

# Mobility Rule - The Facts

Since the announcement of Scottish Widows withdrawal from Chatham and its decision to move the closed book operation to Tonbridge the most frequently asked question from members involves the interpretation of the mobility rule. For some staff, travelling to Tonbridge will be just as easy as travelling to Chatham, but that will not be the case for all staff. In our previous Newsletter we referred to the guidelines agreed between LTU and the Bank which specify that normally staff should be expected to transfer only when:

- **The journey from home is within approximately 25 miles, or**
- **The journey time for staff travelling from home is no more than 1 hour 15 minutes.**

We are aware that following yesterday's meetings, some Line Managers are now telling staff that if the journey from home falls within 25 miles of the Tonbridge Office then regardless of the length of travelling time they will be expected to move to the new Office. That interpretation of the rule is understandable but it's incorrect. LTU have dealt with numerous reorganisations and closures over the years and the interpretation of the mobility clause is the issue that causes the most problems. Predictably that's the case now when we have got lots of staff who would prefer take the severance terms on offer rather than be required to relocate to Tonbridge. **Last year LTU wrote to the Bank regarding the issue of mobility and were told by Employee Relations, the custodians of the staff rule book, that "...it is not a requirement of the mobility policy to have to fail both time and distance guidelines in order for a move to be deemed unreasonable - and that a move could be deemed unreasonable for either reason"**

In practice that means the journey from home to Tonbridge could be within 25 miles but the time travelling to the new Office could take more than 1 hour 15 minutes either by car, for those who currently use their own transport, or by public transport and in those circumstances the requirement to move would be unreasonable.

As we have already said each case will need to be judged on its own merits. In some circumstances, such as quick driving routes, a longer journey may be reasonable; whilst in other cases 25 miles may be too great a distance because of congestion or cross country journeys.

The Union has raised with Scottish Widows that they should take into account the 'personal and domestic circumstances' of staff, for instance their child or family care responsibilities, when considering asking them to transfer. Scottish Widows have reiterated that this is the case.

Members with any questions on this issue can either contact the Union's Bedford Office on 01234 262868 or speak to one of our Officials visiting Chatham.

**Mark V Brown**  
Assistant General Secretary

