

ACCORD

Quality Time

A fact sheet for
ACCORD union members.



True work/life balance is good for you, your family and your employer.

We believe that our members should work to live, not live to work.

Work/life balance – we're here to help you get it right.

Despite the introduction of the Working Time Directive, more than 4 million people currently work over 40 hours per week, and 1 million over 60 hours per week. There simply has not been a general improvement in the long hours culture of the UK. That leads to health problems, damage to family life and to the epidemic of stress. ACCORD is committed to tackling the work/life

Get A Life!

Despite the raft of joint agreements currently in place, it seems that not all of our members can get a life outside of HBOS! The Colleague Opinion Survey results for 2003 show that 25% of colleagues remain dissatisfied with the balance between private/family life and work commitments.

The further up the career ladder you climb, the worse it seems to get. Only 60% of Level 1 colleagues are satisfied with the balance, and for Levels 2 – 5 it's worse, with around two thirds of the population suggesting that they don't get the quality time away from work that they expect, need and deserve.

To compound this imbalance, more than half of all HBOS colleagues feel they are overworked whilst they are there and nearly half the workforce feel undervalued.

So, how can ACCORD help to redress this imbalance?

Back To Basics

It seems from the number and nature of telephone calls to our Helpline that some members are unaware of the hard fought for framework agreements, policies and procedures that are in

In particular, there is currently confusion about how much overtime individuals should be expected to work, with some members enduring 'compulsory overtime' week in and week out. We're tackling these instances, as you'd expect but if we don't know it's going on, we can't help. So it's important that you know your rights and know where to come if you think they're being abused!

Set out below are some of the options available to help you get the work/life balance right.

Flexible Working

HBOS has confirmed its commitment at the highest level to Flexible Working. We've discussed and agreed a number of options available to colleagues:

- | Job Sharing
- | Term Time Working
- | Career Breaks
- | Part Time Working
- | Staggered Start/Finish Times
- | Annualised Hours
- | Home Working
- | Compressed Hours
- | Monthly/Fortnightly Hours
- | Seasonal Working

This is not an exhaustive list of the options available. HBOS has said it will properly consider any flexible working request that a colleague may put to them. Of course, operational requirements will have to be properly considered too.

Flexible Working Workshops covering these and other options are taking place across the Businesses so, in theory, any request you put to your manager should be met with an open-minded reaction.

In practice, however, we recognise that what we agree at the Centre as 'best practice' does not always translate into the workplace.

That's where being a member of ACCORD really helps. We can advise, support and represent any member who feels they have been unreasonably refused a change to the way their working hours are organised.

Call our Helpline on **01189 341808** if you want to discuss your individual circumstances.

Time Off

Having a work/life balance isn't just about the number of hours you work in total, or the way they are organised. It's about being able to balance commitments and responsibilities outside of work with those required of you in work, often at short notice.

We've agreed a number of policies designed to give you the flexibility you need to juggle your home and work life:

- | **Emergency Leave** (unpaid time off to deal with urgent and unexpected domestic incidents/emergencies)
- | **Special Leave** (paid time off to deal with death, serious illness or injury of a family member, national, competitive or public duties, study etc)
- | **Time Off In Lieu** (time 'banked' instead of taking pay for additional hours worked to be taken at a mutually convenient time)



Your HR Team will be able to direct you to the full details of all these policies.

If any colleague feels that leave has been unjustifiably denied, they have the right to challenge the decision. This is where being a member of ACCORD helps once again. Practical and impartial advice is often all you need to be able to resolve the matter locally. If that fails, we can of course represent you at a Grievance Hearing. Ring our Helpline on **01189 341808** if you want to discuss your own circumstances.

Family Matters

Of course there are times when you'll need or want to be away from work for slightly longer than the odd few hours or days – perhaps to raise a new family or look after the one you already have! ACCORD has negotiated arrangements which exceed legal obligations for new and existing parents/carers, including:

- | **Maternity Provisions** (up to 52 weeks maternity leave, irrespective of length of service)
- | **Paternity Leave** (two weeks off, one of which is paid)
- | **Parental Leave** (up to 13 weeks unpaid leave for each child and 26 weeks for children who have a disability)
- | **Adoption Leave** (up to 52 weeks adoption leave, irrespective of length of service)
- | **Career Break** (a break of between 3 months and six years for any purpose)

Getting It Right

This Fact Sheet has reminded you of the rights your Union has secured for you in an effort to get the work/life balance right. If these rights are being flouted, then please get in touch. We're here to help.

If you want more information or advice on this topic, there are two useful websites we would recommend:

www.workingfamilies.org.uk
www.maternityalliance.org.uk

Or, for a copy of the LRD Booklet on "Work-life balance" email your request to info@AccordHQ.org