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RBS

Business Services Update

NEWSLETTER • January 2011



SITE CLOSURE SIGNPOST ANNOUNCEMENTS, RETAIL OPERATIONS TELEPHONY AND CARDS SHIFT REVIEW

The Royal Bank of Scotland Group has recently communicated a number of changes impacting members in Business Services. This newsletter will update members on consultations to date, next steps and Unite's position on these announcements.

Advance Notification of Site Closures – Telford, Plymouth and Milton Keynes

Following the announcement in September 2010 of 3500 job losses across Business Services, the bank committed to Unite to providing 12 months advance notice of all site closures across Group Operations. The bank has now announced the next stage in the consultation process which impacts members based at the Telford, Milton Keynes and Plymouth sites.

At this stage the announcement is simply intended to provide members and all staff based at these locations with advance notice that the consultation process with Unite will shortly begin. It is anticipated that the first redundancies will take place in January 2012 and all exits from the sites will be phased throughout 2012. The specific detail of the impact at each site is subject to future consultation with Unite during Q1 and Q2 2011 and we will keep members updated on progress throughout.

An extensive series of site visits has taken place across all UK Group Operations sites that have either been earmarked for closure or are under review and hopefully many of you will have met and had an opportunity to speak to visiting representatives as well as to your local workplace representatives. Further site visits are in the process of being arranged, the detail of which will be provided to you in due course by local management. You will have a further opportunity to raise any questions or concerns with your trade union during these sessions and we would encourage as many members as possible to attend. Unite are acutely aware that our members are incredibly worried about their future and we will do everything possible during forthcoming consultations to once again challenge the bank's rationale and plans, as well as to support our members every step of the way.

Retail Operations –

Alignment of Retail Operations Telephony to Retail Division

Also recently announced has been a change to the Retail Operations Telephony Operating Model which will see the reporting line for the current Business Services Retail Telephony Teams and Complaint Handling roles align to the Retail Division. The bank wants to align these teams into one division primarily to ensure seamless customer service and remove cross divisional duplication of tasks.

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The bank has confirmed that there are no headcount reductions as a result of these changes, nor are there changes at this time to Terms and Conditions of Employment including work location, hours of work or job families. Clearly however the bank may look at the future alignment of some terms and conditions as they bring the 2 former functions together, however this will be subject to future consultation with Unite.

Some 4500 Retail Operations Telephony roles are impacted across all Retail Operations sites and current roles will be segregated into either Contact or Processing roles. The amount of time currently spent on Contact versus Processing work, will dictate the segregation and allocation of all impacted staff:

- Individuals who have spent in excess of 65% of their time during the past 6 months on telephony activity and who are currently aligned to the Retail Telephony Incentive Scheme will be aligned 100% to a dedicated telephony role.
- Where less than 30% of working time has been spent in the last 6 months on Telephony activity then alignment will be to a Processing role.
- There are also just over 100 individuals who have spent between 30%-65% of their time on telephony work during the past 6 months and they will be given a choice of which type of role they wish to go into. The bank will consult further post selection for these roles in the event that there is either under or over subscription of preferences for roles.
- For any member with less than 6 months service roles will be looked at on a case by case basis.
- Customer Services Managers and Team Managers will be aligned to their respective teams in accordance with time spent on either Telephony or Contact work and the same allocation principles outlined above will apply.

For those members currently based in Enfield, Leeds and Harrogate where consultation has already commenced on the site closures, the changes will be no more than a reporting line change to Retail Division and there will be no segregation or allocation of roles undertaken. In addition the small amount of Processing work currently undertaken by teams in the Cards Centres and Menai RCSC makes it difficult to split out the processing work and the proposal is that these teams will transfer to Retail.

The bank also plans to create an additional 55 new roles across the Retail Operations estate to support the removal of the existing flexible role model and to smooth transition to the new operating model. Additional support will also be provided as appropriate from the existing Retail Sales Telephony Teams.

Any individual who is concerned about moving to either a dedicated Telephony or Processing role or who feels that they have been wrongly allocated should make their views known in the first instance to their line manager. In the event that the matter remains unresolved then you should contact your local Workplace Representative or the RBS Helpline for support and guidance.

