

ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND GROUP PLC  
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PROSPECTUS

THE ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND GROUP plc

By this prospectus we may offer —

DEBT SECURITIES  
DOLLAR PREFERENCE SHARES  
CONTINGENT CONVERTIBLE SECURITIES  
ORDINARY SHARES

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THE ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND plc  
fully and unconditionally guaranteed by THE ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND GROUP plc

By this prospectus we may offer —

DEBT SECURITIES

The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc may use this prospectus to offer from time to time debt securities, including senior debt securities, subordinated debt securities and capital securities, dollar preference shares, directly or in the form of American Depositary Shares, contingent convertible securities and ordinary shares (in the form of American Depositary Shares). Our American Depositary Shares, or ADSs, each representing two ordinary shares (or a right to receive two ordinary shares), are listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol “RBS”. In addition, our ordinary shares are listed on the London Stock Exchange. Our series of American Depositary Shares representing non-cumulative dollar preference shares and evidenced by American Depositary Receipts (Series F, Series H, Series L, Series M, Series N, Series P, Series Q, Series R, Series S, Series T and Series U) are listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc (acting through its head office or any one of its branches) may use this prospectus to offer from time to time senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities. Such senior debt securities and subordinated debt securities will be fully and unconditionally guaranteed by The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc.

We will provide the specific terms of these securities, and the manner in which they will be offered, in one or more supplements to this prospectus. Any supplement may also add, update or change information contained, or incorporated by reference, into this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement carefully before you invest in our securities.

You should read both this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, together with the additional information described under the headings “Where You Can Find More Information” and “Incorporation of Documents by Reference”, before investing in our securities. The amount and price of the offered securities will be determined at the

time of the offering.

Investing in our securities involves risks that are described in the “Risk Factors” section of our annual and interim reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission or in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined that this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

This prospectus may not be used to sell securities unless it is accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

The date of this prospectus is March 31, 2015.

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ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement on Form F-3 that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”) using a “shelf” registration or continuous offering process. Under this shelf process, we may sell the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings of an unspecified amount in one or more foreign currencies or currency units.

This prospectus provides you with a general description of the debt securities, dollar preference shares, contingent convertible securities and ordinary shares we may offer, which we will refer to collectively as the “securities”. Each time we sell securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement will provide information regarding certain tax consequences of the purchase, ownership and disposition of the offered securities. The prospectus supplement may also add to, update or change information contained in this prospectus. If there is any inconsistency between the information in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in that prospectus supplement. We will file each prospectus supplement with the SEC. You should read both this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, together with the additional information described under the headings “Where You Can Find More Information” and “Incorporation of Documents by Reference”.

The registration statement containing this prospectus, including exhibits to the registration statement, provides additional information about us and the securities offered under this prospectus. The registration statement can be read at the SEC’s offices or obtained from the SEC’s website mentioned under the heading “Where You Can Find More Information”.

Certain Terms

In this prospectus,

- the term “RBSG” means The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc and the term “Group” means The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc and its subsidiaries;
- the term “RBS plc” means The Royal Bank of Scotland plc, the term “RBS” or the “Royal Bank” means RBS plc and its subsidiaries, the term “NWB Plc” means National Westminster Bank Plc and the term “NatWest” means NWB Plc and its subsidiaries;
- the terms “we”, “our” and “us” refer to each of RBSG or RBS plc, as applicable, as issuer of the relevant securities;
- in the sections titled “Description of Dollar Preference Shares” and “Description of Dollar Preference Share American Depositary Shares”, the terms “we”, “our” and “us” refer to RBSG as issuer of the dollar preference shares;
- in the section titled “Description of Contingent Convertible Securities”, the terms “we”, “our”, and “us” refer to RBSG as issuer of the contingent convertible securities; and
- in the sections titled “Description of Ordinary Shares” and “Description of Ordinary Share American Depositary Shares”, the terms “we”, “our” and “us” refer to RBSG as issuer of the ordinary shares.

RBSG publishes its consolidated financial statements in pounds sterling (“£” or “sterling”), the lawful currency of the United Kingdom. In this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, references to “dollars” and “\$” are to United States dollars.

As permitted by Rule 12h-5 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the “Exchange Act”), RBS plc does not file reports under the Exchange Act with the SEC. In accordance with Rule 3-10 of Regulation S-X under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “Securities Act”), the Group’s financial statements include condensed consolidating financial information for RBS in a footnote to those financial statements.

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USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless we have disclosed a specific plan in the accompanying prospectus supplement, we will use the net proceeds from the sale of the securities offered by this prospectus for general corporate purposes. The Group has raised capital in various markets from time to time and we expect to continue to raise capital in appropriate markets as and when required.

THE ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND GROUP PLC

RBSG is a public limited company incorporated in Scotland with registration number SC045551. RBSG was incorporated under Scots law on March 25, 1968. RBSG is the holding company of a large global banking and financial services group. Headquartered in Edinburgh, the Group operates in the United Kingdom, the United States and internationally through its two principal subsidiaries, RBS and NatWest. Both RBS and NatWest are major U.K. clearing banks. In the United States, the Group's subsidiary Citizens Financial Group, Inc. is a large commercial banking organization. Globally, the Group has a diversified customer base and provides a wide range of products and services to personal, commercial and large corporate and institutional customers. At December 31, 2014, Her Majesty's Treasury's ("HM Treasury") holding in RBSG's ordinary shares was 62.3% and its economic interest was 79.0%.

RBSG's registered office is 36 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 2YB, Scotland and its principal place of business is RBS Gogarburn, PO Box 1000, Edinburgh EH12 1HQ, Scotland, telephone +44 131 626 0000.

THE ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND PLC

RBS plc is a public limited company incorporated in Scotland with registration number SC090312. RBS plc was incorporated under Scots law on October 31, 1984. RBS is a wholly owned subsidiary of RBSG.

RBS plc's registered office is 36 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 2YB, Scotland and its principal place of business is RBS Gogarburn, PO Box 1000, Edinburgh EH12 1HQ, Scotland, telephone +44 131 626 0000.

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

The following is a summary of the general terms that will apply to (i) any senior debt securities, subordinated debt securities and capital securities that may be offered by RBSG, and (ii) any senior debt securities and subordinated debt securities that may be offered by RBS plc (acting through its head office or any one of its branches) and guaranteed by RBSG. Consequently, when we refer to "debt securities" in this prospectus, we mean (i) the senior debt securities, the subordinated debt securities and the capital securities that may be issued by RBSG, or (ii) the senior debt securities and subordinated debt securities that may be issued by RBS plc, acting directly or through one of its branches, as applicable. The term "debt securities" does not include the "contingent convertible securities" described under "Description of Contingent Convertible Securities".

Each time that we issue debt securities, we will file a prospectus supplement with the SEC, which you should read carefully. The prospectus supplement will summarize specific financial terms of your security and may contain additional terms of those debt securities to those described in this prospectus. The terms presented here, together with the terms contained in the prospectus supplement, will be a description of the material terms of the debt securities, but

if there is any inconsistency between the terms presented here and those in the prospectus supplement, those in the prospectus supplement will apply and will replace those presented here. Therefore, the statements we make below in this section may not apply to your debt security. You should also read the indentures under which we will issue the debt securities, which we have filed with the SEC as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part.

Senior debt securities will be issued by RBSG and/or RBS plc under the relevant senior debt indenture. Senior debt securities issued by RBS plc will be fully and unconditionally guaranteed on a senior basis by RBSG. Subordinated debt securities will be issued by RBSG and/or RBS plc under the relevant subordinated debt indenture.

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Subordinated debt securities issued by RBS plc will be fully and unconditionally guaranteed on a subordinated basis by RBSG. Capital debt securities that have no stated maturity will be issued by RBSG under a capital securities indenture. Each indenture is a contract between us and The Bank of New York Mellon or Wilmington Trust Company, as applicable, as trustee, and in respect of the senior debt securities Citibank, N.A., as securities administrator for RBS Notes<sup>SM</sup> and Retail Corporate Notes issued by RBS plc, and, in respect of the senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities issued by RBS plc, RBSG, as guarantor. The indentures are substantially identical, except for certain provisions such as those relating to subordination, which are included only in the subordinated debt indentures and the capital securities indenture. None of the indentures limit our ability to incur additional indebtedness, including additional senior indebtedness.

### General

The debt securities are not deposits and are not insured or guaranteed by the U.S. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other government agency of the United States or the United Kingdom.

The indentures do not limit the amount of debt securities that we may issue. We may issue debt securities in one or more series. The relevant prospectus supplement for any particular series of debt securities will describe the terms of the offered debt securities, including some or all of the following terms:

- whether RBSG or RBS plc (acting through its head office or any one of its branches) is the issuer of the relevant debt securities;
- whether they are senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities or, in the case of debt securities issued by RBSG only, capital securities;
  - whether the senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities are guaranteed;
- with respect to the subordinated debt securities and capital securities, whether the payment of interest can be deferred, whether the payment of principal can be deferred, the subordination terms, whether the principal amount may be written down or converted into equity upon the occurrence of certain events relating to our financial condition, the redemption terms and the events of default applicable to each series of the subordinated debt securities and capital securities;
  - their specific designation, authorized denomination and aggregate principal amount;
  - the price or prices at which they will be issued;
- whether such debt securities will be dated debt securities with a specified maturity date or undated debt securities with no specified maturity date;
  - the annual interest rate or rates, or how to calculate the interest rate or rates;
- the date or dates from which interest, if any, will accrue or the method, if any, by which such date or dates will be determined;
- whether payments are subject to certain conditions that relate to our financial condition, including our capital ratios;
  - the times and places at which any interest payments are payable;



- the terms of any mandatory or optional redemption, including the amount of any premium;
- any modifications or additions to the events of default with respect to the debt securities offered;
- any provisions relating to conversion or exchange for other securities issued by us;
- the currency or currencies in which they are denominated and in which we will make any payments;

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- any index used to determine the amount of any payments on the debt securities;
- any restrictions that apply to the offer, sale and delivery of the debt securities and the exchange of debt securities of one form for debt securities of another form;
- whether and under what circumstances, if other than those described in this prospectus, we will pay additional amounts on the debt securities following certain developments with respect to withholding tax or information reporting laws and whether, and on what terms, if other than those described in this prospectus, we may redeem the debt securities following those developments;
  - the terms of any mandatory or optional exchange; and
  - any listing on a securities exchange.

In addition, the prospectus supplement will describe the material U.S. federal and U.K. tax considerations that apply to any particular series of debt securities.

Debt securities may bear interest at a fixed rate or a floating rate. We will sell any subordinated debt securities that bear no interest, or that bear interest at a rate that at the time of issuance is below the prevailing market rate, at a discount to their stated principal amount.

Holders of debt securities shall have no voting rights except those described under the heading “— Modification and Waiver” below.

If RBSG issues subordinated debt securities or capital securities, and if RBS plc issues subordinated debt securities, that, in each case, qualify as Tier 2 capital or other capital for regulatory purposes, the payment, subordination, redemption, events of default and other terms may vary from those described in this prospectus and will be set forth in the relevant prospectus supplement.

#### Guarantee for Debt Securities Issued by RBS plc

RBSG will fully and unconditionally guarantee payment in full to the holders of senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities issued by RBS plc and all amounts due and owing under the applicable indenture. The guarantee is set forth in, and forms part of, the indentures under which senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities, as applicable, will be issued by RBS plc.

#### Senior Debt Securities

If, for any reason, RBS plc does not make any required payment in respect of its senior debt securities when due, RBSG will cause the payment to be made to or to the order of the applicable trustee. The guarantee will be on a senior basis when the guaranteed debt securities are issued under the senior indenture. Holders of senior debt securities issued by RBS plc may sue RBSG to enforce their rights under the guarantee without first suing any other person or entity. RBSG may, without the consent of the holders of the debt securities, assume all of RBS plc's rights and obligations under the debt securities and upon such assumption, RBS plc will be released from its liabilities under the senior debt indenture and the senior debt securities.

#### Subordinated Debt Securities

If, for any reason, RBS plc does not make any required payment in respect of its subordinated debt securities when due, RBSG will cause the payment to be made to or to the order of the applicable trustee. The guarantee will be on a subordinated basis when the guaranteed debt securities are issued under the subordinated debt indenture. Holders of subordinated debt securities issued by RBS plc may sue RBSG to enforce their rights under the subordinated guarantee without first suing any other person or entity. RBSG may, without the consent of the holders of the debt securities, assume all of RBS plc's rights and obligations under the debt securities and upon such assumption, RBS plc will be released from its liabilities under the subordinated debt indenture and subordinated debt securities.

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Because the guarantee is subordinated, if winding-up proceedings with respect to RBSG should occur, each holder may recover less ratably than the holders of its unsubordinated liabilities. If, in any such winding-up, the amount payable on any guarantee of any series of debt securities and any claims ranking equally with such guarantee are not paid in full, those guarantees and other claims ranking equally will share ratably in any distribution of RBSG's assets in a winding-up in proportion to the respective amounts to which they are entitled. If any holder is entitled to any recovery with respect to the guarantee of any debt securities in any winding-up or liquidation, the holder might not be entitled in those proceedings to a recovery in U.S. dollars and might be entitled only to a recovery in pounds sterling or any other lawful currency of the United Kingdom.

In addition, because RBSG is a holding company, its rights to participate in the assets of any subsidiary if it is liquidated will be subject to the prior claims of such subsidiary's creditors, including, in the case of RBS plc, RBS plc's depositors, except to the extent that RBSG may be a creditor with recognized claims against RBS plc.

### Payments

We will make any payments of interest and principal, on any particular series of debt securities on the dates and, in the case of payments of interest, at the rate or rates, that we set out in, or that are determined by the method of calculation described in, the relevant prospectus supplement.

### Subordinated Debt Securities

We are not required to make payments of interest and principal on the subordinated debt securities and if we fail to make a payment, our obligation to make such payments shall be deferred and such failure to make a payment does not create a default under the applicable subordinated debt indenture. The relevant prospectus supplement will set forth the terms on which the payment of interest and principal on the subordinated debt securities can be deferred and any other terms relating to payments on subordinated debt securities.

### Capital Securities

We are not required to make payments on any series of capital securities on any payment date and if we fail to make a payment, such failure shall not create a default under the capital securities indenture. Unless the relevant prospectus supplement provides otherwise, any payment that we do not make in respect of any series of capital securities on any applicable payment date, together with any other unpaid payments, so long as they remain unpaid, shall be missed payments and will accumulate until paid. The relevant prospectus supplement will set forth the terms on which all payments, including missed payments, on the capital securities of a particular series outstanding at the time will be treated, including deferral.

### Subordination

#### Senior Debt Securities

Unless the relevant prospectus supplement provides otherwise, senior debt securities constitute our direct, unconditional, unsecured and unsubordinated obligations ranking pari passu, without any preference among themselves, with all of our other outstanding unsecured and unsubordinated obligations, present and future, except such obligations as are preferred by operation of law.

#### Subordinated Debt Securities

Unless the relevant prospectus supplement provides otherwise, in a winding-up, all payments on any series of subordinated debt securities will be subordinate to, and subject in right of payment to the prior payment in full of, all claims of all of our creditors other than claims in respect of any liability that is, or is expressed to be, subordinated, whether only in the event of a winding-up or otherwise, to the claims of all or any of our creditors, in the manner provided in the applicable subordinated debt indenture.

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### Capital Securities

Unless the relevant prospectus supplement provides otherwise, in a winding-up, the principal amount of, and payments and any missed payments on, any series of capital securities will be subordinate to, and subject in right of payment to the prior payment in full of, all Senior Claims. The following are “Senior Claims” in respect of any series of capital securities:

- all claims of our unsubordinated creditors admitted in the winding-up;
- all claims of our creditors in respect of liabilities that are, or are expressed to be, subordinated, whether only in the event of a winding-up or otherwise, to the claims of our unsubordinated creditors but not further or otherwise; and
- all other claims except those that rank, or are expressed to rank, equally with or junior to the claims of any holder of capital securities of any series.

Additional senior claims, if any, may be set forth in the accompanying prospectus supplement.

Unless the relevant prospectus supplement provides otherwise, if at any time an order is made or a shareholders’ resolution is passed for a winding-up, any amounts that would have been payable in respect of the capital securities of any series if, on and after the day immediately before the winding-up began, any holder of those capital securities had been the holder of preference shares in our capital with a preferential right to a return of assets in the winding-up over the holders of all other issued shares, including all classes of our preference shares, will be payable on those capital securities. These amounts will be calculated assuming that such preference shares were entitled, to the exclusion of all other rights or privileges, to receive as a return of capital an amount equal to the principal amount of the capital securities of the series then outstanding, together with all payments accrued to the date of repayment at the rate provided for in those capital securities and any missed payments. Accordingly, no amount will be payable in a winding-up on any series of capital securities until all Senior Claims admitted in the winding-up have been paid in full.

### General

As a consequence of these subordination provisions, if winding-up proceedings should occur, each holder may recover less ratably than the holders of our unsubordinated liabilities and, in the case of the holders of capital securities, the holders of certain of our subordinated liabilities, including the holders of subordinated debt securities. If, in any winding-up, the amount payable on any series of debt securities and any claims ranking equally with that series are not paid in full, those debt securities and other claims ranking equally will share ratably in any distribution of our assets in a winding-up in proportion to the respective amounts to which they are entitled. If any holder is entitled to any recovery with respect to the debt securities in any winding-up or liquidation, the holder might not be entitled in those proceedings to a recovery in U.S. dollars and might be entitled only to a recovery in pounds sterling or any other lawful currency of the United Kingdom.

In addition, because RBSG is a holding company, its rights to participate in the assets of any subsidiary if it is liquidated will be subject to the prior claims of its creditors, including, in the case of RBS plc, RBS plc’s depositors, except to the extent that RBSG may be a creditor with recognized claims against RBS plc.

### Additional Amounts

Unless otherwise specified in the relevant prospectus supplement, all amounts to be paid by us on any series of debt securities will be paid without deduction or withholding for, or on account of, any and all present and future income, stamp and other taxes, levies, imposts, duties, charges, fees, deductions or withholdings now or hereafter imposed, levied, collected, withheld or assessed by or on behalf of the United Kingdom or any political subdivision or any authority thereof or therein having the power to tax (the "U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction"), unless such deduction or withholding is required by law.

Unless otherwise specified in the relevant prospectus supplement, if deduction or withholding of any such taxes, levies, imposts, duties, charges, fees, deductions or withholdings shall at any time be required by the U.K. Taxing

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Jurisdiction, we will pay such additional amounts with respect to the principal of and other payments on any series of debt securities (“Additional Amounts”) as may be necessary in order that the net amounts paid to the holders of the debt securities of the particular series, after such deduction or withholding, shall equal the amounts of such payments which would have been payable in respect of such debt securities had no such deduction or withholding been required; provided, however, that the foregoing will not apply to any such tax, levy, impost, duty, charge, fee, deduction or withholding that would not have been payable or due but for the fact that:

(i) the holder or the beneficial owner of the debt security is a domiciliary, national or resident of, or engaging in business or maintaining a permanent establishment or physically present in, the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction or otherwise has some connection with the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction other than the mere holding or ownership of a debt security, or the collection of the payment on any debt security of the relevant series,

(ii) except in the case of a winding-up of us in the United Kingdom, the relevant debt security is presented (where presentation is required) for payment in the United Kingdom,

(iii) the relevant debt security is presented (where presentation is required) for payment more than 30 days after the date payment became due or was provided for, whichever is later, except to the extent that the holder would have been entitled to such Additional Amount on presenting (where presentation is required) the debt security for payment at the close of such 30 day period,

(iv) the holder or the beneficial owner of the relevant debt security or the payment on such debt security failed to comply with a request by us or our liquidator or other authorized person addressed to the holder (x) to provide information concerning the nationality, residence or identity of the holder or such beneficial owner or (y) to make any declaration or other similar claim to satisfy any requirement, which in the case of (x) or (y), is required or imposed by a statute, treaty, regulation or administrative practice of the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction as a precondition to exemption or relief from all or part of such deduction or withholding,

(v) the withholding or deduction is required to be made pursuant to European Council Directive 2003/48/EC on the taxation of savings income or any Directive amending, supplementing or replacing such Directive, or any law implementing or complying with, or introduced in order to conform to, such Directive or Directives,

(vi) the relevant debt security is presented (where presentation is required) for payment by or on behalf of a holder who would have been able to avoid such withholding or deduction by presenting (where presentation is required) the relevant debt security to another paying agent in a Member State of the European Union, or

(vii) any combination of subclauses (i) through (vi) above,

nor shall Additional Amounts be paid with respect to a payment on the debt security to any holder who is a fiduciary or partnership or person other than the sole beneficial owner of such payment to the extent such payment would be required by the laws of the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction to be included in the income for tax purposes of a beneficiary or settlor with respect to such fiduciary or a member of such partnership or a beneficial owner who would not have been entitled to such Additional Amounts, had it been the holder.

