LOTS of our staff will be volunteers or torch bearers at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, or involved in planning for the Games.

It’s a chance of a lifetime to be part of the Games. We meet some of them on the centre spread.

And we’re also going for gold with next day stamps of all Team GB winners – a first for us.

The Gold medal stamps will, wherever possible, feature a photo of the Team GB athlete or team in action from their gold medal winning performance. They’ll be produced overnight and available at 500 Post Offices by lunchtime the next day.

During the Games, picture editors, graphic designers, printers and drivers will work round the clock when Team GB strikes gold to meet this unique challenge.

Sally Gunnell OBE, gold medallist in the 400m hurdles at the Barcelona Games, launched the stamp design this month.
YOU can really help shape the future of our company by giving your views in our new, annual employee opinion survey. It is being run confidentially by research company Ipsos MORI. We really want to hear what you have to say.

It is important that everyone takes part so we can get a complete picture of the areas where we are doing well and what we need to improve. Only by working together can we achieve our strategy to be the best delivery and media business in the UK.

A CHANCE TO SUCCEED
We have seen some very significant developments recently that will help us. A number of key building blocks are now in place.

They are:
1. the pension solution
2. fixing our balance sheet
3. a new regulatory framework
4. charging a fair price for the work we do.

Our historic pension deficit was a huge financial burden. As you know, the Government has now had the go-ahead from the European Commission to take on most of the Pension Plan’s liabilities and fix our balance sheet. More on page 3. You also received a special issue of Courier with more details.

Going for gold… Barcelona gold medallist Sally Gunnell OBE unveiled the design for our Team GB gold medal stamps for the London 2012 Olympics. More on page 16.

A CHANCE TO SUCCEED
We have seen some very significant developments recently that will help us. A number of key building blocks are now in place.

You know we have announced price rises. No one likes to increase their prices when we are doing well and what we need to improve. Only by working together can we achieve our strategy to be the best delivery and media business in the UK.

A CHANCE TO SUCCEED
We have seen some very significant developments recently that will help us. A number of key building blocks are now in place.

They are:
1. the pension solution
2. fixing our balance sheet
3. a new regulatory framework
4. charging a fair price for the work we do.

Our historic pension deficit was a huge financial burden. As you know, the Government has now had the go-ahead from the European Commission to take on most of the Pension Plan’s liabilities and fix our balance sheet. More on page 3. You also received a special issue of Courier with more details.

Going for gold… Barcelona gold medallist Sally Gunnell OBE unveiled the design for our Team GB gold medal stamps for the London 2012 Olympics. More on page 16.

A CHANCE TO SUCCEED
We have seen some very significant developments recently that will help us. A number of key building blocks are now in place.

You know we have announced price rises. No one likes to increase their prices when we are doing well and what we need to improve. Only by working together can we achieve our strategy to be the best delivery and media business in the UK.

A CHANCE TO SUCCEED
We have seen some very significant developments recently that will help us. A number of key building blocks are now in place.

They are:
1. the pension solution
2. fixing our balance sheet
3. a new regulatory framework
4. charging a fair price for the work we do.

Our historic pension deficit was a huge financial burden. As you know, the Government has now had the go-ahead from the European Commission to take on most of the Pension Plan’s liabilities and fix our balance sheet. More on page 3. You also received a special issue of Courier with more details.

Going for gold… Barcelona gold medallist Sally Gunnell OBE unveiled the design for our Team GB gold medal stamps for the London 2012 Olympics. More on page 16.

A CHANCE TO SUCCEED
We have seen some very significant developments recently that will help us. A number of key building blocks are now in place.

They are:
1. the pension solution
2. fixing our balance sheet
3. a new regulatory framework
4. charging a fair price for the work we do.

Our historic pension deficit was a huge financial burden. As you know, the Government has now had the go-ahead from the European Commission to take on most of the Pension Plan’s liabilities and fix our balance sheet. More on page 3. You also received a special issue of Courier with more details.

Going for gold… Barcelona gold medallist Sally Gunnell OBE unveiled the design for our Team GB gold medal stamps for the London 2012 Olympics. More on page 16.
FIGHTING CHANCE

by MARK GLOVER

SIGNIFICANT steps have been taken that will give us a chance to succeed if we achieve our modernisation pro-gramme.

The Government has taken on most of our historic pension liabilities after it got the go ahead from the European Commission. The deficit was a heavy burden on our already poor finances caused by the decline in letters. Our financial health is now much stronger. Our regulator Ofcom also announced a new regulatory framework that gives us more freedom to compete by, for example, setting our own prices. Previous rules prevented us from competing on a level playing field. For instance, it costs us money to deliver the mail collected by other mail carriers and given to us for processing and final delivery through the Downstream Access (DSA) arrangement.

We have announced new stamp price rises that will help us to maintain the Universal Service we provide to nearly 29 million addresses six days a week. Without the rises, the service was in peril because of the fall in mail and the increase in addresses. These are major developments for our company and give us a fighting chance to succeed. Now we must deliver.

Price rises announced

YOU’LL have received your Courier Special about our stamp price increases, which come into effect on 30 April.

Without the rise, the Universal Service was under threat because of the fall in mail volumes and the high cost of delivering to nearly 29 million addresses.

Our stamps are still good value compared with other EU countries. All price rises are carefully thought through. No one likes to increase their prices when the economy is as tough as it is right now. We don’t believe there is an affordability issue with stamps, which make up a tiny proportion of people’s household spend.

From 6 November, we will have a scheme for Christmas 2012 enabling low income households to buy up to 36 First or Second Class stamps at 2011 prices.

Business account prices went up on 2 April.

There’s a single flat price for all packets up to 750 grams, making things simpler for customers, and a new machine-readable large letter specification.

For businesses that use stamps or franking, prices go up on 30 April.

Framework for freedom

OFCOM has announced a new set of regulations for the postal industry. We lobbied hard to get a fair deal that would give us a chance to compete on a level playing field with other companies.

The Ofcom announcement contains a lot of detail and we are now reviewing it in full. We have been stressing the need for a very different regulatory framework as the old approach prevented us from earning a fair rate of return for the work we do.

Our pension solution

THE Government has taken on responsibility for most of the Royal Mail Pension Plan’s (RMPP) liabilities built up until the end of 31 March 2012 – an £8.4 billion deficit.

The pension solution will leave the Plan in a much stronger financial position. People with RMPP pensions needn’t take any action. You’ll pay the same contributions and receive the same overall benefits, but they will come from two separate schemes, as the Government has set up a new scheme (the Royal Mail Statutory Pension Scheme) to pay out all the benefits built up in the RMPP before the end of 31 March.

All employees have received a special issue of Courier dedicated to explaining the pension solution.

Fancy filling the guest editor’s chair? Email courier@abcomm.co.uk or call 020 7922 5670

April 2012

FOR DAILY NEWS, VISIT myroyalmail.com

GUEST EDITOR’S COLUMN

Brian Bilgori, Priority Service team, Heathrow Worldwide Distribution Centre

WHAT a great surprise – to be invited to edit Courier, and find that it includes one of my all-time favourite cartoon characters, Dennis the Menace. These stamps will bring back childhood memories for many readers.

