FIRE BRIGADES UNION
SERVICE ★ STRUGGLE ★ SOLIDARITY

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TO: BRIGADE SECRETARIES

Dear Brother/Sister

UPDATE REGARDING COMMUTATION CHALLENGE AND DISCLAIMER ISSUES

As you will be aware, in May this year the FBU won a huge victory in respect to gaining a pension based compensation for thousands of retired firefighters who did not receive the correct lump sum awards when they retired.

Since this victory the FBU has been working to ensure that not only do members get the pension payment they are due, but also that they are protected against any future tax liability on this.

As part of the settlement, some firefighters are being asked to sign a disclaimer which requires them to agree that this payment represents the individual closing their claim. This disclaimer process has also been applied in cases where retired members of the police service also benefitted from the action taken by the FBU.

The FBU has spoken with DCLG in relation to the disclaimer, and has stressed that it is unnecessary and overcomplicating the situation, because this is a payment that the eligible retired firefighters should have received.

We have, however, made it clear that if FBU members are expected to undertake this unnecessary process, we will ensure that they are fully protected from any associated future tax liabilities.

The FBU is the only organisation anywhere that has continued to consistently raise the fact that our retired members should have already had this money, and insisted that interest and tax liabilities were considered.

Members who are rightfully frustrated by the delays in relation to this claim, can be assured that we are pressing Government to make the payments without what we think is an unnecessary hurdle.

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FBU members should recognise that although the chance of any retrospective tax liability is small if there is one, we do need to ensure that members are able to challenge what could be a substantial amount of money. We have already raised concerns relating to retrospective tax liabilities being applied elsewhere, whereby some pensioners who have already retired are facing tax liabilities of up to £40,000. We do not want members to receive their pension payment on one hand only to have part of it withdrawn by another.

We are currently following up all avenues with DCLG in an attempt to speed up this process, and to ensure that Government do not use this as a further delaying tactic.

Yours in Unity,

SEAN STARBUCK
NATIONAL OFFICER

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