

**GENERAL**

- 639** Liaison Meetings with CWU Group MPs
- 655** Union Skills I Course
- 656** Union Learning Reps Stage II Course
- 657** Health & Safety Stage II Course

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- 640** Harassment Complaints Database: Union Policy
- 641** Mandatory Equality & Diversity Training
- 642** Equality Conference Audit

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 661** Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- 662** New Workplace Hazard Awareness Course and Qualification for Young People
- 663** The Role of the Safety Representative
- 664** Health & Safety Whistleblowing
- 665** HSE and Trade Unions
- 666** Accidents in Storage and Warehousing
- 667** Moving Goods Safely
- 668** Reversing Vehicles – Workplace Transport – Companies Fined After Worker's Leg Crushed

**TELECOMS**

- 669** One IT: Data Centre Agility Roll-Out
- 670** 21CN and Pathfinder Architecture and Network
- 671** One IT: Vendor and Asset Management
- 672** One IT: Infrastructure Products and The ICT 4000 Challenge
- 673** NTL/Telewest – Continuity of Service Obligations
- 674** Broadband Assurance Customer Services Resourcing Strategy

**POSTAL**

No items this week

**LETTERS TO BRANCHES**

- 771** Replacement of Membership Records System – Tony Kearns
- 772** TUC Conference Nominations – Steve Baguley
- 773** UNI Nominations – Steve Baguley
- 774** Post Office Ltd – 5 Year Business Plan/Strategy Presentation Trade and Industry Committee (Rmg) 9th Report – Andy Furey
- 775** Eurotrashed – Justice for Agency Workers Campaign – Labourspace.com – Sally Bridge
- 776** The Anti-fascist Fortnight 24/03/07 to 07/04/07 – Michèle Emerson
- 777** BT Media and Broadcast – Proposed Sale of Satellite Broadcasting Service (SBS) Business – Bill McClory
- 778** TUC Elections – Steve Baguley
- 779** BT Media and Broadcast – Proposed Sale of Satellite Broadcasting Service (SBS) Business – Bill McClory

## LETTERS TO BRANCHES

- 780** Monterey Central PMA – Simon Sapper  
**781** Customer Service Accommodation Review – Andy Furey  
**782** Asbestos Samples in the Post – Union Calls for Action – Dave Joyce  
**783** York Containers – Brake Failure Fault and Modification – Dave Joyce  
**784** Customer Services Pay and Rewarding Skills Agreement 2006 – Andy Furey  
**785** Royal Mail Northern Ireland Inspection Programme by HSE and Local Authority – Dave Joyce  
**786** Royal Mail Group Large Organisations Partnership Pilot Engagement Plan – Dave Joyce  
**787** 2006/2007 HSE and LAs Inspection Programme of Royal Mail – Dave Joyce  
**788** New Domino Printer Fluorescent Orange Coding Ink Agreed Employment Plan Joint Statement – Dave Joyce  
**789** Openreach Service – Offshoring – Ian Cuthbert  
**790** Palestine Solidarity Campaign – Billy Hayes  
**791** National Pensioners' Convention – Billy Hayes  
**792** Meeting With Kelly Services (UK) Ltd and the CWU on 20 November 2006 – Sally Bridge  
**793** TUC Congress 2006 – Delegation Report – Billy Hayes  
**794** The Labour Research Department (LRD) – Asbestos in the Workplace Survey Questionnaires – Dave Joyce  
**795** Treasury Committee Banking the Unbanked Banking Services the Post Card Account and Financial Inclusion (13th Report) – Andy Furey  
**796** O2 Acquisition of Link – Emma Forrest  
**797** Environmental Issues and a Greener Workplace – Guide for CWU Safety Representatives – Dave Joyce  
**798** Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change – Dave Joyce

## GENERAL

**654**

### **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

**655**

### **Union Skills I Course**

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

**The course will be held from 26 February – 2 March 2007**

**The closing date for nominations is 11th January**

The Linked Education Programme is designed to encourage members to become more active in the union. It is open to all members of the CWU, but is particularly aimed at new activists. 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 members of the union who wish to have

a working knowledge of the wider Trade Union and Labour Movement would benefit from attending the Linked Education Programme. The three parts of the course are completely self contained, but there are real educational benefits in completing all three parts of the programme in a year or eighteen months. Union Skills courses attract special leave with pay.

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

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

**656**

### **Union Learning Reps Stage II Course**

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

**The course will be held from 19 – 23 March 2007**

**The closing date for nominations is 1st February**

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

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

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

**657**

### **Health & Safety Stage II Course**

A Health and Safety Stage II course has been

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

**The course will be held from  
26 – 30 March 2007**

**The closing date for nominations is  
8th February**

Applicants for this course will have already attended the union's Health & Safety Stage 1 course. Special leave with pay will apply.

Nominations should be made on an 'application for Union courses' form and returned to Alvescot Lodge by the closing date shown. If a member is refused a place, due to oversubscription, then indicate this on a subsequent application for another date.

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

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

**658**

### **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.

**659**

### **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.

**660**

### **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.  
Equal Opportunities Department.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

**661**

### **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)**

#### **What is COPD?**

COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) is a general term which includes the conditions chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

- Chronic means persistent.
- Bronchitis is inflammation of the bronchi (the airways of the lungs).
- Emphysema is damage to the smaller airways and airsacs (alveoli) of the lungs.
- Pulmonary means 'affecting the lungs'.

