



## **UNITE UPDATE**

**15th September 2013**

Dear Colleague,

On September 6th a meeting took place between members of the senior airline management team including Alison Watson (Director of Customer Delivery and Sales), Julie Armstrong (Director of Human Resources) and your reps accompanied by Oliver Richardson (Unite Civil Air Transport National Officer). The meeting was arranged so that the reps could raise concerns that the proposed cabin crew forum was an attempt by the Company to marginalise and undermine your democratically elected representative committee. Unite also requested that part of the meeting was used to avoid a dispute over the Company plans to introduce minimum crew on selected flights.

Oliver opened the meeting and stated that the way the Company had approached the setting up of the employee forum was indicative of the way the Company were treating the Union and its representatives in recent times. The Company protested that this was not the case and that the forum was merely a 'communication tool' in order to engage staff. It was stated that the forum was going to be composed of cabin crew, ground staff and managers. There was lots of debate, arguments and counter-arguments. An adjournment was requested and during the adjournment the reps agreed that if the forum was just for communication and to encourage engagement, we had no issue - provided that the seats allocated for cabin crew were filled by elected Unite reps and had no bearing whatsoever on industrial agreements. Oliver put this reasonable and positive position forward to the Company. One Company representative then stated *"In my business I can set up any forums I like, and I will communicate to my staff in any way I choose. I don't mind one rep on the forum and I think that is reasonable"*. A further adjournment was requested by the Company. They then modified their position slightly and agreed to two Unite reps on their forum. The Company were asked to reflect on this position and it was subsequently put to the Company that it was reasonable that 80% of the available cabin crew seats were allocated to elected Unite reps (4 out of 5) as this was reflective of Unite membership within the crew community. It is also reflective of the agreement in place which states that your Unite committee are the sole recognised group for the cabin crew community at the UK airline.

After the extensive debate and a long adjournment by the Company, the management team said that they needed to leave in five minutes and did not have time to discuss minimum crew. Oliver maintained the position that we have a collective agreement in relation to crew complements dating back to the settlement of a previous dispute in 2008 and in addition, before any progression or thought of implementation, the Company needed to comply with legislation relating to rest breaks. He said that provided the Company did not impose minimum crew there would be no problem. However Oliver informed our management that he could not wait around for a response, due to the recent consultative ballot result and that he expected them to make contact with him this week outlining their position. He went on to say that if the response was not a positive one he would not stand in the way if the members / reps wanted to make the issue an industrial one. He also stated that he would take the issue of crew breaks to EASSA (European Aviation Safety Agency) and the CAA and take whatever action necessary with the regulators to ensure TCX comply with the law. We provided the Company with the legislation and the interim 'Crew breaks / Minimum Crew' survey results so there could be no doubt of the validity of the law and the facts.

There was no contact from the Company all week until last thing on Friday September 13<sup>th</sup>, when the HR Director rang Oliver. The Company will confirm their position tomorrow morning in relation to the two issues (minimum crew / crew breaks and their cabin crew forum). We are hopeful that the Company position is a positive one that will avoid entering into a dispute with Unite.

We will update you further as the issue progresses.