As used in this “Additional Amounts” section, the term “payment” means, in the context of Senior Debt Securities and Subordinated Debt Securities, payments of principal, premium, if any, and interest, if any, on such securities, and, in the context of Capital Securities, payments and any missed payments on such securities. Whenever in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement there is mentioned, in the context of Senior Debt Securities or Subordinated Debt Securities, the payment of the principal, premium, if any, or interest, if any, on, or in respect of, any such security of



any series, and, in the context of Capital Securities, payments or missed payments on any such security of any series, such mention shall be deemed to include mention of the payment of Additional Amounts provided for in this “Additional Amounts” section to the extent that, in such context, Additional Amounts are, were or would be payable in respect thereof pursuant to the provisions of this section and as if express mention of the payment of Additional Amounts (if applicable) were made in any provisions hereof where such express mention is not made.

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Redemption

Unless the relevant prospectus supplement provides otherwise, we will, and in the case of capital securities only if the solvency condition is satisfied, have the option to redeem the debt securities of any series as a whole upon (i) not less than five business days, and not more than 60 calendar days' notice in respect of subordinated debt securities issued by RBS plc and senior debt securities, including Series A Senior Notes, issued by RBSG or (ii) not less than 30 days, and not more than 60 days' notice in respect of capital securities issued by RBSG, subordinated debt securities issued by RBSG and senior debt securities, including RBS Notes<sup>SM</sup> and Retail Corporate Notes, issued by RBS plc, to each holder of debt securities, on any payment date, at a redemption price equal to 100% of their principal amount together with any accrued but unpaid payments of interest, if any (including any deferred amounts, if applicable) in the case of senior debt securities and subordinated debt securities, and all payments and missed payments in the case of capital securities, to the redemption date, or, in the case of discount securities, their accreted face amount, together with any accrued interest, if, at any time, we determine that as a result of a change in or amendment to the laws or regulations of a U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction, including any treaty to which it is a party, or a change in an official application or interpretation of those laws or regulations, including a decision of any court or tribunal, which becomes effective on or after the date of the applicable prospectus supplement:

- in making any payments, including missed payments in the case of capital securities, on the particular series of debt securities, we have paid or will or would on the next payment date be required to pay Additional Amounts;
- payments, including missed payments in the case of capital securities, on the next payment date in respect of any of the series of debt securities would be treated as “distributions” within the meaning of Section 1000 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 of the United Kingdom (or any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof for the time being); or
- on the next payment date we would not be entitled to claim a deduction in respect of the payments in computing our U.K. taxation liabilities, or the value of the deduction to us would be materially reduced.

In each case we shall be required, before we give a notice of redemption, to deliver to the trustee a written legal opinion of independent English counsel of recognized standing, selected by us, in a form satisfactory to the trustee confirming that we are entitled to exercise our right of redemption.

The relevant prospectus supplement will specify whether or not we may redeem the debt securities of any series, in whole or in part, at our option, including any conditions to our right to exercise such option, in any other circumstances and, if so, the prices and any premium at which and the dates on which we may do so. Any notice of redemption of debt securities of any series will state, among other items:

- the redemption date;
- the amount of debt securities to be redeemed if less than all of the series is to be redeemed;
- the redemption price;
- that, and subject to what conditions, the redemption price will become due and payable on the redemption date and that payments will cease to accrue on such date; and
- the place or places at which each holder may obtain payment of the redemption price.

In the case of a partial redemption, the trustee shall select the debt securities to be redeemed in any manner which it deems fair and appropriate.

We or any of our subsidiaries may at any time and from time to time purchase debt securities of any series in the open market or by tender (available to each holder of debt securities of the relevant series) or by private agreement, if applicable law allows and if, in the case of the capital securities, certain other conditions to be specified in the applicable prospectus supplement are satisfied. Any debt securities of any series that we purchase

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beneficially for our own account, other than in connection with dealing in securities, will be treated as cancelled and will no longer be issued and outstanding.

Under existing U.K. Prudential Regulatory Authority (“PRA”) requirements, we may not make any redemption or repurchase of certain debt securities beneficially for our own account, other than a repurchase in connection with dealing in securities, unless, among other things, we give prior notice to the PRA and, in certain circumstances, it consents or does not raise any objection in advance. The PRA may impose conditions on any redemption or repurchase all of which will be set out in the supplemental indenture with respect to any series of debt securities.

### Modification and Waiver

We and the trustee may make certain modifications and amendments of the applicable indenture with respect to any series of debt securities without the consent of the holders of the debt securities. We may make other modifications and amendments with the consent of the holder or holders of not less than a majority in aggregate outstanding principal amount of the debt securities of the series outstanding under the indenture that are affected by the modification or amendment, voting as one class. However, we may not make any modification or amendment without the consent of the holder of each debt security affected that would:

- change the stated maturity of the principal amount of any subordinated debt security;
- change the terms of any capital security to include a stated maturity date;
- reduce the principal amount of, or in the case of subordinated debt securities, the interest rates, or any premium payable upon the redemption of, or the payments, in the case of capital securities or any missed payments, with respect to any debt security;
  - change our (or any successor’s) obligation to pay Additional Amounts;
  - change the currency of payment;
- impair the right to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment due and payable;
- reduce the percentage in aggregate principal amount of outstanding debt securities of the series necessary to modify or amend the indenture or to waive compliance with certain provisions of the relevant indenture and any Senior Debt Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Event of Default, Capital Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default (as such terms are defined below and described in the relevant prospectus supplement);
- modify the subordination provisions or the terms of our obligations in respect of the due and punctual payment of the amounts due and payable on the debt securities in a manner adverse to the holders; or
  - modify the above requirements.

In addition, material variations in the terms and conditions of debt securities of any series, including modifications relating to subordination, redemption, a Senior Debt Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Event of Default, Capital Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default (as those terms are defined under the heading “Event of Default and Defaults; Limitations of Remedies” below), or capital security payment events, as described in the relevant prospectus supplement, may require the non-objection from, or

consent of, the PRA or its successor.

Events of Default and Defaults; Limitation of Remedies

Senior Debt Security Event of Default

Unless the relevant prospectus supplement provides otherwise, a “Senior Debt Security Event of Default” with respect to any series of senior debt securities shall result if:

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- we do not pay any principal or interest on any senior debt securities of that series within 14 days from the due date for payment and the principal or interest has not been duly paid within a further 14 days following written notice from the trustee or from holders of 25% in outstanding principal amount of the senior debt securities of that series to us requiring the payment to be made. It shall not, however, be a Senior Debt Security Event of Default if during the 14 days after the notice, we satisfy the trustee that such sums were not paid in order to comply with a law, regulation or order of any court of competent jurisdiction. Where there is doubt as to the validity or applicability of any such law, regulation or order, it shall not be a Senior Debt Security Event of Default if we act on the advice given to us during the 14 day period by independent legal advisers approved by the trustee; or
- we breach any covenant or warranty of the senior debt indenture (other than as stated above with respect to payments when due) and that breach has not been remedied within 60 days of receipt of a written notice from the trustee certifying that in its opinion the breach is materially prejudicial to the interests of the holders of the senior debt securities of that series and requiring the breach to be remedied or from holders of at least 25% in outstanding principal amount of the senior debt securities of that series requiring the breach to be remedied; or
- either a court of competent jurisdiction issues an order which is not successfully appealed within 30 days, or an effective shareholders' resolution is validly adopted, for our winding-up (other than under or in connection with a scheme of reconstruction, merger or amalgamation not involving bankruptcy or insolvency).

If a Senior Debt Security Event of Default occurs and is continuing, the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in outstanding principal amount of the senior debt securities of that series may at their discretion declare the senior debt securities of that series to be due and repayable immediately (and the senior debt securities of that series shall thereby become due and repayable) at their outstanding principal amount (or at such other repayment amount as may be specified in or determined in accordance with the relevant prospectus supplement) together with accrued interest, if any, as provided in the prospectus supplement. The trustee may at its discretion and without further notice institute such proceedings as it may think suitable, against us to enforce payment. Subject to the indenture provisions for the indemnification of the trustee and the securities administrator, as the case may be, the holder(s) of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding senior debt securities of any series shall have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding in the name or and on the behalf of the trustee for any remedy available to the trustee or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee with respect to the series. However, this direction must not be in conflict with any rule of law or the senior debt indenture, and must not be unjustly prejudicial to the holder(s) of any senior debt securities of that series not taking part in the direction, and determined by the trustee. The trustee may also take any other action consistent with the direction that it deems proper.

Notwithstanding any contrary provisions, nothing shall impair the right of a holder, absent the holder's consent, to sue for any payments due but unpaid with respect to the senior debt securities.

By accepting a senior debt security, each holder will be deemed to have waived any right of set-off, counterclaim or combination of accounts with respect to the senior debt securities or the applicable indenture that they might otherwise have against us, whether before or during our winding-up.

Subordinated Debt Securities Event of Default or Capital Securities Event of Default

Unless the relevant prospectus supplement provides otherwise, a "Subordinated Debt Security Event of Default" with respect to any series of subordinated debt securities and a "Capital Security Event of Default" with respect to any series of capital debt securities shall result if either a court of competent jurisdiction issues an order which is not successfully appealed within 30 days, or an effective shareholders' resolution is validly adopted, for our winding-up (other than under or in connection with a scheme of amalgamation or reconstruction not involving a bankruptcy or insolvency).

If a Subordinated Debt Security Event of Default or Capital Security Event of Default, as the case may be, occurs and is continuing, the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding subordinated debt securities or capital securities, as the case may be, of each series may declare to be due and payable immediately in accordance with the terms of the applicable indenture the principal amount of, and any

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accrued but unpaid payments (or, in the case of discount securities, the accreted face amount, together with any accrued interest), including any deferred interest and, in the case of capital securities, any missed payments on the securities of the series. However, after this declaration but before the trustee obtains a judgment or decree for payment of money due, the holder or holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding subordinated debt securities or capital securities, as the case may be, of the series may rescind the declaration of accelerations and its consequences, but only if all Subordinated Debt Security Events of Default or Capital Security Events of Default, as the case may be, have been remedied or waived and all payments due, other than those due as a result of acceleration, have been made.

### Subordinated Debt Securities Defaults or Capital Securities Defaults

In addition to Subordinated Debt Security Events of Default and Capital Security Events of Default, the subordinated debt and capital securities indentures also separately provide for “Subordinated Debt Security Defaults” and “Capital Security Defaults”. The relevant prospectus supplement with respect to any series of subordinated debt securities or capital securities shall set out what events, if any, shall be considered Subordinated Debt Security Defaults or Capital Security Defaults. The indentures permit the issuance of subordinated debt securities or capital securities, as applicable, in one or more series and whether a Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default has occurred is determined on a series-by-series basis.

Unless the relevant prospectus supplement provides otherwise, if a Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default occurs and is continuing, the trustee may commence a proceeding in Scotland (but not elsewhere) for our winding-up, but the trustee may not declare the principal amount of any outstanding subordinated debt security or capital security, as the case may be, due and payable. The relevant prospectus supplement will set forth further actions provided in the subordinated debt securities indenture and the capital securities indenture relating to the rights of holders in connection with the occurrence of a Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default, if any, that may be taken by the trustee upon the occurrence of a Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default.

By accepting a subordinated debt security or a capital security, as applicable, each holder and the trustee will be deemed to have waived any right of set-off, counterclaim or combination of accounts with respect to the subordinated debt securities or capital securities, as applicable, or the applicable indenture (or between our obligations under or in respect of any subordinated debt security or capital security, as applicable, and any liability owed by a holder or the trustee to us) that they might otherwise have against us, whether before or during our winding-up.

### Events of Default and Defaults - General

The holder or holders of not less than a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may waive any past Senior Debt Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Event of Default, Capital Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default, or capital security payment event with respect to the series, except a Senior Debt Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Event of Default, Capital Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default, in respect of the payment of interest, if any, or principal of (or premium, if any) or payments or, in the case of capital securities, missed payments on, any debt security or a covenant or provision of the applicable indenture which cannot be modified or amended without the consent of each holder of debt securities of such series.

Subject to exceptions, the trustee may, without the consent of the holders, waive or authorize a Senior Debt Security Event of Default if, in the opinion of the trustee, the Senior Debt Security Event of Default would not be materially prejudicial to the interests of the holders.



Subject to the provisions of the applicable indenture relating to the duties of the trustee, if a Senior Debt Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Event of Default, Capital Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default, or a capital security payment event occurs and is continuing with respect to the debt securities of any series, the trustee will be under no obligation to any holder or holders of the debt securities of the series, unless they have offered reasonable indemnity to the trustee. Subject to

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the indenture provisions for the indemnification of the trustee, the holder or holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series shall have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee with respect to the series, if the direction is not in conflict with any rule of law or with the applicable indenture and the trustee does not determine that the action would be unjustly prejudicial to the holder or holders of any debt securities of any series not taking part in that direction. The trustee may take any other action that it deems proper which is not inconsistent with that direction.

The indentures provide that the trustee will, within 90 days after the occurrence of a Senior Debt Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Event of Default, Capital Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default, or a capital security payment event with respect to the debt securities of any series, give to each holder of the debt securities of the affected series notice of the Senior Debt Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Event of Default, Capital Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default or a capital security payment event known to it, unless the Senior Debt Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Event of Default, Capital Security Event of Default, Subordinated Debt Security Default or Capital Security Default, or a capital security payment event has been cured or waived. However, the trustee shall be protected in withholding notice if it determines in good faith that withholding notice is in the interest of the holders.

We are required to furnish to the trustee annually a statement as to our compliance with all conditions and covenants under the indenture.

### Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets; Assumption

We may, without the consent of the holders of any of the debt securities, consolidate with, merge into or transfer or lease our assets substantially as an entirety to any person, provided that any successor corporation formed by any consolidation or amalgamation, or any transferee or lessee of our assets, is a company organized under the laws of any part of the United Kingdom that assumes, by a supplemental indenture, our obligations on the debt securities and under the applicable indenture, and we procure the delivery of a customary officer's certificate and legal opinion providing that the conditions precedent to the transaction have been complied with.

Subject to applicable law and regulation, any of our wholly-owned subsidiaries may assume our obligations under the debt securities of any series without the consent of any holder, provided that certain conditions are satisfied, including that under certain indentures we unconditionally guarantee the obligations of the subsidiary under the debt securities of that series. If we do, all of our direct obligations under the debt securities of the series and the applicable indenture shall immediately be discharged. Any Additional Amounts under the debt securities of the series will be payable in respect of taxes imposed by the jurisdiction in which the assuming subsidiary is incorporated, subject to exceptions equivalent to those that apply to any obligation to pay Additional Amounts in respect of taxes imposed by the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction, rather than taxes imposed by the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction. However, if we make payment under the guarantee, we shall be required to pay Additional Amounts related to taxes, subject to the exceptions described under the heading “—Additional Amounts” above, imposed by the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction by reason of the guarantee payment. The subsidiary that assumes our obligations will also be entitled to redeem the debt securities of the relevant series in the circumstances described in “—Redemption” above with respect to any change or amendment to, or change in the application or official interpretation of, the laws or regulations (including any treaty) of the assuming subsidiary's jurisdiction of incorporation which occurs after the date of the assumption. However, the determination of whether the solvency condition has been satisfied shall continue to be made with reference to us, unless applicable law requires otherwise.

An assumption of our obligations under the debt securities of any series might be deemed for U.S. federal income tax purposes to be an exchange of those debt securities for new debt securities by each beneficial owner, resulting in a recognition of taxable gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes and possibly certain other adverse tax consequences. You should consult your tax advisor regarding the U.S. federal, state and local income tax consequences of an assumption.

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### Governing Law

The debt securities, the guarantees and the indentures will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York, except that, as the indentures specify, the subordination provisions and the waiver of the right to set-off by the holders and by the Trustee acting on behalf of the holders of each series of subordinated debt securities and capital securities will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Scotland.

### Notices

All notices to holders of registered debt securities shall be validly given if in writing and mailed, first-class postage prepaid, to them at their respective addresses in the register maintained by the trustee.

### The Trustees and Securities Administrator

The Bank of New York Mellon, acting through its London Branch, One Canada Square, London E14 5AL, is the trustee under the indentures with respect to the debt securities other than RBS Notes<sup>SM</sup> and Retail Corporate Notes issued by RBS plc. Wilmington Trust Company is the trustee under the indentures with respect to RBS Notes<sup>SM</sup> and Retail Corporate Notes issued by RBS plc. Citibank N.A. is the securities administrator under the indentures with respect to RBS Notes<sup>SM</sup> and Retail Corporate Notes issued by RBS plc. The trustees shall have and be subject to all the duties and responsibilities specified with respect to an indenture trustee under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 (“TIA”). Subject to the provisions of the TIA, the trustees are under no obligation to exercise any of the powers vested in them by the indentures at the request of any holder of notes, unless offered reasonable indemnity by the holder against the costs, expense and liabilities which might be incurred thereby. We and certain of our subsidiaries maintain deposit accounts and conduct other banking transactions with The Bank of New York Mellon, Wilmington Trust Company and Citibank N.A. in the ordinary course of our business. The Bank of New York Mellon and Citibank, N.A. are also the book-entry depositaries and paying agents with respect to our debt securities. The Bank of New York Mellon is the depositary with respect to the ADSs representing certain of our preference shares, and trustee with respect to certain of our exchangeable capital securities.

### Consent to Service of Process

Under the indentures, we irrevocably designate CT Corporation System as our authorized agent for service of process in any legal action or proceeding arising out of or relating to the indentures or any debt securities brought in any federal or state court in The City of New York, New York and we irrevocably submit to the jurisdiction of those courts.

## DESCRIPTION OF DOLLAR PREFERENCE SHARES

The following is a summary of the general terms of the dollar preference shares of any series. Each time that we issue dollar preference shares, we will file a prospectus supplement with the SEC, which you should read carefully. The prospectus supplement will designate the terms of the dollar preference shares of the particular series, which are set out in the resolutions establishing the series that our board of directors or an authorized committee thereof (referred to in this section as the board of directors) adopt. These terms may amend, supplement or be different from those summarized below, and if so the applicable prospectus supplement will state that, and the description of the dollar preference shares of that series contained in the prospectus supplement will apply. You should also read our Articles of Association, which we have filed with the SEC as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. You should read the summary of the general terms of the ADR deposit agreement under which Dollar

Preference Share American Depositary Receipts (“Dollar Preference Share ADRs”) evidencing American Depositary Shares (“Dollar Preference Share ADSs”) that may represent dollar preference shares may be issued, under the heading “Description of Dollar Preference Share American Depositary Shares”.

If we issue dollar preference shares that qualify as capital for regulatory purposes, the terms of such dollar preference shares may vary from those described in this prospectus and will be set forth in the relevant prospectus supplement.

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### General

Under our Articles of Association, our board of directors is authorized to provide for the issuance of dollar preference shares, in one or more series, with the dividend rights, liquidation value per share, redemption provisions, voting rights and other rights, preferences, privileges, limitations and restrictions that are set forth in resolutions providing for their issue adopted by our board of directors. Our board of directors may only provide for the issuance of dollar preference shares of any series if a resolution of our shareholders has authorized the allotment of shares.

The dollar preference shares of any series will have the dividend rights, rights upon liquidation, redemption provisions and voting rights described below, unless the relevant prospectus supplement provides otherwise. You should read the prospectus supplement for the specific terms of any series, including:

- the number of shares offered, the number of shares offered in the form of Dollar Preference Share ADSs and the number of dollar preference shares represented by each Dollar Preference Share ADS;
  - the public offering price of the series;
  - the liquidation value per share of that series;
  - the dividend rate, or the method of calculating it;
  - the place where we will pay dividends;
  - the dates on which dividends will be payable;
  - the circumstances under which dividends may not be payable;
  - voting rights;
- the restrictions applicable to the sale and delivery of the dollar preference shares;
- whether and under what circumstances we will pay additional amounts on the dollar preference shares in the event of certain developments with respect to withholding tax or information reporting laws;
  - any redemption, conversion or exchange provisions;
  - any listing on a securities exchange; and
- any other rights, preferences, privileges, limitations and restrictions relating to the series.

