

ProActive

*Taking Initiative · Hands On · Down To Business
Positive · Upbeat · Acting Rather Than Reacting*



**A PUBLICATION FOR
UNITE NAG MEMBERS**

JUNE 2007

Welcome...



Pictured above:
Mary Alexander
Wendy Dunsmore
Unite National Secretaries

to the first edition of **ProActive**, the Unite the Union – Amicus Section newsletter for Union members in National Australia Group.

We hope to provide a twice yearly update of news, views and your feedback.

We recognise the pace of change for our members has been fast and furious over the last 3 years with 1,700 job losses, branch closures and outsourcings high on the Company agenda. Old departments and divisions have been removed/restructured/realigned – BDS, ECCC and IFS to name a few.

The latest Company results are encouraging and we feel it is time the Company recognised the employees' contribution to the turnaround by addressing some of the key challenges facing our members – staffing shortages, stretching targets, long hours and unpaid overtime.

Corporate Social Responsibility also plays an important part in the Company's strategy and we will continue to focus on Dignity At Work and achieving a decent Work/Life Balance for all.

In this issue we look at some of the recent legislative changes on Age and Family Friendly policies and provide an insight into the Company's Agenda for Change including Reward and Diversity.

We hope you find this **ProActive** interesting. Please do contact us with any ideas or comments.

Mary Alexander and Wendy Dunsmore
Unite National Secretaries

NAG TEAM WINS MEDAL FOR EQUALITIES

The Unite the Union - Amicus Section Reps will receive a gold medal for their work with NAG on Diversity issues.

The Amicus team were responsible for initiating and securing NAG agreements to the following:

- Glass Ceiling Workshops for Women which led to the Diversity Strategy priorities.
- Two Ticks Symbol for Disabled employees.
- NAG sign up to the Amicus Equal Pay Charter.
- Introduction of money saving Childcare Vouchers.

The Reps will receive their award at the Unite the Union - Amicus Section Union Conference in June this year.



Childcare vouchers - Have you signed up?

Did you know that you can save between £916 and £1,195 per year on tax and National Insurance using the Childcare Vouchers Scheme NAG has just introduced following representations made by Amicus?

How much you save will depend on your tax band and salary level.

Each employee can purchase vouchers up to a maximum value of £243 per month.

If you are claiming either Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Sick Pay, Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit, you should check what impact this will have if you take up Childcare Vouchers.

NAG has selected a company called Accor Services as the provider. **To find out more or to enrol on the Scheme contact: Accor, 0870 365 1248.**

Please have your Employer's Scheme ID ready, which is NATI0402, your Employee Number and Cost Centre. Your manager will have the latter information if you don't know this. You should also have details of your childcare provider when enrolling.



message from **Jenni Brown** Union Chair - NCC, in NAG

Dear Colleagues

I work in Brechin branch and have worked for Clydesdale Bank for over 18 years. During that time I have seen many changes as the Company has sought to adapt to the changing marketplace.

It has been a very tough 2 or 3 years for all staff in Clydesdale Bank and Yorkshire Bank with the radical changes affecting everybody.

Whilst I am pleased that the Company is on the road to recovery, the Union has an important job to do persuading the Company to address the challenges which make our members' life at work difficult. Issues such as staffing shortages, long hours, unrealistic targets, unpaid overtime and dysfunctional behaviour creeping in to some areas of work.

As Union Chair of NCC in NAG, I am determined that the next year should be one in which Work/Life Balance and Dignity At Work is a reality for our members.

I am delighted and proud also that the hard work of Union Reps and Officials, Mary Alexander and Wendy Dunsmore, has been recognised by Amicus who are presenting NAG Reps with an Equality Award for our groundbreaking work on Glass Ceiling issues in NAG.

Yours
Jenni Brown



WORKPLACE REPS



NAG recognises Amicus as an important stakeholder within the group and the introduction of the Workplace Rep structure will be positively viewed as helping the group to improve the way we do business.



