



in the Financial Services Sector

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Amicus fury as Norwich Union offshore 7,000 jobs

Amicus has denounced Norwich Union's plans to offshore 7,000 jobs by 2007 as a brash business decision that underlines the real threat to the future of the UK financial services industry. The move comes as part of plans announced by Norwich Union today to export 950 jobs to India as part of a plan which will see a 25% reduction in its total UK workforce by 2007.

The company plans to make 150 compulsory redundancies. Norwich Union has already exported 3,700 jobs to India since December last year.

David Fleming National Officer said: *"This points to a bleak future for the UK financial services finance industry as a whole. We will not accept compulsory redundancies as a consequence of offshoring in any company and that will be fundamental to our negotiations with Norwich Union. We expect the company to ensure there is maximum opportunity for retraining, job mobility and skills development for all staff affected"*.

A recent Amicus survey (06/09/04) revealed that 99.9% of staff at Norwich Union correctly feared further job cuts under the company's offshoring programme. 78% have job security worries and 93% say that offshoring decisions have been taken purely for short-term gains.

Amicus has made it clear that it expects companies who offshore to demonstrate how they will reinvest the cost savings made into developing the UK workforce and generate higher skilled jobs. To date not a single company has been able to demonstrate a focus on reinvestment and corporate social responsibility.

Amicus continues to challenge gender pay gap

Amicus Finance Sector used the TUC Congress in Brighton to reaffirm their commitment to work with the major financial services companies and the Equal Opportunities Commission to tackle the gender pay gap in the finance sector.

Dave Fleming, Amicus' National Officer for finance, says: *"It has been over 30 years since the Equal Pay Act was brought in and yet women still face injustice at work through their pay Amicus are trying to reverse the gender gap that persists in the finance industry. We are working with the Equal Opportunities Commission and with employers to address the causes of the pay gap. An important first step will be the*

conducting of equal pay reviews but there are a range of other measures that employers can implement to address the barriers to female advancement."

One of the main factors to the pay gap being so much larger in the finance sector is due to a 'glass ceiling effect'. Women are able to progress to a certain grade but do not seem able to progress past it. Women make up 50% of the workforce in the finance sector but only 6% of them progress to director level.

Another cause is 'occupational segregation', with women tending to be concentrated in particular occupations like front of office branch staff whereas men tend to be concentrated in higher paid roles such as IT. The sector's long hours culture is also a major barrier to female progression in the finance sector.

Prudential agrees to do an equal pay audit

Amicus Prudential Section recently received confirmation that the company will be doing an equal pay audit. The union has had assurances that the review will follow the guidelines issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission. A meeting is due to take place in early October to discuss the practicalities of pay audit and how Amicus will be involved in the process.

Chris Gray, Amicus Seconded rep said: *"We look forward to working with the company to ensure that there is fairness and equality across the Prudential pay system. Only through social partnership and transparency will employees be fully confident that they are receiving equal pay"*.

Amicus Welcomes AXA's decision to sell rights to RAC

Amicus the UK's largest private sector union has welcomed the announcement by AXA is to sell the new business rights to their personal lines direct insurance business to the RAC. The union has been fully consulted over AXA's plans and has assurances from the RAC that there will be no redundancies. There will be a 3-week consultation period from the 17th September to the 8th October with the formal transfer to the RAC on the 11th October.

Amicus Regional Officer, Hugh Jones-Glass says, *"This is good news for our members at AXA as the RAC are looking to develop the business further. Also AXA were due to make a number of redundancies at the Morecambe site earlier this month which following the change in ownership will no longer take place. Moreover, certain elements of AXA Direct which were outsourced to Pune in India, will revert back to the UK once the RAC have officially taken over."*

The two sites at Morecambe and Darlington have almost 500 staff between them. All staff (except claims and site services at Morecambe) will transfer to the new employment under the same terms and conditions under which they are currently employed.

Amicus raises profile in Scottish Widows

The Scottish Widows Section will shortly be holding a high profile campaign telling employees why trade union membership is so essential. Local representatives will be highlighting the 'Top 10 Reasons to join Amicus'.

Employees decide to move on

Employees who face a 'glass ceiling' in their workplace are more likely to decide to change their jobs rather than discuss the problem with their manager, according to a new survey.

The research Robert Walters, recruitment consultancy found that more than three-quarters start looking for a job if they come to halt in their career progression. Of these people, 40% said that they would also raise the issue with their immediate manager.

Young people face ageism

A report out this week has shown that younger staff face ageism at work. The study by Eversheds law firm of 2,184 people, found that almost 60% of 16 to 24 year olds polled said they felt unfairly treated because of their age or lack of experience.

Eversheds concluded that unless the government gets to grips with the controversial issue of a mandatory retirement age, then the situation would deteriorate.

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