The prospectus supplement will also describe material U.S. and U.K. tax considerations that apply to any particular series of dollar preference shares.

The dollar preference shares of any series will rank junior as to dividends to the cumulative preference shares, equally as to dividends with other non-cumulative preference shares, the exchange preference shares of any series and the sterling preference shares, equally as to repayment of capital on a winding-up or liquidation with other non-cumulative preference shares, the exchange preference shares of any series, the sterling preference shares and the cumulative preference shares and, unless the resolutions of our board of directors establishing any series of dollar

preference shares specify otherwise and the related prospectus supplement so states, will rank equally in all respects with the dollar preference shares of each other series and any other of our shares which are expressed to rank equally with them. The preferential rights to dividends of the holders of the cumulative preference shares are cumulative whereas the preferential rights to dividends of the holders of any series of dollar preference shares, any series of exchange preference shares, the euro preference shares, and any sterling preference shares will be or are non-cumulative. Holders of dollar preference shares will have no pre-emptive rights.

The dollar preference shares will rank in priority to our ordinary shares as regards the right to receive dividends and rights to repayment of capital if we are wound up or liquidated, whether or not voluntarily.

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There are no restrictions under our Articles of Association or under Scots law as currently in effect that limit the right of non-resident or foreign owners, as such, to acquire dollar preference shares of any series freely or, when entitled to vote dollar preference shares of a particular series, to vote those dollar preference shares. There are currently no English or Scots laws, decrees, or regulations that would prevent the remittance of dividends or other payments on the dollar preference shares of any series to non-resident holders.

### Dividends

Non-cumulative preferential dividends on each series of dollar preference shares will be payable at the rate or rates and on the dates set out in the relevant prospectus supplement and will accrue from their date of issue.

Pursuant to our Articles of Association, our board of directors may resolve prior to the issue and allotment of any series of dollar preference shares that full dividends on such series of dollar preference shares in respect of a particular dividend payment date will not be declared and paid if, (i) in its sole and absolute discretion, the board of directors resolves prior to the relevant dividend payment date that such dividend (or part thereof) shall not be paid or (ii) in the opinion of the board of directors, payment of a dividend would breach or cause a breach of the capital adequacy requirements of the PRA that apply at that time to us and/or any of our subsidiaries, or subject to the next following paragraph, our distributable profits, after the payment in full, or the setting aside of a sum to provide for the payment in full, of all dividends stated to be payable on or before the relevant dividend payment date on the cumulative preference shares (and any arrears of dividends thereon), are insufficient to cover the payment in full of dividends on that series of dollar preference shares and dividends on any of our other preference shares stated to be payable on the same date as the dividends on that series and ranking equally as to dividends with the dollar preference shares of that series. The U.K. Companies Act 1985 (as amended) defines “distributable profits” as, in general terms, and subject to adjustment, accumulated realized profits less accumulated realized losses.

Unless the applicable prospectus supplement states otherwise, if dividends are to be paid but our distributable profits are, in the opinion of the board of directors, insufficient to enable payment in full of dividends on any series of dollar preference shares on any dividend payment date and also the payment in full of all other dividends stated to be payable on such date on any other non-cumulative preference shares and any of our other share capital expressed to rank *pari passu* therewith as regards participation in profits, after payment in full, or the setting aside of a sum to cover the payment in full, of all dividends stated to be payable on or before such date on any cumulative preference share, then the board of directors shall (subject always to sub-clauses (i) and (ii) of the preceding paragraph) declare and pay dividends to the extent of the available distributable profits, (if any) on a *pro rata* basis so that (subject as aforesaid) the amount of dividends declared per share on the dollar preference shares of the series and the dividends stated to be payable on such date on any other non-cumulative preference shares and any of our other share capital expressed to rank *pari passu* therewith as regards distribution of profits will bear to each other the same ratio that accrued dividends per share on the dollar preference shares of the series and other non-cumulative preference shares, and any of our other share capital expressed to rank *pari passu* therewith as regards participation in profits, bear to each other.

Dividends on the cumulative preference shares, including any arrears, are payable in priority to any dividends on any series of dollar preference shares, and as a result, we may not pay any dividend on any series of dollar preference shares unless we have declared and paid in full dividends on the cumulative preference shares, including any arrears.

If we have not declared and paid in full the dividend stated to be payable on any series of dollar preference shares on the most recent dividend payment date, or if we have not set aside a sum to provide for payment in full, in either case for the reasons set out in sub-clause (ii) of the second paragraph of this section, we may not declare or pay any dividends upon any of our other share capital (other than the cumulative preference shares) and we may not set aside any sum to pay such dividends, unless, on the date of declaration, we set aside an amount equal to the dividend for the



then-current dividend period payable on that series of dollar preference shares to provide for the payment in full of the dividend on that series of dollar preference shares on the next dividend payment date. If we have not declared and paid in full any dividend payable on any series of dollar preference shares on any dividend payment date, or if we have not set aside a sum to provide for payment in full, in either case for the reasons set out in sub-clause (ii) of the second paragraph of this section, we may not redeem, purchase or otherwise acquire for any consideration any of our other share capital and may not set aside any sum or establish any sinking fund to redeem,

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purchase or otherwise acquire them, until we have declared and paid in full dividends on that series of dollar preference shares in respect of successive dividend periods singly or together aggregating no less than 12 months.

To the extent that any dividend on any dollar preference share to which sub-clause (i) of the second paragraph of this section applies is, on any occasion, not declared and paid by reason of the exercise of the board of directors' discretion referred to in sub-clause (i) of the second paragraph of this section, holders of such dollar preference shares shall have no claim in respect of such non-payment. In addition, such non-payment shall not prevent or restrict (a) the declaration and payment of dividends on any other series of dollar preference shares or on any of our non-cumulative preference shares expressed to rank pari passu with our dollar preference shares, (b) the setting aside of sums for the payment of dividends referred to in (a), (c) except as set forth in the following paragraph, the redemption, purchase or other acquisition of our shares by us, or (d) except as set forth in the following paragraph, the setting aside of sums, or the establishment of sinking funds, for any such redemption, purchase or other acquisition by us.

If we have not declared and paid in full the dividend stated to be payable on any series of dollar preference shares as a result of the board of directors' discretion referred to in sub-clause (i) of the second paragraph of this section, then we may not redeem, purchase or otherwise acquire for any consideration any of our share capital ranking after such dollar preference shares, and may not set aside any sum nor establish any sinking fund for the redemption, purchase or other acquisition thereof, until such time as we have declared and paid in full dividends on such series of dollar preference shares in respect of successive dividend periods singly or together aggregating no less than 12 months. In addition, no dividend may be declared or paid on any of our share capital ranking after such dollar preference shares as to dividends until such time as the dividend stated to be payable on the dollar preference shares to which the discretion in sub-clause (i) of the second paragraph of this section applies in respect of a dividend period has been declared and paid in full.

No series of dollar preference shares rank after any other series of preference shares with which it is expressed to rank pari passu as regards participation in profits, by reason only of the board of directors' discretion referred to in sub-clause (i) of the second paragraph of this section, or any dividend on that series not being paid by virtue of such discretion.

Dividends on the dollar preference shares of any series will be non-cumulative. If the board of directors does not pay a dividend or any part of a dividend when due on a dividend payment date in respect of any series of dollar preference shares because it is not required to do so, then holders of dollar preference shares of the applicable series will have no claim in respect of the non-payment and we will have no obligation to pay the dividend accrued for the dividend period or to pay any interest on the dividend, whether or not dividends on the dollar preference shares of the series are declared for any future dividend period. The holders of the dollar preference shares of any series will have no right to participate in our profits.

Any dividend which has remained unclaimed for 12 years from the date when it became due shall be forfeited and shall revert to us.

We will calculate the amount of dividends payable on the dollar preference shares of any series for each dividend period using the method determined by the board of directors before the shares are issued, except for any dividend period shorter than a full dividend period, for which the amount of dividend payable will be calculated on the basis of twelve 30-day months, a 360-day year and the actual number of days elapsed in the period, unless the applicable prospectus supplement states otherwise. Payments of less than \$0.01 will be rounded upwards.

Dividends declared on the dollar preference shares of any series will be payable to the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary or the record holders as they appear on the register on the appropriate record dates, which will be the

number of days before the relevant dividend payment dates that the board of directors determines before the allotment of the particular series. If applicable fiscal or other laws and regulations permit, each payment will be made, in the case of dollar preference shares of any series in bearer form, by dollar check drawn on, or by transfer to a dollar account maintained by the payee with, a bank in London or in The City of New York or, in the case of dollar preference shares of any series in registered form, by dollar check drawn on a bank in London or in The City of New York and mailed to the record holder at the holder's address as it appears on the register for the dollar preference shares. If any date on which dividends are payable on the dollar preference shares of any series is not a

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business day, then we will pay the dividend on the next business day, without any interest or other payment in respect of the delay, unless it falls in the next calendar month, in which case we will make the payment on the preceding business day. A “business day” is any day on which banks are open for business, and foreign exchange dealings may be conducted, in London and The City of New York.

## Liquidation Rights

If we are wound up or liquidated, whether or not voluntarily, the holders of the dollar preference shares of each series will be entitled to receive out of our surplus assets available for distribution to shareholders, after payment of arrears (if any) of dividends on the cumulative preference shares up to the date of payment, equally with our cumulative preference shares, any other series of non-cumulative preference shares then outstanding, and all of our other shares ranking equally with that series of dollar preference shares as regards participation in our surplus assets, a distribution in U.S. dollars per dollar preference share equal to the liquidation value per share, together with an amount equal to dividends for the then current dividend period accrued to the date of payment, before any distribution or payment may be made to holders of our ordinary shares or any other class of our shares ranking after the dollar preference shares of that series. If the assets available for distribution are insufficient to pay in full the amounts payable with respect to the dollar preference shares of that series and any of our other preference shares ranking equally as to any such distribution with those dollar preference shares, the holders of those dollar preference shares and other preference shares will share ratably in any distribution of our surplus assets in proportion to the full respective preferential amounts to which they are entitled. After payment of the full amount of the liquidation distribution to which they are entitled, the holders of the dollar preference shares will have no right or claim to any of our surplus assets and will not be entitled to any further participation in surplus assets. If the holders of the dollar preference shares are entitled to any recovery with respect to the dollar preference shares in any winding-up or liquidation, they might not be entitled in such proceedings to a recovery in U.S. dollars and might be entitled only to a recovery in pounds sterling or any other lawful currency of the United Kingdom.

## Optional Redemption

Unless the relevant prospectus supplement specifies otherwise, we may redeem the dollar preference shares of each series, at our option, in whole or in part from time to time, on any date no earlier than five years and one day after they are issued, in accordance with the notice period and at the redemption prices set forth in the prospectus supplement plus the dividends otherwise payable for the then-current dividend period accrued to the redemption date.

Each notice of redemption will specify:

- the redemption date;
- the particular dollar preference shares of the series to be redeemed;
- the redemption price, specifying the amount of the accrued but unpaid dividend per share to be included and stating that dividends shall cease to accrue on redemption; and
- the place or places where holders may surrender documents of title and obtain payment of the redemption price.

Our Articles of Association provide that no defect in the notice of redemption or in the giving of the notice will affect the validity of the redemption proceedings.

If fewer than all of the outstanding dollar preference shares of a series are to be redeemed, our Articles of Association provide that, for the purposes of determining the particular dollar preference shares to be redeemed, we shall cause a drawing to be made in the presence of our independent auditors.

If certain limitations contained in our Articles of Association, the special rights of any of our shares, and the provisions of applicable law permit (including, without limitation, the U.S. federal securities laws), we may, at any time or from time to time, purchase outstanding dollar preference shares of any series by tender, available to all holders of those dollar preference shares, in the open market, or by private agreement, in each case upon the terms

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and conditions that the board of directors shall determine. Any dollar preference shares of any series that we purchase for our own account will pursuant to applicable law be treated as cancelled and will no longer be issued and outstanding.

Under existing PRA requirements, we may not redeem or purchase any dollar preference shares unless we give prior notice to the PRA and, in certain circumstances, it (i) consents in advance and (ii) at the time when the notice of redemption is given and immediately following such redemption, we are or will be (as the case may be) in compliance with our capital adequacy requirements as provided in the regulations relating to capital adequacy then in effect of the PRA. The PRA may impose conditions on any redemption or purchase which would be set out in the prospectus supplement for any series of dollar preference shares.

## Voting Rights

The holders of the dollar preference shares of any series will not be entitled to receive notice of, attend or vote at any general meeting of our shareholders except as provided by applicable law or as described below.

If any resolution is proposed for adoption by our shareholders varying or abrogating any of the rights attaching to the dollar preference shares of a particular series or proposing that we be wound up, the holders of the outstanding dollar preference shares will be entitled to receive notice of and to attend the general meeting of shareholders at which the resolution is to be proposed and will be entitled to speak and vote on that resolution, but not on any other resolution. In addition, if, before any general meeting of shareholders, we have failed to pay in full the dividend payable on the dollar preference shares of a particular series for a number of dividend periods specified in the relevant prospectus supplement, the holders of the dollar preference shares of that series shall be entitled to receive notice of, attend, speak and vote at that meeting on all matters. In these circumstances only, the rights of the holders of dollar preference shares of that series to vote shall continue until we have resumed the payment in full of dividends on the dollar preference shares of that series for the number of dividend periods specified in the prospectus supplement. Holders of any series of dollar preference shares shall be entitled to receive notice of, attend, speak and vote at general meetings in other circumstances if the board of directors determines, as specified in the prospectus supplement.

Whenever holders of dollar preference shares are entitled to vote at a general meeting of shareholders, on a show of hands each holder present in person, and each proxy for a holder, shall have one vote and on a poll each holder present in person or by proxy shall have the number of votes for each dollar preference share of the relevant series that the board of directors determines, as specified in the relevant prospectus supplement.

Our Articles of Association provide that all resolutions shall be decided on a show of hands unless, either before or on the declaration of the result of the vote taken on a show of hands, a poll is demanded by:

- the chairman of the meeting;
- not less than three shareholders present in person or by proxy;
- the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository;
- a shareholder or shareholders, including holders of any series of dollar preference shares entitled to vote on the resolution, present in person or by proxy who represent at least 10% of the total voting rights of all shareholders entitled to vote on the resolution; or

- a shareholder or shareholders present in person or by proxy and holding shares conferring a right to vote at the meeting on which an aggregate sum has been paid up equal to not less than 10% of the total sum paid up on all shares conferring that right.

The holders, including holders of any series of dollar preference shares at a time when they have voting rights as a result of our having failed to pay dividends on the series for the number of dividend periods specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, of not less than 10% of the paid up capital that at the relevant date carries the right of voting at our general meetings are entitled to require our board of directors to convene a general meeting. In

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addition, the holders of any series of dollar preference shares may have the right to vote separately as a class in certain circumstances as described below under the heading “—Variation of Rights”.

At December 31, 2014, we had 6,365,895,896 ordinary shares outstanding. The dollar preference shares of any series will not limit our ability to issue additional ordinary shares.

### Form

The dollar preference shares of any series will, when issued, be fully paid and, as such, will not be subject to a call for any additional payment. For each dollar preference share of each series issued, an amount equal to its nominal value will be credited to our issued share capital account and an amount equal to the difference between its issue price and its nominal value will be credited to our share premium account.

The dollar preference shares of each series will be represented by a single certificate. If in registered form, the certificate will be issued to the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary and if in bearer form the certificate will be deposited with the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary under the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement. We may consider the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary to be the holder and absolute owner of any series of dollar preference shares represented by the certificate so deposited for all purposes. Unless the relevant prospectus supplement specifies otherwise, dollar preference shares of any series withdrawn from deposit under the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement will be evidenced by share certificates in registered form without dividend coupons. If a Dollar Preference Share ADR holder elects to receive share certificates in registered form, the share certificates will be delivered at the time of withdrawal. Unless the prospectus supplement specifies otherwise, the dollar preference shares of any series may not be withdrawn from deposit in bearer form.

Title to dollar preference shares of any series in registered form will pass by transfer and registration on the register for the dollar preference shares of the series. Title to dollar preference shares of any series in bearer form, or to any dividend coupons appertaining to them, will pass by delivery of the relevant bearer share warrants or dividend coupons. If our Articles of Association and the limitations described in the following paragraph and in any relevant prospectus supplement permit, dollar preference shares of a particular series in bearer form will be exchangeable for the same number of dollar preference shares of the series in registered form upon surrender of the relevant bearer share warrants and all unmatured dividend coupons, if any, appertaining to them. Unless the prospectus supplement specifies otherwise, dollar preference shares of any series in registered form will not be exchangeable, in whole or in part, for dollar preference shares of such series in bearer form.

Each exchange or registration of transfer of dollar preference shares of any series in registered form will be effected by entry on the register for the dollar preference shares of the series kept by our registrar at its office in the United Kingdom. Any exchange or registration of transfer will be effected without charge to the person requesting the exchange or registration, but the requesting person will be required to pay any related taxes, stamp duties or other governmental charges. The exchange of dollar preference shares of any series in bearer form for the dollar preference shares of such series in registered form will also be subject to applicable U.K. tax laws and regulations in effect at the time of the exchange. No exchange will be made unless any resulting taxes, stamp duties or other governmental charges have been paid to us.

### Variation of Rights

If applicable law permits, the rights attached to any series of dollar preference shares may be varied or abrogated only with the written consent of the holders of 75% in nominal value of the outstanding dollar preference shares of that series or with the sanction of a special resolution passed at a separate class meeting of the holders of the outstanding



dollar preference shares of that series. A special resolution will be adopted if passed by a majority of 75% of those holders voting in person or by proxy at the meeting. The quorum required for any such class meeting will be two persons holding or representing by proxy at least one-third in nominal amount of the outstanding dollar preference shares of the particular series affected, except at any adjourned meeting, where any two holders present in person or by proxy will constitute a quorum.

The written consent of the holders of 75% in nominal value of the outstanding dollar preference shares of a particular series or the sanction of a special resolution passed at a separate class meeting of holders of the

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outstanding dollar preference shares of the series will be required if our directors propose to authorize, create or increase the amount of any shares of any class or any security convertible into shares of any class ranking as regards rights to participate in our profits or assets, other than if we redeem or purchase the shares, in priority to the series of dollar preference shares.

If we have paid the most recent dividend payable on the dollar preference shares of a particular series in full, the rights attached to that series will not be deemed to be varied by the creation or issue of any further series of dollar preference shares or of any sterling preference shares or of any other further shares ranking equally as regards participation in our profits or assets with or junior to the dollar preference shares of that series, whether carrying identical rights or different rights in any respect, including as to dividend, premium on a return of capital, redemption or conversion or denominated in dollars or any other currency.

## Notices of Meetings

We will cause a notice of any meeting at which holders of dollar preference shares of a particular series are entitled to vote to be mailed to each record holder of dollar preference shares of that series. Each such notice will state:

- the date of the meeting;
- a description of any resolution to be proposed for adoption at the meeting on which those holders are entitled to vote; and
- instructions for the delivery of proxies.

A holder of dollar preference shares of any series in registered form who is not registered with an address in the United Kingdom and who has not supplied an address within the United Kingdom to us for the purpose of service of notices is not entitled to receive notices of meetings. For a description of notices that we will give to the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository and that the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository will give to Dollar Preference Share ADR holders, you should see “Where You Can Find More Information”.

## Governing Law

The creation and issuance of the dollar preference shares of any series and the rights attached to them shall be governed by and construed in accordance with Scots law.

## Registrar and Paying Agent

The relevant prospectus supplement will specify who will act as registrar and paying agent for the dollar preference shares of each series.

## DESCRIPTION OF DOLLAR PREFERENCE SHARE AMERICAN DEPOSITARY SHARES

The following is a summary of the general terms and provisions of the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement under which the Dollar Preference Share ADRs may be issued. The Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement is among us, The Bank of New York Mellon, as depository, and all holders from time to time of Dollar Preference Share ADRs issued under it. This summary does not purport to be complete. You should read the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement, which we have filed with the SEC as an exhibit to the registration

statement of which this prospectus is a part. You may also read the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement at the principal offices of The Bank of New York Mellon in The City of New York and London.

#### American Depositary Receipts

Dollar Preference Share ADRs will evidence American depositary shares (“Dollar Preference Share ADSs”) of a particular series, which will represent dollar preference shares of a corresponding series. Unless the relevant prospectus supplement specifies otherwise, each Dollar Preference Share ADS will represent one dollar preference

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share, or evidence of rights to secure one dollar preference share, deposited with the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary or the London branch of The Bank of New York Mellon, as custodian. A Dollar Preference Share ADR may evidence any number of Dollar Preference Share ADSs of the corresponding series.

