

Working for you in RBS

Corporate Division

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BUSINESS & COMMERCIAL - SANTANDER WORKPLACE TRANSFERS

Following announcements in April regarding proposed workplace transfers for staff in-scope of the move to Santander from retained sites to in-scope sites, RBS have today (25th May) confirmed details of the additional support being made available to staff impacted by a proposed move. The bank have also announced details of staff moves from in-scope sites to retained sites.

Background to Announcement

Following the allocation exercises undertaken by RBS in 2010 to identify and allocate staff in-scope of the transfer to Santander, members have been waiting to understand whether they will be required to move office and if so to which office. In April RBS confirmed the proposals to move 480 employees from retained sites to in-scope sites. UNITE raised a number of concerns as to the viability and reasonableness of some of the proposed moves and whether these represent genuine Suitable Alternative Employment. The bank provided satisfactory explanations regarding some of the moves and amended, as appropriate, proposed moves, centred on their suitability; although the union maintained concerns around a number of the moves. UNITE also communicated, with those members that have registered to receive electronic updates, via e-mail on this issue.

Since the beginning of April there have been a number of meetings between UNITE and RBS regarding the proposed moves, with RBS today detailing the additional assistance that will be made available to staff in-scope of a transfer to a new workplace which is directly attributable to moves from retained to in-scope sites. The assistance would not be made available as part of Business As Usual moves.

Proposed Assistance Package

All 480 staff in-scope of a move were offered the opportunity of a one to one to discuss any concerns that they had regarding the move and its suitability. Of the 480, 188 staff requested a one to one meeting and any members that have not yet had a one to one who are concerned about the suitability of their move, should request a meeting without delay. A number of

the proposed moves are to sites in the same town or city, are less distance or where a greater distance, only marginally, therefore a number of members would appear comfortable with the proposed moves.

In the one to ones, staff tabled requests for additional assistance such as payment of additional mileage, train/bus fares, parking, childcare, as well as consideration for flexible working. Requests were also made in respect of assistance with additional car insurance costs, additional child care costs and compensation for the potential loss or reduction of tax credits, as a result of receiving an additional travel allowance which could tip salary across certain income thresholds.

The bank have confirmed, subject to meeting the relevant criteria, that assistance will be made available to staff in-scope of a workplace move in the form of one or more of the following - additional mileage, train/bus fares, town/city centre or train station parking. These would all be paid for an initial period of one year as a travel allowance, which would be subjected to tax and national insurance deductions. What assistance, if any, would be provided following a year or post transfer to Santander is still to be determined.

The bank have however confirmed that they are unable to provide assistance with additional childcare, car insurance or compensation for loss of tax credits, but flexible working requests to accommodate transfers would be supported, subject to the usual criteria.

UNITE Comment & Role Suitability

UNITE clearly welcomes the additional support being made available by the Group to facilitate these trans-

fers; however the union continues to harbour concerns as to the suitability and long term viability of some of the moves. UNITE categorises the moves into three – i) those moves that are either in the same city, shorter or marginally longer and are suitable and reasonable ii) those moves that are suitable and reasonable in respect of personal circumstances, travel distance, time and cost, where the additional assistance will smooth the transition to the new workplace iii) those moves that remain unsuitable and not reasonable despite the assistance on offer.

Where a move falls into the third category, unless an individual chooses to undertake the role voluntarily, it is the view of UNITE that an individual should be removed from the transfer and in the first instance a more suitable location should be sought. If this proves unsuccessful, then the bank should look to re-deploy the individual and if this proved unsuccessful, then redundancy should be explored as a final resort. It is important that members study the move and ask themselves the question as to whether they are able to undertake the transfer based upon the criteria of personal circumstances such as caring responsibilities, travel time, distance and cost on a long term basis.

Particularly in relation to cost, members need to consider whether the move is manageable once any financial assistance expires. UNITE have argued the point strongly with RBS that financial assistance for any period of time, does not render a previously unsuitable role suitable, the underlying role remains unsuitable. It is currently unclear what, if any assistance Santander will provide and UNITE does not support a situation where one or two years down the line members have to resign their roles as they are no longer able to afford their journey to work once assistance expires.

Next Steps

As the detail of additional assistance has now been announced, it is important than any members that remain concerned with the suitability of the role raise these concerns with their line manager. UNITE will be continuing dialogue with RBS regarding these transfers and whilst the first of the transfers are due to take place in July, UNITE have argued that no moves should take place until details of what assistance package Santander propose are known.

Members who have been advised of a proposed move from an in-scope site to a retained site will be provided with the opportunity of a one to one to discuss the move. Discussions between UNITE and RBS as to the provision of any appropriate, additional assistance are on-going.

Members who are concerned regarding the suitability of the transfer and their ability to undertake this, whether in the short or long term, should also raise their concerns with UNITE via the helpline on **0870 241 4425** or e-mail **rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org**, alternatively you can contact one of your local Workplace Reps for assistance. UNITE will seek to resolve any issues with RBS; however recourse to the grievance procedure maybe required and in line with laid down procedure, no location move can be imposed until such time that the grievance and appeals process has been concluded.

Unite Representatives

UNITE has also recently concluded negotiations with the bank on a new and improved UNITE Representatives Agreement. We are 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 e-mail **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 one and a half 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 21 hours a week. Membership forms can be obtained by phoning **0845 850 4242** or emailing **rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org** plus you can join on line at **www.unitetheunion.org**

Stuart Davies & Alison Maclean – Joint Lead Officers

Unite RBS Helpline – 0870 241 4425

Join Unite the Union online at www.unitetheunion.org