There’s also a story about how Royal Mail has helped to maximise sales for a small holiday business in Dartmoor (page 8). Features like this help to show the story behind the mail we handle, and help us all appreciate that everything we do is about our customers.

Lots of colleagues are talking about their Royal Mail pension at the moment, so it’s good to have a recap of the announcement at the end of March (see left).

There are also stories featuring our Olympic planners, volunteers and torch bearers – what a great opportunity these people have.

Royal Mail is in a strong position to help this country overcome one of its major problems – youth unemployment.

I was part of the Heathrow Worldwide Distribution Centre team that attended employment open days at local schools, to promote the opportunity and benefits of working for Royal Mail to school leavers.

As this is a cause I’m close to, I was really interested to see how the POOBi fund has helped a youngster gain an apprenticeship (page 14).

Hopefully Royal Mail can take on more of these young people too, as we have the ability to offer them proper employment and a decent future.
MAINTAINING STRONG RELATIONSHIP

WE WILL continue to work very closely with the Post Office following its separation from the Royal Mail Group on 1 April.

The Postal Services Act, passed in June last year, paved the way for the two businesses to become sister companies.

Post Office will stay in public hands, while the Act enables Royal Mail to seek private investment in the future.

We’ve signed a major commercial agreement with Post Office, which means we’ll continue to enjoy a long-term relationship.

Post Office will continue to be our retail arm, providing us with access to customers through the Post Office’s network of nearly 12,000 branches.

Royal Mail will remain Post Office’s biggest customer.

There will be no change for our customers, who will continue to buy mail products from the Post Office in the usual way.

For the vast majority of people at Royal Mail and Post Office Limited there will be no change. Only a small number of colleagues will transfer between the two businesses.

Our mutual success is obviously best served by working closely together. By innovating and offering customers unrivalled products and services, both businesses will continue to build on their valued role in British life.

Model behaviour

UP TO 6,000 Post Office branches will be modernised under one of two different models over the next three years.

The main model is being introduced in around 4,000 branches. It offers a modern environment, with a dedicated Post Office counter as well as Post Office services from the retail area and, in many cases, extended opening hours.

Most main branches will be existing Post Office sites. This model is already up and running at 16 pilot branches.

The local model will offer Post Office services from the host business’s retail counter, often over longer opening hours. With 161 local branches already up and running, up to 2,000 will be established either in existing Post Offices or suitable nearby retailers.

Andrew Dash, subpostmaster at Falmouth main Post Office branch, says: ‘We jumped at the chance to operate a Post Office branch – we saw it as the perfect complement to our convenience store.

‘It meant we could become a hub in the community. We have a bright, modern Post Office in a bustling convenience store. The customers love it.’

WHAT IS THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO BUSINESSES?

Royal Mail and Post Office have signed a major long-term commercial agreement, which will ensure both companies continue their close relationship. Our mutual commercial success is best served by working closely together for the benefit of customers. Post Office will continue to be Royal Mail’s retail arm. This provides us with unrivalled access to customers through around 12,000 branches. We will remain Post Office’s biggest customer. The agreement is fair to both businesses and allows each to develop its overall strategies.

WILL CUSTOMERS SEE ANY CHANGES?

No. There will be no change for our customers. The two businesses have long had an agreement on how they work together in the overall interests of customers. That will continue under the new agreement. Crucially, customers will not notice any difference to the way they obtain postal services and products from Post Office branches across the network.

HOW WILL EMPLOYEES BE AFFECTED?

There has been no change for the overwhelming majority of our people. Only a small number of colleagues have transferred between the two businesses.

MORE than 30 employees had their say with chief exec Moya Greene and CWU deputy general Dave Ward on the company’s values.

‘They are the principles that guide how we think, behave, make decisions and, ultimately, how we operate as a business.

‘Postmen and women came from around the country. Several topics were debated, including what values are important to our work today, what’s missing and what’s important for the future.

‘Our people have a real pride in their job,’ says Shelley Luxon-Eade, deputy manager in Brighton.

‘We all want to change what needs changing so that our company will survive, bringing in new ways of working at the same time building on our experience.’

Harpreet Singh is People Development pillar lead for the World Class Mail programme at Bristol mail centre. He says: ‘The day was really interesting and we had some very in-depth discussions.

‘It was properly interactive and I felt senior managers were listening to our opinions on issues like communicating more effectively to frontline staff.’

Simon Haben, HR director of policy, says: ‘As we define our business strategy and simplify our HR policies, we need to ensure we have the right values in place, developed by our people.

‘These values must become a part of everything we do.’

WHAT CHANGED ON 1 APRIL?

Royal Mail and Post Office became sister companies. The Postal Services Act enabled the two companies to separate and develop in the changing, competitive but different markets the two businesses operate in. The Government stressed Post Office would remain 100% in public ownership, while Royal Mail could seek private investment.
Tell us what you think in the Employee Survey 2012

WE want to hear your views. What do we do well as a business, and where do we need to do better? Have you got an idea to improve the way we work?

The Employee Survey 2012 is your chance to tell us your views and share your ideas.

Please take the time to complete the survey. We need to know what everyone’s real issues are to be able to take action. The results help us make improvements – if we don’t know about it, we can’t act on it.

We are committed to taking action. In the snapshot survey last autumn, you asked us to tell you more about our strategy – we briefed everyone in the company earlier this month. You also said you wanted to know more about our customers and what we are doing to improve performance. You will have seen a lot of information on our customers.

We will continue to take action on your feedback.

Surveys were given out in your Work Time Listening and Learning sessions earlier this month or sent direct from Ipsos MORI to those people with work email addresses. All surveys should be completed and returned by 30 April 2012 at the latest.

The results will be collated and analysed independently by Ipsos MORI and all surveys are completely confidential.

DON’T miss your chance to choose our next main charity partner in your Employee Survey from 10 to 30 April.

There’s a shortlist of three charities to vote for – Alzheimer’s Society, The Prostate Cancer Charity and Whizz-Kidz. You’ll find more information about these three good causes in your Courier Special delivered earlier this month, or on myroyalmail.com, to help you choose.

The Charity of the Year programme will run for two years, and we will initially focus our fundraising activities on the charity that receives the most votes. We will also donate £50,000 to each of the two charities that doesn’t become our Charity of the Year. Additionally, once you have raised £1 million for our Charity of the Year, which will be matched penny for penny by Royal Mail, you can choose to raise money for any of the three shortlisted charities for the remainder of the programme. In this way, each charity will benefit in a significant way.

We hope to announce the result by the end of May and to start fundraising for the chosen charity from June. Cast your vote on the final page of the Employee Survey.

YOU raised more than £2.4 million for Barnardo’s during our partnership, which ended on 31 March.

Anne Marie Carrie, Barnardo’s chief executive, says: ‘On behalf of everyone at Barnardo’s, I would like to say a huge thank you to Royal Mail Group employees, customers and suppliers for your fantastic support and commitment over the past three years.

