

No. 315/2020

15th June 2020

Dear Colleagues

POST OFFICE: CROWN OFFICE RETURN TO NORMAL OPENING HOURS

In LTB 163/20 dated 27th March, I advised Branches of an agreement with the Post Office to reduce opening hours in Crown Offices as a response to the Covid-19 lockdown.

I now wish to update Branches of the agreed timetable to return Crown Offices to their normal opening times as a result of the government announcing that non-essential shops can re-open in England, today, Monday 15th June.

Rather than simply let the Post Office announce the move back to traditional opening hours, it was felt we should take joint responsibility and provide the necessary leadership. Consequently, we engaged with the Post Office as result we have been able to significantly influence the outcome.

Below is a Joint Statement explaining the timetable and the rationale:

Joint Statement – PO, CWU and Unite Plan to Return to Normal Opening Hours

The Post Office, CWU and Unite have been reviewing the opening hours of branches as a response to the Government's recent announcement to relax the lockdown and allow non-essential shops to re-open in England on Monday 15th June.

Post Offices are an essential service on the high street and therefore it has been agreed to return opening hours back to normal arrangements on a gradual basis. This structured approach will enable colleagues to adjust and allow us to continue to gauge the impact on the operations during these challenging times.

The important issues we have considered are:

- *Level of staffing currently impacted by Covid-19*
- *Maintaining social distancing in the workplace and when travelling to work.*

Whilst it is acknowledged that not all nations are in sync with the opening up of the high street, we wish to apply a consistent approach across the UK with the objective of being fully operational in the majority of branches by late July.

There are however some branches where self-isolation and shielding will impact more than others on the staffing levels. In these cases the network team and CWU Representative will work together to find bespoke solutions to try to ensure the branch is operational to meet customer demand.

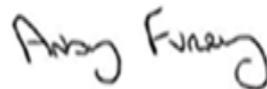
The plan for opening hours for all offices and in addition we will maintain Saturday opening for all branches at 0900-1230 for the first three weeks:

- *Week beginning 29th June: 0900 to 1600 (London 0930 to 1630 – currently opening 0930-1530)*
- *Week beginning 6th July: 0900 to 1700 (London 0930 to 1730)*
- *Week beginning 13th July: 0900 to 1730 (London 0930 to 1730)*
- *Week beginning 20th July: All branches to commence normal opening hours including the Saturday.*

Finally, thank you all for your continued hard work throughout these challenging times. Your health, safety and wellbeing continue to be the absolute priority. Therefore we will continually review the situation and respond in a timely manner where appropriate.



Steve Blampied
Head of Directly Managed
Branch Network



Andy Furey
CWU Assistant
Secretary



Industrial Relations
Rep - Central, South
West & Supply Chain

As we are in a potentially fluid situation, we will be jointly reviewing on an ongoing basis the effectiveness of these arrangements and will modify where appropriate if there is a demonstrable need to do so.

Finally, I would like to thank Lynn Simpson, Postal Executive member, who led on the talks with the Post Office.

Yours sincerely

Andy Furey
Assistant Secretary