Chronic bronchitis or emphysema can cause obstruction (narrowing) of the airways. Chronic bronchitis and emphysema commonly occur together. The term COPD is used to describe airways which are narrowed due to chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both.

COPD is an extremely common lung disease

in society and is a term used to describe a number of breathing problems where there is damage to the breathing tubes and air sacs within the lung. It is a lung condition that encompasses chronic bronchitis (regular phlegm production) and emphysema (damage to the air sacs in the lung)'.  
There are approximately 30,000 deaths each year from the disease in the UK (NICE 2004). Smoking is the main cause; however, evidence suggests that there would be around 4000 fewer of these deaths if occupational risks (dusts, smoke and fumes) were removed.

COPD is a major cause of disability and death. It is the 4th leading cause of death throughout the world.

#### **What causes COPD?**

Smoking is the cause in the vast majority of cases. There is no doubt about this. The lining of the airways becomes inflamed and damaged by smoking. About 3 in 20 one-pack-per-day smokers and 1 in 4 two-pack-per-day smokers develop COPD if they continue to smoke.

Air pollution and polluted work conditions may play a part, or make the disease worse. However, people who have never smoked rarely develop COPD.

#### **What are the symptoms of COPD?**

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a long-term illness that makes breathing difficult.

The lungs and breathing tubes are damaged making it difficult to get air in and out. Walking up a hill, playing football or even playing with your grandchildren can become difficult because of shortness of breath.

Other common symptoms include; a persistent chesty cough and phlegm, 'short of breath' wheeze, more frequent and troublesome chest infections.

COPD is a slow developing condition, the symptoms tend only to start becoming a problem in mid-life, usually in the late forties onwards.

Because COPD creeps up slowly, many people do not realise they have the disease. They think their symptoms are simply due to lack of fitness or getting older. This means that often the disease does not get diagnosed in the early stages.

The sooner you realise you have lung problems, the quicker you can try to stop smoking and reduce harmful exposures to dusts, fumes and gases. Medical treatments may also help.

#### **What are the causes of COPD?**

The main cause of COPD is cigarette smoking. But exposure to dusts in the workplace can worsen and even cause COPD, even in people who don't smoke.

Thousands of British coalminers recently received compensation for COPD? But COPD is not just a problem for coalminers, breathing in too much fume and/or dusts in the workplace

could put you at risk of developing COPD.

The risk of developing COPD is greatly increased if you breathe in dusts/fumes in the workplace and you smoke.

### **Why is the HSE interested in COPD?**

HSE is interested in COPD because there is increasing research evidence that COPD can be caused or made worse by dusts, fumes and irritating gases at work.

Work related COPD is a priority because of the human costs in terms of suffering, its effects on the quality of life and the financial costs due to working days lost and medical treatment. Research findings suggest that for Great Britain:

- Around 15% of COPD may be caused or made worse by work
- 4000 COPD deaths every year may be related to work exposures
- 4 in every 10 COPD patients are below retirement age
- A quarter of those below retirement age are unable to work at all.

### **What's the difference between COPD and asthma?**

Asthma and COPD cause similar symptoms. However, they are different diseases. Very briefly:

- In COPD there is permanent damage to the airways. The narrowed airways are 'fixed', and so symptoms are chronic (persistent). Treatment to 'open up the airways' is limited.
- In asthma there is inflammation in the airways which causes muscles in the airways to constrict. This causes the airways to narrow. The symptoms tend to 'come and go', and vary in severity from time to time. Treatment to reduce inflammation and to 'open up the airways' usually works well.

Both asthma and COPD are common, and some people have both conditions.

### **How can the course of the COPD be altered?**

Stop smoking. This cannot be stressed enough. If you stop smoking at an early stage of the disease, it will make a huge difference. Any damage already done to your airways cannot be reversed, but stopping smoking prevents the disease from getting much worse.

It is never too late to stop at any stage of the disease. Even if you have fairly advanced COPD, you are likely to benefit and prevent further progression of the disease.

Cough may become worse for a while when you give up smoking. This often happens as the lining of the airways 'come back to life'. Resist the temptation to start smoking again to ease the cough. An increase in cough after you stop smoking usually settles in a few weeks.

See a practice nurse or doctor if you have difficulty in stopping smoking. Help is available. For example, counseling, nicotine replacement therapy (nicotine gum etc.) and another

medicine to help with stopping smoking may help. Another leaflet discusses giving up smoking in more detail.

### **Can COPD be cured?**

Once COPD develops the damage to the lungs cannot be reversed. However, you can help stop it getting worse by reducing exposure to the dust, fume and irritating gases at work that are causing the problem, and if you do smoke, by stopping.

### **What are the treatments for COPD?**

Stop smoking! This is the most important treatment. No other treatment may be needed if symptoms are mild, short acting bronchodilator inhalers, long acting bronchodilator inhalers, steroid inhaler, bronchodilator tablets, steroid tablets, mucolytic medicines, antibiotics, oxygen and surgery in a small number of cases to remove a section of lung. People should consult your doctor for further medical information and advice on treatments.

### **What can I do to help?**

A yearly 'flu jab', keep fit, lose weight and stop smoking. In summary:

- COPD is usually caused by smoking.
- Symptoms usually become worse if you continue to smoke.
- Symptoms are unlikely to get much worse if you stop smoking.
- Treatment with inhalers often eases symptoms, but no treatment can reverse the damage to the airways.
- A flare-up of symptoms, often during a chest infection, may be helped by a short course of steroid tablets and/or antibiotics.
- COPD can be caused or made worse by dusts, fumes and irritating gases at work.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: E3

### **662**

### **New Workplace Hazard Awareness Course and Qualification for Young People**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in partnership with the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), British Safety Council Awards (BSC Awards) and ENTO have announced the new workplace hazard awareness course and qualification.