During these tough economic times, your incredible fundraising efforts have helped some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the UK. Thousands of staff have rolled up their sleeves and volunteered, and you have directly supported more than 100 young people into employment opportunities, literally helping to turn their lives around.

“You have left us a tremendous legacy.”

You can still support Barnardo’s through Payroll Giving or your own fundraising activities.

Bumper effort for Barnardo’s
FIRST CLASS PERFORMANCE

by BEN HALL

THE Feeling First Class programme is in full swing, offering all staff the chance to monitor and improve their health.

A health fair roadshow has been touring delivery offices and mail centres across the UK, with kits that measure key health indicators like blood pressure and body mass index (BMI).

This month, the number of kits is more than doubling, which will allow every one of our employees the chance for a health check over the next 18 months.

Postman Mark Service received a valuable insight into his blood pressure when the roadshow arrived at Birmingham mail centre.

‘Whether you are interested in your health or not, it is very convenient and can open your eyes,’ says Mark.

‘It’s definitely worth it, especially for free.’

Boots Opticians has been accompanying the roadshow, providing eye screening and vouchers for full eye tests and money off glasses.

Halfords and the Rowland Hill Fund, our charity for employees in financial hardship, have also set up stands on the tour.

Occupational health manager Stephen Weston says: ‘Each time we run a health fair, we try to expand the activities, and they are growing at an impressive rate.

‘These activities only take a few minutes out of your day, but they really are worthwhile.’

The roadshow will next hit Logistics in the summer, followed by the South-East in September and Thames Valley in October.

Web of help

A NEW online resource launched this month to provide all staff with personally tailored programmes, information and support for health and lifestyles.

The Wellbeing Zone, which is part of Feeling First Class, offers a personal training programme, weight management plan, advice, stress solutions, 10-minute wellness checks and an ‘ask the expert’ service.

Also available are preferential rates and discounts from a range of partners, including Champneys, Fitness First, LA Fitness, Marriott and more.

Occupational health manager Stephen Weston says: ‘We hope people will have their health checks as well as making good use of the Wellbeing Zone – all elements of Feeling First Class can really complement each other.’

Register with the Feeling First Class website to be in with a chance of winning a Red Letter Day.

Go to www.feelingfirstclass.co.uk with reference code FFC1 now!

Moving on up

WOMEN in our business are benefiting from mentoring set up through our Women’s Network.

The aim is to unlock their potential, support their professional development and help progress their careers.

The Women’s Network, led by chief executive Moya Greene and Sue Whalley, Group director of regulation and government affairs, provides women with an opportunity to connect and network.

At present, women represent 18% of our workforce.

Ambrin Shah says her mentor was ‘fantastic’.

Ambrin was work area manager at Manchester mail centre and was matched with Margaret Ollerenshaw, head of talent and succession. She is now late shift manager at North West regional distribution centre.

‘Every time I called Margaret, there was never an “I’ll call you back” or a long period of silence,’ says Ambrin.

Margaret says: ‘Ambrin was ambitious but not sure how to progress, so a lot of what I did was offer practical tips – have you thought about this, or that, and how have you been going about achieving it?’

Frontline operational women can get involved in our Springboard development programme. For more information on Springboard, email preeti.lad@royalmail.com or call 01788 512238.

April 2012

AS PART of the Business Transformation Agreement, a 3.5% pay increase came into effect from April.

The pay increase applies to CWU colleagues on Royal Mail Letters pay rates.
Furnishing success

Our Door to Door service is helping Lucas Furniture, Buckinghamshire’s biggest independent furniture supplier, reach new customers.

Door to Door revenue grew to £127 million in 2011-12 – the busiest year in Door to Door history and a fantastic performance given the current economic climate, when overall advertising has declined.

We have ambitious plans to grow unaddressed mail, as part of our goal to be the best delivery and media business in the UK. But to do that, we need to make sure we deliver every single item customers pay us to, every time. That’ll give customers confidence to keep their business with us and not take it to a competitor.

DO you know an unsung hero or heroine who deserves recognition?

You’ve still got time to nominate them for a Chairman’s Award for Excellence – the closing date is 9 May.

The awards recognise colleagues who go above and beyond the call of duty. This year, there are two special award categories – a Change Champion Award and a Bravery Award. There are also categories for Customer Excellence, Community Champion and Best Colleague.

The winners will be announced at a ceremony on 22 June. You can nominate a colleague online at myroyalmail.com, by email to awards@royalmail.com or by post to Chairman’s Awards, c/o Group Communications, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ. Please include your details, the nominee’s name, work location, category and why you think they deserve to win.

Chairman’s Awards for Excellence
You make the difference

See www.mmc.co.uk for more info
WISH YOU WERE HERE

by BEN HALL

TUCKED away in Dartmoor National Park, cottage and holiday letting agents Helpful Holidays prepares its brochures for delivery with our direct mail service.

Growing mail as an advertising medium is a key part of our strategy to be the best delivery and media business in the UK.

The holiday company, based in Chagford, is a superb example of our services complementing a company rooted in its own community.

Kim Stoodley, Linda McKeown and the team form the largest company to manually sort its mail in-house, sourcing its entire part-time staff from the village, providing great support for the area.

‘It is not all about money for us,’ says Kim. ‘There is a real mixture of people helping us out, and everyone has some fun because it’s a close community.’

Teenagers as young as 16 can be found helping alongside pensioners up to the age of 90 as the mail is sorted in Chagford Village Hall, which the company rents whenever it’s time for a drop.

Helpful Holidays is supported by our new business field manager Sarah Oakes.

‘We have a great relationship that has developed a lot, with direct mail having helped grow this business,’ says Sarah.

‘Taking advantage of this service ensures it gets the most for its money, which is what we’re eager to provide.’

‘The scale of this operation is representative of how the business’s relationship with us has grown over time.

‘We’ve gone from dealing with a Post Office out of a house to regularly liaising with our own account managers,’ says Kim. ‘That kind of back-up gives us a lot of confidence, and it’s why we’re always receptive to new ideas.’

‘Direct mail is a really novel approach to promoting our business and we wouldn’t think of going anywhere else for these services,’ adds Linda.

‘It’s a true partnership.’

Success banked

Bank says our Sameday team is delivering the goods

by HILARY ROBERTSON

WHEN it comes to delivering a high-quality service, banking group Santander knows it can count on us.

It has measured our performance and awarded us top performing supplier status.

Across the country, 70 of our drivers and five dedicated employees provide a specialist mailroom service contract with Santander through our Sameday service.

Every day, they collect Santander pouches from each of the 11,500 Post Offices around the UK, and deliver them to the Group’s banking centre in Bootle, Liverpool, within 12 hours.

The bank measures all its suppliers in areas like service quality, proactiveness, ability to implement change and commitment to drive down costs.

‘We book in each van when it arrives and process the pouches containing the cheques immediately,’ says postman Mike Toker. ‘The times are recorded and each day we account for any lates – usually caused by traffic on the motorway.

