

PENSIONS : TALKS ONGOING OVER LGPS AND FPS



The Union will keep members advised of developments

Fellow trade unions held talks with Government over public sector pensions on Tuesday.

These led to an outline agreement over health, education and civil service pension schemes. This would see no rise in the retirement age to 65 from 60 for existing members of schemes for those groups of workers.

New staff will get new schemes which will be index linked to defined benefit schemes but they will have to work until they are 65 unless they pay more into their pension pot.

Specific negotiations will now take place for each of the health, education and civil service schemes hammering out the detail.

Talks with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

and the Firefighters Pension Scheme (FPS) are still on-going. They are not part of the outcome of Tuesday's talks involving the TUC. The Government has still not come back with concrete proposals.

These discussions and negotiations will continue. The Union will keep members and officials advised of developments regarding negotiations for both the LGPS and FPS schemes.

A full report will be made to the Executive Council.

Pensions & Control - join the FBU campaigns, have your say

The FBU is moving to encourage the widest possible debate in the Union about the Government's plans for pensions and regional controls and how the FBU best responds to them.

Yesterday the second of a series of regional "open forums" was held in Yorkshire & Humberside (Region 4).

The following "open forums" are also scheduled:

Region 1	16 Nov
Region 2	11 Nov
Region 3	30 Nov
Region 5	24/25 Nov
Region 6	22 Nov
Region 7	28 Nov
Region 8	9/10/15 Nov
Region 10	5 Dec
Region 11	24 Nov
Region 13	28 Nov

Region 12 date is yet to be confirmed.

The meetings will be attended either by the General Secretary Matt Wrack or President Ruth Winters or both.

Members should contact their local FBU official for more details.

LSI/CPD payments

Members will be aware that long service pay will be removed from fire service pay as a result of the June 2003 agreement.

It was agreed that long service pay would be replaced by a payment for continuous professional development (CPD).

The Executive Council has set up a sub-committee to negotiate on this. We will keep members informed as these negotiations progress.

Scotland's Fire Service Inspectorate demands massive job losses

The Chief Inspector for the Fire Service in Scotland has published a circular demanding sweeping job losses in all Fire & Rescue Services in Scotland.

In his response to Lothian & Borders Fire & Rescue Service's Service Improvement Plan for 2005/6, he describes the potential for substantial cuts in Fire Cover & Front Line Firefighter Jobs as "opportunities". His statement is a clear warning to all other Fire Authorities to take heed of his comments.

Ord's remarks "outrageous"

Ken Ross, Scottish Regional Secretary of the FBU said "Mr Ord's remarks are nothing short of outrageous. This is the man who says that 4 firefighters on a fire appliance can do exactly the same job as 5 firefighters. This is the man who told the Scottish Parliament Justice Committee that it was feasible to have a single emergency fire control room for the whole of Britain. Now he is demanding huge job losses that are supposed to 'improve community safety' "

"The Fire (Scotland) Act was passed in July 2005. This legislation affords each fire authority the responsibility of determining their own fire cover arrangements and establishment levels. Mr Ord is trampling on the toes of legislation that is barely 3 months old."

"Whilst we have serious concerns regarding Lothian & Borders FRS proposals, Mr Ord is proposing to magnify the cuts to an unacceptably dangerous level, all in the name of 'Best Value'"

"We call on Cathy Jamieson, Minister for Justice, to condemn Mr Ord's comments. Failure to do so would show compliance with his views and destroy the Executive's long argument that the Fire Service should be taken away from central control"

Shortfalls in Cambs IRMP exposed at emergency incident

Firefighters in Cambridgeshire experienced first hand the shortfalls that the reduction of 24 emergency response firefighter posts within the county can cause.

Two appliances from the Parkside station in Cambridge were mobilised to a report of a fire in a building. When in attendance, they were met with a developing fire. The incident Commander requested a further appliance and a turntable ladder.

Turntable ladder unavailable

The nearest turntable ladder is also based at Parkside Station. But due to reduced crewing levels implemented as part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), it was not available as the remaining station crew were out on another vehicle completing community safety.

This vehicle was subsequently mobilised back to the fire station on blue lights to pick up the turntable ladder and proceed to the incident.

Cuts lead to ten minute delay

This whole episode caused a ten minute delay in the turntable ladder attending the incident.

Paul Clarke, FBU brigade secretary for Cambridgeshire said:

"This incident exposes the IRMP plans for what they are. A cuts based agenda that places the public and firefighters at risk.

"It's fortunate that no one was awaiting rescue by this specialist vehicle. It's also fortunate that it was an empty building that was affected.

Fire authority got lucky

"We are just thankful that it wasn't one of the university heritage buildings. The fire authority got lucky with this incident. One day that luck will run out.

"We urge the fire authority to reconsider the loss of 24 emergency response firefighter posts before lives or buildings are lost."

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