



Strategic Plan

2019 – 2023

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Strategic Plan for NGSU

1. Introduction

NGSU is an independent trade union dedicated to protecting the interests of our membership within the Nationwide Group. We have provided an effective and constant voice on behalf of our members for over 40 years.

Our Strategic Plan has been in place since 2009 and defines our purpose and identifies the areas of our operation which underpin and support our mission. The Strategic Plan was refreshed for the five-year period spanning 2014-2018.

The Plan has enabled us to focus on our resources in an effective way and we approach the next period in good shape. We have seen a period of membership growth over the past two years; our financial position remains strong and we have continued to build our relationship with Nationwide and have established the Union and its representatives across all parts of the business.

As we look ahead and plan for the next five-year period it is clear that there will be many challenges ahead: from Brexit; changes in the housing market; greater demand from customers for online and mobile services and increased automation of processes – all with associated implications for jobs. It is therefore crucial that we continue to plan ahead and take actions that will enable us to remain an effective voice on behalf of our members.

2. Mission Statement

Our mission statement defines the Union's purpose:

Nationwide Group Staff Union exists to protect and promote the interests of our members. To enable us to do this effectively we will remain a union in our own right and we will seek to build a "partnership" relationship with NBS. We will strive to achieve a position where our members value the Union, actively participate in the Union, become Representatives and are our greatest advocates.

3. Goals and Objectives

To fulfil the mission statement NGSU must work to deliver eight key goals and objectives.

1. To develop a network of 'effective' NGSU Representatives who are enabled and empowered to undertake a greater role in the delivery of services to members
2. Deliver professional support, advice and representation to members
3. Recruit and maintain membership
4. Engage in collective bargaining to protect and promote members' Terms and Conditions
5. Maintain and develop benefits and services to members
6. Develop a communication strategy that informs, activates and empowers members and representatives
7. Develop and maintain relationships with appropriate external bodies
8. Ensure effective use of operational resources

4. Evaluation and Review

Our Strategic Plan is approved by the National Executive Committee (NEC) and will be subject to regular review at the bi-monthly NEC meetings.

Tim Poil
General Secretary

November 2018

NGSU Strategic Plan: Section One

Goal

To develop network of 'effective' NGSU Representatives who are enabled and empowered to undertake a greater role in the delivery of services to members

Overview

Our 2014-2018 Strategic Plan emphasised the importance of placing our elected Representatives at the heart of our activity by making this goal the first section of our strategy. It is a goal that delivers a number of benefits and is crucial to the success of our overarching mission of protecting the interests of our members and remains at the forefront of the 2019-2023 plan period.

The diverse and changing nature of the activity undertaken by Nationwide means that it makes sense that our Representatives take a leading role in delivering services, as they have the best knowledge and understanding of the issues impacting on their local members.

The development of a network of effective Representatives also supports the succession into the National Executive Committee (NEC), Business Committee members, Disciplinary Officers, and potentially into permanent roles in NGSU.

The strategy supports the effective use of resources which is crucial to our ability to manage costs within subscription income whilst continuing to deliver excellent service to members.

An 'Effective' Representative

There are four key areas of activity that we expect a District and Department Representative to undertake and so be 'effective':

- **Communication** – facilitating two-way communication with members and NGSU
- **Consultation** – consulting with local management and participating in formal consultation meetings with Nationwide
- **Recruitment** – understanding and promoting the benefits of membership
- **Supporting Members** – providing simple first line support and advice to members

Achievements over the 2014-2018 Plan Period

We have made considerable progress in advancing towards our goal over the 2014-2018 plan period:

- The majority of Representative vacancies are filled, including new constituencies for ex-Carillion employees
- We have defined what an 'effective' Representative should be and developed a 'handbook' to provide information that supports activity and Representatives have conducted self-assessment to identify knowledge and skill gaps
- All new Representatives receive induction training
- We have good and regular attendance at Regional Councils
- Interest in joining the National Executive Committee (NEC) is strong (evidenced by contested elections)
- We have active Representative participation in EIC Business Committees across the Admin Centres and Branch Network
- With Nationwide, we have jointly developed and delivered training for Admin Centre Business Committee Representatives and made Nationwide training courses available to all Representatives via the Learning Zone
- The Rep Support Officer role is fully established and plays a crucial role in organising and supporting Representative activity and maintaining regular communication
- The changes to the timing of the term of office will mean our National Conference will provide a platform to enthuse and motivate Representatives and help them be effective

Current Situation

As we prepare for the 2019-2023 plan period, we have 186 Representatives.

	No of Reps	No of Constituencies	% of Positions Filled	No of Regions
31 July 2018	186	204	91%	10
30 June 2013	152	214	71%	11
30 Sept 2008	126	197	64%	12

Although achieving a full complement of Representatives remains our goal, it is likely that we will always have some vacancies as existing Representatives move roles or leave and we may continue to find it difficult to recruit Representatives at TNS due to the small membership pool in those constituencies.

The National Executive Committee comprises of 20 Representatives (including The President), plus the General Secretary.

Regional Councils meet 3 times a year. There are 5 EIC Business Committees and a further 10 sub-committees.

Strengths/Opportunities

- ☐ The Representative structure is fully established across most business areas
- ☐ We have an increasing pool of experienced, knowledgeable Representatives
- ☐ We have a formal Agreement in place between the Union and NBS allowing Representatives time off from their normal duties to undertake Union activities
- ☐ The Business Committee structure has been refreshed and is becoming established
- ☐ The Rep Support Officer role provides dedicated resource to promote the Representative role and to provide ongoing training and support

Weaknesses/Threats

- ☐ Participation in Union activity can be constrained due to operational demands and pressures
- ☐ Fear of being perceived negatively can still be a barrier to full and open dialogue
- ☐ Some operational managers do not recognise or value the role of the Union and their Representatives
- ☐ Members' knowledge about who their Representative is and what they do is inconsistent
- ☐ There is no formal process to assess whether a Representative is effective and to identify any additional support or help they need or to address situations where they are not acting in the best interests of members

Themes for the 2019-2023 Plan Period

We have a range of 'in-house' training initiatives for Representatives, including induction training, Reps Handbook, knowledge updates sessions at Regional Councils and a bespoke Disciplinary Officers course. Representatives have also been given access to a number of modules in the e-learning suite at Nationwide and some have attended Business Committee training, developed jointly with Nationwide.

Over the plan period we will enhance our training options and accessibility to training material, developing new material for specific topics (such as representing members at informal or early stage FTAW hearings), provide online access to in-house material, and explore additional provision, for example, via TUC education.

It will be important to continue to enhance the profile and skills of Representatives and for them to be seen as the active and effective face of NGSU in their area. Through their profile and activity, they will be a natural recruiter of new Union members and Representatives.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) has had an ambition to lead and support Representatives in fulfilling the strategy but there is scope to improve and enhance this activity. This is important, both for the development of the Representative role but also for the profile of NEC members and promoting succession to the NEC. The decision to revise the term of office, meaning that our National Conference will be closer to the start of the term, will provide the opportunity to encourage and enthuse Representatives at an early stage and the NEC has an important role to play in this process.

The EIC Business Committees are becoming established and understood as a consultation mechanism for NGSU, People & Culture and participating managers but awareness amongst the wider employee population is not high. Improving awareness will help to demonstrate and heighten the understanding of the Union's work and influence in the business – with associated benefits encouraging more members to stand as Representatives and helping non-members understand the value of joining.

We have to be realistic in our expectations about the amount of time a Representative can spend on union duties and balance this with their Nationwide role. The time-off provisions agreed with Nationwide are sufficient to enable a Representative to be effective but not many Representatives feel empowered to use their full allocation. We must continue to work with Nationwide to ensure Representatives are supported by the business and their contribution is recognised.

Over the next plan period we can expect to see developments in working and communication practices and we must embrace new ways of working to maximise our opportunities to engage with Representatives and help them balance union duties with their day job. We have already begun to embrace video conferencing technology for NEC meetings and we should explore other opportunities to engage with Representatives and deliver support in an efficient and cost-effective way.

Our strategy places effective Representatives at the heart of our activity and the objectives over the next five years are intended to build and develop processes that deliver the goal. This must include ways to assess 'effectiveness' and identify where additional support and other interventions are required to help a Rep be effective.

Once we have a comprehensive framework and support mechanisms in place, the strategy will ultimately demand that we have a process to address instances where a Representative is not deemed to be effective. Our experience is that Representatives are always well-intentioned and if they feel they are not contributing as much as they'd like, they will step down by their own volition. However, it is appropriate that we should review the need for more formal interventions if the need arises.

