

## **Peak/Christmas Arrangements 2020**

### **1. Introduction**

This document summarises the operational arrangements for Peak/Christmas 2020. Robust staffing arrangements will be required throughout this period to ensure customer/operational needs and USO obligations are met in line with workload forecast and taking into account the aspirations of our employees. These arrangements cover OPGs, OSGs, MGV drivers, Mail Screeners, MDECs, Processing Engineers scheduled to shift working, LAs whose conditioned hours attract assigned allowances, and Network professional drivers as detailed below.

The 2004 Christmas agreement abolished claw back of hours arising from public, bank holidays and non USO days and these arrangements remain in place for Christmas 20/21.

For Network Professional Drivers, Bank Holiday attendance arrangements will be made in line with the terms in the National Agreement on "The Introduction of the Professional Driver". Details for arrangements this year will be covered in the Joint Statement between Royal Mail Linehaul and the CWU on Peak Bank Holiday Resourcing for Network Professional Drivers, Christmas 2020/21.

The safety, health and wellbeing of all employees remains jointly our 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

With a rise in the infection rate and announcements from Government to increase testing capacity, test kits volumes are expected to increase to c200k per day with most test kits returned via Priority Postboxes. Royal Mail and the CWU are committed to delivering the exceptional levels of performance whilst keeping all colleagues safe with clearly defined Safe Systems of Work.

Local discussions should ensure operational arrangements are concluded in line with the terms below and relevant National Agreements to secure excellent customer service through reliable staffing, ensuring everyone has a fair and manageable workload. Options may include:

- Pre-scheduling hours against forecast workload
- Scheduled Attendance or pressure overtime in line with Section 5 below
- The opportunity for part timers/less than full time staff to increase their contracted hours where supported by workload
- Use of temporary/agency staff as supplementary resource

### **2. Enhanced Operational Arrangements**

The following enhancements will operate within the period of times specified. These are intended to address customer concerns, provide improved service and improve efficiency.

#### **Key Principle – National Peak Workplan**

- To ensure we deliver the best possible service to our customers, Mail Centres and RDCs should plan to advance T48/2c workplan with the object of improving/smoothing flow and enhancing the arrival profile at inward Mail Centres.

- To enable Peak 20/21, with the forecast increase in parcels, many Mail Centres will need to divert more 2c parcels to Christmas parcel sort centres to ensure they have adequate inward sorting capacity to clear inward parcels to workplan. This encompasses weeks 32-42.
- Changes to local workplan for each Mail Centre, RDC and Delivery Offices will be discussed as part of the peak planning process and resourcing arrangements agreed.
- Any agreed changes to workplan to advance T48/2c traffic will be considered temporary measures for peak. Both parties recognise that separate national discussions are considering future workplan alignment however in advance of any agreed outcome it is confirmed that workplan will revert to current arrangements at the end of peak.
- In addition, Mail Centres should ensure all services to Delivery Offices despatch all available mails.
- Delivery Offices may also consider opening during the night shift and may introduce some earlier starts to ensure that Mail Centres and Distribution service can advance workload to assist with the flow of mails and to aid social distancing in the indoor operation.
- Ensure that the additional support and equipment is in place in units including increasing the overall numbers of vehicles on site where this is necessary in order to ensure all products can be delivered to their specification including USO deliveries.

### **Cyber Weekend**

- Normal resourcing procedures will apply. There should be discussions locally at operational sites (RDCs, Plants and Delivery Offices), on how to best resource what is anticipated to be a high-volume weekend.
- In RDC and Plants a significant operation will be in place from Midday Sunday to Midday Monday to advance Tracked and Standard Parcels. Enhanced collection arrangements will need to be in place over this weekend to support the operation.

### **Customer Service Point (CSP) Opening Times**

Opening hours in CSPs have been reduced due to changes in customer demand and an increase in First Time Delivery (FTD) over the course of the last 6 months. There will be an increase in CSP opening hours for peak based on the commercial steer and expected uplift in parcel traffic. It is expected that the FTD will continue to remain higher year on year as we move into the peak period. There will be extended opening times from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November to Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December. The CSP closing times on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December will be no later than 16:00 for the larger categorised CSPs and earlier for the smaller CSPs.

