative from Wales

11 July

PFMC members to be nominated and 1 representative from the North East Region.

Billy Hayes

General Secretary

3

Two Day Safety Representatives Refresher/update Course

The Education and Training Department are pleased to announce that a two-day Safety Representatives Refresher/Update Course for experienced Safety Reps will be held at South Thames College in Putney on the 6th and 7th March 2006. The Education and Training and Health Safety and Environment Departments' and South Thames College have developed this refresher/update training course.

This training course is aimed at:

- Experienced Area and Substitute Area Safety Reps working in Royal Mail Group who have not attended any Safety Reps training courses over the last 2 to 3 years but have attended CWU H&S Stages 1, 2 and 3 or TUC H&S Stages 1 and 2
- Experienced USRs working in BT Group who have not attended any Safety Reps training courses over the last 2 to 3 years but have attended CWU H&S Stages 1, 2 and 3 or TUC H&S Stages 1 and 2
- Experienced CWU USRs who have not attended any Safety Reps training courses over the last 2 to 3 years but have attended CWU H&S Stages 1, 2 and 3 or TUC H&S Stages 1 and 2
- Experienced USRs who have been a Safety Rep for 2 to 3 years and have not attended CWU H&S Stages 1, 2 and 3 or TUC H&S Stages 1 & 2 may be considered exceptionally.

Applications should be made to Maxine Todd at Alvescot Lodge by Friday 10th February. Please note that paid release for this course is currently being sought from employers but has not yet been agreed – further details will be made available in due course.

4

Equality & Diversity Mandatory Training For Branch Officials – Reminder – London

In line with Conference policy, we now

require branches to submit applications for the following mandatory Equality & Diversity courses.

These courses are being held in the London Region:

Thursday 19th January – CWU HO

Wednesday 1st February – CWU HO

Tuesday 21st February – CWU HO

Further dates and venues for other regions will be published in due course. Nominations should be made on an application form for Union courses and returned as soon as possible to Trish Lavelle, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: 01993 843373; Fax: 01993 840960; email: mtodd@cwu.org

5

Equal Rights In The CWU Part 1 – Reminder

The Communication Workers Union has organised an 'Equal Rights in the CWU Part 1 Course', to be held at the Union's Education & Training Centre at Alvescot Lodge. All courses held at Alvescot Lodge are accredited with the National Open College Network. This is a fully integrated course.

The course will be held from 13 – 17 February 2006

Please submit applications forms ASAP

This course is targeted at CWU Branch Equality Officers and other Branch and Field Representatives who deal with equality Issues on a regular basis. The course objective is to equip members with a thorough grounding in diversity & equality issues at both a theoretical and practical level.

As with all CWU courses, the focus is very much on the practical and on building the individuals' confidence, skills and knowledge. Students are supported throughout by trade union tutors and will be encouraged to work at a pace and level that suits them. Many of the course activities will be carried out through working in small

groups assisted by our specialist tutors.

Main Themes

- Understanding how discrimination and prejudice impact on CWU members in the workplace
- Understanding the role of equality representative
- Becoming familiar with CWU procedures and policies around equality issues
- Dealing with members' problems in a systematic way
- Understanding and utilising agreements and procedures in the workplace
- Understanding legal and contractual maternity, paternity and parental rights
- The Disability Discrimination Act and the implications for CWU members
- Developing communication and presentation skills.

Special Leave with pay applies for members employed by BT.

We particularly encourage branches to nominate women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and young members who are often under-represented on the CWU Education and Training Programme.

All courses at Alvescot are residential. The cost of tuition, food and accommodation will be met from the General Fund. Branches are required to meet the cost of travelling and subsistence payments. Branches requiring financial assistance from the General Fund to enable them to send students to the course must submit the request with the nomination, to enable the Trustees to consider the request in time.

The Education Centre can offer child-minding facilities for a maximum of three under school age children at any one time. If any applicant from your branch would like child-minding facilities, can you please advise the age and sex of the child on the application form. Further information on the child-minding arrangements will then be sent to successful applicants.

Nominations should be made on the form for Education Courses, and returned to Alvescot Lodge by the closing date shown. If you nominate more than one member (a maximum of two please), indicate the order of preference if necessary and please apply for only one course at a time. If a member is refused a place, due to oversubscription, then indicate this on a subsequent application for another date.

Application forms should be addressed to: Trish Lavelle, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training

Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: 01993 843373; Fax: 01993 840960; email: mtodd@cwu.org

6

Induction Course

The Communication Workers Union has organised an Induction course, to be held at the Union's Education & Training Centre at Alvescot.

The course will be held from 24 – 28 April 2006

The closing date for nominations is 9 March

This course is aimed at newly elected Postal representatives.

Application forms should be addressed to: Trish Lavelle, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: 01993 843373; Fax: 01993 840960; email: mtodd@cwu.org

7

Health & Safety Stage I Course

A Health and Safety Stage I has been organised to be held at the Education and Training Centre at Alvescot Lodge. All courses held at Alvescot Lodge are accredited with the National Open College Network. This is a fully integrated course.

