
Nationwide Group Staff Union

Admin Centres' Regional Council Summary - Summer 2019

Regional councils were held at administration centres in May and June; here are the key points raised and discussed.

Unless noted otherwise, issues should be raised locally with management and/or referred to the relevant Business Committee if necessary by the Union Rep in that area.

Some issues may have now been resolved, others may be ongoing.

Jargon Buster:

ED&I	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EIC	Employee Involvement Committee
FPM	Financial Planning Manager
FTAW	Fair Treatment at Work
JCNC	Joint Consultation & Negotiation Committee
NEC	National Executive Committee
NRO	National Regional Officer
SOM	Senior Operations Manager
TM	Team Manager

Abbreviations:

AN	Angela Needham, NGSU Individual Cases Officer
BC	Bev Cubbon, NGSU President (2019-2021)
DA	Diana Allen, NGSU Individual Cases Officer
KM	Karin McKenzie, NGSU Individual Cases Officer
KW	Kerry Wagg, NGSU Rep Support Officer
MD	Marian Dean, NGSU Assistant General Secretary (Members)
MJ	Mairi Jones, NGSU Individual Cases Officer
MP	Michelle Pickering, NGSU Individual Cases Officer
RG	Rob Goldspink, NGSU Individual Cases Officer
TR	Tim Rose, NGSU Assistant General Secretary (Services)

Similar issues across several sites:

Facilities Management (FM): FM had sent out a message via Internal Comms around parking and were overwhelmed by the 416 responses. Following further comms they have identified 6 work streams: parking/traffic management; alternative travel; dynamic working; buses; car sharing; behaviours and each is being headed up by someone from the Leadership 200 population. They have invited people to get involved; if you would like to have your say on these matters, we would encourage any interested members or Reps to join the working groups as FM will be working with People & Culture and NGSU going forward.



Upcoming Event!

Monthly Draw venue:

Weds 7th August 2019 – NAC

NGSU Conference 2019!

National Conference will be held over 7-8 October 2019. Conference is the forum where Union policy and Rules are decided; all motions passed by delegates with a two-thirds majority become Union policy and define our negotiating agenda for the following two years.

We are calling on Union members now to submit ideas that will form the basis of Conference motions so please start thinking about issues for Conference! The closing date for motions is Friday 23rd August 2019.

An idea for a Conference motion can be about a work-related topic e.g. pay and benefits, performance management, equality issues, or can be about Union policy or Rules, or about external affairs that you think your Union should be involved with or support in some way.

Please see [here](#) for more details.

Find us on Facebook, search 'NGSU' or click here →



Return of the flip flop! The wearing of flip flops is on the rise; the [Code of Conduct policy](#) asks that you dress sensibly - clothes that you would typically wear to a music festival or sunbathing by the pool, are probably best kept for their intended purpose, and are not to be worn in the workplace.

Verbal and Aggressive Behaviour (VAB): We are concerned that VAB is under-reported and that some members still do not know how to report occurrences. VAB covers all instances of:

- Verbal or written threats - any expression of an intent to inflict harm. Other incidents of verbal abuse can take the form of a racist comment and abuse over the phone.
- Sexual harassment – inappropriate words, touching or gestures.
- Threatening behaviour – shaking of their fist or aggressive posturing.
- Physical attacks - hitting, shoving, pushing, spitting or kicking.
- Racial Abuse – any reference to colour, dress, religion etc.
- Unwanted attention – always wanting to speak with the same person.
- Intimidation, discrimination and harassment – belittling comments, continual unreasonable pressure and demands, personal remarks.

Verbal and aggressive behaviour can happen anywhere not just in the office: it can happen at off-site business-related functions (training courses), at social events related to work, in clients' homes or away from work resulting from work.

If you experience VAB please contact the VAB Report line on 0845 076 6425. If it is concerning employee behaviour please contact Ask HR option 6.

Reps from Swindon met on the 2nd May, 14th May and 5th June:

Abuse on social media: There had been an increase in abusive messages since it has not been possible to buy lottery tickets, do online betting and gambling using a FlexOne account (the account for 11-17 years olds).

Ageism: Is this creeping in? Reps to feed issues to NGSU.

Air conditioning: Completely different temperatures depending on where you are in the building. NGSU: members must log issues with temperatures with the Property Services Helpdesk and follow the Property Services Escalation process if they are not being addressed.

Building capacity: The maximum capacity of workers in Wakefield House is 2616; concerns voiced that the building seems extremely crowded. Response from Property Services: This is not an issue of building capacity but of the best application of Dynamic Working. The Car park and building is not heavily populated on Fridays and Monday mornings. Managers and employees should work together to ensure that Dynamic working meets both the employee and business needs.

