

No. 040/24

29<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**TO: ALL CWU BRANCHES**

Dear Colleagues

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CWU NATIONAL BRIEFING MANCHESTER</b> <b>30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 11AM – 3PM</b></p>
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In advance of tomorrow's National Briefing, please find attached the agenda for the meeting and a precis of a recent NEC document that set out the areas for discussion and some initial thinking from the General Secretary and Senior Deputy General Secretary.

In sharing this information, we would like to emphasise that the NEC has not agreed, at this juncture, any of the proposals listed. However, we felt it was important that the branches and field officials have a greater understanding of both the approach to the restructuring programme and the areas that are definitely in scope.

In the previous National Briefing we have already set out the reasons for restructuring, including the major financial and organisational challenges facing the union. Therefore, the main purpose of tomorrow's session is to delve further into some of our initial thinking and crucially take feedback from the branches.


We will also use the briefing to update branches on conference arrangements and the likely content and structure of the special report.

We will also explain at the briefing what we mean by a two-phased approach to the restructuring programme and how this is likely to develop into areas of change that we believe requires immediate agreement and those that will be subject to more detailed consultations. The phase two consultations would also be launched in the special conference report, albeit over a longer timescale before decisions are made.

Finally, we will be pushing the urgent need to re-energise our recruitment and organising approach across the whole of the union.

We look forward to seeing you all tomorrow and having an informed and constructive National Briefing.

Yours sincerely



Dave Ward  
**General Secretary**



Tony Kearns  
**Senior Deputy General Secretary**

**COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS UNION  
NATIONAL BRIEFING - CWU RESTRUCTURING  
TUESDAY, 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 11.00 AM TO 15.00  
Mercure Manchester Piccadilly Hotel, Portland Street,  
MANCHESTER M1 4PN**

1. Introduction – CWU President
2. The context to CWU Restructuring – Building a modern union – General Secretary
3. The elements of restructuring and some initial thinking – GS/SDGS and Panel including Deputy General Secretaries  
Q & A and feedback from the floor
4. Conference Arrangements/likely structure of the Special Report – SDGS and GS  
Q & A and feedback from the floor
5. Recruitment and Organising – GS and Panel  
Q & A and feedback from the floor

**POLICY AREAS (REQUIRING A RULE CHANGE)**

There is a need to share our initial thinking/direction of travel on important restructuring issues, hence the further bullet points underneath each policy area. However, we must emphasise that although the headings have been endorsed for the development of specific policy papers, the NEC has not agreed at this stage any of the bullet points underneath each heading. This was presented to the NEC by the GS and SDGS in the spirit of discussion and facilitating our next steps.

1. Structure of NEC
  - Maintain our commitment to equality strands on the NEC and discuss the best way to achieve this, while reducing the overall number of NEC seats
  - Maintain the link with the Industrial executives with a reduction in NEC seats to 27 or less
2. Postal and TFS Industrial Executives
  - Ongoing discussions taking place with respective Deputy General Secretaries
3. Regions
  - Reduction from 10 to 7 or 8 regions
  - Consider realignment of some branches within any new regional structures
  - Review regional roles and responsibilities
  - Consider the merits of elected or appointed regional secretaries
4. Branch rebate
  - Phased reduction from current levels of rebate; July 2024, levels reduced to 24.5%. July 2025 further reduction of 4.5% to 20%. Retired members rebate also to reduce in equal amounts from 27% to 20%
  - Suitable transition arrangements to support branches would be required and need to be implemented. We would review where this support will come from and how it will be allocated
  - Consider the geographical challenges facing some branches

5. Restructure approach to Health, Safety and Environment
  - Mainstream HS&E issues into Industrial Executives
  - Improve coordination, input and accountability between the national union and all Health and Safety structures
  - Remove the requirement to elect a central National HS&E Officer from the rule book. Within the overall financial savings from Headquarters restructuring, replace with an appointed, suitable role to support the industrial executives with HS&E legislation and wider trade union and labour movement policy
  
