

## **Annex A**

### **APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME – JOINT STATEMENT – AUG 05**

The purpose of this joint statement is to demonstrate the joint commitment of both the CWU and Royal Mail to develop, introduce and maintain an apprenticeship scheme for 16-24 year olds within Royal Mail.

Both parties fully support the scheme and will work together to ensure it is successful in attracting, developing and retaining our apprentices, and potential managers of the future. Both are also committed to dealing with any issues that may arise with the implementation of the scheme.

This statement describes the main elements of the apprenticeship scheme

#### **Scheme content**

The Royal Mail apprenticeship lasts for 18 months and will offer 16-24 year olds the opportunity to gain new skills and knowledge, working towards a newly created Level 2 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Mail Services, plus Key Skills. The scheme will include a mixture of on-the-job training supported by coaches and mentors as well as classroom study. Apprentices will be given experience of working in both a mail centre and a delivery office during the scheme in order to gain experience of the pipeline. Further work will be jointly carried out in the forthcoming year to enable wider experience of the whole pipeline.

Each apprentice will have an induction plan, including a Welcome Day and a day dedicated to how the apprenticeship scheme will work. Each apprentice will have a programme of activity mapped out which will be covered in detail during the induction; this will be provided to both the Coach, mentor and line manager.

#### **Selection**

Apprentices will be recruited to actual vacancies both from internal and external candidates. It is jointly accepted that academic achievement is not an appropriate measure or tool for the selection of apprentices. The selection process has been adapted to take account of the young age and inexperience of most of the applicants and is based on competence, attitude and potential.

#### **Diversity and Health and Safety**

Both parties are committed to increasing the diversity of the workforce in this age group and are actively taking steps by working with external organisations to help recruit from a diverse population.

Health & Safety has been given special attention by the Royal Mail and CWU safety experts who have worked together to produce guidelines on the rules for the apprenticeship scheme. Information packs and briefings are available for CWU reps. Line Managers are also being fully briefed on the guidelines and provided with a comprehensive support pack in relation to young persons and H&S. CWU representatives will also have access to this support pack.

#### **Pay and benefits**

Apprentices will receive the pay levels outlined in the attached agreement. They will also have the opportunity to gain a professional qualification and gain experience across the whole business. Working time regulations prohibit people under the age of 18 working between midnight and 4am, so 16 and 17 year olds will not be required to cover night shifts.

**Support**

The apprentices will play an important part in the mails operation, helping us provide customer service. The scheme will introduce many people to a working environment for the first time. Line managers, CWU representatives and colleagues all have a special responsibility in respect of young people over and above the commitment to learning and development. For example apprentices may well lack risk awareness, and be inexperienced in terms of the world of work. Each apprentice will be allocated a workplace coach (reviewed in line with current trials) and a mentor. The mentor will act as an independent sounding board, providing career advice and support to the apprentice with practical issues (e.g. securing release to attend training). Each apprentice will also have a 'buddy' (a fellow apprentice) to help and support them through the scheme. The line managers have been fully briefed on the scheme and their responsibilities and will play an important role in supporting the apprentices. It will be the responsibility of both Royal Mail and CWU to support the success of the scheme and the people in it through the development and retention of high calibre apprentices.

**Career progression and development**

At the end of the scheme and on completion of their NVQ, there will be opportunities for career development within the business, which may include moving into a management role. Those apprentices with potential will have the opportunity to receive some initial management training. There may also be the possibility of driving tuition for apprentices to encourage completion of the NVQ and the scheme.

**Deployment of the scheme**

It is jointly confirmed that initially the scheme will be launched in a limited number of areas giving us the opportunity to monitor, evaluate and build in learning points as the scheme progresses.

The first phase of apprentices will be recruited in the following areas: Home Counties North; South London; North and East London; Central and South Midlands; Mid Yorkshire; North East; Chester & North Wales (not Wales at this stage). It is anticipated that other areas will come on board in 2006. Ultimately it is hoped that there will be up to 1000 apprentices on the Royal Mail scheme.

**Implementation support**

To ensure successful implementation, Regional Implementation Managers have been appointed to work with the Areas, People & Organisational Development and the CWU to support introduction of the scheme in the phase one areas and help resolve any issues that arise. In addition, a team in Learning Services based at Coton House, Rugby has been set up to co-ordinate the administration of the NVQ in Mail Services. Learning Services will also help to plan and deploy the learning and development. The CWU will be actively involved in both of these aspects.

Both Royal Mail and the CWU will work closely to identify and overcome any difficulties that arise during implementation of the scheme. Local/Area (along with (divisional as required) representatives will work with managers in the areas to ensure there is a smooth path to successful implementation. Any issues of interpretation regarding this joint statement or the national agreement that cannot be resolved locally should be forwarded to the respective headquarters. Operational issues should be resolved via the IR Framework.

Regular national and area joint review meetings will be scheduled to ensure these things happen and support the success of the scheme.

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Louise Cartwright  
Royal Mail

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Bob Gibson  
Communication Workers Union

Date .....

## **National Agreement on the Royal Mail Apprenticeship Scheme**

### **Pay and benefits**

Apprentices will receive the following pay and benefits. Basic pay will be reviewed at the same time as for all employees. Apprentices who have completed 12 months service will progress to the maximum at age 18.

Maximum	£311.50 per week
6 months	£295.93 per week
Age 18	£280.35 per week (starting pay)
Age 17	£218.05 per week
Age 16	£186.90 per week

### **Working time**

Working time regulations prohibit people under the age of 18 working between midnight and 4am, so 16 and 17 year olds will not be required to cover night shifts across those hours. Occasional development activity within those hours may be required but only where it is in accordance with the law, and with prior consultation with the CWU.

### **Involvement and Placement**

Local area and Divisional Representatives will need to work with managers in the areas to ensure that there is a smooth path to successful implementation, including urgent discussions to identify potential duties. Whilst placing apprentices will be a high priority both parties accept that this will not prevent existing employees moving from part time to full time where appropriate opportunities exist. To facilitate this all opportunities/avenues should be thoroughly examined with both parties accepting that imaginative solutions may be required. In some cases for apprentices this may include redesigning some duties or examining the opportunity to convert existing part time positions into full time positions by building the duty time up with the training and developments requirements within the apprenticeship scheme.

Other resourcing issues will be discussed locally. CWU representatives will be provided with sufficient facility time to actively participate in the processes listed above.

### **Roll -out**

Roll-out beyond the first phase will be the subject of further discussions at national level with the involvement of and taking full account of the experiences within the first phase areas.

**Attached at Annex A is a formal Joint Statement covering the introduction of the scheme.**

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**Royal Mail**

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**CWU**