Strategic Objectives & Plan

To achieve the goal, we need to:

- ☐ Continue to develop the skills and knowledge of Representatives and evolve our range of training material
- ☐ Work with Nationwide to embed consultation with Representatives as core operational activity - both informally with local managers and formally via Business Committees
- ☐ Seek to raise the profile of Representatives with their members and managers and to highlight their role in consultation
- ☐ Embrace new technology and ways of working and communication to meet changing demands and maximise efficiency
- ☐ Review the need for formal mechanisms and/or rules that support the maintenance of an effective network of Representatives

To deliver the objectives, we need to:

From the Centre:

- ☐ Continue to develop the Rep Support Officer to be an enabler of the strategy
- ☐ Involve ICOs in the delivery of the strategy by strengthening relationships and interactions at roadshows and Regional Councils
- ☐ Develop a full suite of training and appropriate delivery channels
- ☐ Establish regular communication with Representatives to engage them and support skills development
- ☐ Work with Nationwide to ensure the business embraces the strategy through continued provision of time-off and recognition of Representatives contribution to the business
- ☐ Raise the profile of the work of Representatives with members through regular communication
- ☐ Review our assessment and support processes and identify potential enhancements

With Representatives:

- ☐ The NEC will continue to identify ways NROs and NEOs can support Representatives more effectively and increase the profile of NEC members
- ☐ Encourage regular communications between Representatives to share best practice and support each other
- ☐ Encourage Representatives to be involved in local consultation and communicate regularly with their members
- ☐ Involve Representatives in identifying the training and support material they need to help them gain confidence and be effective
- ☐ Work with individual Representatives to help identify training needs and support required to become effective
- ☐ Establish review and monitoring systems that involve Representatives in appraising and refining the Strategy
- ☐ Use the National Conference as a springboard to enthuse and encourage Representatives to be active

With Members:

- ☐ Promote the work of Representatives and highlight the associated development benefits to encourage members to consider standing and so support our succession plan
- ☐ Encourage members to know who their local Representative is and see them as a natural point of contact for support and feedback

NGSU Strategic Plan: Section Two

Goal

Deliver professional support, advice and representation to members

Overview

Our proposition to members comprises of three main elements: collective bargaining when all members speak with one voice in the negotiation of terms and conditions of employment; individual support for members who need help at work and the provision of additional benefits, such as discount schemes that help create a positive association with the Union and add value to the membership proposition.

Of these, the provision of individual support and advice often has the greatest resonance with members because it provides the clearest direct benefit of Union membership – delivering confidential and professional help. Over the years NGSU has earned considerable recognition from the membership, and respect from the business, for the quality of advice and representation and we can take pride that we are giving a quality service to our members when they need it most.

The past five years has been a period when our ability to provide individual support and advice continued to be tested. During this period discussions took place at the Employee Involvement Committee (EIC) on several occasions regarding the number of disciplinary, and capability hearings and the levels set. This has led to an improvement in the process and a slight reduction in the number of hearings and their outcomes. However, the number of cases covered under the Fair Treatment at Work continue to be a challenge. Change programmes across the business resulting in redundancy declined initially in the last five years but have seen a significant increase in the last couple of years. The signals are that this will continue as the business revises its operating models in the various Communities. The demand on our services is as great as ever. We have increased the number of ICOs.

Over this period our working relationship with the business, and in particular, the Community Partners, Change Managers and Case Management teams in HR, have also been tested. Changes in working practices and structures together with an increase in grievances have caused difficulties and tensions and have added to the pressures facing our Individual Cases Officer's (ICOs).

We have been successful in training an increased number of DOs through our accreditation scheme although some have left, so we have only increased those accredited by three.

Our overarching strategy of placing Representatives at the heart of Union activity is critical to our on-going delivery of advice and support. Representatives have the opportunity to help their members locally, by both offering individual support, but also by identifying work issues and pressures and seeking solutions in consultation with managers, which in turn may prevent individual cases emerging. The continued development of our DO team is essential – both to the delivery of individual representation and also as a succession pool for ICOs.

Scope

This section of the Plan focuses on support for individual members. The implications of not providing this support at the highest standard may include the following

- ☐ Members of the union finding themselves the recipient of inappropriate action an example being unfairly dismissed
- ☐ Nationwide not following agreed procedures
- ☐ Members leaving the NGSU disillusioned
- ☐ Members taking external action against NGSU

Current Situation

We might need to provide Individual Representation or Support to any of our members (In excess of 12,000) in any of the areas listed below:

- ☐ Disciplinary and appeal hearings
- ☐ Improving performance hearings
- ☐ Probation hearings
- ☐ Grievance meetings (including Harassment and Bullying)
- ☐ Flexible working appeal hearings
- ☐ Job security and redundancy related discussions and formal meetings
- ☐ TUPE situations
- ☐ Sickness review meetings
- ☐ End of prolonged sickness benefit hearings
- ☐ End of fixed term contract/retirement hearings
- ☐ Special Investigation meetings (not a right but often a request)
- ☐ Phone/face to face support and advice relating to day to day queries.
- ☐ Webchat and emails relating to day to day
- ☐ Providing telephone support to Representatives who in turn provide support to members.

NGSU currently employs 5 full time Individual Cases Officers (ICOs); 2 ICOs that work 4 days a week; 2 ICOs that work 3 days. The team are supported by 14 accredited Disciplinary Officers (DOs) and 2 external DOs. There are currently 6 trainee DOs.

During 2014 we supported or formally represented members at 548 meetings/hearings, in 2015 at 538, 2016 at 545 2017 at 536 and so far (to 31st July) in 2018 at 325.

Strengths/Opportunities

- ☐ We have a good understanding of Nationwide policies and procedures and the history of their development
- ☐ We offer a seamless service to our members through a bespoke computerised system called Harmony (under regular review) here all ICOs can access member records and update them when providing support.
- ☐ We have an experienced, close, mobile, flexible and approachable team
- ☐ We offer a personal service for members (one to one)
- ☐ We are seen by our members as being distinct from Nationwide
- ☐ Feedback from the vast majority of our members is at the highest level

Weaknesses/Threats

- ☐ Nationwide employees as DOs who will carry out lower level disciplinary hearings, appraisal appeal, absence meetings are not always released by the business placing a reliance on ICOs
- ☐ A lack of complete trust with HR within Nationwide
- ☐ Often last minutes delivery of evidence packs from Nationwide for hearings/issues can lead to a lack of preparation time when members contact us for support
- ☐ Lack of opportunity to input at early stages to resolve issues informally for our members.
- ☐ Regular change of operating models impacts on our familiarity with Nationwide's structure
- ☐ Continual change may lead to falling membership
- ☐ Lack of active DOs across the country

Strategic Objective & Plan**To achieve the goal, we need to:**

- ☐ Continue to support our team of ICOs through training and coaching and communication.
- ☐ Grow our population of accredited Disciplinary Officers (DOs) so that they increasingly become the face of NGSU providing local support/representation at lower level hearings, investigation meetings, appraisal appeals and through change programmes
- ☐ Establish other methods to deliver initial advice to members through telephone and digital channels building on webchat and making more use (where appropriate) video conference

To deliver the objectives, we need to:**From the Centre:**

- ☐ Evolve the ICO role in various directions to ensure we can support our members through the revised way of working and changes to operating models they may experience over the next few years.
- ☐ Evolve the role of the ICOs to provide advice and support to representatives as their role develops
- ☐ Continually review and implement any changes to the accreditation process for representing members through the Fair Treatment at Work policies (FTAW). Consider ways to speed up the process that will not impact on the confidence of DOs
- ☐ Provide for the ICO team an efficient and cost-effective way of getting legal advice to provide to both each other and DOs whilst active in the field.
- ☐ Ensure that internal communication is effective to provide confidence in what is happening to members' terms and conditions of employment and job security
- ☐ Continually review the interaction with Nationwide and assess its value
- ☐ Continue to review statistics relating to FTAW to identify trends and action any findings
- ☐ Continually look for new ways to provide support to members, such as how we provide first line telephone help and keep up to date information on the website

With Representatives:

- ☐ Work with existing DOs to ensure competence is maintained
- ☐ Further expand our pool of DOs
- ☐ Encourage Reps to tackle local issues and help resolve issues that might evolve into individual concerns
- ☐ Liaising with the Representatives Support Officer to assist in evolving the elected Representatives as a first point of call for members to obtain initial advice and support

NGSU Strategic Plan: Section Three

Goal

Recruit and Maintain Membership

Overview

In order for NGSU to achieve its future goals it is essential that we continue to recruit and maintain the membership base. If the Union fails, we will be unable to secure our long-term viability and will increasingly experience difficulties in fully protecting the interests of our members.

The implications of not achieving this goal may include the following

- ☐ Lack of financial stability due to the high reliance on membership subscriptions
- ☐ Requirement to raise subscriptions, which may result in increased resignations
- ☐ Ability to deliver services to members may be compromised
- ☐ The Union's strength in negotiations with the Society may be compromised

There is a risk that without a continued focus on recruitment that total membership numbers will decline over the next five years.