### Deposit and Withdrawal of Deposited Securities

Upon receipt of dollar preference shares of a particular series or evidence of rights to receive dollar preference shares, and subject to the terms of the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary will execute and deliver at its principal office, which is presently located at 101 Barclay Street, New York, New York 10286, U.S.A., to the person or persons specified by the depositor in writing upon payment of the fees, charges and taxes provided in the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement, a Dollar Preference Share ADR or Dollar Preference Share ADRs registered in the name of that person or persons evidencing the number of Dollar Preference Share ADSs of the series corresponding to the dollar preference shares of that series.

Upon surrender of Dollar Preference Share ADRs at the principal office of the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary and upon payment of the taxes, charges and fees provided in the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement and subject to the terms of the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement, a Dollar Preference Share ADR holder is entitled to delivery to or upon its order, at the principal office of the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary or at the office of the custodian in London, of dollar preference shares of the relevant series in registered form in respect of the deposited dollar preference shares and any other documents of title evidenced by the surrendered Dollar Preference Share ADRs. The forwarding of share certificates and other documents of title for delivery at the principal office of the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary will be at the risk and expense of the Dollar Preference Share ADR holder.

### Dividends and Other Distributions

The Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary will distribute all cash dividends or other cash distributions that it receives in respect of deposited dollar preference shares of a particular series to Dollar Preference Share ADR holders in proportion to their holdings of Dollar Preference Share ADSs of the series representing the dollar preference shares. The cash amount distributed will be reduced by any amounts that we or the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary must withhold on account of taxes.

If we make any distribution other than in cash in respect of any deposited dollar preference shares of a particular series, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary will distribute the property received by it to Dollar Preference Share ADR holders in proportion to their holdings of Dollar Preference Share ADSs of the series representing the dollar preference shares. If a distribution that we make in respect of deposited dollar preference shares of a particular series consists of a dividend in, or free distribution of, dollar preference shares of that series, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary may, if we approve, and will, if we request, distribute to Dollar Preference Share ADR holders, in proportion to their holdings of Dollar Preference Share ADSs of the series representing the dollar preference shares, additional Dollar Preference Share ADRs for an aggregate number of Dollar Preference Share ADSs of that series received as the dividend or free distribution. If the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary does not distribute additional Dollar Preference Share ADRs, each Dollar Preference Share ADS of that series will from then also represent the additional dollar preference shares of the corresponding series distributed in respect of the deposited dollar preference shares before the dividend or free distribution.

If the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary determines that any distribution in property, other than cash or dollar preference shares of a particular series, cannot be made proportionately among Dollar Preference Share ADR holders or if for any other reason, including any requirement that we or the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary withhold

an amount on account of taxes, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary deems that such a distribution is not feasible, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary may dispose of all or a portion of the property in the amounts and in the manner, including by public or private sale, that it deems equitable and practicable, and it will distribute the net proceeds of any such sale or the balance of any such property after deduction of any taxes that we or the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary must withhold to Dollar Preference Share ADR holders as in the case of a distribution received in cash.

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### Redemption of Dollar Preference Share ADSs

If we redeem any dollar preference shares of a particular series, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository will redeem, from the amounts that it receives from the redemption of deposited dollar preference shares, a number of Dollar Preference Share ADSs of the series representing those dollar preference shares which corresponds to the number of deposited dollar preference shares. The Dollar Preference Share ADS redemption price will correspond to the redemption price per share payable with respect to the redeemed dollar preference shares. If we redeem less than all of the outstanding dollar preference shares of a particular series, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository will select the Dollar Preference Share ADSs of the corresponding series to be redeemed, either by lot or in proportion to the number of dollar preference shares represented. We must give our notice of redemption in respect of the dollar preference shares of a particular series to the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository before the redemption date and the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository will promptly deliver the notice to all holders of Dollar Preference Share ADRs of the corresponding series.

### Record Dates

Whenever any dividend or other distribution becomes payable or shall be made in respect of dollar preference shares of a particular series, or any dollar preference shares of a particular series are to be redeemed, or the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository receives notice of any meeting at which holders of dollar preference shares of a particular series are entitled to vote, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository will fix a record date for the determination of the Dollar Preference Share ADR holders who are entitled to receive the dividend, distribution, amount in respect of redemption of Dollar Preference Share ADSs of the corresponding series, or the net proceeds of their sale, or to give instructions for the exercise of voting rights at the meeting, subject to the provisions of the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement. Such record date will be as close in time as practicable to the record date for the dollar preference shares.

### Voting of the Underlying Deposited Securities

Upon receipt of notice of any meeting at which holders of dollar preference shares of a particular series are entitled to vote, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository will, as soon as practicable thereafter, send to the record holders of Dollar Preference Share ADRs of the corresponding series a notice which shall contain:

- a summary of the notice of meeting;
- a statement that the record holders of Dollar Preference Share ADRs at the close of business on a specified record date are entitled under the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement, if applicable laws and regulations and our Articles of Association permit, to instruct the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository as to the exercise of the voting rights pertaining to the dollar preference shares of the series represented by their Dollar Preference Share ADSs; and
- a brief statement of how they may give instructions, including an express indication that they may instruct the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository to give a discretionary proxy to a designated member or members of our board of directors.

The Dollar Preference Share ADR depository has agreed that it will try, if practicable, to vote or cause to be voted the dollar preference shares in accordance with any written nondiscretionary instructions of record holders of Dollar Preference Share ADRs that it receives on or before the date set by the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository. The Dollar Preference Share ADR depository has agreed not to vote the dollar preference shares except in accordance with

written instructions from the record holders of Dollar Preference Share ADRs.

#### Inspection of Transfer Books

The Dollar Preference Share ADR depository will keep books, at its transfer office in The City of New York, for the registration and transfer of Dollar Preference Share ADRs that at all reasonable times will be open for inspection by Dollar Preference Share ADR holders. However, this inspection may not be for the purpose of communicating with Dollar Preference Share ADR holders in the interest of a business or object other than our

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business or a matter related to the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement or the Dollar Preference Share ADRs.

### Reports and Notices

The Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary will make available at its principal office for inspection by Dollar Preference Share ADR holders any reports and communications received from us that are both received by the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary as the holder of dollar preference shares of the applicable corresponding series and made generally available to the holders of those dollar preference shares by us, including our annual report and accounts. The Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary will also send copies of those reports to Dollar Preference Share ADR holders when furnished by us as provided in the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement.

On or before the first date on which we give notice, by publication or otherwise, of any meeting at which holders of the dollar preference shares of a particular series are entitled to vote, or of any reconvening of any such adjourned meeting of holders, or of the taking of any action in respect of any cash or other distributions on or any redemption of dollar preference shares of a particular series, we shall transmit to the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary a copy of the notice in the form given or to be given to holders of the dollar preference shares. The Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary will, at our expense, arrange for the prompt transmittal by the custodian to the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary of such notices, and, if we request in writing, arrange for the mailing, at our expense, of copies to all holders of Dollar Preference Share ADRs evidencing Dollar Preference Share ADSs of the corresponding series.

### Amendment and Termination of the Dollar Preference Share ADR Deposit Agreement

The form of the Dollar Preference Share ADRs evidencing Dollar Preference Share ADSs of a particular series and any provisions of the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement relating to those Dollar Preference Share ADRs may at any time and from time to time be amended by agreement between us and the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary in any respect which we may deem necessary or desirable. Any amendment that imposes or increases any fees or charges, other than taxes and other governmental charges, or that otherwise prejudices any substantial existing right of holders of outstanding Dollar Preference Share ADRs evidencing Dollar Preference Share ADSs of a particular series, will not take effect as to any Dollar Preference Share ADRs until 30 days after notice of the amendment has been given to the record holders of those Dollar Preference Share ADRs. Every holder of any Dollar Preference Share ADR at the time an amendment becomes effective, if it has been given notice, will be deemed by continuing to hold the Dollar Preference Share ADR to consent and agree to the amendment and to be bound by the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement or the Dollar Preference Share ADR as amended. In no event may any amendment impair the right of any holder of Dollar Preference Share ADRs to surrender Dollar Preference Share ADRs and receive in return the dollar preference shares of the corresponding series and other property represented by the Dollar Preference Share ADRs.

Whenever we direct, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary has agreed to terminate the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement as to dollar preference shares of any and all series and the deposited securities, Dollar Preference Share ADSs and Dollar Preference Share ADRs of all corresponding series by mailing a termination notice to the record holders of all those outstanding Dollar Preference Share ADRs at least 30 days before the date fixed in the notice for termination. The Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary may likewise terminate the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement as to dollar preference shares of any and all series and the deposited securities, Dollar Preference Share ADSs and Dollar Preference Share ADRs of all corresponding series by mailing a termination notice to us and the record holders of all those outstanding Dollar Preference Share ADRs at any time 60 days after it has delivered to us a written notice of its election to resign, if a successor depositary has not been appointed and accepted its appointment as provided in the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement. If any Dollar Preference Share



ADRs evidencing Dollar Preference Share ADSs of a particular series remain outstanding after the date of any termination, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary will then discontinue the registration of transfers of those Dollar Preference Share ADRs, will suspend the distribution of dividends to holders and will not give any further notices or perform any further acts under the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement with respect to those Dollar Preference Share ADRs, except that it will continue to collect dividends and other distributions pertaining to the dollar preference shares of the corresponding series and any other property

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represented by those Dollar Preference Share ADRs, and will continue the delivery of dollar preference shares of the corresponding series, together with any dividends or other distributions received with respect to them and the net proceeds of the sale of any property, in exchange for Dollar Preference Share ADRs surrendered to it. At any time after two years from the date of termination of the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement as to Dollar Preference Share ADRs evidencing Dollar Preference Share ADSs of a particular series, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary may sell the dollar preference shares of the corresponding series and any other property represented by those Dollar Preference Share ADRs and may hold the net proceeds, together with any other cash then held by it under the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement in respect of those Dollar Preference Share ADRs, without liability for interest, for the ratable benefit of the holders of Dollar Preference Share ADRs that have not previously been surrendered.

### Charges of Dollar Preference Share ADR Depositary

The Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary will charge the party to whom it delivers Dollar Preference Share ADRs against deposits, and the party surrendering Dollar Preference Share ADRs for delivery of dollar preference shares of a particular series or other deposited securities, property and cash, \$5 for each 100, or fraction of 100, ADSs evidenced by the Dollar Preference Share ADRs issued or surrendered. We will pay all other charges of the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary and those of any registrar, co-transfer agent and co-registrar under the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement, but, unless the relevant prospectus supplement with respect to a particular series of dollar preference shares or securities convertible into or exchangeable for dollar preference shares of any series states otherwise, we will not pay:

- taxes, including U.K. stamp duty or U.K. stamp duty reserve tax, and other governmental charges;
- any applicable share transfer or registration fees on deposits or withdrawals of dollar preference shares;
- cable, telex, facsimile transmission and delivery charges which the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement provides are at the expense of the holders of Dollar Preference Share ADRs or persons depositing or withdrawing dollar preference shares of any series; or
- expenses incurred or paid by the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary in any conversion of foreign currency into dollars.

You will be responsible for any taxes or other governmental charges payable on your Dollar Preference Share ADRs or on the deposited securities underlying your Dollar Preference Share ADRs (including U.K. stamp duty or U.K. stamp duty reserve tax, but not stamp duty reserve tax arising on issue of the securities underlying your Dollar Preference Share ADRs). The Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary may refuse to transfer your Dollar Preference Share ADRs or allow you to withdraw the deposited securities underlying your Dollar Preference Share ADRs until such taxes or other charges are paid. The Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary may withhold any dividends or other distributions, or may sell for the account of the holder any part or all of the deposited securities evidenced by the Dollar Preference Share ADR, and may apply dividends or other distributions or the proceeds of any sale in payment of the tax or other governmental charge, with the Dollar Preference Share ADR holder remaining liable for any deficiency.

### General

Neither the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary nor we will be liable to Dollar Preference Share ADR holders if prevented or forbidden or delayed by any present or future law of any country or by any governmental authority, or by

reason of any provision, present or future, of our Memorandum or Articles of Association, or any act of God or war or other circumstances beyond our control in performing our obligations under the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement. The obligations of both of us under the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement are expressly limited to performing our duties without gross negligence or bad faith.

If any Dollar Preference Share ADSs of a particular series are listed on one or more stock exchanges in the United States, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depository will act as registrar or, if we request or with our approval, appoint a registrar or one or more co-registrars, for registration of the Dollar Preference Share ADRs

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evidencing the Dollar Preference Share ADSs in accordance with any exchange requirements. The registrars or co-registrars may be removed and a substitute or substitutes appointed by the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary if we request or with our approval.

The Dollar Preference Share ADRs evidencing Dollar Preference Share ADSs of any series are transferable on the books of the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary. However, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary may close the transfer books as to Dollar Preference Share ADRs evidencing Dollar Preference Share ADSs of a particular series at any time or from time to time when it deems it expedient to do so in connection with the performance of its duties or if we request. As a condition precedent to the execution and delivery, registration of transfer, split-up, combination or surrender of any Dollar Preference Share ADR evidencing Dollar Preference Share ADSs of a particular series, or transfer and withdrawal of dollar preference shares of the corresponding series, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary or the custodian may require the person presenting the Dollar Preference Share ADR or depositing the dollar preference shares to pay a sum sufficient to reimburse it for any related tax or other governmental charge and any share transfer or registration fee and any applicable fees payable as provided in the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement, and the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary may withhold any dividends or other distributions, or may sell for the account of the holder any part or all of the dollar preference shares evidenced by the Dollar Preference Share ADR, and may apply dividends or other distributions or the proceeds of any sale in payment of the tax or other governmental charge, with the Dollar Preference Share ADR holder remaining liable for any deficiency. Any person presenting dollar preference shares of any series for deposit or any holder of a Dollar Preference Share ADR may be required from time to time to furnish the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary or the custodian with proof of citizenship or residence, exchange control approval, information relating to the registration on our books or registers or those maintained for us by the registrar for the dollar preference shares of that series, or other information, to execute certificates and to make representations and warranties that the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary or the custodian deems necessary or proper. Until those requirements have been satisfied, the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary may withhold the delivery or registration of transfer of any Dollar Preference Share ADR or the distribution of any dividend or other distribution or proceeds of any sale or distribution. The delivery, transfer and surrender of Dollar Preference Share ADRs of any series generally may be suspended during any period when the transfer books of the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary are closed or if we or the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary deem necessary or advisable at any time or from time to time because of any requirement of law or of any government or governmental authority, body or commission, or under any provision of the Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement or for any other reason, subject to the provisions of the following sentence. The surrender of outstanding Dollar Preference Share ADRs of any series and withdrawal of deposited securities may only be suspended as a result of:

- temporary delays caused by closing our transfer books or those of the Dollar Preference Share ADR depositary or the deposit of dollar preference shares of the corresponding series in connection with voting at a shareholders' meeting or the payment of dividends;
- the non-payment of fees, taxes and similar charges; and
- compliance with any U.S. or foreign laws or governmental regulations relating to the Dollar Preference Share ADRs of the series or to the withdrawal of the deposited securities.

The Dollar Preference Share ADR deposit agreement and the Dollar Preference Share ADRs are governed by and construed in accordance with New York law.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTINGENT CONVERTIBLE SECURITIES

The following is a summary of the general terms that will apply to any contingent convertible securities that may be offered by us.

Each time that we issue contingent convertible securities, we will file a prospectus supplement with the SEC, which you should read carefully. The prospectus supplement will summarize specific financial terms of your security and may contain additional terms of those contingent convertible securities to those described in this prospectus. The terms presented here, together with the terms contained in the prospectus supplement, will be a

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description of the material terms of the contingent convertible securities, but if there is any inconsistency between the terms presented here and those in the prospectus supplement, those in the prospectus supplement will apply and will replace those presented here. Therefore, the statements we make below in this section may not apply to your contingent convertible security. Contingent convertible securities will be issued by us under an indenture. The indenture is a contract between us and The Bank of New York Mellon, as trustee. The indenture does not limit our ability to incur additional indebtedness, including the issuance of further contingent convertible securities. You should also read the indenture and any related supplemental indenture establishing such contingent convertible securities, which we have filed with the SEC as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part.

### General

Contingent convertible securities means our subordinated convertible debt securities mandatorily convertible into our ordinary shares on the occurrence of certain events. The contingent convertible securities are not deposits and are not insured or guaranteed by the U.S. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other government agency of the United States or the United Kingdom.

We may issue contingent convertible securities in one or more series. The relevant prospectus supplement for any particular series of contingent convertible securities will describe the terms of the offered contingent convertible securities, including some or all of the following terms:

- the specific designation, authorized denomination and aggregate principal amount of the contingent convertible securities;
- whether such contingent convertible securities will be dated contingent convertible securities with a specified maturity date or undated contingent convertible securities with no specified maturity date;
  - the annual interest rate or rates, or how to calculate the interest rate or rates;
- the date or dates from which interest, if any, will accrue or the method, if any, by which such date or dates will be determined;
- whether the payment of interest can be deferred or cancelled, whether the payment of principal can be deferred and the subordination terms;
  - the price or prices at which they will be issued;
- the terms on which the contingent convertible securities may or are required to convert into ordinary shares of RBSG and any specific terms relating to the conversion or exchange feature, including upon the occurrence of certain events relating to our financial condition;
- whether payments are subject to certain conditions that relate to our financial condition, including our capital ratios;
  - the times and places at which any interest payments are payable;
    - the terms and conditions of any mandatory or optional redemption, including the amount of any premium;
- any modifications or additions to the events of default with respect to the contingent convertible securities offered;

- the terms and conditions, if any, under which we may elect to substitute or vary the terms of the contingent convertible securities;
  - the currency or currencies in which they are denominated and in which we will make any payments;
  - any index used to determine the amount of any payments on the contingent convertible securities;

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- any restrictions that apply to the offer, sale and delivery of the contingent convertible securities;
- whether and under what circumstances, if other than those described in this prospectus, we will pay additional amounts on the contingent convertible securities following certain developments with respect to withholding tax or information reporting laws and whether, and on what terms, if other than those described in this prospectus, we may redeem the contingent convertible securities following those developments; and
- any listing on a securities exchange.

In addition, the prospectus supplement will describe the material U.S. federal and U.K. tax considerations that apply to any particular series of contingent convertible securities.

Contingent convertible securities may bear interest at a fixed rate or a floating rate. We may sell any contingent convertible securities that bear no interest, or that bear interest at a rate that at the time of issuance is below the prevailing market rate, at a discount to their stated principal amount.

Holders of contingent convertible securities shall have no voting rights except those described under the heading “—Modification and Waiver” below, unless and until such contingent convertible securities are converted into our ordinary shares, in which case holders will have the voting rights described under “Description of Ordinary Shares—Share Capital —Voting Rights”.

If we issue subordinated contingent convertible securities that qualify as Additional Tier 1 or Tier 2 capital or other capital for regulatory purposes, the payment, subordination, redemption, events of default and other terms may vary from those described in this prospectus and will be set forth in the relevant prospectus supplement.

### Payments

We will make any payments of interest and principal, on any particular series of contingent convertible securities on the dates and, in the case of payments of interest, at the rate or rates, that we set out in, or that are determined by the method of calculation described in, the relevant prospectus supplement. The relevant prospectus supplement may provide that we are not obligated to make payments of principal or interest on any scheduled payment date, that interest payments may be cancelled or deemed cancelled, in whole or in part, and that any such cancellation or deemed cancellation will not create a default or an event of default under the contingent convertible securities indenture.

### Subordination

Each contingent convertible security will constitute our direct, unsecured and subordinated obligations, ranking equally without any preference among themselves. The rights and claims of the holders of any series of contingent convertible securities will be subordinated as described in the relevant prospectus supplement with respect to such series. The relevant prospectus supplement will set forth the nature of the subordinated ranking of each series of contingent convertible securities relative to the debt and equity issued by us, including to what extent the contingent convertible securities may rank junior in right of payment to our other obligations or in any other manner.

### Redemption

Any terms of the redemption of any series of contingent convertible securities, whether at our option or upon the occurrence of certain events (including, but not be limited to, the occurrence of certain tax or regulatory events), will



be set forth in the relevant prospectus supplement.