‘We’ve had people from the bank come down to watch us, and they’ve been impressed at the speed we deal with the pouches.

‘It’s in our interest to do a really good job – nothing sits around.’

‘We have a cracking relationship with them and they are a pleasure to work with.’

‘The scale of this operation is representative of how the business’s relationship with us has grown over time.

‘We’ve gone from dealing with a Post Office out of a house to regularly liaising with our own account managers,’ says Kim. ‘That kind of back-up gives us a lot of confidence, and it’s why we’re always receptive to new ideas.’

‘Direct mail is a really novel approach to promoting our business and we wouldn’t think of going anywhere else for these services,’ adds Linda.

‘It’s a true partnership.’
TOP OF THE TABLE

DELIVERY sector manager Pat O’Reilly
opened London’s newest delivery office just a few weeks before his retirement.
I’ve been part of Royal Mail since starting as a postman in March 1975,” he says. ‘I have
worked at every grade, across every part of the business, and it’s a real honour to open this new building. I can remember when there were ships in the docks and no City Airport – there’s so much redevelopment going on here and we’re a part of that.’
The Victoria Docks delivery office is part of the evolution of our delivery office network in response to changing market needs, space demands, technology, and the supply and demand of the property market. It will help the local team deliver quickly and efficiently to customers in London’s changing East End.
‘We’ve been moving around between offices for 20 years,’ says postman Mark Stone. ‘It’s great to have our own building with our own equipment that we are responsible for.’
For fellow postman Laurie Barford, that responsibility is crucial. He says: ‘Our vans and PDAs mean we can really give customers the best service.’

KIRKCALDY delivery office tops Scotland’s league table for sequencing the most mail efficiently and on time.
‘We’ve got the right people in the right jobs,’ says delivery office manager Eddie Smeaton. ‘Our new compact sequence sorters (CSS) are very reliable with fewer breakdowns, and performance has got better week on week.’
Postman Ian Pennman says: ‘A lot of people have put in a lot of hard work. The changes are working well and we’re all doing a fair share of the work. The high capacity trolleys and shared vans mean we’re definitely not carrying nearly as much at one time.’
Colin Fisher is another postman on the Kirkcaldy team. He says: ‘We’re all making the best of the changes we’re seeing, and I’ve even noticed I’ve got more energy because we’re not having to carry so much.’
The teamwork continues outside their own delivery area.
Alan Bunting, delivery office manager at Leven, 10 miles away, says: ‘Our 7.5-tonne vehicle broke down 25 miles from our base at 7am. I called Kirkcaldy for help, and they sent theirs to transfer the mail to and brought it up to us.’

EAST END EVOLUTION

by HILARY ROBERTSON

DEVELOPMENT sector manager Pat O’Reilly opened London’s newest delivery office just a few weeks before his retirement.
I’ve been part of Royal Mail since starting as a postman in March 1975,” he says. ‘I have worked at every grade, across every part of the business, and it’s a real honour to open this new building. I can remember when there were ships in the docks and no City Airport – there’s so much redevelopment going on here and we’re a part of that.’
The Victoria Docks delivery office is part of the evolution of our delivery office network in response to changing market needs, space demands, technology, and the supply and demand of the property market. It will help the local team deliver quickly and efficiently to customers in London’s changing East End.
‘We’ve been moving around between offices for 20 years,” says postman Mark Stone. ‘It’s great to have our own building with our own equipment that we are responsible for.’
For fellow postman Laurie Barford, that responsibility is crucial. He says: ‘Our vans and PDAs mean we can really give customers the best service.’

Helping hand for PPI

by BEN HALL

COLLECTION drivers are receiving new training to help with the introduction of PDA upgrades.
The software upgrades will complement the introduction of mandatory paperwork for collections (MPC).
Drivers will now be required to check that every payment protection insurance (PPI) posting has acceptable documentation with it and that the number of letters posted matches what the paperwork says.
This MPC process will be made easier with drivers simply scanning the barcodes on top of the paperwork.
Rugby delivery office driver Samuel James says: ‘The training gives you the peace of mind that you’re doing things right. It also covers situations with customers – what we should do and the options we have on how we should approach them.’
Training will take place throughout spring and summer, with the new process starting in August.
LONDON LOWDOWN

A GROUP of 14 postmen and women have swapped their day job for roles in our Olympics planning team. They’re spending the next five months – until the end of September – helping every delivery office in London and the South West region on several days in May and July, and three Paralympic Flame locations in August, so we can plan for these too.

Deployment planner Colin Baker is leading the team. He says: ‘This is a project that we will never have to repeat. It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity for everyone involved.’

They’ve decided the capital up so they each cover a set number of offices, building regular contacts and each visiting around three offices a day.

Suzanne McCall, usually based at West London delivery centre, says: ‘We put together storyboards during briefing sessions, observing how the Games will affect them.

The team includes delivery and collection routes that are on the Olympic Route Network which has a lane dedicated to Olympic traffic and restrictions on stoppages, changes in traffic signs and speed limits, and regulations on when traffic can enter and leave the Games area.

Martin Hall, from East London, adds: ‘There are so many delivery points to plan for. This project is giving me a real insight into how the business works, and how other organisations like Transport for London operate.

‘The Olympic Games will be the chance of a lifetime, and we really want to support people in this.’

Plain sailing

IT’S not just London that’s hosting Olympic events. Weymouth and Portland will see 17 days of Olympic action across the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Regional postman manager Aditya Chacko, the team leader, says: ‘The top priority is maintaining the quality of the universal service. We are looking at all sorts of options, such as whether we could deliver from business hours or earlier, to help make the collection schedule as smooth as possible.’

We also have the torch relay coming through the South West region on several dates in May and July, and three Paralympic Flame locations in August, so we are planning for these too.

Deployment planner Colin Baker is leading the team. He says: ‘The planning principles and techniques we’re applying to plan our Olympic Games is much the same as for all other projects – it’s just the occasion we are planning for that makes this project unique.

‘We are planning for the dates of the Olympic Games, but we will remain focused on providing delivery and collection services as near normal as possible for our customers.’

So we decided to keep the current annual holiday policy in place, and people should apply as normal.

‘Taking annual holiday for the events is the preferred option. But if that’s not available for the required days, managers should do all they can to accommodate people’s requests. For example, if a request for Monday is rejected, managers should try to help people around me – I live by the motto of treating people the way you’d like to be treated.’
A round-up of convictions across the country. Phil Gerrish, director of investigations, says: ‘The courts take offences against Royal Mail seriously, and so do we – our policy is to prosecute all cases of theft and fraud, every time. We will also use all available legislation to recover our losses from employees who steal.’

Anthony Clifford Brierley, a postman from Oldham delivery office, targeted cash and stole 831 postal packets and intentionally delayed a further 11,898, together with 21,686 Door to Door postal packets. Brierley pleaded guilty to one charge of theft and one of intentional delay at Oldham Magistrates’ Court on 27 February 2012 and was sentenced to 16 months’ imprisonment on each charge to run concurrently.

