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GENERAL

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Liaison Meetings with CWU Group MPs

The first meeting with CWU Group MPs has now been arranged for the 2007 Parliamentary Session and, for your information, listed below is the date of that meeting and those nominated to attend:

20 February 2007

Maria Exall, Beryl Shepherd, Peter Keenleyside and a representative from the North West Regional Political Committee.

Billy Hayes

General Secretary

733

Legal Services CWU Accident Helpline Christmas Arrangements

The above services will be available up until **Friday 22nd December 2006** but will close at **17:00 hours**. The Helpline will then remain closed until the **27th December 2006** operating between the usual hours of **07:00 hours to 20:00 hours**.

The Helpline will then close on **New Years Eve**, at **17:00 hours** and then will remain closed until **Tuesday 2nd January 2007** operating between **07:00 hours and 20:00 hours**.

All enquiries regarding the above paragraph should be directed to Tony Rupa, Legal Services Officer.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

734

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.

735

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.

Equal Opportunities Department.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

737

Radio's and Hi-Fi Systems in Mail Centres and Delivery Offices – Noise Complaints

Further to BOB 33/05, Paragraph 511 dated 26 August 2005, a number of Branches, Area Reps, and individual members continue to write to Headquarters, to various departments complaining about noise pollution and the nuisance of loud music played in Mail Centres and Delivery Offices on Radios and Hi-Fi systems, many of which were purchased with "first-line-fix" money as suggested by the managers of the funding.

The matter was raised with Royal Mail HQ last year without a national response or policy to resolve the matter being produced. In short Royal Mail have failed to resolve a problem they themselves created by providing funding and suggesting that members purchase Radios and Hi-Fi's. The problem we face now is that some members like the music playing but others find it intrusive and quite frankly hate it, especially when played at an excessive volume. The difficulty now is finding an acceptable compromise for all concerned if at all possible. However, the bottom line is that no member should be exposed to uncomfortable, nuisance noise or noise that affects hearing and concentration.

The matter has once again been raised with several Royal Mail HQ managers in CSR, Health, Safety and IR. I have copied the letter to the HSE and Allan Johnson MP our former General Secretary who has also raised the matter with the HSE following a letter from a Hull Mail Centre member, one of Allan's constituents.

Would those ASRs who believe they have a serious problem that local management are failing to address contact the appropriate Local Authority Environmental Health Officer and request an Inspection of the Mail Centre or Delivery Office along with independent Noise Tests. When contacting the Local Authority you should mention the Royal Mail/CWU "LOPP" (Large Organisations Partnership Pilot) Scheme under which a programme of Royal Mail Workplace Inspections are underway.

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 replaced the Noise at Work Regulations 1989 on 6 April 2006 introducing new requirements for action to be taken by employers and lowering levels, requiring employers to take action to protect workers at levels of noise 5 decibels lower than in the 1989 Regulations. The normal limit (average noise exposure over the day or week) is now 80db. Once reached employers must assess the risk to workers' health and provide them with information and training. If it gets up to 85db then that is the serious area requiring hearing protection and hearing protection zones etc. There is also an exposure limit value of 87 decibels, taking account of any reduction in exposure provided by hearing protection, above which workers must not be exposed under any circumstances. Action will be required depending on how loud the noise is and how long people are exposed to it. However, Radios should be getting nowhere near the Noise Regs limits.

How Loud – Guide?

140 decibels	jet aircraft taking off
110 decibels	noisy nightclub
100 decibels	road drill
90 decibels	loud pub
70 decibels	city street
50 decibels	normal conversation
40-50 decibels	quiet office

As a simple guide – something will certainly need to be done about the noise if the noise is intrusive – like a busy street, a loud vacuum cleaner or a crowded restaurant for most of the working day or staff have to raise their voices to carry out a normal conversation when about 2 m apart for at part of the day?

I reproduce below my recent letter to Royal Mail HQ.

