



Amicus

Flexible working revisited

May 9th brings with it confirmation that the bank does intend to move to implementation of its plans for flexible working in the branches announced last October. However, things have changed. 65 of those branches originally scheduled to open on Saturdays from 10 to 2 will now open all day (9 to 5) and the number of branches originally scheduled no longer to open on a Saturday is down markedly.

The bank's main grounds for this change are feedback from staff and the fact that the bank was pleasantly surprised by the 20% increase in sales activity brought about by recent refurbishment of branches. This led to the decision to do many more refurbishments than originally planned thus broadening the reach of their plans to extend opening and reducing the number of Saturday closures.

Amicus priorities

Our first priority in these circumstances was to negotiate to ensure that members did not feel that their non-working lives were being further encroached upon by their employer. This was especially important given the degree of concern voiced by members in October when the original plans were announced. In this context, we are pleased to note that the bank's video on this subject makes clear that the new working hours are "down to personal choice. Some will choose, some will not."

In addition, we felt it was appropriate to question the bank's change of plan since October, given the stress staff went through at the time and the fact that the bank had spent so much effort and resource on researching the original proposals.

Negotiations

In the negotiations we sought a guarantee that those who had signed up to the J contract on the assumption that they would work from 10.00 to 14.00

would not be pressurized into working longer or changed hours. Amicus believes that this assumption is an implied term in the J contracts which should be protected. In the negotiations we were able to achieve the guarantee we sought. This means that J contract staff who wish to stick to 10.00 to 14.00 working can do so and the bank's written communication makes this clear.

Whether members are satisfied with the wisdom and sustainability of their bosses' decision making on the change of plan from October is clearly for them to decide. Anything which could contribute to renewed cynicism will sadly impact on staff morale and engagement. Having said that, both the union and its members will undoubtedly welcome the extra 400 fte staff to be recruited this year to accommodate the changes. We would welcome your feedback on whether this is sufficient to resolve your concerns on staffing levels in the branches.

B3 staff

Whilst many B3 members may welcome the invitation to work in larger Saturday opening branches, it is clearly vital that consultation with individuals over this change takes full account of their needs and preferences. This is especially important where existing hours of work have become established. Members with concerns on how to proceed should ring the union's HSBC helpline on 0207 253 9642.

S5s who deputise

Where an S5 deputises for a branch manager on alternate Saturdays as well as for the manager's day in lieu during the week, the bank has agreed with the union's view that deputisation payments should apply (HR Procedures Manual - "D" (deputising payment), "Eligibility"). Amicus also sought deputisation payments where this is required by the rostering system but is

shared between two or more S5s. This claim was rejected. S5s in these circumstances may decide to exercise their choice not to deputise.

Pre-opening and post-closing activities

The union sought clarification from the bank that sufficient time and resource will be factored into rosters for these activities on weekdays and Saturdays. Our aim is to avoid inconsistency across those branches where such rostering is possible and acceptable to staff. The bank's response is that this provision is at managers' discretion.

Work your proper hours

The new rostering does offer the potential for staff and managers to work their proper hours in the branches and ends six day week working. In addition, transitional resource in terms of overtime has been provided for the settling - in period. Give us your feedback both now and post implementation on the impact of these changes on your work-life balance.

MA's

Despite recent feedback from members to Amicus to the contrary, the bank has assured us that it has no proposals in mind for changing the contracts of Mortgage Arrangers.

Feedback

Members with feedback or seeking advice from the union on these changes should contact their local JAOR, call our helpline (020 7253 9642 or 020 7336 8253), send us a fax to 020 7780 4142 or email hsbc@amicustheunion.org

Bernadette Fisher
National Secretary
May 9th 2006