Current situation

The last five-year Strategic Plan aimed to increase the total number of members against the number of employees to 80% as a percentage of the Nationwide workforce, and although this was not achieved, we did see an increase to over 76% from 69.03% during the current plan period. Between 2013 & July 2018 there has been an actual increase of 1057 members (11,718 to 12,775), with peaks & troughs throughout this period.

This has been a strong performance in an environment that has seen continual change at Nationwide and some significant challenges for the Union, such as changes to branch working arrangements and bonus schemes and re-structuring across the organisation. Our success is due to a combination of factors including more active recruitment by Representatives, a full programme of roadshows and attendance at induction sessions – all underpinned by good employee relations with Nationwide, with the organisation being seen to support and encourage NGSU membership.

The aim to achieve a membership level of 80% of the Nationwide workforce is an aspirational target. It recognises that there will always be a cohort of employees who will not join a trade union but that there is potential to grow membership where we have sole recognition rights and the organisation has a positive attitude to membership.

It makes more sense to consider membership in percentage terms, rather than aim for a set membership figure, as our fortunes will be linked to Nationwide and reflect fluctuations in headcount. However, expressing our membership as a percentage of the workforce gives a false indication of our actual penetration at Nationwide, as our total membership also includes Pensioner and Associate members. It is appropriate that we should retain our aspiration to grow membership but it is important to recognise the true picture to help us determine how best to deploy recruitment activity and resources.

Strengths/Opportunities

The growth in our membership means NGSU is currently in a healthy position, in terms of strength of influence and financial stability and ability to deliver services to members. This is a strong performance given the general declining trend in Union membership across the UK.

- ☐ Strong financial position
- ☐ High membership figures compared to unions in other financial services companies
- ☐ Support of the Union by NBS which includes endorsement of membership and provision of recruitment material to new starters
- ☐ Attendance at induction events to provide recruitment opportunities which the Reps, having been through training, are now hosting with increased regularity
- ☐ Opportunities to hold our roadshows on Nationwide premises, and increasing invites to Nationwide events
- ☐ A network of Reps that has increased in numbers since the last Strategic Plan, so the penetration of coverage is extremely healthy, and are advocates and first line recruiters
- ☐ Internal processes for follow-up of new starters
- ☐ There is a significant cohort of existing Nationwide employees who are not members but provide a potential recruitment pool
- ☐ Potential changes to the workforce may provide an additional pool to recruit from

Weaknesses/Threats

Over the next five years there will be a persistent threat to our membership as the Society continues to evolve in the financial market. This threat will come from digital platforms and automation replacing traditional ways of operating which could result in headcount reductions and changing aspirations of employees recruited into technical roles and their attitudes to Union membership. The external environment will also remain challenging as pressures from the housing market; new entrants and the possible effect of Brexit.

- ☐ High reliance on membership subscriptions in terms of total income
- ☐ Employees being made redundant.
- ☐ Withdrawal of support by NBS
- ☐ Failure to demonstrate value from NGSU membership
- ☐ Changing attitudes to Trade Union membership
- ☐ Current non-members have enjoyed the benefit of working in a unionised environment without the need for membership
- ☐ Changing face of employment with the possibility of attracting new employees who look to stay in role with a specific timeframe, moving away from traditional “a job for life” attitude
- ☐ Accepting a cohort of employees who, for many reasons, will not join a Union under any circumstances

Strategic Objective & Plan

As we enter the 2019-2023 Plan it is appropriate to retain the aim to grow membership to at least 80% of the total workforce. However, it is also important to set an objective to increase actual penetration rates at Nationwide and focus recruitment activity in areas where there is more scope to grow.

To achieve the 80% target, we need to grow membership by 647 over the five-year period. This assumes that headcount at Nationwide remains stable and this is reasonable as we can expect to see reductions in some operational roles be balanced by increases in technology roles over the Plan period.

The total number of employees stands at 16778, the total number of members 12775. The headcount figure excludes contractor and temporary workers.

%Target	78%	79%	80%
Members needed	311	479	647

To determine a more accurate picture of penetration at Nationwide it is necessary to exclude Pensioners and Associate members, currently at 1640 (July 18). This gives a penetration rate of 66% (total membership 12,775 – 1640 = 11,135; workforce of 16,778 / 11,135 = 66%).

To achieve a realistic penetration rate of 70% would require growth of 609 members from the active Nationwide workforce (based on current headcount):

%Target	68%	69%	70%
Members needed	274	441	609

To achieve these goals, we need to grow membership by between 120-130 each year over the plan period. This breaks down to modest monthly increases and should be achievable with continued and focused recruitment effort.

In order to achieve the goal, we need to:

- ☐ Continue to develop our proposition to members to demonstrate value of joining NGSU and retaining membership
- ☐ Continue to develop a network of effective Representatives who are our greatest advocates and first line recruiters
- ☐ Review the existing training & support that Reps benefit from
- ☐ Develop a means of reviewing the effectiveness of Reps and recruitment
- ☐ Seek opportunities to recruit from the existing population of non-members
- ☐ Develop effective procedures and recruitment opportunities to convert as many new starters into members at the point of joining Nationwide
- ☐ Develop effective procedures and recruitment opportunities to convert employees within the first six months. After six months they will be removed from our database and so increases the difficulty of maintaining contact

To achieve our objectives, we need to:**At the Centre:**

- ☐ Support Reps through the provision of MI and recruitment material
- ☐ Review the recruitment training module for Reps, and continue to promote
- ☐ Ensure internal new starter follow up procedures are robust and effective, reviewing regularly before six months has expired
- ☐ Engage with the business to retain existing opportunities to recruit at induction events and identify new opportunities
- ☐ Engage with the business to seek opportunities to hold roadshows and support other corporate events e.g. business conferences
- ☐ Maintain the effectiveness of recruitment material as needed
- ☐ Ensure that joining procedures are easy and remove any barriers
- ☐ Monitor and evaluate recruitment initiatives at all levels, including the involvement of NRO/NEO's as well as Reps
- ☐ Monitor and review membership numbers and trends to identify recruitment hot-spots and reasons for leavers
- ☐ Review the activity with Reps regularly and develop who, where, when this should be achieved
- ☐ In line with setting a strategic aspirational goal of 80% then discuss with NEC how recruitment is performing against this measure to increase understanding of success
- ☐ Consider the impact of the "National" category (made up of pensioners & associates) as this category is not reflected within the figures of total employees. When removing this category from our membership figures then the percentage of members who are employees equals 67% (July 18). Considering this measure then reflects trends to review and duly act upon.

With Representatives:

- ☐ Encourage Reps to recruit by personal introductions and recommendations
- ☐ Ensure that reps have lists of new starters and members
- ☐ Provide up to date and compelling recruitment material
- ☐ Maintain & grow a network of Reps who can support induction events and identify new local opportunities to recruit new starters
- ☐ At the administration centres, work with Reps to run roadshows and other recruitment events
- ☐ Devise initiatives to recruit from existing non-members
- ☐ Develop a means to identify best practice ideas to promote recruitment
- ☐ Develop a strategy for evaluating the success or challenges of recruitment

NGSU Strategic Plan: Section Four

Goal

Engage in Collective Bargaining to Protect and Promote Members' Terms and Conditions

Overview

The Union has represented its members with the prime employer (Nationwide) for over 45 years. During that time the relationship between the Union and the employer has been subject to many "ups and downs".

In the more productive periods of the relationship the fact that we are a 'Staff Union' was valued and appreciated by the Executive Management team of Nationwide.

The most recent period in which the relationship was difficult followed the appointment of a new CEO at the time of the Portman merger. The view of the then CEO was that the Union was a threat which needed to be contained and its influence curtailed. This coincided with a sharp economic downturn and extreme external pressures coming to bear on all Financial Services (FS) organisations.

In 2011, there was a shift back towards a 'partnership approach' and this approach by Nationwide has continued and shows the value of our consistent objective of maintaining our 'partnership philosophy'.

The appointment of a new CEO and new Chairman of the Board of Directors in 2015/2016 has seen the strengthening of the 'partnership approach' and this has led in 2018 to the General Secretary being invited to talk to the Board about the Union's concerns. We understand that this will be now be an annual invitation.

Whilst we have not yet succeeded in renegotiating the Recognition Agreement to modernise its approach and remove the 'no strike' clause, this remains an objective for this Plan period.

As we enter this Plan period, we need to continue to build on the two key objectives that we set ourselves in the previous period (2014 – 2018).

Whilst we do have a constructive and collaborative approach to the relationship at the outset of the plan period, we need to safeguard and enhance members T & Cs through negotiation and the full use of our Representative structure to deliver local consultations.

In respect of the central negotiations with Nationwide, we will continue to consider our succession planning to ensure that we deliver for our members (see Section 8).

Following the most recent changes to the Community structure we continue to strengthen the Business Committee structure, with some joint training for our Representatives having been delivered in early 2018.

