



## **Royal Mail/CWU Joint Statement Covering Annual Leave Planning (April 2021 to March 2022).**

### **Introduction**

Royal Mail and the Communication Workers Union are working together in developing key business policies, mutual interest solutions and a new culture, which is at the core of all the commitments contained in the Guiding Principles of Employment Security and Mutual Interest Approach of Future Challenges and Opportunities agreement.

Building on the former Royal Mail & CWU Agreed Guidelines covering Annual Leave and Weekly Resourcing, the following revised Joint Statement has been designed to reinforce the objective for Local Managers and Representatives in Delivery Offices to take a more formal approach to planning Annual Leave arrangements. In developing annual leave plans both parties should work together to deal with workload variations in an efficient but fair and manageable way, also taking into account seasonal changes, with summer workload and resourcing requirements as well as peak workload considerations across and during the year.

To ensure fair and efficient resourcing and to maximise annual leave opportunities as part of the annual planning process, September's Weekly Resourcing Meetings should be fully utilised with the focus of discussing and agreeing the annual leave arrangements for the coming year based on the jointly established Staff in Post (SIP) and AWD of the office, taking into account any known future changes. This process does not replace the mandatory weekly resourcing meetings and usual agenda which will continue to underpin resourcing throughout the year and at which the annual leave plan should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure workload variations are accounted for when planning resource to workload.

Local Managers and CWU Reps will work together in a constructive manner, in line with this Joint Statement and National Agreements to establish their annual leave arrangements. Delivery Office Managers and CWU Reps will use the national annual leave Calendarisation Work-Aid in order to assist them to determine and agree the number of annual leave slots available for selection each week. This work-aid has been developed by Royal Mail to help DOMs and Reps jointly make the decision on how best to fairly share out the total annual leave slots for their office against a national workload profile.

The Calendarisation Work-Aid has been subject to former joint national review and the 'guidelines/information tab' has been updated to give managers and representatives a clear understanding on how to use this work-aid in a way that supports the processes and agreements we have that establish annual leave entitlement. The Calendarisation work-aid is a guide only and should therefore be used accordingly.

Once the unit plan is agreed, these local office annual leave arrangements will be shared with frontline colleagues so they can choose their holiday weeks and allocation of leave completed by the 31<sup>st</sup> of October in line with section 4 of the Way Forward Agreement.

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The aim of this Joint Statement is to ensure that everyone takes a positive approach to this initiative which is about ensuring annual leave plans are transparent, robust, provide greater fairness and opportunity in the allocation of annual leave, whether that is weeks, days or the chance to use up outstanding leave in line with the approach of accurate alignment of resource to workload in an efficient manner whilst also ensuring that quality of service is maintained.

Local annual leave plans for April 2021 to March 2022, should include all leave due in the leave year period, including purchased leave and any carried over/outstanding leave from the previous year/s. For the past few years there has been a joint commitment between Royal Mail and the CWU to 'burn off' outstanding leave and this should continue. The amount of leave outstanding in delivery will remain the subject of regular review between RM and CWU nationally. There should be a joint review of any outstanding leave that can be taken this year and an assessment made in each office of any leave that can be aligned to available leave slots up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, allowing for outstanding leave to be managed over the coming months to the end of the year.

All annual leave plans for 2021/22 will need to be completed for each office by the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 in line with section 4 of the Way Forward Agreement.

***Note: The Joint Statement between Royal Mail and the CWU in regard to a Joint Review of Annual Leave Arrangement (dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019) tasked every Delivery Office to undertake a review of outstanding leave entitlement and ensure all such leave is properly recorded against the individual OPG and on the PSP system by August of 2019. If for whatever reason this has not been done, then both local parties must undertake this activity and ensure all leave due to individual employees is fully recorded and done so in the PSP system.***

## Key Objectives

- To jointly produce an annual leave plan taking into account seasonal workload variations, utilising all available hours including overtime, that accurately aligns the leave opportunities in an efficient, fair and manageable way based on local factors and knowledge and in line with the current National Agreements.
- By no later than the second week of September the Weekly Resourcing Meeting(s) should include sufficient prescheduled time to discuss and agree the annual leave plan for the forthcoming year which will set out the annual leave allocation for the office.
- Following an agreement on the local office annual leave arrangements this will then be shared with frontline colleagues so they can choose their holiday weeks by the 31<sup>st</sup> of October each year in line with section 4 of the Way Forward Agreement. The aim is to ensure that all local plans are agreed and concluded by the end of October, if not before. When complete, all leave for 2021/22 should be booked into PSP by the end of October.
- To provide additional annual leave opportunities in periods when workload is below model week, including the opportunity to 'burn off' any outstanding or carried over leave. Units will plan on the full year's allocation of leave including Bank Holiday credits and purchased leave.
- To provide an opportunity and a way for people to take midweek to midweek leave and odd days of leave taking into account special and religious events.

