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To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Update - First Royal Mail Group Employee/CWU Member, Positive Test, Corona Virus Victim:

This LTB is being issued to confirm the basic facts of the first case of a Royal Mail employee and CWU Member becoming unwell at work and subsequently testing positive for the Coronavirus (Covid-19) infection and to deal with the unhelpful misinformation and rumour appearing on social media.

As of yesterday evening the UK national number of confirmed Coronavirus cases was confirmed by the Government as 273 and is expected to continue to climb.

The facts of the case involving a Royal Mail employee and CWU member involve a Postman/OPG employed at the Manchester South West Delivery Office, who recently returned from holiday in Italy, without any immediate symptoms but on returning to work became ill after a single day back at work and after showing the symptoms of the virus contacted NHS 111 and was tested which resulted in a positive result after which he went off work and into self-quarantine and is following medical advice and treatment.

The CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department was immediately informed by the Business and we have been in consultation with Royal Mail HQ and working with the local CWU Area Health and Safety Rep and CWU Divisional IR Rep.

Prior to this case occurring, RMP&FS had been in discussions with the CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department with regard to their plans to set up arrangements for initiating 'deep cleans' of Royal Mail premises by specialist cleaning teams, using a powerful multi-purpose virucidal/bactericidal cleaner and sanitiser - should it be required. This has been carried out at Manchester SWDO.

It is also worth adding that scientific experts conclude that this virus does not survive long outside of a host person or animal and estimate that it can survive on hard and soft surfaces no more than a few hours to a day at most approximately.

Royal Mail Group's Head of Health has been working in conjunction with and under the advice of Public Health England who have confirmed their satisfaction that the Delivery Office building poses no risk of infection to the workforce and that it can operate normally.

Transmission of the virus is airborne which means it's spread in a similar way to colds and flu to other persons, normally via close personal contact with infected individuals through coughing and sneezing small fine droplets which are breathed in by others and they can become infected.

At the request of the CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department, it has been agreed that a professional medically qualified clinician will brief the Manchester SWDO workforce to provide the necessary assurances and to answer any questions.

See attached Joint Statement which in summary firstly commits Royal Mail Group to joint working with the CWU in line with the advice and guidance of the WHO, UK CMO, Department of Health, PHE and NHS in order to plan ahead to take appropriate action. It covers agreed arrangements for deep cleaning and disinfecting of offices where necessary as per PHE guidelines. It covers Royal Mail and CWU joint support for promoting regular handwashing and the use of gloves and alcohol disinfectant wipes for shared equipment and the joint promotion of good respiratory hygiene in the workplace. Importantly it commits Royal Mail Group to adopt a supportive approach to self-isolation in relation to, pay, absence policy and fit note provision.

This is the first case in Royal Mail Group and being one of the UK's largest employers, we have to expect that it may not be the last. We are satisfied that the Royal Mail Group Head of Health and the Director of Safety, Health, Wellbeing and Sustainability and their teams are doing everything possible to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of the members involved, working with Public Health England and working closely in consultation with the Union and both sides are committed to continue working in liaison during the current virus outbreak.

Finally, All ASRs and Branch Reps are asked to remain vigilant in encouraging members to maintain good hygiene standards at all times, thoroughly washing hands regularly and using alcohol-based wipes to clean shared equipment such as PDAs, scanners and keyboards. Members should also be encouraged to act responsibly, follow Government travel advice and restrict contact with anyone who may have travelled to high-risk areas and countries and who have an obvious fever or cough. Anyone exhibiting any flu-like symptoms and feeling unwell should be advised to limit the spread of infection and call NHS 111 without delay.

Further reports will follow in due course.

Yours sincerely



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encl: [RMG-CWU Joint Statement Coronavirus Manchester SWDO](#)

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Royal Mail Group/ CWU Joint Statement Dealing with Coronavirus COVID-19 Protecting and Putting the Workforce First

This Joint Statement reiterates the primary policy of Royal Mail Group, that the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees is paramount and we continually review our policies and processes, working jointly in co-ordination with the Communication Workers Union in order to minimise and eliminate the risks to employees, removing or reducing the likelihood of injury or ill health and harm to employees.

Royal Mail Group are working in line with the advice and guidance of the World Health Organisation, the UK Chief Medical Officers, the Department of Health and Social Care, Public Health England and the NHS - following the best practice policies adopted by the public health authorities to take action, in order to contain the Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak. The WHO stress that long-term success cannot be taken for granted and all sections of society - including all businesses and employers - must play a role if collectively we are to stop the spread of this disease. Royal Mail is fully committed to these objectives, as the UK numbers of Coronavirus victims continue to increase daily and as one of the UK's biggest employers, Royal Mail will continue to plan ahead in relation to the issues that need to be addressed and work closely with the CWU who support this approach.

Royal Mail Group working with the CWU will be doing all it can to support employees, through awareness raising, preventative steps, employee health campaigning, advice and support from the Occupational Health Teams and HR Business Partners. The Safety Health and Environment Team will continue to support managers effectively and Royal Mail will update the SHE Business Partners daily with information and current Q&A's. Royal Mail will also pro-actively evolve relevant policies as agreed and required. Royal Mail is working closely with Optima Health and Global Director Compliance & Sustainability Dr Shaun Davis is heading up oversight of our Businesses cohesive approach to supporting the business and its workforce.

This current potential Coronavirus health threat is being prioritised across all channels within the business and Royal Mail is doing all it can in line with Public Health England guidelines and advice. Public Health England has advised that the Manchester SW Delivery Office building is safe to return to and presents no risk to employees working there. It has been agreed that an Expert Medical Clinician will brief the staff at the Delivery Office to assure the workforce that there is no risk of virus transmission from the premises. The main risk of catching the virus is from person to person in close proximity. If standing within one meter of a person with Coronavirus COVID-19 It can be caught by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by the infected person. In other words, Coronavirus COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu. Most persons infected with Coronavirus COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover. Some people experience more serious illness and may require hospital care. These are mainly older, more vulnerable people with underlying medical conditions and weakened immune systems and people with conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease are also more vulnerable to serious illness.

Following the positive diagnosis managers quickly arranged a disinfectant clean of the office as per the clear PHE guidelines in this case.

Royal Mail and CWU support and promote regular handwashing and the use gloves and alcohol disinfectant wipes for shared equipment and jointly Promote good respiratory hygiene in the workplace.

We Jointly agree that it is an essential step in ensuring that workers are able to comply with the public health advice that the government is giving. More cases of Coronavirus COVID-19 are being confirmed in the UK daily, and the Department of Health warns that it is highly likely that the spread could significantly increase. The government's own plans indicate that up to a fifth of the workforce may be off work during the peak of the epidemic. Therefore in line with spirit and intent WHO, TUC, ACAS and Government initiatives Royal Mail Group have adopted a supportive approach to self-isolation, pay and absence Policy and are finalising their full arrangements and will be updating this shortly.

It is also accepted that Government advice is that people should not visit their GP, health centre or hospital but instead ring NHS 111. This means that people could be expected to 'self-isolate' or be ill at home for 14 days without obtaining a fit note. As stated above Royal Mail Group have adopted a supportive approach to self-isolation Policy and are finalising their full arrangements and will be updating this shortly.



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