Carbon footprint: Concern over removal of single use plastic cups and wrong use of recycling bins. Response from Property Services: There are some great trials of recyclable vending cups and cupless vending going on currently. If you have any questions, concerns or ideas please join The Fantastic Anti-Plastic Fanatics Yammer group to get involved.

Car parking, buses, potholes: Please see note on Facilities Management workstreams at beginning of newsletter.

Desk cleaning: What is Society policy around cleaning desks? Doesn't feel like they are being cleaned very often – is this because they are not clear of items? Response from Property Services: Desks are cleaned once a week (1/4 of the floor a night with a spot clean on Fridays). The desk needs to be clear for it to be cleaned.

Dynamic Working: Some positive feedback where it was working well, some negative where it wasn't; concerns over reductions of desks – in one area 600 staff/400 desks; feeling that dynamic working can be ineffective; tools for doing your job not sufficient; need to encourage more employees to work dynamically mid-week in order to help with office and car parking

capacity; why do some areas actively promote it and others actively discourage it; why do some areas limit the number of days you can work from home; IT/Wifi problems can put people off working from home; NBS unable to provide screens for home use if not a formal Homeworker (ie you are working from home due to agile working arrangements).

Expenses when away on business: Member felt penalised as was visiting Nationwide sites but was out of pocket as they usually bought food in from home. The Expenses Policy states “daytime meal allowance will not be paid where you are at another Nationwide Group location”. NGSU: Any suggestions for enhancements to Society Policies can be submitted as motions for debate at Conference 2019. Closing date 23 August 2019.

Hearing & grievance delays: One manager will now chair a hearing and another is required to act as note taker (rather than HR) – this takes two managers out of the business and is creating pressure on resources and delays.

Meeting room facilities: Issue C/F from previous newsletter - many meeting rooms did not have a pc or laptop/employee laptops often didn't have access to the Intranet – this was causing a problem in meetings. NGSU Reps have now been around every meeting room at Optimus House and logged faults for anything that was missing from the room or was faulty; have asked that users leave things as they would like to find them and log any damaged items going forward. This should apply to meetings rooms at any site.

My Career: Issue C/F from previous newsletter – some negative comments (format poor, very repetitive); some positive comments (the more you use it the more familiar it becomes, came up with the right outcome). NGSU: we established at the meeting that most areas should have a “My Career Champion”; while they may not have had any training updates recently, they are there to help and support.

New Starter Journey: System issues; lengthy sign-off process; employee offered new role in another business area but was told could not allow them to move depts for 3 months.

Performance management: Ratings being “imposed”; member told that this is their rating but their line manager would have to check with the Senior Manager first; managers had been asked to “submit” their ratings beforehand to check there was the “right spread”. NGSU: Union Mail February 2018 confirmed that calibration has been removed as follows: The ‘calibration’ process, which involved management teams determining performance ratings in advance of individual performance discussions, has been removed. This means that the new review process will focus on an individual’s performance against their goals and will not be determined by peer comparison or be influenced by the distribution of ratings across a business area.

Processes: The same processes are not aligned across different sites causing problems implementing and performance managing them.

Refurbishment/team move: Felt it had been “imposed”; no discussion with staff; employee concerns had been “shut down”; managers didn't listen; another area had systems issues, wasn't much consultation beforehand especially with members with Workplace Adjustment requirements. Reps to continue to raise concerns locally and via Workplace Transformation.

Restaurant capacity: Not enough tills, slow service leading to larger queues. Response from Property Services: There is a trial in Nationwide House with self-service tills to increase capacity; following a review of this it will be rolled out to other locations.

Restructures/change: Seem to be endlessly restructuring based on cost challenges; not back-filling leavers; increased uncertainty is leading to stress and worry; how many times can change be “done to you”; how many times can your responsibilities be changed; creating “change fatigue”.

Sabbaticals: Issue C/F from previous newsletter - guidance on managing sabbaticals had been issued to line managers in the Retail Network but not the admin centres; this has now been provided to the Rep concerned.

Social events: Alcohol fuelled incident/not helpful when events were always arranged in a pub. NGSU: Section 2.6 of the Code of Conduct Policy states that “work social functions and hospitality events are good opportunities to relax and socialise with colleagues, suppliers and clients which usually take place away from the workplace and outside of normal working hours. It is important however, that when taking part in such events you conduct yourself in a way which is in keeping with Nationwide’s professional image and behave in a way which does not contradict our employment policies, or cause a risk or actual harm to our reputation”.