Given that Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve day fall on Thursdays (normal day for late night opening), late night opening this year will move to Wednesday for both these days. A National specification will be issued categorising each CSP and the required opening times (Appendix A – CSP Opening Times).

All CSPs that opened on a Sunday prior to March 2020 (pre-COVID changes) will now open each Sunday from 22nd November, up to and including the 20th December. These CSPs will open at the pre-COVID Sunday opening times.

It is also the aim to open as many other CSPs as possible on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December and this is in line with last year's additional opening which demonstrated high customer footfall on the day. These additional CSPs will operate for a minimum of four hours with a core time of 11:00

to 15:00 hours (however a period of booking in will be required for Saturday P739s) subject to local discussions.

### **Tracked Direct Dispatch**

To alleviate capacity issues at some inward Mail Centres for the processing of tracked items a number of MPUs will perform the inward sortation for their respective postcodes during the Christmas pressure period. Resourcing options will be agreed locally.

### **Supplementary Tracked Parcel Delivery Services (LAT/Parcel Hubs)**

From week 34-36 (23 Nov until 7 Dec) certain Delivery Offices will introduce Supplementary Parcel Deliveries (LAT) as part of the LAT Ramp Up Agreement. This will maximize connectivity of premium products, arriving in Delivery Offices too late to connect with core delivery. From week 36 until week 39 (23<sup>rd</sup> December) the number of participating Delivery Offices will increase to c960 based on local arrangements, when it is anticipated that volumes will increase.

It is imperative that the upstream pipeline/network is in place to connect and distribute this traffic. To ensure that these arrangements are agreed in a timely manner, each Mail Centre which receives non-core LAT traffic will also create Local Joint Working Groups (LJWG) to ensure that the cross functional working is adopted, and all functions are aware of the roles and responsibilities. The LJWG will be overseen by the relevant Manager and nominated CWU Divisional Representative with the core attendees being:

#### **CWU**

Area Delivery Representative  
Area Processing Representative  
Area Distribution Representative

#### **Royal Mail**

Operations Manager  
Plant Manager  
Area Distribution Manager

Each unit will need to plan and align resource dependent upon the traffic forecasts, to ensure LAT/premium products are delivered on the same day as received in the Delivery Offices, this should include utilisation of reserves, overtime and casuals. The delivery of these items should normally be completed by 19:00 hours however taking into account that this is our peak delivery period, it has been agreed that delivery can be extended to 20:00 hours in weeks-36 – 39 (2<sup>nd</sup> December to 23<sup>rd</sup> December) subject to local agreement. As a result of increased parcel workload there will be a requirement to resource agency workers to supplement PM parcel deliveries, however it is accepted that this will not be at the detriment to existing employees earning opportunities.

These Supplementary Parcel Delivery duties will form part of the normal local discussions covering operational arrangements and will take full account of local circumstances in ensuring sufficient resource and vehicle provision is available to cover the workload, and in line with Section 15.3 of the Guiding Principles agreement.

Both parties would encourage local discussions to ensure the Supplementary Standard Parcel Delivery may be planned and takes place between 07:00 and 10:00 in order to maximise the opportunities to deliver as many items as possible. However, these will not replace the LAT delivery task in the points above for the resource to deliver the parcel products that arrive on the day and do not connect with Core Deliveries.

In all circumstances, employee safety and the security of mail must be assured. Areas/Addresses identified as high risk: for example, where deliveries are suspended due to attacks, robberies or problem dogs etc., will be excluded from receiving this additional service.

### **Sunday Delivery and re-delivery**

It is recognised that the increase in first time delivery and the additional number of CSP's open combined with rigorous planning means that there should be no need for Sunday deliveries or re-deliveries. However, this aspect will be subject to continued and ongoing review and if any office finds it necessary due to a high number of undelivered items, or based on local knowledge and/or current challenges around maintaining the USO due to absence rates linked to Covid-19 then arrangements will be made via local discussions in advance to ensure the necessary resource is put in place. Where discussions locally fail to resolve the matter, it will be referred to the appropriate Operations Manager and Area Representative or Service Delivery Leader and Divisional Representative for speedy resolution. This will also be subject to National review and will be included on the National weekly Joint Operational meeting agenda.