The course will be held from 8 – 12 May 2006

The closing date for nominations is 23 March

Application forms should be addressed to: Trish Lavelle, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: 01993 843373; Fax: 01993 840960; email: mtodd@cwu.org

8

Union Learning Reps Stage II Course

The Communication Workers Union have organised a Union Learning Reps Stage II Course, to be held at the Union's Education & Training Centre, Alvescot.

The course will be held from 15 – 19 May 2006

The closing date for nominations is 30 March

This course is aimed at Lead ULRs and Learning Centre Co-ordinators, who have already completed Union Learning Reps Stage I and have been a Union Learning Rep for over 18 months.

The course will cover:

- Negotiating skills for learning
- Working with learning providers
- Planning and running a Learning Centre or project
- Learning and organising
- Learndirect and Trade Unions

Application forms should be addressed to: Trish Lavelle, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: 01993 843373; Fax: 01993 840960; email: mtodd@cwu.org

9

National Executive Council, National Officer & National Representative Elections – 2006

The NEC has agreed the election timetable and regulations for the 2006 NEC Elections. As in 2005 the Telecom & Financial Services Industrial Executive, Postal Industrial Executive, Clerical Assistant Secretaries, COOC and OAOOC elections will be held simultaneously.

In addition to the above elections the NEC has further agreed that the elections for the CWU General Secretary, Assistant Secretary – Royal Mail Indoor, Assistant Secretary – Packages and Express/Logistics & Contract Distribution/Quadrant and Assistant Secretary – Operator & Ancillary Grades (all due for election under the five year rule) will be held at the same time.

The timetable for the elections is as follows:

Nominations Open – 20 February 2006
Nominations Close – 14 March 2006 (14.00)

Accept Nominations – 20 March 2006 (14.00) – Where applicable
Despatch of Ballot Papers – 10 April 2006

Close of Ballot – 8 May 2006 (first post)
Result – 11 May 2006

A copy of each of the election regulations can be obtained from your Branch, which will also be published on the CWU website.

Any enquiries regarding the elections should be addressed to Steve Baguley, National Organising Secretary, CWU, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1RX.

10

Recruitment Of Regional Chairs And National Council Members: Postwatch

The Union has been advised by the Department of Trade and Industry of the intention to recruit both Regional Chairs (in London and Northern Ireland, who will also serve as National Council Members) and National Council Members for Postwatch.

Application packs are available from the firm of Odgers Ray & Berndtson on www.odgers.com. The closing date for applications is 27 January 2006.

Any queries in respect of this

paragraph should be addressed to the General Secretary's Office.

Billy Hayes
General Secretary

11

Future Priorities Of The Union

At Annual Conference 2005 Motion 24 was carried calling for a debate on the future priorities of the Union. To this end a Sub-Committee of national officers, NEC members and lay members from all the constituencies would be established. Branches are now invited to nominate a member to participate in this Sub-Committee. Nominations should be sent to the General Secretary's Office before midday Friday, 3 February 2006.

Billy Hayes
General Secretary

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

12

Harassment Complaints Database – Union Policy

Branches are again reminded of the need to fill in the Harassment Complaints Database (HCD) Forms, as illustrated in LTB 450/04. Please ensure that all reps have a copy of LTB 450/04 as it contains useful guidance as well as the form itself. Branches may also find LTB 289/04 useful which contains information on the Harassment Helpline and the Harassment Advice Network as well as the HCD. The completion of the HCD forms is part of our agreement with the Equal Opportunities Commission and is, therefore, CWU policy. (The full agreement can be found in LTB 292/04) The Equal Opportunities Commission has raised concerns with us regarding the completion rate, which we need to address, otherwise we will fall foul of the agreement. Therefore, please ensure that any complaint raised with branch reps by members that involves possible Harassment should be notified to HQ via these forms.

We appreciate that this will add to an already busy work schedule for those reps that have the responsibility for completing them, but there is no scope for non-compliance. We must accept that this will become an accepted culture in terms of harassment reporting. The data that will come through to HQ will be vital in enabling us to analyse and identify any obvious patterns where problems exist. We extend our appreciation to all those branches already complying with the policy and look forward to the co-operation of all Branches in this matter. Any enquiries regarding this paragraph please contact Michèle Emerson at CWU HQ.

13

Sickness Absence And The DDA

We have received some enquiries in respect of the question of how disability related absences should be treated under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) following the re-issue of our guidance booklet "The Disability Discrimination Act – Your Questions Answered". Managers are questioning the correctness of our interpretation. Fortunately the position as far as the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is very clear. In their Code of Practice on employment they deal with this issue at some length. Branches are reminded that the Code of Practice has the following status as described by the DRC: "Courts and employment tribunals must take into account any part of the Code that appears to them relevant to any question arising in those proceedings." (Code of Practice, Employment and Occupation, Disability Rights Commission paragraph 1.6). This paragraph uses the DRC Code of Practice and the legal precedents. It uses the comparative forms of discrimination outlined in the Code of Practice which clearly shows the differences and at the end of this the paragraph touches on the legal precedents.

Extract from Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice

Set out below are the relevant extracts from the Commissions Code of Practice.

The three separate elements extracted deal with absence from work. The extract related to direct discrimination is included to contrast it with the other paragraphs.

In respect of Direct Discrimination the comparator is someone who does not have the same disability. It could be a non-disabled person or a person with other disabilities.

