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008

Education & Training Courses – North East Region

The following Education & Training courses have been organised to take place in the North East region:

- Union Skills I: **3 – 7 March 2008** – Newcastle
- Union Skills I: **3 – 7 March 2008** – York
- Union Skills I: **3 – 7 March 2008** – Sheffield
- 2 Day Organising: **12 – 13 March 2008** – York
- Postal Agreements & Procedures: **7 – 11 April 2008** – Newcastle
- Postal Agreements & Procedures: **7 – 11 April 2008** – York
- Postal Agreements & Procedures: **7 – 11 April 2008** – Sheffield
- Equal Rights in the CWU Part 1: **12 – 16 May 2008** – York
- 2 Day Media Training: **8 – 9 July 2008** – York
- Union Skills I: **8 – 12 September 2008** – Newcastle
- Union Skills I: **8 – 12 September 2008** – York
- Union Skills I: **8 – 12 September 2008** – Sheffield
- Equal Rights in the CWU Part 2: **29 September – 3 October 2008** – York

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

009

Union Skills III Course – Reminder

The Communication Workers Union has organised a Union Skills III course, to be held at the union's Education & Training Centre at Alvscot Lodge. All courses held at Alvscot Lodge are accredited with the National Open College Network. This is a fully integrated course.

The course will be held from **25 – 29 February 2008**.

Please submit applications as soon as possible.

Only members who have attended a Union Skills I/Induction and a Union Skills II course are eligible for nomination. 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 Alvscot are residential. The cost of tuition, food and accommodation will be met from the General Fund. 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.

Those nominees who are Committee Members, Branch Representatives or Branch Officers are entitled to leave with pay. Nominations should be made on the form for Education Courses, and returned to Alvscot Lodge by the closing date shown.

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

010

Union Skills I & Union Skills II Courses – Wales

Branches are asked to submit application forms for the following courses being held in the Wales region:

- Union Skills I: **31st March – 4th April 2008** – Newport
- Union Skills II: **19 – 23 May 2008** – Newport

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

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

011

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 representatives 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 representatives 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 representatives 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 Head Office, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1RX.

012

Mandatory Equality & Diversity Training

Branch secretaries are requested to ensure that any person in their branch who has CWU rep responsibilities and has not yet completed their mandatory Equality & Diversity training are enrolled in the courses that are planned throughout the regions in the forthcoming months.

All reps must do the training – this includes divisional reps, area reps, unit reps and branch officers.

For clarification on dates please contact your regional secretary. The training has been running now for over three years and there are still a substantial number of reps who have not completed the training.

Your co-operation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Equal Opportunities Department.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

013

Deaf Workers – DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) – Reasonable Adjustments – Pager Provision

The recent case of a deaf and dumb member employed by Royal Mail Letters in a mail centre has highlighted the need for risk controls to be put in place and a clear policy to cover basic DDA/safety requirements has been requested from Royal Mail. In the meantime the following advice is provided for branches and safety reps to use locally should similar situations arise.

One in seven (15%) of the population is deaf or hard of hearing. That is 8.7 million people in the UK. Many cannot hear fire alarms or public address announcements.

Employers can make a profound difference

by making simple changes and have a legal duty under the Disability Discrimination Act to make reasonable adjustments to the workplace and provide support. RNID is urging employers to make the simple but necessary adjustments in the way candidates are assessed and employees are treated to ensure an inclusive and effective working environment for all. RNID give examples of how colleagues can communicate with deaf and hard of hearing people in the workplace, and practical advice on what employers can do to make reasonable adjustments for their hard of hearing employees include:

Make sure the deaf or hard of hearing person is seated where they can see everyone, rather than facing a wall, as this could lead them to feel isolated from the office environment.

When approaching a deaf or hard of hearing person from behind, try to attract their attention by either tapping on their shoulders or waving next to them.

Include deaf and hard of hearing people in meetings by providing the right communication support for the individual, whether it be a sign language interpreter, speech to text operator, note taker or a lip speaker. Deaf and hard of hearing people can get funding from Access To Work for reasonable adjustments in the workplace, which can pay for communication support and equipment.

Be aware of deaf and hard of hearing people in the workplace, for example if you have to suddenly evacuate the building in the event of a fire, make sure they are made aware of the alarm. Employers should also install effective fire alarms – this can be alarms with flashing lights or a vibrating pager. Employers should provide necessary equipment for deaf and hard of hearing employees as part of Health & Safety measures.

Install a loop system in meeting rooms to help hearing aid users – these are cheap and effective.

Make textphones available for deaf and hard of hearing staff, these allow them to communicate with hearing people by telephone.

