

BANK ROCKED BY UNION CAMPAIGN

HFC Bank ignored two polite communications from UNITE the Union – Amicus section requesting onsite access to staff for recruitment purposes. But Britain's biggest trade union won't be ignored... and our proud response has **ROCKED** the Bank!



THE WEEK THAT ROCKED THE BANK:

Monday 23rd April – A GIANT Amicus van was parked outside the Bank's main operations centre, at Edmund St, Birmingham. Thousands of staff smiled as they walked past it into work.

A hard-hitting "Voyeur Employer" leaflet was handed simultaneously to all staff at major sites as staff came into work between 6am and 10am. The leaflet slammed HFC policy which bans Fathers and Sons from working together, and threatens to discipline staff who "get close with a colleague" and do not tell management about it!

A poetry/song lyric competition was also launched - the responses received to date are all hilarious, but sadly too indecent to put into print!

Tuesday 24th – The bank was rocked as it realised that all 200 of its high street HFC branches had also been hit. Unite local offices received many calls from HFC workers across the UK who were unaware that

they could join us. The response was overwhelmingly positive.

Wednesday 25th - HFC were informed that Unite have registered a very serious discrimination matter with an Employment Tribunal. Meanwhile, a sacked member in Birmingham walked back into work with her head held high because Unite won re-instatement upon appeal.

Thursday 26th - Posters condemning fat-cat executive pay in banks were received at all 200 HFC branches. Meanwhile, basic pay at HFC remains as miserable as £11,500.

Friday 27th - From 6am to 10am, all major HFC sites were leafleted, the leaflet was also sent to all 200 HFC branches. This newsletter informs staff that they have a right to join Unite, a right to be informed about union recognition, and the right to choose recognition. We proudly announced that we will not allow HFC to obstruct staff from making these choices.

There has always been a "fear factor" in non-union multi-national companies, HFC is no different; like 19th Century Mill Owners, the company maintains that it is a disciplinary offence for workers to discuss salary or other terms and conditions. There is no reputable excuse for this.

Our campaign has given workers hope, we have shown that the Union is itself a powerful organisation that can change things and make things happen. We have shown that we bring balance to the unequal relationship between employer and employee and are making clear that all workers in all sectors can "Unite with confidence".

These observations will not be lost on the employer - Unite does not anticipate that its communications will be deliberately ignored again.

Until real progress is made on the Union Recognition agenda, our campaign will continue to gather momentum.

"The Union in HFC is not going away. Without recognition, we will take issues and concerns directly into the public arena. It is only through recognition of Unite that HFC can ensure staff are getting the representation they deserve."

Rick Coyle, Regional Officer

HSBC Cards Update

- We recently represented a member who works to beyond 10pm, but is not paid the shift allowance. The business has agreed to back-date payment of the shift-allowance to when our member starting working those hours.

As a result of this one grievance, we understand that some 26 staff will now start to receive the shift allowance after 10pm, they will also get this back paid to the date they commenced working these hours. This will mean back pay of several thousand pounds for some staff.

We understand that this matter had previously been raised at the "Peoples Forum" - without success.

- Unite is fully recognised by HSBC Cards at Southend. We are now close to the numbers required for triggering the statutory recognition procedure at Edmund Street. Unite will be saddened if we have to do this, having been the legitimate voice of Midland / HSBC staff since 1917.
- Cards and Fraud have introduced the "Belle Curve" for pay rises. HFC are interpreting this HSBC idea to mean that the "bottom 10%" of staff MUST NOT be allowed a pay rise, even if performance for these individuals is excellent. Unite does not accept that the "Belle Curve" should work in this way, or that HSBC want it to. We strongly advise members to contact us who have not had a pay rise.



Other issues

Sick pay - the number of grievances relating to HFC's hugely unpopular sickness procedures continues to rise, even managers with 20 years service don't get paid if they are off with a broken leg. Whatever the savings may be with this mean scheme, Unite hopes to play a positive role in helping the business to understand the damage this policy is doing to loyal staff in time of need

Ethical Selling - staff should not be pressurised into selling insurance or other products to the public that may not be in the customers' best interests. Targets must be pro-rata for part-time staff, or they are illegal. If you have any ethical concerns about the way your department is run, you can contact Unite in absolute confidence.

Unite believes that the number of disciplinary cases involving compliance related matters has increased sharply in recent months. Perhaps surprisingly, it is often "top performers" that find themselves in such situations.

WORKING FOR YOU IN HFC BANK

Rick Coyle, West Midlands Regional Organiser, Unite the Union