“Our ref: E2/DJ/km
14 December 2006
Ian Stockdale Head CSR RML UK Mails
Dr Steve Boorman RMG Director CSR
Sandy Batho Head of IR Dev RMG
Allan St John Holt RMG Head of Safety
Dale Lang Head of IR RML UK Mails

Dear Colleagues,
Radio's and Hi-Fi Systems in Mail Centres and Delivery Offices Purchased with (First Line Fix Funding)

I wrote to Sandy Batho on 17 October 2005 (copy below) – over a year ago but incredibly I never received a reply in spite of me speaking directly to Sandy as well as Ian and Steve.

I continue to receive complaints and have recently received amongst others, yet another complaint, this time from Hull Mail Centre. The individual member Mr D.Perry, supported by his Branch has now raised the matter with government Minister Allan Johnson MP (former CWU General Secretary) who in turn has raised

the issue with Geoffrey Podger Chief Executive at the HSE.

I have sent you bundles upon bundles of complaint letters from across the Country about this issue and clearly it is not going to simply go away!

I repeat the basic message I put to you all when we spoke about it face to face a year ago – “Royal Mail created this problem so Royal Mail now has a duty to resolve it”. These foolish people in Royal Mail who dish out the annual ‘First-Line-Fix’ cash for our people to spend in their workplaces never consult either Royal Mail’s Health and Safety Experts or the CWU’s Health and Safety Experts before giving away the money and suggesting that staff purchase Radios and Hi-Fi’s for the workplace. Never for one minute do they seem to consider fully the possible health, safety and welfare aspects or individual preferences. Those people really do need to be brought to book.

I do now need a positive, detailed response as to how you propose to resolve the matter and there needs to be a clear policy and guidance on this. Whilst some of our people find that having music playing while working is soothing and allows them to shut out other distractions and other intrusive thoughts, for others there is nothing more infuriating than unwanted sounds. It is a known thing that people’s individual reaction to noise differs quite a bit. When the UK Noise Association (UKNA) published the results of a year-long survey into Britain’s noisiest roads, the results were not solely based upon where noise was loudest, but on how annoying the noises were. It should therefore be understood that individuals interpret noise and loud music differently. While loud music spells enjoyment for some, for others this may be hell on earth. It also depends how long an individual is exposed to the noise and how frequently – a full 8 hour shift may be too much! Excess noise affects people’s physical health and employers must act if staff are exposed to excessive noise levels on a daily basis. Some people claim that having the radio on while working helps them to focus but the UK Noise Association (UKNA) say that laboratory findings show that that’s actually not the case. While some very boring, repetitive tasks that do not involve much cognitive effort may well be enhanced by having some music on in the background, any even a moderately difficult task may be disrupted say the UKNA.

Noise pollution is a modern problem and it is getting worse. In extremes it can cause mental and physical damage but its effects are still largely ignored. Long-term exposure to unwanted sound has been linked to increased risk of high blood pressure, stress and heart disease. At work it has been shown to reduce concentration levels and affect memory and attention span and in extreme cases, often involving arguments and inter-personal disputes. A person frustrated by unwanted sounds may find him or herself becoming

increasingly depressed or aggressive and will certainly become over-sensitive to the noise. Control over the noise seems to be a key feature in the link between noise and stress and those unhappy about the loud music etc have no control and no say. Even pleasurable noise seems to have an adverse affect on our concentration levels say noise experts.

Noise is not like something you do not want to look at or be near to because you can not look the other way or walk away from it - but your ears are working 360 degrees, always turned on and you can not ignore them!

Royal Mail needs to be tough on the causes of noise rather than dismiss the stresses associated with unwanted sound as a reaction by those who are hypersensitive, even if it is a minority. Royal Mail need to acknowledge that noise is a very real problem which, in some cases, is resolved by everyone showing consideration to others working around them.

I look forward to hearing from you and would appreciate one of you taking the issue on and responding positively please.

