

PROJECT BIRCH – UPDATE

Members will be aware that since the 2nd quarter of 2007, AFD have been announcing a number of re-organisations across the division, as a result of an on-going cost and profit challenge, which has resulted in a number of job losses.

These re-organisations are on-going and today (4th September) AFD have announced the biggest impact of Project Birch, within Change/IT and Operations, affecting staff within the Band A-C range.

Following the re-organisation of the Band E and D structures within these areas, the company have now reviewed the reporting structure and have announced a reduction in staff among the Band A-C population from 231 to 168.

LOCATION OF REDUCTIONS

The company stated that whilst there were no "set in stone" numbers around exactly where the headcount savings would be achieved, it was anticipated that reductions would be experienced within all sites, i.e Birmingham, Bury, Cardiff, Cockfosters, Edinburgh and would also include home workers.

The company also stated that it was expected that there would be broadly similar percentage reductions in roles across the various business units i.e Change Delivery, Service Delivery, Infrastructure and both Blackhorse and Autolease Systems.

Included within the reduction are 12 contractor roles, whose contracts will be brought to an end over the coming months and also due to the number of volunteers at Band D level, there now exists a further 4 Band D vacancies for staff among the affected population to apply for, providing promotion opportunities and reducing the number of Band A-C roles disappearing to 47.

SELECTION FOR ROLES

The company have confirmed that due to the numbers being subjected to a selection process, that it is not their intention to undertake competency based interviews, but to base selection on a desktop process, which will review and score Technical Skills, Job Profile Competencies, and Values.

Balanced Scorecard Ratings and any disciplinary warnings for conduct, performance or attendance will also be reviewed as deciding factors where two or more members of staff have scored at a similar level. Unite (formerly Amicus) raised considerable concerns at the selection procedure and the fact that the desktop selection process was subjective and that the only clear objective measure of the Balanced Scorecard Rating was not integral to the process.

The company felt that given the numbers and the timescales that it was reasonable to undertake this approach and that sufficient safeguards are in place in terms of senior management grand parenting the selection outcomes before communication.

Unite will continue to monitor this situation and the process, however any members who feel following the selection process that they have been unfairly selected for potential redundancy and wish to challenge this decision, should contact the LTSB Helpline on 08081 449595 or one of your AFD Unite Reps.

Email Updates

If you would you like to get Unite updates via email, please contact us on LTSB@unitetheunion.com

UNITE'S POSITION

Clearly Unite are disappointed when faced with any redundancy exercise and despite the company citing the cost and business challenges being faced by AFD, the union have pointed out that the company is still making a healthy profit, albeit not at the level that both the company and the staff would like to see.

Unite's policy is to reduce and avoid compulsory redundancies, as with all other restructures, the union has urged the company to seek volunteers and members will have the opportunity to express an interest in VR at their one to ones. However this expression of interest does not guarantee redundancy, as the numbers applying or business need may preclude a request being granted.

To date most job reductions have been achieved through voluntary means and those roles that have disappeared by way of compulsory redundancy have tended to be fairly specialist roles, however if any members feel again that they have been unfairly selected for redundancy or wish to remain with the organisation and feel that insufficient efforts have been made to find re-deployment, you should contact the union without delay.

Unite have also discussed with the company the dangers of shedding too many staff or cutting departments down too close to the bone, however the company maintain their confidence that the actions being taken now, will ultimately help to "turn the business around".

ON-GOING RE-ORGANISATIONS

Although this newsletter has concentrated on the specifics of the restructure of Bands A-C within Change/IT and Operations, the union has been involved in consultations with the company regarding all re-structures under Project Birch and any members with any concerns or issues regarding any existing or future re-organisations should contact the Unite LTSB Helpline or one of your Unite AFD Reps.

AGE DISCRIMINATION AND SEVERANCE

Members would have received a newsletter from Unite regarding discussions with LTSB Bank about the recent changes to severance terms and the outline of a proposed deal. Members within LTSB Bank and C&G have returned a vote in favour of the deal of 5 to 1 and a component of the deal was a commitment for AFD to open talks with the union.

The successful outcome of talks with AFD could have a positive effect on members who have both already left AFD on redundancy and those members considering redundancy. Preliminary discussions took place with the company on the 21st August, with further discussions due to be undertaken.

Due to the nature of the talks, both sides were keen to progress this issue with minimal delay and the union will communicate with members as soon as talks have concluded.

NOT A MEMBER?

Join Unite today for the unbeatable amount of £5.77 per month for full time staff or £3.17 for part time staff; in addition you will receive the first three months membership completely free. Contact the helpline for further details or one of you Unite AFD Reps.

UNITE COMMITTEE

Neil.cochran@ltsbasset.co.uk – Tel: 0131 311 2215

Moy.roberts@ltsbasset.co.uk – Tel: 07768 724 131

Greig.brown@ltsbasset.co.uk – Tel: 0131 311 2775

STUART DAVIES – REGIONAL OFFICER
UNITE LTSB HELPLINE – 08081 449595