

talk <sup>to</sup> 

**Building a  
stronger union  
in your workplace**

**Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.**

MARGARET  
MEAD

## **Contents**

Why <b>talk<sup>to</sup>?</b>	<b>2</b>
Why should I take part in <b>talk<sup>to</sup>?</b>	<b>2</b>
How to start a conversation	<b>3</b>
Helpful responses to potential questions	<b>4</b>
FAQs	<b>5</b>
Contact forms	<b>7</b>
What happens next	<b>9</b>



*Dear member,*

Hello and welcome to your  
**talk<sup>to</sup>** booklet!

You told us that you want Virgin Media to recognise the CWU – your union – so that you can have a real say in determining your pay and conditions of work. In order to achieve this we have to make sure that all staff, both CWU members and non-members, understand the benefits of having a union in their workplace.

We have prepared this booklet for you to keep in your pocket or in your van, to help you talk to colleagues about the CWU. Many of them will not have been asked if they want to join the CWU or might think that they are not allowed to be part of your union. It is likely that there are a few people in your area, people that you talk to often, who want to know a lot more about what membership can mean for them.

We say it all the time but this is about your union and your workplace. We can't always access non-members *but you can* – they are standing right next to you!

Please take a few minutes to read through the booklet, then keep it with you all the time and use the ideas to help spread the union message so that we make Virgin Media a company that listens to you.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John East'.

John East  
Assistant Secretary T&FS Department

## Why talk<sup>to</sup>?

**talk<sup>to</sup>** is a simple guide to give CWU members like you tips on talking to colleagues about why being a CWU member is valuable to them now and in the future. It is important that people who work beside you in Virgin Media understand why they should be in the union and the best placed people to do this are you, the union members working for Virgin Media already.

## Why should I take part in talk<sup>to</sup>?

The CWU is a union where working people come together to resolve common issues and common problems.

Talking positively to people about your union is a simple but vital contribution to growing union membership. With a strong union membership comes a strong influence over company policies and procedures which can only improve everyone's working life.

If every union member contributes a few minutes of their time to talk to a non-member then the outcome will make a massive and positive impact on the union campaign for recognition.

## How to start a conversation

It is important to be friendly, open and to check if it is convenient to chat with this person. If the person is in a rush, let them know that they can talk to you another time. Most people will appreciate that you are showing interest in them and will spare a few minutes of their time. Starting the conversation with an 'open' question demonstrates this well and shows that you are interested in their opinions.

You could ask questions like:

- What are your thoughts on the CWU?
- What has stopped you from joining the union in the past?
- What do you think the Voice Forum will be able to achieve in the future?
- What do you think was the reason behind the management campaign to oust the union?

## Helpful responses to potential questions

Some non-members may have preconceived ideas about the union that appear a little negative at first. Below are some helpful responses.

### **We've got the Voice Forum, it's just the same**

“ The Voice Forum, unlike the union, is not independent of VM management. Any proposals managers put forward can only be consulted with the Voice Forum – they cannot negotiate changes to management proposals. They can only advise but ultimately management will do what they want. ”

### **The company doesn't recognise the union any more...**

“ The CWU is here to stay and so are CWU members – ask yourself why Virgin Media didn't want the union around. What have they got planned for the future? Sunday working? No improvement to call out pay? More and more unreasonable performance management plans and disciplinary cases? If there is no union, it makes it easier for managers to force through big changes to your working life... ”

## **It's not worth the money... the Voice Forum is free**

“ CWU membership costs less than 17p a day in the first year and only 26p a day after that. It brings numerous benefits including individual representation at work, free legal advice, 24-hour personal accident insurance cover and a range of services including low cost motor and home insurance. ”

## **The union doesn't make any difference!**

“ The CWU wants to make sure that your issues are addressed seriously. The union wants to talk to the company about important issues that impact on you such as workload, Aspire, pay parity and pay banding. The union wants to make sure that line managers act consistently thus avoiding unnecessary disciplinary action and unfair performance management programmes. ”

## **FAQs**

### **Q. When is the best time to talk<sup>to</sup>?**

**A.** Try to speak to people when they are on a tea break or just before they start work.

**Q. How long will the chat take?**

- A.** Having a **talk<sup>to</sup>** chat won't take that long – you can talk to someone about the union in less than five minutes.

**Q. What will my manager say if he/she sees me doing this?**

- A.** If you are on a break or outside of working time then your manager should not say anything about what you are doing. If they do, remind them that Virgin Media say they are not Anti Union.

**Q. Isn't it somebody else's job to do union stuff?**

- A.** Often people think that union reps and union staff should do it all but, quite simply, they can't do everything! Taking part in **talk<sup>to</sup>** will help out a lot and show non-members that we are all in this together! We are actively handing leaflets out at Red Sheds but we simply cannot get access to everyone – you can!

**Q. What should I do if the talk doesn't go well?**

- A.** Don't worry about it and don't let one bad experience put you off. It has probably gone better than you think!



## Contact form for colleague 1

When you have spoken with your colleague, please complete the form below and return to us in the freepost envelope provided. If you have any questions or require more forms, please contact us (see next section 'What happens next' for contact details).

### About you

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### About your colleague

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_

After speaking with your colleague, you would say his/her views on the CWU are

☐

Positive

☐

Negative

Would your colleague like more contact from the CWU?

☐

Yes

☐

No

## Contact form for colleague 2

If you have spoken with a second colleague, please enter the details here.

Please contact us if you require more forms (see next section 'What happens next' for contact details).

### About your colleague

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_

After speaking with your colleague, you would say his/her views on the CWU are

☐

Positive

☐

Negative

Would your colleague like more contact from the CWU?

☐

Yes

☐

No

## What happens next?

You will receive a call from a CWU Organiser, but if you have any questions before then, please call and leave a message on **020 8971 7203** stating your name, contact number and 'talk to 2' to arrange a priority call back.

Membership forms have also been provided with this booklet to hand out to people who want to join you in your union. If you need more forms, please call the number above, leave your name, contact number and state '*membership forms*' and we will arrange to get some more forms to you.





**t 020 8971 7203**

**e [joinunion@cwu.org](mailto:joinunion@cwu.org)**



**[www.cwu.org](http://www.cwu.org)**

150 The Broadway, London SW19 1RX | 020 8971 7200 | [info@cwu.org](mailto:info@cwu.org)  
Billy Hayes, General Secretary, [www.billyhayes.co.uk](http://www.billyhayes.co.uk)