Yours Sincerely

Dave Joyce

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

CC:

Allan Johnson MP

Geoffrey Podger HSE

Mark Dawson HSE

Mike Whiting CWU Hull

Dr Su Wang RMG Head of Health

Mick Gledhill CWU NE Regional H&S Forum Sec

Martin Collins Ass/Sec

Bob Gibson Ass/Sec

Dave Ward DGS(P)

All enquiries relating to the above should be addressed direct to Dave Joyce National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting ref: E2.

Would all those Branches and individuals who have written in to Union HQ please accept this BOB Paragraph as a reply to the complaints raised.

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“Risks” Readers Survey 2006 Results

The 2006 online survey of TUC’s weekly health and safety e-bulletin “Risks” has shown the e-zine maintained the very high satisfaction levels amongst the readership reported in the 2002 and 2003 reader surveys.

The Risks Reader Survey 2006, conducted in Risks in February 2006, attracted 803 respondents – almost two and a half times more than the 346 participants of the 2003 survey.

Almost 7 per cent of the 12,000 readership responded to the survey. That proportion is two per cent more than in 2003 (5 per cent). In the period between completion of the survey in February and December 2006 a further 2,000 readers had subscribed to Risks.

Almost two thirds of Risks readers (64 per

TABLE 1

TUC Risks survey analysis breakdown 2006

Category	Total	2006 Percentage	2003	2002	Trend 2003-2006
Union safety rep	456	56.79	61.85	61.61	-5.06
Other union	42	5.23	8.96	11.76	-3.73
Lawyer	7	0.87	0.29	0.31	0.58
Safety or health professional	182	22.67	16.18	13.00	6.48
Manager/personnel professional	32	3.99	2.60	1.55	1.38
Policy adviser	4	0.50	0.00	1.24	0.50
Researcher/academic	24	2.99	2.60	3.41	0.39
None of the above	56	6.97	7.51	7.12	-0.54
	803	100.00	100.00	100.00	

cent) use information in Risks as a basis for action.

Approaching 90 per cent of the 2006 respondents report satisfaction with Risks in its current format of 20-25 items per issue (up 4 per cent from 2003). And a high proportion of the respondents approve of the average word length of 150-200 words per item (89 per cent, down 2 per cent from 2003).

The proportions of 2006 survey respondents wanting the level of content either maintained or increased in each section of Risks are as follows. For the Action items section the proportion is 86 per cent, for the Resource items section 86 per cent, for the Union news sections 84 per cent, for the Other news section 78 per cent and for the International news section it is 53 per cent.

Seventy six per cent of the 2006 survey group want more resources in the form of additional web links to news stories.

Survey responses show very little under- or over-reporting of health and safety issues in Risks. On the question of whether there are any issues covered too much there were 240 responses. Over half of these, 133, reported no issues are covered too much or the balance is right. One in five, 46 respondents, said international issues are covered too much (6 per cent of the total survey group).

Over two thirds of current Risks readers (68 per cent) are registered at www.tuc.org.uk/register and receive Risks automatically by email. As a proportion of total readership this represents a 16 per cent fall on the 2003 survey. The proportion that now receives Risks as an attachment is 19 per cent, up from 7 per cent in 2003.

Website use amongst the respondents has remained roughly the same over the three surveys. Eighty three per cent of 2006 respondents use the HSE webpages, 69 per cent use the TUC safety pages and 60 per cent use Hazards magazine's website.

Hazards magazine is still by far the most widely read safety publication amongst Risks respondents with more than twice as many respondents (61 per cent) reading it than the next most popular publications, Health and Safety at Work and Safety and Health Practitioner (25 per cent each).

About our readers

As with the previous surveys the majority of Risks survey respondents in 2006 are white, male, union members aged between 41 and 55. Sixty nine per cent of respondents have some degree of influence over health and safety purchasing decisions. Almost 3 out of 5 respondents were in the 41-55 age group (59 per cent). Only one in five were aged 40 or under (20 per cent).

