

No. 322/2020

19th June 2020

For the Immediate Attention of All:

Postal Branches
PFW Regional Organisers
PFW Representatives

Dear Colleagues

Joint Statement Between Parcelforce Worldwide And The Communication Workers Union On The Review Of Depot Customer Service Resource Alignment Against Declining Call Volumes

Branches and representatives will be aware that in line with the commitments contained in the Parcelforce Annex of the Four Pillars agreement, review activity has been taking place under the *Terms of Reference between Parcelforce Worldwide and the CWU for Customer Service Activity Across All Teams 2018/19* (LTB's 345/18 & 361/19 refer).

In addition to the above due to a decline in call volumes, analysis has also been taking place via the established Table of Success Customer Service Joint Working Group (CSJWG) in relation to the level of telephony required in PFW Depots.

Call volumes in Parcelforce have continued to decline year on year with current volumes running at 28% down on average against the direct comparison for the same period last year. This decline in telephone contact is partially due to the successful implementation of other mediums for customer enquiries

Analysis has identified that in 10 PFW Depots less than 20 calls are answered per day. These sites were also all identifiable as having 'hybrid' roles, where the Customer Service Advisor is also expected to cover a multitude of Admin (non-telephony) tasks.

Through further investigation into these sites the SJWG have been able to ascertain that providing availability to achieve an ever-declining number of calls was not only increasing the pressure placed on these smaller depots, but detracted valuable time away from ensuring that all admin tasks were completed to the high standards expected. The 10 Depots identified are:

1. Inverness
2. Aberdeen
3. Perth
4. Carlisle
5. Deeside
6. Portadown
7. Poole
8. Shrewsbury
9. York
10. Ipswich

The recommendations from the CSJWG and SJWG was that in the abovementioned sites, there should be a cessation in the provision of Customer Service telephony during weekdays Monday to Friday where the calls can be rerouted to other depots. This change will enable the ten depots to focus on other elements associated with Customer Service provision, redelivery conformance, and allow employees within the sites to remain focused on the other tasks within their administrative roles.

Discussions have therefore been taking place with the business in relation to a Joint Statement to facilitate the change, which has now been concluded and endorsed by the Postal Executive and a copy is attached for your information

Branches and representatives will note that recognition is included in relation to the importance of continued training and support for individuals at the affected sites.

It is also confirmed that at the 10 affected sites a telephony service will continue to operate at the weekend, which provides the opportunity to prevent any loss of earnings for employees and enables the continuation of high levels of quality to be delivered to customers.

Call volumes will continue to be monitored on a regular basis to identify and understand any and all future impacts, whether increase or decrease, to ensure that high quality customer service continues to be delivered to meet customer demand.

Any enquiries in relation to this LTB should be addressed to Davie Robertson, Assistant Secretary, email: dwyatt@cwu.org or shayman@cwu.org quoting reference number: 134.02

Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary

JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN PARCELFORCE WORLDWIDE AND THE COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION ON THE REVIEW OF DEPOT CUSTOMER SERVICE RESOURCE ALIGNMENT AGAINST DECLINING CALL VOLUMES

Background

Both parties recognise that Parcelforce Worldwide is considered a premium brand which operates within an exceptionally competitive market place, where customers expect consistency and exceptional levels of service. In this environment Parcelforce are striving to be 'the best and most trusted carrier'.

Customer behaviours and demand have continued to evolve in the past two years, with more customers requiring relevant up to date information about their consignment, opting to self-serve and utilising alternative contact channels aside from telephony. Parcelforce is a customer centric business and has had to adapt to these demands, implementing Live Chat, Email support and updates to webpages, whilst maintaining and improving the level of service that customers now expect as a standard in telephony.

In line with our joint commitments and well-established working relationship under the Table of Success (TofS) the Customer Service Joint Working Group (CSJWG) has continued to meet on a regular basis to undertake an extensive review into customer service within Parcelforce and discuss how we can ensure that exceptional customer experience is delivered to all customers each and every time. This journey started with the identification and realignment of a dedicated Depot customer service team. Consisting of 254 employees spread across our depot network, these dedicated customer service advisors were initially supported through continuous coaching to ensure these standards are achieved consistently and supported customers through to a resolution on the first call.

Since this realignment of customer resource took place 3 customer service training modules have been jointly designed and delivered under our TofS process. Both Parcelforce Worldwide and the CWU believe that ensuring that advisors have these skillsets is paramount to the success of the business and mutually agree that our training should be a continuous learning cycle. Based on the feedback received from advisors in the training sessions to date, the CSJWG are working on future training plans and modules, which will be communicated separately at the appropriate time.

CSJWG Activities

Call Volume Decline - Resourcing Review

Call volumes in Parcelforce have continued to decline year on year with our current volumes running at 28% down on average against the direct comparison for the same period last year.

This decline in telephone contact is partially due to the successful implementation of a customer driven demand for self-service opportunities both on the web and telephony systems and a fundamental shift in customer behaviour to utilise alternative contact methods. However, Parcelforce's commitment to customers still strongly remains that they are and will continue to be as accessible as possible where a customer wishes to speak to an advisor to discuss a query in more detail.

To gain a better understanding of the challenges faced in the Customer Service arena and in line with the TofS commitments to joint working, the CSJWG formed a sub group (SJWG). The SJWG was tasked with identifying the impact the decline in call volume has had on resourcing and telephony levels across all depots. The data helped the SJWG to identify the depots with the lowest call volumes through 'own depot calls' taken.

Analysis indicated that the bottom ten depots receive on average less than 20 depot calls answered per day. These sites were also all identifiable as having 'hybrid' roles where the customer service advisor is also expected to cover a multitude of Admin (non-telephony) tasks. Both the CWU and Parcelforce Worldwide recognise the importance that Customer Service and admin roles play in ensuring the business is able to deliver the exceptional levels of service required for our customers.

Through further investigation into these sites the SJWG have been able to ascertain that providing availability to achieve an ever-declining number of calls was not only increasing the pressure placed on these smaller depots, but also detracted valuable time away from ensuring that all admin tasks were completed to the high standards expected.

As a result of the recommendations from the CSJWG and SJWG, both parties are in agreement that within the sites listed below there would be a cessation of Customer Service telephony from the 27th July 2020 during Monday to Friday. This will allow the affected depots listed below to really focus on Resolve and their redeliveries conformance, and allow employees within the sites to remain focused on the other tasks within their administrative roles as mentioned above.

- 1) Inverness
- 2) Aberdeen
- 3) Perth
- 4) Carlisle
- 5) Deeside
- 6) Portadown
- 7) Poole
- 8) Shrewsbury
- 9) York
- 10) Ipswich

The CWU and Parcelforce recognise that training remains a fundamental platform for success for the business and its employees and mutually agree that these sites will continue to receive any future training and support required to deliver consistent, professional and efficient services to customers.

At the affected sites a telephony service will continue to operate at the weekend, and therefore the opportunity to work in customer services throughout the weekend also remains as a viable option for all employees, in order to continue to deliver high levels of quality to customers and prevent any potential loss of earnings for employees.

Parcelforce Worldwide and the CWU are jointly committed to review call volumes on a regular basis to identify and understand any and all future impacts, whether increase or decrease, to ensure that high quality customer service continues to be delivered to meet customer demand.

Any questions of interpretation, implementation or application of this Joint Statement shall be referred to the signatories as a matter of urgency and will be dealt with inside the provisions of the appropriate Industrial Relations agreement.



Ian Johnson
Head of Customer Experience
Parcelforce Worldwide



Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary
CWU

Date: 18th June 2020