

Four Steps Forward

Following two days of intense negotiations between the union and Santander we can report four major breakthroughs which will affect the overwhelming majority of union members in Santander UK.

Step 1: We have agreed a new allowance to be paid to all S1's and S2's.

From March 1st 2018 all 17,250 S1's and S2's will receive a Flexible Benefits Allowance of £500 per annum. This is 80% of the total workforce. The new allowance will be paid in equal monthly installments and can be used to buy variable pay items such as additional annual leave or discounted products, *or simply taken as cash*. Because some of the variable pay items have to be signed up to in December before the new allowance starts, there will be an additional sign up window in March. The £500 allowance will be reviewed with us on an annual basis during pay negotiations. Importantly, all S1 & S2 members will receive this £500 allowance no matter whether they are full time or part time.

The £500 equates to a 3% pay-rise for an S1 on average salary or 1.5% for an S2 on average salary. Obviously it is worth more for those on less than average salaries and part time staff.

Step 2: Minimum Salaries for Branch Network and RCC staff rise immediately.

By the time you read this if you are an S1 at Professional Level 1 in the Branch Network, or in a Retail Contact Centre in Bootle, Bradford or Carlton Park, the minimum starting salary will have risen from £15,379 to £16,000 for new entrants. Better still if your current salary is below **£16,400** then you have just received an immediate rise to that figure. So if you are currently paid at the minimum, **then you have just got a £1,021 pay rise**. Those S1's at Professional Level 2 have moved to a minimum salary of £16,500. These changes occurred on 1st September and will show up in salaries this month.

This is a 6.6% increase for 2,597 people representing 21.4% of all S1s. This total includes 775 Customer Service Advisors and 1,763 Telerelations Advisors.

In addition, the mid-point for the S1 Professional Level 1 in RCC will rise on 1st March 2018, not by the 1% previously agreed (£167), but by £655, to a new mid-point of £17,400 which will also be the new mid-point for CSA's in the Branch Network.

Many more people will receive pay progression in March 2018 than would otherwise have been the case.

Step 3: All fully flexible staff in RCC to receive a new Premium of £1000

If you work in Retail Contact Centres and your shifts include the commitment to work between 7am and 9pm on a fully flexible basis and you are not already in receipt of a legacy shift or premium payments then *you are now benefiting* from a £1000 per annum Fully Flexible Shift Premium again, from **1st September**. Anyone who is not currently fully flexible who wishes to change their shift pattern to this type will also benefit once they take up the fully flexible shifts.

The new Premium of £1,000 is worth 6.1% of the new minimum of £16,400 for existing colleagues and will be paid to a minimum of 1,479 advisors or approximately 63% of those in eligible business areas including 406 people in Bootle, 215 in Bradford and 169 in Carlton Park with the potential for others changing their shifts to receive it.

Taken together with the changes in starting salary in Step 2 above, this means that many members will receive an extra £2,000 a year from 1st September, with the extra £500 allowance and next years' pay rise to come on 1st March.

Step 4: Improved Paternity Leave; Ante Natal and Foster Care Leave

Paternity Leave will be doubled to 4 weeks. Fathers/Partners will now be eligible for paid leave to attend two Ante Natal appointments and Foster Parents will now receive 2 weeks paid leave for a new fostering arrangement.

All of these changes will apply from 25th February 2018.

Why has Santander agreed to all this?

Firstly, as part of the Pay negotiations in 2016 we agreed a 3 year pay deal. Unfortunately because inflation has remained high, the pay we negotiated has not kept pace with inflation and we have argued that low pay was a major cause of attrition. The £500 Flexible Benefits Allowance should mean that pay will now outstrip inflation for all S1 and S2 members.

Secondly, as a result of feedback from CWU members we have demonstrated to the company that starting salaries for Branch Network and RCC colleagues were out of line with other major companies including those outside the financial services sector where staff do not have the added regulatory requirements. We have also argued that the existing pay progression arrangements for S1's (Professional levels 1 and 2) in these areas are out of step with other areas of the Bank.

Finally we have argued that the existing shift arrangements in Santander are too onerous and that people choose to leave and earn more money elsewhere for less demanding shifts.

This is not the end – more Steps to come

In our view all of the changes are positive, but we have also agreed **more needs to be done**.

We have agreed that discussions will take place on Salary Ranges and Pay Progression arrangements for entry level S1's to make them fit for purpose before March 2019.

We have also agreed to work to achieve better shift arrangements by agreeing a set of parameters that fully flexible shifts need to adhere to so that colleagues can better plan their lives outside of work. Finally we hope to sit down with the company and conduct a thorough review of the shift requirements. By doing this our aim would be to come up with shift patterns that are more attractive to individuals than the current one size fits all.

For further information, please contact:

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Join the CWU

If you know of colleagues who are not CWU members, please encourage them to join.

The simplest way for them to do so is for you to forward this bulletin to them and they can click on the link below.



Should colleagues encounter any problem accessing this link, they should email Santander@cwu.org or the appropriate email address above to obtain an application form.