RNID can provide Deaf Awareness Training to any business or part of a business no matter what its size, to make sure employers and managers are aware of the barriers deaf and hard of hearing people can face in employment, and how to overcome them.

For further information can be obtained from RNID on Tel/textphone: **020 7296 8229/8137** or email: anna.hollis@rnid.org.uk

About Deaf Alerter

Deaf Alerter is a radio-based fire alarm warning and messaging system. It will vibrate and display the appropriate message if that building's fire alarm has been activated.

In the event of fire the deaf and those with impaired hearing may not hear the fire alarm.

Many employers use the Deaf Alerter system in order to make sure deaf and hearing impaired staff, students and visitors are alerted should the fire alarm sound.

About Deaf Alerter: The Deaf Alerter is a small battery operated device that vibrates when the building fire alarm is activated. The alphanumeric display on Deaf Alerter relays a fire emergency message, stating the building where the activation has occurred.

Why is Deaf Alerter important?: If you are in a building and there was a fire or emergency situation, it must be communicated to you.

Deaf and hard of hearing people rely on Deaf Alerter to do this.

Lifesaving: It could save a person's life by giving access to fire and bomb warnings (deaf staff would wear their alerter at all times).

Equal access: Deaf Alerter provides people with equal access to the alarms and the information hearing people take for granted. No longer do they have to rely on other people looking out for them, hence greater independence.

Information: Deaf Alerter can be connected to door bells, Minicomms and other equipment to give greater access to communication.

Public address: Announcements that deaf people would normally be excluded from can be sent via the alerter.

For whom is it important?: Family and Friends. Deaf Alerter gives you, your family and friends peace of mind, knowing you'll receive the same degree of safety as a hearing person.

Duty of Care: The employer is responsible for the health and safety of everyone on their premises.

Obtaining a Deaf Alerter: Deaf Alerter plc. A member of the ECL Group of Companies, registered in England Number 4078512. Registered Office: Enfield House, 303 Burton Road, Derby, DE23 6AG. VAT number: GB764051441. Tel: **+44 (0)1332 363981**; Fax: **+44 (0)1332 293267**; Minicom: **+44 (0)1332 291921**.

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

014

Royal Mail Cycles – Seven Year Lifespan Extension and Replacement Policy

This is an update report to branches, further to LTBs 514 /06 and 201/07.

Branches will recall that agreement was reached with Royal Mail to restore the seven year lifespan and replacement policy on Royal Mail cycles. That remains unchanged.

The problem with maintaining the seven year lifespan replacement policy was caused when during the 2005 – 2006 financial year, the cycle replacement budget was withdrawn for the year based on an assumption that the business had in excess of 5,000 spare cycles in

the system and sufficient cycles in service to replace those becoming "time expired" without buying any replacements. Additionally the Cycle Contract Tender due that year was put on hold. As a result a major backlog of time-expired cycles awaiting replacement built up across the UK.

The supply of new cycles has not yet caught up to deal with all over seven-year-old replacements. However a total of 8,500 cycles were delivered in 2006 – 2007. A further 1,500 new cycles will be delivered before the end of the current 2007 – 2008 financial year (prior to 31 March 2008).

A national audit was conducted earlier this year to identify the correct surplus of cycles in comparison with the number being used for delivery and since then Royal Mail has been working to bring the cycle fleet in line with current and future requirements. This has involved the purchase of a small number of new cycles plus a number of existing cycles being transferred within and between areas to match cycle duty requirements and a further number of cycles held in local storage have been released into service.

The industrial action delayed completion of the cycle redeployment and replacement plan and, in the meantime, Royal Mail HQ (Assets) have asked areas to continue to retain in service cycles that reach seven years old, providing they are assessed as roadworthy by the cycle mechanics.

Royal Mail does not believe that this presents a risk in the short term, provided cycles have been appropriately maintained in line with guidelines, and are in sound mechanical working order. They conclude that there is no reason why cycles should cease to be used immediately their seven-year anniversary is reached. As a comparison, they state that the Royal Mail Motor Vehicle Fleet have lifespans ranging between three to five years, depending upon the type and that appropriate maintenance and servicing maintains them in a sound mechanical order. As a result Royal Mail frequently run vehicles on beyond their three to five year lifespan which does not expose the driver to any greater safety risks by retaining them beyond the initially planned and stated lifespan policy.

Royal Mail state that the cycle mechanics are best placed, based on their skills, knowledge and experience of the cycles to know whether any particular cycle is in a sound mechanical working order or not and to make the appropriate decision on whether it can be used beyond its seven-year lifespan or not. Additionally, as an added safety precaution, advice has been issued to areas by the Royal Mail Assets Team that when continuing to use over seven-year old cycles, which are in good condition, they recommend that the area should increase safety inspections from every 12 months to every six months or three months. Further to this Royal Mail HQ (Assets)

have emphasised that if any of the older cycles are unfit for use and in such a poor condition as to be considered a safety risk, then those particular cycles should be withdrawn and not returned to service.

