

Letter to Branches

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General Secretary: Billy Hayes

No. 259/02

Date: 14 May 2002

TO ALL BRANCHES

Dear Colleague,

CWU LEGAL ADVICE SERVICE (Help Line number: 0800 8046674)

Branches will be aware that since the demise of the TUC Union Law Scheme, we have been attempting to negotiate an in-house scheme in order to provide the Union's membership with free legal advice on non-work related issues.

A number of ideas were explored but unfortunately we were unable to finalise our negotiations and this has been reported in this year's Annual Report.

I can report that further negotiations have continued and I am pleased to announce an agreement has been reached which will enable us to provide this service to the membership.

The service will be operated by the Union's panel solicitors, Simpson Millar, via a national call centre. Union members can access this service by dialling a national advice line number at which point they will be required to provide their membership and branch details.

The call centre will be staffed by trained personnel and free legal advice can be given directly to the member. If the member requires a personal interview with a solicitor then details will be provided of firms who are participating in this scheme and the member will then contact them and make the necessary arrangements accordingly.

Members need to be made aware that if they engage a solicitor to act on their behalf they do so on a private client basis and the CWU will not be responsible for any costs incurred.

I am also aware that many branches have agreements in place with local firms of solicitors who provide a range of services to their branch membership and I am happy for those arrangements to continue. In the event a member from such a branch rings the national advice line, they will be directed to the local firm who in turn will deal with their enquiry. However, if the member wishes to obtain advice direct from the call centre, then the advice will be provided.

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The service will be available from Monday 20th May, 2002, operating Monday to Friday, 09:00-17:00. Outside of these hours an answer phone service will be available and calls will be returned as soon as possible.

The Legal Help Line number is 0800 8046674.

It is hoped that we will be able to extend the opening hours once the service is up and running to 08:00-20:00 and I will inform branches accordingly.

Any enquiries related to this letter to branches should be directed to Tony Rupa, Legal Services Department at CWU Head Office.

Yours sincerely

Tony Rupa
Legal Services Officer

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