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GENERAL

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Liaison Meetings with CWU Group MPs

Meetings with CWU Group MPs have now been arranged for the next Parliamentary Session. Listed below are the dates of the meetings and those nominated to attend:

12 December

Graham Colk, Andy Kerr, Joe Malone, 1 representative from W Midlands Political Committee.

Billy Hayes, General Secretary

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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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.

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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.

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Equality Conference Audit

Branches will be aware that those of you who have not sent a delegate to any of the CWU Equality Conferences over a 3-year period have been written to asking for an explanation as to why this is the case.

The department thanks the many branch secretaries who have responded positively outlining plans to make progress in these areas. Those branch secretaries who have not replied to the letter will shortly be receiving a letter from the General Secretary and we advise you all to get your replies in as soon as possible.

For your information the LGBT and Disability Conferences have been very well attended but there were still a considerable number of CWU branches who did not attend. The Women's Conference and Black Workers Conference have been advertised via LTBs and the *Voice* and we hope to see an marked increase in branches attending these conferences too.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

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"Asbestos-by-Post" Consultants – Mailing Dangerous Goods

A number of enquiries have been received in the Health, Safety & Environment Department from members, the public, branches and safety representatives regarding this matter and this is an interim report to inform you as to the action taken to date.

Our concerns were first raised last year and again earlier this year with Royal Mail. The matter has again been raised this month with Royal Mail Group and with the HSE's Asbestos Policy Unit.

A new breed of "asbestos-by-post consultants" have been increasing in number and we are seeking a clear and unambiguous response and policy position from Royal Mail Group on whether or not they are prepared to allow the carriage of asbestos through the mail system and if so how Royal Mail intends to ensure that this is under strictly controlled conditions e.g. the Royal Mail standard "safe box" is used or alternatively whether it is to be a listed as one of Royal Mail's prohibited, banned substances.

With increasing legislation and awareness of the dangers of asbestos fibres within the home/business premise, more and more of these new "asbestos-by-post" consultants are setting themselves up and offering services to the public which include asbestos consultants

to survey and test suspected Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) which are things like decorative coatings (artex), floor tiles, ceiling tiles, insulation, cement roof sheets, cement flues etc. The services are offered as a cheap alternative to calling in an asbestos specialist company who will charge a minimum call-out fee for jobs, which are often too small to warrant the expenditure!

These companies (several examples have been sent to Royal Mail HQ) at worst simply tell the public to cut a lump of suspected Asbestos off the material concerned and put it in a plastic bag and post it to them!

Then there are the more sophisticated organisations offering a "DIY Self Testing kit" suitable for taking samples and analysing suspect materials for asbestos. With these companies you send off say £100 and get; A DIY Safe sampling Instructions leaflet and a telephone advice-line service, an EN 149:2001 FFP3 dust mask, a Cat 3 disposable coverall (EN13034:1997 Cat 3 Type 5&6), disposable sampling gloves, an inner sampling bag, an outer sampling bag suitable for labelling samples, a pre-paid order form for analysis of samples (UKAS accredited laboratory-accredited to ISO 17025), a stamped addressed envelope for laboratory analysis and an EU approved double-bag system for safe disposal of hazardous waste (for dust suit, mask etc.) The bags are red and clear with EU approved signage. All this amounts to more and more of Asbestos Containing Materials going through the post.

Parcelforce have advice on their public website which clearly states under General prohibitions and restrictions that Parcelforce Worldwide complies with strict transport regulations and will not carry certain goods and substances and that "All dangerous goods are prohibited" including Class Nine: Miscellaneous Dangerous Goods: Substances which present dangers not covered elsewhere. Examples: asbestos etc.

We have asked that Royal Mail establish a clear and consistent policy for both Royal Mail and Parcelforce without delay, with firm standards being set and that this be made public knowledge as well as notifying the Asbestos Industry and the HSE Asbestos Policy Unit. Previously Royal Mail have said asbestos samples can be posted in the correct packaging. Further to asking Royal Mail to be consistent, we have requested an asbestos by post policy, legal confirmation, HSE Asbestos Policy Unit sanctioning, standard "safe box" requirement and that these DIY Asbestos-by-Post consultant companies that are currently telling the public to post 'raw asbestos' in plastic bags be policed and dealt with by Royal Mail and the HSE to ensure that only the correctly specified packaging and containers are used if indeed Royal Mail sanctions the carriage of asbestos.

