

UNITE IN HFC BANK

JOBS AXE FALLS AS NEW BOSSES GET TOUGH

HFC staff are devastated by a series of announcements concerning “off-shoring” and heavy job losses. Bosses have tried to down-play the misery, by only telling the directly affected staff about bad news.

The Bank has announced the killing of its Endeavour Finance subsidiary. The sackings of its loyal workforce has already been implemented, although other HFC workers have been kept in the dark about this.

Birmingham Operations are being particularly badly hit:

- Mail and scanning functions to move to Coventry HSBC DSC by November 2008
- Customer Services to be “offshored” by March 2009
- Banking Services – project underway to explore the scope for more “off-shoring”
- Reconciliations – 60% of staff to be “offshored” by March 2009
- HFC Birmingham to become wholly located within Camden House
- Collections, OA and Complaints departments to be “migrated” into HSBC, but there will not be jobs for everyone

Job losses have also been announced at Winkfield, including savage cuts in HR staffing, and more still are feared.

HFC are being coy over the total number of jobs that will be lost. However it is clear to everyone that the recent announcements are very significant and will change the business beyond recognition.

Reaction to the announcements has been very mixed. Privately, many HFC Departmental Managers feel very let down that HSBC took four years to decide what it wanted to do with the business.

This has led to four years of anxiety – four years of staff worrying that announcements of this nature were going to be made. As one DM put it,

“We’ve all been left dangling by four years of HSBC dithering over what to do with us.....if dithering was a criminal offence, HSBC would be behind bars”

Morale is at rock bottom, and the business is now gripped with acute anxiety. The detailed announcement letter to all Birmingham staff raised more questions than it answered.

HFC are very aware that the staff would really benefit from being properly represented at this “challenging time”, but continue to refuse to recognise your union. This will only change if large numbers of staff join us.

REDUNDANCY “PACKAGES” – What You Need To Know

Last year, Unite objected strongly to the way the Bank dealt with the sackings of its Regional Collectors. In particular, the “at risk” period before redundancy notices were served was a paltry 30 days – the statutory minimum. Unite is hopeful the Bank will not be quite so mean this time.

Unite has reminded HFC that under the job security agreement between Unite and HSBC, the minimum “at risk” period should be not less than four months.

It is unclear as yet what redundancy pay – and “at risk” policy the Bank will follow. In the past, there has not been a consistent policy and some departments have been treated better than others. It would at least be a start if HFC would be so good as to be up front and transparent as to how it is proposing to move forwards.

The question “Will we get HSBC redundancy pay” – is answered with a big fat NO. But there is no legitimate excuse offered.

Branch Network – Managers Conditions Under Attack

The Bank has turned it's fire upon it's loyal Branch Manager workforce.

Branch Managers have a contractual, legally binding entitlement to claim back the expense of parking their vehicle during the working day.

The Bank has unlawfully withdrawn this contractual benefit. The Bank knows that it's behaviour towards it's managers is unlawful, but has proceeded regardless. It has calculated that it's Managers will meekly accept any nonsense it throws at them.

Unite believes HFC has underestimated the moral fibre and resolve of it's managers and is politely giving the Bank the month of September in which to reconsider it's position. Beyond September, Unite will be taking further steps in support of our manager members.

In the meantime, members are advised to continue to make claims for parking in the usual way.

Paul Dawson – Blackburn Branch Manager – is now also your Unite Rep in HFC.

Things are starting to change – speak to Paul to report problems, or to get a form to join us for the protection union membership brings.

Branch Network – all staff under the cosh

Unite is hearing reports of Branch staff of all grades being placed under intense pressure by Regional Management.

Your Union was shocked and appalled to see one email to from a Regional Manager which included “JFDI”. Those of you that understand what this obscene management jargon stands for will share our dismay that bullies and idiots continue to disrespect staff and use it in the year 2008

There is a real problem in the branches with staff turnover, as new entrants tend to regard the pressure as excessive and hand in their notice. A complete change in the culture of people management is required if this is to change, and Unite doubts this mammoth task could succeed without the staff being represented and closely involved in how the business moves forward.

It is reasonable for HFC staff to expect no less than HSBC values, policies and standards. Elsewhere in HSBC, staff are represented collectively by Unite the Union. There is no reputable reason for this not to be the case within HFC.

THE BELL CURVE – What You Need To Know

HFC are bedded to some extreme management nonsense that has been imported from the USA.

This includes the grotesque belief that “the bottom 10%” of the workforce should be “managed out” every year. HFC use it's “Bell Curve” to identify the “bottom 10%” – who are then expected to be sacked by line management.

There is no moral or legal bases for this ruthless, nasty and extreme policy. It brings misery to loyal, decent people, and destroys the goodwill and morale of the very staff it is intended to keep in line.

The HFC Bell Curve has unfairness specially built into it. The so-called “bottom 10%” may have performed really well. But they would still face the misery of a performance improvement plan, and ultimately dismissal. A top performer with twenty years experience may have just buried her husband, yet in the latest appraisal could find herself in the “bottom 10%”

THERE IS MUCH THAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN HFC. UNITE IS NOT SIMPLY A SERVICE THAT HELPS PEOPLE FACING INDIVIDUAL GRIEVANCE OR DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS – WE BELIEVE IN GETTING MEMBERS TO ACT COLLECTIVELY TO CHANGE WORK FOR THE BETTER.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A BETTER, FAIRER HFC – AND UNION RECOGNITION IS SOMETHING STAFF NEED TO HELP US SUCCEED.

Don't be alone

Don't be the “one in ten”

Be one of the two million members of Britains biggest, proudest and best Trade Union – Join Unite today – and lets organise for fairness, decency and transparency for all in HFC Bank.

Rick Coyle, Unite - Amicus Section 0121 569 8900

Join on line on www.unitetheunion.com/hfc