- To look to reserve a level of leave slots where possible to account for the need for short notice/Ad Hoc leave requests during the leave year.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact in terms of a number of employee's current leave plans. As such the 'Joint Statement between Royal Mail and the CWU on Annual Leave for the 2020/2021 Leave Year' set out a clear process for Local Managers and Reps to follow in order to prioritise individual postponed holiday arrangements from this year into next year's plans. This should be reviewed as part of the weekly resourcing meeting agenda when agreeing the annual leave slot allocation for the coming year. There will need to be formal/written confirmation from the employees to confirm the dates of leave required. For ease of reference, reproduced here is the agreed wording:

***Some employees may have had this year's holiday postponed by their holiday agent/tour operator and automatically transferred to the same dates in the following year i.e. a 2-week holiday booked for 3rd July 2020 rescheduled and booked for the same period in July 2021. Other employees may have received holiday vouchers which are time limited to redeem as a replacement for their cancelled holiday. In these situations, where the employee has no alternative and can provide the appropriate supporting documents, the individual will be able to secure the same leave period for the following year where the operator has specifically rescheduled the holiday to a fixed date or be accommodated with the required annual leave slot, within the specified timescales of the vouchers. For both these situations, all requests will be submitted and prioritised in advance of the units 2021/2022 annual leave process commencing (normally around September/October 2020). This arrangement will provide certainty to individuals and allow them to commit and confirm to the revised arrangements offered by their holiday agent/tour operator. The numbers required, along with any known annual leave carried over into the 2021/2022, must be taken into account when discussing the annual leave process for 2021/2022.***

- To ensure that all employees annual leave will be included on an equal basis, whether full or part time.
- Whilst the aim is to ensure that all annual leave is planned for and taken in the year it is due, up to one week/a maximum of 5 days (or contractual equivalent for PT employees) can be carried over into the next leave year where it is requested by the individual employee in line with the Royal Mail Policy. Additionally, some employees may also have specific holiday/events planned that would require more than one week/5 days (or contractual PT equivalent) annual leave to be carried over into the following year in exceptional circumstances. In these situations, the arrangements as outlined within the Way Forward Agreement will apply and leave carried over will need to be authorised by their line manager.
- The Annual leave plans will not be based on any predetermined lapsing/absorption plans or budget targets, however all annual leave plans must be based on an efficient, fair and manageable way making full use of all available work hours.
- Where there are any known and agreed future changes to the Office (including SIP/AWD) this should be factored into the annual leave planning process including any learning curve periods linked to this.
- Operational Managers and Area Delivery Representative will provide evidence of local agreements on their offices plans to their respective Delivery Director and Divisional Representatives which should be undertaken by the end of October/start of November.
- Vacancies and leave reserve vacancies will remain under constant review to ensure adequate resource is available to meet customer, the annual leave plan and operational requirement. Units must ensure the appropriate recruitment requests, where required, are submitted in time to facilitate this, identifying locally the Document CWU & Royal Mail September 2020

number of foreseen vacancies in the coming months using current national agreements, joint statements and guidelines on resourcing issues.

**Attached Document**

The standard WRM agenda on Annual Plan Resourcing Meeting, to assist Local Managers and Representatives in Delivery Offices to take a more formal approach to planning Annual Leave arrangements.

An 'example copy' of the Calendarisation Work-Aid and the 'guidelines/Information tab' for the reference of the Local Managers and Representatives.

Some guidelines for Weekly Resourcing Meetings.

**Summary**

Both Royal Mail and CWU are jointly committed to the ongoing review of this activity, including the Calendarisation Work Aids and tools currently in place, this will take place at the Delivery Strategic Involvement meetings and agreed similar national forums; this agreement strives to provide people with opportunity to improve the work/life balance in a fair and consistent way as well as maintain the principles of planning resource to workload. As such and in the unlikely event that units fail to agree an annual plan or in instances where either party is not adhering to the agreed plan then the Flashpoint procedure should be invoked.



