



# SITE CLOSURE ANNOUNCEMENT – THEALE BUSINESS SERVICES & RETAIL BANKING 24/7

***In April 2009 the Royal Bank of Scotland Group announced a global reduction of 9000 jobs across its Business Services Division, 4500 of which will be in the UK. Following recent consultations with Unite, the bank has announced the closure of the Theale site which impacts on members working in Business Services RCSC Ops and OSAC, as well as Retail Private Banking.***

## Impact of restructure & rationale

The restructure will impact all of the c. 280 staff on site. The proposals centre around the bank's plans to move out of Arlington Park following the expiry of the lease arrangement later this year. This is in line with the plans announced as part of the Group's ongoing Strategic Review to reduce costs and create efficiencies by ensuring locations are optimal for their operations. It is anticipated that many of the changes will take effect by June 2010, with some staff remaining until September to ensure transition of roles and to allow for contingency.

## Reduction in business services roles and transfer of work to Reading & Farnborough

Much of the activity undertaken by the RCSC Ops Teams will be transferred to other work locations, resulting in the loss of 166 roles. These roles will be placed at risk of redundancy. In addition the bank is planning to transfer the work undertaken by 30 Business Services Clerical B front line telephony staff, 2 Team Leader Roles and all Retail Private Banking roles to a new work location at Farnborough. There will be no reduction in the overall number of Retail Private Banking roles, although it is recognised that not all staff

maybe able to transfer. The work undertaken by the OSAC Team will relocate to Reading.

## Managing reductions

The bank has confirmed that a Voluntary Redundancy (VR) register will be opened for all at risk staff to provide the opportunity to apply for VR from the outset. In addition the bank is committed through ongoing engagement with Unite, to minimise the impact of Compulsory Redundancy (CR) by seeking redeployment opportunities for any member of staff who wishes to remain with the Group.

Unite has agreed a number of redundancy mitigation measures to further reduce the potential for CRs, full detail of these measures will be provided to all at risk employees in their Employee Communication pack and should be discussed in detail with line management in the first instance. In certain circumstances help with additional travel costs will be considered where an alternative role has been identified but is not within reasonable travelling distance and the bank have committed to supporting individuals who may wish to consider working at another location. Whilst the bank has acknowledged that redeployment opportunities are limited, in certain circumstances the bank will give consideration to voluntary role reduction where an opportunity may exist for a member of

staff who is at risk to consider taking a downgrade in role subject to availability of roles. For those who do leave the bank's employment, full outplacement support will be provided.

## Relocation of work to Farnborough and Reading

During consultations, Unite also explored further the rationale for the relocation of work and expressed concern over the suitability of Farnborough as a new work location taking into account travelling distance, additional expense and domestic circumstances. The bank recognises that for some employees this new work location may present some challenges and have committed to engaging further with Unite after the completion of 1:1 meetings. Unite has stressed that we do not expect a situation where staff are being unreasonably expected to travel where they have genuine circumstances that prevent them from doing so. The bank has advised that they will take a pragmatic and realistic approach and will consider all cases on an individual basis.

Any individual who has a concern over relocating to Farnborough should raise this in the first instance with line management and in the event that problems persist you should speak to your local workplace representative or contact our Helpline for support and advice.

## Next steps

Over the coming days and weeks members will attend 1:1 meetings to discuss how the restructure impacts upon them. All those at risk will have the opportunity to opt for VR or redeployment, however the bank reserve the right to decline VR, eg if there is a requirement to retain skilled staff or where they believe a new work location is within reasonable travelling distance. Unite however does not support a position where VR is declined when other members of staff, in the same pool or who have the same skill set/role may be at risk of CR. 166 roles will be displaced outright, ie the role ceases to exist, if you do not wish to apply for VR, then the bank and Unite will support you through the redeployment process.

If the number of jobs specific to the role that you undertake are being reduced and you do not wish to opt for VR, as is the case for the Appointed A Team Managers, you will be placed into a selection pool, with matrix selection for the role being undertaken. Questions on pooling should be addressed via line management in the first instance.

**Unite will also be holding a workplace surgery at Theale on Wednesday 27 January, details of which will be provided to you by local management or via your local workplace representative.**

## Unite comment

This announcement confirms the worst fears for impacted staff during a period of continued anxiety across the Group. It is a bitter blow to those who have been affected by these latest announcements and who have continued to work tirelessly through the ongoing difficulties that the Group faces. Unite retains a position of complete opposition to CRs and urges RBS to undertake every conceivable measure to avoid CRs. Your trade union welcomes the commitment from the bank to work with Unite to avoid any such redundancies.

Whilst our immediate concerns are focused on those staff who are at risk of redundancy, Unite also have concerns for those staff that will remain post restructure. During consultations, your trade union explored further the business rationale for the proposed headcount reductions in some detail and expressed concern for those staff that will remain and face the inevitably difficult and challenging task of driving the bank's recovery. The bank advised however that whilst they recognise the challenges that lie ahead, they are confident that the new structure will not adversely impact upon workloads and that staff will be fully supported and trained in learning new skills and developing in their roles as appropriate. The bank has also committed to ongoing dialogue with Unite, where we will have an opportunity to raise any such concerns.

Unite does however have remaining concerns given the proposed headcount reductions that there is a real prospect of CRs. Therefore any members at risk of redundancy who wish to remain with the Group and feel they may have been unfairly selected for redundancy, feel that insufficient efforts are being made to support redeployment or have concerns regarding the selection/pooling exercise should contact Unite for support, advice and where appropriate representation.

If members have any queries that management are unable to respond to regarding the announcement and the impact upon them they should contact the RBS Helpline or speak to their local workplace representative. Unite will do everything possible to ensure that any members impacted who wish to remain with the Group, ultimately continue their employment with RBS.

## Not a Member?

Join Unite's two million members and have a voice in the workplace, as well as receiving support and representation for £10.96 per month for full time staff and £4.98 per month for part time staff working less than 20 hours a week. Membership forms can be obtained by phoning **0845 850 4242** or you can join on line at **[www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org)**