Target Operating Model changes: Concerns over changes to continual service improvements; level 2.2 managers invited to training course but not level 2.1 – what is the rationale for this? Rep to raise locally.

Target Operating Model changes: Employees have been given more accountable freedom but workload high leading to increased stress and high staff turnover; big headcount gap and redundancies at senior level were leading to low morale; not much concern for employee wellbeing; why are management not concerned about turnover; headcount gap; employee wellbeing?

Thefts: There had been some thefts at one site; Nationwide were looking at providing more lockable storage. All thefts should be reported to the Police.

Toilets: State of the toilets and slow responses to problems. Property Services were not aware at the time of any issues being raised with the toilets; a number had have been refurbished which might have put pressure on the ones open. Response from Property Services: please log a fault for any toilet issue, including cleanliness that you identify. Taking ownership of a fault in common areas really supports improving the environment for all. If you have logged a fault and feel it is not being progressed please search Property Escalations on the intranet to find the contacts for your building.

Training: Concern that overtime not being paid for training out of hours/at weekend and that being required to complete training at the weekend may exclude some employees such as those with caring responsibilities. NGSU: training should be part of contracted hours otherwise should attract an overtime payment or time back in lieu.

Reps from Northampton region, including Sheffield and Wakefield Contact Centres and Manchester met on the 4th June:

Car Allowance: Inconsistency of allowance for a specific job role between managers in the Retail Network compared with those based in Administration centres.

CeMAP: This is required for some roles; Nationwide pays for the course but there is then no financial recognition for passing and no study time given at work. NGSU: Time of for studying is covered in the [Further Education Policy](#). Any suggestions for enhancements to Society Policies can be submitted as motions for debate at [Conference 2019](#). Closing date 23 August 2019.

Desk space: Some parts of NAC seemed empty while in other areas the desks felt cramped together. Please raise any concerns with Workplace Transformation.

Development: Less opportunity now to do meaningful learning; some learning nowadays is “just for the sake of it” e.g. reading/news items etc.; time-consuming and not truly in the spirit of personal development.

Ex-Carillion employees: Concern that recognising loyalty wasn’t being applied consistently for all.

Holiday booking: Issues booking two weeks off; have to book the weekends first and then hope for the weekdays to be confirmed; issues getting Saturday off even though the business area you support is closed on a Saturday.

Job adverts: Many jobs are advertised stating that applicants need to be “fully flexible” but this could discriminate against parents/carers/part-time employees. Conference motion submitted for debate at Conference 2019.

Maternity leavers: Internal job vacancies site is only accessible to those using a NBS log on; parents are unable to access details on internal vacancies while on maternity leave. Conference motion submitted for debate at Conference 2019.

Pay: Concerns voiced over possible pay differentials for call handlers at different sites; also about pay differentials between Senior Advisors and Senior Case Owners.

Rewarding High Performers: How do we reward high performers now that quarterly bonuses have been removed?

Saturdays: Call handlers working 3 Saturdays in 5 but call demand low.

Targets: Feels like targets are creeping back in; not written down but often spoken about; percentage of products compared with number of customers seen.

Temporary workers: Worries over the availability of permanent positions.

WhatsApp groups: A group had been set up and circulated to managers without the team members' permission meaning their contact numbers had been shared thus breaching confidentiality and GDPR.

Reps from our Scotland Admin Centre region met on the 19th June

Air conditioning: Completely different temperatures depending on where you are in the building. NGSU: members must log issues with temperatures with the Property Services Helpdesk and follow the Property Services Escalation process if they are not being addressed.

Appointment duration: Concerns over allocated time length for appointments as can be too short. Reps to raise locally and at Mortgage Distribution EIC.

Car parking & potholes: Please see note on Facilities Management workstreams at beginning of newsletter.

Pay uplift: Following a change program some employees received a salary uplift but existing employees with more experience now only paid slightly more than new starters or colleagues.

Performance Agreement: Some enhancements very good but concerns about how to measure new descriptors such as "I will be brave"; "I will inject fun into the workplace"; "I will embrace one team, one dream"; "I will actively support charities in the contact centre"; these are wide open to interpretation and may cause confusion or hold people to impossible standards come review time; there is also an expectation that you will be involved in charity events but this is not always possible and you should not be penalised for not contributing.

Salary differential: Ongoing questions about the difference in salary between Later Life consultants and existing Mortgage Consultants as MC product spread is higher but Later Life consultant salary is higher. NGSU: this is due to the risk profile of each role.

Sunday working: Ongoing concern over possible system bias towards some teams scheduled to work more Sundays than others. NGSU: this is a situation that we are dealing with; we'd hoped a "fix" at NAC would improve things. Members to continue to raise this with Reps if still a problem.