"Direct Discrimination

4.13 In determining whether a disabled person has been treated less favourably in the context of direct discrimination, his treatment must be compared with that of an appropriate comparator.

Example

A person who becomes disabled takes six months' sick leave because of his disability, and is dismissed by his employer. A non-disabled fellow employee also takes six months' sick leave (because he has broken his leg) but is not dismissed. The difference in treatment is attributable to the employer's unwillingness to employ disabled staff and the treatment is therefore on the ground of disability.

The non-disabled employee is an appropriate comparator in the context of direct discrimination because his relevant circumstances are the same as those of the disabled person. It is the fact of having taken six months' sick leave which is relevant in these circumstances. As the disabled person has been treated less favourably than the comparator, this is direct discrimination".

Reasonable Adjustments

The next paragraph deals with reasonable adjustments and makes it the duty of an employer to consider reasonable adjustments to enable the employee to meet the requirements of the employer in terms of attendance. The example given is disability leave and would include other elements of reasonable adjustments. The relevant paragraph is set out below with the bit in the example I consider relevant underlined.

"4.14 It follows that, in the great majority of cases, some difference will exist between the circumstances (including the abilities) of the comparator and those of the disabled person – there is no need to find a comparator whose circumstances are the same as those of the disabled person in every respect. What matters is that the comparator's relevant circumstances (including his abilities) must be the same as, or not materially different from, those of the disabled person.

Example

In the previous example, the position would be different if it were the employer's policy to dismiss any member of staff who has been off sick for six months, and that policy were applied equally to disabled and non-disabled staff. In this case there would be no direct discrimination because the disabled person would not have been treated less favourably than the comparator – both would have been dismissed. Nevertheless, there may be a claim for failure to make reasonable adjustments to the policy, for example by allowing disability leave (see paragraph 4.25). In addition, the employer's policy may give rise to a claim for disability-related discrimination (see paragraph 4.27)." Another important Reasonable Adjustment is "allowing the person to be absent during working or training hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment." This reasonable adjustment is listed in the DRC Code. The example given is as follows:
An employer allows a person who has become disabled more time off during work than would be allowed to non-

disabled employees to enable him to have rehabilitation training. A similar adjustment would be appropriate if a disability worsens or if a disabled person needs occasional treatment anyway.

Over and above the need to consider any reasonable adjustments necessary for a worker to attend work the last example given by the Commission in its Code covers a key element that appears to be missing from management consideration. This relates to what the Commission describe as disability-related discrimination. Set out below is the section of the Code of Practice dealing with this issue again in the context of absence. According to the Commission and clearly according to case law the comparator for disability related discrimination is a person to whom the disability related reason does not apply and this is put in bold in the Commission's Code of Practice – the example spells this out as someone who has not been absent. This is very starkly set out and cannot be emphasized enough. If someone is absent for a disability related reason within the context of the procedure then to not disregard their absence for the purposes of the procedure will amount to disability-related discrimination unless the employer can show the treatment is justified. The Code of Practice extract is set out below:

“When does disability-related discrimination occur?

4.30 In determining whether disability-related discrimination has occurred, the employer's treatment of the disabled person must be compared with that of a person to whom the disability-related reason does not apply. This contrasts with direct discrimination, which requires a comparison to be made with a person without the disability in question but whose relevant circumstances are the same. The comparator may be non-disabled or disabled – but the key point is that the disability-related reason for the less favourable treatment must not apply to him.

Example

A disabled man is dismissed for taking six months' sick leave which is disability-related. The employer's policy, which has been applied equally to all staff (whether disabled or not) is to dismiss all employees who have taken this amount of sick leave. The disability-related reason for the less favourable treatment of the disabled person is the fact of having taken six months' sick leave, and the correct comparator is a person to whom

that reason does not apply – that is, someone who has not taken six months' sick leave. Consequently, unless the employer can show that the treatment is justified, it will amount to disability-related discrimination because the comparator would not have been dismissed. However, the reason for the treatment is not the disability itself (it is only a matter related thereto, namely the amount of sick leave taken). So there is no direct discrimination.

“The law therefore is unambiguous on this issue. Please bear in mind that if your member is indeed covered by the DDA then both the manager and the employer is potentially liable under the DDA if they discriminate by way of warnings or other detrimental treatment. That will mean that any detrimental treatment including failure to disregard a disability related absence for warning purposes is potential discrimination under the DDA and would be subject to the need for justification as potential disability related discrimination.

The DRC Code of Practice in Chapter 6 sets out the basis of justification as follows:

“6.3 [s 3A(3) & (4)] Where less favourable treatment of a disabled person is capable of being justified (that is, where it is not direct discrimination), the Act says that it will, in fact, be justified if, but only if, the reason for the treatment is both material to the circumstances of the particular case and substantial. This is an objective test. ‘Material’ means that there must be a reasonably strong connection between the reason given for the treatment and the circumstances of the particular case. ‘Substantial’ means, in the context of justification, that the reason must carry real weight and be of substance.”

So the test is that the justification must carry real weight and substance. Moreover any individual who wishes to challenge the employer could justifiably go to an employment tribunal and given the current law, the claim of disability discrimination would have to be tested. This potentially would cost the employer a fair amount of money.

