



FIRE BRIGADES UNION

SERVICE ★ STRUGGLE ★ SOLIDARITY

Matt Wrack General Secretary

Fire Brigades Union
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Circular: 2015HOC0674MW

TO: ALL MEMBERS

7 December 2015

Dear Brother/Sister

PENSIONS: FBU VICTORY FOR FIREFIGHTERS WHO JOINED FPS AGED 18-20

You will be aware that the FBU lodged a legal challenge in relation to firefighters who joined the 1992 Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) aged 18-20.

Firefighters who joined the 1992 FPS aged 18-20 have previously had to contribute for up to 32 years to receive a 30 year pension at the earliest age of 50. This is because the FPS unlike many other schemes has an accrual cap of 30 years reckonable service i.e. no more pension can be accrued after thirty years contributions.

This issue has been of concern for many years, particularly among those members affected, that is those who joined the Service and pension scheme before the age of 20. As a result the FBU challenged this legally with a test case in a specific hearing that was due to take place this week, starting 7 December 2015.

Very late in the process, correspondence from the Department for Communities and Local Government has confirmed that the Secretary of State will now allow members under the age of 50 who have accrued 30 years' service to take a contributions holiday from the time they attain 30 years' reckonable service until they reach age 50. In other words they have conceded our case.

The rules of the 1992 FPS will now be amended to allow an affected member (i.e. one who joined before the age of 20) upon reaching 50, to be able to choose to:

- Retire with a pension.
- Continue employment and recommence payment of contributions (the accrual cap remains in place with a maximum thirty years pension).
- Or continue employment without paying contributions thereby electing to defer their pension.

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The proposal is to be applied retrospectively to 1 December 2006 so that:

- If a firefighter has already paid contributions in to the FPS after that date;
- And has already accrued 30 years' pensionable service;
- And was under the age of 50;

He/she will get a refund of contributions for that period.

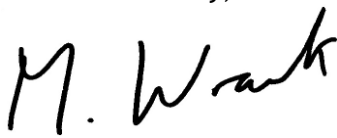
This refund will include a payment in relation to interest.

The date of 1 December 2006 relates to the date when discrimination of this type became unlawful. The FBU is also examining other potential challenges associated with this particular age discrimination issue.

FBU members will recognise that this is another significant legal victory following on from the successful commutation challenge of May 2015. Once again the FBU is the only organisation within the Fire Service that has taken up a challenge on behalf of firefighters.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack', with a stylized flourish at the end.

MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY

MW/sll