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Circular: **2021HOC0034AD**

27 January 2021

TO: **All Members**

Dear Brother / Sister

Recent Discussions: NJC Discussions For A National Agreement On Covid-Related Activities

Members will recall the recent All Members circular (2021HOC0022MW) in respect of the national employers' cessation of the NJC agreement on Covid-related activities. This circular brings members' attention to decisions of the Executive Council following a video conference meeting between lead members of the two respective sides of the NJC which took place on 25 January 2021, which included a discussion on Covid-related working.

There was a frank and candid discussion at the meeting of the lead members. Both sides have committed to further discussions. The FBU was clear that any such agreement would have to comprise arrangements which protect the safety and health of firefighters and the public and the employment conditions of firefighters.

A report of the meeting was discussed at the Executive Council held on 26 January 2021. The Executive Council agreed the following position statement:

Position statement agreed at a meeting of the Executive Council held on 26 January 2021

The EC notes the outcomes of the lead members meeting that took place on 25 January which centred on the resumption of detailed talks to achieve the reinstatement of a national agreement.

These detailed talks should commence as urgently as possible. The EC has agreed to continue to give such talks the highest prioritisation.

Ideally, under a national agreement, the previously agreed control measures and arrangements will be reinstated whilst any alternative arrangements are discussed as this would allow an agreement to be reached without delay. If the employers are not willing to do so - then the status quo, as a consequence of the national employers ending the agreement on 13 January, is that there is no agreement whilst those discussions take place.

A national agreement provides the certainties for entire fire sector.

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Position statement agreed at a meeting of the Executive Council held on 26 January 2021/Cont.....

We note that, with the ending of the national agreement by the employers' side, local FRSs are seeking to make local agreements. This is not a solution. Local FRSs and FRAs should be raising their concerns with the national employers and not with local FBU representatives.

Head office shall write as a matter of urgency to the national employers to expedite the commencement and completion of those discussions.

The Executive Council reaffirmed its commitment to a national agreement. The Executive Council was clear that any such agreement would have to comprise arrangements which protect the safety and health of firefighters and the public and the employment conditions of firefighters.

In order to implement the decision of the Executive Council, the letter provided in Appendix A to this circular was sent today to the national employers.

The Executive Council also discussed the disinformation which continues to be circulated by fire and rescue services. That discussion included the issues which were the subject of a letter sent by FBU Brigade Secretaries to their respective fire and rescue service over the last few days. A copy of the template letter is attached in Appendix B.

The Executive Council agreed that whilst the FBU should concentrate its efforts on going forward and not raking over the past, it was necessary to ensure that the FBU was able to counter the misinformation already in circulation. To that end, the Executive Council resolved that Head Office should provide members with a commentary on the contents of employers circular 2/21 which has been circulated by many chief fire officers to personnel. This commentary is provided for members in Appendix C.

We will keep members informed of developments.

Yours in solidarity.



Andy Dark
Assistant General Secretary

Attachments x3

AD/jh