

No: 158/2020

26th March 2020

For the Immediate Attention of All:

Postal Branches
PFW Regional Organisers

Dear Colleagues

Parcelforce Worldwide – Covid-19 Response

The Coronavirus crisis presents unprecedented challenges to our Representatives and members as events unfold. We remain in dispute with the company but recognise that dealing with the Coronavirus crisis, protecting our members' health and safety and addressing the sustainability of jobs and the business, must be the priority. High level discussions have been taking place at Group level and as reported by the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary Postal, while discussions continue commitments have been received.

In respect of Parcelforce specifically these include:

- The company has confirmed their plan to TUPE Parcelforce members into a separate company has now been put on hold.
- The company has confirmed that they are willing to agree a process for talks to resolve all issues in dispute.

On the basis of the above commitments Branches and Representatives are advised that the department has been engaging with Parcelforce on a continuous basis to address the challenges created by the Coronavirus crisis and ensure that operational changes deliver the maximum protections for our members.

In all discussions the safety of our members in every function continues to be the number one priority for the CWU. Our Parcelforce members, like their colleagues across Royal Mail, have been designated as Key Workers during the crisis and continue to provide an essential service to the UK public. Of course in an environment where advice from Government varies from day to day we fully understand that our members have concerns over the evolving situation. The business are attempting to introduce guidance and procedures to amend operational practices to ensure employee safety to address employee concerns and the department continue to work with the business to that end.

However, as with Royal Mail the issue of availability of PPE, sanitizers etc. continues to be a major issue for PFW members and representatives. The business has informed the department that they

are anticipating delivery of gloves, anti-bac wipes and hand sanitizers next week. We understand that there are national shortages of some products but it is imperative that our members are provided with the necessary equipment to perform their duties. No CWU member should place themselves at risk due to a lack of equipment.

To enforce social distancing, the provision of a number of products and services have already been modified or suspended by the business to reduce potential risk to employees and recognise the impact that the pandemic is having on operational capability. The business has advised that this approach will remain under constant review.

Attached for your information are copies of documentation that has been created by the business to provide guidance in relation to social distancing and service changes/suspensions. For absolute clarity the attached documents have been produced by the business. That said where issues have been identified by the department they have been raised with the business in order to clarify, revise or improve the documentation where necessary:

- Annex A: Covid-19 Social Distancing Deliveries
- Annex B: Covid-19 Social Distancing Hub
- Annex C: Covid- 19 Social Distancing International Hub
- Annex D: Covid-19 Social Distancing CX
- Annex E: Interim Process for Deliveries & Collections
- Annex F: Covid-19 Optimised Manifest
- Annex G: PFW Web Page Content

Branches and representatives are advised that the department is aware that concern exists among some members and customers in relation to the continued use of Callers Offices and this issue has been raised with the business. The business have advised that the access has been maintained predominantly to assist key workers and those who have urgent medical supplies that need to be collected. They have assured the department that they are making attempts to discourage other members of the public from using the facility (as communicated in Annex G Web Page Content). They have also confirmed that strict social distancing procedures will remain in place for those visiting Callers Offices. The business will be continually monitoring the situation and sharing information with the department. The use of the facility will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

You are also asked to note that the REX optimised manifest approach was discussed with the department and we have supported the change in process as a contingency arrangement only. The temporary nature of this approach has been agreed by the business, without prejudice to ongoing discussions on the use of REX technology. The joint view is that the temporary move to the optimised manifest approach, during what are clearly exceptional circumstances, will support employee safety by reducing congregation points in the workplace and improve adherence to social distancing requirements. The department, fully understand that this change may be seen as significant, however in our view it supports the premise that during the crisis social distancing measures take precedence and remain the primary objective. We would however highlight that drivers should be reporting any route/delivery issues that are identified to the de-briefer at the end of the day, in order that any adjustments can be accommodated on the system to improve the use of the manifest.

Also in order to assist with adherence to social distancing a staggered start approach has been proposed at a number of depots to reduce the numbers of individuals attempting to gain access to and be in the workplace at the same time. While in principle the concept of this approach has been agreed with the business as appropriate for consideration as a temporary measure during this time of crisis, deployment would be subject to local agreement and discussions should determine where this is required.

For the avoidance of doubt however the department's position is that where a temporary staggered start arrangement is agreed arrangements should fully take account of individual circumstances and not adversely affect individuals on a personal or earnings basis.

It has been agreed that an engagement structure will be introduced for CWU Regional Organisers and Regional Operations Manager to ensure that issues in the field can be monitored and addressed in the most effective manner or referred to National level where necessary.

We would like to place on record our thanks to our Parcellforce Representatives and members for their professionalism and dedication in delivering a service to the public during this most uncertain of times. The department will continue to engage with the business as the nature of the crisis evolves and further communications will be issued as required.

Any enquiries in relation to this LTB should be addressed to Davie Robertson, Assistant Secretary, email: dwyatt@cwu.org quoting reference 014.14

Yours sincerely

Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary