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GENERAL

421 Equality & Diversity Mandatory Training for Branch Officials – Lincoln

In line with Conference policy, we now require branches to submit applications for the following mandatory Equality & Diversity course.

This course is being held on **Thursday 20th September 2007** in Lincoln and places are limited.

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

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

422 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.

423 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 either 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

424 Mobile Phone Masts – New Research Fails to Detect Short-term Harm

A study by an Essex University team, published on 25 July in the journal "Environmental Health Perspectives" has concluded that Mobile phone masts do not cause harmful short-term health effects. The study which included a number of people who say they experience symptoms when they are close to Mobile phone masts has strongly countered the notion that low-level

electromagnetic fields from cellphones or base stations are dangerous. The team of researchers in the Psychology, Computer Science and Electronic Systems Engineering Departments at the University of Essex received funding from the Department of Health (Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research Programme) to undertake the research study.

The researchers looked at 2G and 3G phone masts in a lab setting where both the participants and researchers did not know whether the equipment was turned on. The set-up was designed to mimic the output from a phone mast at 20-30 metres from the subject and concluded that the evidence shows that people couldn't detect the signals.

The Report stats that 159 people took part in the experiment and of those 44 said they were sensitive to electronic equipment. At first the participants were told when the electric field was turned on while being tested. Under these conditions, the electrosensitive participants reported unpleasant symptoms such as headaches and nausea. In three further tests the researchers subjected them to 2G radiation, 3G radiation or no radiation under "double blind" conditions, meaning that no one involved knew whether the equipment was switched on. Under these conditions two of the electrosensitive group and five of the control group correctly identified whether the electricity was on every time – no better than you would expect by chance alone.

The team also measured heart rate, blood volume pulse (a measure of pressure) and the sweatiness of the subject's skin. All of these should go up when the participants are experiencing unpleasant symptoms or anxiety. The electrosensitive individuals had generally higher scores than the control group for all three, but they did not change when the 2G or 3G radiation was switched on.

The reaction from Anti-phone mast campaigners to the research findings was mixed:

The "Mast Sanity" campaign group said in a statement said that the results were skewed by the fact that 12 volunteers who claimed to be sensitive to electronic equipment dropped out and claimed that by eliminating 12 people

or 20% of the group, the study's integrity had been undermined. Essex University countered this view stating that the study still tested 44 of those claiming to be 'sensitive', and of the 12 dropouts, all of those participated in the first 'double blind test' before dropping out and none of them were able to identify correctly when the radiation was switch on or off. However the Essex University team accepted that the reduced numbers participating did mean that the statistical power of the experiment was compromised and estimated that there is a 30% chance that the experiment missed a real effect because of the smaller numbers.

The "Powerwatch" campaign group on the other hand however said in a statement that they had been impressed by the study and that the Essex team have carried out one of the best-designed and executed studies to date.

Prof Fox the leader of the Essex University study team stated in the report's conclusions that scientists and sufferers should now concentrate on finding the real cause of the symptoms because if people are convinced that they are suffering ill-health because of mobile phone masts they don't investigate other causes.

One previous survey found that 4% of people in the UK claim to be sensitive to electronic equipment. Many experience flu-like symptoms such as headache, streaming eyes or a burning sensation and for some these are so bad they opt to shield their homes with foiled wallpaper or even move to the country.

It's been 18 years since the birth of the Mobile Phone revolution and over that period there has been continual reports regarding the fear of ill-health caused by radiation and radio-waves emitted by phones and masts.

Nevertheless, the UK has adopted a precautionary approach on radio frequencies by, among other measures, using the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) exposure guidelines for the general public. These are five times more stringent than the previous UK NRPB standards. Such standards are based on the only scientifically established effect of radio waves – the 'heating' effect.

In order to reassure the public, the Radiocommunications Agency (RA) – now part of Ofcom – carries out annual surveys of radio field strength near mobile phone masts. These checks, at the suggestion of the Stewart Report of 2000, number about 100 a year and are carried out at schools and hospitals.

So far, the highest reading Ofcom has recorded was one 279th of the UK exposure guidelines (ICNIRP). Nevertheless, this reading was unusual because the vast majority of sites Ofcom has monitored are thousands of times below the guidelines.

Mobile Phone network operators are obliged to provide evidence with each planning application that signals are well within the safety limits which follow a precautionary

approach and are far below the levels at which an effect of any sort has ever been detected in replicated scientific experiments.