Further reports will be made to branches in due course.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: P8

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BT Cleared Over Death of Engineer Tara Whelan

CWU member Tara Whelan, a BT Engineer, died after falling from a telegraph pole near Trowbridge. The tragedy happened in Marsh Road, Hilperton, on Friday May 25, 2001. Tara died eight days later at Frenchay Hospital in Bristol from skull injuries.

The Health and Safety Executive, brought a prosecution against her employer, BT, and after a four-week trial at Bristol Crown Court BT was acquitted of a single charge of failing to ensure the safety of their employees. After deliberating for eight-and-a-half hours, a reduced jury of ten people returned the not guilty verdict.

A CWU spokesperson said "We are of the view that the HSE were right to bring the prosecution in view of the weight of evidence and don't think anything more could have been done in respect of presenting the evidence to the court.

Of course we are more than a little surprised at the verdict particularly in view of the previous Coroner's inquest but the technical nature of the case may have made it difficult for the jury to reach a verdict as they were out for an unusually long time of over eight-and-a-half hours. However, the court has made its decision and everyone must accept it.

We will continue working with BT and the HSE to keep working at height as safe as we can for our members and of course our deepest sympathy remains with Tara's family, friends and work colleagues."

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

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Summary of Key Changes in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 – (For Use by Enforcement Officers/Inspectors)

The HSE have published a final version of their summary of key changes in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 and associated approved code of practice L143 for use by Enforcement Officers/Inspectors which is reproduced below for your information. (Final version for use by enforcement officers/inspectors — 06/11/06)

Summary of Key Changes in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 & Associated Approved Code of Practice L143

Background

New regulations were required to implement amendments to the European Asbestos Worker Protection Directive (AWPD) and other changes to the existing asbestos regulatory framework. The Regulations will be called the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 (Asbestos Regulations, SI No. 2739).

Key Changes

- 1) The following three sets of regulations that controlled exposure to asbestos have been combined into the Asbestos Regulations which should come into force on 13 November 2006:
 - a) The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 (CAW);
 - b) The Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations 1983 (ASLIC);
 - c) The Asbestos (Prohibitions) Regulations 1992 (Prohibitions Regulations).
- 2) There is no Action Level. There is a new single Control Limit of 0.1f/cm³ and a Short Term Exposure Limit (STEL - ACoP standard, not in the regulations) of 0.6 f/cm³ measured over 10 minutes. The Control Limit is a level of asbestos fibres in air that, so far as is reasonably practicable, should not be exceeded. No-one's personal exposure should ever go above this limit when measured over 4 hours, in line with current practice, which is equivalent to the directive's 0.1 f/cm³, if the shift is 8 hours long.
- 3) The requirement to notify work to the enforcing authority and the requirement for medical surveillance of workers will not apply to certain specified types of work where (a) the worker exposure to asbestos fibres is sporadic and of low intensity and (b) it is clear from the risk assessment that the STEL will not be exceeded. There is a risk-based approach to define what comes within the definition of sporadic and low intensity worker exposure. Work cannot be considered to be sporadic and low intensity if it is likely to exceed 0.6 f/cm³ measured over 10 minutes. The ACoP defines which work will be exempt from requiring a licence on the same basis, aligning when a licence is needed with the requirement to notify work. It reflects the type of work detailed in HSG 210, 'Asbestos Essentials'. For most work with asbestos this will maintain the status quo.
- 4) A new, World Health Organisation (WHO) asbestos fibre counting method will be introduced to replace the current European Reference Method (ERM). Analytical laboratories that carry out air testing will transfer to this counting method. Under the ERM method, fibres are discounted if they touch particles greater than 3 microns wide, but under the WHO method, these fibres are not discounted.
- 5) Most work with textured decorative coatings (TCs) should not require a licence. Research suggests that the risks from work with TCs are much lower than previously thought. The risks from asbestos in TCs are now estimated to be orders of magnitude below that for other licensed materials, and lower than that from work with asbestos cement which doesn't require a licence. This does not mean that work with TCs is safe; it still needs proper control measures, but not such stringent controls as those required for other licensed contract work. These are set out in the ACoP. It describes how to go about removing textured coatings safely.
- 6) Employers using their own workers on their own premises will no longer be exempt from the licensing requirements.
- 7) Accreditation will be required (from 6 April 2007) for those organisations carrying out the 4-stage clearance. Those persons issuing clearance certificates for reoccupation after asbestos removal work should meet the relevant accreditation requirements of ISO 17025 and ISO 17020. Accreditation is already required for the air testing part of the clearance procedure and will be extended to apply to all the four stages of clearance certification.
- 8) The CAW Regulations currently include Short Term Exposure Limits (STELs) to reinforce and support high standards of control, such as, wearing respiratory protective equipment (RPE). A limit for peak exposures will be maintained, otherwise it could be argued that RPE is not legally required so long as exposure does not exceed 2.4 f/cm³ over 10 minutes (the equivalent of the proposed Control Limit over 4 hours). The maximum peak level of 0.6 f/cm³ over 10 minutes for all types of asbestos (the current STEL for amphibole asbestos) will be maintained. This is based on the assertion that it is always reasonably practicable to ensure that no personal exposure to asbestos fibres, however short, exceeds this peak. This is written as ACoP material rather than in Regulations, because STELs are not a requirement of AWPD.
- 10) Asbestos training is split into licensed, non-licensed and awareness training. It is set out more explicitly in both the regulations and the ACoP.
- 11) Asbestos is defined, in guidance, as containing one or more of the fibrous silicates listed in the Interpretation section, regardless of the amount. 'Work with asbestos' is also defined in the Interpretation section.
- 12) A water absorption test is described with which to identify asbestos cement.
- 13) For licensed work there is more emphasis on pre-cleaning and planning the work to take the clearance process into account.
- 14) Supervisory and ancillary work are defined.
- 15) Employees are entitled to have a copy of their training certificate and to be given the results of tests such as their face-fit test, air monitoring, medical examination etc.
- 16) Where removal of ACMs is time-consuming and resource-intensive and only involves a lower risk material such as textured decorative coatings containing asbestos, then removal prior to demolition or major refurbishment may not be reasonably practicable.
- 17) There is a requirement now for RPE to reduce exposure as low as is reasonably practicable. This means that RPE will be required even when the control limit is not

