

No: 161/20

27th March 2020

TO: ALL BRANCHES

Dear Colleague

Distribution of Coronavirus Testing Kits

The government has announced that Royal Mail will have a role in the distribution of Coronavirus testing kits to NHS and Social Care frontline staff currently in isolation and will be exclusively responsible for the collection of these kits.

A statement from Royal Mail is attached. Royal Mail says “conveying medical supplies through our network is something we do daily..... what is important is that we treat these items as the priority and take care when handling them not to damage the kit and protect our people”.

NHS workers will post their samples into one of 13,000 priority post boxes. The sample will be placed into a corrugated cardboard box and then into a plastic envelope. This packaging complies with World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines and will be specifically labelled and packaged for easy identification. The intention is to issue plastic bags to collection drivers so that the items do not need to be touched when identified and removed from post boxes.

In line with our support for Royal Mail’s key role at this time of national crisis, CWU welcomes the government’s decision to entrust this crucial task, which will enable as many NHS and care workers to return to work as soon as possible, to the Royal Mail network.

The union will of course expect to be fully consulted on the safety and operational measures to be adopted and discussions with the business are in progress.

Any enquiries on the above should be addressed to the General Secretary’s office at

gsoffice@cwu.org

Yours sincerely

Ray Ellis

Acting National Health & Safety Officer