

# **TERMS OF REFERENCE BETWEEN ROYAL MAIL AND THE CWU COVERING THE DEPLOYMENT PROGRAMME FOR PARCEL SORTING MACHINES WITHIN THE MAIL CENTRE/ RDC ESTATE**

## **Background**

Royal Mail and the Communication Workers Union are working together in developing key business policies, mutual Interest solutions and a new culture, which is at the core of all the commitments contained in the Guiding Principles of Employment Security and Mutual Interest Approach to Future Challenges and Opportunities agreement.

This document represents an example of how this joint activity embraces and supports the commitment to integrate the interests of all parties and complements the transparent mutual interest based culture approach.

Both parties recognise that creating the right IR and collective working environment is key to the general success of the Mail Centre Function/Operation, and are committed to achieving the above by resolving all local issues and concerns across the wider operation.

A key component of the joint vision and agenda is investing in the right equipment in our operation to allow colleagues to deliver high quality service for our customers, whilst ensuring the equipment is fit and safe for the task.

RM and the CWU both recognise the need to modernise our parcel sorting operation in order to improve customer service, offer new services to customers, maintain and grow our revenues from the parcels market and improve operational efficiency. This document represents an example of how transparency and shared information has supported joint activity to develop and agree a way forward in deployment of the Parcel Automation strategy.

As part of the wider parcels transformation programme, RM and the CWU commenced joint trial activity at Swindon Mail Centre in 2016 of a Parcel Sorting Machine (PSM). Subsequently in order to assist with learning and preparation for future deployment of the machinery, it was agreed to extend the trial activity for the new PSM's to Chelmsford, HCN and Greenford Mail Centres. The trial activity has now concluded and this document sets out the framework under which future PSM's will be deployed.

It is recognised that the circumstances in each site will vary, effective and efficient deployment will require local planning and full engagement and involvement between the project team, the Mail Centre teams and local CWU representatives within the parameters set out in this document.

## **Training**

Under no circumstances will untrained colleagues be allowed to work on the PSM. Colleagues working on the Parcel Sorting Machine will be fully trained on all operational and associated elements related to the tasks they are undertaking and must have completed the 1 day operator course, or the relevant task training module before they are allowed to work on the machine.

## **Parcel Automation Machine Deployment**

Currently it is anticipated that PSM's will be deployed at the following Mail Centres. Timescales are still to be finalised and it should be noted that the list below does not represent the order in which the machines will be deployed. The precise deployment dates to each site will be kept under review as the rollout progresses and will be confirmed at the local planning and engagement meetings. Consideration is also being given to the potential deployment of the PSM's within RDC's the ongoing review will establish the most suitable sites for a PSM.

### **Confirmed Sites**

- Birmingham MC
- Bristol MC
- Chelmsford MC – Machine in place
- Gatwick MC
- Greenford MC – Machine in place
- Home Counties North MC – Machine in place
- Jubilee MC
- Leeds MC
- Manchester MC
- Preston MC
- South Midlands
- Swindon MC – Trial Site
- Warrington MC

**The outstanding units are being reviewed, the above may change**

### **Mail Profile**

The Parcel Sorting Machine will sort mail which is a maximum size of 450mm\*350mm\*200mm and maximum weight of 3kg. Items not meeting this specification can be tipped onto the machine but should be culled alongside non machineable items, e.g. tubes that will roll, at the induct workstation.

### **Throughput and Manning**

The PSM has an estimated sort rate of up to 10,000 parcels per hour. To achieve this throughput over 11,000 parcels per hour would need to be tipped on to the machine. This figure takes into account the potential rejects per hour which are determined via the parcel sort induct operators at source or via the automatic reject selection after the parcel has gone through the dimension, weigh, scan tunnel.

To ensure the PSM is used effectively it will be utilised at full capacity as standard for the maximum possible time, in these circumstances the machine will be staffed by 11 operators on a rotational basis.

To enable the machine to maintain capacity and to ensure safe Systems of Work are adhered to in respect of the level of operators, the machine will remain part of the overall parcel sorting operation. Parcels Work Area Managers will be responsible for the running of the machine and ensuring the correct level of staffing is in place and that the agreed rotations are taking place.

It is recognised that the availability of traffic or Revenue Protection activity may on occasion provide the ability for the PSM to be utilised at less than full capacity and as such reduced staffing levels may be required. On these occasions the processes contained in the following sections *Minimum Staffing Levels* and *Exceptional Circumstances – Revenue Protection* must be adopted. It is emphasised that while it is permissible for the PSM to operate with reduced staffing this must be in line with the agreed SSOW and aforementioned minimum staffing processes to ensure that the machine is run in a safe manner at all times.

### **Minimum Staffing Levels**

Both parties reaffirm that optimum performance is achieved through running the PSM at full capacity and the default position will be to do so in line with the level agreed for throughput and manning. The PSM is designed to run at full capacity with a staffing level of 11.

It is however recognised that on occasion mail arrival patterns may impact on operational capability and capacity and it is agreed that at such times the PSM may be utilised with only one belt operational. This reduced level of operation would mean that a full complement of 11 staff would not be required in such instances.

Where this situation arises it is agreed that where only one belt is in operation the minimum level of staffing is outlined below:

- 3 x Induction Operators,
- 1 X Tipper Operator
- 1 x Porter once sufficient parcels have been inducted to fill any of the selections

To ensure the reduced staffing level is used in the correct circumstances, the reduced staffing levels above will continue to be monitored by the JWG/NPG.