expected to be exceeded e.g. TC work.

Further Information

Use the following links:

www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos

www.uk-legislation.hmso.gov.uk

Contact HSE's Asbestos Licensing Unit about queries relating to enforcement on

0131-247-2135.

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

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Asbestos Licensing Requirements of The Control Of Asbestos Regulations 2006

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 comes into force on the 13th November 2006. Significant changes have been made to when an Asbestos Licence is required for work on asbestos.

The Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA) have produced a short briefing note to clearly explain under what circumstances an asbestos licence is required under the Control of Asbestos regulations 2006.

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006

A change in the law relating to when an Asbestos Licence is required

1. A Change in the Law

1.1. On the 13th November 2006 the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 (CAR 2006) comes into force. These regulations significantly change the approach to determining whether asbestos removal work is licensable or not. Most work with asbestos will still need to be undertaken by a licensed contractor but any decision will now be determined by the risk. The most significant change concerns the removal of asbestos containing decorative coatings. The removal of asbestos containing decorative coatings no longer needs to be undertaken by a contractor licensed by the Health and Safety Executive for work with asbestos.

1.2. In the past, a licence to work with asbestos issued by the HSE was required to work on asbestos insulation, asbestos insulating board and asbestos coatings, asbestos containing decorative coatings were classed as an asbestos coating and therefore a licence to work on asbestos issued by the HSE was required. This was a requirement under the Asbestos Licensing Regulations 1983 as amended. The Asbestos Licensing Regulations (ASLIC) as well as the Asbestos Prohibitions Regulations 1992 as amended have now been incorporated in to CAR 2006.

2. When is an Asbestos Licence Required

2.1. CAR 2006 moves away from licensing particular asbestos materials, i.e. asbestos

insulation, asbestos insulating board and asbestos coatings, and any decision on whether particular asbestos removal work is licensable or not is now determined by the risk. Work with asbestos will only be exempt from licensing only if:

- the exposure of employees to asbestos is sporadic and of low intensity;
- it is clear from the risk assessment that the exposure of any employee to asbestos will not exceed the control limit; and
- the work involves
 - short, non-continuous maintenance activities,
 - removal of materials in which the asbestos fibres are firmly linked in a matrix,
 - encapsulation or sealing of asbestos-containing materials which are in good condition, or
 - air monitoring and control, and the collection and analysis of samples to ascertain whether a specific material contains asbestos.

