

No. 723/2018

21st December 2018

Dear Colleagues

POST OFFICE: FRANCHISING OF 74 CROWN OFFICES TO WHSMITH - TUPE CONSULTATION MEETING

Further to LTB 652/18 dated 16th November. I wish to provide Branches with an update specifically regarding TUPE. Yesterday we held the first joint meeting with the Post Office and WHSmith in regard to TUPE consultation. This activity took place despite WHSmith initially refusing to engage with the Union. Due to the serious issues under consideration, our negotiating team was supported by Ivan Walker, our legal expert. This was necessary as both Post Office and WHSmith also had their in-house solicitors in the room.

The TUPE consultation meeting discussed the proposed WHSmith "measures" letter (attached to this LTB) and specifically our members' Terms & Conditions of employment including pensions that we believe should transfer across with any member who decides to take the TUPE option. The following Joint Statement was agreed with Post Office, WHSmith and Unite following the meeting:

"We are pleased to report that a meeting was held on Thursday 20th December between Post Office, WHSmith, CWU and Unite. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the TUPE arrangements in regard to Terms & Conditions for employees transferring to WHSmith as a result of the franchising plans. The meeting was both constructive and cordial, with all parties now having a clearer understanding of the issues under consideration. There are a number of key areas that require further examination from the various parties, and subsequent discussion.

Further developments will be reported following our next meeting scheduled for Tuesday 15th January 2019."

I appreciate the above is light on detail. Unfortunately the nature of discussions surrounding TUPE is exceptionally complex. Consequently there are a number of key areas which have been discussed in detail that require further analysis and research from various participants in the talks. At least we are now in a serious conversation with WHSmith and we are, as a consequence of the first meeting, hopeful that good progress can continue to be made. Our clear aspiration is to bring these matters to a successful conclusion at the earliest opportunity in order that members can make informed decisions about their future.

Further developments will be reported.

Yours sincerely

Andy Furey
Assistant Secretary