

June 2009



HSBC MEMBERS' UPDATE

Following the announcement in March of the Banks plans to make 1228 redundancies in the UK, Unite has continued the consultation process through a number of meetings.

This figure of 1228 is the number of people who were at risk of redundancy and who may leave through compulsory means. However, taking account of natural attrition, overall there will be 2900 fewer jobs once the bank's plans have been implemented and this does still include the offshoring of a further 500 jobs. Visit www.unitetheunion.com/hsbc to see Unite's previous comment on these job losses.

HSBC JOB LOSSES

In the meetings we have held since the announcement we have been working hard to ensure that compulsory redundancy is avoided wherever possible. We continually press HSBC to adopt the concept of Voluntary Redundancy used by other Financial Institutions in the UK but without success thus far. However we are pleased to note that it is looking more likely that the Bank's predictions on natural attrition (e.g. resignations, retirements etc) will be correct and we continue to work closely with them on the National Redeployment Forum which reviews every case of displacement. Through that forum Unite does all it can to ensure that every displaced person actively seeking redeployment is given every chance to succeed in that aim so that compulsory redundancy is the last resort.

Members will recall that there is a major impact on jobs in Leamington Spa (Warwick) following the decision to create an Investments Centre of Excellence in Southampton. We are pleased to note that 60 or so staff affected have expressed an interest in relocating to Southampton and we have ensured that they will be given priority over any other staff interested in the new posts there.

At the moment it appears that HSBC are not planning anymore job losses in the near future. However, the main criteria for redundancy selection in this and any future job loss programmes will always be appraisal ratings. This means it is more important than ever before for members to be prepared to challenge their rating if they believe it is unfair and they have evidence to back it up. Any member of staff has the right to appeal formally against a rating within 3 months of being advised although we strongly advise anyone wishing to do this not to delay. The Bank are very keen to have a specific spread of appraisal ratings using all the ratings available in a proportion which ensures most staff are rated 3 but where some will always be rated 4 and 5. Occasionally we find cases where staff seem to have been placed into the 4 category simply to make the numbers fit and Unite has represented many members who decided to challenge.

Unite will only represent members in formal meetings on matters such as Appraisal appeals, Disciplinary hearings, Grievances and of course Selection for redundancy. Non-members are on their own.

Members facing any of these issues are always recommended to contact us for individual help and advice so that we can ensure their case is being properly considered. Members should contact the HSBC Unite Helpline on 0207 253 9642.

HSBC BANKING SERVICES

Unite meets the Bank quarterly to discuss Banking Services matters. At these meetings we usually meet the Head of Network and other senior managers from the business as well as HR.

The issues raised at these meetings come from our network of JAORs (Jointly accredited Office reps) and the Unite HSBC National Committee. Outside of these meetings JAORs take up local /regional issues on members' behalf direct with regional management. Unite members across Banking Services are encouraged to raise issues of concern or ideas for us to put to the bank with either their local JAOR or the HSBC helpline on 0207 253 9642.

Here's an update on the Banking Services meeting held on 30 April where we met Peter Keenan the new Head of Network for the first time. It was very interesting to get Peter's views on the issues we were raising particularly as he has been out and about forming his own thoughts, ideas and opinions during his first couple of months in the job. He seems genuinely interested to listen to us and put things right where he agreed action needed to be taken. This bodes well for the future and builds upon the excellent relationship we have had with his predecessor John Hackett over the years.

So overleaf is a round up of the topics debated at the meeting:

Network sales and bonus performance Q109

We discussed bonus outturn for Q1 and whilst the overall amount of money spent on bonus was less than in 2008, in relation to the amount of profit earned the picture appears positive. In Q1 70% of Counsellors and Business specialists triggered bonus with RBMs/SSMs at 63% and cashiers/ Back office staff at 45%. The business seems broadly satisfied with this level of performance. How does it feel at the sharp end?.....let us know.

We discussed various anomalies our members have identified together with the ingenious work arounds that some have found which enables them to maximise their points scores. Peter Keenan seems very keen to look at how things can be streamlined to ensure the right behaviours are rewarded more of the time and he's keen to get our ideas. We need to have more examples and ideas from members so don't be backward at coming forward. The union is always consulted about bonus changes so the more feedback we have in advance the better.

Changes to savings measures are being planned for the 2nd half of this year to reflect the importance of the growth of savings balances... we'll be consulted in detail about this so watch this space.

Overtime/TOIL

This is a perennial subject for us with members frequently reporting problems with:

- the failure to record all hours worked
- the expectation by some managers that staff should routinely arrive at work early and leave late for no additional pay
- general weaknesses in rostering leading to the overtime being clocked up when perhaps more careful rostering could avoid it

We discussed several examples with Peter Keenan including the fact that in some areas staff are being pressured into taking TOIL rather than being paid for it (personal choice is fine but the contractual entitlement is for overtime pay). In some areas staff aren't then able to take the TOIL due to staff shortages or are being told at short notice when they HAVE to take their TOIL. Peter Keenan showed a lot of interest in this and asked for more examples of problems to be fed back to him... please let us have any you know of.

Meanwhile we asked the Bank to put out a communication to remind staff of the contractual policy around Overtime and TOIL.