Legal Precedent:

The lead case is *Clark v TDG Ltd t/a Novacold* [1999] IRLR 318 CA and the relevant summary provided by IRLR and Equal Opportunities Review from this Court of Appeal decision is: “In the case of an employee absent from work for a disability-related reason, the correct comparison is with the treatment of employees who are not absent, rather than with an employee

absent for the same time for a reason unrelated to disability.”

Another issue in respect of sick absence concerns people who are covered by the DDA and are off sick because of the employer's failure to carry out a reasonable adjustment necessary to enable them to work. This is the case of *Nottinghamshire County Council v Meikle* [2004 Court of Appeal]

. This was about a teacher who failed to get adjustments the courts felt were reasonable from her employer and was forced onto sick leave and in these cases the Equal Opportunities Review summed up the Court of Appeal judgement in the following terms:

“Payment of full sick pay by an employer can be an adjustment falling within the scope of [s.4A].”

The full Code of Practice can be obtained on line at the DRC Web site on Website: www.drc-gb.org. If Branches want us to send a copy please contact 020 8971 7205 or email acrisp@cwu.org. but please bear in mind it is a very large file. Please use the same contact points if you want to clarify any matters.

Any enquiries on the above should be addressed to Michèle Emerson, Assistant Secretary, quoting reference No. 2.40.15

14

TUC Disability Conference 2006

The 2006 TUC Disability Conference will be taking place at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LS from Wednesday, 24 May to Thursday, 25 May 2006. Motions are due to be sent to the TUC by Wednesday, 22 February 2006.

Visitors

The Equality Department are also inviting Branches to consider sending visitors to the Conference. We will register the visitors and pay for their documentation. Any other costs, e.g. loss of earnings, travel or subsistence will not be met by HQ funding. Any names to be submitted to us by Friday, 7 April 2006. Names of visitors can be submitted by letter, faxed to 020 8971 7205 or emailed to acrisp@cwu.org before the appropriate deadline.

Any enquiries on the above should be addressed to Michèle Emerson, Assistant Secretary, quoting reference No. 3.10.40

15

HEALTH AND SAFETY LGV Speed Limits & Speed Limiters

Speed limiter, speed limits and motorway driving laws are changing. VOSA (Vehicle and Operator Services

Agency) has confirmed that the EU Speed Limiters Directive is coming into force, being introduced by the UK Government on a phased basis and will widen the range of vehicles requiring a road speed limiter. This will mean that previously exempt LGVs between 3.5 tonnes and 12 tonnes will be limited to the same maximum speed limit as heavier LGVs and Artics at 56 mph. The implementation timetable will therefore be:

New Vehicles registered after 1st January 2005 to comply as below.

3,501 – 12,000kg Used Internationally Jan 2005

7,501 – 12,000kg Used in UK only Jan 2005

3,501 – 7,500kg Used in UK only Jan 2008

Retrofit – Vehicles first used from 1st October 2001 to 1st January 2005 to comply as below.

3,501 – 12,000kg Used Internationally Jan 2006

3,501 – 12,000kg Used in UK only Jan 2007

Newly speed limited vehicles are prohibited from using the outside lane of 3 and 4 lane motorways,

It is likely, once all the changes to vehicles requiring road speed limiters have taken place (after 1 January 2008), the national motorway speed limit for goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes and buses will be lowered. Restricting all vehicles in these classes to the same speed limit will reduce any competitive advantage of older vehicles (which are not required to have speed limiters). Buses with more than 8 passenger seats (regardless of weight) will also be required to be fitted with a road speed limiter restricting the maximum speed to 62mph.

For further information, please contact the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) on: 0870 60 60 440 or go to: www.vosa.gov.uk

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: V6.

16

Tray Dollies

LTB 643 was issued on 19 December 2005.

Please correct the date which was printed as 19 October 2005.

The LTB also refers to SSOW Version 9 being attached but in fact further updates were made shortly before publication and Version 10 was in fact attached. Please make this correction also.

Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

17

2005/2006 HSE Inspection Programme Of Royal Mail Outdoor Delivery Office Work (Peripatetic Activities) Summary Progress Report

Further to LTB's No. 258/05 and 290/05, you will be aware that a major programme of HSE Inspections were planned for 2005/2006.

A meeting took place with the HSE Head of Utilities group on 6th December at which a summary progress report was given as follows: Of the 7 HSE Divisions and their sub-divisions covering England, Scotland and Wales along with 410 Local Authorities, the following areas have commenced Inspections: - North West, York and Humberside, West Midlands and Scotland. London (within the M25) is to commence shortly.

85 Delivery Office Inspections have been completed to date.

22 Enforcement (Improvement) Notices have been issued. Those DO's inspected but not receiving Improvement Notices have all received letters from the HSE Inspector or Local Authority EHO with a list of recommendations to improve Health and Safety compliance.

7 RIDDOR (serious Accident) Inspections have been carried out by HSE Inspectors during the same period.

23 Complaint Investigations have been carried out by Inspectors during the same period.

7 Advice contacts have been recorded. 144 HSE contacts have been made with Royal Mail workplaces, Managers, Safety Reps and Staff etc in total.

