

Head Office Redundancies: LTU Condemns Undue Haste To Ditch Staff

LTU has condemned plans to make the jobs of hundreds of Head Office staff redundant. The undue haste with which the programme is being implemented may unnecessarily condemn hundreds of staff to compulsory redundancy.

UKRB Senior Management are intending to slash the number of staff working in the 'Store Services' Head Office areas by over 300; from 553 to 239.

The reductions - which will affect all levels of staff, from Band 1 Senior Executives to Band 8 - will have its biggest impact in Bristol, London and the West Midlands. This is where 95% of the affected staff are based.

LTU accepts that only the Bank is in a position to determine how many Head Office staff it needs in the future, even though it seems inconceivable that Terri Dial's target of 45% growth can be achieved at the same time as slashing jobs.

However, the Union does not accept at all the disregard being shown by the Bank for attempts to avoid compulsory redundancies.

We are opposed particularly to:

- **The unreasonably short 'window' within which the Bank has said it will attempt to find staff alternative jobs before making them compulsorily redundant. It intends to clear out staff by the end of**

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the year even though surplus staff will not be identified until later this month.

- **The failure to work effectively with other business units to identify opportunities for redeploying staff.**
- **The total failure to show any commitment to the principles of a Voluntary Severance Register - and other similar measures - to avoid staff being made compulsorily redundant.**

LTU will be fighting any attempts to make large numbers of staff compulsorily redundant, through both internal procedures and, if necessary, legal means.

Putting Staff Last & Senior Management Hypocrisy

Whatever criticisms LTU may sometimes have of the Bank, it would be churlish not to acknowledge that in the past Senior Management have worked closely with LTU to minimise and avoid compulsory redundancies.

For example, just a few years ago an operation in London - Lloyds TSB Security Services (LTSS) - closed with the loss of 1,150 jobs. But, because at the time treating staff responsibly and fairly was a priority, the closure was phased over an extended period to help those staff seeking jobs in other business units to do so. The result? A mere handful of compulsory redundancies, with all other staff either being found alternative jobs or else opting to leave on Voluntary Severance Terms.

But the manner in which the Store Services reorganisation is being driven marks a significant departure from this approach. Quite simply, getting surplus staff off the Bank's books by the end of the year appears to be Senior Management's one and only priority. And if that means that up to two hundred staff are made compulsorily redundant then tough!

With more time to complete the restructuring before decisions are taken on compulsory redundancies, many staff wishing to remain working for the Bank would have a better chance of doing so. There are staff in other business units who would jump at the chance to leave the Bank on Severance Terms. But that seems of little interest to a Management Team that is disinterested in the welfare of staff. Senior Management appears simply not to care

But this attitude to staff is not just cold blooded; it is also hypocritical!

It was only earlier this year that another group of staff affected by reorganisation within UKRB - Branch Managers - also found themselves surplus to requirements. But at that time, Senior Management were determined to minimise severance costs. For this reason, the Bank extended considerably the period over which it would seek alternative jobs for these staff; even though some would welcomed at the opportunity to leave on Voluntary Severance or Early Retirement Terms.

So staff welfare is now very much considered second best to short-term financial considerations.

One Bank? You Must Be Joking

Senior Management has invested considerable time and effort over recent years in insisting that Lloyds TSB is now 'One Bank'. However, this is nothing more than an empty slogan when it comes to minimising the likelihood of compulsory redundancies.

Large numbers of managers and staff in Business Banking are being forced to accept 'transitional roles' so that the business unit can avoid having to spend money on Severance Terms. Many of these staff would like Voluntary Severance or Voluntary Early Retirement.

With the grade mix being similar to that in Store Services, there is no reason whatsoever why some of these Business Banking staff could not switch places with those Store Services staff who would like to remain working for the Bank.

Similarly, there are undoubtedly many hundreds - if not thousands - of Lloyds TSB staff in other business units and across all grades who would jump at the opportunity to leave on Voluntary Severance or Voluntary Early Retirement Terms. Through a process known as 'bumping', these staff could achieve their wish - to receive

Severance Payments - whilst Store Services staff could then take their jobs.

So why haven't these measures featured in Store Services Management's plans? Is giving real consideration to the welfare of its staff simply too much bother?

LTU is insisting that no Store Services compulsory redundancies should go ahead before all options have been exhausted. Until this happens, LTU will vigorously oppose all attempts to make staff compulsorily redundant.

LTU Proposals To Avoid Compulsory Redundancies

LTU has insisted that the Bank adopt a number of important measures that would help minimise - if not avoid altogether - the need to make any Store Services staff compulsorily redundant.

These measures are particularly important since the Bank has indicated that out of the 300 job reductions it is planning, fewer than a hundred staff have expressed an interest in Voluntary Severance. **That leaves the prospect of over 200 compulsory redundancies.**

Our proposals include:

- **A guarantee that all Store Services staff interested in Voluntary Severance are entitled to this automatically.**
- **That the Bank immediately launches a new Voluntary Severance Register across the whole of Head Office and also invites interest from staff in business units in the London, Bristol and Birmingham areas.**
- **A guarantee that no Store Services staff are made compulsorily redundant before all opportunities for redeployment and**

bumping are exhausted.

- **That the period searching for alternatives to compulsory redundancy be extended from the end of this year to at least the end of March 2006.**

LTU's Severance Register

In order to restrict the Bank's ability to make staff compulsorily redundant, LTU is also relaunching its own Voluntary Severance Register.

This will assist the Union in marrying those members interested in leaving on Voluntary Severance Terms against those staff wishing to remain working for the Bank.

The Union will then be able to challenge effectively any attempts to make staff compulsorily redundant through identifying 'bumping' opportunities. In other words a 'win, win, win' opportunity for those staff wishing to leave and those wanting to remain working for the Bank and at no additional cost to the Bank.

Full details will be provided in our next Newsletter.

LTU Will Challenge Compulsory Redundancies

LTU believes the Bank could well be falling short of its legal obligations by seeking to make compulsorily redundant by the end of the year any staff who cannot be found alternative jobs in the short time available.

In other words, with LTU's support, staff might be able to take cases against the Bank to the Employment Tribunal.

But before even this stage is reached, staff will be able to invoke the Bank's internal Job Security Appeals Procedure to challenge any circumstances where insufficient effort has been made to help staff find alternative employment as an alternative to compulsory redundancy.

Under this procedure, staff can challenge the grounds upon which they have been selected for redundancy - with full representation from an LTU Official - at a Hearing in front of a panel of senior Union and Bank Officials.

Where insufficient effort has been made to find alternative employment for a member of staff, the Job Security Panel is able to rule that more time be given to the task.

LTU anticipates that if the Bank continues with its plans to force through compulsory redundancies by the end of the year, dozens of cases could well be heard under the Job Security Procedures or at the Employment Tribunal.

Support You Can Count On

With the knife out to slash costs and the wellbeing and welfare of staff appearing to be of little concern to Senior Management, there could be no more important time for Head Office Staff - whatever their Pay Bands - to be members of LTU.

No-one has more experience at representing staff than LTU and all our officials are specially trained

and experienced in assisting staff affected by reorganisations.

Whether you would like to join LTU, or are already a member and need advice, you can contact LTU on 01234 262868.

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