### **Sunday Collections**

It is expected the requirement as in previous years to collect from heavy boxes on Sundays will be required again this year. Local knowledge of heavy boxes or the Mail Centre capacity plan on the following Monday's indicates Sunday collections are required then staffing will be on a voluntary basis and the arrangements agreed locally.

### **Sunday Processing**

There is increasing demand for customer collections and next day fulfilment during the weekends. Processing plants/RDCs should therefore utilise all available processing opportunities on Sundays for both outward and inward sortation and despatch - should the traffic levels require. Staffing will be on a voluntary basis and the arrangements agreed locally.

### **Collection on Delivery**

Local discussion should ensure adequate arrangements are in place to deal with Collections on Delivery, where there may be larger than normal postings, to ensure that all mails (Collection and Delivery) meet their due service standards.

## **3. Attendance and Resourcing Arrangements**

- 3.1 Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December and Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> December are not a Bank Holiday and resourcing should be agreed in line with adjusted workplan principles. Night shifts will not be required to attend on these days. In exceptional circumstances where any attendance on Night Shift is required this will be on a voluntary basis.
- 3.2 Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December is the designated bank holiday. There will be no USO collections or deliveries on this day.
- 3.3 Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> December is not a bank holiday. We have agreed with Ofcom that it is a non USO day so there will be no USO collections or deliveries. However, there will be a requirement to collect, process and deliver Covid-19 test kits, as well as

collection from POL outlets. On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December there is a requirement to collect, process and deliver Covid-19 test kits, and we are further required to deliver T24 parcels posted from Christmas Eve on this Sunday, with an expectation that this will be an LAT style service. Monday 28<sup>th</sup> December will be the bank holiday and again there is a requirement to collect, process and deliver Covid-19 test kits. Where service requires attendance on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> December, people attending will be paid at scheduled attendance Monday to Saturday rate. These additional attendances during this weekend will be on a voluntary basis with work covered utilising the full range of resourcing options.

- 3.4 Friday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 is the designated New Year bank holiday. There will be no USO collections or deliveries on this day. There is a requirement to collect, process and deliver Covid-19 test kits.
- 3.5 Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> January is not a Bank Holiday in Scotland in 2021. In 2009 and 2015 Ofcom agreed to designate this day as non-USO day in Scotland. Ofcom are currently consulting on granting the same condition for 2021 with the review due to conclude on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020. The expectation is that Ofcom will confirm the arrangement in which case there will be no USO collections or deliveries on this day (2<sup>nd</sup> January) in Scotland. The 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 is a designated Bank Holiday in Scotland however Royal Mail will be obliged to perform USO Deliveries and Collections on this day. Operational and attendance arrangements for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021, including collection, processing and delivery of Covid-19 test kits will mirror the principles established in 2009/10 and will be confirmed between Service Delivery Leaders and Divisional Reps who cover Scotland. Should Ofcom decide to retain the non USO day on the 4<sup>th</sup> January arrangements will be revisited.
- 3.6 In line with normal Christmas bank holiday and non USO service day arrangements, people who would normally be scheduled to work on the day of the bank holiday or non USO service day for the provision of USO collection and delivery services and non USO parcel operations will not be required to attend and not be required to make up the hours.
- 3.7 Rest days will apply in line with normal year-round arrangements. Attendances may be varied by local agreement to take account of workload forecasts and service requirements. Where workload requires, (and subject to currently agreed working time limits) people can volunteer in advance to work their normal rest day in return for a day in lieu or the resourcing/remuneration options contained in Section 1. Where a rest day falls on a Bank Holiday (i.e. on 25, 28 December, 1 January or 2 January in Scotland) and it is not operationally sensible to transfer the rest day to another day in the same week, people will receive an additional day holiday (including those working 'a week off in six' or other variations on this theme) in the form of a day in lieu or alternatively the excess hours can be taken as normal overtime.
- 3.8 To comply with the USO, Inland night shift operations should resume as required on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> December and Friday 1<sup>st</sup> January (Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> January in Scotland) to meet service obligations. Staff required to attend within conditioned hours on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> December or on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> January (Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January in Scotland) will receive the Bank Holiday premium for each hour worked on the Bank Holidays. Where agreed night shift resourcing arrangements result in attendance beyond conditioned hours, staff will receive normal Bank Holiday rates (option A or B as appropriate) for the additional hours worked on the Bank Holiday (before Midnight) and normal overtime rates for hours worked out-with the Bank Holiday (after midnight).