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### Events of Default; Limitation of Remedies

#### Events of Default

The relevant prospectus supplement with respect to any series of contingent convertible securities shall set out what events, if any, shall be considered Events of Defaults and what remedies, if any, that may be available to holders. The indenture permits the issuance of contingent convertible securities in one or more series and whether an Event of Default, if applicable, has occurred is determined on a series-by-series basis.

If an Event of Default provided for in a supplemental indenture for any series of contingent convertible securities, occurs and is continuing, the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding contingent convertible securities of each series may declare the principal amount, together with accrued interest (if any) and Additional Amounts (if any), payable on such contingent convertible securities, of all the contingent convertible securities of that series to be due and payable immediately, by a notice in writing to us, and upon such declaration such amount shall become immediately due and payable. However, after this declaration but before the trustee obtains a judgment or decree for payment of money due, the holder or holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding contingent convertible securities of the series may rescind the declaration of acceleration and its consequences, but only if all Events of Default have been remedied or waived and all payments due, other than those due as a result of acceleration, have been made.

By accepting a contingent convertible security, each holder and the trustee (acting on behalf of the holders) will be deemed to have waived any right of set-off, counterclaim or combination of accounts with respect to the contingent convertible security or the indenture (or between our obligations under or in respect of any contingent convertible security and any liability owed by a holder to us) that they (or the trustee acting on their behalf) might otherwise have against us, whether before or during our winding-up.

#### Events of Default — General

The holder or holders of not less than a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding contingent convertible securities of any series may waive any past Event of Default with respect to the series, except an Event of Default in respect of the payment of interest, if any, or principal of (or premium, if any) or payments on any contingent convertible security or a covenant or provision of the indenture which cannot be modified or amended without the consent of the holder of each contingent convertible securities of such series.

Upon any such waiver, such Event of Default will cease to exist, and any such Event of Default with respect to any series arising therefrom will be deemed to have been cured and not to have occurred; provided that no such waiver will extend to any subsequent or other Event of Default or impair any right consequent thereon.

Subject to the indenture provisions for the indemnification of the trustee and the provisions of any supplemental indenture establishing any series of contingent convertible securities, the holder or holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding contingent convertible securities of any series shall have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee with respect to the series, if the direction is not in conflict with any rule of law or with the indenture and the trustee does not determine that the action would be unjustly prejudicial to the holder or holders of any contingent convertible securities of any series not taking part in that direction. The trustee may take any other action that it deems proper which is not inconsistent with that direction.

The indenture provides that the trustee will, within 90 days after the occurrence of an Event of Default with respect to the contingent convertible securities of any series, give to each holder of the contingent convertible securities of the affected series notice of the Event of Default known to it, unless the Event of Default has been cured or waived. However, the trustee shall be protected in withholding notice if it determines in good faith that withholding notice is in the interest of the holders.

We are required to furnish to the trustee annually a statement as to our compliance with all conditions and covenants under the indenture.

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### Additional Amounts

Unless otherwise specified in the relevant prospectus supplement, all amounts of principal, premium, if any, and interest, if any, on any series of contingent convertible securities will be paid by us without deduction or withholding for, or on account of, any and all present and future income, stamp and other taxes, levies, imposts, duties, charges, fees, deductions or withholdings now or hereafter imposed, levied, collected, withheld or assessed by or on behalf of the United Kingdom or any political subdivision or any authority thereof or therein having the power to tax (the “U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction”), unless such deduction or withholding is required by law.

Unless otherwise specified in the relevant prospectus supplement, if deduction or withholding of any such taxes, levies, imposts, duties, charges, fees, deductions or withholdings shall at any time be required by the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction, we will pay such additional amounts in respect of, payments of the principal amount of, premium, if any, and interest, if any, on any series of contingent convertible securities (“Additional Amounts”) as may be necessary in order that the net amounts paid to the holders of the contingent convertible securities, after such deduction or withholding, shall equal the respective amounts of principal, premium, if any, and interest, if any, which would have been payable in respect of such contingent convertible securities had no such deduction or withholding been required; provided, however, that the foregoing will not apply to any such tax, levy, impost, duty, charge, fee, deduction or withholding that would not have been payable or due but for the fact that:

- (i) the holder or the beneficial owner of the contingent convertible security is a domiciliary, national or resident of, or engaging in business or maintaining a permanent establishment or physically present in, the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction or otherwise has some connection with the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction other than the mere holding or ownership of a contingent convertible security, or the collection of any payment of (or in respect of) principal of, premium, if any, or interest, if any, on any contingent convertible security of the relevant series,
- (ii) except in the case of a winding-up of us in the United Kingdom, the relevant contingent convertible security is presented (where presentation is required) for payment in the United Kingdom,
- (iii) the relevant contingent convertible security is presented (where presentation is required) for payment more than 30 days after the date payment became due or was provided for, whichever is later, except to the extent that the holder would have been entitled to such Additional Amount on presenting (where presentation is required) the contingent convertible security for payment at the close of such 30 day period,
- (iv) the holder or the beneficial owner of the relevant contingent convertible security or the beneficial owner of any payment of (or in respect of) principal of, premium, if any, or interest, if any, on such contingent convertible security failed to comply with a request by us or our liquidator or other authorized person addressed to the holder (x) to provide information concerning the nationality, residence or identity of the holder or such beneficial owner or (y) to make any declaration or other similar claim, which in the case of (x) or (y), is required or imposed by a statute, treaty, regulation or administrative practice of the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction as a precondition to exemption or relief from all or part of such deduction or withholding,
- (v) the withholding or deduction is required to be made pursuant to European Council Directive 2003/48/EC on the taxation of savings income or any Directive amending, supplementing or replacing such Directive, or any law implementing or complying with, or introduced in order to conform to, such Directive or Directives,
- (vi) the withholding or deduction is required to be made pursuant to Sections 1471 through 1474 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, any agreement with the U.S. Treasury entered into with respect thereto, any U.S. Treasury regulation issued thereunder or any other official interpretations or guidance issued with respect thereto; any intergovernmental

agreement entered into with respect thereto, or any law, regulation, or other official interpretation or guidance promulgated pursuant to such an intergovernmental agreement,

(vii) the relevant contingent convertible security is presented (where presentation is required) for payment by or on behalf of a holder who would have been able to avoid such withholding or deduction by presenting (where presentation is required) the relevant contingent convertible security to another paying agent in a Member State of the European Union, or

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(viii) any combination of subclauses (i) through (vii) above,

nor shall Additional Amounts be paid with respect to a payment of principal of, premium, if any, or interest, if any, on the contingent convertible security to any holder who is a fiduciary or partnership or person other than the sole beneficial owner of such payment to the extent such payment would be required by the laws of the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction to be included in the income for tax purposes of a beneficiary or settlor with respect to such fiduciary or a member of such partnership or a beneficial owner who would not have been entitled to such Additional Amounts, had it been the holder.

Whenever in this prospectus or any prospectus supplement there is mentioned, in any context, the payment of the principal of, premium, if any, or interest, if any, and any other payments on, or in respect of, any contingent convertible security of any series such mention shall be deemed to include mention of the payment of Additional Amounts provided for in this "Additional Amounts" section to the extent that, in such context, Additional Amounts are, were or would be payable in respect thereof pursuant to the provisions of this section and as if express mention of the payment of Additional Amounts (if applicable) were made in any provisions hereof where such express mention is not made.

### Limitation on Suits

No holder of contingent convertible securities will be entitled to proceed directly against us, except as described below.

Subject to any further limitations provided in the relevant prospectus supplement and supplemental indenture establishing any series of contingent convertible securities, before a holder of the contingent convertible securities may bypass the trustee and bring its own lawsuit or other formal legal action or take other steps to enforce its rights or protect its interests relating to the contingent convertible securities, the following must occur:

- The holder must give the trustee written notice that a continuing Event of Default has occurred and remains uncured.
- The holders of not less than 25% in outstanding principal amount of the contingent convertible securities of the relevant series must make a written request that the trustee institute proceedings because of the Event of Default, and the holder must offer indemnity satisfactory to the trustee in its sole discretion against the cost and other liabilities incurred in connection with such request.
- The trustee must not have taken action for 60 days after receipt of the above notice and offer of security or indemnity, and the trustee must not have received an inconsistent direction from the majority in principal amount of all outstanding contingent convertible securities of the relevant series during that period.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the contingent convertible indenture or the contingent convertible securities, the right of any holder of contingent convertible securities to receive payment of the principal of (and premium, if any, on), and interest on, the contingent convertible securities, on or after the due dates thereof or to institute suit for the enforcement of any such payment on or after such respective dates, will not be impaired or affected without the consent of such holder.

### Modification and Waiver

We and the trustee may make certain modifications and amendments to the applicable indenture with respect to any series of contingent convertible securities without the consent of the holders of such contingent convertible securities. Other modifications and amendments may be made to the applicable indenture with the consent of not less than a majority in aggregate outstanding principal amount of the contingent convertible securities of the series outstanding under the indenture that are affected by the modification or amendment, voting as one class. However, no modifications or amendments may be made without the consent of the holder of each contingent convertible security affected that would:

- change the stated maturity, if any, of any principal amount of any contingent convertible security;

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- change the terms of any contingent convertible security to include a stated maturity date;
- reduce the principal amount of, the interest rates of, or the payments with respect to any contingent convertible security, other than as permitted under the applicable indenture;
  - change our (or any successor's) obligation to pay Additional Amounts;
  - change the currency of payment;
- reduce the percentage in aggregate principal amount of outstanding contingent convertible securities of the series necessary to modify or amend the applicable indenture or to waive compliance with certain provisions of the applicable indenture;
- impair the right to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment due and payable;
- modify the subordination provisions or the terms of our obligations in respect of the payment of amounts due and payable on the contingent convertible securities in a manner adverse to the holders, in each case other than as permitted under the applicable indenture; or
  - modify the above requirements.

In addition to the permitted amendments described in the preceding paragraph, we and the trustee may amend or supplement the applicable indenture or the contingent convertible securities without the consent of any holders of the contingent convertible securities to conform the provisions of the applicable indenture to this "Description of Contingent Convertible Securities" section in this prospectus.

In addition, unless the relevant prospectus supplement provides otherwise, any variations in the terms and conditions of the contingent convertible securities of any series, including modifications relating to the subordination or redemption provisions of such contingent convertible securities, can only be made in accordance with the rules and requirements of the PRA, as and to the extent applicable from time to time.

Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets; Assumption

We may, without the consent of the holders of any of the contingent convertible securities, consolidate with, merge into or transfer or lease our assets substantially as an entirety to any person, provided that any successor corporation formed by any consolidation or amalgamation, or any transferee or lessee of our assets, is a company organized under the laws of any part of the United Kingdom that assumes, by a supplemental indenture, our obligations on the contingent convertible securities and under the applicable indenture, and we procure the delivery of a customary officer's certificate and legal opinion providing that the conditions precedent to the transaction have been complied with.

Subject to applicable law and regulation (including, if and to the extent required at such time by the applicable regulatory capital rules, regulations or standards, the prior consent of the PRA), a holding company of us or any of our wholly-owned subsidiaries may assume our obligations under the contingent convertible securities of any series without the consent of any holder, provided that certain conditions are satisfied. If the conditions set out in the contingent convertible securities indenture are satisfied, all of our direct payment obligations under the contingent convertible securities of the series and the applicable indenture shall immediately be discharged. Any Additional Amounts under the contingent convertible securities of the series will be payable in respect of taxes imposed by the



jurisdiction in which the assuming holding company or wholly-owned subsidiary is organized or tax resident, subject to exceptions equivalent to those that apply to any obligation to pay Additional Amounts in respect of taxes imposed by the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction, rather than taxes imposed by the U.K. Taxing Jurisdiction. The holding company or wholly-owned subsidiary, as the case may be, that assumes our obligations will also be entitled to redeem the contingent convertible securities of the relevant series in the circumstances described in “—Redemption” above or in the supplemental indenture with respect to the particular series of contingent convertible securities.

An assumption of our obligations under the contingent convertible securities of any series might be deemed for U.S. federal income tax purposes to be an exchange of those contingent convertibles securities for new contingent

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convertible securities by each beneficial owner, resulting in a recognition of taxable gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes and possibly certain other adverse tax consequences. You should consult your tax advisor regarding the U.S. federal, state and local income tax consequences of an assumption.

### Governing Law

The contingent convertible securities and the indenture will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York and the Trust Indenture Act, except that, as the indenture specifies, the subordination provisions and the waiver of the right to set-off by the holders and by the Trustee acting on behalf of the holders of each series of contingent convertible securities will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Scotland.

### Notices

All notices to holders of registered contingent convertible securities shall be validly given if in writing and mailed, first-class postage prepaid, to them at their respective addresses in the register maintained by the trustee.

### The Trustee

The Bank of New York Mellon, acting through its London Branch, One Canada Square, London E14 5AL, is the trustee under the indenture with respect to the contingent convertible securities. The trustee shall have and be subject to all the duties and responsibilities specified with respect to an indenture trustee under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 (“TIA”). Subject to the provisions of the TIA, the trustee is under no obligation to exercise any of the powers vested in it by the indenture at the request of any holder of contingent convertible securities, unless offered reasonable indemnity by the holder against the costs, expense and liabilities which might be incurred thereby. We and certain of our subsidiaries maintain deposit accounts and conduct other banking transactions with The Bank of New York Mellon in the ordinary course of our business. The Bank of New York Mellon is also the book-entry depository and paying agent with respect to our contingent convertible securities. The Bank of New York Mellon is the depository with respect to the American Depositary Shares representing certain of our preference shares and our ordinary shares, and trustee with respect to certain of our exchangeable capital securities.

### Consent to Service of Process

Under the indenture, we irrevocably designate CT Corporation System as our authorized agent for service of process in any legal action or proceeding arising out of or relating to the indentures or any contingent convertible securities brought in any federal or state court in The City of New York, New York and we irrevocably submit to the jurisdiction of those courts.

## DESCRIPTION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS RELATING TO DEBT SECURITIES AND CONTINGENT CONVERTIBLE SECURITIES

### Form of Debt Securities and Contingent Convertible Securities; Book-Entry System

Unless the relevant prospectus supplement states otherwise, the debt securities and contingent convertible securities shall initially be represented by one or more global securities in registered form, without coupons attached, and will be deposited with or on behalf of one or more depository identified in the applicable prospectus supplement, including, without limitation, The Depository Trust Company (“DTC”), Euroclear Bank S.A./N.V. (“Euroclear Bank”), as operator of

the Euroclear System (“Euroclear”) and/or Clearstream Banking, société anonyme (“Clearstream Luxembourg”), and will be registered in the name of such depositary or its nominee. Unless and until the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, are exchanged in whole or in part for other securities that we issue or the global securities are exchanged for definitive securities, the global securities may not be transferred except as a whole by the depositary to a nominee or a successor of the depositary.

Special procedures to facilitate clearance and settlement have been established among these clearing systems to trade securities across borders in the secondary market. Where payments for securities we issue in global form will be made in U.S. dollars, these procedures can be used for cross-market transfers and the securities will be cleared

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and settled on a delivery against payment basis. Cross-market transfers of securities that are not in global form may be cleared and settled in accordance with other procedures that may be established among the clearing systems for these securities.

The debt securities and contingent convertible securities may be accepted for clearance by DTC, Euroclear and Clearstream Luxembourg.

The laws of some states may require that certain investors in securities take physical delivery of their securities in definitive form. Those laws may impair the ability of investors to own interests in book-entry securities.

Neither we nor the trustee nor any of our or its agents has any responsibility for any aspect of the actions of DTC, Clearstream Luxembourg or Euroclear or any of their direct or indirect participants. Neither we nor the trustee nor any of our or its agents has any responsibility for any aspect of the records kept by DTC, Clearstream Luxembourg or Euroclear or any of their direct or indirect participants. Neither we nor the trustee nor any of our or its agents supervise these systems in any way. This is also true for any other clearing system indicated in a prospectus supplement.

DTC, Clearstream Luxembourg, Euroclear and their participants perform these clearance and settlement functions under agreements they have made with one another or with their customers. Investors should be aware that DTC, Clearstream Luxembourg, Euroclear and their participants are not obligated to perform these procedures and may modify them or discontinue them at any time.

The description of the clearing systems in this section reflects our understanding of the rules and procedures of DTC, Clearstream Luxembourg and Euroclear as they are currently in effect. Those systems could change their rules and procedures at any time.

So long as the depository, or its nominee, is the holder of a global security, the depository or its nominee will be considered the sole holder of such global security for all purposes under the indentures. Except as described below under the heading “—Issuance of Definitive Securities”, no participant, indirect participant or other person will be entitled to have debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, registered in its name, receive or be entitled to receive physical delivery of debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, in definitive form or be considered the owner or holder of the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, under the indentures. Each person having an ownership or other interest in debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, must rely on the procedures of the depository, and, if a person is not a participant in the depository, must rely on the procedures of the participant or other securities intermediary through which that person owns its interest to exercise any rights and obligations of a holder under the indentures, the debt securities or the contingent convertible securities, as applicable.

## The Clearing Systems

DTC, Euroclear and Clearstream Luxembourg have advised us as follows:

DTC. DTC, the world’s largest securities depository, is a limited-purpose trust company organized under the New York Banking Law, a “banking organization” within the meaning of the New York Banking Law, a member of the Federal Reserve System, a “clearing corporation” within the meaning of the New York Uniform Commercial Code, and a “clearing agency” registered pursuant to the provisions of Section 17A of the Exchange Act. DTC holds securities deposited with it by its participants and facilitates the settlement of transactions among its participants in such securities through electronic computerized book-entry changes in accounts of the participants, thereby eliminating the

need for physical movement of securities certificates. Direct participants include both U.S. and non-U.S. securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies, clearing corporations, and certain other organizations. DTC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation (“DTCC”). DTCC is the holding company for DTC, National Securities Clearing Corporation and Fixed Income Clearing Corporation, all of which are registered clearing agencies. DTCC is owned by the users of its regulated subsidiaries. Access to the DTC system is also available to others such as both U.S. and non-U.S. securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies, and clearing corporations that clear through or maintain a custodial relationship with a direct

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participant, either directly or indirectly. The DTC rules applicable to its participants are on file with the SEC. More information about DTC can be found at [www.dtcc.com](http://www.dtcc.com).

**Euroclear.** Euroclear holds securities for its participants and clears and settles transactions between its participants through simultaneous electronic book-entry delivery against payment, thus eliminating the need for physical movement of certificates. Euroclear provides various other services, including safekeeping, administration, clearance and settlement and securities lending and borrowing, and interfaces with domestic markets in several countries. Euroclear is operated by Euroclear Bank, under contract with Euroclear plc, a U.K. corporation. Euroclear Bank conducts all operations, and all Euroclear securities clearance accounts and Euroclear cash accounts are accounts with Euroclear Bank, not Euroclear plc. Euroclear plc establishes policy for Euroclear on behalf of Euroclear participants. Euroclear participants include banks (including central banks), securities brokers and dealers and other professional financial intermediaries and may include any underwriters for the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable. Indirect access to Euroclear is also available to other firms that clear through or maintain a custodial relationship with a Euroclear participant, either directly or indirectly. Euroclear is an indirect participant in DTC. Securities clearance accounts and cash accounts with Euroclear are governed by the Terms and Conditions Governing Use of Euroclear and the related Operating Procedures of the Euroclear System (collectively, the “Euroclear Terms and Conditions”) and applicable law. The Euroclear Terms and Conditions govern transfers of securities and cash within Euroclear, withdrawals of securities and cash from Euroclear, and receipts of payments with respect to securities in Euroclear.

**Clearstream Luxembourg.** Clearstream Luxembourg is incorporated under the laws of The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg as a société anonyme and is subject to regulation by the Luxembourg Commission for the Supervision of the Financial Sector (Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier). Clearstream Luxembourg is owned by Deutsche Börse AG, a publicly traded company. Clearstream Luxembourg holds securities for its participants and facilitates the clearance and settlement of securities transactions among its participants through electronic book-entry changes in accounts of its participants, thereby eliminating the need for physical movement of certificates. Clearstream Luxembourg provides other services to its participants, including safekeeping, administration, clearance and settlement of internationally traded securities and securities lending and borrowing. Clearstream Luxembourg interfaces with domestic markets in several countries. Clearstream Luxembourg’s customers include worldwide securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies and clearing corporations and may include professional financial intermediaries. Its U.S. customers are limited to securities brokers, dealers and banks. Indirect access to the Clearstream Luxembourg system is also available to others that clear through Clearstream Luxembourg customers or that have custodial relationships with its customers, such as banks, brokers, dealers and trust companies. Clearstream Luxembourg is an indirect participant in DTC. Clearstream Luxembourg has established an electronic bridge with Euroclear to facilitate settlement of trades between Clearstream Luxembourg and Euroclear. Distributions with respect to the securities held beneficially through Clearstream Luxembourg are credited to cash accounts of Clearstream Luxembourg customers in accordance with its rules and procedures, to the extent received by Clearstream Luxembourg.