The new qualification is designed to improve young people's understanding of safe working when taking part in work experience. The qualification and associated teaching materials were previewed at an event organised by IOSH and attended by Minister for Health and Safety, Lord Hunt of Kings Heath at the Aston Hall Hotel, Sheffield this month.

The HSE say they believe in working in strong partnership and this new qualification is the perfect example of how HSE, government

and industry can work together to ensure that tomorrow's workforce has a sound basis for understanding the hazards that confront people every day at work.

The course and qualification aims to provide Year 10 students with a basic understanding of health and safety in the workplace, so that they understand hazards, and what to expect of their employer. All schools in England will soon be notified about the qualification and course through Spectrum, newsletter for schools and website at: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/)

The Workplace Hazard Awareness Qualification at entry level 3 is based on the new national occupational standard for basic hazard awareness developed by ENTO. It allows students to demonstrate their awareness of workplace hazards and how they can prevent harm by supporting the delivery of:

- the general teaching requirement for health and safety in the National Curriculum; and
- the National Curriculum's non-statutory guidelines for Key Stage 4 for work-related learning which require students to be able to describe the main hazards associated with particular types of workplace.

Ossett School, Ossett, West Yorkshire was one of the schools that piloted the teaching materials and the school stated that this is a very positive development to ensure the safety of school students in the workplace and the school is looking at the possibility of introducing the course for students on extended work placements.

Teaching materials to support the qualification have been produced by IOSH and will be free to schools and colleges. The materials will be accessible for students to work online and have been piloted in schools in England to ensure they meet the needs of teachers and students.

1. All schools in England will receive, through [www.teachernet.gov.uk/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/) and their monthly DfES newsletter Spectrum, information on the Workplace Hazard Awareness teaching materials and qualification.
2. The workplace hazard awareness course teaching materials will be available for teachers to download for free from Wiseup2work in December. Teachers can register their interest at [www.wiseup2work.co.uk](http://www.wiseup2work.co.uk).
3. The BSC Awards qualification has been accredited by QCA for 14-16 learning. Qualification details can be found on Open Quails [www.openquails.com](http://www.openquails.com).
4. HSE helped to coordinate this activity as part of its contribution to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work's focus on young people in 2006.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: EX5

### The Role of the Safety Representative

HSE have issued the following guidance:

Safety representatives are appointed by trade unions to represent their members on health and safety issues. In some workplaces, they have agreed to represent the entire workforce. The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 set out their legal functions, which include:

- representing employees in discussions with the employer on health, safety or welfare issues and in discussions with HSE or other enforcing authorities;
- being consulted 'in good time' over a large range of health and safety issues;
- being involved with risk assessment procedures;
- attending safety committee meetings;
- having access to relevant health and safety information;
- inspecting the workplace;
- investigating potential hazards;
- investigating notifiable accidents, cases of diseases or ill health, and dangerous occurrences;
- investigating employees' complaints;
- receiving information from health and safety inspectors;
- being given paid time off their normal work to carry out their functions and undergo training;
- having access to suitable facilities and assistance to carry out their functions.

#### Consultation

Safety representatives are entitled to be consulted 'in good time' about health and safety measures. 'In good time' means that the employer must allow enough time to tell the safety representatives about what is proposed, and for the safety representatives to consult with their fellow workers and get their views.

Those views then need to be reported back to the managers before any final decision is made or any action is taken. In emergencies or urgent situations, however, action needs to be taken first.

This process allows the workforce to consider the effect of health and safety changes before they are made. Not only does this mean that procedures or work practices are improved, but workers are more likely to follow procedures they themselves have helped develop.

#### Safety committees

If two or more safety representatives request the employer to set up a safety committee, the employer must do so within three months of the request. Safety committees can help the employer develop, promote, monitor and amend their health and safety management systems. Safety committees should:

- develop safe systems of work and safety procedures;

- analyse accidents and causes of notifiable occupational diseases;
- review risk assessments;
- examine safety audit reports;
- consider reports submitted by safety representatives;
- monitor the effectiveness of health and safety training;
- consider reports and factual information provided by HSE inspectors and Environmental Health Officers;
- monitor and review the adequacy of health and safety communication and publicity within the workplace; and
- continuously monitor all arrangements for health and safety and revise them whenever necessary.

Managers and representatives should agree who chairs the meetings, how often meetings should be held, and what they hope to achieve. It is important that safety committees actually review health and safety systems. They should not become reporting centres for matters that should be dealt with by managers.

#### Accident and ill health investigations

Occupational accidents and ill health can be signals that risk control measures have failed. If they are properly investigated, this can reveal weaknesses in the control systems which need to be remedied.

A joint investigation with the safety representative is more likely to give employees the confidence to co-operate fully in any investigation, because those involved may not wish to reveal any details in case they are blamed for the accident. Also, what someone says immediately after an accident may affect any subsequent civil compensation claim.

#### Contacting enforcing authority inspectors

Safety representatives are entitled to contact enforcing authority inspectors i.e. a HSE inspector or Local Authority Enforcement Officer. If this is just for information, they can be contacted directly. However, where it is a formal complaint about conditions at the workplace, the inspector will want to know whether it has been reported to the employer.

