

Our Ref: AF/LS/100

Date: 13th September 2017

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 @CWUnews

From the office of **Andy Furey** Assistant Secretary

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Dear Paula

CESSATION OF CWU REPRESENTATIVE STRUCTURE – GE RED LINE & THREAT OF PUNISHMENT

Yesterday we met with John Whitefoot under the auspices of the NJNC to discuss replacement arrangements following the cessation of the CEIRF. Disappointingly, the previous afternoon, John sent an email which attempted to narrow the scope of the discussions (by no stretch of the imagination can they be described as negotiations) by incredibly excluding two fundamental areas that we are currently in disagreement over. Specifically, these relate to the number of Representatives going forward (and the associated pre-scheduled release time) and also the composition of the NJNC which as it stands has effectively air-brushed out my role and that of our two Postal Executive members employed by the Post Office who are elected until May 2019.

My negotiating team was bemused to learn from John that he only wanted to discuss peripheral matters as contained in the CEF proposal (I use the word "proposal" lightly) that in the overall scheme of things, whilst in time may be necessary, pale into insignificance in comparison to the key principles outlined above which we are currently at loggerheads over. If I may paint a picture, John was seeking to put tiles on a roof when the foundations and all 4 walls have yet to be constructed. This led to a surreal meeting which in no way can be described as negotiations. In fact, once again "Negotiating" in the title of NJNC is a complete misnomer.

We were, however, able to establish that John Whitefoot, by his own admission, was not empowered to negotiate on the number of full time Representatives and associated release time. John stated the GE had established a "red line" with the policy that there will only be 3 full time Representatives paid for by the Post Office versus the current 19 roles (with 17 people in post) and that this position was non-negotiable. The GE stance as explained by John is illogical as it is simply arbitrary and evidently not based on any scientific formula or informed calculation based on actual workload. The best that John has been able to advance to justify this position is that this mirrors the Unite structure, yet their membership numbers are considerably less than the CWU.

As a consequence of the GE "red line" I wish to formally advise you and confirm what I stated during yesterday's meeting: there is absolutely no prospect whatsoever of this Union reaching a replacement agreement for the CEIRF with just 3 full-time Representatives. This significant reduction in our Representative structure would in effect make the job of providing decent representation to our members impossible which I strongly suspect is the real motive of the GE. Our members, your employees have a right to receive quality representation from professional CWU Representatives who have

expertise and knowledge and are in a position to provide the commitment required at the time of need. Therefore, for the Union to accede to this "red line" position would effectively render a complete disservice to our members.

The outrageous threat-centred response to our position outlined above is typical in regard to the way Industrial Relations is being conducted by the Post Office. John reaffirmed what he had stated in earlier correspondence of 24th August i.e. that in the absence of an agreement by 9th November, the Post Office would remove all full-time release (including the 3 full time IR posts) and all facilities would lapse as the Post Office would rely on the statutory position until a new agreement is in place. This is essentially a gun to our heads (which we pointed out to John and he didn't deny it). Therefore this approach can only be interpreted as a punishment for not rolling over and agreeing the GE's "red line". In essence, the shorthand message being conveyed is ***"The IR structure has to be the Post Office's way and only the Post Office's way"***.

Patently this is an attempt to place undue and unfair duress on the Union and our negotiating team by the pursuit of a divide and conquer tactic directly aimed at the 4 Territorial Representatives as all of them are directly impacted by this threat and in the circumstances it is not being melodramatic to state this amounts to emotional blackmail. When advising Terry Pullinger, DGS(P) of the prevailing position late last night, I described it as follows: ***"Andy Furey had better agree to the 3 full-time Representative posts (the GE "red line") or else we will take these away from you as well"***. This type of behaviour which is both intimidating and provocative has no place today in our modern society and is outwith the moral compass and values of a civilised Great British Post Office. I must confess I am deeply troubled by the entire attitude being displayed towards Industrial Relations, our members and this Union and I would be extremely disappointed if it transpired that you condoned this behaviour.

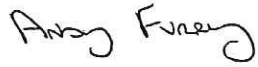
I need to be abundantly clear, from our perspective, no agreement is better than a bad agreement and irrefutably just 3 full-time Representatives would be an atrocious agreement as the cessation of an entire tier of Sector Reps would lead to us being unable to provide our members with the necessary representation. Consequently if the GE is determined to retain its "red line" policy, even though I have been consistent in regularly stating we are not seeking to retain the status quo in respect of numbers of Sector Reps and release time (repeated at yesterday's meeting), then there is no prospect of an agreement being reached with this Union. As regrettable as this is, this Union will not be blackmailed. Whilst acknowledging this is a strong word, the clear definition (from Wikipedia) is as follows: *"An act....involving unjustified threats to make a gain....or cause loss to another unless a demand is met"*. This is exactly how we feel the Union is being treated.

As John Whitefoot is not empowered to negotiate in regard to the GE "red line" I am now formally requesting a meeting at GE level with a Director who is empowered to negotiate. Additionally, I am seeking confirmation from you, as the Group Chief Executive, that the punishment described above (removing all pre-scheduled release time up to and including the 3 Representative posts proposed in the CEF) will not under any circumstances be instigated by the Post Office in the absence of an agreement being established by 9th November. This request would restore a degree of confidence into future negotiations on this matter and as such would be seen by our Representatives as you acting in a fair, reasonable and diplomatic way.

In conclusion, due to this being an extremely contentious matter, making progress is already difficult enough. However this situation has now been exacerbated by your IR team who have adopted a threat-centred approach to these negotiations. Clearly this demonstrates more than ever the imperative to involve an independent third party person to assist both parties in negotiating a way forward. Accordingly I invite you to embrace this proposal.

This letter and the sentiments herein are fully supported by all CWU members of the NJNC. I look forward to a positive response from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Furey". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Andy Furey
Assistant Secretary

c.c. Alisdair Cameron - Chief Finance & Operations Director
Martin Kirke - Group HR Director
John Whitefoot - Employee Relations & Policy Director