Signed.....  
Rob Jenson  
National Delivery Director  
Royal Mail



Signed.....  
Mark Baulch - CWU

Date: September 2020

**Annual Plan Resourcing Meeting**

Meeting Held			Date:		
Step	Agenda Item	Purpose/Output	Source	Action	Record Actions arising
1	Establish the annual leave demand in weeks and days for the forthcoming financial year.	Annual leave demand	<p>Manpower Plan</p> <p>Annual Leave Calendarisation work-aid</p> <p><i>NB. This work-aid has been developed by Royal Mail to help DOMs and Reps jointly make the decisions on how best to <b>fairly</b> share out the total AL blocks for their office against a national workload profile. It is a guide only and should therefore be used accordingly.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using your up to date Manpower Plan, calculate how many weeks and days of Annual Leave are to be scheduled.</li> <li>• Calculate how many weeks of Annual Leave have been purchased or have yet to be purchased (based on previous years)</li> <li>• Ensure purchased annual leave and any carried over leave to be scheduled is taken into account.</li> <li>• Determine and agree the number of reserves you are planning to use.</li> <li>• Open the Annual Leave Calendarisation work-aid and follow the guidelines within that file.</li> </ul>	

2	<p>Review current year's summer resourcing activity to see if leave opportunities where maximised. <b>(Factor in Covid-19 impact to plans)</b></p>	<p>Understanding of what was good and what could be better about the deployment of summer resourcing plans</p>	<p>Resourcing meeting minutes from summer period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the summer resource activity for this year, what went well? What didn't go so well? How can we improve with a view to improve next year's leave plan?</li> </ul>	
3	<p>Determine the indoor and outdoor absorption opportunity to determine the capacity for extra annual leave slots during low traffic periods</p>	<p>Indoor and Outdoor opportunity in hours</p> <p>No of additional leave blocks</p>	<p>Annex A Annual Resourcing Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Now review the Annual Leave Calendarisation work- aid consider the opportunity to offer more Annual leave slots throughout the year</li> <li>Follow annex A within the resourcing guidelines to help you do this</li> <li>The number of reserves available should be taken into account when determining the absorption opportunity</li> <li>Remember if you increase Annual Leave in any weeks, then you will have to reduce the same number of</li> </ul>	

				<p>weeks elsewhere, so you maintain the total number of weeks to be allocated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember absorption should not be used to cover sick absence unless the office is over resourced against workload and a genuine opportunity exists</li> </ul>	
4	Determine the periods when you will require extra resource in higher traffic periods	Flexing up Methods for High workload periods	2007, 2010, 2013 national agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look at the Annual Leave Calendarisation Planning work-aid and the indicators on there. Consider any periods where you may need extra resource.</li> <li>Remember if you decrease the number of Annual Leave blocks allocated in any weeks, then you will have to increase the same number of weeks elsewhere.</li> <li>Agree other methods of how you will resource your Unit during High workload periods.</li> </ul>	
5	Determine the final number of annual leave blocks per week by matching annual leave demand against workload and	A calendar showing the total number of annual leave blocks by week.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You now have all the information needed to agree exactly how all the weeks of Annual Leave should be spread across each week of the year.</li> </ul>	

	<p>absorption opportunities for extra leave slots where workload is below the model week.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go back to the Annual Leave Calendarisation work-aid and open the "Finalised Leave Plan" tab</li> <li>• Input the number of FT annual leave blocks</li> <li>• The number of FT annual leave hours will calculate automatically</li> <li>• Input the number of PT annual leave blocks</li> <li>• Input the number of Total PT annual leave hrs.</li> </ul>	
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6	Agree messages for communicating annual plan and gaining frontline involvement in how workload will be shared.	Annual plan WTL	resourcing guidelines annex A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now consider how you are going to communicate the Annual Plan.</li> <li>• Write a WTL session explaining how you have reached agreement on your decisions.</li> <li>• Remember to explain to your people that the detailed summer resourcing activity will take place in the New Year and they will have the opportunity to get involved with how the work will be absorbed in an efficient and fair way.</li> </ul>	
7	Annual Leave Pick	Allocate Staff to the agreed levels of Annual Leave.	Way Forward agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start your Annual Leave Pick.</li> <li>• Complete your Annual Leave pick by 31<sup>st</sup> October</li> <li>• To provide a way for people to take odd days of leave agree the number of slots per week that remain un-picked</li> </ul>	
8	Annual leave policy	Ensure the Annual Leave process complies with HR	HR Annual Leave Policy  Way Forward Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all Annual Leave records are correct in PSP</li> </ul>	

		policy and Way Forward agreement	PSP guide		
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## **Guidelines for Weekly Resourcing Meetings**

The following guidelines for Weekly Resourcing meetings will ensure that Royal Mail and the CWU work together to deal with workload variations in a fair and manageable way using agreed procedures and processes to maintain efficiency on an annual basis, with the underlying principle that all paid for hours are fully utilised. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the commitments set out in the Pay and Modernisation (2007), Business Transformation (2010) and the Agenda for Growth (2013) national agreements, including the Royal Mail & CWU Nationally Agreed Guidelines Covering Annual Resourcing and the national joint statement setting the Indoor Performance for Delivery Offices Version 2 June 2012.

