

No. 504/2019

21 August 2019

Our Ref: P26/19

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Royal Mail Group Trial of the 'Whole Office' Stress Risk Assessments – Using the HSE Work-Stress Survey Tool - Joint Statement/Communication:

Mental health problems are widespread, at times disabling, yet often hidden. Research as part of a 2018 study by the mental health charity the "Mental Health Foundation" found that three quarters of UK adults had felt 'overwhelmed or unable to cope' in the previous year, with one in three having suicidal feelings as a result of stress.

In line with Motion 37(2015), LTBs 166/16 and 595/2016 (copy attached) reported on the conclusion of negotiations between Royal Mail Group and the CWU for the introduction of a new revised Royal Mail Group, Work Stress, Safety, Health and Environment Standard, Guidance and Stress Risk Assessment Process as part of a new RMG 'Stress Toolkit.'

As detailed in previous reports to Regional Health and Safety Forums and ASRs, after pressing for a review and overhaul of Royal Mail Group's Stress Policy and Stress Risk Assessment process for some considerable time, in October 2016, RMG agreed with the CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department to jointly launch the Royal Mail Stress Toolkit, which included an individual Stress Risk Assessment (guided conversation) process and the online Stress Tool (available via the Royal Mail Group Feeling First Class Intranet site).

The HSE Stress Indicator Tool, Risk Assessment Questionnaire or Survey form which was also agreed to be part of the 'RMG Stress Toolkit' has not been utilised and so the Health, Safety & Environment Department has been vigorously pursuing a revised process for Stress Risk Assessing "Whole Workplaces/Offices/Depots/Plants/Groups of workers etc.", utilising the HSE stress survey and analysis tool.

Motion 70(2017) and Motion 34(2019) carried at this year's CWU Conference in fact endorsed our current approach and called for 'a stress risk assessment/survey to be used in every workplace.

Building on the work done to date, Royal Mail has agreed with the CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department to now move to the next stage and to trial the introduction of a Stress Risk Assessment Survey Tool, developed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as part of the HSE Stress Management Standards, which can be used to measure the workplace/workforce stress of groups of employees, teams or whole workplaces, including all

staff in order to get a general picture of stress levels across all the workforce. This will be done using the HSE Stress Indicator Tool Risk Assessment Questionnaire (see copy attached).

HSE's Work Stress Management Standards represent a set of conditions that, if present:

- demonstrate good practice through a step-by-step risk assessment approach
- allow assessment of the current situation using the survey tool and other techniques
- promote active discussion and working in partnership with employees and the trade union representatives, to help decide on practical improvements that can be made
- help simplify risk assessment for work-related stress by:
 - identifying the main risk factors,
 - helping employers identify and focus on the underlying causes and their prevention,
 - help employers to tackle the key causes of stress.

Through the Royal Mail Group five-year strategy 'Because Healthy Minds Matter' launched in 2017, Royal Mail Group (RMG) have committed to implement effective support strategies and tools that can make a positive difference to the workforce who are directly or indirectly affected by mental ill-health. Royal Mail Group has also committed to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees, recognising that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. (See attached copy of Joint Statement).

The Royal Mail Group (RMG) 5-Year Mental Health Strategy to date has included:-

- The signing of the Time to Change Pledge - jointly signed by RMG and CWU;
- Development of 5 mental health support videos with the Mental Health Foundation;
- Introduction of the Mental Health First Aid Awareness one day course for all Managers, Physical First Aiders and CWU Health & Safety Reps;
- Launch of the Stress Toolkit;
- Launch of the five-year strategy and underpinning plan 'Because Healthy Minds Matter';
- Creation of the 'Because Healthy Minds Matter' mental health e-learning;
- Mental health support 'z-cards' with CWU sent into all units;
- Launched a Mental Health Ambassador Pilot with CWU of 160 Mental Health Ambassadors;
- Agreed with CWU an approach to upskilling 5,500 physical first aiders to include mental health first aid;
- Increased promotion of RMG's "Feeling First Class" and "Employee Assistance" programmes;
- Continued activity through mental health charity partnerships including the 'Everyday People' video.

During July a 'Joint Statement and Communication' signed by Royal Mail Group, CWU and Unite/CMA plus a 'Power-Point Slide Pack' (copies attached), were sent to all managers and CWU Area Health and Safety Representatives in the agreed trial offices. Dan Clarke, Royal Mail Group Health & Wellbeing Development and Systems Manager invited those involved to participate in a series of conference calls which outlined the trial scope, approach and process as well as a question and answer session.

ASRs were requested to brief all IR Rep colleagues in trial offices, both Area Reps and Unit/Shift Reps about the trial details and invite them to participate in the conference calls if they so wished. Additionally, all Reps working together are requested to ensure we get maximum participation and survey form returns from the membership in order to get the most meaningful assessment and picture of stress levels and identification of the stressors and causes of stress.

The following offices nominated by CWU (6 DOs/MPUs, 3 Mail Centres and 2 PWW LDs) and nominated by Unite/CMA (1 Mail Centre and 2 Delivery Sectors) are participating in the three

month trial of the Stress Risk Assessment Survey Tool concluding in September/October following which a joint national review will take place prior to national roll-out. The trial offices are:-

Nominated by CWU:

- Taunton MPU (TA)
- Crewe DO (CW)
- Newcastle Under Lyme DO (ST)
- Cheadle DO (ST)
- Lincoln DO (LN)
- Blair Gowrie DO (PH)
- Cardiff Mail Centre (CF)
- Northern Ireland Mail Centre (BT)
- Exeter Mail Centre (EX)
- Exeter LD (Parcelforce Worldwide) (EX)
- Medway LD (Parcelforce Worldwide) (ME)

Nominated by Unite/CMA

- Swindon Mail Centre Nights (Management team)
- Manchester Delivery Sector (Management team)
- ML/KA Glasgow Delivery Sector (Management team)

Attachments:

- Joint Statement/Communication
- HSE Stress Indicator Tool Risk Assessment Questionnaire
- Stress Risk Assessment Power-Point Slide Pack
- LTB 595/16 New Royal Mail Group Stress Risk Assessment Process and Guidance – Royal Mail Stress Toolkit:

A further report following the trial conclusion will be made in due course.

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer