

## **National Agreement between POL and CWU for the integration of retail sales hours into Crown Office all purpose working**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. In October 2008 POL and the CWU reached a national agreement for the upskilling and transition of Postshop Retail Sales Consultants to Customer Service Consultants enabling them to undertake all customer facing activities within the Crown Office.
- 1.2. It meant there is no longer a distinction between the Postshop and Counter roles as all colleagues could undertake all roles within a Crown Office.
- 1.3. This gave Postshop colleagues the opportunity to increase their income from the then current £15000 pay rate to the advanced level of the CSC - £19150, and the office benefited by having a more flexible workforce. Colleagues who were unable or did not wish to acquire the additional skills to fulfil the CSC role and did not wish to be redeployed were offered voluntary redundancy in accordance with MTSF.
- 1.4. Progress with the transitional stage of the upskilling agreement has led to 207 colleagues reaching the fully competent level with a further 36 still to pass the assessment

### **2. Key Principles**

- 2.1. This agreement is designed to consolidate the upskilling agreement, create an environment where the retail position is fully integrated into the counter duty rotation and make a contribution to the Crown Cost saving initiative.
- 2.2. The Crown Office Refurbishment Programme was completed in November 2009 leaving 84 offices with a resourced retail position, with the intention that this should be a remote all purpose working position. Along with the introduction of Financial Services positions this refurbishment has led to a decrease in retail space and thus retail products. It is now possible to assess the full impact of the various changes that have affected the offices and these activities have combined to reduce the resource needed to undertake retail sales.

### **3. Criteria for Assessing Retail Staffing Needs.**

- 3.1. Historically the retail position has been resourced on a stand alone basis necessitating the need to schedule colleague's attendance times to provide cover for meal and rest breaks. Under this agreement it will now be possible to schedule anyone from the counter to provide this cover negating the need to make any special provisions.
- 3.2. Initially each office will be allocated 60hrs per week to resource the retail unit at all times whilst the office is open. In the busiest 27 offices a further 20hrs will be allocated to facilitate retail sales being undertaken at the counter plus increased time needed to replenish and control the retail stock.

- 3.3. It is accepted that at the time of this agreement it is not possible to obtain accurate work level information for all offices due to the fundamental changes that have impacted on customer flow. Therefore this allocation of hours is seen as an interim measure and will be subject to a formal review in approximately one year's time.

#### **4. Staffing Changes**

- 4.1. All staffing changes and changes to AWDs resulting from this agreement will be subject to the terms of the National Agreement for the Implementation of Permanent Duty reviews in Crown Offices
- 4.2. This new agreement will result in a reduced headcount of approximately 49 Full Time Equivalents across the 84 offices involved. The savings in 58 offices included in Phase 3 of the current permanent duty review programme will be implemented as part of that phase, which will enable the creation and simultaneous introduction of an office wide set of duties. The 26 offices whose duties were implemented in Phase 2 of the permanent duty reviews, will be revisited once Phase 3 is completed. The net result of this will be 30 Crown Offices with more than 16 surplus hours.
- 4.3. It has been established that the programme for installing the new Horizon on Line into Crown Offices will require resource from the same 30 locations. It is therefore the intention to seek volunteers from these surplus offices to resource the training requirements which are expected to be required from the beginning of January 2010 until the end of May 2010.
- 4.4. On completion of the HOL rollout colleagues who have worked on the programme will:
- Return to their Crown office with no requirement for VR or redeployment due to churn
  - Return to their Crown Office and the reduction in surplus staffing arrangement within the Working Towards A Prosperous and Long Term Crown Office Network Agreement applies.
- VR preferencing and selection will take place under the terms of the MTSF Agreement.
- 4.5. The Postshop Upskilling agreement allows ex Postshop colleagues to leave the business on VR terms if they do not achieve CSC fully competent standard within 6 months of being trained. This will continue to apply.
- 4.6. In recognition of the fact that this option is still open to these people we will preference ex Postshop colleagues for VR in the first instance where surplus hours created by the reduction in retail hours remain in these 30 Crowns after the completion of the HOL rollout. This preference will be made regardless of status in respect of being fully competent or not.
- 4.7. Where there are no ex-postshop colleagues interested in VR and surplus hours remain, all CSCs in the Crown Office will be preferred.
- 4.8. Subject to 4.5 above VR will be offered to applicants taking into account whether a part time or full time colleague is the best match for the

reduction in hours. The table in a Joint Statement of 20<sup>th</sup> August 2009 provides a guide on how this will happen.

- 4.9. Final decisions on VR offers taking into account the above will be made jointly between POL and CWU.

## **5. Colleague Development**

- 5.1. POL and the CWU expect all CSC colleagues to achieve the advanced level in the Crown Career Path between one to two years of starting employment with POL. As all ex Postshop colleagues have experience of the Branch Office environment and have received full counter training it is expected that they would reach full advanced status within 6 to 12 months of being assessed as fully competent.
- 5.2. Full support for this development will be supplied by their line manager and they will be included in the full range of sales training.
- 5.3. To ensure progress to advanced level is being in an appropriate and timely manner. There will be joint POL/CWU monitoring on a monthly basis.

Any disagreements regarding the introduction and interpretation of this agreement will be referred to the signatories of this agreement for resolution.

Tom Pegler  
Head of Crown Service & Efficiency  
POL

Andy Furey  
Assistant Secretary  
CWU