It is here that, again, we need to further respond as we need our Representatives to play a full role in consulting with business leaders. This will ensure that our members' views and concerns can be listened to and the local working environment enhanced.

Scope

This part of the Union's strategy considers the Union's approach to collective bargaining (consultation and negotiation). As we have seen over many years this certainly is an area where it "takes two to tango" and we cannot operate alone. We continue to believe that a relationship which is based on a partnership approach, is the relationship type that will deliver most for our members and for Nationwide. As we enter the Plan period, Nationwide also holds this view. Coincidentally, Nationwide continues to believe that the involvement of our Representatives at a local level is beneficial to good employee relations. This has been the result of Representatives successfully engaging in the Business Committees and ad hoc working groups.

Strengths/Opportunities

The Union is well established having delivered a comprehensive set of T & Cs which remain amongst the best in the FS sector. We have successfully been through changing relationships with Nationwide in the past, and no doubt will need to do so in the future. Whilst we have seen immense pressure on the costs of the organisation, during the previous Plan period we have managed to retain the defined benefit pension scheme, achieved pay increases year on year, limited the number of redundancies through effective consultation and ensured that the working arrangements within the Branch Network (introduced in 2013) have been fully embedded for our members.

Key strengths include:

- ☐ A high level of membership within Nationwide
- ☐ A growing network of effective Representatives
- ☐ Established T & Cs
- ☐ In depth knowledge of Nationwide as an employer
- ☐ Stability of both management team and NEC which means that we have a strong negotiating team
- ☐ Effective research capacity
- ☐ A strong balance sheet which provides the ability to use external bodies as required
- ☐ NGSU is affiliated to the TUC and is a highly regarded Union

Weaknesses/Threats

- ☐ Continued difficult economic environment which will curtail our ability to enhance T & Cs in the medium term
- ☐ The impact of Brexit on the UK in general and Nationwide in particular
- ☐ The continuing reluctance of some business leaders to genuinely engage with the Union (although the number is reducing)
- ☐ Difficulty in encouraging members in the Admin Centres to participate in NGSU
- ☐ The lack of high calibre Representatives in some business areas
- ☐ Approach of Nationwide which seeks to curtail the influence of NGSU
- ☐ Incursions by other Unions into Nationwide – i.e. GMB

Strategic Objective & Plan

To support our mission statement, we need to consider this part of the Plan in two parts. Firstly, the central negotiation framework on a 'partnership' basis and secondly the involvement of Representatives at a local level, be that in the Business Committees or other engagement forums that are instigated by the business:

From the Centre:

- ☐ Maintain our 'partnership' philosophy
 - Continue to show the value of working together to find solutions which are acceptable to both parties.
 - Build on the opportunities that the current environment provides to embed 'partnership' within the ethos of Nationwide
 - Re-negotiate the Recognition Agreement to modernise its approach and remove the 'no strike' clause
 - Maintain and grow our negotiating expertise
 - Ensure that succession planning takes place within the officers and employees of NGSU to ensure that we maintain our strong knowledge of Nationwide and our ability to negotiate the best deals to protect and promote the interests of our members
 - Maintain an approach to both Equality and Health & Safety within Nationwide
 - Develop, implement and refresh (biennially) an NGSU strategy in relation to equalities issues. (See Appendix I)
 - Develop, implement and refresh (biennially) an NGSU approach to health & safety issues. (See Appendix II)
 - Maintain and grow our external focus
 - Maintain our external contacts to ensure that we are aware of all developments affecting people, particularly within Financial Services
 - Consider and development our interaction with the Regulators as this will be an increasing important area in the Plan period.

With Representatives:

- ☐ Grow our Representative base to fully engage across all business areas.
 - Encourage members to become high calibre Representatives who will advance the views of their local members to local business leaders, through involvement at Business Committees and other business forums
 - Encourage Representatives to become involved in local engagement programmes (such as Viewpoint Action Planning) to ensure that the views of Union members are at the forefront
 - Ensure that our Representatives are fully equipped to participate in people related matters at a local level and have the confidence to articulate the views and concerns of their local members

NGSU Strategic Plan: Section Five

Goal

Maintain and develop a range of benefits and services that add value to our membership proposition

Overview

The provision of additional services and benefits is an important part of our overall proposition to members. The main purpose is to add value to NGSU membership and for members to associate a positive experience or purchase with being a member. Income received from the Subscription Draw makes a significant contribution to income but other commissions received are minimal and incidental.

The relationships with third party suppliers yield some additional benefits, for example, Benchmark Travel, Affinity Leasing and O2 have been regular attendees at roadshow events and Hotpoint, Virgin Experience Days and Co-op Funeralcare have also supported events. Some partners provide content for Rapport, for example, Slater & Gordon have provided articles of general interest, rather than simply promoting their service.

The suite of benefits continues to evolve and most recently we have established a new arrangement with Salary Extras and included a gym membership scheme and Independent Financial Services Wealth & Pensions (IFSWP) are our new partners for the Insurance Commission Rebate scheme.

Benefits Policy

We are regularly approached by companies who are keen to offer their services to members. For the 2009-2013 strategy, we developed a 'benefits policy' to provide some guiding principles to help decide which companies to partner.

One of these principles is that a benefit should only be adopted if there is minimal cost to the Union. This principle still holds good for benefits where we are promoting services of a particular company but needs broadening to recognise situations where there is merit in 'buying in' a service or package of benefits for members. This is the case for the Slater & Gordon legal helpline and our arrangement with Salary Extras, which has a monthly cost of the basic package and an additional fee for the gym membership scheme. These schemes provide ongoing value for existing members and support recruitment of new members.

The 'policy' has therefore been amended for the 2019-2023 plan period to recognise that buying in a benefit can support our strategic goal. However, these benefits should be reviewed annually to assess if they are popular with members and continue to add value to the proposition.

Benefits policy 2019-2023

- Our activity in this area must not be perceived as detracting from the prime purpose of supporting members – so timing of benefit launches must be sensitive to the workplace agenda.
- Benefits must offer genuine value for members and be competitive with other products and services generally available.
- Suppliers must have a good reputation and be credible and trustworthy partners for the Union and fit with our values. They must offer robust customer service and complaint processes.
- Where possible, services and benefits must be available to all members and throughout the UK.
- As a general rule, costs to the Union should be minimal. Suppliers must provide marketing material and cover any additional expense incurred by the Union, for example, additional postage costs for inserts in Rapport. Costs will only be shared where commission arrangements exist.
- In exceptional cases, the Union will buy in services for members where these are deemed to be of additional significant value to the proposition and are affordable. These benefits will be reviewed annually to ensure they continue to support the strategic goal and provide value for money.

Strengths/Opportunities

The Union has developed a range of services and benefits over the years:

- ☐ Good mix of services (e.g. free legal advice; free will writing service) and benefits (e.g. discounts on UK attractions)
- ☐ Our membership size makes us an attractive proposition for companies to offer discounts
- ☐ The monthly subscription draw is very popular and is a powerful recruitment incentive
- ☐ Some suppliers are happy to provide marketing support; advertising revenue or other support e.g. Travel Club support for roadshows and Conference.
- ☐ Regular updates at Regional Councils has enabled Reps to be more proactive in promoting benefits

Weaknesses/Threats

- ☐ A competitive market place means members are likely to match discounts from other sources and this devalues this aspect of membership
- ☐ Providing alternative financial service products puts the Union in conflict with Nationwide and some members
- ☐ Knowledge of the benefits package is limited
- ☐ Members who have a poor experience in purchasing a benefit may associate that with the Union
- ☐ We have limited time and resources to research and vet new benefits
- ☐ Reduction in the take-up of the subscription draw would mean a significant loss of income.

Strategic Objective & Plan

To support the goal:

From the Centre:

- ☐ Review and assess the existing range of benefits to determine if they continue to provide additional value from union membership and identify gaps.
- ☐ Annual review of Salary Extras and Gym membership scheme
- ☐ Work with benefit suppliers to ensure promotion material is up-to-date and seek opportunities to derive additional value from the relationship, including attendance at roadshows; providing Rep briefings at Regional Councils and sourcing material for Rapport
- ☐ Review our communication strategy in respect of benefits, ensuring the website and leaflets are up to date and material is available for induction and welcome packs
- ☐ Consider options to match benefits to different populations of members to help them make the most of their membership

With Representatives:

- ☐ Involve Reps in seeking feedback from members about our benefit range and perceived value to aid our review and evaluation process
- ☐ Enhance Reps' knowledge of the benefit range to increase their advocacy of this aspect of the Union's proposition to support retention and recruitment of members.
- ☐ Work with Reps to run regular campaigns on specific benefits and plan for seasonal campaigns

With Members:

- ☐ Invite members to provide feedback directly by actively canvassing views when featuring benefits in communications

NGSU Strategic Plan: Section Six

Goal

Develop a communication strategy that informs, activates and empowers Members and Representatives

Overview

To fulfil our purpose, we need to understand the views and needs of our membership and members need to believe that the Union is actively working on their behalf and is providing value for money. Effective communication is therefore a critical activity for NGSU - without it we run the risk of failing to meet members' expectations and this will impact on membership growth and the long-term viability of the Union.

