

# HEALTH & SAFETY MATTERS



## Welcome to Issue 1

Hello,

Welcome to this the first in an occasional series of newsletters brought to you by the seconded Health and Safety Reps working for you in Barclays.

We are a dedicated team of qualified Health and Safety professionals appointed by Unite to:

- represent colleagues in consultation with the Bank on all health and safety matters
- investigate accidents and incidents and their causes, as well as potential hazards and dangerous occurrences
- investigate complaints by colleagues concerning Health and Safety at work
- carry out inspections of all Barclays workplaces regardless of business area
- represent colleagues at their places of work during visits of the Enforcing



Back Row (L-R): Mark Campbell, Tony Mitchell, Dee Yeandle, Phil Jones. Seated (L-R): Seamus Lally, Hilary Gambling

Authority Inspectorate.

Through these newsletters we intend to keep you up to date with matters that affect you, our members, wherever you might work in the Barclays group.

If you need help or assistance our contact

details can be found on the last page.

We hope you find this newsletter informative and useful—if there is a particular topic you would like to see covered in a future edition please let us know.

## Issue 1

June 2010

### Inside this issue:

Long Hours Culture 2

European Week of Health & Safety 2

Overtime & TOIL 3

Open Counters 3

Staff Abuse 3

Reasonable Adjustments 4

HSR Contact Details/Poster for Display 5

## Temperature in the Workplace

Many colleagues often ask what's the minimum or maximum temperature allowed in the workplace. Here we explain what the law says and also what you can do to improve conditions in your office.

The legal minimum temperature that colleagues can be expected to work in is **16 degrees**. However, the sedentary nature of some roles (e.g. Personal Bankers) may mean that 16 degrees feels extremely cold, therefore it is important to consider each role on a



case-by-case basis. There is **no maximum temperature** laid down in law, however the Chartered Institute of Building Service

Engineers recommends 20 degrees as suitable for offices.

The law requires a suitable number of thermometers to be displayed in all workplaces and Barclays as an employer must provided these.

If there isn't a thermometer on display in your office order one from Banner – Item Ref. 7901265. If your workplace is excessively hot or cold keep a record of the temperature and call PAL, or your local Facilities

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Workplace Inspections

Between January and April your Health and Safety Reps carried out **125** workplace inspections across all business areas.

Of these inspections **108** achieved a **SATISFACTORY** rating, 17 were rated as having **ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT**, and there were no **UNSATISFACTORY** inspections. These figures represent an improving trend.

If you feel that your workplace would benefit from a Workplace Inspection please contact your local HSR - contact details can be found on the last page.

## Temperature in the Workplace

(Continued from page 1)

Manager, for a solution on Health & Safety grounds.

We consult regularly with the Bank on the issue of temperature and Unite, through the TUC, supports the case for an action level of 24 degrees which is the World Health Organisation recommendation for working in comfort.

Barclays has a strategy in place to have comfort cooling installed in all refurbished sites. The Bank has also agreed to repair air conditioning units

where practical and to provide temporary cooling where need is identified.

When the temperature rises temporary solutions which should be considered include:

- Closing blinds on sunny sides of the building early in the day.
- Providing oscillating fans.
- Keeping Windows closed to allow the A/C units to operate more efficiently
- Drinking water regularly, and avoiding tea, coffee.

Special consideration should be given to pregnant women to protect them from extremes of heat. Issues should be identified and addressed through the "Pregnant New & Nursing Mothers" risk assessment process.

If your workplace is uncomfortable due to the temperature and you have escalated this through PAL or your local FM without achieving a satisfactory response please let us know—our contact details can be found on the last page.

## Long Hours Culture

Do you regularly work over your contracted hours? Do you feel the Long Hours Culture is bad for your health?

Then you are not alone – studies have shown that long working hours are bad for work-life balance, health, productivity and safety. It is estimated in the UK approximately 4million people work more than 48hours a week on average and white collar workers have seen the biggest increase in their working hours. Full time employees in the UK work the longest hours in Europe. The average for full timers in the UK is 43.5. In France it's 38.2 and in Germany 39.9, yet both are more productive than the UK. Many experts believe that

overwork is definitely making us sick - a recent DTI survey found one in five men (19 per cent) had visited the doctor because of stress, rising to one quarter (23 per cent) of over 40s. But did you know that the law (which has been incorporated into Barclays policy) protects you from having to work excessive hours?