The categories for the question of where respondents live/work were changed for the 2006 survey. They now reflect the TUC regions. This gave a much clearer picture of the geographical spread of respondents showing the majority live or work in Southern and Eastern England (31 per cent). Other well represented regions are the Midlands, and North-West England.

The two largest groups of respondents are safety or health professionals and those with a union role. The numbers in each group have increased from 65 in 2003 to 182 in 2006 and from 244 in 2003 to 498 in 2006 respectively.

The work sectors that respondents are drawn from are broadly the same. Local and central government sectors together account for a quarter share of the total respondents (26 per cent). Other well represented sectors in the 2006 survey are education (13 per cent), manufacturing (15 per cent), transport and communications (ten per cent) and other services (13 per cent). The proportion of respondents in the construction sector has grown from one per cent in 2002, to 3 per cent in 2003 and 4 per cent in 2006.

The proportion of respondents identifying themselves as 'disabled' remains around 10 per cent.

SEE TABLE 1**1. Work Category**

Sixty two per cent of respondents have a trade union role, a proportion that has dropped by nine per cent since 2003. However, in absolute terms, the number of union respondents has increased significantly from 244 in 2003 to 498 in 2006. Over half of all respondents, 57 per cent, are union health and safety reps with another five per cent having other union posts. The proportion of safety or health professionals responding has increased from 16 per cent in

2003 to 23 per cent in 2006. The proportion of managers or professionals responding has increased from less than 2 per cent in 2002, to 2 per cent in 2003 and then to 4 per cent in 2006. The remaining 15 per cent was made up from lawyers, policy advisers, researchers/academics, others and those who declined to answer.

2. Broad location

The two prior surveys' respondents reported location by postcode. However this question was framed differently in 2006. Respondents were asked to select which region they lived or worked in. The new method established thirty one per cent live or work in Southern and Eastern England. This is twice the proportion of respondents from the next two highest regions – North West England with 14 per cent and the Midlands with 13 per cent. Scotland accounted for 10 per cent of the respondents with South-West England and Yorkshire and the Humber following closely behind, each with a nine per cent share. North East England only accounted for 5 per cent of the respondents and Wales even less with four per cent. Northern Ireland, the rest of Europe, outside Europe and those that did not say accounted for the remaining respondents, roughly 5 per cent.

3. Age

The majority of respondents, 59 per cent, are aged between 41 and 55 years of age. Twenty per cent are aged between 25 and 40 years. The age categories changed for the 2006 survey and these meant trends could only be drawn broadly by comparing those above or below 40 years of age. The proportion of respondents aged over 40 years old has increased from 70 per cent in 2002, to 75 per cent in 2003 and to 80 per cent in 2006. The share of respondents under 40 years old has declined from 30 per cent in 2002, to 25 per cent in 2003 and finally 20 per cent in 2006.

4. Gender

The ratio of male to female respondents remains unchanged at 3:1 respectively.

5. Work sectors

Local government, the major work sector of the 2003 survey, has seen its share diminish from

2003 (down 4 per cent to 14 per cent in 2006) to be replaced in top spot by manufacturing, (15 per cent). Central Government's share is up 4 per cent from the 2003 survey to 13 per cent. Education remains just below 13 per cent. Other services accounted for roughly the same share of respondents as in 2003 (12 per cent). Transport and communications increased from 7 per cent in 2003 up to 10 per cent in 2006. The Health services sector share was down by a fraction of 1 per cent (still 7 per cent). The proportion of respondents in the Construction sector has grown from 1 per cent in 2002, to 3 per cent in 2003 and finally 4 per cent in 2006. Agriculture and fishing remained very low (half of one percent); Banking, finance and insurance also held low with a 2 per cent share; hospitality's share (Distribution, hotels and restaurants) remains at the 2003 level of 2 per cent; Energy and water's share remained at the 2003 level of 4 per cent and the Voluntary sector share continued to hover at 3 per cent. Less than 1 per cent of respondents failed to answer this question.

