

NATIONAL AGREEMENT ON THE INTRODUCTION OF INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The following Framework Agreement has been reached between Royal Mail Service Delivery and the Communication Workers' Union in respect of the introduction of Individual Performance Standards.

1. Background

Contained within the Joint Statement agreed in respect of the Standards of Conduct and Attendance and within the PBS Agreement, was a commitment by both parties that standards needed to be developed, understood and communicated to all employees.

To facilitate the introduction of the above, individual performance standards were developed, using National Databank values and a jointly-agreed process was trialled in twenty pilot offices.

The Pilot activity confirmed that:

- providing the agreed joint approach is taken, a one minute check of an individual's performance can demonstrate to employees the standard expected in each work area (over a one minute period) and can serve to identify those employees who may need additional training and support to reach and sustain the required standard.
- providing the standards set take into account local circumstances (i.e. by confirming that the National Databank standards are applicable for local use), they were acceptable as a reasonable measure to ensure the above.
- all employees were able to reach the required standards, providing they were given the appropriate level of training and support.
- although both management and employees agree close supervision of fully trained employees can inhibit rather than enhance achievement of performance levels, there was a reluctance in many areas to actively promote this change of approach in the workplace, which needs to be addressed.
- it was counterproductive and contrary to the aims of the initiative to use individual performance standards or one minute spot checks as a disciplinary tool.

2. Aims

- to establish a set of work standards that both parties are confident are appropriate for the various work areas. These will be standards derived from National Databank values for the equipment actually in use in any given unit and will replace any standards that have been introduced previously. Where a unit is using equipment not covered by National Databank, technical guidance will be sought.(i.e. to take local circumstances into account, where appropriate)
- to ensure that all employees are aware of the work standard expected of them, with this information being readily available for reference purposes. It is accepted

that the one minute standard would not be achievable throughout a shift , because of the need for rest and relaxation (for which a standard allowance is given) and agreed meal breaks. It is a measure, however, that can be used by individuals to self-assess themselves, should they wish.

- to deliver induction training to new entrants and, where necessary, further development (including refresher training), that will support the achievement of the standards by all employees.
- To give Work Area Managers the confidence that they will have the ability to meet the work plan requirements.
- to remove the unnecessary close supervision and any conflict that might arise in the workplace in order to give managers the opportunity to focus on their most important role of coaching, supporting and motivating employees.
- to improve productivity, service to the customer, bonus payments and employee morale.

3. Implementation Programme

- deploy an awareness programme of the standards agreed, via joint workshops at all levels, using the jointly agreed process (Four Step) developed and successfully trialled during the pilots.
- in line, with the agreed joint approach, identify the existing employees who may need support in reaching the standards. Employees will be able to indicate themselves if they feel they need additional support and development, which could take the form of refresher training, counselling, coaching or shadowing a more experienced colleague.
- ensure that the necessary refresher training and support is provided for these employees to enable them to reach and sustain the standard.
- display the standards agreed on work area notice boards as appropriate and provide a reference book of all the office work area standards and ensure that all employees new to a work area are made aware of the standards.
- development of induction training, that will support the achievement by new entrants of the required performance standards, by the end of their trial period.
- Any discussions regarding delivery standards will only take place as part of the Tailored Delivery Services negotiations. If new standards are developed, they will be communicated and implemented in line with the principles and terms of this Framework Agreement.
- continue the development of the managers' training modules, which focus on the key elements of the leadership role, such as coaching, supporting and motivating employees.
- monitor the performance in all work areas, covered by individual performance standards, to measure the success of the introduction of this initiative in respect of all of the key aspects set out in Paragraph 2 - Aims.

- individual performance will only be judged against the standards, as described in the workshop briefs.

4. National Roll Out

The introduction of individual performance standards will be rolled out nationally, on a phased basis, using the workshops referred to in Paragraph 3. The aim will be to complete all units by the end of the financial year 2002-2003. Local training programmes will be prioritised in order to ensure full support of this initiative.

Following full implementation, when all employees and managers are fully aware of the required performance standards, it is accepted by both parties that the use of the formal one-minute checks to evaluate a fully-trained individual's performance, would not be appropriate. The only exception to this might be when an individual's capability to meet the standard is brought into question due to the length of time they may have been away from the task they are due to perform e. g. the individual has been performing other duties for a year and the use of a one-minute check may indicate to the manager that they may require support or refresher training.

5. Review

The introduction of this initiative will be monitored jointly on a regular basis to ensure achievement of the aims of Paragraph 2 and a formal National Joint Review will take place after 12 months.

.....
Royal Mail Service Delivery

.....
Communication Workers' Union

Date

Date