- 3.9 People who volunteer and attend for overtime on bank holidays will receive normal bank holiday rates (Option A or B as appropriate) for the hours worked on the bank holiday.
- 3.10 Local Christmas discussions/arrangements should ensure agreed staffing arrangements are in place to meet service obligations in full on Bank Holidays while maximising opportunities to meet employee aspirations for time off. To support this, discussions will utilise the full range of resourcing options, including the realignment of conditioned hours across these weeks.
- 3.11 Weekend duty holders (notional full timers and people who make three or less attendances each week) will have separate scheduling arrangements, in line with the relevant national agreements, to be agreed/discussed locally.
- 3.12 Providing resourcing is secure at their parent offices, people can volunteer for duty or additional earnings opportunities at neighbouring Parcel Sort Centres, and at specific MPU sites that will be processing inward tracked arrivals. (Mail Centre workload). Normal processing arrangements for inward tracked arrivals will resume after the Christmas period.
- 3.13 Local flexibility agreements and the National Pay and Modernisation agreement Phase 3 Annexes A and B will apply and be utilised during the Christmas period. Both parties will explore opportunities to give people time off where possible consistent with customer and operational requirements.

#### **4. Christmas Pay Supplement**

The Christmas pay supplement of £100 for full time OPG and OSGs, pro-rated for part timers and 35-hour full timers (subject to the arrangements in Section 7) will be paid on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December. The eligibility criteria for the Christmas supplement payment will be the same as last year, based on the four December weeks (commencing Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November). In the event of any Industrial Action the abatement criteria will be drawn from the PBS agreement.

The separate payment of £100 (pro rata for PT and 35hr full time employees) agreed in the National Joint Statement - New Incentive Arrangements June 2012 will also be paid on Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> December. As in previous years, any necessary top up payments for Part Time or 35 hr Full time employees will be made in January 2020 in accordance with the actual hours worked at standard rate, beyond contractual during 2019.

#### **5. Scheduled Attendances**

Scheduled Attendance rates can be paid for pre-scheduled overtime worked during the Christmas pressure period. These do not attract Paid Meal Relief unless worked on a Sunday.

Additional 'on the day' pressure or absence overtime will be paid at ordinary standard overtime pay rates.

All year-round SAs will remain in place during the Christmas period unless agreed locally. Where agreement is reached on revised SA arrangements, 4 weeks' notice must be given before any agreed change is deployed. Normal SA arrangements will resume following the Christmas period.

## 6. Scheduled Attendance Holiday Pay

Christmas SA may increase the number of SA hours worked above normal weekly averages. To ensure the additional contribution is not lost SA holiday pay for the Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day (plus 2<sup>nd</sup> January in Scotland) Bank Holidays will be calculated by taking the average daily amount of SA worked by each individual in the 4 weeks prior to the Bank Holiday.

## 7. Temporary Variation to Contractual Status

To ensure parity of treatment, where workload supports the increase, part time or 35-hour full time staff performing 38-hour duties may extend their contractual hours to 38 for the Christmas period through a temporary variation of contract in line with the current process.

## 8. Pay Arrangements

The Christmas Pay Timetable will be separately communicated

## 9. Appendix A – CSP opening times

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Very Large	08:00-19:00	08:00-19:00	08:00-19:00	08:00-20:00	08:00-19:00	08:00-17:30	Pre-Covid BAU
Large	08:00-16:00	08:00-17:30	08:00-17:30	08:00-20:00	08:00-19:00	08:00-17:00	Pre-Covid BAU
Medium	08:00-14:00	08:00-14:00	08:00-17:30	08:00-20:00	08:00-17:30	08:00-15:00	Pre-Covid BAU
Small	08:00-13:00	08:00-13:00	08:00-13:00	08:00-13:00 & 16:00-20:00	08:00-14:00	08:00-14:00	Pre-Covid BAU
Very Small	08:00-11:00	08:00-11:00	08:00-11:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-12:00	Pre-Covid BAU
Micro	08:00-11:00	08:00-11:00	08:00-11:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-12:00	Pre-Covid BAU

Royal Mail

CWU

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020