### Other Clearing Systems

We may choose any other clearing system for a particular series of securities. The clearance and settlement procedures for the clearing system we choose will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

### Payments on the Global Security

Payments of any amounts in respect of any global securities will be made by the trustee to the depository. Payments will be made to beneficial owners of debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, in accordance

with the rules and procedures of the depositary or its direct and indirect participants, as applicable. Neither we nor the trustee nor any of our agents will have any responsibility or liability for any aspect of the records of any securities intermediary in the chain of intermediaries between the depositary and any beneficial owner of an interest in a global security, or the failure of the depositary or any intermediary to pass through to any beneficial owner any payments that we make to the depositary.

Primary Distribution

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The distribution of debt securities and contingent convertible securities will be cleared through one or more of the clearing systems that we have described above or any other clearing system that is specified in the applicable prospectus supplement. Payment for debt securities and contingent convertible securities will be made on a delivery versus payment or free delivery basis. These payment procedures will be more fully described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Clearance and settlement procedures may vary from one series of debt securities and contingent convertible securities, as applicable, to another according to the currency that is chosen for the specific series of debt securities or contingent convertible securities. Customary clearance and settlement procedures are described below.

We will submit applications to the relevant system or systems for the debt securities and contingent convertible securities to be accepted for clearance. The clearance numbers that are applicable to each clearance system will be specified in the applicable prospectus supplement.

### Clearance and Settlement Procedures—DTC

DTC participants that hold debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, through DTC on behalf of investors will follow the settlement practices applicable to United States corporate debt obligations in DTC's Same-Day Funds Settlement System.

Debt securities and contingent convertible securities, as applicable, will be credited to the securities custody accounts of these DTC participants against payment in same-day funds, for payments in U.S. dollars, on the settlement date. For payments in a currency other than U.S. dollars, debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, will be credited free of payment on the settlement date.

### Clearance and Settlement Procedures—Euroclear and Clearstream Luxembourg

We understand that investors that hold debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, through Euroclear or Clearstream Luxembourg accounts will follow the settlement procedures that are applicable to conventional Eurobonds in registered form for securities.

Debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, will be credited to the securities custody accounts of Euroclear and Clearstream Luxembourg participants on the business day following the settlement date, for value on the settlement date. They will be credited either free of payment or against payment for value on the settlement date.

### Secondary Market Trading

#### Trading Between DTC Participants

Secondary market trading between DTC participants will occur in the ordinary way in accordance with DTC's rules. Secondary market trading will be settled using procedures applicable to United States corporate debt obligations in DTC's Same-Day Funds Settlement System for securities.

If payment is made in U.S. dollars, settlement will be in same-day funds. If payment is made in a currency other than U.S. dollars, settlement will be free of payment. If payment is made other than in U.S. dollars, separate payment arrangements outside of the DTC system must be made between the DTC participants involved.

#### Trading Between Euroclear and/or Clearstream Luxembourg Participants



We understand that secondary market trading between Euroclear and/or Clearstream Luxembourg participants will occur in the ordinary way following the applicable rules and operating procedures of Euroclear and Clearstream Luxembourg. Secondary market trading will be settled using procedures applicable to conventional Eurobonds in registered form for securities.

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### Trading Between a DTC Seller and a Euroclear or Clearstream Luxembourg Purchaser

A purchaser of debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, that are held in the account of a DTC participant must send instructions to Euroclear or Clearstream Luxembourg at least one business day prior to settlement. The instructions will provide for the transfer of the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, from the selling DTC participant's account to the account of the purchasing Euroclear or Clearstream Luxembourg participant. Euroclear or Clearstream Luxembourg, as the case may be, will then instruct the common depository for Euroclear and Clearstream Luxembourg to receive the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, either against payment or free of payment.

The interests in the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, will be credited to the respective clearing system. The clearing system will then credit the account of the participant, following its usual procedures. Credit for the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, will appear on the next day, European time. Cash debit will be back-valued to, and the interest on the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, will accrue from, the value date, which would be the preceding day, when settlement occurs in New York. If the trade fails and settlement is not completed on the intended date, the Euroclear or Clearstream Luxembourg cash debit will be valued as of the actual settlement date instead.

Euroclear participants or Clearstream Luxembourg participants will need the funds necessary to process same-day funds settlement. The most direct means of doing this is to pre-position funds for settlement, either from cash or from existing lines of credit, as for any settlement occurring within Euroclear or Clearstream Luxembourg. Under this approach, participants may take on credit exposure to Euroclear or Clearstream Luxembourg until the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, are credited to their accounts one business day later.

As an alternative, if Euroclear or Clearstream Luxembourg has extended a line of credit to them, participants can choose not to pre-position funds and will instead allow that credit line to be drawn upon to finance settlement. Under this procedure, Euroclear participants or Clearstream Luxembourg participants purchasing debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, would incur overdraft charges for one business day (assuming they cleared the overdraft as soon as the securities were credited to their accounts). However, any interest on the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, would accrue from the value date. Therefore, in many cases, the investment income on debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, that is earned during that one-business day period may substantially reduce or offset the amount of the overdraft charges. This result will, however, depend on each participant's particular cost of funds.

Because the settlement will take place during New York business hours, DTC participants will use their usual procedures to deliver debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, to the depository on behalf of Euroclear participants or Clearstream Luxembourg participants. The sale proceeds will be available to the DTC seller on the settlement date. For the DTC participants, then, a cross-market transaction will settle no differently than a trade between two DTC participants.

### Special Timing Considerations

Investors should be aware that they will only be able to make and receive deliveries, payments and other communications involving the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, through Clearstream Luxembourg and Euroclear on days when those systems are open for business. Those systems may not be open for business on days when banks, brokers and other institutions are open for business in the United States.

In addition, because of time-zone differences, there may be problems with completing transactions involving Clearstream Luxembourg and Euroclear on the same business day as in the United States. U.S. investors who wish to transfer their interests in the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, or to receive or make a payment or delivery of the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, on a particular day, may find that the transactions will not be performed until the next business day in Luxembourg or Brussels, depending on whether Clearstream Luxembourg or Euroclear is used.

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### Issuance of Definitive Securities

So long as the depositary holds the global securities of a particular series of debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, such global securities will not be exchangeable for definitive securities of that series unless:

- the depositary notifies the trustee that it is unwilling or unable to continue to act as depositary for the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, or the depositary ceases to be a clearing agency registered under the Exchange Act;
- we are wound up and we fail to make a payment on the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, when due; or
- at any time we determine at our option and in our sole discretion that the global securities of a particular series of debt securities or contingent convertible securities should be exchanged for definitive debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, of that series in registered form.

Each person having an ownership or other interest in a debt security or contingent convertible security, as applicable, must rely exclusively on the rules or procedures of the depositary as the case may be, and any agreement with any direct or indirect participant of the depositary, including Euroclear or Clearstream Luxembourg and their participants, as applicable, or any other securities intermediary through which that person holds its interest, to receive or direct the delivery of possession of any definitive security. The indentures permit us to determine at any time and in our sole discretion that debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, shall no longer be represented by global securities. DTC has advised us that, under its current practices, it would notify its participants of our request, but will only withdraw beneficial interests from the global securities at the request of each DTC participant. We would issue definitive certificates in exchange for any such beneficial interests withdrawn.

Unless otherwise specified in the relevant prospectus supplement, definitive debt securities and definitive contingent convertible securities will be issued in registered form only. To the extent permitted by law, we, the trustee and any paying agent shall be entitled to treat the person in whose name any definitive security is registered as its absolute owner.

Payments in respect of each series of definitive securities and definitive contingent convertible securities will be made to the person in whose name such definitive securities are registered as it appears in the register for that series of debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable. Payments will be made in respect of the debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, by check drawn on a bank in New York or, if the holder requests, by transfer to the holder's account in New York. Definitive securities should be presented to the paying agent for redemption.

If we issue definitive debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, of a particular series in exchange for a particular global security, the depositary, as holder of that global security, will surrender it against receipt of the definitive debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, cancel the book-entry debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, of that series, and distribute the definitive debt securities or contingent convertible securities, as applicable, of that series to the persons and in the amounts that the depositary specifies pursuant to the internal procedures of such depositary.

If definitive securities are issued in the limited circumstances described above, those securities may be transferred in whole or in part in denominations of any whole number of securities upon surrender of the definitive securities certificates together with the form of transfer endorsed on it, duly completed and executed at the specified office of a

paying agent. If only part of a securities certificate is transferred, a new securities certificate representing the balance not transferred will be issued to the transferor within three business days after the paying agent receives the certificate. The new certificate representing the balance will be delivered to the transferor by uninsured post at the risk of the transferor, to the address of the transferor appearing in the records of the paying agent. The new certificate representing the securities that were transferred will be sent to the transferee within three business days

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after the paying agent receives the certificate transferred, by uninsured post at the risk of the holder entitled to the securities represented by the certificate, to the address specified in the form of transfer.

## DESCRIPTION OF ORDINARY SHARES

The following is a summary of the material terms of the RBSG ordinary shares of nominal value of £1, as set forth in our articles of association and the material provisions of U.K. law. This description is a summary and does not purport to be complete. You are encouraged to read our articles of association, which are filed as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this document is a part.

The dividend and other rights of the Series 1 Class B Shares and the Series 1 Dividend Access Share are set out in the Circular Letter to Shareholders of RBSG dated November 27, 2009 and amended as set out in the General Meeting Circular dated June 2, 2014.

## Share Capital

As at December 31, 2014, our allotted, called up and fully paid share capital was as follows.

Class of Share	number (in thousands)	amount (in £m)
Ordinary shares of £1(1)	6,365,895,896	6,366
B shares of £0.01	51,000,000	510
Dividend access share of £0.01(2)	–	–
Non-cumulative preference shares of U.S.\$0.01	209,609	1
Non-cumulative convertible preference shares of U.S.\$0.01	65	–
Non-cumulative preference shares of €0.01	2,044	–
Non-cumulative convertible preference shares of £0.01	15	–
Non-cumulative preference shares of £1	54	–
Cumulative preference shares of £1	900	1

(1) There is no authorised share capital under RBSG's constitution. The directors have the authority to issue £17.7 billion nominal of ordinary shares in connection with a conversion of B shares. At December 31, 2014 they had a remaining authority granted at the 2014 Annual General Meeting to issue up to £256 million nominal of ordinary shares other than by pre-emption to existing shareholders.

(2) One dividend access share in issue.

## Voting Rights

Subject to any special rights or restrictions provided by the articles of association, on a show of hands every member who is present in person or by proxy shall have one vote (except that a proxy who is appointed by more than one member has one vote for and one vote against if the proxy has been instructed by one or more members to vote for the resolution and by one or more members to vote against the resolution), and on a poll every member who is present in person or by proxy shall have one vote for each 25 pence in nominal amount of shares held by him. Voting rights may

not be exercised by a member who has been served with a restriction notice after failure to provide us with information concerning interests in shares to be provided under U.K. law.

Holders of non-cumulative preference shares are not entitled to attend or vote at any general meeting unless the business of the meeting includes the consideration of a resolution for the winding-up of RBSG or any resolution directly varying or abrogating the rights attached to any such shares and then in such case only to speak to and vote upon any such resolution. However, holders have the right to vote in respect of any matter when the dividend payable on their shares has not been declared in full for such number of dividend periods as the directors shall determine prior to the allotment thereof. Whenever a holder is entitled to vote at a general meeting, on a show of hands every shareholder who is present in person has one vote and, on a poll, every such holder who is present in person or by proxy shall have such number of votes as may be determined by the directors prior to allotment.

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### Shareholders' Meetings

The Board must call an annual general meeting in each period of six months beginning with the day following our accounting reference date. Other general meetings may be called by the directors whenever they think fit. The directors must also convene a meeting upon the request of shareholders holding not less than 5% of our paid-up capital carrying voting rights at general meetings of shareholders. A request for a general meeting of shareholders must state the general nature of the business to be dealt with at the meeting, and must be signed by the requesting shareholders and deposited at our registered office or an address specified by us for the purpose. If our directors fail to give notice of such meeting to shareholders within 21 days from receipt of notice (the meeting in question to be held on a date not more than 28 days after the date of the notice convening the meeting), the shareholders that requested the general meeting, or any of them representing more than one-half of the total voting rights of all shareholders that requested the meeting, may themselves convene a meeting, but any meeting so convened shall not be held after the expiration of three months. Any such meeting must be convened in the same manner, as nearly as possible, as that in which meetings are to be convened by our directors.

We must give at least 21 days' notice of a general meeting but, in the case of any general meeting other than an annual general meeting, the Companies Act 2006 allows us to use a shorter notice period of 14 days provided that certain conditions are met, including the passing of an appropriate resolution at an annual general meeting. Notice shall be given to the auditors and to every member of RBSG, other than those who are not entitled to receive such notice under the provisions of the articles of association.

We may not hold an annual or general meeting at short notice other than in relation to a general meeting that is adjourned.

The notice calling a general meeting must specify the place, day and time of the meeting.

### Attendance at Shareholders' Meetings; Proxies and Votes by Mail

In general, all shareholders (subject to restrictions for holders of non-cumulative preference shares as set out above) who have properly registered their shares may participate in general meetings. Shareholders may attend, speak and vote in person or by proxy. Shareholders may vote in person or, on a poll, by proxy.

In order to attend or vote at any general meeting, a person must be entered on the register of members by the time, being not more than 48 hours before the meeting, specified in the notice of the general meeting (as described below under —“Quorum”).

A shareholder may appoint a proxy in writing or by electronic communication. The appointment of a proxy must be delivered to or received by us at the address specified for that purpose not later than 48 hours before the time appointed for the holding of the meeting. A proxy need not be a member of RBSG.

### Quorum

The articles of association state that no business other than the appointment of a chairman of the meeting shall be transacted at any general meeting unless a quorum is present. A quorum for the purposes of a general meeting is five shareholders present in person and entitled to vote at the meeting.

If a quorum is not present at a general meeting within 15 minutes of the time appointed for the meeting (or such longer time not exceeding one hour as the chairman of the meeting may determine), the meeting shall be adjourned to



either the day and time specified in the notice convening the meeting for such purpose or (if not specified) such time as the chairman of the meeting may determine. In the event of the latter, not less than seven days' notice of the adjourned meeting (or such longer notice as may be required by statute) shall be given. If a quorum is not present at the adjourned meeting within 15 minutes of the time appointed, the members present in person or by proxy and entitled to vote at the meeting shall constitute a quorum.

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### Votes Required for Shareholder Action

An ordinary resolution must receive more than 50% of the votes cast to be passed. A special resolution must receive at least 75% of the votes cast in order to be passed.

### Financial Statements and Other Communications with Shareholders

Not less than 21 days before the date of an annual general meeting, we must send a copy of every balance sheet and profit and loss account which is to be laid before a general meeting, and a copy of the Director's and Auditors' reports, to every member of RBSG and every person who is entitled to receive notice of the meeting. Alternatively, such persons can elect to receive only a copy of RBSG's strategic report or can elect to view the aforementioned documents on our website.

### Dividends

Subject to the provisions of the 2006 Act and Clause 123 of the Articles, we may, by ordinary resolution, declare dividends on ordinary shares save that no dividend shall be payable except out of profits available for distribution, or in excess of the amount recommended by the Board or in contravention of the special rights attaching to any share. Any dividend which has remained unclaimed for 12 years from the date of declaration shall be forfeited and shall revert to us.

We may cease sending dividend warrants and cheques by post or otherwise to a member if such instruments have been returned undelivered to, or left uncashed by, that member on at least two consecutive occasions, or, following one such occasion, reasonable enquiries have failed to establish any new address or account of the registered holder. We may resume sending warrants and cheques if the holder requests such recommencement in writing.

### Preference shares

Each cumulative preference share confers the right to a fixed cumulative preferential dividend payable half-yearly. Each non-cumulative preference share confers the right to a preferential dividend (not exceeding a specified amount) payable in the currency of the relevant share. The rate of such dividend and the date of payment thereof, together with the terms and conditions of the dividend, are as may be determined by the directors prior to allotment. Cumulative preference share dividends are paid in priority to any dividend on any other class of share. The non-cumulative preference shares rank for dividend after the cumulative preference shares but rank *pari passu* with each other and any shares expressed to rank, in terms of participation in our profits, in some or all respects *pari passu* therewith and otherwise in priority to dividends payable on the ordinary shares and any of our other share capital. The directors may resolve prior to the issue and allotment of any series of non-cumulative preference shares that full dividends in respect of a particular dividend payment date will not be declared and paid if, (i) in their sole and absolute discretion, the directors resolve prior to the relevant dividend payment date that such dividend (or part thereof) shall not be paid and/or (ii) in the opinion of the directors, payment of a dividend would cause a breach of the UK Prudential Regulation Authority's capital adequacy requirements applicable to us or our subsidiaries, or subject to the next following paragraph, insufficient distributable profits are available to cover the payment in full of all dividends after having paid any dividends payable on any of the cumulative preference shares. If dividends will be paid but, in the opinion of the directors, insufficient distributable profits are available to cover the payment in full of dividends after having paid any dividends payable on any of the cumulative preference shares, dividends will be declared by the directors, *pro rata* on the non-cumulative preference shares to the extent of the available distributable profits. The non-cumulative preference shares will carry no further rights to participate in our profits and if, and to the extent, any dividend or part of any dividend is on any occasion not paid for any of the reasons described above, holders of

non-cumulative preference shares will have no claim in respect of such non-payment.

If any dividend is not payable for the reasons described in clause (ii) of the third paragraph of this subsection, the directors may pay a special dividend not exceeding US\$0.01, £0.01 or €0.01 (depending on the currency of the relevant preference share) per share.

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If the dividend payable on any series of non-cumulative preference shares on the most recent payment date is not paid in full, or if a sum is not set aside to provide for such payment in full, in either case for the reasons set forth in clause (ii) of the third paragraph of this subsection, no dividends may be declared on any of our other share capital and no sum may be set aside for the payment of a dividend on any of our other share capital (in each case other than the cumulative preference shares), unless, on the date of declaration, an amount equal to the dividend payable in respect of the then current dividend period for such series of non-cumulative preference shares is set aside for payment in full on the next dividend payment date.

If any dividend payable on the non-cumulative preference shares is not paid in full or if a sum is not set aside to provide for such payment in full (in either case for the reasons set forth in clause (ii) of the third paragraph of this subsection), we may not redeem or purchase or otherwise acquire any of our other share capital and may not set aside any sum nor establish any sinking fund for its redemption, purchase or other such acquisition, until such time as dividends have been declared and paid in full in respect of successive dividend periods together aggregating not less than 12 months.

The non-payment of any dividend (in full or in part) by reason of the exercise of the directors' discretion referred to in clause (i) of the third paragraph of this subsection, shall not prevent or restrict (a) the declaration and payment of dividends on any other series of non-cumulative preference shares or on any non-cumulative preference shares expressed to rank *pari passu* with the non-cumulative preference shares, (b) the setting aside of sums for the payment of such dividends, (c) except as set forth in the following paragraph, the redemption, purchase or other acquisition of our shares by us, or (d) except as set forth in the following paragraph, the setting aside of sums, or the establishment of sinking funds, for any such redemption, purchase or other acquisition by us.

If dividends are not declared and paid in full on any series of non-cumulative preference shares as a result of the directors' discretion referred to in clause (i) of the third paragraph of this subsection, then we may not redeem, purchase or otherwise acquire for any consideration any of our share capital ranking after such preference shares, and may not set aside any sum nor establish any sinking fund for the redemption, purchase or other acquisition thereof, until such time we have declared and paid in full dividends on such series of non-cumulative preference shares in respect of successive dividend periods together aggregating no less than 12 months. In addition, no dividend may be declared or paid on any of our share capital ranking after such preference shares until the dividend in respect of a particular dividend payment date payable on the preference shares to which the directors' discretion in clause (i) of the third paragraph of this subsection applies has been declared and paid in full.

