

No. 164/2020

30th March 2020

TO: ALL BRANCHES WITH ROYAL MAIL GROUP MEMBERS

Dear Colleagues,

RE: CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 – SICK PAY AND POLICY UPDATE

Over the last few weeks, we have been in negotiations with Royal Mail on attendance issues linked to the Coronavirus Covid-19. On 9th March 2020 we wrote to Royal Mail wanting to discuss the challenges Coronavirus Covid-19 would bring and to ensure our members were looked after. Following a meeting on 13th March 2020, paid sick leave for members with less than 12 months service and discounting absences for Coronavirus within the attendance procedure were implemented on 16th March 2020. This was reported in LTB 127/20.

When LTB 127/20 was published, there was a maximum of 14 days self-isolating, Royal Mail's policy was based on this with a review date of 31st March 2020. Within a few days of the LTB being published this changed, as over the weekend of 20th March 2020 the Government introduced the self-isolation for vulnerable people, which is 12 weeks self-isolation. Members in the most vulnerable groups have been sent letters to this effect, so they can supply the letter to their employer. Once this letter is provided, this will cover you for the period of 12 weeks.

Due to this announcement, we wrote to Royal Mail on 23rd March requesting the review be brought forward as we now potentially have members who are on half/no pay, or could potentially go onto half/no pay if they had to self-isolate for 12 weeks and there is no way this could be covered by annual leave. We have made the point most members would not be able to afford to be on half pay/unpaid for 12 weeks for an absence they would not normally have taken, and therefore they could be forced to take risks by coming into work as they cannot afford to stay off.

Royal Mail stated they were not going to bring forward the review from 31st March 2020, however would take on board our concerns.

Any member who has a letter from the NHS or a Doctor's letter stating they are in the vulnerable category will be paid in line with the pay policy. This is 6 months full pay

and 6 months half pay over a rolling 4 year period. RMPFS will follow their own pay policy.

We believe as the Government are instructing members to take time off to go into social-isolation/social-distancing, exceptionally, any absence where members are forced into being absent should be paid full pay and not be penalised due to having had serious illnesses in the past e.g. Cancer.

Taking absence at this time, is not a choice a lot of people would have opted for. As this is a life saving measure which has been enforced on our vulnerable members, Royal Mail should pay full pay for anyone who has to follow Government advice due to being in the Vulnerable Persons category.

We will keep pressing Royal Mail on this and other issues which affect our members during this Coronavirus Crisis.

We have also brought up the issues and risks of the current policy highlighted in this LTB to the most senior national managers, therefore our opinion has been highlighted throughout the business.

When I write to Royal Mail, this also covers Parcelforce Members. We are also speaking with Management in RMPFS, who have to date followed Royal Mail's lead.

Sick pay will be paid in line with each business unit's sick pay policy.

I have attached a question and answer sheet to this LTB. There is a Facebook live session at 4pm today where I will be giving an update of discussions with the employers and it will also be an opportunity for members to have any questions they want answered on the Attendance Agreement.

All enquiries regarding the content of this LTB should be addressed to the **PTCS** Department, quoting reference 415. Email address: snicholas@cwu.org.

Yours Sincerely,



Carl Maden
Assistant Secretary (Acting).