

Saturday Working

Your Rights Explained

With Saturday opening now viewed by the Bank as a key day for doing business, managers are under increasing pressure to ensure that branches are staffed effectively, with not simply the right number of staff but with the right mix of sales and service staff to capitalise on business opportunities.

With that pressure however, we have seen an increasing number of managers overstep the mark from persuasion and encouragement to what can only be described as bullying, harassment and threats. This is unacceptable and something which rightly the Bank has also condemned.

In light of the growing number of these cases and with the importance to the Bank of resourcing Saturdays effectively it is time to remind members of their rights and the safeguards we have negotiated with the Bank over Saturday working.

These safeguards apply to all staff on old style 'fixed' contracts as well as, in practice, many staff originally on flexible contracts and whether they are asked:

- **to work on Saturdays when they have not previously done so**
- **to increase the number of Saturdays which they work**
- **to increase the number of hours which they work on a Saturday.**

Full details follow but the essential advice is that if members are, or have been, put under any pressure whatsoever regarding changing their hours they should contact the Union's 24 Hour Advice Team immediately on 01234 262868 for professional help and guidance.

Voluntarism Remains Paramount

Fixed Contracts

The safeguards we have negotiated for staff on 'fixed' or 'named day' contracts include the following:

- staff are under no obligation to discuss amendments to their hours of work or give any reasons for not wanting to discuss such changes.

Any suggestion that a member may suffer by not changing hours, such as being moved to an office that involves major inconvenience or expense, or will make travelling difficult or have an adverse impact on sales targets is unacceptable and will be treated by the Union as harassment.

- If staff on established contracts (those which do not include Saturday working as part of the normal working week) agree changes to their hours this will require a variation to the existing contract, or a separate contract for Saturdays - a new flexible / annual hours contract is not required
- any amendment to the contract must specify the new work pattern that has been agreed and state how many Saturdays are to be worked. If at any stage staff wish to revert to working only Monday to Friday, the Bank will honour that wish subject to one month's notice
- where staff work on Saturdays in exchange for Time Off in Lieu (TOIL), or where they are obliged to do so by virtue of the nature of their contract, then the Bank must specify in advance when this TOIL can be taken rather than it being allowed to accumulate with no guarantee it will be able to be used
- overtime pay may still be paid to established contract staff who do not change their hours during the week but who agree to work on Saturdays as well.

Any members who have amended their hours already should ensure that:

- their new hours of work are specific and clearly documented
- they have not been given new flexible or annual hours contracts by mistake
- TOIL is being allowed.

Newsletters by Email

LTU is offering members the opportunity to receive newsletters by Email.

We will send all newsletters for your area direct to you on the day they are sent to members by post giving you authoritative, immediate information on the issues that matter.

To subscribe to the service all you need do is email us at 24hours@ltu.co.uk with the subject line "Newsletters and your membership number (your file or payroll number)" or phone on 01234 262868. We'll do the rest.

Members who require advice, or who have changed their hours other than entirely voluntarily, should contact the Union's 24 Hour Advice Line immediately on 01234 262868.

Flexible Contracts

As stated earlier, these safeguards may apply also to staff who originally signed flexible contracts.

The Bank has always accepted and recently has reiterated its agreement with LTU that in order for a contract to remain flexible the following must have happened within the previous six-month period:

- **the employee's work pattern (i.e. days and hours worked) must have changed,**
- or
- **the employee must have received a written reminder that he or she is working to a flexible contract.**

If over a rolling six-month period the work pattern has remained the same and no such reminder has been received then the contract will be treated as no longer flexible. Any request from the Bank to amend the working pattern from then on may then be declined, whether in relation to Saturday working or otherwise. In this case all of the safeguards set out above will apply.

Any member experiencing any undue pressure to work on Saturdays should ring the LTU Advice Line on 01234 262868 for independent professional advice and assistance.

NICK HOLT

Assistant General Secretary