The following extract from the Bank's Guide to Health and Safety explains how Barclays manages compliance with the law:

Employers are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that employees do not work more than an average of 48 hours a week over a 17 week period. This requirement applies to employees at all levels as well as agency workers.

As Barclays standard contractual hours are 35 hours per week, staff should only be exceeding the average limit in exceptional circumstances. Such exceptions may include staff who have Saturday contracts in addition to their normal contracts, or those who regularly work overtime/additional hours.

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that instances of employees working long hours are the exception rather than the norm, and that steps are taken, wherever practically possible, to ensure that the 48 hour average limit is not exceeded. In practice, this responsibility will be shared by the Team Leader and employee.

In such instances where the average limit is being exceeded, the business need for this should be assessed. Where a genuine requirement does exist, the employee should be asked whether or not they agree to work in excess of the 48 hour average weekly limit. If they agree, their hours worked must be recorded and they will also need to sign an individual **voluntary agreement**.

If staff are not willing to do this, steps must be taken to reduce their working time.

**If you work in excess of the 48hour average weekly limit and you have not signed an agreement raise this with your Team Leader immediately. If you do not wish to sign the agreement (or wish to revoke an existing agreement) then you are entitled to refuse without prejudice or penalty. If you are experiencing problems please contact your local Unite Rep.**

## European Week of Health & Safety

European Health and Safety Week takes place in October each year and is designed to raise awareness of health and safety throughout the European Union. This year the campaign will run

from the 25th to the 29th October and is organised by the European Agency for Safety and Health and is aimed at people in organisations, companies and workplaces of all sizes and sectors.

Each year the Unite Health and Safety Representatives join forces with the Barclays H&S Managers



(Continued on page 3)

# European Week of Health & Safety

(Continued from page 2)

to organise various events throughout Barclays. This year the Barclays campaign will concentrate on a number of specific topics:

- Safe Driving
- Housekeeping and Maintenance
- Eye-care
- DSE

• Accident Reporting  
Various activities will be organised including a travelling road show which will visit a number of large corporate sites all over the country including:

- Barclaycard Kirby
- Standard Life in Glasgow
- One Snow Hill, Birmingham
- First Plus, Cardiff
- Barclays House Poole

But don't worry if you don't work at one of these locations there will be plenty of opportunity for you to get involved as there will also be online quizzes and competitions with lots of great prizes to be won!

So keep an eye out on the Barclays Intranet Site for more information nearer the time.

## Overtime & TOIL

Despite clear contractual policies being in place, members continue to contact Unite to advise us that local managers are refusing to offer overtime payments and in some cases are even refusing to book TOIL.

Deanna Oppenheimer has issued the

following message to line managers.

**'Overtime is a contractual entitlement and we must pay colleagues what they are entitled to. Overtime payments and TOIL cannot be waived'**

Any member who is not being paid their contractual overtime or receiving the agreed TOIL should contact their local Unite Workplace Rep or our helpline on 0844 7360134.

A summary of member's rights can be found in the "Information Box" below.

Your rights:

- Overtime is payable where a colleague works more than their daily hours
- Overtime becomes payable once 20 minutes of overtime has been worked, it is payable in 15 minute blocks, which includes the qualifying time.
- TOIL can only be taken as an alternative to overtime where it has been mutually agreed between the colleague and their line manager.
- TOIL should only be offered where it can be taken within a reasonable period of time.
- Ideally, once 7 hours of TOIL (3.5 in Retail) has been accrued, this should be arranged to be taken within the next month. Where this cannot be accommodated overtime should be paid instead.
- A lack of budget is no reason not to pay overtime.

## Open Counters

The Branch Network Development Programme, that is affecting all Barclays Branches, will result in Branches having either fully closed or fully open counters. Open counters are supported by a counting house with strict limits on transactions.

The open/closed decision is based on a number of factors and in the main, the Regional and Area Directors would prefer the 'look' of the fully open counter proposition. Barclays Security team provide specialist advice and guidance concerning the geographical risk of the Branches and this has a huge bearing on the final outcome.

Where this specialist advice is ignored,

Unite have pushed for an additional risk assessment to be signed by the Business with all of the legal implications this has for that signatory.

