

25TH APRIL 2005

ALL MEMBERS IN BUSINESS BANKING

# Business Banking Accused (Again) Of Grading 'Con Trick'

**L**TU has accused Business Banking of misleading staff over the operation of grading arrangements.

Business Banking Managers have been under the impression that 'Grade Drivers' were being used to increase their grades in circumstances where their job sizes increased and where the level of 'stretch' within the roles enabled them to demonstrate skills and competencies at a higher grade.

The use of Grade Drivers had been an incentive for better performance. Business Managers were led to believe that by achieving franchise and earnings growth, they could increase their grades.

**However, many Business Banking Managers - and particularly those who have performed most successfully - will now feel they have been severely misled. Senior Management has admitted, under pressure from LTU, that it suspended the use of Grade Drivers some time ago and that no Business Managers have achieved promotion through this route for some period of time. Though the Bank has not yet confirmed how long this has been happening, LTU believes it may have been for as long as 12 to 18 months.**

Many Business Banking Managers - and particularly those who have been most successful over recent years - will no doubt be incensed that all their efforts have contributed nothing toward their pay and career progression.

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## A Lack Of Integrity

The bare minimum that employees in any organisation are entitled to expect is that they are treated with integrity. But this has not happened in Business Banking, where managers have been encouraged to achieve high levels of performance under the incentive of being rewarded through an upgrading.

They have been let down particularly badly by their senior management team.

**LTU believes that, to restore the trust of managers, senior management must (i) accept they have misled staff; (ii) conduct a thorough investigation to find out which managers would have been upgraded through the use of Grade Drivers; and (iii) backdate pay increases to the date at which the higher grades would have been justified.**

# Not The First Time BB Staff Have Been Misled on Grading

This isn't the first time that Business Banking Managers have been misled by senior management over their grading arrangements.

When Business Banking first introduced its 'New World' strategy in 1999/2000, a number of managers who were moved into lower graded roles were assured their grades would remain protected at current levels.

But despite providing these 'guarantees', the Bank decided last year that it would downgrade many of these staff. At the time LTU told senior

management that it could not rely on being trusted over grading issues again. The latest secret withdrawal of Grade Drivers shows we were correct.

The current Transition Programme is likely to lead to many surplus managers being asked to take on temporary (fudged!) or project roles. Before accepting such a role, it is important members speak to LTU's Advice Team to ensure necessary guarantees are provided and establish whether these are indeed roles that they have to accept.

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## Time To Put A Stop To Excessive Working Hours

LTU is alarmed by the excessive number of hours worked by staff across Business Banking. **Often these extra working hours are unpaid.**

**The Transition Programme will inevitably place further demands upon staff, leading almost certainly to pressure to work even longer hours. In fact, LTU's warnings of this in a previous Newsletter have already been proved correct, with staff in the Pilot area reporting significant extra hours being worked.**

The nature of these concerns, and guidance LTU provides staff, differs according to whether or not they are in Bands 6 to 8, or graded at Band 5 or above.

### **Bands 6 to 8 - A Right To Overtime Pay**

Where staff are graded at Bands 6, 7 or 8, it is important they understand that working

overtime is voluntary and when extra hours are worked they should always be paid.

Only under exceptional circumstances - when extra time is needed to complete a task that could not be left to another day - can staff be expected to work extra hours. But even then, personal and domestic circumstances - such as collecting a child from school - must be taken into account.

Where staff do agree to work additional hours, they should ensure that:

- **Their Line Managers agree in advance that they will receive the correct amount of Overtime Pay for all extra time worked.**

Often the excuse is used that there is no Overtime Budget available. This is not acceptable. Quite simply, where staff are expected to work extra time, they are entitled to receive Overtime Pay for doing so. Do not work unless you are paid!

- **Receipt of Time Off In Lieu - as an alternative to Overtime Pay - is entirely dependent on the individual's agreement.** It is important the member of staff is permitted to take the Time Off In Lieu within a reasonable period and at a time convenient to them.
- **Overtime is payable after 15 minutes and for every subsequent complete 15 minute period.** Time worked at the beginning or end of the day, or over lunchtime, should be added together to calculate the total amount of time worked and qualifying for payment in a single day.
- **The amount of Overtime Pay is calculated at 1.5 times basic hourly pay for working extra time on a normal working day, and 2 times salary for working on a sixth or seventh day of the week.**

Where members are required to work Overtime, but denied their right to receive Overtime Pay for doing so, they should telephone LTU's 24 Hour Advice Team for assistance on 01234 262868.

