

Nationwide Group Staff Union

NGSU - April/May 2012



Representation at Nationwide Hearings

Important information for NGSU members

Introduction

As a member of the Nationwide Group Staff Union you have the right to be represented at a formal disciplinary, performance or grievance hearing by an NGSU officer.

We hope that you'll never find yourself in a disciplinary or grievance situation but every year there are around 900 hearings - so it's important that you know how to access our help just in case you need it.

Please take a few minutes to read this leaflet and if you have any questions about disciplinary hearings please don't hesitate to call us.

The right to be represented

Your right to be represented at a formal Nationwide hearing is set out in the Fair Treatment at Work (FTAW) policy, which the Union has agreed with the Society.

You also have a statutory right to be accompanied at a hearing by a certified trade union official or a colleague.

If you are required to attend a formal hearing it is important that you contact us immediately to arrange representation.

Please call us on 01295 710767

The benefits of representation

We will support you before, during and after the hearing. We will explain the process to you and tell you what to expect and how to prepare in the most effective way.

We have a detailed knowledge of the FTAW procedures and can ensure that the hearing is run properly and that you are being treated fairly.

We can speak on your behalf and help to make sure that you've covered all the important issues. We can also ask questions and challenge the manager and Human Resources (HR) representative to ensure that they have considered everything fairly.

We have a good knowledge of Nationwide's other procedures and understanding of employment law. This can be useful in making sure that the person chairing the hearing has all the information they need to make a fair decision. We cannot guarantee what the outcome of the hearing will be but we can make sure that any decision takes all the relevant circumstances into account.

After the hearing we can advise you of any further action you may need to take, for example, how to make an appeal. In some circumstances we may consult with the Union's solicitors if we feel that a legal view would be beneficial to your case.

Finally, we will provide moral support throughout the process. Sometimes it can be helpful to chat to someone in confidence and talk things through. Everything you tell us will be in confidence.

Who will represent me?

The Union has a designated team of Individual Cases Officers (ICOs) and Disciplinary Officers (DOs) who are trained to represent Union members at hearings.

Our ICOs and DOs are based across the country and we will allocate the person who is best able to meet your needs.

When should I have representation?

We recommend that you have representation at all formal hearings. Nationwide will give you written notice of the requirement to attend a hearing - at least 48 hours in advance of the hearing.

You should call us on **01295 710767** immediately so that we can arrange for an ICO or DO to represent you.

Representation is available to all NGSU members who have paid three or more months' subscriptions (or after one month's subscription if joining the Union during their probationary period).

If you do not qualify for representation immediately we can still give you important advice so please still call us.

The right to postpone a hearing

Occasionally we may not have an officer available on the date of your hearing. In these circumstances you have the statutory right to postpone the date of the hearing by up to 5 working days.

It can be tempting to agree to go ahead with the hearing without representation - just to get it over with or because you are told that the outcome will be the same regardless of whether you have representation or not. However, we strongly recommend that you exercise your right to postpone the hearing so that we can arrange for an officer to represent you.

Fair Treatment at Work Procedures

NGSU can represent you at the following types of hearings and meetings:

Probation hearings: We recommend that you have representation even if you've been told that the outcome will be to extend your probation.

Disciplinary hearings: In relation to all matters relating to your conduct at work.

Performance hearings: In relation to all matters relating to your performance at work.

Grievance meetings: Where you wish to make a complaint about something or someone at work.

Flexible Working meetings: To discuss your request for a new working arrangement.

In addition NGSU can also give you advice and, where appropriate, support you at the following types of meetings:

Ill Health Capability meetings: To discuss matters relating to long-term illness.

Harassment & Bullying meetings: Fact finding meetings as part of an HR investigation.

Performance Rating appeals: When you disagree with your performance rating.

End of Fixed Term Contracts: When you are called to a meeting to discuss the end of your employment.

SID interviews: Fact finding meetings as part of a SID investigation.

What's Nationwide's view of Representation?

Nationwide supports the NGSU's involvement at hearings. This is why the right to be represented forms part of the Fair Treatment at Work policy. Nationwide wants to be sure that hearings result in fair decisions and so values our contribution.

Being represented at a hearing will not be viewed negatively nor will it have any adverse impact on the decision.

Why is Representation so important?

The expertise and experience of a Union officer helps to ensure that there is a robust examination of all the facts - including information from our member that may not have been included in the evidence provided prior to the formal hearing.

This means that the outcome is more likely to be fair and to fall within the range of responses that have been given in other cases. This is in the interest of both the individual and Nationwide.

Contact Us

**Nationwide Group Staff Union
Middleton Farmhouse
37 Main Road
Middleton Cheney
Banbury
Oxon
OX17 2QT**

tel: 01295 710767

fax: 01295 712580

e-mail: ngsu@ngsu.org.uk

web: www.ngsu.org.uk