Our strategy for Representatives is dependent on keeping them engaged and active and so regular communication with them is also important and they too play a key role in facilitating two-way communication with members.

We have a good mix of publications and communication methods but we need to be mindful of changing demands and innovation if we are to keep communication fresh and relevant to members.

Our communication strategy extends beyond the delivery of communication and must also consider how we represent the Union to members. We must continue to retain our independent identity and speak for the membership while also securing the benefits of working in 'partnership' with Nationwide.

Scope

The scope of this element of the strategy does not focus on face-to-face communication but this is an important aspect of our interaction with members and Representatives. Face-to-face communication occurs between ICOs and members; Reps and members and at induction and roadshow events and now extends to video conferencing.

Current Communication Channels

Our main communication channels and publications continue to provide a good framework, providing regular contact with members and each communication having an identity and purpose:

- **Website** – is our primary communication channel, providing interactive services (web chat/forum/join online); information and resources for members and Reps and provides an ability to publish information quickly.
- **Union Mail** - is our monthly newsletter. Its purpose is to provide regular updates on workplace issues and Union activity and benefits. It is distributed as a paper version to workplaces and to individuals by e-mail and online.
- **Special Issues** - provide an additional one-off communication that can be used for tactical purposes and specific topics, such as the pay review.
- **Rapport Magazine** – is sent to all members at home and acts as a reminder of membership. Production lead-in times dictate a broader mix of articles about NGSU activity; wider employment issues; personal interest stories; and member benefits.
- **Social Media** - we have a limited presence on Facebook and Twitter.

- **Promotional Material** – we have a range of promotional leaflets; stands and induction presentations.
- **Reps Handbook** – we have a manual covering the key aspects of the role.

Achievements over the 2014-2018 Plan period

Over the 2014-2018 plan period we have continued to invest in our website and have included a 'web chat' facility to provide an additional way for members to contact us and added a Frequently Asked Questions section. We have appointed a new website development partner and made a number of security and access enhancements.

Our core communications, Union Mail and Rapport, have continued to meet their purpose. We have used e-mail to cascade links to the online version of Union Mail enabling use of hyperlinks to other relevant information on the website. We have continued to take a light touch with the use of Social Media.

We have updated our leaflets and promotional material to provide more brand consistency and have reflected this in the website imaginary.

The Rep Support Officer has established regular communication with Reps and we have set up distribution lists for all Regional Councils. We launched a Reps Handbook at Conference 2015. This is given to new Reps as part of induction training and is available online.

Strengths/Opportunities

- ☐ Good mix of communication channels
- ☐ Clear branding and purpose of key communications
- ☐ Interactive capabilities including webchat and the forum
- ☐ Opportunities for cost efficiencies identified via electronic media
- ☐ In-house capabilities for writing and production
- ☐ Our network of Reps who are active in communicating with their local members

Weaknesses/Threats

- ☐ We are often restricted in what we can tell members because of the need to maintain confidentiality
- ☐ Most members have a remote relationship with the Union and do not actively seek information
- ☐ The membership is spread over a wide geographical area
- ☐ We have limited time and financial resources
- ☐ We are dependent on Nationwide for distribution and access to some of our communications
- ☐ We compete with Nationwide on messaging and reach
- ☐ The views of our membership are varied and diverse
- ☐ We have limited presence on social media

Considerations for the 2019-2023 Plan period

Our communications must be fit for use on mobiles and other personal devices as these become the preferred way to access services and information. This may extend to developing applications to provide easy access to services such as member benefits or chat services.

We must continue to evolve our online proposition to meet member needs, seek efficiencies and reduce dependencies on Nationwide for distribution of paper communications. We must continue efforts to build our database of home e-mail addresses and extend the reach of our communications to as many members as possible.

We must review our presence on social media and we have secured access to expert resource to support this work during the early part of the plan period - via our membership of Unions 21.

We must embrace new technologies and ways of working to ensure we are delivering communications and interacting with members and Reps in ways that meet their needs and secure efficiencies.

The subject matter and topics for communication will continue to be largely dictated by events and workplace issues and we need the ability to react and respond to these. As a specific objective we should seek to enhance members' understanding of the Employee Involvement Committee (EIC) at Nationwide, to help awareness and participation in the consultation agenda and to support the work and profile of Representatives.

Strategic Objective & Plan

To support our mission statement:

From the Centre

- ☐ Website and Apps – work with Oxford Web Applications (OWA) to develop new features; format and consider options for App development
- ☐ Forum – with OWA identify other options to improve the user experience and consider the development of a separate Forum for Representatives
- ☐ Rapport – continue to hold an annual review with our external editor and designer to keep the publication fresh and engaging. Seek feedback and involvement from Reps and members in this process.
- ☐ E-mail database – seek opportunities to build the database of home e-mail addresses
- ☐ Social Media – maximise resources available via Unions 21 to understand and develop our social media and online presence.
- ☐ EIC – increase coverage of EIC in NGSU publications; work with Nationwide to promote the work of the EIC and encourage local Business Committees to communicate details of their work and ongoing agenda.
- ☐ Technology innovation and service delivery – seek opportunities to embrace new ways of working, such as video conferencing options and webinars, to deliver services to members and training to Representatives

With Representatives

- ☐ Continue to involve Representatives as a key part of the communication chain
- ☐ Establish the NEC and Reps as part of the feedback and review process
- ☐ Consider establishing a dedicated Reps Forum (as above) to provide an additional communication channel and encourage Reps to share information and best practice

With Members

- ☐ Review and revise our interactive services, such as webchat and the forum
- ☐ Invite members to submit material for publications and to be part of the feedback and review process, for example, at Roadshows

NGSU Strategic Plan: Section Seven

Goal

Develop and maintain relationships with appropriate external bodies

Overview

In order for NGSU to meet its obligations to the members, we cannot operate in isolation and there must be effective relationships with other Trade Unions and appropriate external bodies. In particular, we need to consider and develop contact / relationships with Regulators.

These external relationships are important in order that we can understand wider external issues that impact on NGSU and Nationwide; to understand the requirements of the Regulators as they play an increasing role in shaping the employment environment; to support benchmarking activity and research; identify issues/campaigns that might be important to our members; and to support wider lobbying campaigns in relation to employment law and other issues of importance to the members.

The Union has been affiliated to the TUC since late 1999 and the General Secretary was a member of the TUC General Council during the period 2005 – 2015. With Nationwide still the most likely FS organisation to be involved in the further reduction in the overall number of building societies in the UK, it is essential that we maintain our external standing.

The Union affiliates to number of other organisations and needs to consider its involvement levels:

Unions 21, Justice for Columbia, Amnesty International, War on Want and the Institute of Employment Rights.

In respect of Unions 21, this is a grouping of modern forward-looking trade unions which exists to provide an 'open space' for discussion about the future of the union movement. The General Secretary of NGSU sits on the Unions 21 Steering Committee, but because of work pressure has not been an active participant for some time. It is hoped that more active involvement by NGSU can be achieved during this plan period.

In respect of Justice for Columbia, Amnesty International and War on Want, it is important that the NEC determine whether they wish to continue these affiliations, whether to actively participate and if so, agree who will lead this activity.

In respect of the Institute of Employment Rights, this is a body to which we affiliate in order to receive their publications and access to their training seminars.

During both 2017 & 2018, the Union was invited to roundtable discussions within the Banking Standards Board, an activity that we will continue to participate in.

Scope

The Union needs to consider what further benefits that it can obtain from the TUC – i.e. organising skills and techniques. The Union also needs to consider its participation in the other bodies, in particular Unions 21 and plan accordingly.

Strategic Objective & Plan

To support mission statement:

- ☐ Maintain our position within the TU sector
 - Continue to actively participate within the TUC
 - Consider what further benefits we can obtain
 - In relation to TUC – from a smaller union’s perspective – influence TUC agenda and activity to ensure it remains relevant to our members; e.g. participate in consultation exercises
- ☐ Engage with Regulators
 - Consider how we can best engage with the appropriate regulators that influence the employment environment of our members
- ☐ Review our participation with external bodies
 - Consider how (and if) we participate in the future
- ☐ Engage with members
 - Consider how to engage with members to ascertain what external campaigns/ organisations we support

NGSU Strategic Plan: Section Eight

Goal

Ensure effective use of operational resources

Overview

The Union relies upon its membership to provide the funding of its activities, whether that is through the payment of subscriptions or by utilising the services and benefits which provide an additional source of funding. If the Union were to fail to offer a professional service to its members they would cease to subscribe to the Union. To fulfil our purpose we must, therefore, provide a professional service to our members, our Representatives and our external contacts.

