

March 2024

CWU London & South East News



A Tale of Two Projects

Project Manta

A lot has happened since Christmas, and it's important to highlight the key points. On 27th February 2025, Fibre City Build teams were presented with a leaver scheme by Openreach managers. However, instead of a fair and transparent process, it was forced upon employees, with pressure and implied consequences for those who refused to sign. This is not how it was initially briefed to the CWU.

When presented to the CWU, it was framed as a process with employees' best interests at heart. While we always knew Build would eventually end, Openreach repeatedly promised to handle it with compassion. Our CEO even stated that there was 10 years of work before any downsizing would be necessary—so what has changed?

If you've had the MANTA briefing, ensure you fully understand your options. Get everything in writing—verbal conversations won't hold up in a dispute. Compare your estimated leave date with colleagues and question any discrepancies. If you wish to stay, ask why Openreach hasn't offered alternative roles like those in Project Green. Demand clarity on Project Gecko (outsourced contracts auditing and commissioning their own work), ask how much work is going to contract. Who is doing all the sweeper work, MDU's and buried UG estates that you were told to ignore and leave?

If leaving suits you, that's fine, but if not, challenge and push back. Keep records and inform your local CWU branch of any concerns.



Project Green

Under Project Green, several Build team members were moved to FTTP, but this transition was handled without proper due diligence. Some employees who couldn't climb or had medical issues were sent back to Build, raising serious concerns about Openreach's failure to check OHS referrals, Disability Passports, or Carers Passports. It's unacceptable that these considerations weren't made upfront. Thanks to CWU branch intervention, many issues are now being addressed, but if you're still facing difficulties, contact your local branch.

For those moved to FTTP, you were likely told that training involves a five-day workweek. However, once buddying is complete, you must be offered a preference exercise for your attendance pattern. Four-day weeks are rare in FTTP and usually follow a seasonal pattern. If you're unsure about your options or need a P&D (Personal & Domestic) pattern, speak to your local branch.

In FnD Ethernet, a restructure is underway to form Complex Engineering, with seven regional director-led patches. In London and the South East, managers are undergoing a selection process to keep their roles. A wider reorganisation is expected in April/May, so stay informed and report any changes to your CWU branch.

BT Pay Offer

You should have or soon will be receiving your chance to vote on the recent pay deal, via your work email. The ballot will close at noon on Tuesday 25th March.

If you can't see your email please check your spam/junk folder. Further communications and frequently asked questions will be issued as soon as possible.