Sean Alexander Stephenson, postman from Manchester South West delivery office, who stole postal packets containing DVDs, books and headphones, pleaded guilty at Manchester Minshull Crown Court on 9 March 2012 to one charge of theft of 47 postal packets, one charge of opening three postal packets and one of intentionally delaying 848 postal packets. He received a total sentence of nine months’ imprisonment.

Stephen Leslie Walshaw, an agency driver from Wakefield, and Andrew Wake, unemployed from Barnsley, pleaded guilty to the theft of two mail bags. At Sheffield Crown Court on 8 March 2012, Walshaw received an immediate 12-month prison sentence and Wake received a six-month suspended prison sentence along with 150 hours’ community service, and was also ordered to pay Royal Mail £4,000 in compensation.

**CONTACTS**

**BULLYING & HARASSMENT**
HELPLINE 0800 587 4777

**SPEAK UP (WHISTLEBLOWING)**
Report a breach of our licence or legal obligations to a confidential external hotline.
Call 0800 097 1131 or visit www.intouchfeedback.com/royalmail

**DISABILITY HELPLINE**
0800 028 6142 or email disabilityhelpdesk@royalmail.com

**PENSIONS HELPLINE**
Postline 5456 4545 or 0114 241 4545 (employees)
0845 603 0043 (pensioners)

**HUMAN RESOURCES**
Royal Mail business units: Postline 5456 7100 or 0845 606 0603/0114 241 8900

**HELP**
Employee assistance service for free advice.
Call 0800 688 8777

**SECURITY HELPDESK**
Tel 020 7239 6655 or email securityhelpdesk@royalmail.com

Phone: 084 50 57 57 50
Email: sales@affinityvehicleleasing.com
Or log in: royal password: MAIL
WWW.affinityvehicleleasing.com

**Vehicle Finance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Payment Deposit Price per month</th>
<th>2 years 5,000 miles a year</th>
<th>3 years 5,000 miles a year</th>
<th>4 years 5,000 miles a year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kia Picanto 3 Dr 1.2 Sxi</td>
<td></td>
<td>£120</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kia Sportage 1.6 CDi 1 2WD</td>
<td></td>
<td>£172</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kia Rio 3 Dr 1.25 l</td>
<td></td>
<td>£180</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kia Picanto 3 Dr 1.0 1 Free Metallic Paint</td>
<td></td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kia Picanto 3 Dr 1.2 Sxi Free Metallic Paint</td>
<td></td>
<td>£220</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kia Sportage 1.6 CDi 1 2WD Free Metallic Paint</td>
<td></td>
<td>£225</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
<td>£2,000 deposit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Great News!** - If, in the current economic climate, you have slipped with payments or are unsure why you have been unable to obtain finance, we now have the opportunity to help with your car purchase. If you are over 22 years old, with a Full UK or EU driving Licence and are looking for a new car with Fantastic Discounts, then call Affinity Leasing now. We can finance up to £10,000 on a selection of brand new cars on Hire Purchase, with no deposit......let us help you get back on the road in a new reliable car. Call Affinity for more details or just a quote (all loans subject to status)

Quotations are based on no maintenance. Other mileages and payment profiles available upon request. Underwriting subject to status. A documentation fee of £180 plus VAT is payable on order. The pictures are for illustration purposes only. All rentals are inclusive of VAT. Stock available but is limited. The above figures are correct at the time of print.
EAGLE-EYED postman Alan Ryall has won £1,000 of shopping vouchers after helping to win new international business.

He spotted an opportunity for the business to work with a company called Extreme Fliers, who sell remote control toys such as helicopters.

After reporting the Watch&Win lead, it has since earned us more than £100,000. He will be cashing this in for vouchers he can enjoy during his retirement soon.

‘I contacted their customer services team and found out there are a number of companies under the name Extreme who could all work with Royal Mail,’ says Alan, who works at Nine Elms mail centre.

‘It’s been making the business money for a while now. I’ll be using my rewards in Sainsbury’s and Marks & Spencer to save money on my shopping bills for the next few months.’

by GARY MOSS

Simplyhealth is a trading name of Simplyhealth Access, registered and incorporated in England and Wales, No.183035. Registered office: Hambleden House, Waterloo Court, Andover, Hampshire SP10 1UQ. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Your calls may be recorded and monitored for training and quality assurance purposes. Part of this policy is underwritten by a third party insurer. Premiums received by Simplyhealth for this part of your cover are held by us as agent of the insurer.

Bother us on 0800 731 3486 quoting LA0034 or visit www.simplyhealth.co.uk/royalmail

Simplyhealth
We can be bothered.

simplyaccidentplan

Money back on accidents from just £5 a month

We cover both serious accidents and minor ones, including fractures

Claim money back for physiotherapy and osteopathy, plus stays in hospital up to your annual limit

Up to four resident children up to the age of 18 are covered for FREE

Bother us on 0800 731 3486 quoting LA0034 or visit www.simplyhealth.co.uk/royalmail

1Specifically related to an accident
MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE

THE Rowland Hill Fund has helped Swindon stock centre acting manager Anthony Mann, who has just been medically retired after suffering ill health last year.

"The money from the Rowland Hill Fund has really made a difference to my life," says Anthony.

"On top of my lung condition, I suffered a heart attack in January and am now on oxygen."

"I asked the Fund for help, and they paid for my travel expenses to and from the hospital and funded my new electric scooter. I just wouldn’t be able to get around at all if I didn’t have it."

Every day, the Rowland Hill Fund hears from people struggling to make ends meet, who often feel desperate and alone. Anthony is pleased he made the call, and thinks more people should go to the Fund for help.

More info at www.rowlandhillfund.org

Coached for success

by HILARY ROBERTSON

WATFORD FC has a new apprentice coach thanks to the Post Office Orphans Benevolent Institution (POOBI).

Network driver Michael Praide spotted an opportunity for his teenage son Lewis after reading about POOBI in Courier.

Michael, who works at Heathrow Worldwide Distribution Centre, says: 'When Lewis was doing A-levels, his PE teacher suggested the coaching apprenticeship at Watford. I was under immense pressure because of the cost of further education, but it was clear that Lewis has a particular talent in people management and sport.'

POOBI helped fund Lewis’s apprenticeship with Watford FC and West Herts College, and he’s been excelling on the course.

'I’ve just been appointed to the coaching team before I’ve even completed the course,’ says Lewis. ‘I can’t wait to start coaching in the summer, and I’m very grateful to POOBI for supporting me through the last couple of years.’

Making a difference… Anthony says his electric scooter is a lifeline

More info at www.poobi.org

Lights, Camera, CSMA Club!

Join CSMA Club today for just £17 and you can make great savings on so many things, including your next holiday, your next car, insuring your home, even O2 arena and theme park trips.

New members also receive £130 worth of vouchers to save money on breakdown cover, car insurance, our Leisure Retreats and a case of wine or champagne!