## **Bands 5 & Above - The Unpaid Hours Scandal**

Many Business Banking managers and staff in Bands 5 and above have reported being expected to work excessive hours; and, in some cases, regularly over 48 hours a week.

**This level of excessive working hours is unacceptable.** One needs to bear in mind the fact that when overtime pay for Managers ended, they received only a £500 Overtime Buy-Out added to their salaries.

For a Manager working an average 45 hour week, this equates to just £1 an hour ... or 60 pence after tax. For someone obliged to pay for parking, the cost of doing so will probably be greater!

**At our last Business Banking meeting, LTU asked management for an indication of what amount of extra time it expects managers to work for their £500 Overtime Buy-out. It could not give an answer!!!**

**We also asked for details of the number of hours Business Banking records show that its managers and staff actually work, and why it has not taken seriously the excessive amount of extra time worked.**

That managers and staff might fall below the maximum limits set by the Working Hour Directive is not sufficient: Business Banking should ensure its managers and staff work as close as possible to the actual hours they are paid to work.

**Senior management must not get away with abusing the commitment of its managers in this way.** It certainly doesn't deserve goodwill given its actions over the clandestine withdrawal of Grade Drivers.

## **Action Needed**

If there is too much volume of work required of its existing workforce to complete within a normal working week, the answer for senior management is simple: either appoint more managers and staff to carry out these roles or adjust downwards the targets expected to be achieved within a normal working week.

What is not acceptable is that managers and staff - with the threat of being placed on Performance Improvement Plans (PIP's) at the back of their mind and a desire to provide customers with a professional service - end up pressurised into working excessive unpaid hours.

It is also not sufficient for senior management to sympathise with the situation in which its managers and staff find themselves, but refuse to show the sort of commitment and action required to tackle these problems. It must take a clear lead and:

- **Ensure all staff entitled to receive Overtime Pay do receive it whenever they are expected to work additional time.**
- **Guarantee that Managers will not be expected to work excessive hours and make every effort to put into effect the Bank's policy of providing a proper 'Work-Life Balance'.**

# Performance Improvement Plans

A regular area of concern raised by LTU in meetings with senior management is the use of the Performance Improvement Plans within Business Banking.

The Union's particular concerns include:

- **Rumours that senior management believes that as many as 20% of all Business Banking staff should be placed on Performance Improvement Plans.**
- **The suspicion that Performance Improvement Plans have been used to 'encourage' some managers and staff to leave the Bank.**

- **Performance Improvement Plans being applied to some individuals without either proper justification or adherence to the requirements of this Bank policy.**
- **The generally held view that only through working excessive hours can managers and staff meet their targets and avoid being put on a Performance Improvement Plan.**

It is often the case that because PIP's are either unjustified or incorrectly applied, LTU's intervention in representing members means that the procedure is stopped in its tracks. It is therefore important that whenever members are threatened with these proceedings, they contact LTU's Advice Team.

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## BCSU Closure Programme

LTU has been assisting many members who are affected by the BCSU closure programme.

Each month the Union has been meeting with Business Banking's HR Team to review progress of the closure programme and ensure full account is taken of our members' concerns.

Typical concerns that have arisen include:

- **Staff being asked to accept roles outside the Bank's Mobility Policy of 25 miles or 1 hour 15 minutes by public transport.**
- **Staff being asked to accept roles that are significantly different to those they have been performing for Business Banking.**
- **A lack of information on redeployment**

**opportunities. Business Banking could follow the lead of WBO, through establishing a special team dedicated to identifying redeployment opportunities.**

- **A lack of clarity for staff invited to transfer to other business units that do not operate the same harmonised terms and conditions of employment as in most other parts of the Bank (i.e. Commercial Finance / Asset Finance).**

Any members concerned by how the Closure Programme will affect them personally should either email [Joe.Harrison@ltu.co.uk](mailto:Joe.Harrison@ltu.co.uk) or telephone LTU's 24 Hour Advice Line Service on **01234 262868**.

**STEVE TATLOW**  
Assistant General Secretary