Inspectors can be contacted anonymously. They will keep the person's identity secret in such circumstances.

#### Training, facilities and assistance

Safety representatives are legally entitled to paid time off for training, which is usually freely available from their trade union or the TUC. Training course topics can include:

- the role and functions of the safety representative;
- health and safety legislation;
- how to identify and minimise hazards;
- how to carry out a workplace inspection and accident investigation;
- employers health and safety arrangements,

including emergency procedures, risk assessments and health and safety policies.

The employer is also required to provide 'such facilities and assistance as safety representatives may reasonably require' to carry out their function.

Depending on the circumstances, these could include:

- noticeboard;
- telephone;
- lockable filing cabinet;
- access to an office to meet with workers in private;
- camera;
- key health and safety information.

However, this should also include access to specialist assistance. Some information will involve technical details that may not be easily understood. During inspections, safety representatives may need to have detailed points explained. Therefore employers should also make sure that support is given to safety representatives so that technical information can be more easily understood.

#### Disputes

Any disagreements between employers and employees about the interpretation of the Regulations should be resolved through the normal ways of resolving employment relations disputes. In certain circumstances it may be helpful to involve the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).

#### Releasing information to safety representatives

Employers have a responsibility to provide information to all workers that will enable them to participate fully and effectively in any consultation about their health and safety.

Information can be provided in whatever form is most suitable, as long as it can be understood by everyone. Employers may need to make special arrangements for employees who do not understand English very well, who cannot read or who have a condition that means they need to be given information in different ways. The information should include:

- procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency, including the contact details of the people nominated by the employer to help with the implementation of those procedures;
- information about the risks the employees (and others) may face, and the measures which have been put in place to ensure that the workforce is protected including any risks notified by another employer with whom a workplace is shared;
- safety data sheets providing information from designers, manufacturers or suppliers of any article or substance which is being used or is proposed to be used.

Safety representatives are also entitled to see

copies of any document that employers must keep under health and safety law, for example the important findings of risk assessments or information relating to occurrences of any accident, dangerous occurrence or notifiable industrial disease.

Safety representatives must be given information necessary for them to fulfill their functions, such as:

- information on any proposed changes to current working practices which may affect the health and safety at work of their employees;
- technical information about hazards to health and safety and the necessary precautions to stop or minimise them;
- information on equipment, materials or substances which an employer issues to homeworkers;
- the results of any action taken by the employer in the course of checking the effectiveness of their health and safety arrangements.

### **Accident book**

Safety representatives are legally entitled to inspect records of accidents that employers have to keep under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). The Accident Book B1510 is a valuable document that organisations can use to record accident information as part of their management of health and safety.

A tick box is included on each page of the Accident Book asking whether the injured person gives his or her consent to the disclosure of the information contained in that record to safety representatives. The employer should:

- if the injured person has ticked the tick box (and signed the form), disclose the information contained in the accident record, so far as it relates to the injured person, to safety representatives and/or representatives of employee safety;
- anonymise the information if the injured person does not tick the tick box and disclose it to safety representatives and/or representatives of employee safety.

The arrangements to pass on this information should be discussed between employers, employees and/or their representatives. The aim should be to make the best possible use of this (and other) information to meet health and safety objectives. By following this approach you and your employer will not be infringing the Data Protection Act (DPA) or confidentiality law.

### **Your employer's responsibilities**

Under the law employers are responsible for health and safety management.

It is an employer's duty to protect the health,

safety and welfare of their employees, and other people who might be affected by their business. Your employer must do whatever is reasonably practicable to achieve this.

This means making sure that you and others are protected from anything that may cause harm, effectively controlling any risks to injury or health that could arise in the workplace.

Your employer has duties under health and safety law to assess risks in the workplace. Risk assessments should be carried out that address all risks that might cause harm in your workplace.

Your employer must give you information about the risks in your workplace and how you are protected and instruct and train you on how to deal with the risks.

Your employer must consult the safety representative that is either elected by the workforce or appointed by a trade union.

For more details on this and how health and safety law works, HSE has produced a booklet *Health and Safety Regulation: A short guide*. You can also read *Health and safety law: What you should know*.

If you have specific queries on health and safety issues in your workplace, first ask your manager. Your safety representative or trade union representative.

If you think your employer is exposing you to risks or is not carrying out their legal duty in regards to health and safety, and you have pointed this out to them without getting a satisfactory response, you can contact HSE – All contacts in strictest confidence.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: A53

### **664**

#### **Health & Safety Whistleblowing**

Employers have a responsibility for the health and safety of their employees. If, after an employee or Safety Rep has approached their line manager, about a risk to their health or the health of others (including members of the public) and is not satisfied that it has been adequately dealt with, the law provides them with protection if they 'blow the whistle' on their employer.

#### **Whistleblowing legislation**

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers who 'blow the whistle' about wrongdoing. It applies where a worker has a reasonable belief that their disclosure tends to show one or more of the following offences or breaches:

- a criminal offence;
- the breach of a legal obligation;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- a danger to the health and safety of any individual;
- damage to the environment; or
- deliberate covering up of information tending to show any of the above.

HSE strongly supports measures which protect whistleblowers from any form of victimisation.

HSE has a complaints handling system to ensure that concerns about health and safety are dealt with effectively and efficiently. HSE and local authority staff do all that they can to preserve the confidentiality of workers who raise concerns about health and safety, whenever this is requested.

