

Overcoming Objections Guide

Why people don't join the NGSU

Here are the most common statements made by non-members when discussing joining the Union. Sometimes just asking an employee if they'd like to join may be all that's needed – perhaps they've never been asked before! The responses below will help you explain more about what we do and so convince an employee of the merits of joining but you may need to adapt them and your approach to make sure they are appropriate to the person that you are talking to.

I can look after myself

The Nationwide Group Staff Union (NGSU) has independent, experienced, professional staff to support, advise and represent its members during what can be very difficult times. Someone who knows your contract of employment, the area you're working in and what your rights are, so that you don't have to.

When someone is in need of support, they are very often stressed and need the security of knowing that they have us to fall back on. It's an extra level of insurance; you look after your home and car – so why not your job? Being a Union member is part of looking after yourself. You give yourself access to an independent point of advice and support in the workplace.

NGSU can represent members at a wide range of formal meetings at Nationwide including disciplinary hearings, improving performance hearings, performance rating appeals, ill health capability meetings, grievance and end of probation meetings. Our relationship with the Nationwide and HR means that in many cases we can intervene informally on behalf of members and resolve issues before they get out of hand.

Many members who call us for advice say they never thought they'd need the Union but when they find themselves facing issues at work are glad we are here to help.

If needed the Union will take legal advice on behalf of individual members and, depending on circumstances, will pay for legal representation for members at Employment Tribunals and cover legal fees.

Members and their families also have access to a free legal helpline as part of their membership and this can help on a wide range of legal matters – not just employment issues.

I get the pay rise anyway

Union membership is not just about your pay rise, but about the quality of your working life as a whole. Being a member of a union is about collective rights and members standing together and looking after one another. Together a group of people can achieve considerably more than the simple sum of the parts.

The NGSU is strong because it has such a high level of membership within Nationwide. What do you think the level of pay settlements would be without the NGSU?

If everyone took the view that they can benefit without participating where would we all be? Enjoying the benefits that your colleagues fund is simply not fair.

Under the terms of the 'Collective Agreement' between NGSU and Nationwide, your terms of contract can be varied by Agreement between the parties. The Union consults with its members, directly or via Representatives, so why miss out on being able to influence how your terms and conditions are agreed?

I'll join when I need it

Just like any other form of insurance, you wouldn't insure your house after it had been burgled and expect to get a payout; similarly, we only look after our members, not non-members who rush to join expecting our help when something goes wrong.

You have to be a fully paid up member to expect support, representation and legal funding from NGSU. In order to receive Union representation at a hearing you must have paid at least three monthly subscriptions (one month if joining within the probationary period). You cannot expect to find yourself in difficulties and then suddenly decide the Union can provide you with the help that you need.

Remember, Union support can extend to paying for legal fees – while everyone hopes they'll never end up at a Tribunal, having Union and Legal advice can make all the difference to winning a case if they do.

No benefit to me

Like any insurance policy, we all hope that we don't have to make a claim, but if we do it's invaluable. As a member you may not need advice or support during your employment, however you have the reassurance of knowing it's there if required.

The cost of membership can be recouped many times over by using the other benefits which are available to members. Many members make significant savings using our Travel Club and insurance commission rebate scheme and can enjoy discounts on a wide range of activities and products.

Remember – only members can join the monthly subscription draw and win up to £15,000. The chances of winning are much better than the lottery – but you have to be a member to be in it.

You don't do anything

You know that's not true. The Union negotiates and consults on all of the terms and conditions of employment within Nationwide.

Just look at the Joint Statements that have been issued over the years detailing agreements reached with the Society's management. In recent times these have included agreements to improve pension benefits for newer staff (increase in contribution rates), agreements regarding job security and financial support for employees in the event of redundancy, protecting overtime arrangements in the branch network, and over the years have advanced employee's terms & conditions – including maternity, paternity and sick pay. Many of the terms at Nationwide are better than statutory terms because of the Union's work on behalf of members.

We represent 100's of members every year in both formal and informal hearings and we consult regularly with management across the organisation through the Employee Involvement Business Committees (EIC meetings).

Relate any personal experiences you have had as a Rep – for example, raising issues at Regional Councils; supporting local members (without disclosing sensitive data) or attending Regional Councils, Business Committees or EIC meetings.

Through the TUC we seek to influence and lobby government on issues impacting on employment. This has ranged from participating in general consultations on matters such as disciplinary procedures or issues more directly related to Nationwide e.g. the cost of the impact of the Financial Services Protection scheme.

Too expensive

Make sure the potential member knows the actual cost; sometimes they assume it's more than it is. FT £11.90 p/m, PT (16hrs and over) £6.30 p/m, PT (less than 16hrs) £4.80 p/m, Maternity £2.55 p/m. For a member working Full Time the cost equates to less than 40p per day.

NGSU rates are very competitive, for example: Unite £16.25 FT/£9.45 PT; GMB £14.14 FT/£8.18 PT; Unison varies with salary up to £22.50 (rates correct in April 2020).

I'm too young

No one is too young to join a trade union and you're just like any other Nationwide employee. Analysis of disciplinary statistics show that employees with less than three years' service who are under 25 are one of the groups most likely to face performance and conduct issues – so young people really need our help. Standing up to your manager can be tough for anyone but when you're young and inexperienced having Union support can really make a difference in ensuring your employment rights are protected and you are treated fairly.

We also have a range of benefits that appeal to younger members, including discounts: through O2; on entry to a range of attractions, including Alton Towers, Thorpe Park and Chessington World of Adventures; discounts on cinema tickets; eating out; electrical and computing retailers and much more. Savings from our Holiday Club can often cover the annual subscription costs and more.

Unions are old fashioned and have no place in the modern working environment

The media coverage of Unions doesn't always portray the movement in a good light and some people's views of Unions date back to days of unrest in the 1970's – images of strikes etc. However, the movement has changed and progressive Unions like NGSU have modern partnership agreements with employers and work together for the mutual benefit of the business and its employees.

NGSU is a 'staff' Union – that means we concentrate all our effort into working on behalf of Nationwide employees. We don't have any political affiliations and we don't make political donations.

Remember – it's thanks to the Union movement that many of the working practices we take for granted today are in place – such as sick pay, holiday pay, maternity and paternity leave, health & safety rules, employer pension arrangements and much more.

Many younger people may not know what Unions are so don't assume they do or aren't interested - explain and educate them!

Nationwide Group Staff Union – Protecting Your Interests