With effect from 19 April 2011, subject to existing class rights of shareholders, new preference shares can be issued with such rights and restrictions as the directors may determine.

## Changes in Share Capital and Variation of Share Rights

Subject to the provisions of the 2006 Act and without prejudice to any rights attached to any existing shares or class of shares, any share may be issued with such rights or restrictions as we may by ordinary resolution determine or, subject to and in default of such determination, as the Board shall determine. Subject to the provisions of the 2006 Act, we may issue shares which are, or at our option or the holder are liable, to be redeemed. Subject to the provisions of the 2006 Act and the Articles, unissued shares are at the disposal of the Board.

We may by ordinary resolution: increase our share capital; consolidate and divide all or any of our share capital into shares of larger amount than our existing shares; subject to the provisions of the 2006 Act, subdivide our shares, or any of them, into shares of smaller amount than is fixed by the Memorandum; or cancel any shares which have not been taken or agreed to be taken by any person and diminish the amount of our share capital by the amount of the

shares so cancelled.

Subject to the provisions of the 2006 Act, if at any time our capital is divided into different classes of shares, the rights attached to any class of shares may (unless further conditions are provided by the terms of issue of the shares of that class) be varied or abrogated, whether or not we are being wound up, either with the consent in writing of the holders of three-quarters in-nominal value of the issued shares of the class or with the sanction of a special

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resolution passed at a separate general meeting of holders of the shares of the class (but not otherwise). To any such separate general meeting the provision of the Articles relating to general meetings will apply, save that:

- (i) if at any adjourned meeting of such holders a quorum as defined above is not present, two people who hold shares of the class, or their proxies, are a quorum; and
- (ii) any such holder present in person or by proxy may demand a poll. The rights attaching to any class of shares having preferential rights are not, unless otherwise expressly provided by the terms of issue thereof, deemed to be varied by the creation or issue of further shares ranking, as regards participation in our profits or assets, *pari passu* therewith, but in no respect in priority thereto.

## Pre-emption Rights

Under U.K. law, if we issue specific kinds of additional securities, current shareholders will have pre-emption rights to those securities on a pro rata basis.

The shareholders may, by way of a special resolution, grant authority to the directors to allot shares as if the pre-emption rights did not apply. This authority may be either specific or general and may not exceed a period of five years. If the directors wish to seek authority to disapply the pre-emption rights in relation to a specific allotment, the directors must produce a statement that is circulated to shareholders detailing their reasons for seeking the disapplication of such pre-emption rights.

## Form, Holding and Transfer of Shares

Shares may be held in either certificated or uncertificated form.

### Certificated Shares

Shares held in certificated form are evidenced by a certificate and a register of shareholders is maintained by our registrar. Any member may transfer all or any of his certificated shares by an instrument of transfer in any usual form or a form approved by the directors.

Title to certificated shares is evidenced by entry in the register of our members.

The directors may decline to register any transfer of a certificated share unless:

- (i) the instrument of transfer is lodged at the specified place and accompanied by the certificate for the shares to which it relates;
- (ii) the instrument of transfer is in respect of only one class of share; and
- (iii) in the case of a transfer to joint holders, the number of joint holders to whom the share is to be transferred does not exceed four.

### Uncertificated Shares

RBSG shares held in uncertificated form are held through CREST (computerised settlement system to facilitate the transfer of title to shares in uncertificated form operated by Euroclear UK).

Subject to any applicable restrictions in the articles of association, any member may transfer all or any of his uncertificated shares by means of a relevant system in the manner provided for in the Uncertificated Securities Regulations 2001 and the rules of the relevant system.

Title to uncertificated shares is evidenced by entry in the operator register maintained by Euroclear UK (which forms part of the register of our members).

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The directors may decline to register the transfer of an uncertificated share in accordance with the Uncertificated Securities Regulations 2001, and, in the case of jointly held shares, where the share is to be transferred to more than four joint holders.

No fee is payable for the registration of transfers of either certificated or uncertificated shares, although there may be U.K. stamp duty and SDRT consequences.

## Liquidation Rights

If RBSG is liquidated, the liquidator may, with the authority of a special resolution, divide among the members in specie or kind the whole or any part of the assets of RBSG. The liquidator may determine how such division is to be carried out as between members or classes of members. No member shall be compelled to accept any assets on which there is a liability.

## Cumulative preference shares

In the event of a return of capital on a winding-up or otherwise, the holders of cumulative preference shares are entitled to receive out of our surplus assets available for distribution amongst the members (i) in priority to the holders of the non-cumulative preference shares and any other shares ranking *pari passu* therewith, the arrears of any fixed dividends including the amount of any dividend due for a payment after the date of commencement of any winding-up or liquidation but which is payable in respect of a half-year period ending on or before such date and (ii) *pari passu* with the holders of the non-cumulative preference shares and any other shares ranking *pari passu* therewith, the amount paid up or credited as paid up on such shares together with any premium.

## Non-cumulative preference shares

Each non-cumulative preference share will confer on a winding-up or liquidation (except (unless otherwise provided by the terms of issue) a redemption or purchase by us of any shares in our capital, the right to receive out of our surplus assets available for distribution amongst the members after payment of the arrears (if any) of the cumulative dividend on the cumulative preference shares and in priority to the holders of the ordinary shares, repayment of the amount paid up or credited as paid up on the non-cumulative preference shares together with any premium paid on issue *pari passu* with the holders of the cumulative preference shares and together with an amount equal to accrued and unpaid dividends.

## Non-voting deferred shares

On a winding-up or other return of our capital, holders of non-voting deferred shares are entitled only to payment of the amounts paid up on the non-voting deferred shares, after repayment to the holders of ordinary shares of the nominal amount paid up on the ordinary shares held by them and payment of £100,000 on each ordinary share.

## B Shares

On a winding-up, holders of the Series 1 Class B Shares will rank equally with the holders of the ordinary shares, the Series 1 Dividend Access Share and any other class of our shares or securities which rank equally with the Series 1 Class B Shares, the Series 1 Dividend Access Share or the ordinary shares on a winding-up or liquidation, and junior to all other shareholders and all of our creditors. For these purposes, on a winding-up each holder of a Series 1 Class B Share will be deemed to hold one (as adjusted from time to time) of our ordinary shares for every Series 1 Class B Share held at the date of the commencement of such winding-up, and will be entitled to receive out of our surplus



assets remaining after payment of all prior-ranking claims, a sum equal to that payable to a holder of one (as adjusted) ordinary share in such event.

Dividend Access Share

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On a winding-up, the holder of the Series 1 Dividend Access Share will rank equally with the holders of the ordinary shares, the Series 1 Class B Shares and any other class of our shares or securities which rank equally with the Series 1 Dividend Access Share, the Series 1 Class B Shares or the ordinary shares on a winding-up or liquidation, and junior to all other shareholders and all our creditors. For these purposes, on a winding-up the holder of the Series 1 Dividend Access Share will be deemed to hold one-tenth (as adjusted from time to time) of one ordinary share and will be entitled to receive out of our surplus assets remaining after payment of all prior ranking claims, a sum equal to that payable to a holder of one-tenth (as adjusted) of one ordinary share in such event.

## General

On our winding-up, the liquidator may, with the authority of any extraordinary resolution and any other sanction required by the Insolvency Act 1986 and subject to the rights attaching to any class of shares after payment of all liabilities, including the payment to holders of preference shares, divide amongst the members in specie or kind the whole or any part of our assets or vest the whole or any part of the assets in trustees upon such trusts for the benefit of the members and may determine the scope and terms of those trusts. No member shall be compelled to accept any assets on which there is a liability.

## Disclosure of Holdings Exceeding Certain Percentages

The Disclosure and Transparency Rules require each shareholder to notify us if the voting rights held by him (including by way of certain financial instrument) reaches, exceeds or falls below 3%, 4%, 5%, 6%, 7%, 8%, 9%, 10% and each 1% threshold thereafter up to 100%. Under the Disclosure and Transparency Rules, certain voting rights in RBSG may be disregarded.

Pursuant to the Companies Act, we may also send a notice to any person whom we know or believes to be interested in our shares requiring that person to confirm whether he has such an interest and if so details of that interest.

Under the articles of association and U.K. law, if a person fails to comply with such a notice or provides information that is false in a material particular in respect of any shares (the “default shares”), the Directors may serve a restriction notice on such person. Such a restriction notice will state that the default shares and, if the Directors determine, any other shares held by that person, shall not confer any right to attend or vote at any general meeting of RBSG.

In respect of a person with a 0.25% or more interest in our issued ordinary share capital, the Directors may direct in the restriction notice that, subject to certain exceptions, no transfers of shares held by such person (in certificated or uncertificated form) shall be registered and that any dividends or other payments on the shares shall be retained by us pending receipt by us of the information requested by the Directors.

## Purchase of Shares by RBSG

Subject to U.K. law (which includes a requirement to obtain shareholder authority), and to any rights conferred on the holders of any class of shares and to any requirements imposed by the London Stock Exchange, we may purchase any of our own shares. The directors are not obliged to select the shares to be purchased rateably or in any other particular manner as between the holders of shares of the same class or different classes.

## Conversion

Convertible preference shares carry the right to convert into ordinary shares if they have not been the subject of a notice of redemption from us, on or before a specified date determined by the Directors. The right to convert will be

exercisable by service of a conversion notice on us within a specified period. We will use reasonable endeavours to arrange the sale, on behalf of convertible preference shareholders who have submitted a conversion notice, of the ordinary shares which result from such conversion and to pay to them the proceeds of such sale so that they receive net proceeds equal to the nominal value of the convertible preference shares which were the subject of the conversion notice and any premium at which such shares were issued, provided that ordinary shares will not be sold

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at below a benchmark price (as determined prior to the issue of the relevant convertible preference shares by the Directors).

### Lien and Forfeiture

We have a lien on every partly paid share for all amounts payable to us in respect of that share. The Directors may call any monies unpaid on shares and may sell shares on which calls or amounts payable under the terms of issues are not duly paid.

### Ownership of Shares by Non-U.S. Persons

There are no provisions in the articles of association that restrict non-resident or foreign shareholders from holding RBSG shares or from exercising voting rights attaching to RBSG shares.

### Untraceable Shareholders

We shall be entitled to sell, at the best price reasonably obtainable, the shares of a member or the shares to which a person is entitled by transmission if:

- (i) during a period of 12 years prior to the date of advertising its intention to sell such shares at least three cash dividends in respect of such shares have become payable but all dividends or other moneys payable remain unclaimed;
- (ii) as soon as practicable after the expiry of the period referred to in sub-paragraph (i) above, we insert advertisements in one daily newspaper with a national circulation in the United Kingdom, one Scottish daily newspaper and one newspaper circulating in the area of the last known address of the member or other person giving notice of its intention to sell the shares;
- (iii) during the period referred to in sub-paragraph (i) above and the period of three months following the publication of the advertisements referred to in sub-paragraph (ii) above, we receive no indication of the whereabouts or existence of the member or other person; and
- (iv) if the shares are listed on the London Stock Exchange, we give notice to the London Stock Exchange of its intention to sell the shares prior to publication of the advertisements.

The net proceeds of such sale shall belong to us, which shall be obliged to account to the former member or other person previously entitled to the shares for an amount equal to the proceeds as a creditor of RBS.

## DESCRIPTION OF ORDINARY SHARE AMERICAN DEPOSITARY SHARES

The Bank of New York Mellon, as the depository, will register and deliver ordinary share ADSs, each representing two RBSG ordinary shares (or a right to receive two RBSG ordinary shares) deposited with the London branch of The Bank of New York Mellon, as custodian. Each ordinary share ADS will also represent any other securities, cash or other property which may be held by the depository. The depository's corporate trust office at which the register will be administered is located at 101 Barclay Street, New York, New York 10286. The Bank of New York's principal executive office is located at One Wall Street, New York, New York 10286.

You may hold ordinary share ADSs either (i) directly (a) by having an ordinary share ADR, which is a certificate evidencing a specific number of ordinary share ADSs, registered in your name, or (b) by holding ordinary share ADSs in the Direct Registration System, or (ii) indirectly through your broker or other financial institution. If you hold ordinary share ADSs directly, you are an ordinary share ADS holder. This description assumes you hold your ordinary share ADSs directly. If you hold the ordinary share ADSs indirectly, you must rely on the procedures of your broker or other financial institution to assert the rights of ordinary share ADS holders described in this section. You should consult with your broker or financial institution to find out what those procedures are.

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The Direct Registration System, or DRS, is a system administered by DTC pursuant to which the depositary may register the ownership of uncertificated ordinary share ADSs, which ownership shall be evidenced by periodic statements sent by the depositary to the ordinary share ADS holders entitled thereto.

As an ordinary share ADS holder, we will not treat you as one of our shareholders and you will not have shareholder rights. United Kingdom law governs shareholder rights. The depositary will be the holder of the shares underlying your ordinary share ADSs. As a holder of ordinary share ADSs, you will have ordinary share ADS holder rights. The ordinary share ADS deposit agreement among RBSG, the depositary and you, as an ordinary share ADS holder, and the beneficial owners of ordinary share ADSs sets out ordinary share ADS holder rights as well as the rights and obligations of the depositary. New York law governs the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement and the ordinary share ADSs.

RBSG may from time to time request owners of ordinary share ADSs to provide information as to the capacity in which such owners own or owned ordinary share ADSs and regarding the identity of any other persons then or previously having a beneficial interest in such ordinary share ADSs and the nature of such interest and various other matters. Each owner of ordinary share ADSs agrees to provide any information requested by RBSG or the depositary pursuant to the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement. The depositary agrees to comply with reasonable written instructions received from time to time from RBSG requesting that the depositary forward any such requests to the owners of ordinary share ADSs and to forward to RBSG any such requests received by the depositary.

The following is a summary of the material provisions of the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement. For more complete information, you should read the entire ordinary share ADS deposit agreement and the form of American depositary receipt.

### Dividends and Other Distributions

The depositary has agreed to pay to you the cash dividends or other distributions it or the custodian receives on ordinary shares or other deposited securities, after deducting its fees and expenses. You will receive these distributions in proportion to the number of RBSG ordinary shares your ordinary share ADSs represent.

- **Cash.** The depositary will convert any cash dividend or other cash distribution we pay on the RBSG ordinary shares into U.S. dollars, if it can do so on a reasonable basis and can transfer the U.S. dollars to the United States. If that is not possible or if any government approval is needed and cannot be obtained, the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement allows the depositary to distribute the foreign currency only to those ordinary share ADS holders to whom it is possible to do so. It will hold the foreign currency it cannot convert for the account of the ordinary share ADS holders who have not been paid. It will not invest the foreign currency and it will not be liable for any interest. Before making a distribution, any withholding taxes, or other governmental charges that must be paid, will be deducted. The depositary will distribute only whole U.S. dollars and cents and will round fractional cents to the nearest whole cent. If the exchange rates fluctuate during a time when the depositary cannot convert the foreign currency, you may lose some or all of the value of the distribution.
- **Shares.** The depositary may distribute additional ordinary share ADSs representing any shares we distribute as a dividend or free distribution. The depositary will only distribute whole ordinary share ADSs. It will sell shares which would require it to deliver a fractional ordinary share ADS and distribute the net proceeds in the same way as it does with cash. If the depositary does not distribute additional ordinary share ADSs, the outstanding ordinary share ADSs will also represent the new shares. The depositary may sell a portion of the distributed shares sufficient to pay its fees and expenses in connection with that distribution.

- Rights to purchase additional shares. If we offer holders of our securities any rights to subscribe for additional shares or any other rights, the depositary may, after consultation with RBSG, make these rights available to you. If the depositary decides it is not legal and practical to make the rights available but that it is practical to sell the rights, the depositary will use reasonable efforts to sell the rights and distribute the proceeds in the same way as it does with cash. The depositary will allow rights that are not distributed or sold to lapse. In that case, you will receive no value for them.

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If the depositary makes rights available to you, it will exercise the rights and purchase the shares on your behalf. The depositary will then deposit the shares and deliver ordinary share ADSs to you. It will only exercise rights if you pay it the exercise price and any other charges the rights require you to pay.

U.S. securities laws may restrict transfers and cancellation of the ordinary share ADSs represented by shares purchased upon exercise of rights. For example, you may not be able to trade these ordinary share ADSs freely in the United States. In this case, the depositary may deliver restricted depositary shares that have the same terms as the ordinary share ADSs described in this section except for changes needed to put the necessary restrictions in place.

- **Other Distributions.** After consultation with RBSG to the extent practicable, the depositary will send to you anything else RBSG distributes on deposited securities by any means it thinks is legal, fair and practical. If it cannot make the distribution in that way, the depositary has a choice. It may, after consultation with RBSG to the extent practicable, decide to sell what we distributed and distribute the net proceeds, in the same way as it does with cash. Or, it may decide to hold what we distributed, in which case ordinary share ADSs will also represent the newly distributed property. However, the depositary is not required to distribute any securities (other than ordinary share ADSs) to you unless it receives reasonably satisfactory evidence from us that it is legal to make that distribution. The depositary may sell a portion of the distributed securities or property sufficient to pay its fees and expenses in connection with that distribution.

The depositary is not responsible if it decides that it is unlawful or impractical to make a distribution available to any ordinary share ADS holders. We have no obligation to register ordinary share ADSs, shares, rights or other securities under the Securities Act. We also have no obligation to take any other action to permit the distribution of ordinary share ADSs, shares, rights or anything else to ordinary share ADS holders. This means that you may not receive the distributions we make on our shares or any value for them if it is illegal or impractical for RBSG to make them available to you.

## Deposit, Withdrawal and Cancellation

The depositary will deliver ordinary share ADSs if you or your broker deposit shares or evidence of rights to receive shares with the custodian. Upon payment of its fees and expenses and of any taxes or charges, such as stamp taxes or stock transfer taxes or fees and including a U.K. SDRT charge on the value of the ordinary shares so deposited, the depositary will register the appropriate number of ordinary share ADSs in the names you request and will deliver the ordinary share ADSs to or upon the order of the person or persons that made the deposit.

You may surrender your ordinary share ADSs at the depositary's corporate trust office. Upon payment of its fees and expenses and of any taxes or charges, such as stamp taxes or stock transfer taxes or fees, the depositary will deliver the shares and any other deposited securities underlying the ordinary share ADSs to you or a person you designate at the office of the custodian. Or, at your request, risk and expense, the depositary will deliver the deposited securities at its corporate trust office, if feasible.

You may surrender your ordinary share ADR to the depositary for the purpose of exchanging your ordinary share ADR for uncertificated ordinary share ADSs. The depositary will cancel that ordinary share ADR and will send you a statement confirming that you are the owner of uncertificated ordinary share ADSs. Alternatively, upon receipt by the depositary of a proper instruction from a holder of uncertificated ordinary share ADSs requesting the exchange of uncertificated ordinary share ADSs for certificated ordinary share ADSs, the depositary will execute and deliver to you an ordinary share ADR evidencing those ordinary share ADSs.

## Voting Rights



You may instruct the depositary to vote the number of deposited shares your ordinary share ADSs represent. The depositary will notify you of shareholders' meetings and arrange to deliver our voting materials to you if we ask it to. Those materials will describe the matters to be voted on and explain how you may instruct the depositary how to vote. For instructions to be valid, they must reach the depositary by a date set by the depositary.

Otherwise, you won't be able to exercise your right to vote unless you withdraw the shares. However, you may not know about the meeting enough in advance to withdraw the shares.

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The depositary will try, as far as practical, subject to the laws of the United Kingdom and of our articles of association, to vote or to have its agents vote the shares or other deposited securities as you instruct. The depositary will only vote or attempt to vote as you instruct. If no instructions are received by the depositary from any owner with respect of any of the deposited securities represented by the ordinary share ADSs on or before the date established by the depositary for such purpose, the depositary shall deem the owner to have instructed the depositary to give a discretionary proxy to a person designated by RBSG with respect to such deposited securities, and the depositary shall give a discretionary proxy to a person designated by us to vote such deposited securities. No such instruction shall be deemed given and no such discretionary proxy shall be given with respect to any matter as to which we inform the depositary (i) we do not wish such proxy given, (ii) substantial opposition exists or (iii) the matter would materially and adversely affects the rights of holders of the shares.

We cannot assure you that you will receive the voting materials in time to ensure that you can instruct the depositary to vote your shares. In addition, the depositary and its agents are not responsible if they fail to carry out voting instructions or for the manner of carrying out voting instructions. This means that you may not be able to exercise your right to vote and there may be nothing you can do if your shares are not voted as you requested.