### **Further help and advice**

Public Concern at Work, founded in 1993, is the leading authority on public interest whistleblowing. Its charitable objectives are to promote compliance with the law and good practice in organisations across all sectors.

In practical terms, it focuses on the responsibility of workers to raise concerns about malpractice, and the responsibility of those in charge to investigate and remedy such issues. It does this by:

- providing free advice and assistance to individuals who are concerned about apparent danger or malpractice in the workplace;
- offering professional advice, training and consultancy services for employers and organisations;
- influencing public policy through research and campaigning activities.

Public Concern at Work can be contacted on **020 7404 6609** or email [helpline@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:helpline@pcaw.co.uk)

### **665**

#### **HSE and Trade Unions**

HSE have published the following statement: Trade Unions are one of HSE's key stakeholders. HSE has, and will continue to work with unions in partnership on a range of activities. Below are some examples of this.

1. HSE have built mutual understanding. For example, HSE:
  - Created a worker involvement programme to provide a specific team within HSE that is responsible for promoting consultation with trade unions and their members by employers
  - Worked with the TUC to deliver workshops for HSE policymakers on working more closely with trade unions in developing and delivering policy
  - Ensured that our campaigns such as 'Backs' and 'Watch Your Step' involved trade unions and were relevant to workers as well as employers
  - Arranged for a secondment from the TUC to the worker involvement programme to help build trust and understanding between the organisations
  - Set up regular 'keep-in-touch' meetings between HSE and TUC policy staff
  - Commissioned research on the effectiveness of trade union safety representatives in promoting health and safety messages
  - Provided, through the WSA Challenge Fund,

access to funds for trade unions, with others to help stimulate more worker involvement, particularly in the unorganised sector.

## 2. HSE have strengthened the legal framework.

For example, HSE:

- Published a consultative document, including a summary version aimed at workers, on (amongst other things) changes to the law on worker consultation that could see more powers for safety representatives
- Worked with the Home Office to reform the law relating to the offence of corporate manslaughter
- Won Government commitment to:
  - Remove the Crown's immunity from enforcement action when Parliamentary time allows; and
  - Consider doing this as part of the Corporate Manslaughter Bill
- Won Government commitment to increase the maximum penalties available for health and safety offences
- Published case studies about health and safety management that recognise the importance of worker involvement. Where TUs were recognised, they supported the actions going on in the organisations.
- Commissioned and analysed research on the role that directors play in improving health and safety. The Commission is, as a result, looking at the options for strengthening directors' role.
- Proposed clear and credible guidance for directors on health and safety, as supported by the TUC.
- Made two changes to guidance for Inspectors about:
  - Prosecuting individuals generally and;
  - Making it clear that HSE considers it appropriate for the Courts to consider disqualifying directors where it is legally possible, and that Inspectors should remind the Court that it has this additional power.

## 3. HSE have delivered better information. For example, HSE:

- Published guidance for employers on how to consult and involve workers on health and safety matters. Employees can use this guidance as a tool to persuade their employers to improve consultation. (Previous guidance was only about what the law requires rather than how to do it.)
- Allowed the TUC to publish the Approved Code of Practice on the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (the 'Brown Book') on the internet for training purposes
- Jointly with the TUC, published the leaflet "Your Health, Your Safety", on basic health and safety rights for workers, in more than 20 languages
- Published guidance on sickness absence and returning to work for safety representatives – the first guidance produced specifically for safety representatives by HSE

- Published a new version of the accident book that allows employers to give safety representatives copies of accident reports, where the victim agrees
- Published and updated workers' web pages, providing information for safety representatives and employees
- Provided briefings for trade unions on specific issues such as 'Workplace Health Connect'
- Provided articles for Union journals on specific issues when requested.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to Dave Joyce, National Health Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: EX5

### 666

#### Accidents in Storage and Warehousing

The HSE have issued statistics showing that In 2003/04 the storage and warehousing industry reported approximately 4940 work related accidents to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Local Authorities.

Over 615 of these accidents were classified as major injuries such as fractures and amputations. The most common types of accidents reported were:

- Slips and trips;
- Manual handling;
- Falls from height;
- Being hit by a falling or moving object.

Related HSE websites for more information:

- Haulage
- Moving goods
- Workplace transport

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: EX5

### 667

#### Moving Goods Safely

Moving Goods Safely (MGS) is a national project in 2006/07 involving both the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Local Authorities (LA) working in partnership. The project aims to reduce injuries and ill-health arising from the movement of goods from supplier through haulier to the recipient and end user including home deliveries.

This includes the coordinated inspections of multi-site and peripatetic organisations, focusing on workplace transport including falls from vehicles, musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) and slip risks during the collection/delivery of goods.

The movement of goods presents HSE, as health and safety regulators, with the challenge of dealing with a huge variety of issues. The commercial organisations involved within the movement of goods are diverse including hauliers, logistics providers, retailers etc. with some very large companies, thousands of small businesses and the self-employed.

The movement of goods is more than just trucks on the road with a large proportion of accidents happening at the delivery/ collection sites that are often not directly under the control of the road haulage firm. Communication and cooperation problems can arise due to the many organisations involved in the movement of the goods, and this can also lead to difficulties in effectively managing health and safety.

The HSE has made available websites providing access to information that is relevant to organisations where the movement of goods between sites forms a fundamental aspect of their business.

