

Frequently Asked Questions

Sale

Q. Do we know the identity of the purchaser of Media Services?

A. Encompass Digital Media.

Q. What is Encompass?

A. A large American company, with a turnover several times that of Babcock Media. It already owns operations around the globe, including in the UK. The sale is to Encompass Digital Media Inc. in the US, not to the UK-owned subsidiaries.

Q. How financially secure is Encompass?

A. Babcock management shared confidential financial information with BECTU: this information was also supplied to the BBC. We are satisfied on the basis of this information that members can be reassured that there are no reasons to doubt that Encompass Digital Media Services Ltd. within the Encompass group has a viable future.

Q. What has been sold?

A. Babcock Media Services Ltd., which comprised Babcock Media Services staff and assets plus assets and staff transferred in from Babcock Communications – essentially, the businesses and staff currently at Wyvil Court and Woofferton.

Q. What is the company now called?

A. Encompass Digital Media Services Ltd.

Q. What about Babcock's overseas operations eg Ascension Island?

A. The position of each overseas holding is slightly different. Facilities owned by Babcock will be part of the sale, facilities operated by Babcock will be operated by the new company post-sale under a "framework agreement". For the staff and customers, the only immediate consequence of the sale will be the change of name from Babcock.

Q. When?

A. The TUPE completed and the business changed owner and name on 30th September 2018.

Q. What about Skelton transmitter station?

A. Skelton is operated by Babcock Marine and remains with the Babcock group.

Transfer of staff

Q. Was the transfer of staff from Communications to Media Services a TUPE transfer?

A. Yes.

Q. Are the rigging staff working at Skelton and Woofferton affected?

A. No, they were not transferred. They will continue to work as now, servicing the new company through a “framework agreement” between Babcock and Encompass.

Q. What does a TUPE transfer mean?

A. Broadly speaking, TUPE means that your contractual terms and conditions are protected against being changed because of the transfer to a different employer.

Q. Does TUPE protect against all change?

A. No. Employers may propose measures to be consulted on, with an intent to seek agreement. The measures proposed in this case were:

- Pay date – proposed to change from 15th to 21st of the month;
- Annual leave year – proposed to change to January-December (currently April-March);
- Defined benefit pension scheme – contributions will cease and members will be able to transfer to a defined contribution scheme;
- Location – it is intended for the London operation to move from Wyvil Court to Chiswick.

Q. Is there a time limit on TUPE protection?

A. No. However, as with any business, subsequent changes (for example, to the turnover of the company) may give rise to proposals for further change.

Terms and Conditions

Q. Were terms and conditions changed with the transfer and the sale?

A. No, TUPE broadly protects against change as a consequence of the transfer of staff from Communications to Media Services. Although the company name changed, the relationship between employer and employees is unchanged.

Q. Can terms and conditions be changed in the future?

A. Not as a direct result of the transfer or sale. If the company wishes to make any changes in the future, they would still need to consult with BECTU.

Redundancy

Q. Did redundancy terms or procedures change with the transfer and the sale?

A. No.

Union Recognition

Q. Did the transfer or sale affect union recognition?

A. No.

Pay Date

Q. When will the pay date change from 15th-21st?

A. It is expected to be November.

Q. Is the company offering assistance to anybody who might be in short term difficulty from the change?

A. The company will consider sympathetically the position regarding individuals with specific problems, who should approach HR.

Annual leave year

Q. How will the change be handled?

A. The company expects to have an adjusted leave year with pro-rated leave.

Q. Will leave I have already be booked be honoured?

Q. Yes.

Pensions

Q. Was ending contributions to the DB scheme legal?

A. Yes, it was not possible for staff to stay in the Babcock scheme once they left the group.

Q. Is there any compensation to staff who lost future DB pension contributions?

A. The company has put in place a compensation arrangement for affected staff who move into the Encompass money purchase scheme. For more information, talk to one of your BECTU reps.

Q. Are existing DB pension entitlements preserved?

A. Yes, that is a legal requirement.

Q. What happened to the current DC scheme?

A. Staff are transferring to the Encompass scheme for future contributions and will continue to make matched contributions on the current basis.

Q. Is the Encompass scheme safe?

A. The Encompass scheme is administered by Punter Southall Aspire and your pension is invested with Aviva, both reputable pension companies.

Q. Can or should I transfer my current pension savings to the new scheme?

A. You would need to take specific individual advice tailored to your personal circumstances. BECTU recommends that if you need advice, you consult an IFA.

Location

Q. When will the move of London premises occur?

A. It is expected to be approximately a year after the sale.

Q. Will there be compensation for affected staff?

A. The company will pay the difference in travel costs for a year.

Q. My season ticket is coming up for renewal. Should I renew it as normal?

A. Yes. If you foresee any problems, approach your manager or HR, but the general approach is "business as usual". If you subsequently have to alter your travelling arrangements, any extra costs (eg from handing back a season ticket early) will be part of your compensation discussion.

Q. When we move to Chiswick, my travel time will be extended. Can I shorten my working day to compensate?

A. No. However, the company will be flexible on start times.

Q. Will arrangements for remote working be altered?

A. The company is not proposing any change. Encompass policy is to encourage a day a week working at home, when that is compatible with the role.

Health and Safety

Q. Will the EAP still be available?

A. Encompass has a very similar arrangement in place which will be available to all staff, albeit with a different provider.

Q. Some important health and safety functions at my workplace were provided by Babcock group. What is the position now?

A. There will be a “framework agreement” in place, under which Babcock group will continue to fulfil the same functions as currently.

Benefits

Q. What happens to my life insurance, previously provided by Babcock?

A. All staff's lives are insured at 4 times salary, regardless of whether they're in the pension scheme.

Q. Will I be still able to sell my shares through the Babcock portal?

A. Yes.

Q. I am required to hold shares purchased through the Babcock scheme for three years. Will that still apply?

A. No. When you leave Babcock, any shares you hold can be disposed of as you see fit.

Q. Is there an equivalent Encompass share purchase scheme?

A. No, Encompass is not publicly traded.

International travel

Q. What happens to International SOS?

A. Encompass does not subscribe to International SOS, but it does have a global travel insurance policy. Encompass Digital Media Services Ltd. are currently examining whether it is adequate for the company's and staff's needs, or whether additional arrangements are required.

Expenses

Q. Will expenses policy change?

A. It is expected that the company will move to the Encompass policy in due course.

Consultations

Q. What happened about the TUPE consultations?

A. They were formally concluded on 25th September, with agreement between BECTU and management regarding compensation arrangements for changes to pensions and locations.

Q. Is that it?

A. BECTU and the company will continue to liaise regarding matters arising from the sale and location, as well as normal business. Please contact us on the email address below for issues relating specifically to the sale.

V5 5th October 2018

Email: babcock.sale@bectu.org.uk