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has indicated that Inspectors from their seven Divisional Offices across the UK are gearing up to launch the next wave of inspections of Royal Mail delivery offices as part of their latest "Slips & Trips Outreach Campaign" which follows on from their BACKS! 2005 back injury Campaign. HSE Inspectors, accompanied by Local Authority Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are due to visit further delivery offices across the country in the coming weeks and months. Hopefully this process will start to rectify Royal Mail's reputation for having some of the best health and safety policies and guidelines in the UK but one of the worst records of implementation and compliance with the resultant high accident numbers and ill health amongst members.

Inspections of Delivery Walks and Offices that have taken place so far have in the main focused on Royal Mail's widespread failure to

complete suitable and sufficient Risk Assessments for delivery walks and driving duties, which should start with the comprehensive completion of questionnaire forms known as WPQ1 and WPQ2 respectively, supported by walk logs. However, the HSE has discovered that these are rarely completed correctly or with sufficient information and solutions to risks not being provided for staff by management.

Full support and assistance has been afforded by the CWU to the Health and Safety Law Enforcement Officers by way of Information provision and liaison through our Area Safety Reps and by identifying the worst performing Delivery Offices on Health and Safety, ensuring the input and involvement of our CWU Area and Workplace Safety Representatives in the Inspection process to ensure all the key Safety issues are exposed and not covered up. Based on the experience from Inspections carried out in Yorkshire and the North East of England, Guidance has been issued jointly by the HS&E and Outdoor Departments in order to brief Area and Workplace Reps on risk assessments ahead of a new wave of HSE inspections. This covers the completion of questionnaires and most importantly what's required of Delivery Managers.

We would like to express our thanks in particular to Mick Gledhill ASR Bradford plus Derek Townsend ASR East London, and the Walk Design Group for their work on developing the Guidance.

All enquiries should be addressed to Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting reference EX5.

18

CWU Announce New Safety Reps Refresher Course

Welcoming the Education and Training Department's announcement of the first "Pilot" CWU Safety Reps refresher training course, National Health Safety and Environment Officer Dave Joyce said: "Safety representatives have made it clear to me that they need to maintain, develop and broaden their knowledge skills and experience to keep pace with the health and safety demands that are made upon them. Therefore, working with the Education and Training Department and South Thames College we have developed this two-day Refresher/Update Course for experienced Safety Reps who have not attended any Safety Reps training courses over the last 2 to 3 years. The pilot course will take place at South

Thames College in Putney on the 6th and 7th March 2006 and the E&T Department are taking applications right now”

Dave added “The CWU recognises the excellent work that our Union’s health and safety representatives do on behalf of their members and safety representatives save lives. The CWU Education and Training Department are now providing support and training to ensure that safety representatives are fully equipped, and is second to none reflecting the complexity and importance of the role. My objective is to encourage and continue our development of the Safety Reps training programme in order to build confidence, ability and understanding of Health & Safety, so as to ensure that our Safety Reps are well equipped to deal with workplace Safety issues. I would like to thank Trish Lavell and Pat Styles from the CWU Education and Training Department for their support. Further information from Pat Styles on 07793314248 or Maxine Todd on 01993 843373. Applications to Maxine Todd at Alvescot Lodge – closing date Friday 10th February.

19

CWU Announce Health and Safety Degree Level Course

Welcoming the Education and Training Department’s announcement, National Health Safety and Environment Officer Dave Joyce said: “CWU Safety Representatives can now study to degree level with their union. This move has added a further element to this Union’s excellent Health, Safety and environment training programme for our Safety Reps. Health and Safety is a crucial part of Trade Union work and one of the key pillars of what our movement is all about. This is a great opportunity for our people to enhance their skills and knowledge which in turn will provide the Union with Reps in our organisation even better equipped to make a step change in workers’ conditions.” Dave added “my objective has been to encourage and develop our Safety Reps training programme in order to build confidence, ability and understanding in matters of Health & Safety, in order that our Safety Reps can deal with workplace issues, arrangements and organisational requirements. The degree course pathway has special features of both a professional and an academic focus, linking theory and practice.” Dave concluded that “Trish Lavell and Pat Styles in our Education and Training Department deserve great credit for the work done on finalising this course

and in assisting the Health, Safety and Training Department in the provision of the Current training programme.” CWU Safety Reps can apply for the degree level course and applications opened earlier this month. The Union will support a number of students in a programme of part-time, flexible distance learning which may lead to a certificate in higher education, a diploma or a full degree, which will be provided by London Metropolitan University. These programmes are designed specifically for trade unionists and full support will be provided for students who are returning to learn for the first time. The course will lead to a BA degree. Health and Safety pathway applicants should normally have completed the CWU Health and Safety 1, 2 and 3 courses and it will be an advantage if they have also completed the CWU Occupational Health and Safety Further Education certificate. This programme of study is due to start in February 2006. Depending on student preferences the course may last from 1 to 5 years. The programme of study will require students to attend a number of short residential block courses each year supplemented by distance learning with tutor support. Residential elements of the course will be undertaken at the Metropolitan University of London and the CWU Education Centre at Alvescot Lodge in Oxfordshire. Applications are now closed but those interested in applying for future courses can obtain further information from Pat Styles on 07793314248 or Maxine Todd on 01993 843373.

