



# RETAIL BRANCH NETWORK A BETTER PLACE TO WORK?

***During the extensive and on-going discussions with RBS regarding the Retail Transformation Programme, UNITE has continued to raise key issues that are impacting upon the day to day working experience of members within the Retail Branch Network (RBN). UNITE maintains that a number of the challenges and issues facing our members can be avoided or easily remedied to the mutual benefit of the employees and employer.***

***As previously communicated, RBS has committed to engaging with UNITE on an on-going basis to seek ways of improving the RBN as a place to work. The RBN is a crucial function of the Group and it is vitally important that members feel valued and motivated, are rewarded for their work and performance, as well as being able to carry out their role in a workplace that inspires pride, not fear.***

## RBN – a tough place to work?

There is no question that the RBN is a pressurised environment, with heavy footfall, processes and procedures to follow, customers to serve and sales targets to achieve. The rewards in a high performing branch can be good; many members enjoy the working environment, the customers, their colleagues and the challenge. Working life in the RBN can be challenging; however a number of the issues are eminently avoidable.

The Retail Representatives on the RBS National Company Committee recently met to agree on the key issues impacting UNITE members within the RBN, many of which represent long standing challenges, highlighting the urgent need to address these.

Whilst RBS staff face daily pressures regardless of the division that they operate within, staff in the RBN do encounter some specific challenges and UNITE has identified six headlines issues (detailed overleaf) and believe that their successful resolution is central to making the RBN a better place to work.

## Next steps

UNITE has and will continue to meet with Senior Management within Branch Banking and UNITE welcomes the apparent genuine commitment to address issues affecting staff within the RBN. What is recognised is that the bank and trade union will not always agree on what needs to change and where agreement exists, the views on how change should be implemented will not always converge. UNITE and RBS have a shared aim to improve the working environment in the RBN, which is far from desperate, but equally not perfect.

What is also recognised is that change will not happen overnight and UNITE will happily work with RBS to implement changes that have a positive impact on the working environment of our members, although equally UNITE will challenge, criticise and campaign where the union believe that policy and action are not evolving quick enough or improvements are not visible. UNITE will continue to raise with the employer issues that our members and Workplace Reps feed in to demonstrate the size and scope of the

challenges within the RBN and the union welcomes any views, ideas or feedback via [rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org](mailto:rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org).

## UNITE comment

The union believes that all staff within the RBN attend work each day to do their best, to contribute their all, to achieve a good days performance for the benefit of themselves, their colleagues, the customer and the bank. Members want to sell the correct products to the appropriate customers, will go the extra mile for the bank, but expect give and take. Members know what their targets and objectives are, they do not relish the end of a day or week short of their target and as such performance audios or Whiteboards are not required to reinforce the point. Support, encouragement and respect are required and need to be instilled across the RBN. There are fantastic people working across the RBN at all levels, providing a top quality service for RBS customers and the bank needs to deliver a top quality working environment.

## UNITE representatives

UNITE is always seeking members to take on one of the four UNITE Representative Roles i.e. Workplace, Union Learning, Safety and Equality. It is particularly important within the RBS Branches in England and Wales, as well as the Natwest Branches in Scotland, as it is vital that union organisation is improved in advance of the recently announced divestments.

Any UNITE members interested in finding out more about becoming a UNITE Representative, please contact the UNITE RBS Helpline or e-mail [rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org](mailto:rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org).

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## Overtime/Unpaid Overtime

UNITE calls for an end to the practice of unpaid overtime. Legitimate operational unpaid overtime represents a breach of contract and bank policy. Where overtime is worked, payment should always be the first option, with TOIL practiced only where there is mutual agreement. Unpaid overtime masks issues of understaffing and the achievability or otherwise of targets and objectives. Across all employers, over five million people at work in the UK regularly do unpaid overtime, giving their employers £27.4 billion of free work every year.

## Targets/Target Monitoring/Performance Audios

UNITE calls for an end to excessive target monitoring, including performance audios to be replaced by structured, regular 1to1s. Targets should be achievable and realistic. UNITE does not support the use of Whiteboards to record individual targets and performance, this information should be confidential; no such information should be publicly displayed. Members have reported being intimidated and humiliated by the use of Whiteboards.

## Staffing Levels

UNITE calls upon RBS to ensure that Retail Branches are resourced at the correct benchmark numbers. Where Branches or Regions operate under headcount for reasons outside of the control of RBS, then these periods should be taken into account at year-end when assessing performance and eligibility for bonus. The bank should also deploy the use of paid overtime and additional resources to manage such periods of understaffing.

## Zero Tolerance to Cash Balancing

UNITE opposes the re-emergence of objectives around zero tolerance to cash differences, an approach that represents an unachievable target. RBS should ensure that no such targets are in operation across the Retail Branch Network.

## Flexible Resourcing Principles

UNITE calls upon RBS to ensure the consistent and correct implementation of the Flexible Resourcing Principles particularly in respect of the 5-day working week and branch transfers/flexible working requests.

## Respect

UNITE call upon RBS to eradicate instances of inappropriate behaviour being demonstrated within the Retail Branch Network, such as threats being made when targets are not achieved, including level 2 ratings, disciplinary hearings, evening or weekend work to fill diaries with no payment.

**NOT  
A  
MEMBER?**

Join Unite's two million members and have a voice on this and other issues, as well as receiving support, advice and representation, for £10.96 a 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 e-mailing **rbsinfo@unitetheunion.org**, plus you can join on-line at **www.unitetheunion.org**.