We must also look to make full use of our Representative structure as it this key part of the Union that has untapped skills the local knowledge.

Scope

This part of the Union's strategy considers the Union's operational resources and the measures that are in place, or will be put in place, to ensure the most effective and efficient use of the resources available. This section will cover the people and financial elements of our strategic planning and will look at how we can best use our Representatives to assist in delivering a high quality, professional service to our members.

Strengths/Opportunities

The Union has well established working model which delivers a highly professional service to its members which has been developed over a number of years. This is underpinned by a strong balance sheet with an annual operating surplus having been generated in all but one of the last twenty-five plus years.

Key strengths include:

- ☐ A core membership of circa 12,750
- ☐ Established working practices
- ☐ Stability of management team and stability within the NEC
- ☐ Very low turnover of employees
- ☐ A growing population of high calibre Representatives
- ☐ Bespoke computer systems which are built for purpose and are relatively easy to maintain and develop
- ☐ A strong balance sheet
- ☐ NGSU is a highly regarded Union by its members and by other Unions

Weaknesses/Threats

- ☐ The potential for continuing anti Trade Union legislation (including the possible introduction of the Certification Office Levy which is another cost to all unions including NGSU)
- ☐ The current General Secretary is likely to retire during this Plan period
- ☐ Assistant General Secretary (Members) will retire early in the Plan period
- ☐ We are reliant upon NGSU employees to represent members in straightforward hearings – i.e. SID Interviews and change programme consultations
- ☐ Dependency on NBS for the secondment of the President
- ☐ As the membership is spread over a wide geographical area, we can struggle to provide representation as we have limited employed resources in parts of the UK
- ☐ Difficulty in filling Disciplinary Officer positions
- ☐ Limited ability to increase subscriptions

Strategic Objective & Plan

To support mission statement:

- ☐ A review of our Operating Model needs to be undertaken as we consider how best to support members with professional services
 - The retirement of the Assistant General Secretary (Members) provides an opportunity to review our internal structure
 - The future role of our Individual Cases Officers supporting members and representatives across the Admin Centre sites and the Branch Network
 - The role of Representatives in representing members at a local level in change programmes, employee interviews and (subject to accreditation) Fair Treatment at Work Policy meetings.
 - Regular analysis of where and what resource is required to maintain high levels of professional service to NGSU members and make changes where appropriate
 - Ensure that succession planning takes place within the Representative structure, the Officers and Disciplinary Officers
 - The need for the President to be seconded
- ☐ General Secretary Position
 - During the Plan period, it is likely that the current General Secretary will retire and a replacement will need to be recruited.
- ☐ Regular monitoring of financial resources
 - Monthly analysis of the financial position of the Union
 - Annual budgeting and subscription setting
 - Effective cost control measures adopted and utilised
 - Regular contact with our Accountants to provide an expert independent analysis of our financial position
 - Regular contact with our bank to ensure that we are getting the best deals on our cash holdings
 - Consider whether we should continue to develop further services to members to drive additional income streams for the Union or whether these should be core benefits.

Appendix 1

Nationwide Group Staff Union**National Executive Committee****Equality Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Strategy****1. Introduction**

Our Mission Statement defines the Union's purpose as protecting and promoting the interests of all of our members. This paper sets out how NGSU will fulfil this purpose in respect of ED&I.

Equality is about ensuring our members have fair and equal access to jobs and development opportunities within Nationwide.

Diversity is about recognising the similarities and differences across people and communities and reflecting that in the way we support members.

Inclusion is about creating the right environment for our members to join together to support, respect and value each other.

2. Key Aims and Objectives

Our rule book 3(d) gives as one of our objectives:

To promote equality through collective bargaining, organisation, union structures, the employment of staff, education, the provision of services and benefits and all other activities; and to actively oppose all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination whether on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, class, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexuality, physical or mental disability, age, or other status or personal characteristic.

The Union will work to protect members' interests in respect of Equality Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) by:

☐ Working with Nationwide to:

- ensure it meets its legal responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010
- develop ED&I policies that meet and exceed legal standards
- interrogate data to highlight any concerns regarding ED&I and ensure a full investigation to understand root cause
- promote and communicate ED&I awareness and best practice
- resolve ED&I issues impacting on individual members or groups of members

☐ Within NGSU:

- develop and maintain the resource and expertise in identifying examples of potential discrimination at work
- investigate individual ED&I issues, advise and support members
- raise awareness of developments and potential ED&I issues with the District & Department Representatives to identify trends and concerns
- undertake our own promotion of ED&I via a range of communication channels.

As an employer, we have our own Equality statement to ensure fair, equal treatment and protection for our own employees:

The Nationwide Group Staff Union declares itself to be an Equal Opportunities Employer and is unreservedly opposed to any form of discrimination being practised against its employees or potential employees on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, class, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexuality, physical or mental disability, age, or other status or personal characteristic.

Provided it does not conflict with any statutory enactment, this will apply in respect of conditions of work including pay, hours of work, holiday entitlement, work allocation, sick pay, recruitment, training, promotion and redundancy.

The Union expects and places an obligation upon all its managers, employees and third-party business partners to respect and act in accordance with both the letter and the spirit of this statement. Overall responsibility will rest with the General Secretary.

Where employees consider that they have been subject to discrimination in employment which is in direct conflict with this statement, they should normally register a complaint for investigation and resolution through the Grievance Procedure. In cases of particular sensitivity where an employee feels unable to raise such a grievance directly with his or her manager/supervisor, the employee may seek guidance from either the General Secretary or the President.

Appropriate disciplinary procedures will apply where employees have acted in a deliberately discriminatory manner.

3. ED&I at Nationwide

Nationwide have declared that there's plenty of evidence to show how a more diverse workforce and inclusive workplace can help boost performance, increase innovation and market share, as well as drive better decision making. They see greater ED&I as key to helping to increase organisational effectiveness and relationships with customers (their members).

The Nationwide ED&I policy as agreed with NGSU states:

Our mutuality and fundamental commitment to valuing everyone defines and differentiates us. We are developing our culture so that equality, diversity and inclusion are fully embedded. We are committed to being a fair employer, treating everyone equally and promoting a supportive culture of equality, diversity and inclusion for our employees, customers and third-party business partners. The NGSU share this commitment and we work together to achieve it.

4. NGSU Approach to ED&I - Current Situation

4.1 Working with Nationwide

We have had to work really hard with Nationwide over the years for them to take the ED&I agenda seriously and to ensure it is not just about external awards. There have been occasions when we have withdrawn from joint committees as the agenda did not appear to be taken seriously. Over the last couple of years, we have been encouraged that the business is more committed to the agenda.

We therefore have a comprehensive range of formal channels and interventions to meet our ED&I aims and objectives:

ED&I Action Group: This was renamed an action group rather than a committee to ensure it 'gets things done'. The Group is made up of senior people within Nationwide identified as keen to move the ED&I agenda forward together with the Chairs of the various ED&I Networks set up within Nationwide. Tim Poil our General Secretary is also a member of the group to allow NGSU to influence, question and challenge Nationwide at the highest levels.

Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (JCNC): The JCNC provides the formal communication channel with HR. Through the JCNC we are able to pursue a broader range of issues that impact on ED&I, for example, performance management, flexible working, access to training and development, to name a few.

EIC Business Committees: The Business Committee structure allows us to raise operational issues impacting on ED&I at a local level with Divisional Directors, Senior Managers and HR and gives us influence across all of the Society. Issues raised at the Business Committees have included car parking and access to buildings for both part time workers and disabled employees. Access to workplace adjustments for disabled employees has also been addressed.

Various Equality Networks: There are a number of networks set up at Nationwide. They are there to act as a role model for an inclusive culture. The aim is for the networks to provide support to employees through networking opportunities and raising awareness. They also act as an advisory group to Nationwide and support the ED&I strategy through communications and activities. The current networks are:

Enable - disability, EMAH – ethnicity group, LGBT@Nationwide – sexual orientation, FaB – faith and belief, GEM – gender, Working Carers at Nationwide, Veteran and Reservists Network and Working families.

The networks have now started to become established and are providing a useful forum to identify real issues (some more so than others) and therefore is an initiative that we should continue support. As part of the strategy we will encourage members and reps to participate and look for ways to capture feedback. The Network Chairs attend the ED&I Action Group.

The Network Chairs meet monthly and Marian Dean Assistant General Secretary (AGS - Members) with responsibility for ED&I together with the National Equality Officer are invited to attend.

Individual Cases Officers (ICO): Our ICOs work with HR and business managers to resolve issues on behalf of individual members.

Department & District Reps: The National Equality Officer (NEqO) together with the President will identify every term of office a representative for each Regional Council to take the lead for ED&I within their council. As the lead, they will receive awareness training on ED&I to raise the understanding of these matters within their council and take forward issues in the appropriate way - for example, via the NEqO for discussion at the National Executive Committee (NEC) or through an ICO if it relates to an individual case.

