



7 February 2007

To all Branch Secretaries
Amicus/CMA, Royal Mail letters branches

Dear Colleague,

Test Workshop – CMA House, Tuesday 6th February 2007

On the 6th February a “Test” workshop was held at CMA House. Involved were the branch representatives of the branches in the 3 primary test sites together with the relevant BAC Secretaries as well as members of the Sector National Committee. Paul Reuter National Secretary and Brian Scott Assistant National Secretary also attended.

Purpose

The purpose of the workshop was to share information on the debate and discussion thus far with Royal Mail from a national perspective, to review the application of the Terms of Reference agreed during the last pay negotiations and circulated to branches on the 22nd September. Another objective was to understanding what activity has taken place at local level.

Issues

There were a number of issues identified and these are summarised below.

Communications – It was generally felt that communications were limited in respect of the test activity at each of the 3 primary test sites. Whilst some areas had done more than others there was lack of clarity on what was happening and this had generally caused some confusion. Branch representatives had found it difficult to communicate information to members locally as they had very little substantial information to set out. This had led to members being concerned that changes that were happening were test related where in some cases they were not. The dividing line between test activity and non test initiatives appeared to have become somewhat blurred.

Involvement – The general consensus was that involvement of Amicus/CMA representatives could be better. Whilst the Terms of Reference are in place there are limited real examples of these being operated to. All the parties agreed that this was an important issue and would revisit the matter and seek to ensure that the commitments, as given within the Term of the Reference, are being adhered to.

New Ideas Events – It was noted that the involvement of Amicus/CMA representatives, in their representative capacity, had been limited. Although some reps had attended events by invitation this was in their capacity as an employee/manager.

Clarification of Test Activity – Despite what has been said in communications, on Royal Mail websites etc there is still a general lack of clarity on what will be tested in some of the areas. This position is compounded by the fact there appears to be little real activity going on anywhere.

Appointment Process – There was general consensus this process was both costly and flawed. Indeed in some areas there is evidence that vacancies still existed at AMT level and thereby delaying any additional activity.

Cherry picking – The experience of and feedback received by reps was that there appears to be real potential for Areas to use the assessment process to decide who it is they do, or do not, want. This puts the independence of the assessment process that was envisaged in jeopardy.

Actions

The participants in the workshop agreed a set of actions to be undertaken in moving the debate forward. All of this that attended were fully in agreement that Royal Mail needs to up its game in respect of involvement and inclusion in the debate of Amicus/CMA representatives if the ambitions of test are to be achieved in any way. It was also the consensus of the workshop that the challenges of competition, regulation and change management can only be met through proper consultation, negotiation and involvement of Amicus/CMA.

The list of actions agreed is at **Appendix A**.

Summary

The workshop was an excellent opportunity for all the reps involved to share information and to learn from the experience of others. The situation will be monitored and if there is a need to have another workshop then that will be arranged. An additional benefit of the debate was the opportunity, through this update, to apprise other reps and members of the situation in the three primary test sites.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Brian Scott', written in a cursive style.

Brian Scott
Assistant National Secretary

Action Points

The following were agreed as actions to be undertaken by the branches that attended the workshop. These are in no particular order.

1. Branches to revisit the Terms of Reference and to discuss these and their objectives with area management with a view to improving commitment and application of the Terms of Reference. Each branch will seek a meeting with the AGM to discuss.
2. Branches to identify, where not already known, the individuals responsible for each strand of deployment of the various initiatives and to agree a structure to release time for reps to participate in the project.
3. Out of 1 and 2 above, to agree a systematic approach to issues and to seek clarity on what is being tested, a clear definition of who is being affected including insuring that no non test activity is taking place under the banner of test and the business objectives in progressing these initiatives. These issues to be discussed at a specific meeting with the relevant AGM's.
4. Branches to arrange a communication process within the Area.
5. Branches to develop a communication process within the Branch with the objective of providing information to affected members under test arrangements and to communicate with those members not directly affected in order that they understand what is going on.
6. Branches to agree a set of measurements across the various activity including agreeing success criteria with Area management.
7. Branches to share information amongst themselves.
8. Branches to seek a joint meeting with representatives of the CWU to share information and agree areas of joint interest.

List of participants from branches

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