2.2. No exposure to asbestos can be considered to be sporadic and of low intensity if the concentration of asbestos in the atmosphere is liable to exceed 0.6 fibres per cm³ of air measured over 10 minutes in any working day. It should be noted that "sporadic and low intensity" relates to the exposure and not the frequency that employees are employed to undertake asbestos removal work.

2.3. In addition to the risk assessment making it clear that the exposure of any employee to asbestos will not exceed the control limit (a new control limit for all types of asbestos has been introduced and this is 0.1 f/ml when averaged over a continuous period of 4 hours) and the work being "sporadic and low intensity (the exposure is not liable to exceed 0.6 fibres per cm³ of air measured over 10 minutes in any working day) in order for the work to be exempt from licensing it must also fall into at least one of the following four categories:

- a) Short, non-continuous maintenance activities – for those familiar with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002, short, non-continuous maintenance activities are what were known as "short duration work" or the "one hour rule". In CAR 2006 short non-continuous maintenance activities involving asbestos insulation and asbestos insulating board can be considered short non-continuous maintenance activities if any one person carries out work with these materials for less than 1 hour in a seven day period. The total time spent by all workers on the work should not exceed at total of 2 hours. When calculating the time the work takes, you should include anything ancillary to the work which is liable to disturb the asbestos, including setting up enclosures and clearing any potentially affected area.

Please note that if short non continuous maintenance activities are carried out by licensed contractors under this exemption then it does not preclude the operatives concerned from carrying out other work with asbestos during the seven day period, it only precludes them from carrying out work under the short, non continuous maintenance activities exemption within the seven day period.

- b) Removal of materials in which the asbestos fibres are firmly linked in a matrix – this exemption is the one that effectively removes decorative textured coatings from the asbestos licensing requirements. The materials to which it applies include:
 - i) Asbestos cement,
 - ii) Textured decorative coatings and paints which contain asbestos,
 - iii) Any article of bitumen, plastic resin or rubber which contains asbestos where its thermal or acoustic properties are incidental to its main purpose (e.g. vinyl floor tiles, electric cables, roofing felt).

There may be other materials in which the asbestos fibres can be firmly linked in a matrix such as paper linings, cardboards, felt, textiles, gaskets, washers or rope where the products have no insulation purposes. If this is the case then the exemption from licensing may apply.

- c) Encapsulation or sealing of asbestos containing materials which are in good condition – this exemption used to be included in ASLIC in paragraph 17 where it stated that the definition of work with asbestos did not include painting insulating board, insulation, or coatings which are in sound condition. The new requirements now apply the exemption to all encapsulation or sealing of asbestos containing materials which are in good condition, i.e. undamaged. This is as long as the exposure to employees to asbestos during the work is sporadic and low intensity and it is clear from the risk assessment that the exposure of any employee to asbestos will not exceed the control limit.
- d) Air monitoring and control, and the collection and analysis of samples to ascertain whether a specific material contains asbestos. This exemption was previously included within ASLIC and has now been incorporated into CAR 2006. You will not require a licence to work with asbestos if you are:
 - a) The client who has engaged a licensed contractor to do the licensable work
 - b) The principal or main contractor on a construction or demolition site if the licensable work is being done by a subcontractor holding an asbestos licence
 - c) An analyst checking that the area is clear of asbestos at the end of the job
 - d) Carrying out quality control work such as:
 - i) Atmospheric monitoring (air monitoring) outside enclosures while asbestos

- removal work is in progress; or
 - ii) Checking outside enclosures that work has been carried out to a standard which meets the terms of the contract.
- e) A consultant or other reviewing tender submissions on behalf of the client. It is clear from d (ii) that if the consultant or other who is carrying out a quality control role in order to check that the work is being carried out to standard which meets the terms of the contract, they are only permitted to conduct these activities outside of the enclosure without a licence. Therefore if the consultant or other is required to carry out such a role within the enclosure at any time other than checking that the area is clear at the end of the job (item c above) then a licence is required.

3. Flow Chart to follow

4. References

SI 2006 No. 2739 *The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 L11 The Asbestos Licensing Regulations 1983 as amended (superseded by CAR 2006 on 13 th November 2006)*
 SI 1992 No. 3067 *The Asbestos Prohibitions Regulations 1992 as amended (superseded by CAR 2006 on 13 th November 2006)*
 L 28 *The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 (superseded by CAR 2006 on 13 th November 2006)*
 L 143 (Draft) *The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 Approved Code of Practice Work with Materials Containing Asbestos*

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to Dave Joyce, National Health Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: P8

647 Work Vehicle Accidents – 54,000 for the Year or 150 per Day

The Department for Transport has published statistics on a range of topics relating to transport in its annual compendium volume Transport Statistics Great Britain 2006. The new evidence reveals the massive number of work vehicle road crashes each day and highlights the need for urgent Health and Safety Executive (HSE) action.