On an informal basis, Marian Dean (AGS-Members) meets regularly with Nationwide's Head of Culture and Inclusion to discuss any issues and review how Nationwide's strategy is progressing and developing.

4.2 Within NGSU

National Equality Officer (NEqO)

We have an NEqO role who is elected from within the NEC each term of office, whose responsibilities are as follows:

- build and lead a network of union reps to focus on ED&I across the regions
- promote and deliver the NGSU ED&I strategy
- help with educating our reps in what ED&I is and means for us
- collate issues to help resolve or escalate through the agreed channels
- communicate and discuss issues with reps for awareness and to share best practice
- promote success stories to the NEC on what NGSU has pursued and achieved via Regional Councils and also where appropriate produce articles in Rapport and on our website.
- Review what is available via the TUC: for example, results of Equality Audits, identify best practice amongst other Unions with a similar membership makeup and make recommendations to the NEC for any future activity/campaigns.

The current President of NGSU, Nicola Huddleston, is seconded full time to NGSU and is keen to provide support to the NEqO role. In particular, in building/supporting the network of union representatives with a focus on ED&I.

At NEC meetings, data will be provided to show the makeup (using the monitoring data requested on our membership application form) of our membership and our representatives. This should be shown as it compares with Nationwide's workforce data and the Society as a whole. Where significant differences are identified, these will be highlighted and the NEC should then consider what actions are required to make both NGSU membership and active membership (becoming a representative) more attractive/relevant to minority groups of members.

Investigation of Issues: Individuals' issues are pursued by the ICO team and discussed at team meetings to identify any trends to be raised with the Head of Culture and Inclusion or via JCNC. More serious issues are discussed with Slater and Gordon solicitors once agreed with Tim Poil (GS).

NEC and Regional Councils: ED&I appears as a standard agenda item at the NEC and for all Regional Councils. This provides an opportunity for the NEC to monitor the ED&I strategy and review annually. At Regional Councils, it provides an opportunity for Department and District Reps to highlight issues of concern and for NGSU officers to update Reps about ED&I.

Communication: We promote general awareness of ED&I issues in Rapport Magazine and Union Mail.

Nicola will take responsibility for the Equality section of the NGSU website, to refresh it with the relevant information and ensure it is up to date at all times for the benefit of our membership. The website will complement the information provided by Nationwide and will include articles that raise awareness of society in general.

TUC and Equality Audit: We take part in the Equality Audit conducted by the TUC every 3 years.

5. Evaluation of Current Approach

5.1 Strengths and Opportunities

The Union has an established track record in working with Nationwide on ED&I issues. We have developed formal and informal relationships and communication channels that provide the opportunity to raise issues on a collective basis and on behalf of individual members. Our ability to pursue issues on behalf of members is underpinned by The Equality Act 2010.

Our network of Representatives provides the mechanism to gather feedback and identify issues and to support the cascade of communication to members via the NEqO and President.

The current President has a keen interest in the ED&I agenda

We have a comprehensive range of communication channels to help promote and raise awareness of ED&I.

We have access to TUC and legal expertise should we need external help to address concerns.

5.2 Weaknesses and Threats

Time off provision for the NEqO and lack of continuity if a new person is elected every period of office or sooner.

There is no formal process of input or output from Nationwide's Networks

Individual issues raised with NGSU are low in number.

ED&I is a standing agenda item at Regional Councils but knowledge and awareness of ED&I amongst Reps is low and this is not always seen as a priority.

We currently do not have any website pages dedicated to ED&I. We do not have an ED&I communication strategy that identifies issues of importance to our members or that focuses resource to support campaigns.

6. Future Strategy and Activity

Our future strategy should be aimed at building on the strengths of the current approach, maintaining effective and credible relationships with Nationwide, and focusing activity to address the areas of potential weakness and resolve individual issues speedily

6.1 Actions

In additions to the activities identified above we will look to implement a number of actions;

Maintaining pool of expertise –

Develop the role of the NEqO to support the agenda during their period of office. The NEqO will be the primary contact with the lead representatives for ED&I within the Regional Councils.

Identify representatives involved in any of the Networks and develop a feedback process to the NEqO and President to ensure awareness of what is happening within the networks.

Encourage those active in the ED&I agenda to put themselves forward for roles on the NEC in the future thereby developing a succession plan for future NEqOs, other NEC roles including the role of President.

Refresh the ED&I session in the knowledge update section at Regional Councils to increase awareness of NGSU's approach to ED&I; develop further those representatives that have and will continue to take the lead on the ED&I agenda for the Regional Council.

Provide data on Membership and Representatives' make up using the MI from NGSU records to the NEC along with information on how this compares with Nationwide's MI. Where a significant difference exists make recommendation to the NEC for consideration.

Escalation of Issues – Make Guidance available to the ICOs and Reps to assist in resolving issues in an efficient way. Encourage reps to raise issues at Business Committees (BC) and through their development and the BC training help them to review MI to enable them to identify trends from this information and question appropriately.

Website – Consider what should be added to the NGSU website to help members be clear about what support is available from both Nationwide (without reproducing what's available via the intranet) and external providers. Review and add Q&As to the bank of FAQs, as appropriate.

Identify key external ED&I campaigns that are relevant to our members and highlight potential topics for Union Mail, Rapport and social media.

7. Recommendation

The NEC are asked to endorse the proposed strategy and future activity.

Marian Dean
Assistant General Secretary
January 2018

Appendix 2

Nationwide Group Staff Union**National Executive Committee****Health & Safety Strategy Update – 2018/2019****1. Introduction**

Our Mission Statement defines the Union's purpose as protecting and promoting the interests of all of our members. This paper sets out how NGSU will fulfil this purpose in respect of Health and Safety. A key proposal is to further align our H&S strategy to our overall strategic plan by increasing the role Representatives play in raising and resolving issues through greater participation in local Facilities Committees at Nationwide and enhance the remit and status of these Committees.

2. Key Aims and Objectives

The Union will work to safeguard members' interests in respect of Health & Safety (H&S) by:

☐ Working with Nationwide to:

- ensure it meets its legal responsibilities in the provision of a safe working environment
- develop H&S policies that meet and exceed legal standards
- promote and communicate health & safety awareness and best practice
- resolve local H&S issues impacting on individual members or groups of members

☐ Within NGSU:

- developing and maintaining the resource and expertise to conduct H&S inspections; risk assessments and workstation assessments
- investigate individual H&S issues, advise and support members
- raise awareness of H&S issues with the District & Department Representatives to identify trends and issues
- undertake our own promotion of health and wellbeing issues via a range of communication channels and initiatives.

3. H&S Risk at Nationwide

The working environment at Nationwide is generally accepted to be low risk. Most office environments present a low risk of physical injury and the number of security incidents (branch raids) are rare.

However, the environment is constantly changing, for example, increased dynamic and flexible working in Admin Centres and new working arrangements introduced under the branch transformation project, and these will require on-going assessment of potential wellbeing and security issues. The number of reported incidents of members being subject to Verbal and Aggressive Behaviour (VAB) by customers is increasing and mental health issues (including work and non-work-related stress) continue to be the highest reported reason for sickness absence. The issue of minimum resourcing in branches has been a constant issue of concern and debate over the past two years.

H&S risk at Nationwide is managed through the Premises H&S Key Control Function (KCF) and People KCF and the supporting risk strategies. The Society's overall approach to H&S has received a positive endorsement following an independent assessment by external auditors (JELF). NGSU had the opportunity to participate in the review and has been invited to accompany JELF during Safety Audits at selected Administration Centre departments and branches.

4. NGSU Approach to H&S – Current Approach

The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (SRSCR) provide the Union with legal rights to appoint safety representatives and to establish a safety committee.

4.1 Working with Nationwide

We have a comprehensive range of formal channels and interventions to meet our aims and objectives:

H&S Committee: The Committee is responsible for reviewing the H&S Policy and providing an annual update to ExCo on H&S activity and risks. The status of the Committee was elevated in 2016 to become recognised as Key Control Function in the management of H&S risk. The Committee currently meets quarterly.

A number of changes are proposed to the remit and function of the H&S Committee, to be implemented in 2018, and these are discussed further in this paper.

Facilities Committees: NGSU consults directly with Property Services and Business Managers direct via Facilities Committees in some Admin Centres. Plans to revise these Committees are discussed further in this paper.

Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (JCNC): The JCNC provides the formal communication channel with HR. Through the JCNC we are able to pursue a broader range of issues that impact on H&S, for example, sickness absence policies; time-off policies and other wellbeing issues.

Employee Wellbeing Group: This is an informal group at Nationwide, bringing together interested parties from across the Society to consider the wide wellbeing agenda. Nicola Huddleston attends for NGSU and has used the forum to highlight the impact of the menopause at work.

