



Openreach Annual Leave and COVID-19

Issue No. 100.20

Dear Colleague

Further to Briefing 85/2020 which you will have received we are now writing to you in order to update you on the position reached with the company. Once again, your feedback via the branches has been critical in keeping the National Team (NT) fully informed of the issues and the approach taken by the company and how this has impacted on you. You have been very clear regarding the impact COT has had on your ability to take annual leave, as well as your need to carry additional time over as a consequence. We hear and understand your complete frustration at the lack of effort by the company to assist you to get your annual leave outside of this COVID-19 lockdown period.

The NT is pleased to inform you that following representations made by the CWU the company has changed its approach resulting in the automatic triggers being removed and annual leave now being managed throughout the leave year not in company predetermined blocks. In addition, members who may have booked a longer break than standard e.g. 3-4 weeks (for a wedding, special occasion which will have been postponed) will be able to cancel some of that leave in recognition of the changed circumstances.

The following communication from the company (which has been sent to you) outlines the change of approach;

Clarification on managing annual leave this year

It's important for your physical and mental wellbeing to use your annual leave and have some time away from work. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has meant that UK and international holidays are currently not possible due to current government restrictions, we recognise how disappointing this is but this shouldn't prevent you taking time off to rest.

Please spread your annual leave throughout the year so that you get regular breaks and the business has the right operational capacity it needs to support our customers and safeguard its financial future. We currently have significant availability over the summer period, when the weather is likely to be warmer, and we encourage you to make the most of this.

In addition, the following clarification has been sent to your line manager;

Clarification on managing annual leave this year

It's important that you help your team use their annual leave allowance throughout the year. Some of your team may have circumstances that mean they won't be able to use all of their carried over leave by the end of June, or half of their annual leave by the end of September 2020. You know your team and we ask that you apply a reasonable and pragmatic approach, supporting them to take leave at relatively even periods throughout the year.

By regularly reviewing leave balances, you can prevent members of your team potentially losing their outstanding annual leave at the end of Q4, as there may be limited availability at that time.

We currently have significant availability over the summer period and people should be encouraged to make the most of this.

We welcome this change of approach, not only the content but the tone, and hope that this clarifies the position for you and your families.

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 on annual leave or any other issues 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

Davie Bowman
Assistant Secretary