

Friday 23 November 2007 No.2

TAKE 1 MINUTE TO PROTECT YOURSELF – EMAIL YOUR MP!



The disgraceful attack on ill-health and injury pensions threatens every firefighter of all duty systems and every officer of all duty systems. It has already left several firefighters without a pension or a job.

The guidance on ill-health pensions issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) effectively means the end of ill-health pensions in the Fire and Rescue Service. If you suffer ill-health or injury and cannot be re-deployed to another job you will be dismissed and any pension withheld until you reach 60.

Our message is clear: those who work in the fire service are expected to attend incidents other workers would consider a hazard. It defies belief that fire crews will be ordered into a fire with the knowledge that if they are badly injured in doing so they will be sacked.

Firefighters working retained duty also face the loss of their primary employment if they are injured at fire service incidents. They would also lose out on their entitlement to be paid illness and injury awards in line with wholtime firefighters.

The FBU has made clear it is unacceptable to treat any FBU member in this way irrespective of duty system, rank or role.

The FBU has met with CLG officials and directly with Ministers. At these meetings we have outlined our position and expressed the anger and disgust these proposals provoked among FBU members.

The Union's Parliamentary Group met recently with Fire Minister Parmjit Dhanda and raised our concerns.

Minister John Healey MP has written back to General Secretary Matt Wrack saying he has *“asked for an examination to be made of the current arrangements, including the implications for Firefighters and employers. This will, of course, take into account the points that the FBU have made”*.

We need to continue to press that this examination leads to the right conclusion – that your pension rights are restored.

Play your part

This is a crucial campaign and it is one in which every member can play a part.

Let your MP know just how angry you are about the sudden change in the guidance in September 2006. Let your MP know you want the 2006 guidance returned to the original guidance set out in 2004.

Take one minute of your time to protect yourself and your colleagues.

Go to the FBU website – www.fbu.org.uk – click on the Justice for Firefighters or Lobby Your MP links and email your MP. **There is a standard letter you can use if you wish.**

The letter on the FBU website asks your MP to make representations to John Healey and contains a briefing on the issue.

For further information on the Justice for Firefighter Pensions Campaign visit the FBU website.

Retain duty face double loss

Before April 2006, RDS firefighters injured received the same ill-health pension under the Firefighters Pension Scheme (FPS) as a comparable Firefighter working the wholetime duty system (WDS). This benefit is not as widely known as it should be.

Although RDS firefighters were not permitted to join or pay into the Firefighters Pension Scheme (FPS), this FPS entitlement was given partly in recognition of the fact that such an injury may lead the RDS firefighter to lose both their fire service job and their primary livelihood. It was a protection which the FBU fought very hard to keep.

When the New Firefighters Pension Scheme (NFPS) was introduced on 6 April 2006, the existing cover under the FPS was ring-fence-protected for all those RDS Firefighters already employed. All joiners (RDS & WDS) since 6 April 2006 are not covered by the FPS provisions but may join the NFPS.

It is extremely important to realise that the new guidance:

- applies to both the FPS and the NFPS
- applies to both RDS & WDS firefighters regardless of joining before or after 6th April 2006
- applies to all fire service ranks/roles
- almost certainly impacts detrimentally upon you!

Tam Mitchell, FBU Retained Duty System Executive Council member said:

“The change to this guidance is already hitting firefighters working retained duty and the full impact may be catastrophic. It is not going to help recruit or keep firefighters working retained duty if they know they face a double loss.

“We face losing income from our primary employment as well as our fire service employment if we are injured carrying out fire service duties and are sacked. To treat fire

crews of any duty system in that way is not just a disgrace, it is a scandal.

“The incidents we’re heading for are the ones which are hazardous enough for everyone else to be running away from. It can never be justified to tell an injured rescue worker ‘you’re injured, you’re sacked’ for carrying out their public duties.”

FBU Confidential Freephone

Stress and Support Line

0800 783 4778

Stressed?

Bullied?

Get help from the Union

FBU Freephone

Legal Advice Line

0808 100 1061

For advice on personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues

For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU rep