



Prostate Cancer Screening

Recently, both the CWU and BT have put out mailshots regarding prostate cancer, and as a branch, we want to highlight this silent killer too.

One in eight men will suffer from prostate cancer in their lifetime. While some symptoms do occur, up to 80% of men who took a PSA test (blood test) showed no symptoms at all (Journal of Clinical Oncology). Hence the importance of, and drive for, a national screening programme. Until that time comes, there are things you can do.



If you fit any of these categories, you should ask your doctor for a PSA test, or take up BT's Bupa offer (£50): men over 50, particularly if you are of Black heritage, or if your father or brother has had prostate cancer. Watch out for symptoms such as weak, frequent, or painful urination, blood in the urine, pain in the lower back, hips, or pelvis, unexplained weight loss or fatigue, and erectile dysfunction.

We've all heard the jokes about the rectal examination, but don't worry, the first test is just a blood test. Neither you nor the doctor will need to go to the "brace yourself" stage, on day one! However, if your PSA level is higher than 3, you'll get to know your GP a bit better than you did. After that, a hospital scan will confirm whether you have it or not.

Officers of the branch have their own experience with prostate cancer, so if you can't talk to anyone, talk to us.

For a risk check, go to the Prostate Cancer UK web-site.



**PROSTATE
CANCER UK**

Engineering of Yesteryear

Many an 802 or 801 will remember plenty of things and they're rarely shy about telling you about the "good old days," particularly in Service Delivery.

They'll wax lyrical about a time when they had one clear job to do, and they did it with pride. But today's service delivery engineer is almost unrecognisable compared to the past.

Gone are the days of being a master of a single discipline. Now, engineers are expected to be masters of many. Years ago, "triple skilling" arrived, which was, installation, repair, and UG work all rolled into one. Yes, these were completely separate roles once.

Back then, jobs came through a simple phone call. You'd talk to someone, jot the details into a book, jump into your yellow van, and off you went. Jobs were planned by a planner, and sometimes a survey officer would also check the site before an installation.

Fast-forward to today, and jobs arrive on a small screen that some need glasses just to read. Very few are planned by a real person. When the engineer arrives and can't do the job as expected, he suddenly becomes the survey officer and planner too, raising A55s for new poles, arranging duct work, and negotiating permissions with neighbours and customers alike.

Never be told anyone can do your job, it is highly skilled, whether it is in Service Delivery or elsewhere. Remember what you do and where you came from, when it comes to Pay next year.

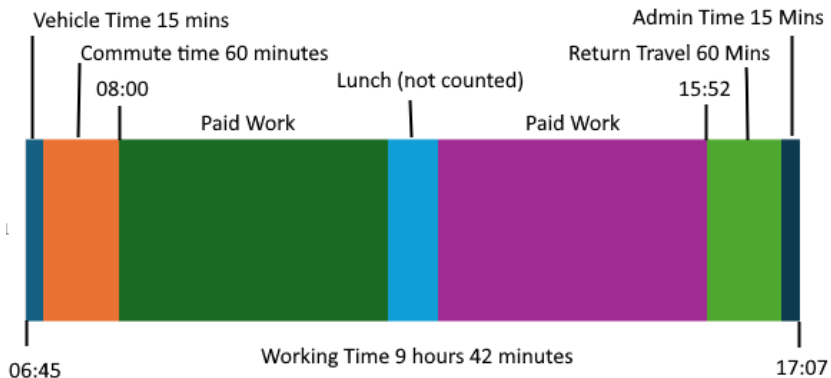


Sweep as you go!

Travel Times

Reports are coming in of members being asked to give more commitment time because they have been moved or an arbitrary boundary has moved. Some engineers, with vehicle check, travel to and from work and admin time at the end of the day, can exceed the working time directive without doing any overtime. In 2022 the CWU had an agreement with the company that the 60 minutes commitment time at the start and end of the day commitment time would not be standard.

Working Time Directive broken on full travel time



The commute time should be related to the Preferred Work Area (PWA), however, are we seeing a reduction of PWA's and an increase in management areas? If technically you can cover nationally, there should be more than one PWA otherwise my commute is equivalent to being in Birmingham. Do we need more PWA's?

Can refuse to work if you exceed the working time directive through personal time given? Hypothetically yes! But in reality, more local PWA's are needed.

The Building Estate

The Estate appears to be in a slightly better position than it was at the same time last year. We suspect this improvement is due to the recent management change at CBRE, which has led to a stronger working relationship. That said, with winter approaching, I wouldn't be surprised if all the roof leaks that have remained hidden over the summer make their presence felt once we face the full force of the colder weather.



Political Opinion



You might have noticed that our streets have a new skyline: St George's Cross flags on lamp posts (Tetra?) and mini roundabouts freshly painted. At first glance, it's easy to think, "Ah, a bit of harmless English pride." But let's pause. If this is really about celebrating England, why are most of these flags cheap, made in China, and barely surviving a week of wind and rain?

The flags aren't just about football or St George's Day, they're up year-round, celebrating "all things English." Is this genuine pride, or just waving a nationalist symbol without thinking about its meaning? These symbols can distract communities from real struggles: plunging wages, cuts to services, and insecure work. People are angry, but we need to address causes, not scapegoats.

And when the flags fade, tear, or the red crosses on mini roundabouts start peeling, who's going to take them down? True pride in England isn't about imported bunting; it's about investing in each other, fighting inequality, and standing together. That's a flag worth waving and a debate worth having!

Leave it to Elon Musk to stir the pot. Appearing at a far-right UK rally, he warned crowds to "fight back or die," not to defend society, but to amplify his influence. After falling out with Trump, he's now targeting Starmer, all while workers face wage cuts, soaring living costs, and chronically underfunded services, battles he won't lift a finger to fight. Who rattled his chain?



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