6. Restructure Legal Services and involvement in Unionline
  - Consider a completely fresh approach to our current involvement in Unionline (including partnership with GMB) and the Legal Services Department
  - Remove the requirement to elect a National Legal Services Officer from the rule book
  - Consider the ongoing provision of agreed legal services and the most appropriate and cost-effective ways of doing so
  - Maintain and improve EAT representation
  
7. Review of CWU Conferences
  - Move to biennial General and Industrial Conferences
  - Supported by decision making policy forums
  - Maintain current arrangements for annual Retired Members and Young Workers conferences
  
8. Rule changes/amendments required

## **RULES TO BE AMENDED**

- Rule 7
- Rule 8
- Rule 9
- Rule 10
- Rule 11

**FURTHER RESTRUCTURING CHANGES (NOT REQUIRING A RULE CHANGE)**

We have made clear in previous meetings that the restructuring plan will be based on a combination of areas that require rule changes and other restructuring strands that do not require rule changes. It is important that the NEC and our branches continue to see all elements of the plan and that the focus is not just on rule changes and the Special Conference.

Therefore, the following lays out the areas of change we are working on, which we will update branches on at the National briefing.

1. CWU Headquarters restructuring
  - a. A continuation of the voluntary redundancy programme at CWU Headquarters to reduce overall pay bill
  - b. The development of a more integrated departmental structure with corresponding flexibility from our employees to ensure we remove duplication of work and create roles that will deliver higher quality output in a modern looking union, as well as reducing costs
  
2. Financial Management
  - a. In line with previous documents, we will put in place more robust ways of reporting and discussing the union's finances
  - b. The introduction of new and clear financial protocols across the whole union
  - c. Commitment to introduce annual financial plans, with the aim of the entire restructuring programme being laid out in a clear financial plan to sustain the CWU in the future
  - d. In setting out the financial challenges facing the CWU, we will also lay out the overall assets of the union, and available cash
  
3. A fresh, improved and better coordinated approach to recruitment and organising across the whole union

4. The implementation of the new Communications approach, agreed by the NEC, which also includes financial savings
5. A planned increase to membership subscriptions
6. Better utilisation of the unions assets, including the sale of 150 the Broadway and the Elstead Hotel
7. The overall review of Unionline services
8. We will also continue to review and where possible enhance our approach to all other areas of union work including political, equality, training and education.

Branches will be aware of the importance of these changes to the restructuring process and the long-term sustainability of the union. It is very important for the leadership of the union to lead by example, given the scale of the overall programme. We must also ensure that our members are brought with us through this process.

Due to the importance of this restructuring process and the difficult environment facing the wider movement, this is not an exhaustive list of the areas we are looking to improve and we will continually assess ways of ensuring the sustainability of the union.

**THE LIKELY STRUCTURE OF THE SPECIAL REPORT**

The report will follow a similar outline to the Redesign booklets that were helpful in the last restructuring process. Initial thinking is that the report will be set out as follows:

1. **Introduction**- this will set out the reasons why it is important that the CWU needs to restructure, as well as covering the wider challenges facing the trade union movement. It will include a very succinct reminder of the changes made under Redesign
2. **A vision for the future**- it is crucial that we make the case for change based on remaining a successful, standalone union in the future
3. **Breakdown of financial challenges facing the union**
4. **A summary of changes being made that don't require a rule change**- including CWU HQ restructuring, implementing better financial management and improving our ways of working
5. **Detailed policy positions on areas that require a rule change**
6. **Our future plans for Equality, Education and Development, Recruitment and Organising, Communications and our political work** (subject to final discussions with the SOC, the intention is to enable branches to submit propositions to the Special Policy Conference on any of the areas covered in the report, even where they have not been identified as a rule changes)
7. **Phase 2 consultations** – A section covering the consultations that we will launch in Phase 2. This will include the terms of reference for a review of the CWU branch structure and the need for a more consistent approach in branch representation and communication with members
8. **Summary**- concluding the report and summarising our overall restructuring programme and vision for the future