20

HSC/E Statistics 2004/2005

The HSC/E have published the latest statistics on workplace injury and work-related ill-health in Great Britain. The main features of the injury statistics are as follows:

Fatal injuries to workers

- 220 fatal injuries to workers in 2004/05. There were 236 in 2003/04.

Reported non-fatal injuries

- 30,213 major injuries to employees in 2004/05. There were 30,817 in 2003/04. (Over a third was caused by slipping and tripping).
- There were 120,346 other injuries to employees causing them to be off work for over 3 days. There were 129,973 in 2003/04. (Two fifths were caused by handling, lifting or carrying).

Injuries to members of the public

- 361 fatal injuries to members of the public in 2004/05. There was 371 in 2003/04. (two-thirds were due to

acts of suicide or trespass on the railways).

- 14,321 reported non-fatal injuries to members of the public. There were 13,605 in 2003/04.

Work-related Self-reported ill health

- 2.0 million people suffered from work-related, ill health. There were 2.2 million in 2003/04. (Three-quarters of the cases were musculoskeletal disorders e.g. upper limb or back problems or stress, depression and anxiety).

Ill health seen by specialist doctors

- 23 000 new cases of occupational or work-related illness were seen by disease specialist doctors and occupational physicians who reported to the THOR surveillance scheme. (Mental ill health and musculoskeletal disorders were the most common types of illness accounting for a third of the total each).

Ill health assessed for industrial injuries disablement benefit (IIDB)

- 7500 cases were assessed for IIDB. (vibration white finger, carpal tunnel syndrome and respiratory diseases associated with past exposures to substances such as asbestos and coal dust were the majority).

Asbestos-related and other fatal diseases

- 1900 deaths in 2003 from mesothelioma, a cancer related to asbestos exposure.

Revitalising Health and Safety targets The Government’s ‘Revitalising Health and Safety’ strategy reduction target has therefore not been met. .

Any enquiries should be directed to Dave Joyce, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting reference No. EX5.

21

Ladder Safety

The HSE launched a Ladder Safety campaign in November 2005 with national ladder week 14-18 November 2005. The campaign was aimed at working with ladder users, looking at current use and suggesting sensible measures to improve safety.

On average 14 people a year die at work falling from ladders and nearly 1200 suffer major injuries. Ladders are the equipment in use when over a quarter of falls happen. Common causes of falls include; the user over-reaching, the user slipping from the rungs, and the ladder slipping and falling.

HSE’s initiative includes HSE inspectors working with ladder user employers, to look at the current use of ladders and suggest sensible measures to improve safety. Ladders should only be used for

low-risk, short-duration work, or where there are site conditions that cannot be changed. Where necessary, suitable arrangements should be taken to prevent the ladder from slipping. This could include tying the ladder at the top or bottom or using an effective anti-slip device, or other stability devices. HSE have recently produced a "guide on the safe use of ladders and stepladders" aimed at employers, the self-employed and people who work from ladders. This is supported by a pocket card which provides useful information on safe ladder use and some sensible tips for using a ladder safely in a handy size for users to keep with them.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 came into force in April 2005. The Regulations require all work at height to be properly planned and appropriately supervised where possible workers should avoid carrying out work at height. Many tasks can be performed either entirely or at least in part from the ground thus eliminating the need to work at height. If workers can work from the ground, they should still ensure that the work can be carried out safely and that the right equipment is used in the right place. In conjunction with the HSE a "Work at Height Regulation 2005 Summary and Guide" was produced by the Health, Safety & Environment Department and circulated to Branches as LTB 324/05.

The following are available from the HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA
Tel:01787 881165 Fax:01787 313995.
The Work At Height Regulations 2005 (A brief Guide) INDG 401
Safe Use Of Ladder And Step Ladders (An Employers Guide) INDG 402
A Toolbox Talk on Learning Ladder And Stepladder Safety INDG 403
Top Tips For Ladder And Step Ladder Safety (Pocket Guide) INDG 405
Any enquiries should be directed to Dave Joyce, National Health & Safety Officer, quoting reference NS30a/EX5.

TELECOMS

22

Telewest – NT&IT Regional Networks Operations (Non-Supervisory Grades 4 & 5 Copper, Access and Last Drop Engineers): Ballot Result

On behalf of the Union's Telewest Executive Team, I am pleased to announce that there has been a very successful outcome of the ballot for extended recognition. The results are reproduced below:

"Do you want the CWU to be recognised for the purposes of

collective bargaining on your behalf?"

Yes	317 (94%)
No	17 (6%)
Spoilt ballot papers	2
Total ballot papers received	336
Total ballot papers despatched	758

The ballot was conducted by Popularis – the Independent Scrutineers who report that they are "satisfied that the arrangements made with respect to the production, storage, distribution, return and other handling of the voting papers used in the ballot, and the arrangements for the counting of the votes, included all such security arrangements as were reasonably practicable for the purpose of minimising the risk that any unfairness or malpractice might occur". This excellent result could not have been achieved without the hard work of individual members in Telewest as well as the support and efforts of local Branch Officers and Telecom Organisers. To this end, I would like to place on record the appreciation of the TFSE.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

23

Telewest – Box Collectors – Salary And Bonus Arrangements

Although the small group of Field Box Collectors are outside the bargaining recognition agreement Telewest has, from time to time, listened to representations made on behalf of that group.

