

No. 712/19

18th December 2019

Dear Colleagues,

Re-entering Negotiations with Royal Mail Group

Further to LTB 674/19, I can report that there have been developments in regards to re-entering negotiations with the company.

At the National Briefing held in Liverpool yesterday I advised colleagues that following an approach by the business, private discussions and an exchange of correspondence has taken place this week regarding how we can re-enter into serious negotiations to resolve this dispute.

Both parties have publicly expressed a desire to enter into talks but colleagues will be aware that in our open letter to Andy Good (Transformation Director) dated 15th November, we sought a number of assurances designed to create a positive environment for talks to take place and to rebuild confidence and trust that these talks will be a genuine effort to find a joint approach to the future.

The assurances we sought were as follows:

1. Both parties agree that we have completed the Dispute Resolution Process and met the terms of the legal contract, and that we will now move into direct negotiations on all of the issues raised in dispute by the CWU i.e. the CWU's Specific Demands as detailed in the mediation packs and ballot papers.
2. Imminent unilateral action in regard to the TUPE of our Parcellforce members and the creation of Parcellforce as a separate limited company is removed subject to the outcome of our negotiations.
3. The negotiating structure for these negotiations should consist of one main negotiating group, supplemented by sub-groups with relevant additional expertise reporting back to the main group for sign-off.
4. From the outset of negotiations, one of the sub-groups should deal with all aspects in dispute in Parcellforce and this group should include Representatives of Parcellforce management and additional CWU expertise.

5. The mass un-agreed agency workforce that have been recruited, by RMG's admission to clear any backlog work created by strike action, should be stood down as unnecessary and not brought into our operations by executive action.
6. Urgent Christmas arrangements to be agreed at both national and local level which should also ensure agreed resourcing arrangements and include the opportunity for part-time employees to extend their hours up to full-time, as well as earning packages for all employees, prior to agreed levels of extra agency resource being introduced.
7. An urgent agreement to be reached on the reward for election material which reflects this exceptional moment in time where by a general election has clashed with Christmas pressure.

The private exchanges that have taken place have been positive and RMG has agreed that all of our assurances will be met. However, for absolute clarity there is a need to test the interpretation of wording on some points raised in the aforementioned correspondence and we have therefore agreed to meet early in the new-year to address the outstanding points. If that meeting is positive we will then re-enter into structured negotiations to resolve our dispute.

Against that backdrop at a meeting on Monday 16th December 2019, the Executive agreed the following:

That the Executive agree in-principle, on the basis that the proposed positioning meeting in early January 2020 clarifies the outstanding points in correspondence exchanged between CWU and RMG, we will agree a period of calm for negotiations to succeed. That period of calm shall be until the end of February 2020, unless RMG pull out of the talks or take any executive action during that time. Equally during that period the CWU will not re-ballot in Royal Mail on the current in-principle dispute or announce any industrial action on the two current live ballots in Parcelforce.

To be absolutely clear we are only in this position because of the solidarity of our members and we will enter into these talks from a position of strength, in a positive and pragmatic manner, but should these talks not be successful we will not hesitate to re-ballot our members and continue our dispute.

Further updates will be provided in due course.

Any enquiries in relation to the content of this LTB should be addressed to the DGS(P) Department.

Yours sincerely,



Terry Pullinger
Deputy General Secretary (Postal)