EIC Business Committees: The Business Committee structure allows us to raise operational issues impacting on H&S at a local level with Divisional Directors, Senior Managers and HR and gives us influence across all key areas of the Society. Issues raised at the Business Committees include long working hours; presentism and concerns about hygiene and cleaning.

ED&I Networks: The Disability Network provides the opportunity to raise awareness of suitable adjustments and awareness of issues, including mental health.

Individual Cases Officers (ICO): Our ICOs work with HR and business managers to resolve issues on behalf of individual members.

Department & District Reps: We have a network of Reps across most areas of the business who are able to raise issues locally and escalate to the Union's team if they need help or the matter requires a formal intervention.

Workplace Inspections: We have the capacity to conduct inspections. We currently choose to limit inspections to address issues of particular concerns rather than run a routine programme of inspections. We have been invited to accompany JELF (external auditors) at a number of inspections in Branches and Admin Centres.

4.2 Within NGSU

We have a range of resources and structures that enable us to identify and investigate H&S issues and provide support for individual members:

H&S Expertise and Inspections: We have a number of Officers and Safety Reps who have experience in conducting workplace inspections and some who have TUC H&S Level 1 qualifications. The NGSU team have a broad knowledge of H&S law and issues and we have access to resources from the TUC, the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and legal expertise via Slater and Gordon if required. We monitor changes to H&S legislation and other developments via a range of channels, such as the TUC; journals; general media; briefings from Slater & Gordon.

Investigation of Issues: Individuals issues are pursued by the ICO team. We have ICOs on site at Nationwide House; Optimus; BAC; NAC and Caledonia House who are able to liaise directly with Workplace Services and local managers and co-ordinate a response to H&S issues. Nicola Huddleston (President) and Tim Rose (AGS – Services) have established communication channels with the Chief Safety Officer and Property Services with the ability to raise issues and seek updates on actions.

NEC and Regional Councils: H&S is a standard agenda item at the National Executive Committee (NEC) and for all Regional Councils. This provides an opportunity for the NEC to monitor H&S activity and for Department and District Reps to highlight issues of concern and for NGSU officers to update Reps about H&S topics and activity.

Communication: We promote general awareness of H&S and Wellbeing issues in Rapport Magazine and Union Mail, for example, highlighting verbal and aggressive behaviour reporting (Rapport – Summer 2016) and the impact of the Menopause at Work (Spring and Winter 2017). A 'Wellbeing' Section for the NGSU website is still under development – this will highlight key issues and direct members to external sources for more information and specialist advice.

Personal Injury Advice and Compensation Service: We provide members with free personal injury advice via Slater & Gordon in relation to work and non-work injuries.

5. Evaluation of Current Approach

5.1 Strengths and Opportunities

Nationwide is a 'low' risk environment and the Society takes a positive approach to H&S management. This means that the Union is able to focus on activity on maintaining and enhancing the H&S and Wellbeing provision rather than making regular interventions to address issues and raise standards. We are therefore able to fulfil our aims and objectives without significant resource cost.

The H&S Committee and other forums identified in Section 4 provide a comprehensive framework for consultation about H&S issues with Nationwide.

The Union has a good and established track record in working with Nationwide on H&S issues. We have developed formal and informal relationships and communication channels that provide the opportunity to raise issues on a collective basis and on behalf of individual members.

Our current team of H&S Specialists and Safety Reps is sufficient to meet our obligations at the H&S Committee and provide an on-going focus on H&S. Our ICO team are sufficiently experienced to take up H&S issues as necessary and support is available from the central NGSU team. We have an on-site presence in the main admin centres and can react quickly if needed.

Our network of Representatives provides the opportunity to gather feedback and identify issues and to support the cascade of communication to members. A 'knowledge update' session on Health & Safety was run at Regional Councils in Autumn 2016.

The seconded 'President' role provides the opportunity to dedicate resource to H&S and Wellbeing issues and support them with TUC Level 1 H&S training. We have access to TUC training if we need to expand our pool of trained Safety Reps.

We have a comprehensive range of communication channels to help promote and raise awareness of H&S and wellbeing issues. Our campaign about the impact of the menopause at work has been received well by members and helped raise our internal profile as an active participant in the promotion of wellbeing issues.

We have access to TUC and legal expertise should we need external help to address concerns.

5.2 Weaknesses and Threats

We have a number of concerns about the effectiveness of the H&S Committee. The Society has taken a position of providing information for the Union to review and identify concerns, rather than proactively highlighting issues of importance. Our repeated requests to develop effective stress measures and interventions have met with resistance. The agenda has also become too broad, with too much discussion of localised issues which better suited to discussion at the Facilities Committees and the composition of Committee does not help a constructive dialogue. As a result of discussions in late 2017, it has been agreed to refocus the agenda on strategic and regulatory issues and to devolve local issues to a revitalised Facilities Committee structure – see section 6.

Our pool of H&S trained employees and Safety Reps is small and our knowledge and experience could become diluted if people leave or Reps step down. There is no requirement for our H&S Committee team to be H&S trained but some knowledge is desirable when interacting with Society H&S specialists. Reps attending Facility Committees currently do not receive any training or support and there is no established communication channel to share information.

H&S is a standing agenda item at Regional Councils but does not generate any substantial debate.

We have website pages covering H&S issues but further pages relating to wellbeing are still in development.

6. Future Strategy and Activity

Overall, our current approach to H&S is proportionate to the risk at Nationwide and we have the resources and influence to fulfil our aims and objectives. A number of proposed changes to the H&S Committee and Facilities Committees are outlined below and these provide the opportunity to further align our H&S strategy with our overall strategic aim of placing Union Representatives at the heart of our activity. Local Reps will be able to focus on issues affecting their business areas and specific locations, with an ability to escalate issues if local resolution is problematic.

6.1 Actions

H&S Committee: Work with Nationwide to restructure the Committee to focus on the strategic and regulatory aspects of health and safety and delegation consultation about local issues to the Facilities Committees. The Committee will retain oversight of the Facilities Committees and act as a point of escalation for issues of concern. The Committee will continue to review the approach to work-related stress and determine appropriate actions.

Facilities Committees: Work with Nationwide to establish and enhance a Facilities Committees for all key Admin Centre sites and the Branch Network and raise their status within the H&S control regime. The Committees will include members from Property Services; Carillion site managers; Business Managers and NGSU ICOs and Reps. The Committees will be provided with local H&S data, including accident reports and Verbal and Aggressive Behaviour (VAB) reports relevant to that site. Each Committee will send a summary of activity to the H&S Committee for review.

NGSU Reps on H&S Committee and Facilities Committees: to review NGSU attendees at the H&S Committee and establish a core team to represent the Union and identify a wider group who can attend to update the H&S Committee on issues raised at Facilities Committees and provide cover. Agree attendees at each of the Facilities Committees and branch Forum. A wider pool of Reps who are actively involved in H&S issues at this level will support succession into the H&S Committee role and help maintain our pool of expertise.

Support and Communication: to establish communication process to support ICOs and Reps attending Facilities Committees to help with knowledge updates and consistency of approach - by Video Conference every six months.

Conference Motions 2017: Two motions were passed that fall within our H&S and Wellbeing agenda and will require discussion with Nationwide:

Motion 37: This conference notes that despite the motion passed at Conference 2015, there is still a lack of knowledge of health issues affecting staff members. This Conference therefore requests NGSU to continue to work with Nationwide in raising managers awareness of illnesses, such as mental health, in order that they can support any individual.

We will seek to meet the aims on this motion by continuing to work with Nationwide via the H&S Committee; JCNC and Employee Wellbeing group to support and promote awareness of mental health. We will provide information directly to members through NGSU publications and website.

Motion 38: Conference requests that NGSU lobby Nationwide to develop a transparent and consistent framework upon which a genuine picture of work-related stress issues within the society can be built. NGSU can then work alongside Nationwide to understand the root causes and ultimately resolve issues.

We will seek to work fulfil the aims of this motion by continuing to lobby the Society to develop effective tools to measure the impact of stress and identify root causes of work-related stress and develop effective measures to resolve issues and raise awareness.

Direct NGSU activity to promote wellbeing: We use our publications and website to promote awareness of wellbeing issues and provide information to members to help raise awareness of interventions available at Nationwide and external agencies.

- **H&S and Wellbeing Information on Website:** to continue to develop the H&S section on the NGSU website – specially to provide more information about how members can raise issues for discussion at the Facilities Committees. A number of Wellbeing pages are under development and these will be finalised and published in early 2018.
- **Menopause Campaign:** to continue to highlight the impact of the menopause at work and pursue the provision of support material and practices at Nationwide via the Employee Wellbeing Group.
- **Mental Health & Stress:** to feature mental health related articles in Rapport.
- **Gym Membership Discount Scheme** – to launch a discount scheme in 2018 to support members with their healthy lifestyle choices.

7. Recommendation

The NEC are asked to endorse the proposed strategy and future activity.

Tim Rose
Assistant General Secretary (Services)
January 2018