

No. 084/25

25th April 2025

Ground-level Letterboxes - Campaign Update

Dear Colleagues,

Branches will be aware of attempts going back several years to make industry-standard recommended minimum letterbox heights mandatory under the law and of the tireless campaigning work of Dave Joyce on this issue, supported by the Outdoor Department and by my predecessors Mark Baulch and Bob Gibson.

This purpose of this LTB is to inform Branches that our new CWU Health & Safety Policy Assistant Jamie McGovern and myself, as Outdoor Secretary, are equally committed to this and to update you on our continuing campaign on behalf of circa 80,000 Royal Mail Delivery postmen and postwomen all around the UK.

While the personnel have changed, the key aim remains the same - **a UK-wide ban on the installation of ground-level letterboxes in all new builds and front door replacements / renewals** - by making the installation height dimensions in BSEN13724 legally mandatory in all such circumstances. The reasons why this is of importance to our Delivery members are, of course, due to the cumulative physical strain induced by constant bending right down to floor level while out on delivery and also the increased risk of dog bites through the letterbox when it is at ground level.

The industry standard, BSEN13724, referring to the letterbox as the 'aperture', states: ***'For ergonomic reasons the lower edge of the lowest aperture and the upper edge of the highest aperture should be at a height between 700mm (approx. 2ft 3½in) and 1700mm (approx. 5ft 7in) measured from the delivery floor level. In special cases such as groups of apertures or in historical buildings with limitations the range may be extended but should be between 400mm (approx. 1ft 4in) and 1800mm (approx. 5ft 11in).'*** (P27 Annex B Installation Height of Aperture)

'BS' and 'EN'

The acronym 'BS' stands for 'British Standard' and the acronym 'EN' stands for 'European Norm'. BS standards are set by the British Standards Institution (BSI), which was founded in 1901 and was the first organisation of its type in the world. EN standards are set by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), which was founded in 1961 and to which EU member-nations as well as non-EU nations belong, including the UK, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

Historically, the UK industry standards on this were set under BS2911:1960 and BS2911:1974. These were incorporated into BSEN13724:2002 and then BSEN13724:2013, which continues to be the industry standard today (*the last four digits in each instance indicating year of publication / update*).

Campaigning at Westminster and around the country

However, while being a recommended industry standard, the installation height dimensions in BSEN13724 are currently only *advisory* rather than *mandatory* under UK law. Most recently a CWU

delegation consisting of the Outdoor Department, Jamie McGovern and Carl Webb, NW Regional Secretary, met with Matthew Pennycook, the current Minister of State for Housing and Planning, last month on this matter. It was a positive meeting and this conversation is currently ongoing.

Work continues at local level as well, with support growing among MPs and efforts being made to engage with local authorities on this matter. There have also been discussions with companies within the construction industry with regard to building projects at individual sites.

Please help with the campaign

While we continue, and step up, our efforts to secure this crucial tightening up of the law, the Outdoor Department and our Health & Safety Policy Assistant are asking Area Delivery Reps and Area Safety Reps in all areas to prioritise this campaign and to undertake the following:

- Please monitor and note significant new build construction projects within your area;
- Please make contact with the respective local authority and the company concerned with regard to these projects, ensuring that they know about the recommended letterbox placement dimensions as advised by the relevant section of BSEN13724, the reasons why the CWU is prioritising this issue and request their compliance;
- Please note the details and report back to the Outdoor Department and / or Jamie McGovern.

The more progress we can make at local level, the fewer new ground-level letterboxes will be installed and the fewer postmen and postwomen will suffer from the associated risk and hazard. Also, the more information we gain, the stronger the case that can be made at national level in our ongoing efforts to secure a UK-wide ban on ground-level letterboxes in all new builds and replacements / renewals.

Your assistance in this is much appreciated and further updates will be circulated in due course.

Any enquiries to the content of this LTB should be directed to the Outdoor Department, email address: Pharacz@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Bouch
Assistant Secretary