To join now visit csmaclub.co.uk/royalmailgroup

---

Visit: csmaclub.co.uk/royalmailgroup

Terms and conditions apply, vouchers subject to change. Full details available at csmaclub.co.uk/royalmailgroup. You are eligible to join CSMA Club as an employee of Royal Mail Group. CSMA Club is a brand of Motoring & Leisure Services Ltd, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. FSA registration no 308988. Registered office Britannia House, 21 Station Street, Brighton, BN1 4RE, registered in England no. 02813598. VAT registration no GB2096633. 927-56-21 Royal Mail.
KEEN to climb the career ladder, Aylesbury postman Stuart Watts has started a master’s degree in management at the University of Hertfordshire.

‘A lot of the degree is practical learning, and I’m using my previous experience in IT management alongside the theoretical parts of the course,’ says Stuart.

‘I’m about to start working full-time, which will make studying more difficult, but I’m determined to continue. Working here helps bring the course to life and to see the practical application of things I’m learning, like people management and forward planning.’

Stuart hopes to do his dissertation about Royal Mail’s people management strategies and will be asking colleagues to complete an online questionnaire with their opinions.

BEAULY postman Andrew Boa has just completed a BSc with honours in physical science with the Open University.

He says: ‘It was hard going sometimes, but I wanted to study something I was interested in. I didn’t get the grades to go to university when I left school, although I’d had an offer to study chemical engineering. It’s good to have the opportunity to do it now.

‘I am sure I won’t be the only postman to have achieved this milestone and it would be interesting to hear about more of us who have obtained qualifications outside the workplace.’

Cottages4you offer the largest choice of over 10,000 holiday properties throughout the UK, Ireland, France and Italy. Choose from the extensive collection of country cottages, villas with pools, rustic farmhouses, rural gites and apartments. Holiday cottages and villas are a popular and flexible holiday choice – ideal for family holidays, weekends away, romantic breaks and get-togethers with friends and even your beloved pet.

Choose to just stay a couple of nights as a short break, a week or perhaps even longer. Cottages4you are sure to have the perfect property for you!

To search online, check availability and book your dream holiday property visit www.cottages-4-you.co.uk/royalmail or call our holiday helpline on 0845 126 1335 to receive your 10% discount simply quote code ‘STAF10’ when booking.

Hoseasons offer an incredible choice of over 440 family-friendly holiday parks, with kids’ clubs for the grandchildren, superb indoor pools, activities all day and entertainment every night.

You’ll find an incredible choice of over 440 family-friendly holiday parks, with kids’ clubs for the grandchildren, superb indoor pools, activities all day and entertainment every night.

If you’re looking for a getaway with a relaxed pace of life, in a quiet and scenic location - how about a stylish wooden lodge in the heart of the countryside - maybe with its own private hot tub!

All aboard for a boating holiday! If you fancy trying your hand at skippering your very own Broads cruiser or Narrowboat, Hoseasons have the widest choice of boating holidays.

To search and book securely online visit www.hoseasons.co.uk/royalmail or alternatively, call our friendly sales team on 0844 847 1296 Quote Mail to receive your 10% discount.
WE BET John Sullivan is feline lucky – he’s won this month’s photo competition with a great shot of himself with Xena the cheetah.

‘My partner and I have just returned after three weeks on a cheetah conservation project in Bloemfontein, South Africa,’ says John, postman at Walton-on-Thames delivery office.

‘Here’s me and Xena sharing the latest Royal Mail news, with her showing me the best way to lick a stamp!’

And Martin’s gone to Iceland in our next photo. Bogor Regis postman Martin Rosam is pictured at the Blue Lagoon spa in Iceland.

Celestine Opely, mail screener at Heathrow Worldwide Distribution Centre, took time out to read Courier before enjoying the works of art at the Louvre in Paris.

And it was a relaxing holiday chilling on the beach in Cuba with Courier for Cefin Vaughan, postman from Narbeth, North Wales.

Send your snaps to courierphotos@abcomm.co.uk or post to Courier photo competition, 24-26 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0UE. Please include your home address.
ESSEX OFFERS GLIMPSE OF PAST

A VISIT to Loughton in Essex will give you an insight into how our processes, equipment and vehicles to deliver mail have evolved in the last 100 years.

The village houses The British Postal Museum & Archive’s (BPMA) collection store, which holds a progressive timeline of vehicles, objects and letterboxes.

This ever-expanding trove includes balancing scales, pneumatic railcars, Morris mailvans and many more items that are a far cry from the PDAs and iLSMs of today.

The BPMA hosts monthly tours around the store.

Each tour is carried out by a BPMA curator, allowing visitors an exclusive insight into the fascinating history of our postal heritage.

To book a place on the next tour or for more information about the store, visit www.postalheritage.org.uk/page/museum-tours or call 020 7239 2570.

TITANIC ANNIVERSARY SHEET UNVEILED

A NEW stamp product marking RMS Titanic was issued on 10 April, 100 years to the day since the liner set sail from Southampton.

Among the 1,500 passengers who perished were two British postal workers, James Williamson and John Smith, who were working in the ship’s mail area.

The Titanic commemorative sheet comes in an illustrated presentation folder telling the story of the construction of RMS Titanic, and each of the 10 labels printed next to the stamps features an individual archive image.

Philip Parker says: ‘The loss of Royal Mail Ship Titanic remains one of the world’s worst maritime disasters, and its incredible story has been indelibly etched into our history.’

Exclusive Holiday Benefits for Royal Mail Employees

Crete
5* Hersonissos Palace Hotel
All-inclusive in Hersonissos
Return flights & transfers included
Choose from 12 regional departure airports

Travel May – October 2012
7 nights from £349 pp
May from £349 pp Jun from £489 pp
Jul from £599 pp Aug from £669 pp
Sep from £439 pp Oct from £389 pp

City Breaks
Choose from over 20 popular cities including Amsterdam, Berlin, Krakow, Paris, Prague & Rome City centre hotels – 3*, 4* or 5* with breakfast
Return flights from regional airports included

Travel May – December 2012
2 nights from £249 pp
Free Excursions on all Packages including city tours and river cruises* Quote CITY3105

Lake Garda Stay & Greek Isles Cruise
7 night stay in Lake Garda, 3* Half Board +
7 night cruise on Splendour of the Seas
Itinerary: Venice, Bari, Corfu, Mykonos, Athens, Al Sea, Dubrovnik, Venice
Choose from 6 regional departure airports

Travel May – October 2012
14 nights from £1349 pp
NEARLY 10 bin liners full of bras have been collected for the charity Against Breast Cancer thanks to Hayley O’Shea in HR Services, Cardiff.

She says: ‘I organised a bra bank to raise funds for breast cancer research, help small businesses in Africa and prevent valuable textiles going to landfill. For every tonne of textiles we collect, the charity will receive £1,000 to help fund its research into treatment for breast cancer.

The bras are then shipped out to west Africa and sold at village markets. I’d like to thank everyone who contributed.’

Cosham coughs up

STAFF at Cosham delivery office got behind the family of postman Mark Lee, whose son Jacob was born three months early, weighing just under 2lbs.

