

North West Regional Women's Lead

INTRODUCTION

Hello my name is Sheila Biggins and I am the North West Women's Regional Lead Officer. I hope to pop these newsletters out every now and then to keep you informed and up to date on what's going on in our region.

I work for Royal Mail at the Bolton West Delivery Office and I'm also the Equality Officer for North West Number1 Branch.

I am involved with the North West Trade Union Congress (TUC) and currently sit on their NWTUC Equality Forum

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MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK



I think the single most important issue on peoples minds at the moment is the coronavirus. I hope everyone is safe and well in these uncertain times.

As the coronavirus pandemic rapidly swept across the world, it induced a considerable degree of fear, worry and concern in the workplace and the wider community which has resulted in higher rates of stress or anxiety.

The effects quarantine has had on people's usual activities, routines or livelihoods has increased levels of

loneliness, depression, harmful alcohol and drug use and self-harm or suicidal behaviour. If you or someone you know is struggling with Mental Health issues, coming together to support each other and sharing your experiences can improve your wellbeing and help you cope (sticking to the 2 metre rule). Your CWU is always here for you.

On Wednesday 21st May the CWU North West Region held a Mental Health Awareness Live Event which was a huge success with 175 CWU reps and members watching on Zoom and 3000 watching on FaceBook Live.

Carl Webb, North West Regional Secretary, Mark Holt, North West Regional Health & Safety Lead and Emma Garner, North West Regional Treasurer and Mental Health Network Member all did a fantastic job at organising the event. Guest Speakers included Angela Rayner MP (Labour Party Deputy Leader), Shelly Asquith (TUC National Health, Safety and Wellbeing Officer), Steve Flatt (psychotherapist and honorary researcher with the University of Liverpool) and our very own Jamie McGovern (Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) accredited tutor and Branch Area Safety Rep(ASR)).

The CWU actively promoted Mental Health Awareness Week on different Social Media platforms using the hashtags #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek #KindnessMatters #ItsOkNotToBeOk.

OPENREACH ENGINEERS ATTACKS

Social media 5G conspiracies have led to a spate of attacks on telecoms engineers since the start of the coronavirus crisis, with Openreach reporting almost 50 incidents of abuse in April.

Engineers have been verbally assaulted, spat on and forced to flee groups of angry people because of baseless fears that the 5G Network poses a risk to health and is linked to the coronavirus.



ROYAL MAIL GROUP(RMG) UNIFORM

Royal Mail Trouser/Shorts for women. I've had a few members with concerns over the trousers from being too tight around the thighs to not having enough give in them. I have been in touch with Sam Dixon from Dimensions and she agreed the trousers were no longer fit for purpose.

Dimensions have designed a brand-new uniform range based on front line employee feedback, they have also engaged with a bio mechanist (Martin Haines) looking at the ease of movement / fabric / fit & design of the garments and are working with the factories to produce a number of samples that we will be trailing, unfortunately due to the current pandemic the trial has been pushed back until it's safe to do so. Once we have completed the trial we will be looking to roll out the new range, however the roll out will probably be over a 2-year plan.

WOMEN OF TODAY (WoT) EVENT

Sadly the event was cancelled due to the coronavirus, but I am looking at taking the WoT Event online. It's still in the early stages of planning, but watch this space!

WORKSHOPS

I've been working on bringing you some online workshops/courses and have been in discussion with Kate Hudson, the CWU Head of Equality, Education and Development on how we are going to set this up.

Duncan Healey the North West Education and Training Lead will also be involved.

ALVESCOT



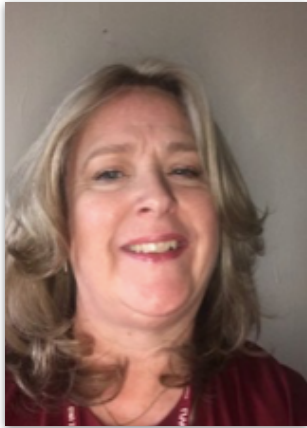
It's with a heavy heart that I can inform you that Alvescot one of our key training centres has been sold, it's a sad loss because I've fond memories and I've learnt a lot from attending courses there and I wish the staff well.

The buyer is an organisation that specialises in running educational and residential facilities for severely autistic children and their families .

There will be still residential courses at other Venues.

HARMFUL GAMBLING

Harmful Gambling- What it does and why it is a workplace issue



Karen Kendrick, Northwest Regional Equality Lead.

Back in 2016, the CWU Northwest Regional Women's Committee (NWRWC) were given a talk by Beacon Counselling Trust looking at how gambling was becoming increasingly harmful to women. The numbers shocked us as they were so big. It was also getting worse with all the sports sponsorship, TV advertising and use of phones, tablets and computers so we decided to do something about it within The CWU and other unions via the Northwest TUC (NWTUC). We took the issue to the CWU Women's Conference in 2017 which resulted in the CWU creating a pack for Branches and Regions explaining more about it and showing where help was available. We also took it to the NWTUC Conference and it became part of their annual work plan. Since then we have been involved in helping set up a Workplace Charter via the 'Bet you can help' campaign and are continuing to help increase awareness and help those suffering from Harmful Gambling. Last week, the NWTUC ran a webinar on the issue which included the CWU and Unite the Union.

If you, or someone close to you needs help or you would like more information please contact Beacon Counselling Trust on 0808 8020133 (for immediate help) or www.beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk for info.

RAMADAN

Finally since I started this letter on the 24th May I couldn't go without saying-

Litanzil 'alaykum barakat Allah fi Eid al-Fitr hatha –

May God's blessings be showered on you on this Eid al-Fitr
To all our muslim members

Eid al-Fitr (Festival of Breaking the Fast), is a religious holiday celebrated by Muslims worldwide that marks the end of the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan.

