

No.595/19

Ref: NM/AE/AK

Date: 16th October 2019

TO ALL BRANCHES WITH MEMBERS IN BT

Dear Colleague

BT Enterprise – Proposed Changes – Headcount Reduction

The announcement this afternoon from BT Enterprise concerning their 'resourcing challenge' and stating a requirement to consolidate work and reduce workplaces, glosses over and underplays their real intentions. The stark reality is that they are seeking a substantial headcount reduction which could see almost 400 team members gone over the next few months. BT has also announced up to 80 EE Enterprise employees are in the same position. A separate LTB will be issued regarding EE. BT has stated that this is likely to result within weeks, in people receiving individual "at risk" (of redundancy) letters.

In line with agreements with the company, the CWU will work constructively with BT to find solutions. We believe however, finding that many alternative roles, particularly in the sites where there are little or no redeployment opportunities will be extremely challenging.

As branches will know the CWU has a long-held policy of no compulsory redundancies and this was clearly emphasised at our Annual Conference this year, which unanimously backed a ballot for industrial action, should we find ourselves forced into even one compulsory redundancy. Please be clear that the CWU will absolutely be holding steadfast to this policy and this should be a clear message to our members.

Enterprise has said that they will be evacuating sites in Lincoln, Cambridge, Sevenoaks and Ambassador House in London. The cuts however are throughout Enterprise Service and they intend to rationalize the number of sites where work is carried out in more than one location. They have also said that in some sites they are talking to other CFUs and are hopeful of securing positions for people displaced by their plans. The union however cannot see how this can be done in all locations.

We fully appreciate that this issue may be unsettling for members and therefore branches and workplace representatives across the regions should ensure that they are available at the affected workplaces to provide advice to our members.

A legally binding redundancy agreement stipulates that, before formalising any proposals that include potential redundancy; BT and the CWU will jointly aim to resolve any identified surplus through a combination of:

- Redeployment, with associated retraining and re-skilling
- In-sourcing of previously off-shored or contracted out-work
- Natural wastage hastened by recruitment slowdowns or freezes
- Contractor and agency displacement
- Rebalancing workloads and the control of overtime
- The offering of enhanced voluntary leaver packages

The CWU National Team is in discussion with BT Enterprise on this issue and this will continue over the coming weeks. Our approach will be to seek the following.

- Maximize the number of jobs retained in Enterprise
- Redeploy as many as possible to other suitable roles
- Ensure that any job losses take place on a voluntary basis.

Of course the CWU want to work with the business to work through the challenges together and we trust that the company will do so or face a wholly unnecessary fight. We hope that sense will prevail but for absolute clarity, I reiterate that the CWU will not be budging on its red line of one compulsory redundancy. Therefore I would urge branches to ensure that a thorough data cleanse of its entire BT membership takes place. This work should start with their BT Enterprise records, so that we are battle ready should this turn into a full blown fight for our members' jobs.

We will be setting up a dedicated email at btenterprise@cwu.org, which will be monitored daily. Please advise your members of this should they wish to provide any comments in relation to this communication through to this email.

I attach to this LTB a member bulletin that will be emailed directly to members' personal email addresses, where we have them. **Branches should also forward this briefing onto their members providing their branch details.** I also attach a webstory that will be on our website from 15.30 today.

As reported in LTB 564/19, there will be a **BT Enterprise and Global Consultative Committee which will take place on 23 October at 11.00am in Conference Room 2 at CWU HQ.** In light of today's announcement branches should make every effort to attend.

Should branches require speakers for branch meetings please email the above dedicated email address and we will try to accommodate all requests.

Yours sincerely

Andy Kerr
Deputy General Secretary

Allan Eldred
Assistant Secretary