

PTC/CM/sn/415

2nd April 2020

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From the office of **Carl Maden**

Acting Assistant Secretary Email:

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Dear Helen

RE: CORONAVIRUS – COVID-19 SICK PAY AND ATTENDANCE

Thank you for your email yesterday informing me Royal Mail are keeping the same policy for sick pay and attendance until the middle of April 2020.

It is inconceivable you are not looking to update your policy, when the policy you have was originally made on 13th March 2020. Since this time, the world and danger due to Coronavirus has moved on. Your original policy was made when much less information was available from the Government/health officials and prior to the emergency measures the Government have introduced to stop the spread of Coronavirus Covid-19. Also, at the time your policy was made, there was a maximum self-isolation period of 14 days. As you will know from our discussions and correspondence, this has now become 12 weeks. Surely this has to influence a change in policy for an employer who wants to protect the health and safety of employees and put them as your number one priority.

The decision yesterday only goes to show the position Royal Mail have attempted to portray publicly as putting your employees health and wellbeing first, is a false position. Your decisions and policymaking during this crisis are not based on the welfare of your employees, they are made on what it will cost. This is a morally bankrupt position.

As you will know I have written to and spoken with you and members of your team many times over the last 2-3 weeks about the issues our members are facing. We have members who have previously had life-threatening conditions such as cancer, heart attacks etc. and had to take sick leave to ensure they could receive the treatment they required and rehabilitate. Thankfully, these members battled through their conditions and survived. However, through no decision of their own, these same members, your employees, are being told by Government to self-isolate, not because they are ill now, but to prevent them becoming ill which could cost them their life.

Your current policy will force these members who are on half/no sick pay to make the heartbreaking and life-threatening decision between having to come to work or stay at home as directed by the Government and risk not being able to feed their family, pay

their bills and in some cases losing their home. This is not right, and your policy re-endorsed yesterday shows absolutely no compassion for these employees.

I suggested to you members with less than 12 months service get paid sick leave so they will not be in a position where they have to risk coming to work with symptoms of the Coronavirus due to not getting paid. You saw the merit in this and agreed to pay sick pay to prevent putting themselves and other colleagues at risk. However, your policy of not paying full pay to members who are on half/no pay is not consistent with this decision and why would someone who is on half/no pay make a different decision when faced with the same choice of having to risk coming to work through not being able to afford to stay at home, just because they have more than 12 months service?

I have constantly brought up this position with you and believe you should exceptionally, outside of the sick pay policy, in line with what you have agreed to do for members with less than 12 months service, make the decision to pay full sick pay for the members who are on half/no pay whose absences are due to Coronavirus. This would not only make your policy a consistent one, it will save lives.

We also have members who have vulnerable dependents being told to self-isolate. These dependents are some of the most vulnerable people in society and have to self-isolate to give themselves the best chance of staying alive by not getting ill. However, our own members, your employees, could be putting their loved ones in danger by having to come to work and risk catching the Coronavirus due to the policy in place, which you have re-endorsed yesterday and failed to update. If you truly believe in keeping your employees and their dependents safe, you should pay full pay to your employees who are in this situation. Your current policy is also putting customers at risk.

The situations above do not only affect the members mentioned. We have had members contact us who are actually worrying whether or not other colleagues are having to take risks by coming to work as they cannot afford to take the time off unpaid. This is affecting the mental health of these other members. Having people at work simply because they cannot afford to stay off will not help anyone - themselves, their dependents, their colleagues, customers nor the business.

I am sure it will not have passed you by on the day you decided not to update your policy and support your employees, it was announced the number of UK deaths in hospitals rose to 2,352 – an increase of 563 (31%), the highest day-on-day rise so far. Also, during the period of the next two weeks, between now and your next proposed review date, it is expected the number of positive cases of Coronavirus Covid-19 will peak. This is and will continue to be at a time when the NHS staff are not getting the correct equipment and are already overwhelmed with patients.

How you handle this crisis will never be forgotten and I believe the above suggestions will go some way to giving members comfort in not being forced to take risks by having to come to work, due to not being able to afford to stay off. I am urging you to reconsider your decision made yesterday and to review your policy in line with what I have outlined above and the managers update you put out yesterday which opened with *"The safety, health and wellbeing of our employees, members of the public and the communities in which we operate remains paramount."*

Finally, if you do not pick up my suggestions above, you have not given reasons as to why you are not updating your policy within your management update yesterday. Your

employees, our members will not understand your position and you owe them an explanation of why you have continued with a policy which is over two weeks old when we are in a life-threatening situation where advice has been and is being updated and changing on what can be an hourly basis. I would urge you to put out a communication explaining to your employees your rationale around your decisions yesterday, including a video.

If you wish to explore my suggestions above I will make this a priority.



I look forward to receiving a reply as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

CARL

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