Branch Closures

We are always consulted in advance of any proposed branch closures well in advance and the Bank will make a number of closures this year. In all cases redeployment opportunities are expected to be available for affected staff and no job losses are anticipated to result. The Bank re-iterated that the main driver for any closures is the size of the local market and they use external independent data to measure this. The policy remains that they will be mindful of the effect on local communities of closures and considers the alternative branches available to affected customers. Closure dates are usually driven by lease expiry though the status of the lease itself is not a deciding factor on the actual decision to close.

Staff Financial Integrity

In the current climate it's inevitable that some staff will find themselves in financial difficulties through no fault of their own (for example where other family members may have lost their job). We put it to the Bank that just as HSBC aims to support its customers who come to them with financial difficulties then staff should receive similar, if not better, help and support. Clearly Bank staff need to maintain high standards of personal financial integrity and it can be a disciplinary offence (particularly for those in regulated roles) if staff get themselves into a default situation. We have left it with the Bank to consider reminding staff about the need to flag up at the earliest opportunity if they are getting into deep water so that appropriate help and support can be given to avoid serious situations developing. We'll follow this up in the near future.

This bulletin is just a brief overview of the issues discussed at the meeting. JAORs can access further detail through Gwyn Bates (gwyn.bates@unitetheunion.com) or Steph Evison (NCC Chair) or Stewart Dack (Vice Chair).

The next meeting takes place at the end of July after which a further report will be issued.



HSBC DIRECT

Call Miner

Unite has raised members concerns over recent months about the transparency of Call Miner and the impact on ability to earn bonus. The main issue has been that as no constructive feedback or coaching has been possible and members have been unclear about how what calls were being "mined" for. At a recent meeting with HSBC Direct management, the bank confirmed that a new suite of reports was now available which would give much clearer feedback to members and help them achieve the scorings required for the bonus measurements.

Shift Changes

The Bank regularly consults with Unite about the introduction of new shift patterns across areas of HSBC Direct. Although the changes are permitted by contractual arrangements reasonable notice needs to be given by the bank. If members have any concerns or difficulties with regards to proposed changes to shift patterns please contact your Unite Workplace Rep



SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE ELECTION RESULT

Anne Abbott has been elected unopposed as the Unite Senior rep covering the London & Eastern, and South East Regions of Unite. Along with the other 2 fulltime Senior Unite reps we have in HSBC, Anne's role is to coach and support the Unite JAORs in her regions, recruit and train new reps and to co-ordinate the casework which arises from our members seeking help and advice over individual problems they have at work. Anne can be contacted via our members helpline 0207 253 9642 or by e mail (anneabbott@hsbc.com)

PENSIONS BALLOT

In the recent ballot Unite HSBC and First Direct Members voted to accept the proposed changes to their Defined Benefit and Contribution Pension Schemes. Members voted overwhelmingly in favour of accepting the proposed changes which are due to come into effect on 1 July 2009. The new arrangement will safeguard the final salary scheme.

Whilst we very much regret that the Bank could not be dissuaded from making these changes, Unite negotiated long and hard to achieve the best possible outcome for our Members. This represented a significant improvement on the Bank's original proposals and our objective in keeping a good Defined Benefit Pension Scheme open and bringing the current Defined Contribution Pension Scheme inline with HSBC's Competitors has been achieved. The overwhelming majority of Members who voted in favour of acceptance clearly agree with us.

FLEXIBLE BENEFITS

Members should have now received a booklet from the Bank outlining the new Flexible Benefits that are available to staff. This does not replace the existing Benefits that you have but gives you extra choice. The My Choice guide contains more choices than currently exists.

The key benefit is that all employees will be provided with a benefit fund which includes:

- Retirement Savings - Pensions Schemes (both Defined Benefits and Defined Contribution)
- Partner and Dependents Benefit
- Group Income Protection (GIP)
- Health Care

Members have voted in favour of the pensions proposals. By agreeing to contribute if you wish to do so, an amendment will be made to your contract to reflect this. It will not change anything else in your contract.

It is very important to note that Defined Benefit Scheme members only have until 12 June to opt to contribute to your pension wef. July 2009. Those who do not opt to contribute will be automatically defaulted to the 1/80ths scheme. There is then a further deadline in November for those Members of the Defined Benefits Scheme that want to make the additional contribution of 3% to protect their current retirement age. This will take effect from April 2010.

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All members' contributions paid to HSBC Pension Schemes and My Choice will be paid through salary sacrifice.

Opting to contribute through Salary Sacrifice means that your contract will be amended because your contractual pay will reduce by the value of any pension contributions and any additional benefits that you may select. These will result in you making savings on your National Insurance contributions.

Please note that Unite is not able to give members any advice about which pensions choices to make so taking independent financial advice may be appropriate.

HSBC will issue Q&As and there is also a helpline that you will be able to call about the flexible benefits, the number is contained in your pack.

We hope members will have found this update useful.

To ensure you keep up to speed with Unite in HSBC visit www.unitetheunion.com/hsbc.

If you are not already a member you can join on line at www.unitetheunion.com and click on "Join us Today" or call our HSBC helpline on 0207 253 9642 for more information.

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CHAIR, UNITE HSBC NATIONAL COMPANY COMMITTEE

JOHN NOLAN
UNITE NATIONAL SECRETARY