The Department for Transport (DfT) annual road casualty statistics for the first time recorded the purpose of journeys, showed work vehicles were involved in over 54,000 crashes in 2005, or 150 per day. The TUC and all major unions including CWU have long supported reporting rules should to be changed so all serious work related road traffic accidents are officially recorded under the workplace accident reporting regulations, RIDDOR. However, although it has been under consideration for some time the HSE are unable to take on board the investigation of work-related road accidents due to lack of resources and currently face job cuts and close scrutiny of their budget.

The high number of at work road accidents, injuries and deaths justifies the need for the HSE to investigate all work related deaths, including those on the road which are currently not part of the reporting regime. 'Driven to death', a March 2000 report from the TUC, estimated that one in four vehicle drivers killed on the road died whilst at work, making driving Britain's most dangerous job. These deaths are not included in official work fatality figures.

Pedal cyclist casualties stayed at more or less the same level as last year at 16,561. The number of cyclists seriously injured however, rose by 2 per cent overall to 2,360 and the number killed increased 10 per cent – from 134 to 148.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: V5

TELECOMS

648 NTL/Telewest: Box Collection Outsourcing

It has come to the attention of the union that NTL/Telewest has made a notice of intent with regard to its Box Field Collectors.

The majority of this function is discharged on behalf of the company by a third party. There is however a small group of in house field collectors 29 in all, together with a small number of team managers and administration support.

With the launch of a new self disconnect initiative early in 2007, this will mean a reduction in a 'physical presence'. Therefore the company has opened a voluntary redundancy option before any outsourcing discussions take place.

In response to assurances sought by the union, it has stated that it is highly unlikely there will be any compulsory redundancies.

Given their unique salary arrangements, the union has sought clarification on the means by which the redundancy payment will be calculated.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

649 21CN Test Success

Branches may wish to see the attached link to an article on BT Today Online which highlights how BT took a major step forward when the actual process that will be used to transfer the first customers on to the 21st Century Network (21CN) was successfully tested at Adastral Park in Suffolk last week.

The full article can be viewed at:
http://today.intra.bt.com/today/plsql/DISPLAY_ARTICLE?Art_Id=60196&itm_id=LE01&art_type=ND&arch_type=U&t_stamp='03/10/0615:32:00'&TEXTONLY=N&next_act=

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

650 21CN – Countdown To Cardiff - 30 Days to Go

Branches may wish to be aware of the latest internal briefing on the countdown to the Pathfinder trial for 21CN. There are links to the BT intranet site as well as to one in the public domain which provides dates for possible conversion of local exchanges.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

651 NTL/Telewest: The Role of Access Engineers

Concerns were raised at Head Office with perceived changes to the role of Access Technicians given the past outsourcing of work and the reduction in Access Engineers.

These have been taken up with the company and the following report is a summary of the company's position.

As part of recent redundancy exercise it was deemed that it was 'more feasible' to outsource the maintenance of the copper telephony network and as a result the role of Copper Maintenance technician was redundant and those CMTs wishing to remain had to change roles.

Now however, it is now being suggested that the company is looking at asking Access Engineers to maintain part of the copper network.

As part of the Group Consultation process, it was confirmed and stated (as per Original Questions – Organisational Question and Response No. 20 on Page 4 in the attached) that responsibilities for copper maintenance will be included in the Access teams moving forward. Copper Techs use to reside in the Core teams previously and is a return to a previous organisational model.

Reference to outsourcing copper telephony network activities as it was deemed "more feasible" was very specific to the copper jointing activities as these were specifically raised as potential reasons to mitigate the number of headcount reductions. The stance to outsource these copper jointing activities were clarified at the time and, for completeness, related specifically to the jointing of large cables (i.e. capacity upgrades, diversionary works, cable replacement, etc.) and not the maintenance or repair of faulty individual circuits/pairs.

It has been suggested that the ex CMTs in London has been put onto the on call rota with the view that if they do it then so can all ex CMTs.