In order to give you a reasonable opportunity to instruct the depositary as to the exercise of voting rights relating to Deposited Securities (as defined in the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement), if we request the depositary to act, we will try to give the depositary notice of any such meeting and details concerning the matters to be voted upon not less than 30 days in advance of the meeting date.

## Fees and Expenses

For:	Persons depositing or withdrawing shares must pay:
· Issuance of ordinary share ADSs, including issuances resulting from a distribution of shares or rights or other property	· \$5.00 (or less) per 100 ordinary share ADSs (or portion of 100 ordinary share ADSs)
· Cancellation of ordinary share ADSs for the purpose of withdrawal, including if the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement terminates	· \$5.00 (or less) per 100 ordinary share ADSs (or portion of 100 ordinary share ADSs)
· Any cash distribution to you	· \$0.02 (or less) per ordinary share ADS
· Distribution of securities distributed to holders of deposited securities which are distributed by the depositary to holders	· A fee equivalent to the fee that would be payable if securities distributed to you had been shares and the shares had been deposited for issuance of ordinary share ADSs
· Depositary services	· \$0.02 (or less) per ordinary share ADSs per annum
· Transfer and registration of shares on our share register to or from the name of the depositary or its agent	· Registration or transfer fees

when you deposit or withdraw shares

·	Cable, telex and facsimile transmissions (when expressly provided in the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement)	·	Expenses of the depositary
·	Converting foreign currency to U.S. dollars	·	Expenses of the depositary
·	As necessary	·	Taxes and other governmental charges the depositary or the custodian have to pay on any ordinary share ADS or share underlying an ordinary share ADS, for example, stock transfer taxes, stamp duty or withholding taxes
·	As necessary	·	Any charges incurred by the depositary or its agents for servicing the deposited securities

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### Payment of Taxes

You will be responsible for any taxes or other governmental charges payable on your ordinary share ADSs or on the deposited securities represented by any of your ordinary share ADSs. The depositary may refuse to register any transfer of your ordinary share ADSs or allow you to withdraw the deposited securities represented by your ordinary share ADSs until such taxes or other charges are paid. It may apply payments owed to you or sell deposited securities represented by your ordinary share ADSs to pay any taxes owed and you will remain liable for any deficiency. If the depositary sells deposited securities, it will, if appropriate, reduce the number of ordinary share ADSs to reflect the sale and pay to you any proceeds, or send to you any property, remaining after it has paid the taxes.

### Reclassifications, Recapitalizations and Mergers

If we:

- change the nominal or par value of our shares
- reclassify, split up or consolidate any of the deposited securities
- distribute securities on the shares that are not distributed to you
- recapitalise, reorganise, merge, liquidate, sell all or substantially all of our assets, or take any similar action

then the cash, shares or other securities received by the depositary will become deposited securities. Each ordinary share ADS will automatically represent its equal share of the new deposited securities. The depositary may, and will if we ask it to, distribute some or all of the cash, shares or other securities it received. It may also deliver new ordinary share ADRs or ask you to surrender your outstanding ordinary share ADRs in exchange for new ordinary share ADRs identifying the new deposited securities.

### Amendment and Termination

We may agree with the depositary to amend the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement and the ordinary share ADRs without your consent for any reason. If an amendment adds or increases fees or charges, except for taxes and other governmental charges or expenses of the depositary for registration fees, facsimile costs, delivery charges or similar items, or prejudices a substantial right of ordinary share ADS holders, it will not become effective for outstanding ordinary share ADSs until 30 days after the depositary notifies ordinary share ADS holders of the amendment. At the time an amendment becomes effective, you are considered, by continuing to hold your ordinary share ADSs, to agree to the amendment and to be bound by the ordinary share ADRs and the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement as amended.

The depositary will terminate the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement at our direction by mailing notice of termination to the ordinary share ADS holders then outstanding at least 30 days prior to the date fixed in such notice for such termination. The depositary may also terminate the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement by mailing notice of termination to us and the ordinary share ADS holders then outstanding if 60 days have passed since the depositary told us it wants to resign but a successor depositary has not been appointed and accepted its appointment.

After termination, the depositary and its agents will do the following under the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement but nothing else: collect distributions on the deposited securities, sell rights and other property, and deliver shares and other deposited securities upon cancellation of ordinary share ADSs. Four months after termination, the depositary may sell any remaining deposited securities by public or private sale. After that, the depositary will hold the money it received on the sale, as well as any other cash it is holding under the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement for the pro rata benefit of the ordinary share ADS holders that have not surrendered their ordinary share ADSs. It will not invest the money and has no liability for interest. The depositary's only obligations will be to account for the money and other cash. After termination our only obligations will be to indemnify the depositary and to pay fees and expenses of the depositary that we agreed to pay.

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### Limitations on Obligations and Liability

The ordinary share ADS deposit agreement expressly limits our obligations and the obligations of the depositary. It also limits our liability and the liability of the depositary. We and the depositary:

- are only obligated to take the actions specifically set forth in the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement without negligence or bad faith;
- are not liable if we are or it is prevented or delayed by law or circumstances beyond our control from performing our or its obligations under the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement;
  - are not liable if we or it exercises discretion permitted under the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement;
- have no obligation to become involved in a lawsuit or other proceeding related to the ordinary share ADSs or the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement on your behalf or on behalf of any other person; and
  - may rely upon any documents we believe or it believes in good faith to be genuine and to have been signed or presented by the proper person.

In the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement, we and the depositary agree to indemnify each other under certain circumstances.

### Requirements for Depositary Actions

Before the depositary will deliver or register a transfer of an ordinary share ADS, make a distribution on an ordinary share ADS, or permit withdrawal of shares, the depositary may require:

- payment of stock transfer or other taxes or other governmental charges and transfer or registration fees charged by third parties for the transfer of any shares or other deposited securities;
- satisfactory proof of the identity and genuineness of any signature or other information it deems necessary; and
- compliance with regulations it may establish, from time to time, consistent with the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement, including presentation of transfer documents.

The depositary may refuse to deliver ordinary share ADSs or register transfers of ordinary share ADSs generally when the transfer books of the depositary or our transfer books are closed or at any time if the depositary or we think it advisable to do so.

### Your Right to Receive the Shares Underlying your Ordinary Share ADRs

You have the right to cancel your ordinary share ADSs and withdraw the underlying shares at any time except:

- When temporary delays arise because: (i) the depositary has closed its transfer books or we have closed our transfer books; (ii) the transfer of shares is blocked to permit voting at a shareholders' meeting; or (iii) we are paying a dividend on our shares.
  - When you owe money to pay fees, taxes and similar charges.

- When it is necessary to prohibit withdrawals in order to comply with any laws or governmental regulations that apply to ordinary share ADSs or to the withdrawal of shares or other deposited securities.

This right of withdrawal may not be limited by any other provision of the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement.

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### Pre-release of ordinary share ADSs

The ordinary share ADS deposit agreement permits the depositary to deliver ordinary share ADSs before deposit of the underlying shares. This is called a pre-release of the ordinary share ADSs. The depositary may also deliver shares upon cancellation of pre-released ordinary share ADSs (even if the ordinary share ADSs are cancelled before the pre-release transaction has been closed out). A pre-release is closed out as soon as the underlying shares are delivered to the depositary. The depositary may receive ordinary share ADSs instead of shares to close out a pre-release. The depositary may pre-release ordinary share ADSs only under the following conditions: (i) before or at the time of the pre-release, the person to whom the pre-release is being made represents and agrees to the depositary in writing that it or its customer (a) owns the shares or ordinary share ADSs to be deposited, (b) assigns all beneficial rights, title and interest in the shares or ordinary share ADSs, as the case may be, to the depositary in its capacity as such and for the benefit of the owners, and (c) will not take any action with respect to such shares or ordinary share ADSs, as the case may be, that is inconsistent with the transfer of beneficial ownership, other than in satisfaction of such pre-release; (ii) the pre-release is fully collateralised with cash, U.S. government securities or such other collateral that the depositary determines in good faith will provide substantially similar liquidity and security; (iii) the depositary must be able to close out the pre-release on not more than five business days' notice; and (iv) the pre-release will be subject to further indemnities and credit regulations as the depositary deems appropriate. In addition, the depositary will limit the number of ordinary share ADSs that may be outstanding at any time as a result of pre-release, but the depositary may, with the prior written consent of RBSG, change such limit for purposes of general application. The depositary will also set dollar limits with respect to pre-release transactions on a case-by-case basis as the depositary sees appropriate.

### Direct Registration System

In the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement, all parties to the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement acknowledge that the DRS and Profile Modification System, or Profile, will apply to uncertificated ordinary share ADSs upon acceptance thereof to DRS by the DTC. DRS is the system administered by DTC pursuant to which the depositary may register the ownership of uncertificated ordinary share ADSs, which ownership shall be confirmed by periodic statements sent by the depositary to the ordinary share ADS holders entitled thereto. Profile is a required feature of DRS which allows a DTC participant, claiming to act on behalf of an ordinary share ADS holder, to direct the depositary to register a transfer of those ordinary share ADSs to DTC or its nominee and to deliver those ordinary share ADSs to the DTC account of that DTC participant without receipt by the depositary of prior authorization from the ordinary share ADS holder to register such transfer.

In connection with and in accordance with the arrangements and procedures relating to DRS/Profile, the parties to the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement understand that the depositary will not verify, determine or otherwise ascertain that the DTC participant which is claiming to be acting on behalf of an ordinary share ADS holder in requesting registration of transfer and delivery described in the paragraph above has the actual authority to act on behalf of the ordinary share ADS holder (notwithstanding any requirements under the Uniform Commercial Code). In the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement, the parties agree that the depositary's reliance on and compliance with instructions received by the depositary through the DRS/Profile System and in accordance with the ordinary share ADS deposit agreement, shall not constitute negligence or bad faith on the part of the depositary.

## PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION (CONFLICTS OF INTEREST)

We may sell relevant securities to or through underwriters or dealers and also may sell all or part of such securities directly to other purchasers or through agents.



The distribution of the securities may be effected from time to time in one or more transactions at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed, or at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to such prevailing market prices or at negotiated prices.

In connection with the sale of securities, we may compensate underwriters in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions or in any other way that the applicable prospectus supplement describes. Underwriters may sell securities to or through dealers, and the dealers may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or

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commissions from the underwriters and/or commissions from the purchasers for whom they may act as agents. Underwriters, dealers and agents that participate in the distribution of securities may be deemed to be underwriters, and any discounts or commissions that we pay them and any profit on the resale of securities by them may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions, under the Securities Act. Any such underwriter or agent will be identified, and any such compensation that we pay will be described, in the prospectus supplement.

Under agreements which we may enter into, we may be required to indemnify underwriters, dealers and agents who participate in the distribution of securities against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act.

Each new series of debt securities, dollar preference shares and contingent convertible securities will be a new issue of securities with no established trading market. If securities of a particular series are not listed on a U.S. national securities exchange, certain broker-dealers may make a market in those securities, but will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. We cannot give any assurance that any broker-dealer will make a market in securities of any series or as to the liquidity of the trading market for those securities.

## Conflicts of Interest

To the extent an initial offering of the securities will be distributed by an affiliate of ours, each such offering of securities will be conducted in compliance with the requirements of FINRA Rule 5121 of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. ("FINRA") regarding a FINRA member firm's distribution of securities of an affiliate and related conflicts of interest. No underwriter, selling agent or dealer utilized in the initial offering of securities who is an affiliate of ours will confirm sales to accounts over which it exercises discretionary authority without the prior specific written approval of its customer.

Following the initial distribution of any of these securities, affiliates of ours may offer and sell these securities in the course of their businesses as broker-dealers. Such affiliates may act as principals or agents in these transactions and may make any sales at varying prices related to prevailing market prices at the time of sale or otherwise. Such affiliates may also use this prospectus in connection with these transactions. None of our affiliates is obligated to make a market in any of these securities and may discontinue any market-making activities at any time without notice.

Underwriting discounts and commissions on securities sold in the initial distribution will not exceed 8% of the offering proceeds.

Any underwriter, selling agent or dealer utilized in the initial offering of securities will not confirm sales to accounts over which it exercises discretionary authority without the prior specific written approval of its customer.

## Delayed Delivery Arrangements

If so indicated in the prospectus supplement, we may authorize underwriters or other persons acting as their agents to solicit offers by certain institutions to purchase dollar preference shares, debt securities or contingent convertible securities from it pursuant to contracts providing for payment and delivery on a future date. Institutions with which such contracts may be made include commercial and savings banks, insurance companies, pension funds, investment companies, educational and charitable institutions and others, but in all cases such institutions must be approved by us. The obligations of any purchaser under any such contract will be subject to the condition that the purchase of the offered securities shall not at the time of delivery be prohibited under the laws of the jurisdiction to which such purchaser is subject. The underwriters and such other agents will not have any responsibility in respect of the validity or performance of such contracts.

LEGAL OPINIONS

Our United States counsel, Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP, New York, New York and Davis Polk & Wardwell London LLP, London, United Kingdom will pass upon certain legal matters relating to the securities. Our Scottish

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solicitors, CMS Cameron McKenna LLP, will pass upon the validity of the securities under Scots law and certain matters of Scots law relating to the subordination provisions of the securities.

### EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements as at December 31, 2014, 2013 and 2012, and for each of the three years in the period ended December 31, 2014, incorporated in this prospectus by reference from RBSG's annual report on Form 20-F filed with the SEC on March 31, 2015 (the "2014 Annual Report") and the effectiveness of RBSG's internal control over financial reporting have been audited by Deloitte LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in their reports, which are incorporated herein by reference. The audit reports (1) express an unqualified opinion on RBSG's consolidated financial statements and include an explanatory paragraph stating that Note 43 to the financial statements was added for the inclusion of consolidating financial information in respect of RBS plc in accordance with Regulation S-X of Rule 3-10, and (2) express an unqualified opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting. Such consolidated financial statements have been so incorporated in reliance upon the reports of such firm given upon their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

### ENFORCEMENT OF CIVIL LIABILITIES

We are a public limited company incorporated and registered in Scotland, United Kingdom. Many of our directors and executive officers, and certain experts named in this prospectus, reside outside the United States. All or a substantial portion of our assets and the assets of those non-resident persons are located outside the United States. As a result, it may not be possible for investors to effect service of process within the United States upon us or those persons or to enforce against them judgments obtained in U.S. courts predicated upon civil liability provisions of the federal securities laws of the United States. We have been advised by our Scottish solicitors, CMS Cameron McKenna LLP (as to Scots law) that, both in original actions and in actions for the enforcement of judgments of U.S. courts, there is doubt as to whether civil liabilities predicated solely upon the U.S. federal securities laws are enforceable in Scotland.

### WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

#### Ongoing Reporting

We file reports and other information with the SEC. You can read and copy these reports and other information that we file with the SEC at the SEC's Public Reference Room, 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549, United States. You can call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information about the Public Reference Room. The SEC's website, at <http://www.sec.gov>, contains reports and other information in electronic form that we have filed electronically with the SEC. You can also read this material at the offices of The New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005, United States, on which certain of our securities are listed.

We will provide the trustee for any debt securities and contingent convertible securities and the ADR depository for any ordinary shares and dollar preference shares with our annual reports, which will include a description of operations and our annual audited consolidated financial statements. We will also provide any trustee or ADR depository with interim reports that will include unaudited interim summary consolidated financial information. Upon receipt, the trustee or the ADR depository will mail the reports to all record holders of the debt securities, contingent convertible securities, ordinary shares or dollar preference shares. In addition, we will provide the trustee or the ADR depository with all notices of meetings at which holders of debt securities, contingent convertible securities, ordinary

shares or dollar preference shares are entitled to vote, and all other reports and communications that are made generally available to holders of debt securities, contingent convertible securities, ordinary shares or dollar preference shares.

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### Registration Statement

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the SEC. As exhibits to the registration statement, we have also filed or incorporated by reference the indentures, the underwriting agreements, the ADR deposit agreement as well as various other documents listed in the exhibit index. Statements contained in this prospectus as to the contents of any contract or other document referred to in this prospectus are not necessarily complete, and in each instance reference is made to the copy of such contract or other document filed as an exhibit to the registration statement, each such statement being qualified in all respects by such reference. For further information, you should refer to the registration statement. You can obtain the full registration statement from the SEC or from us.

### INCORPORATION OF DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to “incorporate by reference” the information that we file with the SEC. This permits us to disclose important information to you by referring to these filed documents. Any information referred to in this way is considered part of this prospectus, and any information that we file with the SEC after the date of this prospectus will automatically be deemed to update and supersede this information.

We incorporate by reference RBSG’s 2014 Annual Report on Form 20-F for the year ended December 31, 2014 filed with the SEC on March 31, 2015.

We also incorporate by reference all subsequent annual reports of RBSG filed on Form 20-F and any future filings made with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act and certain reports on Form 6-K, if they state that they are incorporated by reference into this prospectus, that we furnish to the SEC after the date of this prospectus and until we or any underwriters sell all of the securities.

Upon written or oral request, we will provide free of charge a copy of any or all of the documents that we incorporate by reference into this prospectus, other than exhibits which are not specifically incorporated by reference into this prospectus. To obtain copies you should contact us at Debt Investor Relations, The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc, 250 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 4AA, United Kingdom (telephone: +44 (0)20 7678 1800).

### CAUTIONARY STATEMENT ON FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Certain statements included in this prospectus are forward-looking statements. We may make forward-looking statements in other documents filed with the SEC that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus. Forward-looking statements can be identified by the use of forward-looking terminology such as words “expect,” “estimate,” “project,” “anticipate,” “believes,” “should,” “could,” “intend,” “plan,” “probability,” “risk,” “target,” “goal,” “endeavor,” “outlook,” “optimistic,” “prospects” or by the use of similar expressions or variations on such expressions, or by the discussion of strategy or objectives. Forward-looking statements are based on current plans, estimates and projections, and are subject to inherent risks, uncertainties and other factors which could cause actual results to differ materially from the future results expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements.

In particular, this prospectus and certain documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus include forward-looking statements relating, but not limited, to: our transformation plan (which includes the 2013/2014 strategic plan relating to the implementation of our new divisional and functional structure and the continuation of our balance sheet reduction programme including the proposed divestments of Williams & Glyn and Citizens Financial Group, Inc., the information technology and operational investment plan, the proposed restructuring of our CIB

business and the restructuring of the Group as a result of the implementation of the regulatory ring-fencing regime in the UK), as well as restructuring, capital and strategic plans, divestments, capitalisation, portfolios, net interest margin, capital and leverage ratios, liquidity, risk-weighted assets (RWAs), RWA equivalents (RWAE), Pillar 2A, Maximum Distributable Amount (MDA), total loss absorbing capital (TLAC), minimum requirements for eligible liabilities (MREL), return on equity (ROE), profitability, cost:income ratios, loan:deposit ratios, funding and risk profile; litigation, government and regulatory investigations including investigations relating to the setting of interest rates and foreign exchange trading and rate setting activities; costs or exposures borne by the Group arising out of the origination or sale of mortgages or mortgage-backed securities in the US; our future financial performance; the level and extent of future impairments and write-downs; and our exposure to political risks, credit rating risk and to various types of market risks, such as interest rate risk, foreign exchange rate risk and commodity and equity price risk. These statements are based on current plans, estimates, targets and projections, and are subject to inherent risks, uncertainties and other factors which could cause actual results to differ materially from the future results expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. For example, certain market risk disclosures are dependent on choices relying on key model characteristics and assumptions and are subject to various limitations. By their nature, certain of the market risk disclosures are only estimates and, as a result, actual future gains and losses could differ materially from those that have been estimated.

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Other factors could also adversely affect our results or the accuracy of forward-looking statements in this prospectus, and you should not consider the factors discussed here or in RBSG's 2014 Annual Report or any of its interim reports filed on Form 6-K incorporated by reference herein, to be a complete set of all potential risks or uncertainties. We have economic, financial market, credit, legal and other specialists who monitor economic and market conditions and government policies and actions. However, because it is difficult to predict with accuracy any changes in economic or market conditions or in governmental policies and actions, it is difficult for us to anticipate the effects that such changes could have on our financial performance and business operations.

The forward-looking statements made in this prospectus speak only as of the date of this prospectus. We do not intend to publicly update or revise these forward-looking statements to reflect events or circumstances after the date of this prospectus, and we do not assume any responsibility to do so. You should, however, consult any further disclosures of a forward-looking nature we made in other documents filed with the SEC that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus. This discussion is provided as permitted by the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995.