#### Related HSE sites:

- Workplace transport
- Slips and trips
- Musculoskeletal disorders
- Road haulage

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: EX5.

### 668

#### Reversing Vehicles – Workplace Transport – Companies Fined After Worker's Leg Crushed

Site owners and managers have been warned by the HSE of the danger of moving vehicles around yards when parking, loading/unloading etc. after two companies were fined last week following a prosecution brought by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Aggregate Industries UK Limited (Bardon Contracting division) and Tripod Crest Planning Limited were each fined £25,000 after pleading guilty to breaches of Sections 2(1) and 3(1) respectively of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 at the Central Criminal Court in London on Friday 8 September.

HSE Inspector Alec Ferguson said, "Most of the men on site had worked together before. However, despite both Bardon Contracting and Tripod Crest Planning both had recognised the risk of injury from reversing vehicles and put it in their risk assessments and method statements. However, they failed to enforce safety standards and visiting lorry drivers received no site induction or information about safe reversing from either company on the site."

The incident occurred in South Lambeth, London SW8 on the night of 14 January 2003. Bardon Contracting employee Stephen Bood, aged 53, was marking a driveline on the road surface for the Tripod Planning machine to follow. With his back turned he did not see a lorry from Tripod's haulage subcontractor reversing towards him. The lorry ran over the length of Mr Bood's legs, crushing them severely. Mr. Bood is still recovering from his injuries.

All enquiries concerning the above should be addressed to Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: V4.

669

**One IT: Data Centre Agility Roll-Out**

Branches were given the detail of the One IT Data Centre Agility Trial in Branch Officials Bulletin No. 26, paragraph 437.

The background to this major change programme is the substantial demand both external and internal for Data Centre Capacity. This is in addition to the co-location of 21CN nodes in Data Centres to derive financial and operational value. There is over 50% growth in total capacity forecast within the next 6 months much of which is being driven by the launch of BT's Vision service.

Part of the plan is to focus investment on Data Centres, to reduce the internal costs hosting systems and to reduce the impact of server replacement and investing in larger Data Centres. The BT Board has cleared final authority for the investment of £130m on expansion of Data Centre capacity. To enable this to happen and to manage costs in order to win future external work, the planned direction is to have a small flexible, highly skilled workforce, alongside an equally skilled and flexible mobile workforce.

The trial confirmed the benefits of the fixed and mobile roles. As for the grading, it is agreed that the new fixed role will be a C3. This will mean if selected, promotion for many of our members. There will be a requirement in most sites for shift working to continue, although in three sites this will cease, in four it will reduce and in four sites there will be an increased requirement. One site will continue as is in terms of levels of resource required. The precise requirements are contained within the associated presentation slides. A new role, the "Mobile Professional" has been assessed due to the increased level of operational and managerial responsibility as that of a Reward Framework band.

The intent is to fill these new roles by internal application from the existing workforce. Preferences will be sought and recorded in one to one interviews explaining the changes. Any surplus employees will either be deployed to another role within OI or will go to the bench for upskilling and realignment onto ICT/Own use work. All newly appointed roles will receive training for the new role.

There are a number of staff/resource reductions as a result; the burden will fall mainly on the existing agency workforce of which there are 82 at pre-national roll-out. The direct labour workforce is currently made up of 97 CWU represented grades, falling to 86 on national roll-out and 18 managerial grades increasing to 64 on roll-out. It is intended that subject to appointments the agency resource will be removed. There is also the likelihood of conversions once the wave of direct labour opportunities have been carried out. There will also be the opportunity for Newstart in certain cases.

As for the first phase of appointments, management's intentions are to fill the pilot sites roles first, then move onto the sites which will be the Data Centres for BT Vision. The former due to the fact that the operational model has been in place for some time and the latter in order to have the model in place to meet the demands of BT Vision roll-out.

As to the means by which the 11 Newgrid posts reductions can be achieved they are:

**Change Management**

At present, considerable time and effort is spent in ownership of Change Management within a shift environment (accepting, reading, understanding, assigning and in certain areas, rising of changes will be taken away from the shift environment and passed to Control Services and the mobility function.

**Tape Automation**

An exercise is currently underway to identify all manual tape loading with a view to automating into tape libraries. In addition to this, Ominet links are being set across the UK Data Centre estate to group all sites together; this will then enable in house disaster store (massively labour intensive) to be controlled electronically without the need for manual effort.

Better use of tape technology and data stacking is also under review which by default will reduce the amount of media handling currently being undertaken. All standalone tape activity is also under review with a recommendation to automate and whilst there is still some work to do on this, progress has been made to date in a number of areas.

**Administrative functions**

One IT have engaged with Monterey at a number of sites with a view to them taking on more admin type functions. Typically this would include areas such as Postal duties, stores ordering and certain levels of site security.

**Site Visits**

Tighter controls on access will reduce the number of short notice site visits and One IT are in negotiation with Monterey to deal with more in this area.

**Site Access**

A greater emphasis has been placed on Monterey to provide a more in-depth control on security and access at all of the sites, particularly strategic issues where One IT spend considerable time and effort monitoring and responding to security and access requests.

**Introduction of Mobility**

As part of the mobility activity, certain workloads/installations both during and out of hours, will be covered by the mobility role; this will negate the need, in part for shift staff in undertaking certain activities that they currently provide support for (e.g. checking

status lights on servers, carrying out reboots, completing manual media work at smaller sites until full automation is in place).

Attached for the information of Branches are the presentation slides to be used at the local site level, and the associated job description for the new functions.

