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To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Royal Mail Group – Introduction of ‘Whole Workplace/Office’ Stress Risk Assessment Process Tool and Updated Stress Toolkit, Guidance and Joint Statement (Stress Toolkit Includes Individual Stress Risk Assessment Process Also):

Introduction and Background:

Mental health problems are widespread, at times disabling, yet often hidden. Research by the mental health charity the ‘Mental Health Foundation’ found that three quarters of UK adults had felt ‘overwhelmed or unable to cope’ in the previous year, with one in three having suicidal feelings as a result of stress.

The CWU Health Safety and Environment Department has been working with Royal Mail Group on introducing a revised, updated Stress Risk Assessment Process, Toolkit and Guidance for CWU members. Through this new approach RMG recognise work-related stressors as a potential hazard to health and are jointly committed to managing work related stress in a proactive manner to reduce the personal impact on RMG employees – now both for individuals and across whole workplaces, involving a process used to measure population based stressors when we assess all the staff in a workplace e.g., a Mail Processing Centre, a Delivery Office, a Distribution Centre, a Depot, a Hub, a Workshop, an Admin Unit etc., for example.

Work-related stress is recognised as one of the main ill health concerns in the workplace and the launch of the new Royal Mail Group/CWU agreed ‘Whole Workplace, Whole Office or Whole Work Group’ Stress Risk Assessment Tool adds a new dimension to the Royal Mail stress standard. Through this new additional process, collective workforce stress can be recognised and risk assessed. Working together, managers, CWU representatives and employees can jointly assess stress levels amongst the workforce in a workplace and develop solutions and ideas on how to tackle it effectively.

The management and reduction of stress is an important part of a changing culture in Royal Mail and if implemented properly can significantly reduce levels of mental and physical illness caused by work-related stress and anxiety.

Through the ‘Because Healthy Minds Matter’ Strategy, Royal Mail Group have committed to implement effective support strategies and tools that can make a positive difference to the Royal Mail Group workforce who are directly or indirectly affected by mental ill-health.

Royal Mail Group state that protecting the health, safety and welfare of employees remains the number one priority. Royal Mail Group are on record as recognising that workplace stress is a health and safety matter and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

This updated Stress Toolkit can be a major component in the vision for a workplace with good mental health for all and prevention is at the heart of it.

The RMG Updated Stress Toolkit (Copy Attached):

The new Group Stress Risk Assessment Tool and user guide become part of the Royal Mail Group (RMG) Stress Toolkit along with the Individual Stress Risk Assessment/Guided Conversation and 'Preventing and Managing Stress Guidance' designed to help prevent and manage workplace stress. The Stress Toolkit emphasises the importance of effective line management and the behaviours needed to successfully manage the causes of stress at work. It is now on the RMG Health and Wellbeing intranet pages (an electronic copy is attached to this LTB).

The Preventing and Managing Stress Guide (Part of the Stress Toolkit – Copy Attached):

This outlines roles and responsibility in Royal Mail for stress.

- Provides advice on signs and symptoms.
- Gives directions for carrying out a Stress Risk Assessment using the HSE principles.
- Provides guidance on when each of the risk assessments should be used.

The 'Two-Level' Stress Approach:

The new approach being jointly launched is very much focused on the 'two level' stress approach. This two-level Stress Risk Assessment process is supported by a helpline and website offering advice and wellbeing guidance called the 'First Class Support' service. The CWU very much welcomes this positive initiative which we helped shape through positive involvement and consultation at every stage and includes:

- The individual stress risk assessment called the 'Guided Conversation for Stress' and
- The 'Whole Workplace/Office/Group Stress Risk Assessment using the full HSE Stress Management Standards Risk Assessment Indicator Tool Questionnaire.
- This two-level Stress Risk Assessment process is supported by a RMG 'First Class Support' helpline and a 'Feeling First Class' website offering advice and guidance.

Individual Stress Risk Assessment

In October 2016, Royal Mail Group together with the CWU and Unite CMA jointly launched the first Royal Mail Group Stress Toolkit, which includes guidance to help prevent and manage workplace stress including the 'Guided Conversation' which is an individual Stress Risk Assessment.

Group Stress Risk Assessment

Building on the earlier agreement and following trials at 15 Units in 2019, Royal Mail Group are now enhancing the 'Stress Toolkit' further by introducing the new 'Group Stress Risk Assessment' designed to assess collective work-related stress levels across all employees in a workplace, office, depot, hub, plant, workshop, centre or a workgroup.

Developed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as part of the HSE Stress Management Standards, the Group Stress Risk Assessment Tool has been designed to gather the opinions and feedback of the workforce as a whole in a given workplace, work unit, work groups or employee etc., through a survey, following which the responses are collated, aggregated and analysed to provide a collective, broad indication of the stress levels in that workplace and how well or badly the risks associated with work related stress are being managed or not. From

there solutions and a remedial action plan can be developed and initiated. The objective is to get the most meaningful assessment and picture of stress levels and identification of the stressors and causes of stress in the workplace. In summary the results and outcomes of the stress survey will be jointly analysed and discussed by management and CWU Reps in order to jointly develop and introduce a remedial action by:

- Exploring problems and developing solutions.
- Developing and implementing action plan/s.
- Monitoring and reviewing action plans and assessing effectiveness.

Group Stress Risk Assessment Tool User Instructions (Part of the Stress Toolkit – Copy Attached) – Summary of CWU Reps Involvement:

Para 1. Background

- The **Trade Union Area Health and Safety Representative and other Representatives** should be engaged and fully involved in the process.

Para 2. When should the Group Stress Risk Assessment Tool be completed?