‘I want to thank everyone who works with my husband at Cosham,’ says Katrine Lee.

‘They helped me raise £1,779 for the neonatal unit at Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth.’

Shaggy dog story

ALAN and Julie Drummond combine work at Monmouth delivery office with fundraising for the Four Paws Animal Rescue charity.

“Our latest event was a dog rescue that was covered on the Chris Evans Breakfast Show, local TV news and in the Daily Mail,” says Julie.

‘Peppa was out on a walk with her owner Audrey when she disappeared. Amazingly, we found her down a mine shaft, where she had survived for nine days.’

Let’s get quizzical!

BEING a catalyst for fundraising events and quizzes has become a regular part of Gary Ellerton’s life. The Burslem postman hosts a monthly quiz in his local pub and organises quizzes in aid of local charities.

‘I don’t do all of this for me, I do it for other people. There are one or two who have gone out of their way to help me throughout the years, and I would like to thank them for their support,’ says Gary.

More for Movember

THE team at Ipswich mail centre has just tallied up its Movember money and it comes to the magnificent total of £2,097.06 for research into prostate cancer.

LEUKAEMIA LEGACY

A TEAM from North West Midlands mail centre, led by postman Robert White, has completed a fourth year of fundraising in honour of late colleague Ian Walters, who died of leukaemia in 2007.

Robert presented Bob Williams from Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research with a cheque for £2,710, taking the total amount staff have raised since Ian’s death to £15,000.

Each year the group holds a charity night at Bilston Social Club, and its fundraising efforts are bolstered by a sponsored walk and a five-a-side football game.

Robert says: ’We began fundraising after being inspired by Ian’s decision to allow doctors to run tests on him during the last few months of his life. We have always had a good response from people for the events we’ve put on, even though times are tough.’
MONEY-SAVING OFFERS AND HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

Key: Employees only  E  Employees and pensioners  E  P

CARS
Affinity Leasing  E  P
Up to 45% off a new car.
User name: royal  Password: MAIL
Tel: 0845 507 5750  
Visit: www.affinityvehicleleasing.com

Blackcircles Tyres  E  P
Save money on new tyres and car servicing.
Quote: EUR079L125.
Tel: 0845 620 2000
Visit: www.blackcircles.com

Royal Mail Products
Redirection and Keepsafe  E
Two months’ Keepsafe and up to two years’ Redirection – free.
To apply: Ask your manager
Smilers stamps  E
Get 10% off sets of Smilers (paper and telephone orders only).
Quote: 11JHA.
For more info, visit: www.royalmail.com/smilers

SHOPPING
Applex Employee Purchase Programme  E  P
Up to 17% off some gadgets.
Visit: http://store.apple.com/uk/telecoms/royalmail

Bunches flowers  E  P
Save 10% on blooms by post.
Quote: RMAL
Tel: 0845 077 8850
Visit: www.bunches.co.uk

CycleWork  E  P
Save tax and NI on a new bike.
Username: mgbuser
Password: mgbbenefit
Tel: 0845 077 8850
Visit: www.cycle2work.net/employees

EDF Energy Shop  E  P
15% discount at EDF Energy’s online Energy Shop. Available until 29 February 2012
Quote: RME15

Visit: www.edfenergy.com/products-services/for-your-home/energy-store/

Joe Browns  E  P
Get 15% off men’s and women’s clothing.
Quote: MAIL01.
Tel: 0113 270 6655
Visit: www.joebrowns.co.uk

Kaspersky  E  P
Internet security products for up to 50% less.
Quote: Royalmail25.
Tel: 0800 027 3387
Visit: www.kaspersky.co.uk/royalmail

Moko Chocolates  E  P
Get 15% off chocolate gifts sent to UK addresses.
Quote: RMAL
Tel: 0844 888 8888
Visit: www.mokochocolates.co.uk

Sharp Affinity Programme  E  P
Savings of up to 40% on TVs etc.
Quote: MEDAY.
Visit: www.sharpdirect.co.uk/royalmail

Sony PlayStation  E  P
Visit: https://royalmail.playstation

SHOPPING
Apple Employee Purchase Programme  E  P
Up to 17% off some gadgets.
Visit: http://store.apple.com/uk/telecoms/royalmail

Bunches flowers  E  P
Save 10% on blooms by post.
Quote: RMAL
Tel: 0845 077 8850
Visit: www.bunches.co.uk

CycleWork  E  P
Save tax and NI on a new bike.
Username: mgbuser
Password: mgbbenefit
Tel: 0845 077 8850
Visit: www.cycle2work.net/employees

EDF Energy Shop  E  P
15% discount at EDF Energy’s online Energy Shop. Available until 29 February 2012
Quote: RME15

Visit: www.edfenergy.com/products-services/for-your-home/energy-store/

Joe Browns  E  P
Get 15% off men’s and women’s clothing.
Quote: MAIL01.
Tel: 0113 270 6655
Visit: www.joebrowns.co.uk

Kaspersky  E  P
Internet security products for up to 50% less.
Quote: Royalmail25.
Tel: 0800 027 3387
Visit: www.kaspersky.co.uk/royalmail

Moko Chocolates  E  P
Get 15% off chocolate gifts sent to UK addresses.
Quote: RMAL
Tel: 0844 888 8888
Visit: www.mokochocolates.co.uk

Sharp Affinity Programme  E  P
Savings of up to 40% on TVs etc.
Quote: MEDAY.
Visit: www.sharpdirect.co.uk/royalmail

Sony PlayStation  E  P
Visit: https://royalmail.playstation

SPORT & LEISURE
Airport Parking & Hotels  E  P
A 10% discount on parking at major UK airports.
Quote: RMAL
Tel: 0844 871 7521
Visit: www.aapm.com/royalmail

cottages4you  E
10% off holiday lets. Quote: STAF10.
Tel: 0845 268 1335
Visit: www.cottages4you.co.uk

Visit: www.cottageselection.co.uk/sites/cottageselection/partners/rym

CSMA Club  E  P
Discounts on leisure retreats, live events and motoring benefits.
Visit: www.csmaclub.co.uk/royalmailgroup

David Lloyd Leisure  E  P
Gym membership and free trials.
Tel: 0844 648 4737
Visit: www.davidlloyd.co.uk

English Heritage  E  P
Free entry for colleagues, one adult guest and up to six children to 280 English Heritage sites by showing a work pass, plus discounts on holiday cottages (quote: HROYAL); on prints at www.englishheritageprints.com (quote: CRPT1615); and at shops (quote: EHOCPRM12).
Visit: www.english-heritage.org.uk/corporatemembers or intranet for a list of free-to-visit sites

Fitness First  E  P
Money off membership at more than 170 Fitness First health clubs.
Tel: 0870 899 8893
Visit: www.fitnessfirst.co.uk

Hoseasons  E  P
Discounts on holidays.
Quote: mail.
Visit: www.hoseasons.co.uk/royalmail

Merlin Entertainment  E  P
Discounts on holidays.
Quote: mail.
Visit: www.merlinentertainments.co.uk/royalmail

Mygolfpass  E  P
Discounted golf in UK and Europe.
Visit: www.mygolfpass.co.uk/royalmillion

Royal Mail Sports Foundation  E  P
Help with sports kit and training.