Targets: Concern that sales targets creeping back in; now have "aim" of percentage of sales per number of customers seen; if it is a percentage of sales compared to number of appointments, isn't this a target? Reps to raise concerns locally and at Mortgage EIC.

Yammer: Use of Yammer is being encouraged but often there isn't enough time in the day to read your emails let alone be part of Yammer group discussions!

Zero-talent: New phrase being used; it takes "zero-talent" to be on time, be coachable, have a positive attitude etc.; has been received quite negatively.

Reps from Portman House, Bournemouth met on the 23rd May:

Meeting rooms: Request that users leave meeting rooms as they were found and do not unplug or remove cabling from the room.

New starters/visitors: Request that all managers let reception know if they have any new starters or visitors attending so they are prepared for their arrival.

Recycling: Concern that recycling bins are not being used for the purposes they are designed for. Response from Property Services: if you have any questions, concerns or ideas please join The Fantastic Anti-Plastic Fanatics Yammer group to get involved.

Re-evaluation of roles: Re-evaluation of job roles and reward but no announcement yet, causing concern in a business area. NGSU: discussions are ongoing at the Business Committee about AJI's and the lack of consistency in this business area across sites.

SIS Bonus: Ex-Carillion employees now entitled to SIS bonus – great news!

Video Conferencing: Concern that lack of available meeting rooms with VC can create stress and be a barrier to good communication with other sites.

Updates from NGSU

Membership: *Union membership as at the end of May 2019 was 12723 and at the end of June 2019 was 12824. The main challenge continues to be the number of small change programs across the business that collectively may impact membership.*

Rapport Magazine: We are always looking for ideas for future content! Please email us at ngsu@ngsu.org.uk

Roadshows: Roadshows below took place around the country in April, May, June and July and are planned to start again in September. Special thanks go to all the Union Reps who have helped us on our travels this year – you know who you are!!

Rep Vacancies: We still have a handful of vacancies across admin centres as below:

- Legal & Secretariat
- Mortgage Distribution (Wakefield)
- Nationwide for Business
- Nationwide Now PBMs (video) NAC
- Product & Proposition (Swindon)
- Product Operations (Portman House)
- Property Services (Swindon)
- TNS – all communities

If you are interested in becoming a Rep please contact kerry@ngsu.org.uk

Website: A number of changes have been made to the website:

- Home Page: A 'Join Online Now' button has added; the News Alert bar has slightly bigger font.
- Members Home: A new 'Members Home Page' will appear once logged in. This has nine different boxes which we can use to draw members to content. An 'Edit Profile' link has been added to the top right of the Members Home page.
- Forum: Members will be prompted to change their 'Display Name' should they wish to post anonymously. The link to the House Rules and Help will be more prominently displayed on the right-hand side.
- Mobile Optimisation: A number of fixes have been applied to the website to improve the look on mobile devices. At the moment some of the icons and menus overlap and obscure text – this should be better now.

Benefits:

- Hotpoint: Now charging removal fee of £15 (previously free)
- NGSU Extras: We've added some 'How to Videos' to show how to register on NGSU Extras; How to register with Corporate Perks; How to get to the Cinema Discounts and Gym Scheme.

Collective Bargaining - Joint Consultation & Negotiation Committee (JCNC)

Joint Statement 3 July 2019:

- **2019 Allowance Review:** There is no change to our existing allowances as a result of the pay review, however we are continuing to review our approach to London location allowance.
- **Changes to Maternity/Adoption and Paternity Leave and Pay:** Maternity pay will increase to 26 weeks full pay and paternity leave will increase to 6 weeks at full pay, effective from January 2020, with transitional arrangements in place. See [Becoming a Parent Policy](#)
- **Holiday entitlement changes:** Employees in job level 1 & 2 with up to 14 years' service will have their annual holiday entitlement increased by 1 day from January 2020. This follows a review based on evidence provided by NGSU showing the entitlement for this group was below other employers. See [Holiday Policy](#)
- **Pay Review:** Range from 1.25% to 4.5%.
- **Reward Review:** We are signaling some of the anticipated changes resulting from our ongoing discussions, including a potential move towards a broader band pay structure and a change to how we use performance ratings for pay review.

