

No. 168/20

1st April 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Maintaining a National Postal Network and Saving Lives during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Branches will be aware that since the announcement of the Coronavirus pandemic and the fact that postal workers have been given 'key worker' status, the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary (Postal) have been in dialogue with management at the highest level within Royal Mail Group. These talks have centred on how to continue to maintain a national emergency postal service whilst reacting to the ever changing narrative, the daily announcements from the Government, stopping the spread of the virus and saving lives.

However, as we are now over a week on from the announcement by Boris Johnson regarding a national lockdown and even further on from the Government's declaration about the need for social distancing measures and the provision of PPE equipment for key workers (such as protective gloves and hand sanitiser) the union now harbour concerns that management are showing little urgency in addressing these major issues.

To say that Royal Mail Group management have been slow off the mark would be an understatement. Instead of attempting to find an agreed way forward at pace, they are making decisions sometimes days after the union has raised its concerns and even then in the form of half-baked communications directly to the frontline. We believe that their commercial focused approach is ill-conceived and not in the best interests of protecting our members and the wider public and that ultimately this may threaten lives.

Whilst our members and Representatives at all levels continue to do a superb job during such unusual times, it has become increasingly clear that those running the business appear to be focused more on the commercial impact on the company rather than the safety of those on the frontline. It is a disgrace that a whole host of units are still waiting for protective gloves and hand sanitiser to be supplied and that safe social distancing is still to be implemented in some workplaces.

Neither the public nor the CWU and its members can see how delivering a leaflet to advertise pizza can be considered an emergency or an essential measure necessary to maintain a national vital postal network during a time of national crisis. It is indeed clearly apparent that management are attempting to run exactly the same business as before and are trying to ensure that everything fits around that stance, rather than recognising the fact that these are unprecedented times and emergency measures and the safety of those on the frontline and the wider public must be the priority.

In the absence of recognition from senior managers that these are exceptional times that require emergency measures, and when such a laid back attitude threatens the very safety of our

members and indeed the general public, the union has taken the initiative.

On Monday evening the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary (Postal) wrote an open letter to Rico Back, CEO of Royal Mail Group, to set out what the union believe is the right position for the company and the Government to immediately adopt during this crisis in relation to Royal Mail Group and the services it provides. Enclosed with the letter was a statement that concentrates on the need for an emergency network at this time and measures that we believe will save lives. A copy of the letter and statement are attached for the information of Branches.

Both the letter and statement have been unanimously endorsed by the Postal Executive and we believe that these emergency service principles should be introduced immediately. We would urge all Representatives to urgently raise these matters with management and give this LTB the widest possible circulation.

We are yet to receive a response from Royal Mail Group but we will be speaking with them today and will make the strongest possible representations. Branches will be updated once the business's position is known and will be advised of the union's latest stance.

In closing we would urge you all to stay safe and thank you for your continued support during this extremely difficult period.

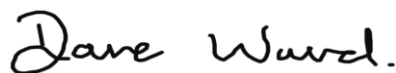
Any enquiries in relation to the content of this LTB should be addressed to the DGS(P) Department.

Yours sincerely,



Terry Pullinger
Deputy General Secretary (Postal)

Yours sincerely,



Dave Ward
General Secretary

Yours sincerely,



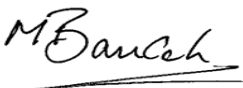
Andy Furey
Assistant Secretary

Yours sincerely,



Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary

Yours sincerely,



Mark Baulch
Assistant Secretary

Yours sincerely,



Carl Maden
Acting Assistant Secretary