

Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of the South East Telecom News!

We're pleased to bring you this update as part of our commitment to keeping all members informed about key developments and topics of interest. As a newly formed branch, covering a wide area from Portsmouth to Margate, some of you may not have seen our previous quarterly newsletters, so a very warm welcome to all our new members.

The South East Telecom CWU Branch, which you are now part of, officially came into effect on 1st June. With this new structure, we now have a wider team of officers available to support and advise you on workplace matters. Contact details for all your full-time Industrial Relations Officers can be found on our newly launched branch website. Whilst the website is still under construction, the essential contact information is already live and accessible.



In addition to the website, we now have several social media platforms to help keep you connected and up to date. You can find links to these platforms at the bottom of the website homepage. Please note that our presence on Bluesky is still under consideration, so more on that soon.

We want this newsletter to reflect what matters most to you. If there are specific topics or local issues you'd like us to highlight in future editions, please don't hesitate to get in touch. You'll find all relevant contact details at the end of this message.

The first General Meeting will be held online on July 17th. You will be notified nearer the date by email.



Vehicles

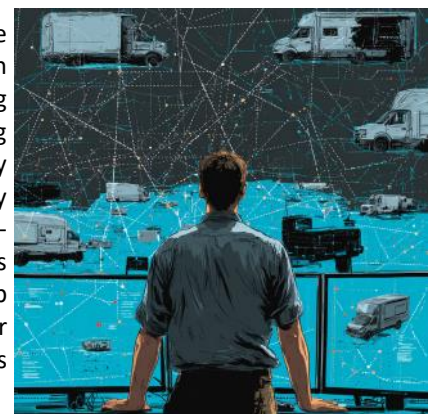
There has been a noticeable increase in attention given to our liveried vehicles recently, both from Managers and the vehicle lease company. It is therefore more important than ever to ensure that all vehicle checks are completed thoroughly and accurately. Holman's have raised concerns that some daily checks, although marked as completed on the app, have coincided with MOT failures occurring on the very same day. This is particularly concerning in relation to tyre condition. While it's understandable that something like a light bulb might fail during the course of the day without your knowledge, tyres showing exposed metal are far more difficult to explain away as a sudden occurrence.



Please make sure you carry out proper visual and physical checks, especially of your tyres, before setting off. It's not just about compliance, it's about your safety and the safety of others on the road.

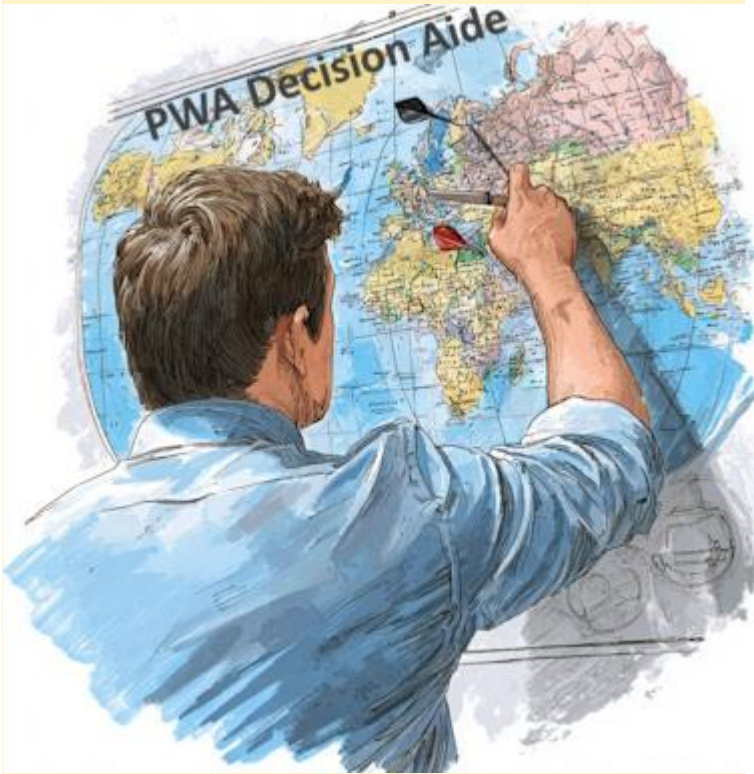
Additionally, please remember that all vehicles are fitted with GPS tracking devices. These trackers monitor not just your location, but also your speed and driving behaviour. In several recent cases, tracker data has been used as evidence in disciplinary investigations, particularly around attendance issues and site arrival/departure times. Some of these cases have unfortunately resulted in dismissal.

Always assume that your location and driving patterns are being monitored by management. Stay within speed limits, because it is not a case of "job and knock", rather the job will take as long as it takes.



Preferred Work Areas

We've received many concerns from members regarding changes to their Preferred Work Areas (PWAs) and the increase in commitment time. It's important to understand that any change to your working pattern or location should be mutually agreed upon between you and your manager, it is not something that can be imposed without discussion.



If you feel that changes have been made without your agreement, or that you've been treated unfairly, you have every right to raise the issue with your manager. Should the matter not be resolved, you can formally raise a grievance through the proper channels and we can assist you with this.

As the copper network continues to decline and the fibre network expands, PWAs are likely to shift. Fibre-based work will require more PWAs, while those remaining on copper may find their areas expanding significantly. But does that mean your PWA should keep moving further away? Will a copper-based engineer in the middle of the patch soon be expected to cover as far as Bristol? How long will it be until they harmonise the fibre and copper teams together and stop this ever expanding commitment time?

Remember, any commitment time spent driving must also be included in your overall working hours, as stated in the Working Time Directive. If this is being overlooked, it's a serious issue.

If in doubt — speak up. You're entitled to fair treatment.

Political Corner

What has happened, missiles, drones, bombing, firstly in Ukraine and Russia, and now in Israel and Iran? You could say the Ukraine war started in 2014 with the annexing of the Crimea, but hostilities started in February 2022. Iran and Israel have been simmering since 1979, politically hostile since 1991 and recently turned into open hostility. It's important to remember whilst watching the military footage on the News that we don't treat it as the latest Xbox game and remember people are dying.

Who'd a thought you'd hear a president swear on TV? Well if it was going to be anyone, it would be the orange one.



Back in this country, is the government facing a rebellion in regards to welfare cuts, with 120 MP's saying they will vote against the bill. Will there be some last ditch diplomacy — we'll wait and see.

News Snippets

Do you use Tetra? Are you using it correctly? Retraining events are now being rolled out throughout the region. Look out for yours.

BT Exchanges are finally seeing roof repairs after years of neglect which is a welcome improvement. But smaller issues remain. If you notice mould (black spots around window edges) in welfare areas, report it, as this is where you eat your lunch. Also, the building services contract is now up for tender, so is this the end of our relationship with CBRE?

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