Lynne Peacock, CEO UK of NAB

Since Lynne Peacock launched Amicus' Workplace Rep Scheme last year, we have recruited over 30 Reps. We have concentrated our efforts on supporting new Reps in this role and ensuring everyone has had Stage 1 training from Amicus. We have also had two Workplace Reps Conferences with presentations on Diversity, Health & Safety and How Union Engagement Works. Here is what the Reps think of their more active Union role and the difference it makes:

"My manager has been very supportive of my role."

Mandy Westby, Vice Chair, NAG NCC.

"We talk about the issues that are bothering staff locally and try and resolve things before they get out of control."

Jenni Brown, Union Chair, NAG NCC.

"I have every potential member in my branch signed up as a Union voice."

Neil Dooley, Workplace Rep, Chesterfield.

"I am much more aware of what the Union is doing and can feed this back to members directly."

Sally Hill, Unite the Union - Amicus Section Seconded Representative South.

"I have learned a great deal from the Union's Reps training. My communication, influencing and representational skills are much improved."

Julie Mullock, Workplace Rep, Crewe

We are always looking to expand our Workplace Reps numbers and are looking for more Reps in all areas of CYB, particularly IFS, BDS and CS&D. For further information on Workplace Reps, please contact Jan Douglas on 0141 222 6510 and ask for our leaflet or call the Seconded Reps (details below).



AMS & Technology closures undermine the Company's commitment to Yorkshire Bank and Leeds

Many members expressed their shock and disappointment with the announcement of the closure of Account Management Services in Brunswick Point with the loss of 53 jobs.

Whilst this is good news for the Clydebank area, the Union asked for an urgent meeting to discuss the Bank's commitment to YB.

Glenn King met with the Union shortly after and highlighted the current investment of £9 million in refurbishing Merrion Way and focused on the growth areas of business which will remain in Leeds.

Glenn also pointed to a number of new initiatives underway to reinforce the Company's commitment to the YB brand. A senior leaders' forum meets regularly to discuss these issues and the Company will now keep the Union up-to-date with their activities. Ask your Union Rep for an update if you would like any further information. In the meantime, the Union will be doing

its best to ensure that no-one is made compulsory redundant and that every redeployment opportunity for members who wish to stay with the Company is thoroughly explored.

Hot on the heels of the AMS announcement was the Leeds and Belfast Technology site closures and restructuring of Glasgow operations with the loss or outsourcing of over 100 jobs.

Amicus Officer, Mary Alexander, said "We do not believe that the outsourcing option is in the best interests of our members and we have questioned management's commitment to the Leeds based operation when so many jobs are being lost, relocated or outsourced.

Amicus Reps have been working very hard meeting with the transferee companies - Certegy, beCogent and Accenture - in a bid to thrash out a deal which will safeguard our members' interests and ease the transition to the new company".

APPRAISAL RATING YOUR PAY RISE DEPENDS ON IT

Many of you will have received your interim appraisal rating. It is extremely important that you challenge your rating now if you feel it is unfair as it may be too late to do anything when it comes to your final appraisal rating for the performance year. For further information contact your local or Seconded Representative (see below for who to contact) or ask for a copy of the Amicus guide to Performance Management in NAG.



IFS

Amicus Reps have been working hard in IFS meeting with Mike Williams and David Thorburn on a regular basis.

Hot topics of late have been bonus payouts, Associate and Private Partner gradings, and the much talked about Junior Partner role. We have secured upgradings for some 40 plus Associates with backdated pay awarded for the previous 12 months.

More recently we have had a number of discussions with the Company on the Junior Partner role to tighten up the criteria around the job role and advertising and recruiting to fill vacancies.

Whilst we have concerns around the Junior Partner framework, we support the principle of "growing your own" and will monitor the recruitment and selection of Junior Partners to ensure that this principle is adhered to and that members interested in taking this career path are subjected to a fair and transparent recruitment process in line with the Company's Diversity strategy and Corporate principles.

If you have any questions or queries, please contact the Union Reps or e-mail us with your views at NAG@amicustheunion.org

Retail

Unite has monthly meetings with Steve Reid, Gary Lumby and Andy Hobbins to discuss strategy and current issues. The hot topics currently are the convergence fiasco in Clydesdale Bank and the unprecedented amount of paid and unpaid overtime staff are expected to do; use of secondments rather than internal ads to fill permanent posts; deputising; unacceptable levels of TOIL accumulated and the perennial staffing shortages. We would like to hear from you with your experience - send us your stories.

