



22 March 2007

To all Branch Secretaries
Royal Mail letters

Dear Colleague

Royal Mail letters Conduct Code

The following is an update on matters relating to the Conduct Code and its application.

1. Decisions following Bullying and Harassment Claim.

Following some discussion with the Equal Opportunities Commission, Royal Mail has proposed that in cases where bullying and harassment complaints are found against the respondent that the person making the complaint will be advised that Conduct Code action has been taken against an individual, should that be the case. They will not be advised of the penalty other than in the case of dismissal or transfer where they will be told that the person no longer works in that part of, or for, the business. The issue being addressed is that a number of people who have grounds to make a complaint do not feel that this is taken seriously enough and that no real action has taken place. It is hoped that this move, whilst expecting the individuals position in these cases, will allow the complainant to have "closure" on the matter and be able to move on.

2. Specialist Investigators

Royal Mail are currently training some managers in specialist skills to undertake investigation into allegations of sexual harassment. There are basically 2 reasons for this. Firstly that by the very nature of the allegations it requires some expertise to deal with the cases. Secondly, many managers, thankfully, do not experience cases of this nature and when required to deal with one they could find themselves in difficulty in dealing with the case swiftly and thoroughly.

This development is very welcome particularly as many of our members at managerial level are often expected to "get on with it".

Conduct Code

3. a) There also appears to be an increase in instances where senior line management refer the matter to a colleague rather than progress the case in line with the agreed Conduct Code. This is not acceptable.

The Conduct Code, page 8, paragraph 8, states; "Major penalties will only be given by an individuals second line manager or at least Royal Mail Executive Manager level 2 grade who is in the direct reporting line."

This should be objected to as it is not consistent with the Conduct Code.

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b) Paragraph 10 of the Conduct Code, sub para 2 suggests that an EL1 can carry out the fact finding interview as well as making the decision to dismiss (should that be the penalty). Since the Statutory Disputes Resolution Procedures were introduced it is likely that this would be unfair. Therefore this should also be resisted.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Brian Scott', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brian Scott
Assistant National Secretary