

**JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN ROYAL MAIL NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION AND THE
CWU REGARDING BANK HOLIDAY RESOURCING FOR LINEHAUL (NETWORK)
PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS
CHRISTMAS 2020/21**

Background

The National Agreement for the Implementation of the Road Transport Directive and the Introduction of the Professional Driver (PDA) created the Professional Driver as a new and distinct grade. For Linehaul (Network) Professional Drivers, in return for industry leading terms and conditions, this progressive agreement between Royal Mail and the CWU predicted the growth of customer activity during the weekends and on Bank Holidays and provided the commitment and the remuneration for drivers to attend on these days as part of normal working.

Since 2007, attendance during the weekends and on Bank Holidays has progressively increased due to retail activity and increased customer demand as internet fulfilment has grown considerably. The deployment of the Professional Drivers Agreement in this regard and the utilisation of its full range of resourcing options has ensured that the business has been able to meet its commercial commitments, however both parties recognise that the significant increase in Bank Holiday attendance has created some challenges in regard to a fair approach to allocation and attendance.

In particular it is recognised that the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays are in general viewed as distinct and special by Professional Drivers and their families. Given the increase in demand for services on these days in recent years both Royal Mail Logistics and the CWU believe that it is appropriate to agree supporting guidelines to the PDA, to ensure fairness in resourcing, maximise opportunities for time off and limit individual mandatory commitment whilst maintaining efficient customer service.

The safety, health and wellbeing of all employees remains jointly our 1st priority at all times and throughout this year's peak operation and measures introduced in response to Covid-19, linked to government guidance, must not be compromised. As employee numbers increase in operational units social distancing will need to be maintained and local resourcing arrangements should take account of this risk. There will be a monitoring process established in order to ensure that the measures as above are in place in all workplaces and that the safety of all employees is maintained.

Approach to Christmas and New Year Resourcing

The business has a clear commitment to provide efficient customer service during the Bank Holiday period over the Christmas and New Year, while balancing the aspirations of the workforce to spend time with their families over the festive period.

A consensus has therefore been reached between Royal Mail and CWU to maximise the availability of leave on these critical Bank Holidays to Professional Drivers over Christmas and New Year. The following principles have been developed between the business and CWU in order to ensure fairness in resourcing for Linehaul (Network) Professional Drivers at all of the Vehicle Operating Centres and Distribution Hubs. These should be utilised to shape local resourcing arrangements for the Christmas and New Year holiday period, the aim being to work collaboratively in order to achieve the optimum agreed outcome in line with these principles.

- Both parties reaffirm that there are no current plans to operate a nationwide service on Christmas Day; as such no Professional Drivers will be compelled to attend on this day. Exceptionally where any customer driven services are required on Christmas Day, it is agreed that our aspiration for attendance will be on a wholly voluntary basis with work covered utilising the full range of resourcing options detailed below.
- Forward planning is becoming increasingly difficult and customer volumes and product volatility is a particular challenge over the critical Christmas and New Year period. As far as possible, Royal Mail will commit to planning attendances well in advance providing certainty to the Professional Drivers and enabling them to arrange their personal work life balance in as much time as is practically possible.
- Resourcing plans will be reviewed and agreed locally as a matter of urgency and no later than Friday, 11th December 2020.
- Royal Mail has the aspiration to ensure that the resourcing requirement for our directly employed Professional Drivers is as low as possible and commits to using the full range of existing agreed mixed resourcing options available. Equally workload will be scheduled on the basis of commercial or operational necessity; as such non priority work will not be scheduled during these Bank Holidays or on the non USO day.
- On the Bank Holidays where a National Linehaul (Network) operation is run it is anticipated that most VOC's will be open and operational. There may be instances however where for operational reasons a VOC remains closed. In such cases it is agreed that such closures should not result in a net increased workload obligation at neighbouring operational VOC's.
- Royal Mail will seek to resource the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays and non USO day (26th December) through volunteers as far as possible. Where there are insufficient volunteers an open "fair share" approach will be developed across the Professional Drivers. (Driver hour's limitations may restrict the pool of available drivers).
- With regard to Boxing Day (26th December) and the New Year's Day Bank Holidays it is agreed that wherever possible, any last resort mandatory attendance requirement, in line with the PDA Agreement, for any individual will be limited to only one of these days.
- The business will look to complete operations as early as possible on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, and it is expected that drivers will support modified attendances to support this objective. Drivers will take a maximum of two Bank Holidays for Christmas and one for New Year (two in Scotland).
- Both parties recognise the context for Bank Holiday attendance over Christmas and New Year is covered within the Professional Drivers Agreement and the remuneration has already been addressed. Where a driver is required to attend during a Bank Holiday a day will be added to that employees annual leave entitlement to be taken under current arrangements where authorised in line with operational requirements. However in line with local arrangements in recent years, for the festive Bank Holidays only, where it enhances the availability of volunteers, drivers may elect to receive remuneration at overtime rate for the hours worked on the Bank Holiday as an alternative to the days leave.

Saturday 26th December 2020

To support contract customer requirements the National Distribution Network will run a significant operation on the non USO day (Saturday 26th December). This will require more drivers than normally scheduled to attend on a Saturday. Exceptionally therefore resourcing arrangements for attendance and remuneration for the 26th December will mirror those defined above for Bank Holidays in recognition of the importance that our drivers and their families place on this day.

Resourcing arrangements will prioritise volunteers in the first instance supported by the full range of mixed resourcing options available. Where this still results in a shortfall resourcing arrangements will be made in line with the terms of the Professional Drivers Agreement.

Therefore although not a bank holiday drivers who work on 26 December will have a day added to their annual holiday or alternatively can claim pay for the hours worked on the day as overtime.

Local discussions on resourcing should be completed at the earliest possible juncture to give the maximum levels of certainty to all our drivers. Discussions should be progressed in line with the IR Framework and the Network Working Group will be available to assist should it become necessary.

This Joint statement covers the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays only. Resourcing for all other Bank Holidays will continue to be progressed in line with the terms of the Professional Drivers Agreement.

Any issues of interpretation should be referred to the signatories of this agreement.



Nick Dunn
National Distribution Director
Royal Mail



Davie Robertson
Assistant Secretary
CWU

Date: 29th October 2020