

Membership on the UP!

Amicus membership at CBS has doubled during the last twelve months. We are delighted to report that membership is now at a healthy level at Economic House, Godiva House and Oakfield House.

Who's joining? Well, the vast majority of our members have been with the Society for 5 years or more. We have members at every grade, up to and including Senior Management grades. We appear to be connecting with staff who value their employment with the Society, and who see themselves as working long-term at CBS.

This news may come as a surprise to the hundreds of CBS staff working in the branch network. We have identified that our organisation and communications have been poor in this area. Sadly, many branch staff have been unaware of either the importance of Amicus within CBS, or even of our existence. Some staff have not had a union induction talk, and newsletters have not been finding staff.

A number of initiatives are under way to raise the profile of Amicus in the branch network. We are also talking to the Society about how best we can access branch staff and speak to them.

All new entrants now get introduced to our Reps during induction.

The other great challenge facing your committee is how we reach out to the call-centre staff, and other employees with less than 5 years service. Membership remains poor in these areas. We have identified that many of these workers see joining "the union for CBS staff" as part of a long term commitment that they may not feel ready to make.

In most organisations, staff with less than 5 years service tend to be the ones more likely to be involved in a disciplinary matter. (*Warwick university academic research*). It is also true to say that, increasingly, younger workers anticipate working for a larger number of employers during the course of their careers than used to be the case.



It is vital that we get across the the following facts :

- **Amicus has 1.3 million members across every sector of the UK economy.**
- **Amicus has the legal right to individually assist members, irrespective of who the employer is.**
- **If you move your employment, keeping your Amicus membership entitles you to full legal services and individual representation - wherever you work.**

Dave Stewart

I recently met the new Chief Executive, and in addition to football we also touched on some important issues!

There is much Amicus and the Society have in common. Ethical principles – so rare across financial services in modern Britain, are still very much alive across the Building Society Movement. I was reassured by Dave's commitment to the mutuality principle, and impressed by an ongoing business plan that it is delivering organic growth. It is of course only a successful Society that can improve employment opportunities and conditions.

Many finance employers have become blinded by greed,

and have forgotten their moral obligations to staff and the surrounding communities. Many companies are currently off-shoring thousands of jobs at a time when profits have never been higher.

Reassuringly, Dave has ruled out offshoring. He also made clear his commitment to the city of Coventry and its surrounding communities

Members at CBS thinking of moving elsewhere in the industry might like to take advice – the grass is usually not greener!

No organisation gets it right all the time, but Amicus is impressed with the direction CBS is taking.

We wish Dave well.

Equality

Women make up the majority of staff working in the financial services (55%) yet the finance sector has the largest pay gap of any industry. Women on average earn a startling 41% less than men. This figure has been released by the DTI.

Amicus has over 200,000 members in Banking and financial services. But nobody thinks equal pay is a problem in their organisation. The problem though is very real, and the truth is that nobody fully understands how or why the pay gap occurs.

Amicus has drawn up a charter which it expects all leading financial services providers to sign up to. The charter commits employers to work with Amicus to tackle the root causes of pay inequality. Amicus maintains that ending inequality in women's pay and career progression is good for business and that UK employers cannot afford to overlook the contribution that women can make if they are allowed to break through the glass ceiling. Pay inequality is also a family issue because it impacts on family incomes. It is time for this industry to realise that gender inequality is not just an issue for women, but an issue for everybody.

Amicus wants employers to follow some of the examples set by HBOS, Legal & General, Barclays and NAG who have been working with Amicus to eliminate pay discrimination through carrying out pay audits which identify where discrimination occurs.

The audits cover gender, part-time workers, age, ethnicity and disability. The companies all work with the union on a number of diversity initiatives to remove the barriers for women working in the financial services.

Earlier this year, Amicus secured funding from the DTI for an



Equal Pay legal specialist to make a joint presentation to CBS HR and Union Reps. The presentation was helpful and interesting.

Amicus believes that if employers share best practise, we can work together to eradicate this problem. Amicus is uniquely placed to coordinate this. CBS has a good track record on equalities and Amicus looks forward to working positively with the Society in the years to come.

BUILDING A NEW UNION

Members will be aware that merger talks are ongoing between Amicus and T&G. Such a merger – if endorsed by members in a ballot, would create the largest Union in the history of this country.

Amicus is keen to stress the New Union will be the 'Union for Life.' From leaving school, through apprenticeships, training, or higher education, the Union will have a range of programmes offering advice, support and information specially tailored for young people just starting out at work, whether part-time whilst studying, or at their first job.

Throughout members' working lives – whatever their job and whoever their employer – the Union will be available 24 hours a day in ways that suit the member, providing representation, advice, support and information. There will also be a range of additional benefits tailored to the needs of members and their families. Specially tailored services will be available for retired people.

At the heart of the union will be the equalities agenda.

We will be better placed to develop international co-operation with sister unions to help fight the effects of globalisation. Our political influence will be even greater.

This is an exciting time for members – to vote on this historic matter in the ballot is to be a part of real social change. Be a part of it!

Amicus Rules, OK?!

To clarify, Amicus rules include a membership qualification period of 6 months before we are able to represent in a formal hearing.

The same period applies to our legal services.

The sensible thing to do is to join when you don't have a problem at work, not when you do!

Not a member?

It's easy to join online, at www.amicustheunion.org or ring a Rep for a form.

Amicus - Lobbying for you

Amicus wields great political influence, and along with other unions, has helped convince this government of the need for many changes to the law to help our people .

Here are some examples:

- The introduction of a statutory trade union recognition law
- The right to professional representation at work in Grievance & Disciplinary hearings
- The right to paid maternity, paternity and adoptive leave
- The legal right to paid holidays
- Right to equal treatment for part-timers

- The Working Time Directive
- The National Minimum Wage

A great number of individual employment rights have become law since 1997 – the vast majority have come via Union lobbying. The latest is the Age Discrimination law. The provisions of the Act specifically:

- Ban unjustified retirement ages below the age of 65
- Ban age discrimination in terms of recruitment, promotion and training
- Remove the current age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy rights
- Introduce a right for employees to request working beyond retirement age and a duty on employers to consider that request and facilitate a meeting.

This allows members to be accompanied by a workplace union Rep (not paid union official or Solicitor) and represented, if necessary, in the new right of appeal.

- A new requirement for employers to give at least six months notice to employees about their intended retirement date so that employees can better plan for retirement.

Early discussions with CBS indicate that this new law will not impact in a detrimental way on staff. CBS has indicated that it wishes to further discuss the implications of the Act with us.

For further information on this or any other aspect of employment law, check out www.amicustheunion.org

Members can also register under the "My Amicus" section and request e-bulletins on a wide range of issues.



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