Brian Healy  
Assistant Secretary

670

**21CN and Pathfinder Architecture and Network**

In The previous reports to branches on Pathfinder, it was reported that that there would be no changes required to attendance in order to manage the Metro Node sites within the Pathfinder Area. This was based on their best estimate of requirements given what was known at the time.

They now have a better understanding of the complexity of a Metro Node over the other key Nodes. Attached is detail of comparison of Vendors' Kit within each of the key Nodes.

Although a number of Metro Nodes will be co-located with Core and I-Nodes, there will also now be 'standalone' Metro Nodes. BT now consider that it will need a level of coverage at these Metro Nodes at all times, in order to meet commitments to the Business and their Customer requirements.

Specifically, within South Wales, Swansea is a standalone Metro Node. BT Wholesale has estimated that it needs 1 person on Nights, (supplemented at this time from the Cardiff Night Team) and 4 individuals on 3 Day Week attendance patterns. BT Wholesale will also consider the option of extending the Night cover if it has available resource to do this, whilst taking into consideration their ongoing commitments to maintain the legacy BAU work.

Secondly, BT Wholesale has admitted to an omission in that Milton Keynes Data Centre is part of the FOA Network and will therefore require cover on a 24/7 basis. The current estimate of resource requirement is that 6 people will be required on Nights, which will be met by the current incumbent Night team; and that 6 people will be required on Day working, who will be selected according to the detail of the Pathfinder FOA letter.

Also attached is the full detail of the Pathfinder FOA Network.

Brian Healy  
Assistant Secretary

671

**One IT: Vendor and Asset Management**

Following a review of the organisational design of Vendor and Asset Management, the output from the review is that there are differing responsibilities and client relationship skills and roles.

As a result, line ownership and management will be split. The method for delivery of the

separation will not necessitate any changes for CWU grades and will be a lift and shift exercise.  
Brian Healy  
Assistant Secretary

#### **672** **One IT: Infrastructure Products and The ICT 4000 Challenge**

One IT has given notice of an activity being undertaken to free up 30 CWU posts from within Infrastructure Products in order to provide resource for ICT work.

The proposed breakdown and underlying means by which these posts are freed up are as follows:

##### **XJE1 – 15 posts**

Working practices and responsibilities are being reviewed to enable a streamlined working arrangement. In order to provide wider geographical coverage than current capabilities, some functions will be moved to Global Service field units, who already undertake similar work for XJE, on a call off basis.

##### **XJE2 – 3 posts**

Technical admin tasks are to be moved back into the technical teams thus freeing up the resource currently doing them. There is currently a disaster recovery team based in Harmondsworth but following the mainframe consolidation exercise, all mainframe systems are now in Harmondsworth or Reigate, if there was a disaster in Harmondsworth the Disaster Recovery Team itself would be compromised. Therefore, people in Reigate are being trained and will take on some of the work, thus reducing the amount of work in Harmondsworth.

##### **XJE4 – 9 posts**

Eight posts will be released as the work is going to either Infosys or TCS, by 31 December. The remaining post will be released through a review of working practices which will allow a more efficient working arrangement in the team.

##### **XJE5 – 3 posts**

One IT will be able to release a couple of people in XJE5 through increased automation and efficiencies in working practices freeing up some of the current resource thus allowing it to be released to the bench.

Management have stated that in the event of no volunteers forthcoming, they will resort to selecting individuals by location, by skill and performance.

More detailed information is being sought on the XJE4 activity as the information received is incomplete and inadequate for the purposes of making any reasonable evaluation.

Brian Healy  
Assistant Secretary

#### **673** **NTL/Telewest – Continuity of Service Obligations**

Concern was raised at Head Office level over the introduction of a policy by which there would be no further callouts to confirm power outages between 23:00 and 06:00 hours.

In the event of an engineer already redeployed before 23:00 hours and running a generator, the NFC must be informed that the generator is being switched off. If there is a need to switch the generator on at 06:00 hours, the NFC will investigate another call out to cover this.

It is company policy that generators will not be used on the network from 23:00 hrs until 06:00 hrs unless there are exceptions made as part of the company decision making process to include:

- specific customer requirements (i.e. emergency lines, Redcare, business parks, etc.)
- any DTI considerations regards Critical National Infrastructure (CNI)
- technical infrastructure requirements (i.e. where we use RSS cabinets, SRUs, etc.)

Whilst the Union has highlighted the potential impact to switch equipment located in the network, this needs to be put into context. The Company only use RSS equipment (Ericsson remote switching systems) in the ex-Eurobell areas of Plymouth and Exeter.

The only other remote switch equipment located in the network is via the Nortel platforms using SRUs (small remote units) – however these are very limited and are normally used on customer sites as part of service delivery to large business users.

In addition, the company also takes into consideration and accepts responsibility regarding local authority guidelines and requirements regarding noise abatement.

In response to the points raised by the Union on the requirements imposed upon Communication Providers to provide a service, the company position is that the key requirement is that the “Communications Provider shall take all reasonably practicable steps to maintain”. This does not say that they must take steps at all times. Following previous discussions and attendance at OFCOM review meetings and emergency planning forums, NTL/Telewest confirm that OFCOM do not want to or claim to be responsible for issuing specific, categoric standards for operators. Hence there is not a formal definition of the term “reasonably practicable”. Therefore in response to the Union’s point, as an operator they believe providing battery back-up plus generator support (except from 23:00 hrs to 06:00 hrs excluding any exceptions as per the above) is reasonably practicable – when also considering noise abatement guidelines and requirements.