The company state they are not aware of any formal plan whereby the "trial" of one individual in one area would determine the suitability of all other individuals with the same or similar skills and experience. They expect that any employees capability is assessed individually (in line with training and development requirements) prior to them undertaking new responsibilities or

undertaking on-call responsibilities.

When CMTs were previously BIT techs they did some catv duties as well as copper duties. However as part of 2002 redundancies BIT tech role was made redundant under the premise that the role had fundamentally changed as catv duties were to be done from then on by Network engineers. As a result of losing these duties it was deemed the CMT role was then only worth 17.5k p.a. and all remaining copper employees had to take a 'pay cut' to remain in the role.

The union has pointed out now the CMT role has gone and those remaining as Access Engineers have to re-take on not only the duties that they lost money for under the BIT tech umbrella, but also more catv duties and other telephony duties there is a reluctance to accept that they are not correctly being rewarded.

The company has noted the points made. However, their position is that any salary or package changes would need to be part of a strategic or harmonisation review, which the union will need to consider as part of any future discussions on roles and salary reviews.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

652 BT Wholesale: Customer Service Extended Opening Hours for Fulfilment and TAGS

In response to the deepening criticism from the external industry on BT's overall quality of service on Broadband repair and provision, the BT Board have taken the unusual decision of intervening directly on operational matters.

A direct request for extending the office hours for Fulfillment and TAGS function has been issued. The response to that request is contained in the attachment. In essence the intent is to extend both the opening and closing of office hours Monday to Saturday for Fulfillment and for TAGS and to open additionally on Sunday.

BT state that they will be making direct approaches to individuals in the two sites which they will use for the extended services. The union has sought further assurances with regards to volunteers and resourcing methods, of which a response is still awaited.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

POSTAL

653 Flats Automation Project (Tops 2000) – Phase 2

Reproduced below for the information of Branches/Representatives is LTB 728/06 that was circulated on 3rd November 2006 regarding the above the content of which is self-explanatory.

Dear Colleague

Flats Automation Project (Tops 2000) – Phase 2

Branches and representatives will be aware that the business has for sometime been considering their options around further investment in Automated Mail Handling options.

I can now confirm that the Royal Mail Board has authorised Phase 2 of the Flats Automation Project and an order has been placed for a further 20 Flat Sorting machines with the first arriving at the end of 2007 and the remainder being installed during 2008.

Reproduced below is a Joint Communication that will be used to brief staff about the new equipment which also contains information on the location of the offices selected for these new machines.

Joint Communication Flats Automation – Phase 2

The Royal Mail Holdings Board have given authority to proceed with Phase 2 of the Flats Automation Project.

Phase 1 of Flats Automation installed 6 Flat Sorting Machines in NWMMC, Gatwick, Edinburgh, Peterborough, Bristol and Manchester Royal Mail has now placed an order with Solystic (the machine supplier) and Lockheed Martin (for connection of the machines to the AI System) for a further 20 TOP2000 Flat Sorting Machines. This will be Phase 2 of the Flats Automation Project. The first machine of this batch will be delivered for test at the end of 2007 with the bulk of the machine deliveries taking place in 2008. This will create a network of 26 machines including the 6 installed as part of Phase 1. The Phase 2 Deployment sites in alphabetical order are:

Birmingham
Belfast
Cardiff
Chelmsford
Chester
Glasgow
Greenford
Jubilee
Leeds
London East
London South
Northampton
Nottingham
Preston
Romford
Sheffield

Southampton or Croydon (If the building works at Southampton to accommodate the machine do not proceed)

Thames Valley 1
Thames Valley 2 (the locations of these 2 machines will of course be dependent on the feasibility study/business case being endorsed by the Board)
Tyneside

The deployment of machines at Northampton and Thames Valley will be dependant on the full authority for these new build projects to proceed.

As more of the detailed plans become clear we will make that information available. The CWU have been consulted throughout the preliminary planning for the deployment of these machines and now that the 20 sites have been established national discussions will commence.

This is a significant investment for the Business and it is a key element of the Business renewal plan. The project continues the Royal Mail programme of investing in the latest automation technology as the surest way of keeping ahead of our competitors, satisfying our customers, and securing our futures.

Discussions will be taking place on a National Enabling Agreement to cover the deployment of the Phase 2 Flats Programme and I will provide an update on progress at the quarterly area processing, distribution and admin representatives meetings that are scheduled to take place over the next few weeks.

