

No. 162/20

27th March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

COVID 19 & MAINTAINING CWU OPERATIONS BETWEEN CWU HEADQUARTERS AND THE FIELD

Branches will be aware that the country has been in a state of national emergency for the last week. New Government measures are almost a daily occurrence and CWU HQ is now working remotely, as are many of our field officials. These factors mean huge challenges to our traditional flow of information, effective representation and response avenues.

Our structure of representation at local, area, divisional, regional and national level is the best that any union could have and its worth has been demonstrated during the early stages of this crisis. It should be recorded that our Representatives at all levels have been outstanding but it is now necessary to complement that excellent work with the implementation of measures to ensure the highest level of information share, effective representation and response.

Whilst we welcome the recognition that the 'People's Post' and our members provide a vital public service (something we have campaigned on both prior to and since privatisation) we absolutely insist that our members are afforded the highest protection whilst carrying out that role.

Royal Mail Group has failed to respond quickly enough in regards to providing personal protective equipment, implementing social distancing, two in a van, prioritising what is actually delivered and putting in place measures to support all of our business units and support operations. When the business has responded it has only been after the strongest possible CWU intervention. We firmly believe that not only do the union and its members have the best knowledge and experience to design appropriate contingencies but that we must also assert ourselves and drive them through.

Against that backdrop and in recognition that the Postal Department and our Representatives at all levels have and will continue to challenge management at all levels whilst being inundated with calls and e-mails regarding members' concerns, we are putting in place the following support structures which we believe, once bedded in, will avoid duplication and help provide consistent information, policy and representational flow.

Occupational Departments

The various postal occupational departments will continue to function as now and be aligned to all Divisions/Regions/Functions and business units to ensure that a link continues to be provided to meet the requirements of those operational departments. To some extent this will still be dependent on the current discussions with the business, but if we take the Outdoor Department for example, Mark Baulch, Steve Fishwick, Mick Kavanagh, Tony Bouch, Bobby Weatherall and Darren Glebocki (who cover delivery, collection, cleaning in RMPFS and other related matters) will be the CWU HQ conduit for all Divisions and allow the Outdoor Department to liaise with each or indeed all of the Divisions on areas of high importance.

This approach will be replicated across the other operational departments to utilise the experience and knowledge of other Postal Executive members. For example, Alan Tate for Fleet, Steve Jones for Engineers (including RMPFS Engineers), Lynn Simpson for POL and Andy Hopping for Administration Grades, Capita etc. Once again Postal Executive members will be able to either cascade information downwards from their department or relay upwards from the field through ensuring regular contact.

Branches will also acknowledge during the current national crisis the vital importance of having an agreed process in place to address the numerous daily concerns relating to health issues, operational matters and contingency arrangements. In relation to these particular matters Postal Executive members will be able to act as a buffer to the National Officers in terms of responding to the exceptional amount of enquiries coming in.

The Postal Executive has therefore endorsed the following structure and process to be used throughout the crisis. Whilst this predominantly centres on Divisions, the same criteria will apply to Parcelforce, Engineers, Fleet, Customer Experience etc.

Coronavirus crisis - Postal Executive Divisional Structure

Postal Executive members will be attached to Divisions as close to the geographical area they are from. This is listed below.

Postal Executive members will have a daily call with the Divisional Representatives (or respective Field Officials) and compile a report for the National Officers which identifies any issues within a Division/Region/Function or business unit, as well as possible solutions. These calls will be used to ensure that Divisional Representatives/Senior Field Officials are also operating and utilising an equally structured format when receiving feedback from the Area and Local Representatives.

Once a week, Postal Executive members will hold a conference call for all Branches within the Division to relay and receive key updates. This will ensure Branches know that the whole of the union structure is working together to ensure that the safety of members is paramount and that consistent, viable operational solutions/CWU Policy Positions, are in place.

Branches will be urged to compile a weekly tracker for all units/shifts. An example template is attached to this LTB. Branches should note that this captures the number of people self-isolating or off sick, whether social distancing is being strictly applied, whether

the rules around shared vans are being applied, if hand sanitiser and PPE etc. have been issued, if resourcing issues at each unit are being dealt with and whether all other operational issues and contingency planning are being applied etc.

To support regular contact between these structures we have deployed to our Postal Executive and Senior Field Officials an extensive external communications package which will be active from Monday 30th March 2020. As this structure evolves it will enable a regular 2-way information share which will ensure that our responses in respect of social media updates and policy positions are relevant to every workplace, all members and Reps, equally it will enable us to identify any units which need support or assistance.

Postal Executive members may have already been in touch to start developing this structure and we would encourage everyone to work with us and help us deploy and evolve this initiative to ensure that we maximise its potential during these unprecedented times.

Parcelforce	Katrina Quirke
Engineering	Steve Jones
Fleet	Alan Tate
POL	Lynn Simpson
London	Martin Walsh
Scotland & Northern Ireland	Bobby Weatherall
Midlands	Mick Kavanagh
Anglia	Darren Glebocki
South East	Shelley Banbury
South Wales/South West	Tony Bouch
North Wales/North West	Mahmood Ali
North East	Steve Halliwell
South Central	Mole Meade
Postal Executive Chair Matters	Jane Loftus
DGSP Department	Dave Wilshire

In closing I wish to thank you again on behalf of the Officers and Postal Executive members for the excellent work you are doing and urge you all to take care.

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)