Those working on or very close to Phone Transmitters can experience the "heating effect", depending on the power of the transmitter masts. The distance would normally be about two feet (0.5m). As an added precaution, safety zones as large as 11 yards (10m) are in force around them, depending on their size and output, to protect people from the heating effect and the normal procedure is to switch them off whilst work is being undertaken on them or nearby. Nevertheless, radio energy falls away dramatically as the distance between a person and the source increases. This is because of the so-called 'inverse square' law. If you double the distance away from a radio source, you decrease the power by four times. Double that again and the power has fallen by a factor of 16, and so on. This heating effect is caused by the ability of radio waves to make molecules vibrate more actively - a quality which was discovered in World War Two during research into radar.

Links on Mobile Phone Health Concerns

World Health Organisation mobile phone health site: <http://www.who.int/peh-emf/en/>

Independent expert group on mobile phones (the Stewart report): <http://www.iegmp.org.uk/>

Department of Health Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research Programme: <http://www.mthr.org.uk/index.htm>

Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

TELECOMS

425

Virgin Media: Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy

Attached for the information of branches is the current Virgin Media policy on disciplinary and dismissal.

This replaces all previous documents issued by Head Office.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

426

Virgin Media: Code of Conduct

Attached for the information of branches is the current Virgin Media Code of Conduct.

This replaces all previous documents issued by Head Office.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

427

Virgin Media: Harassment Policy

Attached for the information of branches is the current Virgin Media policy on harassment.

This replaces all previous documents issued by Head Office.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

428

Virgin Media: Sickness Absence Policy

Branches may wish to be advised of the Virgin Media house style publication of the Company's sick absence policy, a copy of which is attached.

There are issues around the notification process which have been taken up with the company and which will be reported upon once the Company's response is received.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

429

BT Wholesale: Broadband Services Business Integration and Customer Service Programme – Phase 1 Rollout

As part of the Customer Service Resourcing Strategy as reported in LTB 489/2007, the future concept is to move to a single contact number for all inbound activities. This will necessitate a multi-functional workforce.

Management will commence the rollout of this strategy through a series of phases – the first of which is being introduced in Coventry and Manchester during June and July. The preliminary sites will be transformed into multi-skilled teams with a basic core skill set that encompasses Fulfilment and Assurance work. These teams will form the initial Customer Service element of the new operation which will be an ongoing programme into 2008.

Along with this, management will introduce a Business Integration function that will focus on new products and services, change programmes and operational improvement activities. This work area will be focused on ensuring the smooth integration of the areas covered by Customer Service, ensuring this is achieved in a quality way and improving the customer experience.

The skills that will initially form part of a core skill set for the Customer Service teams are those that encompass commonalities within Fulfilment and Assurance in call answering and jeopardy management/exception handling type functions. This will add greater flexibility to both current work areas, increase capability of teams and can be achieved with minimal disruption to the performance.

Also during Phase 1, the Business Integration function will be focused around building on the work already carried out within the SDSL teams and providing additional support to exploit any joint Fulfilment/Assurance synergies, and exploring opportunities with system enhancements and the overall customer experience.

The Wholesale Executive Team will monitor and review how the skill sets come together, in particular, grading. Overall the Executive is supportive of a wider skill set as this approach

supports higher grading, as opposed to an organisation of work which strips out lower skilled functions and therefore more lower graded posts. The latter of which whilst providing a functional/grading hierarchy, does little by way of job satisfaction and providing for the maximum number of higher graded jobs.

A copy of the slide pack is attached for the information of branches.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

430

BT Operate: SMARTS Programme

Branches were last advised in Branch Officials Bulletin No.18/2007, paragraph 299 that the delayed launch would move into operational testing/parallel running towards the end of May and that SMARTS would be launched in August. The launch would cover VPN, Dial, Colossus, BBIP and business VMP platforms; any launch would be dependent on technical issues being resolved.

Management have announced that the Dial-IP, Colossus, IP-VPN platforms are now ready for parallel testing. From **Thursday 9 August** SMARTS will be the primary tool for monitoring these platforms and that will run for at least 5 weeks before the final decision is taken that SMARTS is a stand alone live system. The timetable for BBIP and VMP will be communicated shortly afterwards.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

431

BT Operate: H-IPCC Centre of Excellence

When the Executive Team initially reported on the creation of the H-IPCC Centre of Excellence in Branch Officials Bulletin No.20/2007, paragraph 320, the Executive Team had negotiated D1 banding against the original job design proposals.

In light of operational experience and external market factors in terms of skills, responsibility and attraction and retention of individuals, the company has reviewed its position. The outcome of the review has led management to hold the view that once the level of technical skills and responsibility is mapped externally and to Newgrid, that the job is more properly aligned to Reward Framework. As a consequence the jobs in question will be revised and advertised as sitting within the Reward Framework structure.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

POSTAL

432

Vague Address and Unofficial Redirection Labels

We have learnt that Royal Mail have started to issue these labels for use by Delivery staff. In response to our request for information in this

regard, we have received the reply which is published below:

Thank you for your letter dated 19th July 2007 asking for clarity around the application of Vague Address Labels and Unofficial Redirection Labels. I have consulted with the Marketing leads and can advise as follows:

Where an item of mail is received at a forwarding delivery unit bearing an Unofficial Redirection, Royal Mail as part of the Undeliverable & Reposting specification is obliged to deliver the item to the redirected addressee without any further remuneration.

