



we're calling for change!

By a market researcher

"Smile and dial".... "keep on dialling"... "smile and dial"... "keep it going guys"...

OK, so working the phones can be pretty boring. We're expected to work hard, chasing high targets and for not much money. Many of

us are on casual contracts, and are subject to petty rules and telling-off by supervisors.

Whether we're selling phones, doing surveys or answering service calls, there's now 750,000 of us call centre workers in the UK.

Yet even though we represent such an important part of the economy, we don't have a lot of rights at work, and most of us aren't confident to stand up to our bosses.

But we believe that it is possible for call centre workers to get better conditions in the workplace. To do so, we have to stand together.

After all, a lot of the problems call centre workers face are the same, no matter what we're



ringing about. As individuals it's difficult for us to ask for higher wages or more stable employment—but the bosses can't just get their way if we are organised to stand up to them together and to insist on our rights.

That's why a group of workers from different call centres in London have launched this bulletin.

Although this bulletin is the property of no single trade union, we believe that collective organisation in trade unions is the best way for us to make progress on these demands and force a better deal from our bosses.

Its aim is to reflect our common demands (see right) and to share experiences of standing up for our rights at work.

the call centre workers' charter

Across call centres, across unions, across Britain, we demand:

1. That every call centre worker receives at least £7.50 per hour

The Mayor's recommended London Living Wage is £7.45 per hour, but any call-centre worker in the county earning less than this will struggle. Low pay blights the call-centre industry - there are employers that avoid paying minimum wage and by taking on workers as self-employed and paying commission only.

2. Jobs and Security

All call-centres to recruit directly. End the use of recruitment agencies. All call-centre workers to provided with contracts. A guarantee that work will be shared equitably. No job losses and no compulsory redundancies.

3. Management Style

Targets to be negotiated and agreed. All call-centre employers to have an anti-bullying policy.

4. Training and Development

Three month probation periods to be completed. Full training and support to be provided for probationers. Full training and support to be provided in cases of under-performance.

5. Health and Safety

Minimum Display Screen Equipment (DSE) standards to be adhered to. Cleaning and catering services to be employed in-house.

6. Union Recognition

Call-Centre Employers to enter into recognition agreements with the relevant TUC-affiliated trades union.



Stop the Carphone Warehouse union-busters

Building trade union organisation and standing up for people is not always easy. At Carphone Warehouse's repair centre in Wednesbury in the West Midlands, CWU Rep, Sulinder Kumar was sacked and his fellow rep Kulwinder Plaha has been suspended for the "crime" of raising grievances against what they regarded as unfair management practices.



Dougie Rafferty, CWU Organiser said : "The CWU is convinced the suspensions and sacking represent a clear case of union-busting activity by a company determined to do its utmost to prevent the establishment of trade union organisation at the site.

News of the dismissal and victimisations triggered an emer-

gency motion at CWU annual conference at the start of the month, with delegates voting unanimously for a high profile campaign to highlight Carphone Warehouse's actions."

This is not just an attack on Carphone workers, this is an attack on all trade unionists; an attack on the right to organise..

Call-Centre Worker calls on every union activist to get behind the campaign to defend Sulinder and Kulwinder:

1. Write a Letter of Protest To Charles Dunstone, Carphone Warehouse CEO

Encourage your workmates and anyone you know to flood the union-busting boss with letters of protest to Charles Dunstone at **dunstonec@cpw.co.uk** and copy them to CWU organiser Tom Dale at **tdale@cwu.org**

2. Join the Protest in Wednesbury on Sat 18th July

Get your union or trades coun-

cil to sponsor transport to the demonstration and get them to bring banners.

Let us know if you are interested in coming.

3. Week of Action : Protest at Carphone Warehouse on Tottenham Court Road on Saturday 1st August from 12 noon

The week of action begins on Sunday 26th July. Let us know if you can organise any leafleting sessions of protests at a Carphone Warehouse store during that week. There will be protest outside the shop on Old St on Wednesday 29th July from 12 noon.

We want a mass protest on Saturday 1 August, so bring people and bring your union banners.



For more info on this dispute, how you can get involved and organising at Carphone Warehouse, visit the blog at carphoneworker.co.uk