UNITE Comment

During consultation Unite challenged the bank on the significant change to the operating model with a move away from the flexible role model which incorporated Processing and Telephony work that not so long ago the bank hailed as the best model for the business. Notwithstanding the exclusion of Enfield, Leeds and Harrogate from the segregation and allocation into discreet roles, Unite also expressed concern about the timing of the change when there is already a significant amount of restructuring and anxiety across Business Services. The bank responded that they have to adapt and change to customer needs and evolve the business accordingly and that they are convinced that this is the correct way forward to build a sustainable and successful telephony sales business.

Whilst many members will welcome a move to a more defined role, clearly for others this will cause concern, particularly as Unite are acutely aware of some of the challenges faced by our members during the roll out of the previous flexible role operating model.

The bank has committed to further dialogue with the trade union on the transfer of additional support roles and as their operating model plans evolve, where we will have an opportunity to raise our members concerns. It is therefore vitally important that you share your views, either positive or negative, with both Unite and the bank.

Cards Shift Review – Southend and Manchester

The bank has also announced a review of their current working patterns in their Cards Operations at the Southend and Manchester sites. Once again the bank asserts that in order to respond to customer needs and to ensure that the business continually evolves that they require on a regular basis to review working practices. It seems no time at all since the last shift review in Cards which set out to address such issues, however it also appears that there is still insufficient time being spent on team and planning activity with customer demand often resulting in these activities being cancelled. The bank also advised Unite that members are often being asked to change their shift at short notice with many individuals requesting permanent changes to shift patterns in order to suit their personal situation. It is anticipated that shift patterns will now be reviewed on an annual basis.

Around 520 staff from the core Cards Contact Teams are impacted by these proposals with each member being able to state a preference for 3 shifts from 20 possible shift patterns. Preference selection is currently underway and the bank has committed to further consultation with Unite in advance of the confirmation to staff of allocated shift patterns. Unite has a number of concerns with the bank's proposed changes and feedback from members to date has suggested that they too are concerned.

Amongst the concerns are the bank's proposals to effectively flex working days and patterns within the parameters of the flexible working contract. Unite do not support a position where members could be asked, with what we believe to be insufficient notice, to either completely change their working day or hours to cover busy periods such as month end. Whilst the last review in 2010 saw some 98% of staff getting either their first or second shift preference, Unite retain concerns over what happens when preference for a shift is either under or oversubscribed. These new proposals also appear to include more weekend working and do not always provide 2 consecutive days off.

At this point there are still many unanswered questions however the bank has committed to coming back to Unite once all shift preferences are known at which time Unite expect the bank to respond to and allay some of our concerns.

A site visit will be undertaken by Unite in Manchester on 7th February, further details will be provided direct by the bank. Members are encouraged to come along and speak to Unite on the day. In Southend, support is being provided by the on site local workplace representatives - Cathie Daniel, Marina Gunn and Carole Francis, whose details can be found on internal Unite notice boards.

If members have questions or concerns regarding any of these latest announcements they should be directed in the first instance to your Line Manager; however in the event that this proves unsatisfactory or the query remains unresolved please contact the Unite RBS Helpline on 0870 241 4425 or email rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org

Unite Representatives

Unite is always seeking members to take on one of the four Unite Representative roles, i.e. Workplace, Union Learning, Safety and Equality

Any Unite members interested in finding out more about becoming a Unite Representative please contact the Unite RBS Helpline or email rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org

Unite Updates

If you would like to receive regular updates electronically from the union please email from your preferred email address to rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org

Not a Member?

Join Unite's 1.5 million members and have a voice on this and other issues, as well as receiving support, advice and representation, for £10.96 a month for full time staff and £4.98 per month for part time staff working less than 20 hours a week. Membership forms can be obtained by phoning 0845 850 4242 or e-mailing rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org plus you can join on-line at www.unitetheunion.org

Alison Maclean & Stuart Davies – Joint Lead Officers

Unite RBS Helpline – 0870 241 4425

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