- The Stress Risk Assessment survey can be initiated following an **Area Health and Safety Representative's safety inspection report**.
- The Stress Risk Assessment process can be discussed at the **joint Health and Safety Committee** meetings.

Para 3. Getting a good response rate

- Use joint communications with **Trade Union Area Health and Safety Representatives and other Union Representatives**.

Para 4. Checklist

- Step 1: Inform all relevant stakeholders, **Trade Union Area Health and Safety Representatives and other Representatives** who should form a working group to agree and plan activity, including who will become the survey coordinator responsible for leading activity.
- It is recommended that an existing formal channel such as the Health and Safety Committee Meeting, or an ad-hoc meeting/conference call is arranged to complete this activity.

Para 6. Analysing Results

- It is important to appreciate that the results of the survey alone can only provide an indication of performance in managing work-related stress, and you will need to share and discuss the outcomes of the survey with employees and their **Trade Union Area Health and Safety Representatives and other Representatives**, and explore any issues raised in more detail. The intention is that all the data you collect can be used to promote a system of continuous improvement.

Appendix A:

- A covering communication/message which can be provided along with the Stress Survey. This can be signed by the local or area manager and **jointly signed with Union Representatives**.

Appendix B:

- Group Stress Risk Assessment Tool – Activity Plan.
Activity.
Point 2 – Inform **Trade Union Area Health and Safety Representative and other Representatives.**
Point 10 – Share survey reports with **Trade Union Area Health and Safety Representative and other Representatives** and discuss improvement activity plan.
Point 12 – Review progress against the plan involving **Trade Union Area Health and Safety Representative and other Representatives.**

HSE's Management Standards represent a set of conditions that, if present:

- Demonstrate good practice through a step-by-step risk assessment approach.
- Allow assessment of the current situation using the survey tool and other techniques.
- Promote active discussion and employers/managers working in partnership with employees and the trade unions representatives, to help decide on practical improvements that can be made.
- Help simplify risk assessment for work-related stress by:
 - identifying the main risk factors.
 - helping employers focus on the underlying causes of stress and their prevention.
 - helping organisations in tackling the key causes of stress.

HSE Guidance On Stress and Stress Risk Assessment:

To help workplaces work together to address stress the HSE has identified six key areas (or risk factors) that can be causes of work related stress. These are:

- the **demands** of your job;
- your **control** over your work;
- the **support** you receive from managers and colleagues;
- your **relationships** at work;
- your **role** in the organisation;
- **change** and how it's managed.

The Health and Safety Law:

All employers have a legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure the health safety and welfare at work of their employees. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) state that this includes minimising the risk of stress-related illness or injury to employees. There are lots of ways of doing this and can include having a structured safety programme, a workplace wellbeing programme and by carrying out Stress Risk Assessments.

The Royal Mail Group (RMG) 5-Year Mental Health Strategy:

Through the Royal Mail Group five-year strategy 'Because Healthy Minds Matter' launched in 2017, Royal Mail Group (RMG) have committed to implement effective support strategies and tools that can make a positive difference to the workforce who are directly or indirectly affected by mental ill-health. Royal Mail Group has also committed to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees, recognising that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. (See attached copy of Joint Statement). The Royal Mail Group (RMG) 5-Year Mental Health Strategy to date has included:

- The signing of the Time to Change Pledge – jointly signed by RMG and CWU;
- Development of 5 mental health support videos with the Mental Health Foundation;

- Introduction of the Mental Health First Aid Awareness one-day course for all Managers, Physical First Aiders and CWU Health & Safety Reps;
- Launch of the five-year strategy and underpinning plan 'Because Healthy Minds Matter';
- Creation of the 'Because Healthy Minds Matter' mental health e-learning;
- Mental health support 'z-cards' with CWU sent into all units;
- Launched Mental Health & Wellbeing Ambassadors;
- Agreed with CWU an approach to upskilling 5,500 Physical First Aiders to include Mental Health First Aid;
- Increased promotion of RMG's 'Feeling First Class,' and 'Employee Assistance' programmes;
- Continued activity through mental health charity partnerships including the 'Everyday People' video.
- Launch of the RMG Stress Toolkit, individual stress risk assessment process.
- Introduced 'Whole Office/Unit/Group' Stress Risk Assessment process addition to the RMG Stress Toolkit.

Royal Mail Group 'Helpline' and other available employee assistance support:

- **The RMG First Class Support Service is free, confidential and available 24/7 for all employees including direct access to counselling services. Call 0345 266 5060:**
- RMG members can also visit www.rmgfirstclasssupport.co.uk or download the 'Lifeworks' app. New website/app users can 'sign up' using a unique invitation code, which is **RMG-** and then their payroll number, e.g., **RMG-12345678**.
- Digital services available via the Royal Mail Group Website and App include an instant online chat facility as well as various media content, toolkits, manager support articles and health and wellbeing assessments and personal care programmes.
- CWU Reps, Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors, can work with employees and managers locally to provide mental and physical health promotion and signposting to support and a range of tools and services on the RMG Intranet to support mental health.

Attachments:

- Royal Mail Group (RMG) Whole Workplace/Office/Group Stress Risk Assessment Tool Launch – RMG/CWU Joint Statement
- Royal Mail Group (RMG) Launch of the Group Stress Risk Assessment Tool Communication
- Royal Mail Group (RMG) Stress Tool Kit (Zip File which includes):
 - RMG SHE - Preventing and Managing Workplace Stress Guidance
 - RMG SHE – Individual Stress Risk Assessment – Guided Conversation
 - RMG SHE – Group (Whole Workplace) Stress Risk Assessment Guidance, Questionnaire/Survey Tool, Collation Tool & Action Plan proforma.

Yours sincerely



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