

No. 096/18

15th February 2018

To: ALL BRANCH SECRETARIES

Dear Colleague,

DIGITAL AUTOMATION LTD

We have recently received a number of queries from Branches in relation to the above company. The company has contacted Branches offering to assist regarding photocopying contracts. From the information supplied to us the individual concerned, purportedly acting on behalf of the company, is named as Leigh Rammage, although there could well be other individuals claiming to act on their behalf.

We are told that the company has been informing Branches that either they have had authority given to them by the CWU under the CWU redesign process or in some cases specifically quoting the authority to operate given by Tony Kearns as Senior Deputy General Secretary. Both of these positions are false. At no point have Digital Automation Ltd been given any authority to approach Branches and make these claims, to repeat we believe they are deliberately misleading Branches and are doing so to seek to engage the Branch in signing up to photocopying contacts.

Tony Kearns, Senior Deputy General Secretary contacted Leigh Rammage who agreed to write to confirm that they would cease immediately from contacting CWU Branches and making such claims. Despite agreeing to provide this confirmation and despite being given a number of opportunities to do so, no such confirmation has been forwarded to us.

The failure to provide this confirmation, despite assurances that they would, coupled with what we are told is a misleading approach to Branches raises some very serious questions in our minds as to whether the company is reputable enough for the CWU to deal with. In short, they appear, in our view, to be deliberately and knowingly misleading CWU Branches for the purpose of financial gain. We have asked them to cease with this approach and they have refused to confirm that they will.

Additionally CWU Headquarters Finance Department has begun to receive queries from a leasing company called Leasing Programmes Ltd seeking certain guarantees from us around contractual or Direct Debit payments. It appears that both Digital Automation Ltd and Leasing Programmes Ltd work together on these matters.

Photocopying contracts are an extremely difficult area to deal with as they quite often involve expensive and time commitment legally binding agreements. In the recent past CWU Headquarters has had to incur legal costs to secure release from such contracts on behalf of Branches. On another occasion a Debt Collector turned up at CWU Headquarters demanding to remove goods to the value of a contract they claimed a CWU Branch had failed to honour.

Both our experience in this area and what we view as the dishonest approach from Digital Automation Ltd lead us to take the position that Branches should, with immediate effect, refrain from doing any business with Digital Automation Ltd. Any contact from them should be referred directly to Tony Kearns, Senior Deputy General Secretary at CWU Headquarters. This step is being taken to protect Branch finances and is the only option we are left with following the failure of the company to address our concerns.

Digital Automation Ltd is a company regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and we will be immediately taking the unusual step of raising a complaint with the FCA. This is over what we believe to be an approach that is dishonest as it attempts to secure contracts from Branches by misleading them into thinking that CWU Headquarters have cleared this company as a trusted body. We have done no such thing.

CWU Headquarters has a long standing arrangement with a photocopying supplier that works with the TUC as well as several other large TUC affiliated Trades Unions. Should any Branch require assistance or advice in this area please contact sdgs@cwu.org and we will arrange for them to contact you.

In order to protect the CWU from legal action and to protect Branch finances it is important that Branches act upon the advice contained in this LTB immediately.

Any enquiries regarding this Letter to Branches should be addressed to the Senior Deputy General Secretary's Department on telephone number 020 8971 7237, or email address sdgs@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely,



Tony Kearns
Senior Deputy General Secretary