Joint Statement 7 June 2019:

- **Premature birth and hospitalisation leave:** Employees who have babies born before the 37th week of pregnancy will have the number of weeks the baby is born early added to the end of their maternity/adoption leave, at full pay. In addition, in the event of a premature birth, the secondary parent will be able to take up to four weeks paid hospital leave to support their partner and family. See [Becoming a Parent Policy](#) and [Becoming a Parent FAQs – Premature Births and Hospitalisation](#)
- **Paid family support leave:** Employees will be able to take paid leave for family and caring responsibilities, this includes accompanying a dependant to non-emergency appointments such as medical and dental appointments. From now until the end of 2019 employees will be able to take up to 3 days paid leave, from January 2020 onwards this will increase to 5 days per annum. Both entitlements are pro-rata for part time employees and require manager approval. See [Time Off for Other Reasons Policy](#) and [Time Off for Other Reasons Policy FAQs – Family Support](#)
- **Bereavement leave:** Employees will be able to take up to twenty days paid bereavement leave, this will include any entitlement to statutory pay. To provide employees with flexibility, the leave doesn't have to be taken in one block and can be used to support other responsibilities e.g. probate and/or funeral arrangements and follows the loss of a dependant or someone close to them. Managers will continue to have the discretion to extend the period of leave, on a paid or unpaid basis. See [Time Off for Other Reasons Policy](#) and [Compassionate and Bereavement Leave – Managers Guide](#)

Joint Statement 17 May 2019:

- **Eyecare provision:** Following a request from Nationwide Group Staff Union, Nationwide has undertaken a review of the eyecare provision referenced in the [Wellbeing](#) and [Expenses](#) policies. Nationwide currently contributes up to £100 towards the cost of glasses where employees meet the eligibility criteria. In response to the union's request, Nationwide have also agreed to pay for extras, such as tints, where they are required for medical reasons and specifically for Display Screen Equipment (DSE) use. The eyecare information in both the Wellbeing and Expenses policies has been updated to reflect this change. In addition, the wording has been refreshed to clarify the definition of DSE and to confirm that Nationwide will cover the cost of reasonable administration fees if your optician charged for completing the Opticians Report Form.
- **Personal Financial Management Policy:** The Policy has been withdrawn and relevant sections incorporated into the [Code of Conduct Policy](#).

Other EIC & JCNC discussions:

Branch Network Minimum Resourcing: Update on the minimum resourcing taskforce, including the flexible working pilot and discussions about security; this remains a priority issue for the Union.

Branch Network/Speaking Up: A number of Reps have been invited to participate in a workshop about the barriers to 'speaking up'.

Business Update: Number of challenges: competition is strong in both mortgages and savings – squeeze on the margin is a challenge; Brexit outcomes are uncertain. Customer service remains strong – branch promise helps set NBS apart from competitors.

Carers Passport: Update on Carers passport - has been issued and has gone down well with employees and their managers. Ongoing work to promote.

Mobile Phones: Escalated to EIC for decision about relaxing elements of Communication and Privacy Policy regarding use of mobile phones, recognising that the policy is now out of line with increased business use of phones (mobile banking; Nationwide apps etc.). Revisions to Policy now under consideration.

Pay Review 2019/Performance Management: Discussions are ongoing. The distribution of ratings has shifted slightly to the right but Validation doesn't seem to have had much impact on the distribution of Level 1; BAME; part-time employees – with continued questions about the link between ratings and pay.

Rewards Review: This is picking up all pay and reward conference motions and the commitment to a wider review of pay and reward mechanisms.

Security and Phishing: Further discussions about proposals to engage employees on security issues.

Strengthening Individual Accountability (SIA): A new Financial Services Directory is being established by the FCA/PRA and this will expand on the current register – due for implementation in March 2020.

Time-off Review: This is covering all of the time-off motions regarding holiday; family friendly; compassionate/bereavement leave.

Wellbeing: P&C gave an update on the Wellbeing programme being rolled out over the next six months.

And finally...

NGSU Conference – October 2019!!

As mentioned previously, our National Conference will be held over 7-8 October 2019. Conference is the forum where Union policy and Rules are decided; all motions passed by delegates with a two-thirds majority become Union policy and define our negotiating agenda for the following two years. We are calling on Union members now to submit ideas that will form the basis of Conference motions so please start thinking about issues for Conference! The closing date for motions is **Friday 23rd August 2019**.

Ideas for Conference

An idea for a Conference motion can be about a work-related topic e.g. pay and benefits, performance management, equality issues, or can be about Union policy or Rules, or about external affairs that you think your Union should be involved with or support in some way (for example, which organisations we affiliate to).

Your idea will be sent to your local Union Rep who will contact you to discuss it and to gain a full understanding of what the situation is now and what you would hope to achieve. They will work with you and the Union to develop a properly worded motion that will be proposed, debated and voted on at Conference.

For information about Conference including how and where to submit Conference motions; how to nominate your Rep of the Year; a Conference briefing for delegates and to read the Motions from Conference 2017 please click [here](#).