We have successfully challenged the only decision to date to install fully open counters in a Branch that was in our opinion and that of the Banks security experts inadvisable and which would, we felt be putting staff at additional and avoidable risk.

If your branch is scheduled to have open counters and you are concerned please contact your local Unite H&S Rep.

We will continue to challenge as necessary!

## Staff Abuse

Posters are available from Communis (reference 9903584) politely advising customers that Barclays will not tolerate abusive behaviour towards its staff.

The decision to display these is left with the Branch Manager and whilst some Managers have displayed this poster, many Managers chose not to.

Unite would like to see these posters displayed in all Branches – let's face it, we see this in the offices and workplaces of many responsible employers – take a look for yourself!

If you don't see this poster in your site, ask your Branch Manager why not and get one ordered!

# Reasonable Adjustments

All employers have a duty under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 to make reasonable adjustments to enable those staff covered by the act to work on a level playing field with their colleagues.

Whilst there is no defined list of conditions covered by the DDA, as a guide the condition should have lasted or be likely to last 12 months or more and impact your ability to continue normal life both in work and at home.

Through Partnership and consultation, a process has been agreed to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made in a speedy, cost effective manner and this process, together with some frequently asked questions, is outlined on the Bank's HR Intranet site.

The "Information Box" below briefly outlines the process.

It is important that all staff and Line Managers recognise that support is available so that the proper equipment

and adjustments are made at the workplace to ensure accessibility, safe working & optimum comfort.

It's about bums on seats - if we can provide adjustments to elements of a workstation that address chronic health issues e.g. poor back health, we will ensure that staff work without unnecessary pain and we can hopefully reduce sickness absence and the difficulties associated with working with reduced staff numbers.

## 1. Initial Request

The initial request may come about in the following scenarios:

- Annual Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment raises issues
- New employee with existing disabilities
- Existing employee develops disabilities
- Employee returning from long term sickness absence
- Employee raising concerns about pain whilst undertaking their role

## 2. Referral for assessment

All assessments are arranged via the Barclays Occupational Health Providers, AXA ICAS

Assessments may take one of three forms:

- Telephone assessment
- Face to Face assessment with an AXA ICAS assessor
- Face to Face assessment with a specialist assessor e.g. Royal National Institute of the Blind

Before they proceed, AXA ICAS will ask to confirm that a DSE has been recently completed and that the member of staff has seen their GP; *any DSE or previous assessments will need to be available at the appointment*

## 3. The Appointment

The member of staff will be telephoned by AXA ICAS normally within 48 hours of the referral and this conversation determines whether a face to face referral appointment needs to be booked

## 4. The Report

On completion of either a telephone assessment or a face to face assessment, AXA ICAS will produce a written report containing the findings of the assessment, advice and details of any specific equipment that needs to be ordered and will be sent out within 10 days of the assessment.

## 5. The Ordering Process

AXA ICAS **DO NOT** order any equipment and this responsibility currently lies with the Line Manager. Despite a good follow up process, we do find that this can be where the process stalls. Members of staff concerned must push their Line Manager if there seems to be no progress on ordering equipment or following advice given. Most Line Managers are not that familiar with ordering equipment and despite guidance being given and support available, some Line Managers struggle with this part and some leave it on the 'too difficult to do' pile. The Health & Safety Business Partners, Barclays Reasonable Adjustment officer and your Unite Health & Safety Reps are there at the end of the telephone and can help resolve these issues.

## 6. The Follow Up Process

As mentioned, the Line Manager is required to send a return within 2 weeks of receiving the report and after 8 weeks AXA ICAS will write to the member of staff for whom the assessment has been carried out to find out if the adjustments have been successful.