Attached for the information of Branches is a copy of a letter sent to the HR Director – Consumer Division over elements of the Box Collectors salary arrangements and bonus scheme.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

24

One IT – Management Services
Management Services is a new a functional unit within OI. It brings together the Service Management, Service Control, Products and Services Portfolio.

The appointment process is based on a lift and shift 80/20 basis, with any future vacancies filled through the "bench", internal and external recruitment.

There are 28 Newgrid grades affected however, their role and members will not change and the impact is minimal with possible changes in line manager. The significant impact will be on Connect represented grades which will be through the appointments process.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

25

One IT – Moving Resource Onto ICT Work

The Union has been advised that in line with the previous stated management objectives reported to Branches, management will begin the process of moving people across to ICT assignments. They will re-start the freeing up of BT people in Q4 of the financial year to move to ICT. Moves did not take place in Q3 as the priority was to move the freed up people onto TSR and BT Openreach work. The target that they now have is 600 in Q4 for ICT activity.

Management state that they have learned some of the lessons from last July when this process first began in terms of realigning resource; they will have a clear process where people are advised well ahead that they are going to be moved to the bench and to ICT. It will be made clear who their Continuity Manager will be ahead of the move and they will receive all the information ahead of the move as to what it will entail at each step of the way.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

26

Accenture HR Services – Future Of Finance Team

There is underway across the wider Accenture Services Group, a wide-ranging initiative which is designed to standardise a range of policies processes and technology and is known as Accenture to Accenture or A2A. Much of this is driven by looking at the internal costs and services, in particular using in-house solutions and not duplicating internally or seeking external solutions to that already provided internally by the Accenture Services Group.

One such activity that the Union has been notified that is under review is that of the Finance Team. Attached for the information of Branches is a copy of slides used to brief the Finance Team, of which there are CWU represented grades.

It would appear that of three options being looked at, the strong favourite is a TUPE to Accenture Finance as being a best fit to the overall objectives of the A2A project, whilst at the same time opening up greater career opportunities.

The Union believes that a similar approach may be taken for the Legal and Procurement functions but no CWU represented grades would be affected.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

27**BT Wholesale – 21CN Site Preparation**

BT Wholesale has advised the Union of how it will utilise its resource as it moves towards the 21st Century Network. There is a growing need to complete essential site preparation work and in order to make sure that this work can be done in good time, there is a requirement to match this new and growing work demand. One of the ways is through moving people on to new work streams where volumes allow. As a lot of Core work is reactive, resulting in fluctuating resource demands each week in terms of people, skill and geography, a balance is required in terms of supply and demand. Therefore, there is an opportunity to introduce capital work into job requirements which will also help smooth the peaks and troughs in workflow, as well as allowing engineers in Core Build to complete other critical work.

To make best use of this flexibility, and still be responsive to all customer demands, BT Wholesale will introduce weekly reviews of work stacks, and will adopt a priority order for capital work being taken. This will be:

- Requirement for a small number of people to work within the Capital Team (NQH) control office
- 21C DDF physical cleansing – no back office support is required
- To support additional work on 21C DDF core uplift work
- 21C site preparation work MDF
- Infill work – this will include CP ceases and card in-fill work. However, the process for card infill is currently being discussed.

Furthermore, where Openreach require additional resource from Network Operations this will continue to be a priority until January 2006.

In the field, line management will remain unchanged with existing field managers retaining full responsibility for their own team members whilst working in conjunction with their Capital team on the work requirements for each site. Team members will log on as usual to WM and be allocated a WM proact task in the most appropriate domain. The control team will continue to jeopardy manage reactive work and individuals will be contacted where required to deal with urgent repair for customers. The initial tranche will be around 50 FTEs-worth rising up to around 200 people at any one time when sufficient capital work becomes available.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

POSTAL**28****Dog Dazers Used On Delivery Duties**

For many years there has been the facility for Delivery Staff to be provided with Dog Dazers, which is a product that emits a high frequency signal which is audible to dogs but not humans.

Enquiries have been made with Royal Mail as to the extent of their use and effectiveness in dealing with aggressive dogs reported by users. Unfortunately, all that the business could tell us was that there are orders made costing about £30,000 a year. There was no feedback as to how they are used or whether they are an effective piece of equipment.

Could any representatives who are aware of Dog Dazers being used within their area please enquire of the members concerned whether the equipment does deter attacks and any other comments concerning improvements which could be made. It would be appreciated particularly if Area Delivery Reps and Area Safety Reps could respond on this question. Reports on any other methods for dealing with aggressive dogs would also be welcome.

As there is a meeting with management to discuss this issue in Mid February, responses before 3rd February would be much appreciated.

