

No. 017/21

18<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Colleagues,

## Royal Mail Group People App - Update

Further to LTB 532/20 circulated on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020, it is necessary to make Branches aware of some developments that have occurred in relation to the pilot site activity for the Royal Mail Group voluntary 'People App'.

Pilot activity was initially scheduled to commence between the middle and end of November 2020, however on 19<sup>th</sup> November the Business informed the DGS(P) Department that there would be a slight delay in getting the App into the Google and Apple Store by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020. They therefore made the decision to push the start of the pilot activity back until after Christmas, with a planned launch date of 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021. They went on to state that:

*"Even though the app won't be available on the app stores, it will be ready to use via a URL link which you can use on a browser. We are going to ask our small beta group to start to use this on 30<sup>th</sup> November. After Christmas we will then be able to expand to the pilot sites."*

The Postal Executive were notified of this development, as were the lead Field Officials who had participated in an earlier conference call.

However, on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 an e-mail was received from management stating that:

*"As of yesterday, we've been able to publish the app in the app stores and let our small group of users know about it. It appears that word of mouth has spread further afield than our original small group."*

Following feedback received from the Field, it became apparent that access to the People App was widespread and that the App had been shared extensively on social media by our members and indeed a number of CWU Representatives.

On behalf of the DGS(P) Department, Postal Executive member Katrina Quirke wrote to the Business on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to raise concerns about the widespread access and to request that the App was either removed from the App stores or that the access was limited to those in the pilot sites. A response was received later that evening from management stating that they were unwilling to do this.

On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021, Postal Executive members Katrina Quirke and David Wilshire attended a subsequent conference call with management in order to allow for further discussions. A set of slides were presented by management and these are attached for the information of Branches (see Attachment 1). These were also used in a presentation by the Business to the Lead Field Officials earlier today.

Branches will note that circa 30,000 people have already downloaded this voluntary App and at least one person has completed the download in 1576 units (although numbers are significantly higher in some workplaces).

Clearly the number of downloads now far exceeds the original target of 5,000 users from the original pilot locations. As a result, the Business now sees no value in limiting the App to just these original pilot workplaces and will be writing to these sites to inform them of this decision.

It may well be perceived that the Business acted disingenuously in this manner prior to Christmas, especially at a time when both parties were meant to be rebuilding trust. However, whilst the Postal Executive have taken a somewhat neutral position in relation to the People App, it is recognised that it would be unwise to discontinue our involvement and discussions regarding its ongoing development.

As a result, the approach of using Postal Executive member Katrina Quirke as the Lead will continue, thus ensuring that the Postal Department has an avenue to raise issues of concern, guarantee that there is no impact upon our collective agreements, protect the rights of individuals, be in a position to assess feedback from surveys and have ongoing input. The Business have indeed confirmed that:

- *Regular catch ups and updates would work best, allowing for feedback to be shared and enabling Katrina to highlight any concerns regarding existing National and Local agreements, if necessary (further arrangements will be discussed with Katrina);*
- *They do not plan to implement any large scale changes to the App based on feedback received at this stage, but will continue to discuss the results and ideas they receive from the survey;*
- *The attached slides can be shared;*
- *The App will also operate in different languages, depending upon the language that the device is set up to use.*

Further meetings are being arranged with the Business and future updates will be provided as and when new developments occur. 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)**