

A Statement by the CWU on an Emergency Measures Response to the Escalating Coronavirus Pandemic, Maintaining a National Postal Network and Saving Lives.

The CWU believe that the worldwide Coronavirus pandemic is creating unprecedented challenges for our members, the public we serve and across UK society as a whole. Given the escalating infection rates and increasing emergency measures being taken in response to the spread of the Coronavirus we believe that decisive action is now required to keep our members and the general public safe.

Royal Mail Group and the Post Office are now considered a key service to serve and link our communities through the crisis, however like all other organisations still operating it now requires its own emergency measures to perform its vital role whilst also being focused on ensuring it minimises the risk to its employees and wider public in regards to increased contagion. Our absolute priority now must be to secure and maintain essential services to the country, while reducing risk and saving lives.

The CWU believe that following measures should now be adopted:

- Royal Mail Group cannot operate during this time from a commercial perspective, all efforts now should be on maintaining a national network by prioritising essential work **only** and maximising the safety of its employees.
- Royal Mail Group and the CWU should lobby Government and the Regulator to adjust standards and obligations to deliver 1st & 2nd Class USO mail and parcels only with relaxed 'next day' criteria to enable the measures below.
- Publicity should then be given to the fact that they RMG are now an arm of Government and the state in respect of maintaining a vital national postal service during this crisis and are not functioning as commercial operation but a national vital service.
- All employees should only be compelled to work alternate days, or 3 days per week thereby cutting in half the amount of people in any operational unit on any one day, this is to enable strict social distancing and total equipment cleansing prior to each day are carried out.
- All PPE must be in place or the operation will be suspended. No CWU member or member of the public should be placed at risk due to a lack of essential equipment.
- Workload should be prioritised to secure deliveries of essential medical supplies to Hospitals, Doctors, Health Centres, Pharmacies, USO mail and priority parcels.
- The CWU recognise the differences in operational arrangements and product specifications across Royal Mail Group. Specific revised operational arrangements should be confirmed for deliveries across Royal Mail, Parcelforce and RMSS/Relay to ensure the above principles. Options could include alternating route coverage while ensuring connection of essential goods or urgent medical supplies.
- Other than Government or NHS advice literature, in Royal Mail, D2D contracts should be suspended until after the crisis.

- Every effort should now be made to secure the testing of RMG employees to identify and respond to high risk in all units.
- Everyone over 65 should only be at work if they are happy to do so and if not should be placed on Special Leave with full pay for the duration of the absence
- All vulnerable/at risk employees as identified by Public Health England advice should all now be on Special Leave with full pay for the duration of the absence
- All employees with vulnerable/at risk people at home should be allowed 12wks on Special Leave with full pay
- Where someone within the work location has been diagnosed with the virus that building should not be used until the necessary deep clean has taken place before re-opening for business.
- These arrangements cease the need for the use of private cars and that contingency should now be removed.
- Agency workers should only be used in the event that there is a genuine shortfall in the alternative working daily resourcing and the prioritised delivery of 1st & 2nd Class mail and parcels. (all agency must meet strict vetting criteria)

In the Post Office Network Operations:

- All PPE must be in place in each and every workplace (including the Supply Chain operation and vehicles) or the operation will be suspended where this isn't happening
- Transactions & services performed across the entire Post Office network should be reduced to absolute essential items only which support communities and the vulnerable/disadvantaged together with the revised Royal Mail operation
- All Post Offices should close at 1pm Monday to Friday and 12.30pm on Saturday
- Anyone over 65 should be attending work only if they are comfortable and confident to do so
- Employees should only have to work alternative days to enable strict social distancing and total equipment / workstation cleansing prior to each day. This means no more than 3 attendances per week by any person.
- Social Distancing must operate in each and every Post Office without exception. Where this is not undertaken the service will be closed until this operation can be put in place in order to protect those providing essential Post Office services including Crew and Collection Drivers