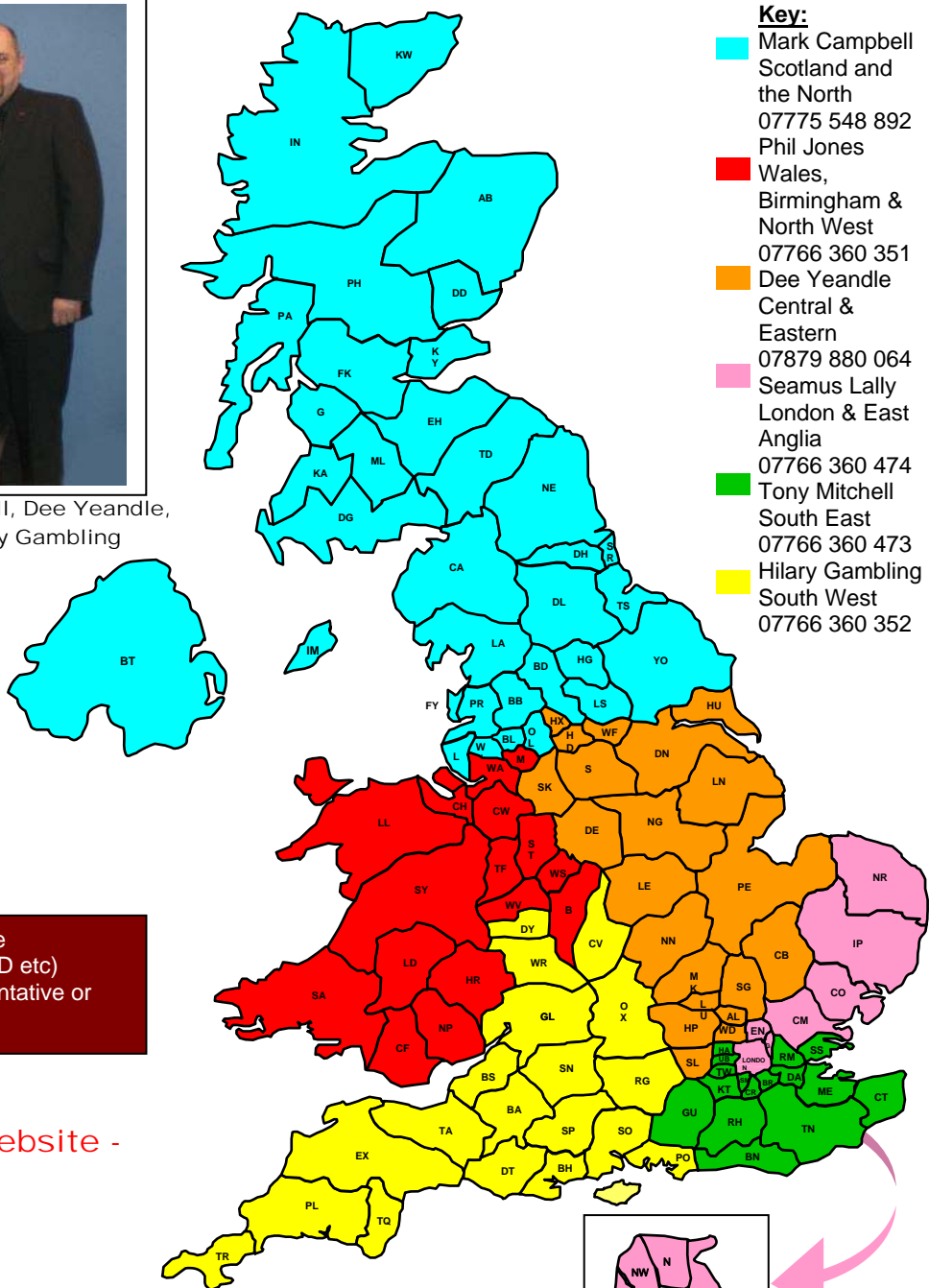
# HEALTH & SAFETY MATTERS



Unite is committed to improving health and safety in all Barclays workplaces. There is a network of seconded union Health and Safety Reps working for union members throughout the bank. These reps are all fully trained and have external qualifications in Health and Safety - they are there to assist members with any health and safety issues that may arise. To find the Representative for your area please refer to the map below.



Back Row (L-R): Mark Campbell, Tony Mitchell, Dee Yeandle, Phil Jones. Seated (L-R): Seamus Lally, Hilary Gambling



Members of Unite are entitled to free legal advice. Representation services cover a range of issues both inside and outside the workplace. Unite can help with personal injury claims, employment matters, wills, conveyancing and many other legal issues.

Telephone our 24-hour helpline on 0870 240 4545 for further information.

For help with general workplace issues (for example Disciplinary and Grievance issues, problems with PD etc) please contact your local Unite Workplace Representative or the Barclays helpline on 0844 7360134.

To join Unite please visit our website - [www.unitetheunion.com](http://www.unitetheunion.com)

THIS POSTER CAN BE DISPLAYED ON YOUR STAFF NOTICEBOARD