6. Union membership

The level of union membership, still very high at 83 per cent, has declined 4 per cent from the 2003 share (87 per cent).

Which union? Unison is still the best represented union with 17 per cent of the share but this is a decline of 9 per cent from 2003 and is slowly being caught by Amicus which has increased its share to 14 per cent, an increase of 6 per cent from 2003. The PCS share increased to 11 per cent (almost double the 2003 figure). GMB and T&G maintained their shares, both around 7.5 per cent. No other union takes over 5 per cent of the share. Almost 19 per cent did not answer the question.

7. Ethnic group

The ethnic grouping categories were increased to paint a more accurate picture of peoples' backgrounds. The only comparisons that can be made with the earlier surveys are very broad. There is roughly the same proportion of White respondents (91 per cent in 2006, no change from 2003, and one per cent lower than in 2002). Almost 8 per cent of the White group identify themselves as non-British White. In the 2006 survey there were slightly more Asian respondents than in 2003 (still only 1 per cent), more Black respondents (10 respondents up from 1 in 2003), 1 per cent identified themselves as Mixed (new category), there was 1 Chinese respondent (new category), 1 per cent from other ethnic groups (down 1.5 per cent from 2003 - possibly due to the increased categories) and 4 per cent did not say.

8. Disability

Almost 9 per cent of the 2006 respondents identified themselves as disabled (1.5 per cent fewer than in 2003). 87 per cent reported no disability and 4 per cent did not say.

9. Purchasing power/influence

Sixty nine per cent of the survey group report some degree of purchasing power in terms of health and safety (4 per cent fewer than 2003 and 1 per cent fewer than in 2002). Of those respondents stating they have some degree of purchasing power, 14 per cent have direct budgetary control (up 3 per cent from 2003 and up 6 per cent from 2002) and 42 per cent said in their role as safety rep they could persuade managers to spend money (down 3 per cent from 2003 and down 11 per cent from 2002).

10. Health and safety publications regularly read

Hazards magazine is still far and away the most popular publication read by over 6 in 10 of the survey (up 3 per cent from 2003). Safety and Health Practitioner (SHP) and Health and Safety at Work (HSaW) have an equal share in 2006, 25 per cent, each with a 2 per cent share increase from 2003. Safety Rep (LRD)'s share remains steady at 23 per cent (no change from 2003). Croner Bulletins are read by a 6.5 per cent lower proportion than in 2003 (17 per cent in 2006). Health and Safety Bulletin/OHR are read by 17 per cent (up fractionally from 2003 figures), Occupational Safety and Health, RoSPA, is read by 14 per cent share of the respondents (down 2.5 per cent from 2003), Safety Management, BSC, is read by a 9 per cent share, down 3 per cent on its 2003 share) and Occupational Health Magazine is read by a 4 per cent share (down 3 per cent).

11. Websites regularly visited

At a time of massive growth on the internet only two websites saw an increased level of use by respondents: The HSE and Hazards magazine sites. As in the earlier 2002 and 2003 surveys the same 3 sites are by far the most popular. HSE's site www.hse.gov.uk is visited regularly by 83 per cent of the survey group (up 4 per cent from 2003), TUC's health and safety pages by 69 per cent (down 6 per cent) and the Hazards website www.hazards.org 60 per cent (up 4 per cent). Of the other sites surveyed the HSE's commercial site www.hsedirect.co.uk is visited regularly 28 per cent (down 7 per cent), HSE's workers' pages by 23 per cent (the same as in both the 2002 and 2003 surveys) and the European Agency's site <http://europe.osha.eu.int/> has also seen a fall in regular visitors (down from 27 per cent in 2003 to 21 per cent in 2006).

How Risks is used

12. How Risks is received

In 2003, 84 per cent of the respondents reported they received Risks automatically by email as subscribers, in the 2006 survey this figure has fallen to 68 (down 16 per cent). Nineteen per cent now receive Risks as an attachment (up 11 per cent from 2003) and 12 per cent read Risks directly from the TUC

website (up 6 per cent from 2002). Two per cent did not answer.

