



Dear Colleague,

Openreach Annual Leave and COVID-19

The CWU is writing to you today to confirm there has been no consultation with the CWU on the changed approach to annual leave within Openreach.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the CWU has been working hard on your behalf to ensure that you and your families remain safe and well. All across Openreach our members, as key workers, have been carrying out fantastic work on behalf of the people of this country to ensure that everyone stays connected, and that especially those who are vulnerable can keep in touch with their loved ones.

Given that undisputed fact, the CWU is appalled at the approach being taken within Openreach on the issue of how you should use your annual leave. This is not an approach that has been rolled out anywhere else across BT Group. In order to be clear, and to state another undisputable fact, there has been no consultation with the CWU on this approach within Openreach. Of course it is important for people to take annual leave and for you to get the rest you deserve in these unprecedented times. However it is unacceptable for the company not to treat you as adults and for it to act in this arbitrary manner - even using bold type to hammer home the point.

What is also very telling is that there is no information whatsoever relating to the following two key questions;

- What sanctions will be taken against anyone who does not take the specified annual leave by June 2020?
- What sanctions will be taken against anyone who does not take 50% of their annual leave by September 2020?

The CWU has asked these questions and has not received a response. The fact that these two issues were not covered in the company's *Loop* article clearly displays the fact they are hoping no-one asks.

A blanket response that states *'we will deal with any escalations or individual cases'* will not wash, as that puts all the pressure on you and your families once again. The CWU and you as employees would expect the company to consult with the CWU and ensure that any change to processes or policies seeks to avoid the need for that to happen.

Getting the rest you need and the time with your families you deserve is really important. Openreach dictating to you how that should happen, and not working with you to facilitate that happening (unlike any other part of BT Group), is not acceptable. As employees you fully understand the challenges that Openreach, like every other company, faces during these difficult times. The company continually tells you what an exceptional job you are doing - and that the roles you carry out are 'key' - so why would the same company not work with the CWU and yourselves to look at annual leave and how that is managed?

The CWU does not understand the recent change of approach and tone when dealing with issues like these but we do demand, on your behalf, that things change and that the company treats you - and the CWU as your representative - with the respect that is deserved.

Contact the CWU

The Union remains here to keep you safe and assist you through this difficult time. If you have concerns or need assistance if at all possible please contact your local rep or Branch. If you don't know which Branch you are in you can find out via www.cwu.org/contact-us.

We are here to help. Keep safe.

From Davie Bowman
Assistant Secretary