

Working for you across the NatWest Group

Newsletter

September 2020



An Open Letter to Alison Rose, CEO NatWest

Dear Alison

NatWest and the Pandemic

Unite has received an unprecedented response to NatWest's recent announcement that the measures you consulted the trade union over and put into place to support your employees through the pandemic, are to be withdrawn at the end of this month.

These measures included the payment of lunch and travel allowances for staff taking the risk to travel into workplaces and serve customers, but more importantly they included an on-going commitment to pay employees who have to take time out from work to care for their loved ones.

There are real fears of a second national lockdown as the number of confirmed Covid cases increase. The government's testing programme is in disarray and many of the bank's employees are understandably concerned about their financial future and the livelihood of their families.

Many of your colleagues believe that your existing pre-Covid policies are insufficient to support employees and their families through this global pandemic. A belief borne out by the fact that you, quite rightly, put additional measures and safeguards in place to provide that security and support.

The problem with relying on existing policies is that whilst the majority of managers will genuinely try to do their best for their staff, we have repeatedly highlighted to your senior team that a minority have been putting their own colleagues at risk in misguided attempts to return to business as usual. We are extremely concerned that this latest decision to abandon the agreed safeguards will only magnify dysfunctional behaviour, leaving many colleagues feeling vulnerable and it will put managers and employees' general wellbeing at risk.

Throughout this crisis, NatWest employees have demonstrated incredible resilience and versatility. When the pandemic was at its worst, front line retail staff continued to work in the branches to support customers in need. Tens of thousands more opened up their homes to their employer to ensure that, despite everything, the business of the bank could continue.

As NatWest, along with the rest of the nation, looks to re-build, it is incumbent on all of us to remember why we need to show support for each other. The bank's previous commitments provided a welcome level of reassurance to its employees at an incredibly difficult and challenging time.

The trade union believes it is premature to withdraw from these commitments and on behalf of Unite members and the wider NatWest workforce I would urge you to pause your plan to do so at the end of this month.

Please note we will be sharing this letter with all NatWest colleagues in due course.

Regards

John Peake

Chair, Unite National Committee, NatWest Group