13. How Risks is read

Sixty three per cent of the 2006 survey group read Risks on screen (down 6 per cent from 2003) and 9 per cent print Risks off and read it later (down 2 per cent from 2003). Evidence that Risks has more readers than its number of subscribers is illustrated by the 23 per cent of respondents that print Risks off, read and then distribute it to others (up 8 per cent on 2003). Five per cent did not answer the question.

14. Have you ever done what is suggested in the "Action" items in Risks?

Almost two thirds of the entire survey group of 803 people answered positively (down 1 per cent from the 2003 figure of 65). Thirty three per cent have never taken up an action item, 3 per cent more than in 2003; and 3 per cent did not say.

What is thought of Risks

15. The number of items (normally 20-25 in each issue)

An increased proportion of 87 per cent reported the number of items in each issue of Risks as just right (up 2 per cent on 2003 and up 5 per cent on the first survey in 2002).

16. The length of items (normally 150-200 words)

Ninety per cent of respondents said the length of each item is just right (down 2 per cent on 2003 and up 5 on 2002).

17. Issues covered too much

Roughly 75 per cent of the 2006 survey group chose not to answer this question. Of the 240 respondents that did over half, 133, answer that nothing is covered too much. One issue some respondents say is covered too much is international news (46 respondents). No other topics registered a proportion of more than 1 per cent.

18. Issues not covered enough

Only about one third of the survey group answered this question in 2006. Roughly 6 per cent of this third say the range of topics is about right. The biggest other group within this sub group is the roughly 4 per cent that want more coverage of legal topics such as ACoPs, new legislation, prosecutions and case studies (in the 2003 survey the figure was 8 per cent). A very broad range of other topics were listed but none accounted for more than one per cent.

19. What issues have been missed entirely?

There were only 180 answers to this question - with roughly half of those reporting either nothing had been missed or that they were unable to think of any missing topics. There are no discernable trends in the responses.

20. Should there be more, less or the same number of items under these sections

Union news: Eighty four per cent (down from 90 per cent in 2003) of the respondents want the number of Union news items to be either maintained (56 per cent, down 3 per cent from 2003) or increased (28 per cent down 3 per cent from 2003). Only 6 per cent want the number reduced (up 1 per cent from 2003).

Other news: Seventy eight per cent (down 11 per cent from 2003) of the respondents want the number of Other news items to be either maintained (60 per cent, down 10 per cent) or increased (19 per cent, the same as the 2003 survey). Only 6 per cent wanted a reduction (up 1 per cent from 2003 and down 3 per cent from 2002).

International news: The majority of the survey group remain satisfied with the number of International news items in the 2006 survey. Fifty three per cent (down 2 per cent from 2003) want the number of International news items to be either maintained (44 per cent, down 7 per cent from 2003) or increased (9 per cent, up 5 per cent from 2003). Thirty two per cent want the number of items reduced (down 7 per cent since 2003). Those who did not answer the question number 15 per cent.

Action items: With 65 per cent of the survey group reporting taking action after reading an Action item in Risks (see question 14 above) it should come as no surprise that the vast majority of respondents 86 per cent (down 4 per cent from 90 per cent in 2003) want the current number of Action items to be either maintained (51 per cent, down from 53 per cent in 2003) or increased (35 per cent, down 3 per cent from 38 per cent). Only 2 per cent, the same level as 2003, wanted the number of action items reduced. Twelve per cent did not answer.

Resources: Respondents' appetites for more Resource items are very high. Eighty six per cent want the number of Resources either increased (46 per cent, down 7 per cent from 2003) or maintained (40 per cent, the same as 2003). Only 1 per cent of the respondents want the number of resource items reduced and 13 per cent did not answer the question.

21. Links

Over three quarters, 76 per cent, of the 2006 survey group want additional links below every item. This is up 5 per cent (71 per cent in 2003) and up 11 per cent from 65 per cent in the 2002 survey. Twenty per cent do not want the links extended (down 6 per cent from the 2003 survey) and 4 per cent did not answer the question.