All enquiries and replies to Bob Gibson's Department, reference 100.02 and/or Dave Joyce's Dept, reference P18

**Branch Secretaries are reminded that in order to be kept fully up-to-date with electronic communications from Head Quarters, they must be subscribed to the online mailing list – if you are not already receiving LTBs, BOBs and News items, please email your details to alawrence-jones@cwu.org.
Abigail Lawrence-Jones
Web Editor**

EVENTS BULLETIN

Tuesday 17 January 2006: Reaching New Reading Audiences. To be held at Bristol, Harbourside, Bristol, BS1 5DB. The fourth Networks Conference organised by ReadEast will be focusing on exploring ways of marketing reading and libraries to attract new readers and re-inspire those who have lost the reading habit. Share your experiences and find out about new initiatives. Speakers include: Andrew Stevens, Genevieve Clark and Jan Holden. For more information contact Rebecca Goodbourn on 020 7766 0018 or rgoodbourn@cflearning.org.uk

Friday 20 January 2006: TUC/EOR Conference - 0 'Discrimination Law in 2006'. 09:15 to 16:30. To be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1. Each year Equal Opportunities Review runs a conference on Discrimination Law. Leading lawyers review legal developments over the past year and likely trends in the coming year. For more information contact TUC Equality and Employment Rights Department, Congress House Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS or visit www.tuc.org.uk/extras/RegistrationForm2006.doc

Saturday 28 January 2006: CWU Women's Conference. Will be held at the Library Theatre, Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ. Branches are entitled to send two delegates to the Conference Details of the delegates should be included on the appropriate form which should be completed and returned to Carmel McCudden at Head Office no later than 30 December 2005. For more information contact Carmel McCudden either by post to head office or by email to cmccudden@cwu.org

Saturday 28 January 2006 – Saturday 4 February inclusive: National Storytelling Week. Location UK-wide. Over 700 nationwide storytelling events and performances were organised this year for National Storytelling Week in Schools, Arts Centres, Museums, Libraries, Theatres, Book Shops, Storytelling Clubs, Retirement Homes, Pubs, and a London shop window! For more information contact the Society for Storytelling, P.O. Box 344, Reading, RG6 7FG Tel: 0118 935 1381 email: SfS@fairbruk.demon.co.uk or visit www.sfs.org.uk

Tuesday 31 January 2006: Supporting Family Literacy. To be held at Education Bradford, Future House, Bolling Road, Bradford BD4 7EB. Many parents and carers struggle to support their children's reading. Family literacy is increasingly recognised as a valuable tool for promoting both literacy skills and positive attitudes to books and reading. For more information contact National Centre for Language and Literacy, The University of Reading, Bulmershe Court, Reading RG6 1HY Tel: +44 (0)118 378 8820 Fax: +44 (0)118 378 6801 Email: ncll@reading.ac.uk

Tuesday 31 January 2006: Equality in Employment – Preventing discrimination based on religion or belief. This one day seminar will be held at the NATFHE Centre, Britannia Street, London WC1. 1.30pm to 4.15pm. Organised by the Institute of Employment Rights. On the 2nd December 2003 the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations came into force. The Regulations are based on the European Framework Directive on Equal treatment in employment. Cost IER Subscriber and members £45.00, Trade Unions £60.00 and commercial £120.00. For more information contact the IER on 020 7498 6919 or Email office@ier.org.uk

Thursday 2 February 2006: Listening to Older Learners. To be held at London Resource Centre. This conference will use the examples of recent initiatives whereby older learners have commissioned and led their own research into the learning needs of older people in their communities. For more information contact Gurjit Kaur, Gurjit Kaur, Conferences & Courses Office, NIACE, Renaissance House, 20 Princess Road West, Leicester LE1 6TP (email gurjit.kaur@niace.org.uk).

Monday 6 February 2006: Stamping Out Homophobia All Over The World. 10:00 to 16:30. To be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS, UK. Registration costs £25 including documentation and working lunch. As part of LGBT History Month, the TUC is holding a conference to raise union awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans issues at international level. The conference is designed for union leaders, officials and activists. Speakers will include personal testimonies from around

the world as well as Foreign Office Human Rights Minister Ian Pearson MP and Education International General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen. For more information contact Pat Brown - pbrown@tuc.org.uk or fax: 020 7436 2830 or visit www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-10922-f0.cfm

Wednesday 8 February 2006: Tenants, trade unions, councillors and MPs demand 'Fourth Option for Council Housing'. Lobby of Parliament – Mass rally at Central Hall, Westminster, 12 noon. National speakers and workshops. Around the country tenants, trade unionists, councillors and MPs are opposing stock transfer, PFI and ALMOs. Along with councils pledged to keep their homes. Further information from Defend Council Housing write to PO Box 33519, London, E2 9WW, email info@defendcouncilhousing.org.uk or visit www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk

Thursday 9 February 2006: GMB Anti-Racist Party. 9pm til late. Free entry to GMB members with collection on the night in aid of Tahir Bhatti Asian Earthquake victims. Live band: the Silvertones, DJs: KMT Badabing Disco, and live PAs: Cypha, Royal Priesthood. For more information contact Steve Kelly, steve.kelly@gmb.org.uk

If you have anything for the events bulletin page please send your contribution to Marcia Murray, CWU, Communication Department, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1RX, Tel: 020 8971 7497, Email: mmurray@cwu.org Details must arrive nine days before publication and must include a contact phone number, brief summary of the event, email and website address. Listings are free, but inclusion is not guaranteed.