

# Working for you in Royal Bank of Scotland Group

NEWSLETTER • November 2011



## BRISTOL JOB LOSS ANNOUNCEMENT & SITE CLOSURE

**Following the announcement by the Group on 2nd September 2010 of the loss of a further 3500 roles within the Business Services Division, today the Group has announced the specific impact and associated job losses at Aztec West, Bristol.**

### Background to Announcement & Rationale

Since the start of the bank's ongoing Strategic Review a staggering 22,500 UK jobs losses have been announced across the Group. Members will recall that the reduction of a further 3500 Business Services roles between now and the end of 2012 will see the Group withdraw from 12 operational sites across the UK.

Whilst the bank asserts that their recovery plan is on track, they have stated that it will take up to 5 years to get back to health and to reach a state of stability. The bank's proposals to cut roles from existing operational sites centres around their desire to reduce costs, the number of sites and to maximise headcount, operational efficiencies and capacity at retained sites.

### Impact of Changes & Job Losses

Around 330 permanent and a further 140 fixed term and agency staff will be impacted by these changes and will be placed at risk of redundancy. The work currently undertaken at the site will migrate to a number of the bank's key retained sites including Manchester, Southend, Chatham, Bolton, Leicester and Birmingham. The work will migrate in phases between September and December 2012 with the Aztec West site due to close shortly thereafter. The bank has committed to considering the individual preferences of members when deciding on the migration of work.

It is very much hoped that members may consider

undertaking an alternative role at another retained site and from the earlier preference exercise undertaken, some staff have already indicated that they would be willing to either travel or move home location to secure alternative continuous employment with the Group. The bank is also actively looking for opportunities in other Bristol locations including Trinity Quay and at RBS Insurance.

The bank believes that by consolidating work and co-locating teams on key retained sites it will allow them to invest in these sites and to run their operation in a more cost effective and efficient manner. The bank also pointed to the use of automation and headcount efficiencies delivered by the Lean Programme, all of which they believe will allow work currently undertaken at Bristol to be carried out and in some cases absorbed across remaining sites.

In addition there is a small number of staff undertaking business support roles that will not be placed at risk of redundancy by these announcements, however they will be required to relocate to a suitable location within reasonable travelling distance (i.e. 40 miles/one hour) from their home location. If members have any concerns about a change of work location then please raise these with local management in the first instance

### Managing Reductions

All those at risk will have the opportunity to opt for VR/VER or redeployment. The nature of these announcements culminating in the migration and

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absorption of work to retained sites means that all at risk staff will find themselves displaced outright. If you do not wish to apply for VR/VER, then Unite will support you through the redeployment process. The bank will advise further of the specific impact on your role during one to one meetings.

The VR/VER window for all staff will be open for a period of 3 weeks post employee communications, following which the bank will engage further with Unite on the outcomes, including opportunities for redeployment and any Voluntary Job Matching (VJM) opportunities.

Unite has also agreed a number of additional redundancy mitigation measures to further reduce the potential for CRs, full detail of these measures were previously provided to members in a separate Unite newsletter, can be viewed at [www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org) and are also available on the bank's Strategic Review website. These improved measures will also be provided to all at risk employees in their Employee Communication pack and should be discussed in detail with line management in the first instance. It is hoped that a number of impacted staff in Bristol may express an interest in moving work location, where members may be eligible for a £5000 lump sum payment and payment of additional travel costs. If any members decide to relocate permanently they may be eligible for relocation assistance subject to meeting the necessary payment criteria for all support measures.

It was recognised during consultations that the opportunities for redeployment for members based in Bristol should be reasonably positive. The bank is also engaging with local employers within the area and Career Events will be held on site. For those who do leave the bank's employment, full outplacement support will be provided.

## Unite Comment and Next Steps

At the time of the announcement of an additional 3500 job losses in Business Services, Unite described this as a "horror story" but one that our members and all staff across the Group are sadly all too familiar with. Members and all staff in Business Services have endured a significant period of change and uncertainty which has already resulted in the closure of a number of the bank's operational centres and the migration and absorption of work to key retained sites. Once again many of the lowest paid Clerical staff are impacted by today's announcements as they continue to pay the price for the bank's failures.

The consultations on the specific impacts of the 3500 job losses are now nearing completion. Although there has been some success stories in terms of those being

redeployed as well as benefiting from the enhanced redundancy mitigates, nonetheless Unite recognise the massive upheaval and anxiety our members have faced over a prolonged period. Site closures inevitably also have an impact on the local communities and businesses and this is the second such announcement to impact the South West region following the recently announced closure of the Plymouth site. These are roles that will sadly never be replaced with skills in many cases being lost forever.

Unite has also asked a number of searching questions about the bank's new operating model and the ability of remaining staff to simply absorb work from other sites and to meet the challenges of an ever changing and demanding workplace. The bank assert that the use of alternative customer channels, automation, falling call volumes and the Lean programme have realised these efficiencies which will allow the bank to get back to stand alone strength. What is now becoming abundantly clear is that Unite's early concerns that headcount reductions would be directly attributable to the Lean programme are now sadly coming to fruition. Even now when Unite visits operational centres Lean is still being badged by the bank as win-win situation for both staff and customers.

Unite has also stressed to the bank that we have real concerns for those members who are left behind to drive the bank's recovery. The trade union are in ongoing dialogue with the bank and during 2012 we want to focus our agenda more proactively on making RBS a better place to work for our members across the Group. In this regard if members have any feedback either positive or negative on the bank's changing operating model, then please contact either your local Workplace Representative, the Unite RBS Helpline or email [rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org](mailto:rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org).

Since the announcement of the 3500 job losses, Unite has been undertaking an extensive site visit programme across all of the impacted Business Services locations. Unite members will already have seen the trade union on site when it was originally signposted for closure. **A further visit and member surgery to support impacted members will be undertaken on Thursday 8th December, further details will be confirmed by local management in due course.**

The bank has committed to ongoing dialogue with the trade union and has stressed that they are actively engaging with all staff through town halls and other local initiatives. It is therefore vitally important that you make your views known both to the bank and to Unite; your views will help inform next steps and future dialogue with the bank.

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If members have any questions or concerns regarding 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 your local Workplace Rep, the Unite RBS **Helpline on 0870 241 4425 or email [rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org](mailto:rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org)**

## Update Your Membership Details

It is also important that members ensure that their membership details are up to date and accurate, i.e. home address, workplace address, whether you are full time or part time etc. If you believe that your membership details are out of date, please also e-mail

**[rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org](mailto:rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org)** with your updated details, alternatively you can contact your local District Office by phoning **0845 850 4242** or logging onto 'My Unite' at the website [www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org) where you can update your own details.

## Unite Representatives

Unite concluded negotiations with RBS in late 2010 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](mailto: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 £11.48 a month for full time staff and £5.72 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](mailto:rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org)** plus you can join on line at **[www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org)**.



**Alison Maclean & Stuart Davies – Joint Lead Officers**

**Unite RBS Helpline – 0870 241 4425**