It will be the intention to ensure that the principles contained in the agreement that applied to the first phase of the Flat Automation Programme will also be included for the Phase 2 deployment.

In addition to the installation of the machines there will of course be concentrations and in some cases de-concentration of flat traffic that will need to take place as part of this programme so it will be important to have an agreement in place prior to this equipment coming on line.

Further information on this issue will be circulated to Branches and Representatives in due course.

Yours sincerely
Martin Collins
Assistant Secretary

All enquiries regarding this paragraph should be addressed as appropriate to Martin Collins, Assistant Secretary Indoor, quoting reference number L.685.20.

EVENTS BULLETIN

October 2006 – June 2007: London Socialist Film Co-op Film Season.

Screenings held on second Sunday of the month from October to June 10.30 for 11 am. Screenings showing at Renoir Cinema, Brunswick Square, London WC1. Nearest tube Russell Square. Tickets cost £7.00, concessions £5.00. Discount to annual members £1.00. Tickets on sale from 10.30 am on day of screening. To book in advance tel **020 7837 1177** (12 noon to 8.00 pm) or go to www.curzoncinemas.com or visit the Box Office (12 noon to 8 pm).

Saturday 18 November 2006: Managing Sickness Absence With Care. 7th Annual Conference. 10.00am to 4.00pm. To be held at Hillscourt Conference Centre, Rednal Birmingham. The conference will discuss the examination of employers' practices and procedures for managing sickness absence and providing phased supported therapeutic return to work programmes. Speakers include HSE, Occupational Health Psychologist, Hope Daley National Health & Safety Officer, Unison, Dave Parr Disability Champions Project and Brian Robinson UK National Workstress Network. Cost: Delegates £50.00 (£16 unwaged). For more information email lesvroberts@hotmail.com or visit www.workstress.net

Tuesday 21 November 2006 – Wednesday 22nd Nov inclusive. CWU Annual ULR seminar. This will be the third national event for union learning representatives in the CWU. To be held at **Britannia Adelphi Hotel**, Ranelagh Place, Liverpool. For more information contact **Laura Wright** on **0208 971 7416** or **Michelle Simpson** on **0208 971 7340** or email learn@cwu.org or visit www.cwu.org

Thursday 23 November 2006: Women in Public Life Seminar (rescheduled). The CWU are please to confirm the rescheduled arrangements for the forthcoming Women In Public Life Seminar. The Seminar will take place in the the CWFS Boardroom, which is at CWU Headquarters on the first floor starting from 11.30am–4.00pm. The day has been specifically designed to inspire female CWU activists to give serious consideration to becoming more involved in decisions affecting public life. Special guests on the day will include: Linda Woodings (Political Secretary and Chair of the East Midlands Labour Party Board), Edith Macauley (CWU Legal Services, Magistrate and former Mayor) and Julia Upton (NEC Member and School Governor). For more information contact the **Equal Opportunities Department** on **020 8971 7356** or dgittens@cwu.org

Wednesday 6 December 2006: The Problem of Intimacy: Trade Union and Labour Governments. 19.00 Portcullis House, Westminster. This seminar will look at the changing relationships between the trade union movement and post-war Labour governments. *What can be learnt about union-government relations today? What are the prospects for tomorrow?* **Speakers:** **Nina Fishman** (University of Westminster), Geoffrey Goodman (tbc), Chair: **Hywel Francis MP**. The event is free to attend. For more information and to book a place email events@unions21.org.uk

Saturday 3 February 2007: CWU Black Workers Conference. The conference will

take place at the Novotel Bristol Hotel, Bristol BS1 6HY. There will be a social event at the Novotel Bristol Hotel on Friday 2 February 2007 details will be circulated nearer the time. For more information contact the **Equal Opportunities Department** quoting **reference 1.50.2**, email dgittens@cwu.org

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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 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.

CWU 2007 Diary

Branches should now be in receipt of 2 order forms for the CWU 2007 Diary. The pocket diary is priced at £1.50 and the desk diary at £2.50. For those branches that have already placed their order you should now be in receipt of your diaries. If you have not yet placed your order you can do so by sending it to Marcia Murray in the Communications Dept and ensuring to enclose a cheque or postal order made payable to 'CWU Diaries'. Branches wishing to pay through the branch rebate should indicate at the time of ordering. For more information contact **Marcia Murray** on **020 8971 7497** or mmurray@cwu.org