Any enquiries should be addressed to Dave Joyce, National Health, Safety & Environment

Officer, quoting reference No. PU5.

TELECOMS

739

BT Wholesale: Customer Services – Moves to OR

The Union has been notified of further developments on moving resource from BT Wholesale into Openreach in order to meet customer service expectations. BT Wholesale have identified the WES/ BES Job Control, and LLU Provision functions which is in need of suitably skilled resourcing, have identified the Job Control and Order Entry team as the work that members currently do as a best match.

Any residual work will be backfilled into one of the existing sites. There will also be an associated re-alignment of the remaining teams within the BT Wholesale customer service organisation. This will involve the Routing team moving-over to the Wholesale Planning organisation and relocating to the Bristol CTE building.

The Openreach roles that individuals will move to and the job descriptions are attached to this report. The grading for these roles currently are WES/ BES Job Control, currently graded C3 and LLU Provision, currently graded B2. Those graded C3 will move to the Job Control Role, and those graded C2 will move to LLU Provision. The numbers impacted by the move are contained within the attached letter from BT Wholesale.

Assurances have been given that members moving across from BTW will do so on their current grades, terms and conditions, which include attendance patterns. Openreach is undertaking a grading review exercise across the entire organisation of all team member grades and the teams moving across from BTW will be part of this review. The details of how management intend to deal with this are contained in the attachment but in essence this will be picked up by the Openreach grading review.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

740

NTL/Telewest: Accreditation Scheme for Customer Service Technicians

Consultation on the process and structure of the scheme to replace the previous Telewest scheme has commenced. The following is a summary of the various components but it should be noted that this is subject to revision and requires sign off by senior executive management.

At present the scheme is scheduled for a national launch date of February 2007. Its roots are based in the performance management tool that was introduced in Telewest and the NTL Service Competency Framework process.

There will be three levels of accreditation:
Developing: Accomplished: Outstanding.

Subject to personal requests, those members on Accomplished and Outstanding levels will only receive a quarterly one-to-one with the line managers. Those on Developing will receive monthly one-to-ones.

The purpose of the scheme is to incentivise the individual through Accreditation on an individual's salary; work on benchmarking for the roles and associated salary bandings continue.

It is proposed that there will be 5 components on which members will be assessed and they are as follows:

1) Mandatory Section

This section has categories by which field technicians will be measured and these are:
Application of Health & Safety policies
PAT/Gas Testing
Ladder Checks
Test Equipment Calibration
Monthly Tooling/Van Audits

2) Performance

As before in the principal elements and jobs per day and 7 day repeat faults. In addition commendations and complaints.

3) CPE

This will be assessing the holding and returning of CPE which are booked out to the field technician.

4) Investment in Skills and Investment

This component will have four sections. It will address compliance to company processes, Customer First impressions, punctuality and flexibility and training.

5) Areas of Agreement from the Review

This component covers off those elements that are agreed and details what needs to be achieved by the next review.

There are aspects of which skill needs to be addressed to give the Union complete confidence in the scheme. However, the Union does give recognition to the operational management for dropping those elements that gave the Union and its members concern in the old scheme, in particular mobile phone usage and sickness.

It is not clear how the scheme will differentiate between the three levels, but it is known that for the mandatory section, it will be a clear Yes or No marking. A failure will automatically score a 'Developing' for the one-to-one.

The process will be that every six months the Head of Department for the region will hold a Panel Review.

The Panel Review is a process that was introduced in Telewest to support and validate the Accreditation scheme. The panel will sit every six months to review the performance of all Service Field Managers and Customer Service Technicians and ensure SFM/CTs move

levels according to their performance. For example, from Developing to Accomplished and from Accomplished to Outstanding. However, they can also move down a level depending on performance.

