

AXA harmonisation talks start

Amicus and AXA have started talks aimed at harmonising terms and conditions across the AXA UK Group, with a view to have one set of terms and conditions for all AXA staff by 1st January 2007. New AXA UK CEO Nicolas Moreau has already stated his ambition to make the diverse AXA UK operations “One AXA” and terms and conditions harmonisation is a key part of this.

At present your terms and conditions depend on which company in the UK group you work for, the date you joined from or even, as in Shared Services, the company you originally joined. This has resulted in lots of problems and issues with staff working at the same site, and occasionally sitting next to each other in the same team, having different benefits etc.

Harmonisation is intended to remove these inequalities and ensure a fairer state of affairs for staff, as well as make it easier for staff to transfer from one stream of the business to another.

Some horse trading will have to go on here. Given the impacts of cost cutting that has resulted in compulsory redundancies in Life, Insurance and Shared Services this year, there is no realistic possibility of harmonisation occurring on the best terms from each company (nice though that would have been).

Some of the main areas of difference between the old operating companies are:

Healthcare benefits: ranging from all staff having private medical insurance in Healthcare to only managers in Insurance and Shared Services.

Bonus: current schemes range from on target 6% for level 6 (D) in Insurance to 8% for level 6 in Life. Whereas for level 3 (G) managers on target in Life is only 11% compared to 16% in Insurance.

Redundancy terms: differences from up to 7 weeks per year of service for older staff in Healthcare to 2.5 x statutory per week for new Life staff.

Overtime: standard 1 x rate for levels 7 to 9 in Life and 1 x overtime for level 6 (only after 20 hours unpaid), compared to up to double time for longer serving staff in levels 6 to 9 in Insurance at weekends.

Maternity benefits: 6 weeks additional pay and £800 return to work bonus in Shared Services to additional pay only for managers and no return to work bonus in Life.

Sickness benefits: range from a maximum benefit of 6 months full/6 months half pay for new staff in Insurance to a maximum possible of 3 months full pay for new staff in Life.

Pic: AXA Insurance, Ipswich

Realistically there will clearly be winners and losers in the process, but our aim will be to ensure that our members aren't major losers, that any losses they may conceivably be faced with are balanced to some extent by wins in other areas and any proposal from management provides a fair and equitable set of terms and conditions for all members and not just a select few.

It is important that you give your feedback to your **Amicus** reps so we know what things you value above others and can reflect this in our negotiations with **AXA**.