On the points of high profile customers and sensitive sites they accept that:

1. Companies transfer large amounts of data between sites during the night, which are crucial for next day working. However, business customer usage is part of the considerations made prior to any potential generator switch-off.
2. With regards to Residential Redcare lines, these customers are one of the considerations and checks made prior to any potential generator switch-off.
3. On alarm lines for residential customer and business customers, the company does not and cannot undertake checks for alarm line usage. However, they believe they take all reasonably practicable efforts to ensure services are available (as per the contracts with customers) but do not and cannot guarantee that services will always be available. The new policy and its impact will be reviewed.

Brian Healy  
Assistant Secretary

#### **674** **Broadband Assurance Customer Services Resourcing Strategy**

Discussions have taken place with Customer Services management at Director level on the details reported in LTB 604/06.

Broadband Assurance position is that if BT fails to deliver the costs savings in a timely way, the market will respond, leading to loss of business, such as the migration of current customers to lower cost options e.g. WLR and LLU, which means increased transactions within a lower cost envelope. Inevitably, as an organisation, this will impact on BT’s ability to compete and tender competitively for new growth work, in the market place and increase further the cost pressures on the organisation.

The Customer Services Director – Broadband Assurance, believes there is a joint challenge on how BT can establish an operational infrastructure that tactically, from within its North and South regions, can enable Broadband Assurance to deliver against the increasing demands and expectations of customers whilst at the same time supporting the needs of our members.

During a meeting on the 10th October 2006 the Executive rejected the concept as not meeting the requirements of our members. A range of issues were raised and the Director agreed to reflect on the issues raised.

The following is a detailed outline of that response: To implement a ‘staircase’ approach to deliver customer service and to meet the aspirations of our members, this ‘staircase’ approach will focus on the following:

- a) reviewing the ‘staircase’ component parts e.g. resourcing solutions, new growth skills, flexible working arrangements that need to be integrated and in place to deliver outstanding customer services
- b) develop tactical working solutions that are in the interests of both members

- and employees within Customer Service (Assurance)
- c) planning each staircase step against an established timetable and implementation plans.

The primary aim of this 'staircase' approach will be to deliver a series of steps that contribute to cost rationalisation and outstanding customer services, whilst providing and reinforcing the building blocks that create a world class working environment.

Broadband Assurance propose to establish a joint working party. This working party would be tasked with concluding, at a tactical level, the following 'stair case' components and actions:

**Resourcing**

- a) Provide a summary of the break down of the resourcing profiles e.g. Agency/FTE personnel by location and propose solutions to provide for a flexible resourcing plan that allows for a reduction in the reliance upon agency personnel leading to a rationalisation in agency usage. Provide a detailed proposal to establish plans for the rationalisation of agency personnel, to include the review of the feasibility of freeing up roles that are currently 'holding points that prevent progression for team members.

**Agency Conversion**

- b) The selected conversion of agency personnel onto BT contracts. This would include the conversion from temporary to permanent of selected high performing individuals.

**Team member progression/promotion**

- c) Submission of plans that enable Broadband Assurance to identify and progress individuals across the organisation who have the ability for progression and are provided with targeted support and investment in their development.

**Utilisation of short term cover**

- d) Review the utilisation of short term cover.

**Future skills & capabilities**

- e) Proposing, via a skills and capabilities review, the future capabilities and skills required in the Customer Services (Assurance) organisation, leading to the development of a tactical plan to ensure these skills are developed within the unit.

**Working arrangements**

- f) Provide a summary of the breakdown of existing working arrangements and propose solutions to develop new flexible working arrangements that meet the needs of the customer.

The above resourcing and agency rationalisation actions would contribute to the identification of new, future proofed,

attendance pattern arrangements and their subsequent roll-out.

Broadband Assurance believe that the current attendance patterns do not allow it to cope with peak periods of Broadband demand. Accordingly if they do not review these attendance patterns this mis-alignment is expected to grow further with the arrival of IPTV.

**Governance**

It is proposed that this small working party are tasked, over the next 2-3 months, to review the above and provide appropriate recommendations for consideration. This working party would consist of a blend of the appropriate experience and leadership from within Broadband Assurance as well as representation from the CWU.

Initial priorities will be the completion of a resourcing review that allows for the introduction of new working arrangements which will permit the establishing plans for the rationalisation of agency personnel and selected conversion of agency personnel onto BT contracts.

These recommendations would be tabled to the Customer Services Senior Management team and the CWU Executive on a regular basis and to discuss these plans in detail.

In addition, at regular meetings, Broadband Assurance will continue to provide the key metrics relating to their Offshore Plans, Integrated Resourcing Planning and customer satisfaction, across the three region model as well as seeking input on any key CWU or Customer Services (Assurance) agenda items requiring detailed consideration.

As currently proposed, there are considerable hurdles as the proposals do not take into account the Union's opposition to high grade functions executed off-shore. Additionally the restriction to progress onto full hours contracts and progression onto higher graded duties whilst on a reduced hours contract.

These are issues which will be raised shortly with meetings at Director level and which will be subject to further reports.

Brian Healy  
Assistant Secretary

**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).

**Tuesday 23 January 2007: The Problem of Intimacy: Trade Unions and Labour Governments.** 18.00. House of Commons, 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, John Cole, 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**



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

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*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**