



Matt Wrack General Secretary
Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road,
Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE
fbu.org.uk | @fbunational
020 8541 1765 | office@fbu.org.uk

Circular: 2016HOC0497MW

To: All Members

Date: 27 September 2016

Dear Brother/Sister

Greater Manchester - Lifting of Section 188 Notice

I am pleased to be able to report that progress has been made on issues in Greater Manchester. Our officials there had been notified under Section 188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act that formal consultation had begun in relation to the dismissal of our members in Greater Manchester. Our officials had been notified of this as a mechanism to sack and re-engage our members as a way to enforce unilateral contractual changes.

Following various discussions over the previous few days, I am pleased to report that the following statement has been agreed with the Chair of the fire and rescue authority in Greater Manchester:

The Chair of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority (GMFRA) has today agreed to withdraw the Section 188 letter issued to the Fire Brigades Union. This letter effectively began the process for potential firefighter redundancies.

The Chair of the GMFRA has taken this step in order to facilitate talks through the independent Technical Advisory Panel (TAP). The FBU has confirmed that it will participate fully in the TAP and both parties are entering the talks constructively.

This is a welcome move that will allow both parties to engage in discussions about the detail of the proposals without the threat of action by either party.

The TAP will meet on Thursday 29th September and will report within 14 days.

We must not forget that these changes have been proposed because of continuing cuts by this Government. The GMFRA has already had to make £28 million of cuts and the Government has imposed a further cut of £14.4 million over the next four years.

Both the GMFRA and the FBU are committed to ensuring the safety of the public.

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This is clearly a step forward. It does not end the matters of disagreement between the FBU and the employer. However, I would like to congratulate all FBU members and officials in Greater Manchester for the unity and determination they have shown during the past two weeks.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Wrack". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Matt Wrack
General Secretary

MW/sll