

# Barclays embroiled in TUPE row over Tech Nation employees

Barclays is at loggerheads with the industry body set up by David Cameron, when prime minister, to champion the British technology sector over the fate of dozens of employees affected by its closure.

Sky News has learnt that the bank, which has been handed a multimillion-pound government grant to promote the industry, is insisting that it should not have to take on nearly 50 of Tech Nation's workforce under so-called TUPE regulations, which are designed to protect employees when their organisation is taken over.

In an announcement last month that it would cease operations at the end of March, Tech Nation said it had "initiated TUPE discussions with Barclays Bank and have informed [the Department for Culture, Media and Sport]".

Insiders said, however, that Barclays was resisting Tech Nation's insistence that TUPE rules applied to up to 48 of its staff.

The not-for-profit industry body is understood to have sought legal advice on the issue, with one source close to the situation saying on Friday that a barrister had confirmed that TUPE applied.

The closure of Tech Nation sent shockwaves through the UK tech sector, and prompted an outcry from leading investors and start-up founders.

In a statement, a Barclays spokesperson said: "Discussions with Tech Nation are still ongoing, so it would not be

appropriate for us to comment in detail at this time.

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“However, we are keen to work with Tech Nation to explore any suitable opportunities for their employees within the Barclays family.”

The government insisted that the decision to hand the £12m Digital Growth Grant to Barclays’ Eagle Labs programme would

represent better value for money for taxpayers.

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Tech Nation, which began a formal redundancy consultation at the end of January, declined to comment formally.