In conclusion Royal Mail do recognise that this approach has caused difficulties in some areas and are planning to supply 1,500 new cycles before 31 March 2008. However Royal Mail HQ (Assets) are taking a cautious approach to the numbers of cycles being purchased due to the 'Delivery Methods and Equipment Review' which they expect to impact on cycle numbers.

The Health, Safety and Environment Department has requested that the situation be closely examined in certain areas where specific problems have been identified to us.

Copy of the Cycle Maintenance Policy attached.

As with previous BOB paragraphs on this subject the Outdoor Department and Health, Safety & Environment Departments have received a number of communications and enquiries regarding this issue so would all representatives and branches that have written in to union HQ on this matter please accept this BOB as a reply.

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

TELECOMS

015

BT Wholesale: Focus Newsletter

Some branches may be aware of a recent and very much inappropriate content published in a BT Wholesale Customer Services Focus Newsletter. This house style was challenged at national level and the outcome is that the following actions will take place.

As a result of looking at the editorial process, management are implementing a training and education plan that includes the following:

- classroom and on-line diversity training
- reinforcement of the company diversity principles and commitments into the editorial sign-off process
- an elevated level for the sign-off gates for the next few issues
- the editorial board will attend a number of internal communications courses and training.

This incident and the subsequent actions by

management now bring the subject matter to a close.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

016

BT Operate: Field Engineering Efficiency Challenge – Interim Report

In November last year, Field Engineering proposed to reduce its workforce by between 92 to 110 people, whilst ensuring customer satisfaction measures were maintained, in order to achieve the next stage of the Field Engineering 2007/08 Efficiency Challenge.

The reduction in roles was undertaken using positive selection based solely on location, job related skills and capabilities

The selection was undertaken by selection managers/RBM leads who undertook the majority of selection work, with input from first line managers. Ratification in each area was undertaken by the regional business manager and Business Operations Team. HR has overseen and coordinated the process to ensure that fairness and procedures are followed appropriately.

Field Engineering were also able to run a Voluntary Leavers Scheme which coincided with the positive selection work and which enabled all individuals within the impacted areas to express and interest in leaving the business. This particular aspect the union requested in order to minimise the impact of the numbers of members nominated for transfer to the CTC.

Based on work volumes and current resource, the following reductions were planned for within each of the regional areas. The table also shows the numbers of individuals management have to date been able to release on Newstart. Management have also taken into consideration any individuals who 'asked' to be moved to the CTC where this was operationally possible.

See Table 1.

The positive selection work was undertaken between 24 October and 9 November. In the final week the information was reviewed and checked by HR and Business Operations.

Newstart opened from 23 October and management were able to consider as many applications as possible by the notification date of 13 November. In effect managers are still considering these now wherever operationally possible. Management received 20 appeals, broken down as follows:

Rejected – 16

Interview – 1

1. Individual's skill score increased, which led to an 'interview' situation with one other. Not finalised yet.

Upheld – 2

1. Individual highlighted use of skills which had not been picked up previously and this altered his markings and consequently excluded him from selection.
2. Individual highlighted some experience of a particular switch skill. Following review, it was considered that this should be preserved within the particular area and his appeal was therefore upheld.

Not completed

1. Late notification and therefore appeal not completed.

Transfers

- 44 people transferred
- 22 people on 30 November
- 5 people should be transferring over on 6 December (held due to sick leave, appeals etc.)
- The remaining people will transfer over as soon as is appropriate.

Arrangements are being made for a full review meeting to examine feedback and probably this will now be at the beginning of January.

Management have requested feedback from the union and have extended this request to branches and this should be forwarded to head office for collation.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

017

Trouble to Resolve Transformation Programme – Infrastructure and Capacity Management Team

BT Operate strategy is starting to draw up plans to deliver a transformed customer experience with a best-cost global infrastructure. This is intended to support the BT transformation objectives. T2R has a pivotal role to play delivering service that is right first time, every time and on time to meet customer requirements.

Management have informed the union that this will involve a significant cost reduction over the next three years.

Part of this cost reduction will be achieved by having the right structure in place and management have informed the union of the

Table 1

Area	Reduction	Newstart	Transfers to CTC	Other efficiency ie, transfer to other role/OR etc.
London	36	13	20	3
Home Counties	11	4	7	0
Scotland	13	3	9	1
Mid Wales & West	37	8	29	0
South West & National	14	4	10	0
Total	111	32	75	4

first of the changes to the T2R structure that will affect the Fulfilment team.