Set up and clear down is excluded from the minimum staffing requirement, as is the operation of the PSM for Revenue Protection purposes which is covered in the next section.

### **Exceptional circumstances – Revenue Protection**

It is recognised that the PSM can provide a quick and efficient means of undertaking Revenue Protection activity relating to individual customers. Therefore it is agreed that where the PSM is utilised for the sole purpose of undertaking a Revenue Protection check for one customer with one belt in operation, the minimum level of staffing will be for 3 individuals.

The staffing levels will continue to be monitored and reviewed; any changes to the staffing level arrangements detailed in this agreement will be reviewed through the JWG/NPG

### **Rotation**

As part of the operational trial machine ergonomic studies have been undertaken to ensure a safe working environment for all operators. These studies have included involvement from a Health & Safety aspect and feedback from individuals working on the machines to ensure that relevant issues, i.e. operator fatigue, repetitive strain etc. have been factored into the operational arrangements for staffing the PSM's.

In line with the outputs of above activity it is confirmed that no individual should work at a specific station for more than two hours and all operators must therefore be rotated every 2 hours. In order to accommodate this facility discussion and agreement will take place locally with the CWU to ensure that it is included in the resourcing plan for the site. To enable full compliance with the rotation system and to provide the opportunity and ability to have as many members of staff as possible trained to use the PSM, the manual sorting area should also be utilised as part of the rotational process in the agreed resourcing plan.

It is confirmed that it is the responsibility of the Work Area Manager to ensure that no individual spends more than the permitted 2 hours at any one work station on the PSM.

### **Equipment**

The Parcel Sorting Machine can only be used with the following equipment:

- Red sleeved York
- Mk4 Parcel York
- Bags
- Cardboard sleeved York
- Litter pickers for maintaining mail flow

### **Selection for roles on the machine**

The process for determining who can work on the machine will be done along the following terms:

- Volunteers will be sought initially from existing parcels staff to take up roles to be trained on the Parcel Sort Machine
- Where there is an excess of volunteers, people will be chosen and trained in seniority order
- Where there is a shortfall of volunteers, volunteers will again be sought, if this is unsuccessful then training will commence in juniority order.
- A duty set will be agreed locally and arrangements will be monitored as part of the weekly resourcing meetings.
- The duty set must ensure that the rotations are maintained at all times.
- Mail Centres will have the capacity to train further operators as the programme will leave a legacy of Work Place Coaches and materials to train future colleagues.
- Day to day deployment to the Parcel Sorting Machine from the pool of trained people will be managed in the normal way.
- At all times only trained operators may work on the machine
- Once trained, operators may be asked to work on the machine in the same way as they may be asked to do any other OPG task for which they are skilled and can operate safely.

### **Managing any surplus created by the parcel sorting machine**

All Changes that are highlighted as part of the overall Parcel Growth changes within each site will be managed in accordance with the relevant national agreement, currently MtSF 2010.

The following principles will be agreed and jointly applied through strategic resourcing discussions in line with local resourcing plans

- Removal of all agency/ordinary casual spend that may be converted to suitable duties for redeployment
- Jointly Agreed Cessation of Fixed Term Contract staff
- Jointly Agreed Re-structuring of OT/SA spend to create duties to enable re-deployment of surplus staff
- Transfers to other Royal Mail units within a reasonable travelling distance. Any training required will complement the resourcing process and will be arranged to facilitate transfers, lack of necessary skills will not be used as a barrier to any transfers.
- Voluntary option of Buy-Downs of hours
- Voluntary Redundancy offered In line with current National Agreements.

### **Engineering**

Local CWU Engineering Representatives will undertake agreed engineering requirements and be fully involved in relation to the development of maintenance schedules for the Parcel Sorting Machine based at their site. Any issues raised or concerns that cannot be resolved locally in respect of engineering aspects will be referred to the relevant RMI and CWU national bodies for resolution.

## **Safe Systems of Work and Standard Operating Procedures**

It is reaffirmed that Health & Safety is of paramount importance to both Royal Mail and the CWU. Therefore Safe Systems of Working, Standard Operating Procedures and all relevant safety compliance documentation in relation of the Parcel Sorting machine will be fully developed and agreed between RM and the CWU National Health & Safety Department prior to deployment.

Safe Systems of Work and Standard Operating Procedures will be kept under review throughout deployment and any issues identified will be referred to the relevant experts detailed above.

All staff using the PSM will be fully trained on the associated Standard Operating Procedure and SSOW, if no training has been given then they will not be able to carry out any roles on the machine.

## **Conclusion**

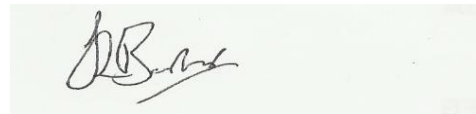
Involvement from the Local Management, the CWU Representatives and CWU Health & Safety Representatives will be a key driver to successfully managing changes to enable deployment of this equipment, therefore there will be full involvement of all parties in the deployment process. CWU Representatives shall be given appropriate release time to facilitate this and to ensure meaningful involvement.

The Joint Working Group at national level will continue to monitor and review the deployment ensuring it is in line with the agreed framework. Any issues that cannot be resolved at local or Joint Working Group level will be escalated to the National Processing Group.

Any questions of interpretation, implementation, or application of this Process shall be referred to the respective Headquarters for resolution.



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