

No: 150/19

11th March 2019

TO: ALL BRANCH SECRETARIES

Dear Colleague

UNIONLINE – INDEPENDENT REVIEW

The purpose of this LTB is to advise Branches that on the 28th February the NEC agreed the outcome of the Independent Review on Unionline by endorsing the full report, its recommendations and my own set of recommendations which set out the union's priorities going forward.

Branches will be aware the Independent Review of Unionline was in response to legitimate concerns around its financial performance, the future viability of the business and the level of services provided to our members. Some of these concerns were also reflected in General Conference debate and policy.

The report is comprehensive and covers the following:

- The establishment of Unionline, its goals and expectations.
- A review of the initial agreements that set up the business.
- The governance and management structures and how it operates.
- The initial challenges faced by Unionline, the managerial response to these and the consequences of the strategies that have been pursued.
- The commercial relationship with our sister union and joint owner, the GMB.
- The financial performance of Unionline to date.
- The future outlook, sustainability and risks.
- Marketing and Services.

There is no doubt that the decision to undertake an independent review of Unionline has been fully justified and the report, its findings and recommendations represent another major piece of work designed to support the overall CWU Redesign Project.

The NEC recognises there is a demand within the union to understand more about what is happening with Unionline and its future viability. Therefore, we are confident that this report will create a better understanding of the business and enable a more informed debate with our Branches.

However, whilst there is a clear need for transparency on the report, this must also be balanced with the need to protect the commercial interests of the CWU, GMB and PM Law (the day to day managers of the business). We are also aware there will be a wider public interest from those in the legal profession who see Unionline as a direct competitor.

Having carefully considered the aforementioned, we can advise that we will be holding a National Briefing on a date yet to be arranged where Branches will be given a full presentation on the report, alongside appropriate documentation.

In the meantime, we have shared the report with the GMB as part of the ongoing dialogue we have had with our sister union since the report was initially commissioned. These discussions will take precedence and we hope to be in a position to confirm a date and venue for the National Briefing in the near future.

Any enquires on the above LTB should be addressed to the gsoffice@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely



Dave Ward
General Secretary