



**AXA UNION NEWSLETTER**

**March 2009**

# Travel Difficulty Policy Problem Snowballs

In February Unite issued a newsletter expressing concern that some managers were not following the AXA Attendance and Timekeeping policy. Despite the severe weather and associated travel difficulties making it unreasonable for many employees to get to work, some were incorrectly instructed to make up the hours using holiday or flexitime in breach of the agreed AXA policy.

The snow has long since disappeared and additional guidance on the policy has been provided, however Unite are still receiving reports from members that their manager requires them to make up time lost due to the snow back in February, even though it was not safe or reasonable for them to make it into the office. Even worse, we have been advised of situations where employees were first told they would not have to make up the time lost due to travel difficulties, only for their manager to subsequently renege on this, presumably because they think they can get away with it.

The proper process is that if your attendance and/or timekeeping was impacted by travel difficulties your manager should have held a meeting with you to discuss whether it was reasonable for you to have made it to work. Hopefully this discussion will enable you to mutually agree whether credit should be given or whether you need to make up any lost time.

We are now aware of several departments where a member has lodged a formal grievance about this breach of an AXA policy. The results so far have been that without the grievance hearing even taking place, the decision has been reversed and time credit given. Unite representatives have also reported that there are a number of members that would also like to challenge the decision by their manager not to follow the policy, however they are apparently concerned about raising a grievance.



Unite's guidance on this is very clear – **if you have not been treated fairly and in accordance with the AXA policies shown in the employee handbook (My Handbook@AXA) then you should lodge a grievance.**

Some factors to consider if you are looking at lodging a grievance about this issue are:

- Whether an AXA policy has not been followed
- Who made the decision not to follow the AXA policy in your case
- Whether you have been treated unfairly compared to other employees
- The behaviours shown by managers in how they have communicated and handled this issue
- Whether amendments have been made to your holiday or flexitime without your agreement

Finally, it's worth pointing out that in many areas of the company managers have adopted a sensible approach and simply followed the policy, so avoiding much bad feeling and unnecessarily wasted time.