

No. 250/2020

12th May 2020

Dear Colleagues,

ROYAL MAIL: CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE – WORKING FROM HOME DURING THE PANDEMIC

Branches are advised we have been working with senior Customer Experience management during lockdown with the aim of ensuring the health, safety and well-being of our members was the paramount priority in the six Call Centres in Bangor, Dearne, Doxford, Glasgow, Stoke and Plymouth.

CE management were quick to respond to the escalating situation, with social distancing measures being put in place wherever possible in the centres as far back as 17th March. Spare capacity such as training/meeting rooms and unused spaces were used to move desks and equipment so that the distance guidelines could be met. In the case of Bangor, this was not practical due to space limitations; consequently, this centre was prioritised for migration to home working.

Discussions took place with Susan Howlett, Director of Customer Experience, from the outset with regards to contingency planning to prepare for a situation whereby CE could incrementally move to a home working solution with the emphasis being placed on seeking volunteers. Plans were also shared with us regarding the ordering of the necessary equipment (hundreds of laptops) to enable members to work from home wherever possible. In terms of the practicalities, members are allowed to take home chairs, keyboard and mouse etc. from their workstations if they didn't have suitable equipment at home. It should be noted the Union has been involved at all levels in these discussions and plans.

We are provided with regular updates on the numbers of people working from home and the latest figures (as at close of play Monday 11th May) show this now stands at 792 (75% of total) as per the table below:

Centre	AT HOME			PLAN IN PLACE TO MOVE TO WFH			NO PLAN AS YET	Grand Total
	RMG Laptop - At Home	VDI Enabled - At Home	LIW/Out of scope	VDI Enabled - Still On Site	Laptop Pending - Still On Site	Solution Pending - Still On Site	Unable to work from home	
Bangor	10						2	12
Dearne	64	104	14	14	59			255
Doxford	144	57	18	14	20	46	5	304
Glasgow	18		1		1	5	3	28
Plymouth	107	82	13	11	3	34	7	257
Stoke	54	31	9	3	16	17	6	136
LIW/Other	54		12					66
	792			243			23	1059

VDI is the home working solution – i.e. people using their own home PC’s or laptops. However, members using the telephony system (Genesys) need a Royal Mail laptop for it to work; hence the two types of solution as described in the table above. There are currently a number of people for whom working from home is not practical or who do not want to work from home and the plans are advanced for the majority of the remainder to work from home. They are either waiting for a laptop or for their home equipment to be assessed/updated for use. We expect the migration to be completed within the next couple of weeks.

Reassurances have been given by CE management that if a member did not feel comfortable working from home or if the environment was not suitable, they could continue to work in the call centre, particularly as social distancing became much easier to achieve once migration of a significant number of members to home based working. CE have also confirmed members have the option of returning to the centre at any time if they wish.

Our Reps in conjunction with management have worked well together in ensuring our members’ health, safety and well-being have been the top priority at every stage of this process. To migrate nearly 800 people to working from home has been a monumental task logistically and that is why the numbers have been built up each week. I am grateful to the Reps for their hard work during this difficult period. Also, credit should be given to the Customer Experience Management for their inclusive and collaborative approach to this migration to home working.

CE Management fully understands that in the event there is an extended period of homeworking it is essential that the CWU are fully involved in the practicalities around these long-term plans. Also if any member experiences any issues whilst working from home they should without delay contact their local centre Rep for advice and guidance.

Finally, below is a link to a web story in regards to the new working from home arrangements.

<https://www.cwu.org/news/working-from-home-agreement-royal-mail-customer-experience/>

Yours sincerely

Andy Furey
Assistant Secretary