To facilitate a reduction in Unofficial Redirections & reduce the potential impact of Identify Fraud, Royal Mail employees will endeavour to apply an Unofficial Redirection Label to each item ahead of delivery.

It will be generally recognised that as customers switch to the Official Redirection service provided by Royal Mail there will be a reduction in the need to apply these labels as units will then simply follow due protocols for the delivery of Official Redirections.

The same application principles will apply for the Vague Address Label and over time would expect to see a reduction in use as we educate our customers in the proper mails addressing standards.

If you need any further information please let me know.

*Yours sincerely
Andy E Hughes*

Any enquiries to **Bob Gibson's Department, reference 530**

433

Keepsafe for Schools

The letter published below has been received from Royal Mail:

*To: Bob Gibson
CWU Assistant Secretary – Outdoor*

7th August 2007

Subject: Official Notification to Educational Establishments regarding the safeguard of their mail during periods of closure

Dear Bob

I am writing to inform you that Royal Mail are planning to formalise the provision of Keepsafe or other similar delivery services for educational establishments from October 2007.

This will impact on most primary and secondary schools around the country, as they have previously benefited from a free unofficial Keepsafe whereby the delivery office has just simply held the mail for the establishment during the period of closure. Clearly this practise is not compliant as Royal Mail makes a charge to other businesses for this service.

The plan from the commercial team is to write to schools as soon as they re-open in September in order to give them sufficient notice for the October half term breaks to put in place an official alternative. The instructions to Delivery Offices will be that if a school has not taken out a standard product (i.e. Keepsafe, Mail Collect, or Business Redirection) for the October closure period, then they should attempt to deliver the mail as normal, and if there is no available access to deliver the mail, they should return the mail to sender on a daily basis following standard return to sender procedures. This process will be spelled out to the establishments within the mailing.

We see no adverse impacts on delivery staff, as this will simply be an extension of our standard services to these establishments.

If you would like further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Steve S Martin on 07801 095467

*Kind regards
Graham Baker
Senior Product Development Manager
Royal Mail UK Operations Design*

Any enquiries to **Bob Gibson's Department, reference 530**

EVENTS BULLETIN

Tuesday 21st August 2007: National Demonstration and Rally – Royal Mail Dispute.

The CWU will be holding a National Demonstration and Rally assembling at Clerkenwell Green at 12.00 midday (Nearest Tube Station is Farringdon). Branches travelling from outside of London are asked to lay on coaches to ensure maximum attendance at this important event. Further details will follow. Any enquiries on this LTB should be addressed to the **General Secretary's Department** quoting the **reference GS 11.0**.

Thursday 20 September 2007: What's on Offer? Engaging Black and Minority Ethnic Adult Learners in Museum and Gallery Education.

The conference will take place as part of the national commemoration of the abolition of the slave trade (200 years) and will broadly focus on including non-traditional learning in education programmes delivered from museums, libraries and archives. For more information contact NIACE, Renaissance House, 20 Princess Road, West Leicester LE1 6TP. **Gurjit Kaur**, Tel: **0116 204 2833**, email: gurjit.kaur@niace.org.uk or visit www.niace.org.uk/

Sunday 23 September 2007: Labour Party Conference 2007.

Bournemouth. Progress Rally. 18:00-20:00, Punshon Methodist Church, Exeter Road, Bournemouth BH2 5AJ (Just outside the secure zone). With: Rt Hon Ed Balls MP; Yvette Cooper MP; Rt Hon John Denham MP; Rt Hon David Miliband MP; Peter Mandelson; Stephen Twigg

Monday 24 September 2007: Labour Party Conference Bournemouth 2007 – Pricing People off the Road, or Pricing them on to Public Transport? 12:45-14:00, Trouville Hotel – Deauville Room, 5-7 Priory Rd Bournemouth, BH2 5DH. With: Gemma Decent, Associate Director, Ipsos-MORI Transport Unit; Stephen Joseph, Executive Director, Transport 2000; Graham Stringer MP, Transport Select Committee; and more speakers tbc. To register, please send your name and email address to **Tom Brooks Pollock**, on tom@progressives.org.uk or call **0203 008 8180**.