## **Objectives of Weekly Resourcing Meetings**

To produce effective resource plans to ensure that:

- There is an agreed annual leave plan aligned to the full year workload by the end of September that provides a reliable guide that enables leave selection to take place by the end of October (This annual leave plan is not designed to undermine the role of the weekly resourcing meetings but to complement them)
- available resource, forecasted workload for 12 weeks ahead is reviewed and agreed and actions are implemented
- resource plans are in place, 2 weeks and 1 week ahead
- product, service and USO targets are achievable
- the planned resource is accurately aligned to the forecasted workload
- the units current indoor performance is understood by the DOM and Unit Rep and all outdoor workload is covered
- all known/predicted special events, religious events and staff absences including WPC and CWU release time has been accounted for
- all paid work hours are fully utilised
- the maintenance of reasonable earning's
- everyone has the necessary training to do the job that is asked of them
- ensure a safe working environment and the correct use of delivery methods and equipment at all times
- the outputs/resourcing plans from the weekly resourcing meetings are communicated to everyone working in the unit 2 weeks and then 1 week ahead via the Comms Board (providing people with advanced notice of what

work they will be expected to do on a daily and weekly basis allowing peoples to better plan their work/life balance)

## **Weekly Resourcing Meeting Principles**

**Frequency** – Weekly Resourcing Meetings are mandatory and will take place every week between the DOM and CWU Rep. The recommended day for holding the meeting is Tuesday and should be scheduled for both the DOM and CWU Rep with appropriate release provided to the CWU representative to enable full participation. This release should be built into the resourcing plan.

**Data** - To support the effectiveness of the meeting all relevant office data needs to be kept up to date i.e. office establishment, staff in post, vacancies, leave allocation, IWT Forecasting Tool, IWT set up. The Auto IWT Performance summary report should be shared with the CWU representative in advance of the meeting, to allow you to compare current performance with historical data and the actual agreed target performance.

Vacancies and leave reserve vacancies will remain under constant review to ensure adequate resource is available to meet customer, the annual leave plan and operational requirement. Units must ensure the appropriate recruitment requests, where required, are submitted in time to facilitate this, identifying locally the number of foreseen vacancies in the coming months using current national agreements, joint statements and guidelines on resourcing issues.

Both parties will use nationally agreed tools to assist with forecasting for more than 2 weeks ahead, also using historical data, local knowledge and the agreed model week.

Both parties need to be confident that traffic data are accurate and use nationally agreed processes to correct them if there is a concern.

The Fairness, Dignity and Respect guidance should be referred to and put in place where necessary.

**Annual leave plan** – No later than the second week of September the Weekly Resourcing meeting(s) should include sufficient prescheduled time to discuss and agree the annual leave plan for the forthcoming financial year which will agree and set out the annual leave allocation for the office over the forthcoming yearDocument

**12 week plan** – every month the meeting should include a review of the forecasted workload and resource available for thenext 12 weeks and any required actions should be agreed e.g. recruitment decisions, Resourcing plans, Christmas plans, special events, religious events, special postings, WPC release, CWU release etc.

**Last week** - Review last week's Resource Plan and Traffic forecast against actual. Record any issues/improvements to flow through to the following week

**2 week plan** - Review available resource and forecasted workload and build Detailed Resource Plan for 2 weeks ahead.

**1 week plan** - Refine the Resource Plan for the following week where any previously unforeseen events or fluctuations in traffic or leave/absence are due to take place.

**Communicate** – ensure all agreed resource decisions are communicated and displayed for the next 2 weeks as a minimum

**Contingencies** - Units should understand what options they have in place to deal with unexpected traffic or resource fluctuations. If all identified workload is absorbed in the weeks below your model week to create extra annual leave slots any subsequent sickness or vacancies during this period will be covered by overtime or supplementary staffing. The exception to this will be that if the DOM and Rep agree at the weekly resourcing meeting that traffic is lower than forecast an element of absorption can be applied to the coverage of sickness or vacancies to be resourced.