

No. 495/20

9th October 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Annual Leave Carry Over in Royal Mail Group and the Purchase of Annual Leave (POAL)

Further to LTB 082/20 issued jointly by Davie Robertson and Mark Baulch's Departments on 17th February 2020, Branches will be aware of the long-running review that has been taking place regarding the carry forward of annual leave and the commitments contained in the Four Pillars Agreement.

The review has been subject to the ongoing joint involvement of Davie Robertson and Mark Baulch's Departments and this will continue to be the case. However, due to it being a pay related matter, the DGS(P) Department was made aware that the business intended to send letters to around 4,300 employees advising them that their POAL for 2021/22 would not roll forward in PSP in September. Management claimed that whilst over 30,000 people purchase additional annual leave, these 4,300 people carried forward more than 1.5 weeks of unused holiday into 2020/21 which meant employees were unnecessarily paying to perpetuate their annual leave entitlement.

The business in effect sought to automatically stop purchasing arrangements for anyone carrying over in excess of 5 days. In 2019 the company had previously attempted to do similar by proposing to install an automatic cessation for POAL through the Joint Working Group process. However, during those talks it was highlighted that this would involve unnecessary discussions with our members including HR Services, expose the limitations of PSP and create extra work for managers in order to administer the policy. As a result, Royal Mail Group did not progress with their proposal.

In terms of the proposals for this year, urgent meetings were sought with the business which took place on 24th and 29th September 2020. Following these discussions, the business have again stepped back from issuing the aforementioned letters although in line with the previously agreed approach, managers are being encouraged to initiate a conversation with individuals as per the agreed scripts. This is confirmed in the attached e-mail (**Attachment 1**) with the relevant text (reproduced below) importantly confirming that this would have to be agreed with the individual:

“In addition I would like to confirm that our original position of seeking to stop current annual leave purchase for employees with high annual leave balances this holiday year has now been removed and will not be pursued at this time. We do however want to encourage managers to ensure that dialogue and discussion takes place relating to purchase to remind people of that fact and that they continue to pay for this where high leave balances do exist. As per the scripts it might be appropriate in agreement with the individual to cancel such purchase until leave balances are reduced and this would lead to employees benefiting from higher basic pay while not purchasing that additional leave”.

The letter itself and associated e-mail is almost identical (**Attachments 2 & 3**) to those issued earlier this year but have been amended in terms of the dates. In short, the employee’s right to continue to purchase additional annual leave has been protected and the aim is to also agree mutual interest solutions for the taking of annual leave. This is important when viewed against the stance the company took on annual leave in the summer.

At present this agreed approach only applies to Royal Mail but departmental discussions are also continuing in relation to both Parcelforce Worldwide and RMPFS. Further developments in light of these two businesses will be relayed by the relevant departments at CWU Headquarters.

Annual Leave Carry Over - General

With regards to the next steps, a further exercise as undertaken in February 2020 shall now take place that prompts a conversation for those carrying forward more than 7.5 days or the contractual equivalent into next year.

This is being dealt with departmentally and involves members who have outstanding leave due to local arrangements when leave was cancelled or rescheduled. The process as outlined in the agreed letters as well as the script email to managers (**Attachments 4 & 5**) details how the discussion and review will take place.

These agreed communications will be sent to employees who are anticipated to have in excess of 7.5 days carry over leave (and those purchasing annual leave). The attached emails as agreed will also be sent to the employee’s PSP manager(s) for action.

The business has also agreed to a re-launch of the Annual Leave Joint Working Group. Steve Halliwell and Mick Kavanagh (Postal Executive Members) will continue their work in this respect and be aided by Katrina Quirke from a Parcelforce Worldwide perspective. This Forum will continue to monitor annual leave allocation and carry over with the aim of finalising improvements and recommendations to the annual leave process. The Group will also oversee annual leave in general and report back to the relevant Departments as and when further meetings are held and developments occur. This will also provide the opportunity to pursue conference policies in this area.

In closing, I would be grateful if Branches could give this LTB as wide a circulation as possible.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Pullinger', with a stylized flourish below it.

Terry Pullinger
Deputy General Secretary (Postal)