Management are merging the existing fulfilment unit and elements of capacity management from proactive and reactive to form an Infrastructure & Capacity Management team.

Management will use the first quarter of 2008 to get this balance right and will be continuing to review the structure to ensure that they have the right numbers of resource within each of the functional teams. This will mean that in order to achieve the strategy and end of year business objectives, they have reported that most T2R teams will reduce in size by the end of the current financial year.

It is currently envisaged by T2R management that they will reduce the number of team members (TM) by 75-80 out of a total impacted TM population of 428. Management will fully support the redeployment of the workforce and in addition make available a paid leaver scheme to all of the impacted community.

To manage the process of identifying people to remain within the team member roles, management are proposing to use positive selection.

Management have decided that the following communities will be excluded from the T2R positive selection process:

- Modern apprentices
- Graduates currently on the BT graduate programme
- People on maternity leave/adoption leave
- People on long term sick
- Individuals managed under the managing changing capability process (e.g. an individual with disabilities where BT may be adjusting their job or are placing them into a new role in line with capabilities)
- Individuals with full-time union duties

The timeline for Infrastructure and Capacity Management positive selection is:

9 January – Positive selection training for senior and second line managers

14 January – Newstart opens and communications to impacted population begins

14 January – Positive selection for first line managers begins

22 January – Positive selection training for second and first line managers begins

25 January – Positive selection for first line manager positions ends

28 January – Positive selection for team

members begins

22 February – Positive selection for team members ends

By end of March – Eligible displaced people enter career transition centre (CTC)

Further information is being sought on what the enabling mechanism is for the reductions stated, the content of the PSP and precisely how and which teams will reduce as management state that most will but, by inference, not all.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

EVENTS BULLETIN

October 2007 – June 2008: The London Socialist Film Co-op. There will be a number of films showing the second Sunday of every month. Film(s) includes La Última Cena/The Last Supper all showing Sunday 14 October 2007. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea is best known for his Memories of Underdevelopment. The Last Supper is unfairly neglected, made during the height of 'the cold war', showing a Cuba that was unknown and a history that was of little interest to audiences of that time. Discussion led by Michael Chanan, Professor of Film and Video at Roehampton University, London, Jacqui McKenzie, Caribbean Labour Solidarity, Dionne Walker and many more. For all enquiries and the full programme contact **020 7278 5764**.

Saturday 3rd February 2008: CWU Black Worker's Conference. To be held at CWU Headquarters from 10.30 am – 16.30 pm. Speakers for the event will be Trevor Phillips, Chair of the CEHR and Dr Muhammed Abdul Bari, Secretary General of the MCB. For more information and details on registration contact **Dionne** on **020 8971 7356**; email **dgittens@cwu.org**

Saturday 23rd February 2008: CWU Women's Conference. To be held at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Belfast from 10.30 am - 16.30 pm. Speakers for the event include Gloria Mills, National Organiser Equalities, Unison and Evelyn Collins, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission. For more information and details on registration contact **Dionne** on **020 8971 7356**; email **dgittens@cwu.org**

Wednesday 12 March 2008: International Women's Day Rally. 17:30 to be held at the Winter Garden in Eastbourne. The TUC Women's

Committee are hosting a rally to celebrate International Women's Day. All are welcome to attend – delegates and non-delegates and unions are invited to organise groups of workers to attend the event. National and international speakers from across the trade union movement and beyond will address the rally. For more information contact TUC Equality & Employment Rights Department: **020 7636 4030** or visit **www.tuc.org.uk/equality/index.cfm?mins=389&minors=383**

Wednesday 12 March 2008 – Friday 14 March inclusive: TUC Women's Conference.

To be held at the Floral Hall, Winter Garden, Eastbourne. Delegates will debate motions on a range of issues of importance to women in the UK and across the world. For more information contact TUC Equality & Employment Rights Department: 020 7636 4030 or visit **www.tuc.org.uk/equality/index.cfm?mins=389&minors=383**

Monday 7th April 2008: Retired Members' Eastern Region Meeting.

To be held at Swinton House, 324 Grays Inn Road London at 11am. For further information contact **Nobby Clark** on **07713 155575**.

Thursday 3 July 2008 – Friday 4 July

inclusive: TUC LGBT Conference. Will be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. The TUC LGBT Conference 2008 takes place at Congress House. It is one of the largest annual gatherings of LGBT activists and workers. Unions will be invited to submit motions for debate, and send delegations, early in 2008. The TUC welcomes visitors from relevant organisations to the event. For more information contact **Peter Purton**, **020 7467 1271**, **ppurton@tuc.org.uk**

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If you have anything for the events bulletin page please send your contribution to:

Marcia Murray
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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.