Monday 24 September 2007: Labour Party Conference 2007 Bournemouth. Is David Cameron Capturing the Political Zeitgeist? 18:00 – 19:30, Trouville Hotel – Granville Room, 5-7 Priory Rd Bournemouth, BH2 5DH. With: Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury; Kitty Usher MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury; Deborah Mattinson, Joint CEO, Opinion Leader Research; Stephen Twigg, Chair, Progress; and more speakers tbc.

Tuesday 25 September 2007: Labour Party Conference 2007 Bournemouth. Question Time. 18:00-19:30, Trouville Hotel – Deauville Room. With: Rt Hon James Purnell MP; Jonathan Freedland; Oona King and Billy Bragg. To register, please send your name and email address to **Tom Brooks Pollock**, on tom@progressives.org.uk or call **0203 008 8180**.

Tuesday 25 September 2007: Labour Party Conference 2007 Bournemouth. Here to serve you? Will Police Reform Work in the Public Interest? 12:45 to 14:00. Wessex Hotel – Forestdale Room, 11-13 West Cliff Rd, Bournemouth BH2 5EU. With the Government's plans for police reorganisation still shelved, this meeting will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different organisational models in combating anti-social behaviour, violent crime, terrorism and organised crime. And how can the Government win support for reform from police chiefs, rank and file officers, as well as the public? With: Jan Berry, Chair, Police Federation; Enver Solomon, Deputy Director, Centre for Crime and Justice, King's College; and more speakers to be confirmed. For more information see www.progressives.org.uk/Events/event.asp?e=854

Thursday 4 October 2007: Employment Law Update – Fairness at Work. 9.30

- 4.15pm at the UCU Conference Centre, Britannia Street, London WC1. This is the third IER annual conference organised in association with the TUC and Old Square Chambers. The conference is timed to coincide with the introduction of new legislation due to come in to force on 1st October. The aim is ensure trade union representatives are kept up to date and well informed about developments in employment law. Cost IER subscribers and members £75, Trade Unions £90 and Commercial £220. For more information contact the IER on **0151 702 6925** or email office@ier.org.uk

Friday 12 October 2007 – Sunday 14 October 2007: National Youth Education Event 2007. The National Youth Education Event is the primary youth event run by the CWU. It brings together young (under the age of 30) activists over the course of a weekend in which they gain knowledge, skills and confidence about their role in the union and the union's work in general. For more information contact **Jo Thair** on jthair@cwu.org or **020 8971 7487**.

Monday 8th October 2007: Eastern Regional Retired Members' Committee Meeting. To be held in Community, Swinton House, 324 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8D at 11am. For more information contact **Nobby Clark** Eastern Region Retired Members Secretary on **07713 155575**.

Wednesday 17th October 2007: National Pensioners Convention Eastern Region Meeting. will be held at Moreton Community Centre, Symonds Road, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk at 1pm. For more information contact **Nobby Clark** Eastern Region Retired Members Secretary on **07713 155575**.

Thursday 18 October 2007: A Rally for Trade Union Freedom and Against Inequality. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation published a report into poverty on 17 July 2007 showing that inequality between rich and poor has now reached levels not seen in Britain for 40 years. A second report, published simultaneously, found that the public thinks the gap between rich and poor is too large. This is an issue relevant to trade union freedom. Unions are a force for good in dealing with such inequality and unionised workers are generally not those who suffer most from low pay. The United Campaign is looking to

encourage TUC and others to support the rally and of course we need much support from members and activists. There is a lot more to do to make even union members aware that trade unions are trussed up by laws in the UK that are unlawful by long standing basic international standards. And we have to go on to ensure that trade unions are free to perform their essential functions to help those who are suffering inequality. Twenty four national unions support the United Campaign and we have many regions, branches and trades councils and individual supporters too. We need your support. Visit our website www.unitedcampaign.org.uk for more information or contact us at info@unitedcampaign.org.uk

Wednesday 5 December 2007: Update on Equality Law – Are we Catching Up? While we have travelled a long way in terms of equalities legislation recent reads. The complexity of discrimination legislation still make it very difficult to tackle the deep issues of inequality in the workplace. The conference will be of interest to trade unionists, employment lawyers, academics and students. Cost IER subscribers and members £75, Trade Unions £90 and Commercial £220. For more information contact the IER on **0151 702 6925** or email office@ier.org.uk

Tuesday 11 December 2007: Plain English Day. Organised by the Plain English Campaign, promoting the use of clear language in government departments, local councils and business. For more information contact the **Plain English Campaign**, PO Box 3, New Mills, High Peak SK22 4QP. Phone: **01663 744409** Fax: **01663 747038** Email: info@plainenglish.co.uk

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

Marcia Murray
CWU Communication Department
150 The Broadway
Wimbledon SW19 IRX
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.