

JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN ROYAL MAIL AREA DISTRIBUTION AND THE COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION ON THE DEPLOYMENT OF POSTAL DIGITAL ASSISTANTS (PDA'S)

Background

Royal Mail and the Communication Workers Union (CWU) are working together in developing key business policies, mutual interest solutions and a new culture, which are at the core of the commitments in the Guiding Principles of Employment Security and Mutual Interest Approach to Future Challenges and Opportunities Agreement.

The aim is to establish a structure that strengthens the partnership approach and involves the CWU in a wide set of business issues. One element of this approach is designed to support the commitment to integrate the interests of all parties in the further development and deployment of new technology.

Building on this way of working together, this Joint Statement has been agreed to support the deployment of PDA's, along with the associated software and web applications, into the Area Distribution function.

Aims

The activity will seek to build on the successes of the deployment of PDA's in other functions and is anticipated to provide benefits in relation to Revenue Protection, quality of service, customer service and assist Royal Mail in remaining competitive.

It is recognised that the enhanced capability of the hand-held device represents a significant financial investment on the part of the business to secure its future and that of its employees. All employees will therefore have a responsibility to take good care of the equipment whilst it is in their possession.

It is agreed that the PDA's are not being deployed for, or will they be used as, a disciplinary tool. As such it will not enhance the ability of managers, on the evidence available, to take disciplinary action. Equally, the PDA outputs will not form part of the daily de-brief sessions with drivers or be used for day to day performance management.

Process

In line with Royal Mail's current service level agreements with customers and to support that payment is received for all items posted, all PPI mail presented must have the correct paperwork. This includes relief and ad-hoc collections. Drivers are currently required to check that every PPI posting has the required documentation and that the amount and type of items posted corresponds with the paperwork presented.

All collection customers must provide the appropriate paperwork when PPI mail is being presented. For relief collections this can be a Customer Collection Receipt (CCR) in lieu of the final system generated paperwork. Where there is no paperwork made available with the collection then the mail must not be collected and a "*we called but were unable to collect your mail*" (P6587) card should be left with the customer and the manager notified upon return to office. The Red X process should be instigated where necessary. This will allow Revenue Protection to investigate and contact the customer where appropriate.

In addition to the above Royal Mail operates in an extremely competitive market place where quality of service is the main differentiator. Customers are increasingly demanding better and quicker information about their consignments and looking for innovative approaches which take advantage of new technologies. The consistent use of the PDA's across Royal Mail will therefore provide enhanced customer service across the pipeline, from point of posting/collection to point of delivery.

Joint Involvement

A deployment plan/timetable will be jointly agreed to ensure that the requisite numbers of PDA's are available for deployment to take place at each unit and that the required level of training has been provided.

Local managers and representative(s) and Area Distribution Advanced Driver Coaches will be fully involved in all aspects of the deployment activity and appropriate Union release time will be provided for the CWU representatives to ensure meaningful involvement.

Training

It is recognised that Professional Drivers will be unfamiliar with the PDA devices and their use. Therefore full training on the use of the PDA and the agreed processes will be supplied to all drivers, including reserves, prior to full deployment. In addition training will be made available to all CWU Representatives.

Joint training materials and workplace coach briefs will be produced for use in the Area Distribution function. Training for all Professional Drivers on the PDA will be undertaken by Area Distribution Advanced Driver Coaches. This will include full demonstrations on the new device and ongoing support for users. The trainers will have sufficient time to carry out the training for affected staff before deployment of the system in their unit takes place.

Both parties accept that technical and human errors may occur during National deployment of the PDAs. In the spirit that the approach to this activity should be corrective and not punitive and a positive experience for the individual, it is agreed that local managers and ADC's will provide additional support, coaching and encouragement to individuals as required.

The training activity will be monitored by the joint Area Distribution Working Group and supported by local, Area and Divisional expertise where required.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety is of paramount importance to Royal Mail and the CWU and both parties agree that all mobile communication and satellite navigation procedures will comply with full Health & Safety legislation. In the event of any change to current legislation there will be an urgent review of all relevant practices to ensure compliance.

Both parties recognise that unsafe driving practices and driver distraction must be avoided at all times, to this end it is agreed that text messages should only be considered by the driver if the vehicle is stationary and the engine is turned off.

Mobile phones/devices can be an essential means of communication away from the base for drivers and can be an important asset in the event of an emergency or breakdown.

However, using a mobile communication whilst driving is illegal as it can distract attention and driving today requires concentration at all times. Therefore it is agreed that it is never acceptable to make or receive calls and/or electronic messages whilst the vehicle is moving. If an individual needs to make a call or send an electronic message they should stop at a safe place and use the mobile device when the vehicle is stationary and the engine is switched off.

Note: The hard shoulder of a motorway is not a safe place, except in an emergency situation.

Therefore all relevant H&S documentation and SOP's will be reviewed and updated as necessary during the trial and/or deployment and be classified as fit for purpose once they have been jointly evaluated by the appropriate Royal Mail and CWU experts.

Review

It is agreed that during and after the deployment of the PDA's monitoring will take place through the Area Distribution Working Group, to understand whether there are any changes to the technical process, software applications and training materials to assist with and support the full use of PDA's in the Area Distribution function and ensure that deployment is undertaken as seamlessly as possible.

Any questions of interpretation, implementation or application of this agreement shall be referred to the respective Headquarters for resolution as a matter of urgency.



Nicholas Dunn
National Distribution Director
Royal Mail



Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary
CWU

Date: 20th August 2019