The company has agreed to share further information with the Union in advance of any final decisions being taken; this will allow the Union further input. In particular the issue of training for line managers and associated guidance to ensure that the scheme is applied fairly, consistently and uniformly. It is intended to produce guidance which shows what would be an example of what a particular level of performance would look like. Management have anticipated the need to support line managers from the old NTL company. They will have a "buddy" who will be an experienced manager who has experience of applying the Telewest scheme.

Further updates will be issued as appropriate, in particular on the decision to rollout and the associated guidance documentation.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

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BT Wholesale: 21CN Voice Transfer

Following a review of some elements of activity carried out by Network and Vendor Management and in particular to work boundaries in a 21CN world, it was felt that Network and Vendor Management should not be taking direct calls from external customers in the first instance. Within BT Wholesale the model is that Customer Services fulfill this role.

The two attached notices give information at the local site level to this transfer of work between two sites.

Brian Healy
Assistant Secretary

POSTAL

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Use of Electronic Overtime Dockets

Annual Conference Adopted the Following Policy

"Conference agrees that the arrangements now in place following the withdrawal of overtime dockets are open to abuse by local management.

Conference further agrees that a review of these arrangements with Royal Mail must take place and that this review will be informed by gathering comment from branches beforehand. The purpose of the review will be to agree improvements to the current system.

The Postal Executive is instructed accordingly."

In accordance with that policy, branches are now invited to supply any relevant comment which will enable us to put forward a case for a review of the arrangements which are now in operation in the majority of offices. It would assist if such responses can be submitted by

Friday 12th January.

Any enquiries to Bob Gibson's Department, reference 130

Bob Gibson
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).

Friday 5th January 2007: The AGM of the Eastern Region Retired Members. To be held in the ISTC Building, Grays Inn Road at 11am. Anyone wishing any further information should contact **Nobby Clark, Eastern Region Retired Members Secretary** on **07713 155575**.

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

Tuesday 23 January 2007: Speak Up for Public Services Lobby. The TUC are holding a rally and lobby of Parliament on January 23rd at Central Hall, Westminster, London. It's a chance for public service workers to join together and tell MPs that public servants want to serve the public, not shareholders or company owners. For more information visit <http://www.tuc.org.uk/speakup>

Monday 29 January 2007: Union Modernisation Fund Seminar. To be held at Congress House 9.30 - 13.30. Unions 21 in partnership with the TUC and the Union Ideas Network is putting together a one day seminar on the Union Modernisation Fund. Speakers include: Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Frances O'Grady (TUC), Diana Holland (T&G), David Yeandle (EEF), John Lloyd (Community/Unions 21). For more information contact **Matt Ball** on **020 7239 1224** or email info@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

Thursday 28 February 2007: CWU Youth Conference. Will be held at CWU Headquarters. For more information contact **Carmel McCudden** at cmccudden@cwu.org

Thursday 8 March 2007 – Friday 9 March inclusive: Creating Opportunities, Building Futures. For the 15th year, 4Children's Annual Conference, Creating Opportunities, Building Futures once again promises to be a high quality pivotal event. This seminal two-day event considers key issues facing the sector during this period of unprecedented reform and rapid change. For more information contact **City Reach**, 5 Greenwich View Place, London E14 9NN. Tel: **020 7512 2112** Fax: **020 75376012** Email: Info@4Children.org.uk or visit <http://www.4children.org.uk/events/>

Thursday 8 March 2007: TUC International Women's Day Celebration. To be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LS. Each year, the TUC organises an evening reception to mark International Women's Day. The opportunity is used to remember our past achievements and reaffirm our commitment to go much further. The event is for trade unionists (women in particular, although men are welcome) and representatives from partner organisations. The reception is ideal for learning more about the global struggle for women's rights, networking and having fun. For more information contact **Aisha Latif**, Project Assistant, EU & International Relations Department – Tel: **020 7467 1239**; Fax: **020 7467 1343**; or alatif@tuc.org.uk

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

Marcia Murray
CWU
Communication Department
150 The Broadway
Wimbledon
SW19 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.