

No. 194/2020

9<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Colleagues

## **POST OFFICE: EASTER SATURDAY - CROWN OFFICES**

Branches are advised we wrote to the Post Office on 3<sup>rd</sup> April to propose that the Crown Office Network should be closed on Easter Saturday. The letter is attached for your information.

Our position was that this small gesture of goodwill from the Post Office would demonstrate to our members that Senior Directors fully appreciate the hard work our members are undertaking in these extremely hazardous times. I put it to the Post Office that our members needed a long bank holiday weekend off to recharge the batteries and spend some well-deserved quality time with their families, away from the risk on the front line.

The policy to pursue closure on Easter Saturday was arrived at following consultation with our Representatives who felt strongly this was a fair and reasonable request in light of this national crisis and would simply be the right thing for the Post Office to do.

The non service day for Crowns on Easter Saturday in most cases would mean a loss of just 3.5 hours of customer serving time. Disappointingly, I received a response from the Post Office late yesterday (also attached) stating:

*"...we cannot agree to closing branches on Easter Saturday".*

The reason given as - extra traffic would be driven into the Crowns on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April, making social distancing more difficult.

We shared the Post Office's position on social media last night and our members' reaction has been one of disappointment and the general feeling was how out of touch Post Office management are. Indeed, the perception of our members is

that the Post Office Directors have sent a clear message to its front line key workers providing a vital service that **profit comes before people.**

## **Ireland - An Post to give Workers Easter Saturday Off**

Clearly the British Post Office is not as progressive as An Post in Ireland who have given workers Easter Saturday off. Evidently Debbie Byrne, Managing Director of An Post Retail, has a greater understanding of the extreme pressures Post Office workers are under as she stated the following which was reported in the Irish Post newspaper:

*"Postmasters and Post Office staff have put in a massive effort in recent weeks to look after customers and ensure continuity of postal, financial and welfare payment services while having the necessary physical distancing measures in place.*

*"I want to thank them most wholeheartedly for all their efforts in keeping the network of 950 post offices open, providing vital services and a welcoming smile to communities across the country.*

***"They are due a well-earned break over the Easter bank holiday so we can resume services on the front-line next Tuesday."***

The full article from the Irish Post can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.irishpost.com/news/post-offices-across-ireland-will-closed-saturday-staff-can-enjoy-well-earned-break-183185>

As a consequence of the above development, I have written to Nick Read, CEO (letter attached) to urge him to reconsider the Post Office's decision to reject our proposal. I await his response.

## **Crown Office Staffing Agreement (COSA) – Bank Holiday Credits**

The usual arrangements for bank holiday credits apply in line with COSA (Paragraph 5.3 - attached). The key points within the relevant section are as follows:

*"All colleagues (full and part time) due to work on a bank holiday will take the day off and regardless of the number of hours they were scheduled to work, they will not be required to make up any shortfall nor claim any balance of hours...."*

*"Full and Part Time colleagues with only one rest day whose scheduled day off coincides with a bank holiday have the choice of two options:-*

*A day in lieu that can either be added to the annual leave card or moved to another convenient time (such as the following week) if operationally possible.*

*Or*

*Overtime can be claimed at normal rate – this will be 1/5th of the weekly contractual hours.”*

Post Office management have confirmed that the above arrangement will apply without exception.

Branches and Representatives are urged to bring this LTB to the attention of our members.

Further developments will be reported.

Yours sincerely

**Andy Furey**  
**Assistant Secretary**