Overtime and TOIL

We have been receiving a number of calls from members who are expected to work overtime without payment or unable to take their accumulated TOIL. Here are some of the most commonly asked questions.

What does Overtime mean?

Overtime means you are working over your contracted 35 hours per week. For members on flexible working contracts this means any time over a 35 hour basic week or for non flexible contracts any time given to the Company after they have worked 7 hours in a day. The business may require you to work reasonable additional hours to meet business needs.

Where can I find details of the Overtime policy?

There is a very clear policy entitled Hours of Work – Overtime in the NAG Policy and Procedures Handbook which should be situated in your workplace. You can also access details via the intranet. NAG has said that it will pay for all overtime for qualifying employees that is authorised in advance.

If you believe that you are required to work overtime and then were refused payment, please contact your Union Representative.

My manager wants me to do the overtime but can't get the District Manager's authority. I don't want to let her/him down but don't feel happy about working for free?

If the authorising manager is refusing to sanction the overtime when there is clearly a need for people to stay behind to sort cash differences or do telesales, then don't do it.

There are lots of areas of good practice in CYB where managers recognise people are working over their time to get the job done and adhering to the Overtime/TOIL policy with no problem. Your area should not be any different.

Talk to other Union members who are being paid for overtime or receiving TOIL and highlight the areas of good practice to your manager.

Is it right that we have to work until 5.15 pm and we can't claim Overtime?

No, you need only work your contracted hours - 35 per week if it is a flexible contract and 7 hours per day if it is a non flexible contract. Overtime can be claimed only when you have completed 15 minutes. You can't, for example, claim for 10 minutes overtime per day but you can claim 20 minutes because you have gone over the 15 minutes.

I am only allowed to take TOIL and can't take Overtime?

This is wrong. Whilst your manager may express a preference for you to take TOIL, if you prefer overtime then you can exercise your right to have a payment.

I have accumulated a lot of TOIL but we are so busy my manager can't schedule in the time for me to take TOIL?

Your manager should be seeking additional resources if you cannot be spared to take your TOIL. If you have accumulated lots of hours over a certain period and are getting nowhere taking your time, then you need to talk to your Workplace Representative to escalate the issue. It's your entitlement and you should make sure you get it or it's converted to overtime.

Unite the Union - Amicus Section is aware that there are problems with the level of overtime being undertaken, particularly the unpaid element. There is no facility within either Clydesdale Bank or Yorkshire Bank for unpaid overtime. If you work overtime you are entitled to be paid for it, regardless of whether it is for teleconsulting, cash shortages or just the catching up of the day's work. We are pressing the Bank to address the issue of TOIL which is not taken and overtime which is not authorised. We will keep you posted on developments. You should contact your Workplace Representative if you are experiencing problems.

Age Discrimination: Normal Retirement

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, which came into force on 1st October 2006, apply to many aspects of employment and vocational training. They prohibit unjustified direct and indirect age discrimination, and all harassment and victimisation on grounds of age, of people of any age, young or old.

As well as applying to retirement where a national default retirement age of 65 has been introduced, they:

- remove the upper age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy rights, giving older workers the same rights to claim unfair dismissal or receive a redundancy payment as younger workers, unless there is a genuine retirement;

- allow pay and non-pay benefits to continue which depend on length of service requirements of 5 years or less or which recognise and reward loyalty and experience and motivate staff;
- remove the age limits for Statutory Sick Pay, Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Adoption Pay and Statutory Paternity Pay, so that the legislation for all four statutory payments applies in exactly the same way to all;
- remove the lower and upper age limits in the statutory redundancy scheme;
- provide exemptions for many age-based rules in occupational pension schemes.

Employees will have the right to

request to work beyond the normal retirement age of 65. In line with the pensions reform last year, for employees who are 60 and members of the Defined Benefits Pension Scheme there will be no early retirement (actuarial) reduction. Members can still choose to retire from age 50 (age 55 from 2010) with appropriate pension adjustment.

