



FIRE BRIGADES UNION

SERVICE ★ STRUGGLE ★ SOLIDARITY

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Fire Brigades Union
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Dear Brother/Sister

23rd November 2015

RETIRED AND OUT OF TRADE FBU MEMBERS: PENSIONS - COMMUTATION UPDATE AND OTHER ONGOING ISSUES

Retired and out of trade (ROOT) members of the FBU will have been following the Fairer Commutation Campaign very closely. You will be aware of the decision from the Pension Ombudsman to retrospectively apply the uplift from 1st December 2001 to 21st August 2006. This welcome decision means that a huge number of firefighters who retired in that period will now receive the correct lump sum they should have received at the time, plus an interest payment to take account of the time elapsed. The impact of the FBU victory also means that police officers who retired in the period will also receive the same uplift.

Since the decision, the FBU has been discussing the decision with its legal team and also with representatives from the employers and Government. We are now satisfied that eligible people will be identified and should receive their money soon.

This has been a very long running and hard fought campaign on behalf of retired and out of trade members of the FBU, and is only part of the service that ROOT members receive. The commutation campaign is not over, and we are currently attempting to challenge the 1st December 2001 date as we have not been provided with a logical argument as to why this has been selected.

The FBU challenge did not extend to those who retired before 2001, but we are not satisfied that 1st December 2001 is the right cut-off date to be applied. We are currently discussing how we can make this challenge and what process it will follow.

This is not the only ongoing challenge/issue which will impact on ROOT members.

We are currently awaiting a hearing in a legal challenge in relation to firefighters who joined the service between the ages 18-20, and trying to show an age discrimination element involved in relation to pensions. This hearing is expected to take place in December and is expected to have a retrospective element if we are successful.

FBU officials are also becoming more and more involved in cases involving the pensions of ROOT members, whether this is ill health/injury reviews, overpayment issues or in relation to cases of unauthorised payment. The FBU education department is providing training to officials so that they are best placed to deal with pension medical appeals and associated issues. There is never a greater need to be a ROOT member as this government is determined to continue attacking the pensions of firefighters which in many cases impacts upon retired members too.

Our service under attack.

The FBU is committed to campaigning on behalf of all of its members, but we have never been involved in the scale of attacks that we are currently facing. We have already seen job losses, station closures and cuts in the fire service on a scale we have never witnessed before. Some 7,000 firefighter jobs have been lost during the last Parliament, while over 40 fire stations were closed. George Osborne's spending plans are likely to mean that this onslaught continues. We are also engaged in fighting a trade union bill which will severely hamper the way we can represent and protect our members.

We are determined to ensure we can continue to campaign on all fronts, but as well as the capacity issue there is also a cost element. For example the fairer commutation campaign and the 18-20 age discrimination claim legal costs are expected to be over £100,000.

We have also just embarked on a huge legal challenge on age discrimination relating to the current pension imposition from 2015, which has employment tribunal registration costs alone of almost £20,000 before we start.

As a result of the recent legal victory on commutation a number of members have asked whether they could make a donation towards our campaigning activities.

We are therefore drawing your attention to our 'FBU Campaign Fund' which allows people to make donations towards our continued ability to fight for and defend the rights of firefighters past and present.

If you feel that you would like to donate towards this fund, please send a payment to the following account.

HOW TO DONATE:

- Securely online via PayPal - Via the FBU Website www.fbu.org.uk
- Make a bank transfer to:

Bank Name: Unity Trust Bank Plc
Account name: FBU Support Fund
Account number: 20034726
Sort code: 60-83-01

- Or send a cheque made payable to 'FBU Support Fund' to:

FBU Campaign Fund
Finance Department
FBU- Bradley House
68 Coombe Road
Kingston Upon Thames
KT2 7AE

Thank you in anticipation and thank you for your continued support.

Yours fraternally



MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY

MW/SS/kc