

CWU WESTERN COUNTIES
BRANCH

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS POLICY
IN ROYAL MAIL

BEST PRACTISE STANDARDS
FOR REPRESENTATIVES AND
COMMITTEES

EFFECTIVE FROM 26 JANUARY
2010



1. INTRODUCTION

Following much debate within the Branch both within the Central Committee and the Royal Mail Section Committee, it was agreed that we now needed to adopt a “best practise” approach to all industrial relations matters.

Due to the extremely difficult climate we face, we have for too long now, allowed ourselves to be put onto the back foot.

Changes are made, members are unhappy and proper dialogue and input from members seems to have been left behind in some cases.

Just as important, you as local reps can end up being isolated and criticised from all sides. We can't let this go on.

In time we believe that it will contribute towards rebuilding good solid links between members, their local reps and the Branch across all workplaces.

Additionally, CWU Representatives must appreciate that they represent the Communication Workers Union as an organisation as well as all CWU members within their area of responsibility. This means that any CWU Representative must always support official industrial action irrespective of how many members in their workplace are doing so.

The voice of the membership needs to be heard more than ever. These new obligations on all of us will begin to change the way we do business for the better and will help to challenge the apathy that exists in some places.

This document is now Branch policy and is mandatory. It will be monitored by both the Royal Mail Section Committee and the Branch Central Committee.

2. DEALING WITH PROPOSALS FROM MANAGEMENT / CONDUCT & ATTENDANCE

Local CWU Representatives when faced with proposals from their manager shall, as a minimum:

1. Ensure that any proposals affecting duties, duty times and earnings are made in writing by the local manager(s).
2. That there is always supporting evidence for any changes being proposed.
3. That appropriate release from duty is granted to deal with the proposals.
4. That where more than one shift or function operates on a particular site, that all CWU reps must be involved (with release from duty granted as appropriate) in any discussions to ensure no adverse knock-on effects.
5. That whenever proposals are made by Royal Mail, that any local outstanding issues that members may have, must be incorporated into talks with management.
6. That the local CWU Rep must contact the Area Representative to ensure they are involved and/or advised, to ensure full compliance with any National Agreements and to ensure no adverse knock-on effects in any other workplaces.
7. That no local agreements can be reached unless they are ratified by a members' meeting and that Royal Mail be informed of this.
8. That a copy of the local agreement reached be sent to the Branch and the relevant Area Representative.
9. Unless the member specifically requests it or the Area Representative agrees otherwise, Stage 3 Attendance interviews must be carried out by the Area Representative. In the absence of the Area Rep, the Deputy Area Rep to decide.

10. In all cases of alleged misconduct, the Area Representative must be informed to ensure dialogue before deciding who will represent the member.

11. In all cases of alleged harassment and bullying or grievances, the Area Representative must be contacted to ensure dialogue before deciding how best to deal with the case.

3. WORKPLACE COMMITTEES

All workplaces must have a local workplace committee, but it is mandatory for those with 100 or more members on one site to have one.

The purpose of the workplace committee will be to:

1. Gather feed back from members on day to day issues
2. Monitor ongoing staffing – vacancies / OT shared out fairly / rounds tested / moving staff to permanent status / advertising vacancies etc
3. Scrutinise with the local rep(s) any proposals from local management
4. Decide on what issues to action and take up with management
5. Checking on progress of issues raised with management

Additionally,

- This Committee must meet at least 4 times per year and :
- Whenever there are proposals put to the local representative (or Area Representative, if there is no locally elected rep).
- The membership of the Committee must where possible include as a minimum, members from different work areas (e.g. towns and rural's / day and night shifts), part time and

full time members, and as far as possible a mix of both male and female CWU members.

- The Committee must ideally have a minimum of 5. There is no upper limit, but it is recommended that not more than 12 members should be needed.
- Brief notes of meetings must be kept including any action points. The Committee should not end up as just a “talking shop.”
- The Committee must abide by all local and national agreements that are in force at the time.
- The Committee must not negotiate direct and has no power to reach agreements with, Royal Mail.
- Area Representatives and the Branch Secretary must be informed of dates of meetings by the local CWU Rep so that they can attend should they so wish.
- Any variation to the above format must be agreed with the Royal Mail Section Committee.

NB. The operation of these Committees will be monitored by the Royal Mail Section Committee to ensure they are up and running and to provide any assistance needed.

4. AREA REPRESENTATIVES RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the Bi-Monthly Royal Mail Section Committee meetings:

1. Conference calls will take place for the specific purpose of checking on progressing agreed Royal Mail Section policy and to discuss any other urgent matters that may have arisen.
2. Local Reps meetings will be held and diarised in advance, for a minimum of 3 meetings per year for each post code

area. (NB Subject to any national IR changes that may be agreed).

3. Reports of any briefings and /or Divisional Committee meetings will be sent by the respective Area Rep to their local reps by hard copy and email.
4. Local reps to be advised of any briefings and / or Divisional Committees when a date is fixed, in order to seek comments.
5. Report on local agreements reached and the work of workplace committees, to the Royal Mail Section Committee.
6. Ensure that all dismissals and/or serious grievances that maybe Employment Tribunal worthy are brought to the attention of the Branch Secretary.

6. ROYAL MAIL SECTION COMMITTEE

The Committee will meet bi-monthly at venues to be agreed.

Dates for future meetings where ever possible will be published to all workplaces in advance, ideally at the beginning of the calendar year.

Minutes and decisions reached shall be distributed to all Royal Mail workplaces by email and hard copy.

The purpose and structure of the Committee is set out in the Branch Rules, however the ongoing intention is to discuss matters relevant to all members and to develop policies and campaigns that can be progressed and reviewed via future meetings and via conference calls.

The Committee will agree a formula to ensure coverage and attendance at National Briefings together with report back arrangements.

The Committee will actively look to invite either a Divisional or National Representative to meetings on an ongoing basis

The Committee will monitor all local agreements reached and ensure that workplace committees are functioning.