Visit: www.royalmail.com/corporate-sports

SUPPORT FOR YOU
Childcare Voucher Scheme  E  P
Save up to £1040 per parent, per year.
Quote: S463231D.
Tel: 0800 612 9015
Visit: www.kiddi vouchers.com

Disability-HelpLine  E  P
For disability-related issues.
Tel: 0800 028 6142 or through RNID Typetalk and BT Text Direct.
Email: disability.helpline@royalmail.com

HELP  E  P
Free 24-hour independent and confidential advice for colleagues.
Tel: 0800 669 8777

POOB  E  P
Financial help for hard-pressed employees with children.
Tel: 0207 239 2295
Visit: www.poob.org

Rowland Hill Fund  E  P
For those in financial hardship.
Tel: 0800 668 8777
Visit: www.rowlandhillfund.org

Volunteer/fundraiser support  E  P
For colleagues raising charity cash or volunteering.
Tel: 0151 294 1221

ROYAL MAIL EMPLOYEE BENEFIT

Welcome to Vauxhall
Associate Partners a new employee benefit, which gives you and your eligible family members great discounts on brand new Vauxhalls. So you get more!

Associate Partners discount PLUS

0% APR Representative
Finance made flexible

To take advantage of our offers go to: partnersprogramme.co.uk and use your company login RMGROUP. call the Partners Helpline on 0844 875 2448 or visit your local Vauxhall Retailer. Current offer ends 2nd July 2012.

COMPANY LOGIN: RMGROUP

Choose your car
Select any new Vauxhall.*

Choose your deposit
On selected car lines** we’ll even give you a contribution towards your deposit.

Choose your term
From 24 to 60 months and you own the car at the end of the term.

PLUS
Lifetime warranty
Lifetime 100,000 mile warranty.
First registered owner.

* Astra SRi shown for illustrative purposes only *Not available on Expression, ES & ES Tech, Astra Tech Line and Insignia Tech Line and all Ampera models. ** Vauxhall Deposit Contribution available on selected cars lines only. Finance provided by Vauxhall Motor Finance. RHI158.

Finance is subject to status, terms and conditions. Applicants must be 18 years or over. Guarantee/Indemnity may be required. Offer applies to private individuals. Vauxhall Partners and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only exit B2B). All other customers are exit. Flexible Finance Offer available on orders or registrations before 2 July 2012. Terms and conditions apply. Vauxhall Partners includes all employees and pensioners of nominated companies and their nominated eligible Vauxhall relatives. Vauxhall Partner’s press/exposure include Vauxhall Partners discount savings and additional customer savings (incl. VAT) where applicable, number plate, delivery. Vehicle Excess Duty and a first registration fee. Excludes fuel and insurance. We reserve the right to change or withdraw any aspect of the Vauxhall Partners Programme without prior notice.

**CROSS-BORDER BENEFITS**

Does Royal Mail intend to end the discriminatory practice of giving free membership/entry to English Heritage sites, but not to Scottish Heritage properties? This has the effect of barring Scottish-based employees from the use of this benefit, and also I imagine assists English Heritage financially but not its Scottish counterpart.

**English Heritage**

Shan Lawrence, employee benefits manager, replies:
The Scottish equivalent is called Historic Scotland and is a completely separate organisation from English Heritage.

We have talked to Historic Scotland before about setting up a corporate benefit, and I went back to ask again when we received your letter. Unfortunately, the organisation does not run a corporate scheme, so we are unable to set this up.

The corporate membership of English Heritage is very good value for money and we will be continuing with it.

I’m sorry there isn’t a Scottish equivalent we can offer employees at the moment.

**Jump to It**

With the recent very cold weather, why are there no jumpers provided for staff? A few years ago this was a standard piece of uniform.

A jumper would be more comfortable to wear inside than wearing the fleece jacket.

Barry, Barnet delivery office

Julie Brown, uniform and print supply advisor, replies:
Currently there are no plans to introduce a jumper, but that’s not to say we have ruled out a jumper altogether. We are constantly reviewing our uniform range based on feedback we receive, so views like this are always useful.

**Cartoon Corner**

**Pension ‘Holiday’?**

I read with interest the Big Interview in Courier on pensions, as the changes affect me directly. I can look forward to a reduced income when I retire and having to work longer for it.

However, the answer as to why we have a pension deficit bemused me. I thought the reason for it is because the Government took a pensions holiday.

Seems like we, the contributors, are at fault for living too long. This explains why management are flogging us to death with unrealistic walking speeds, walks etc – it is to make sure we do not reach the age when we can draw it.

Richard Littlefeld, postman, South Woodham Ferrers delivery office

Mark Rugman, membership and benefits manager, Royal Mail Pension Plan, replies:
Several factors have combined to put pressure on the Plan, like many pension plans, including people living longer, adverse market investment conditions and lower interest rates (which make pensions more expensive to provide).

The situation you refer to is complicated. An interim valuation as at 31 March 1990 for what was then the Post Office Staff Superannuation Scheme (POSSS) estimated that it had a funding level of 122.8% – more assets than liabilities. The actuary recommended that the company suspend its contributions, and this was done from 1 April 1990.

The 31 March 2000 valuation showed the funding level was below 100%, so contributions started to be paid again for this section of the Plan.

By the 31 March 2003 valuation, the Plan had a funding level of 82.6%. The most significant factor in this reduction was investment market conditions – the UK stock market fell by more than 40% between 2000 and 2003, for example.

You will have seen your Courier Special and the other communications about the government taking on most of the historic liabilities of the Royal Mail Pension Plan from 1 April 2012. This is good news for members such as yourself, as the Plan – and your pension – are now much more secure.

**A Useful Point**

I just wondered if Royal Mail had ever considered using a points system for the issue of uniforms?

It would work on the basis of new starters being issued with a full uniform, and then earning one point per month. Anybody with two years’ service would be given a starter of six points and then one point per month, and clothing would be issued on a points system, ie one point for a hat/belt, two points per shirt/trousers, three points for a kagool, four points for shoes, five points per fleece and six points per storm jacket.

This would cut down on people abusing the present system, as when ordered by your local manager, points would automatically come off your total and you could see how many points you have got left in your allocation.

Martin Hoole, postman, Lossiemouth

Julie Brown, uniform and print supply advisor, replies:

This is a great idea, but it would be hard to police due to the number of uniformed employees within Royal Mail Letters in such diverse job roles. Plus, uniform items sometimes need replacing before they are due, for instance due to weight loss/gain or a damaged/faulty item.

We believe the new online ordering system will resolve most, if not all, the issues we currently face regarding uniform issue. The new online system allows the individual wearer to see their previous order history, their entitlement and, most importantly, you can see exactly what you are ordering and where and when your order is dispatched.

Thank you for taking the time to write in. It is nice to see someone taking an interest in the uniform order process, and I am always happy to receive feedback and ideas.