

Tuesday April 12 2005 No.43

GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTION



Ballot papers arriving this week - use your vote!

Ballot papers for the election of FBU General Secretary are being sent out this week and members should start receiving them on Thursday 14 April.

If you haven't received your ballot paper by Tuesday April 19 contact the membership department at FBU Head Office: 0208 541 1765.

This election is for the most senior position in the FBU and the outcome will have an important impact on all members' future, the future of the Union and the future of the UK fire and rescue service.

Failing to use your vote means handing the destiny of the Union for the next five years - and the direction of the workplace campaigns it fights on your behalf - over to somebody else!

Its Your Union - Make Your Voice Heard.

Use Your Vote!

Union raises pensions issue in Wales


General Secretary Andy Gilchrist met yesterday Edwina Hart AM, Wales Minister with responsibility for the fire and rescue service, in what was her first meeting on her first day back at work after the Welsh Assembly's Easter break.

At the meeting, the General Secretary raised the issue of FBU members' pensions.

The FBU Wales Regional Committee heard afterwards first-hand from Andy Gilchrist of the discussion he had with the Minister.

Pensions - Region 11 to hold seminar

National Officer responsible for pensions Paul Woolstenholmes, our pensions advisor Ivan Walker from Thompsons solicitors and General Secretary Andy Gilchrist will speaking at a seminar on our pensions campaign on Thursday in region 11 (Kent, Surrey and Sussex brigades).



Paul Woolstenholmes will open the meeting with an overview of our pensions campaign, Ivan Walker will be dealing with the technical aspects of the proposed reforms and our response, while Andy Gilchrist will be rounding off the meeting with a briefing on the latest position and the way forward.

CPD – LSI replacement: FBU meeting employers April 27

The National Employers are to meet the FBU on April 27 to begin negotiating the details of the replacement system to the Long Service Increment based on Continuous Professional Development, it was agreed at an NJC meeting on Tuesday 5 April.

Under the June 2003 Pay and Conditions Agreement all of the money that was paid into LSI – including all the increases under the Agreement – was to go into the CPD pot and will continue to be paid to members on the basis of professional experience.

Under these arrangements some members will be paid earlier than 15 years – in some cases a lot earlier. Some members are also reaching their “competency” levels of pay earlier because payments are now linked to professional experience and not the length of service.

LSI will start to be phased out when CPD payments made up of the entire LSI pot start to be paid in.

When agreement has been reached with employers on the new CPD

system, it will be put out to members for a decision.

London “deputising” dispute

On the request of FBU London Region, FBU General Secretary Andy Gilchrist led a NJC Joint Secretaries meeting on Friday April 8 to find a way of resolving a dispute with London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority around the issue of “deputising”.

FBU London Region had been unable to resolve the dispute with local employers.

The FBU London Regional Committee is to deliberate this Thursday on the discussions led by the General Secretary.

Control CARE campaign – lobby of South East RMB

FBU members and officials opposing the Government’s mad-cap plans to replace nine fire control centres will be lobbying fire authorities at a South East Regional Management Board meeting in Surrey tomorrow.

Officials and off duty members are urged to gather at 10am outside Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority HQ at 70 Wray Park Rd, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0EJ.

Control rooms in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Berkshire, Hampshire, Buckinghamshire, the Isle of Wight and Oxfordshire would close under the plans.

The meeting will be attended by local councillors and chief fire officers.

Mark Simmons, FBU regional official, told the local press on Monday that the plan would be "an expensive failure" which would "push up council tax and lead to cuts in frontline fire services."

He added: "With the fire service, there is no room for error."

Control Regionalisation: £31m on consultants' fees!

Over £11m has been spent so far on consultants by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on their regional controls project and an estimated £31m will be spent over the life of the project, according to the reply the ODPM has just provided to the Union, which requested the information under the Freedom of Information Act.

For more on the Union's Campaign Against the Regionalisation of Emergency Fire Controls (CARE), and news on the issue from around the UK, visit www.controlcare.org.uk

Asbestos Database:

The FBU's asbestos database is now up and running. Members can fill in the form on-line on the FBU website and sent it direct to our solicitors Thompsons, or print out a form from the website and sent it by post. They can also request a form by ringing the FBU Legal Helpline - 0808 100 6061.

The register is an invaluable database of information that can help to speed up the process of compensation claims for members who become ill due to asbestos

exposure. It records the names of members, employers, the workplaces where they came into contact with asbestos and the relevant dates.

Members do not have to have been diagnosed with an asbestos related disease to register with the FBU asbestos register. Nor do they need to have absolute proof that they were exposed. It's important that the FBU has as many names as possible on the register to help those that are already ill or become ill in the future and need to make a claim.

If you register that information might help a former colleague. Those who register might help you.

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Stress and Support Line

0800 783 4778

**Don't be bullied, don't
be stressed,
get help from the
Union!**