In NAG a project is underway to ensure the Company's employment policies, processes and procedures comply with the new age regulations. The Union is in discussions with NAG on its proposals to amend the Job Security Agreement on the basis that it breaches the age regulations in some areas. We are strongly contesting this and will keep members updated on developments.

Good News for Expectant Families

The Work and Families Act 2006 has introduced big changes for new mothers and partners. From April 1 2007, same sex partners and employees adopting will also benefit from the increased financial support and access to maternity leave. The legislation, which applies to all full time and part time employees under a contract of employment, includes the following:

- 39 weeks statutory maternity pay.
- 52 weeks maternity leave, comprising 26 weeks ordinary maternity leave and 26 weeks additional maternity leave.
- Continuation of contractual benefits during ordinary maternity leave.
- 10 optional "keeping in touch days" to allow a woman to work during her maternity leave.
- Paid time off to attend antenatal appointments.
- The right for employees with young and disabled children to request flexible working patterns
- Parental leave for both mothers and fathers.
- Adoption pay extended from six to nine months.
- Legal protection under sex discrimination legislation against unfair treatment.

Unite the Union - Amicus Section has submitted a number of proposals to NAG on improving their Family Friendly policies including increased Maternity, Paternity and Adoption pay; paid Emergency Carer leave; extension of Flexible Working policy to all; paid leave for employees undergoing assisted conception such as IVF treatment.



What is the Union Doing?

We are currently travelling around the country briefing Regional and District Managers in Retail; Heads of IFS Centres across the country and key BDS staff in Clydesdale Bank and elsewhere on what the Union does in NAG.

Following these briefings we are planning a series of visits to IFS Centres in Scotland, England and Wales to recruit members and, of course, Workplace Reps.

We will also be visiting key large sites such as ECCC and Cards & Collections as part of our large site campaigns. We do our best to cover as many sites as possible but can't get round everyone.

We are happy to answer any queries or concerns you have at any time and would advise non-members interested in joining to do this via the simplest route – the internet www.amicustheunion.org.

You will also find a wealth of information there on the Amicus Section of Unite the Union as we are now known.

Changed your name, address, work location or employer?

Don't forget to tell us

It is vital that you keep us up to speed if you move to another part of NAG or simply change location.

Also, if you are an existing Amicus member who has moved to NAG from another employer such as Barclays, RBS, Lloyds TSB, please do let us know. It is really important that we are kept up to speed with your details.

Changes of name, home address and employer are of course important too. For those with internet access, the best way of keeping your details up-to-date is to go to the "My Amicus" section of our website – www.amicustheunion.org where you can log in to change or update your personal details.

We will soon be able to use this information to communicate with members by email so do not leave it too late – update as soon as possible. Paper communications will of course continue too.

You can also access information about Unite the Union in NAG from the website. We will be publishing lists of Reps, contact details as well as posting copies of our bulletins. Follow the "Sectors" link from the homepage, following through "Finance and Business Services" to "Amicus in your Organisation".

UNITE IS HERE FOR YOU

Members will be aware that the historic merger between Amicus and the T&G has created Unite the Union. Unite is a multi-sector union with over 2 million members. It has a large Finance section which grew by 150% in 2006 and has recruited a further 2,000 since the beginning of 2007.

NAG members can still get in touch with their Union in the normal way – by emailing or telephoning.

The launch of Unite was on 1st May and members will shortly start to see our new branding on promotional material and future publications!

Full integration of the two merged Unions will take time but a new membership system will help us to target our communications much better in the future.

Looking for Advice and support from your Union?

We have two full time Seconded Representatives in NAG and over 30 Workplace Representatives. Contact details will be available shortly through the NAG section on Unite the Union - Amicus Section website which we are currently compiling. In the meantime, please contact Sally Hill or Martin McKenzie-Smith whose details are listed here.

Martin McKenzie-Smith

Unite the Union –
Amicus Section

Seconded Rep North

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Sally Hill

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You can also e-mail our support line: NAG@amicustheunion.org