

# **FIRE BRIGADES UNION**

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## **SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE DISPUTE: UNION ISSUES FRIDAY ULTIMATUM AS MANAGERS THREATEN MASS DISMISSALS TO FORCE SHIFT CHANGES**

South Yorkshire fire authority has been given until 9am on Friday 8 January to return to ACAS for binding arbitration to resolve a dispute over shifts. The move to ACAS was central to an agreement reached on 4 November which led to strikes being called off temporarily to assist the process of resolving the dispute through ACAS.

The Fire Brigades Union has accused the authority of ripping up that agreement and being hell-bent on confrontation. The fire authority has also revived plans to sack 744 firefighters to force through shift changes.

Ian Murray, FBU regional secretary said: “We are totally committed to going to ACAS for binding arbitration as agreed. The fire authority is ripping up that agreement and trying to dictate conditions to rig the process in its favour.

“Arbitration starts with our contractual hours of 9 hour day shifts and 15 hour night shifts. The employers will start from their position of wanting 12 hour shifts across the board.

“The fire authority wants us to start with the fictional position that we work 10 hour day shifts and 14 hour night shifts, a clear move towards their finish line. They are looking to dictate a position which has no basis in reality but gives them a head start and an unfair advantage.

“On 30 December we were told the fire authority will only go to ACAS if they can dictate these conditions. We were given until 17.00 on New Year’s Day, a Bank Holiday, to accept this.

“They have also revived their threat to sack 744 firefighters to force through shift changes. That is also a breach of the agreement.

“We are in no doubt they are once again hell-bent on confrontation. The strikes we set were only called off temporarily because of the agreement the fire authority is now trying to rip up.

“We have given them until 9am on Friday to agree to return to ACAS for binding arbitration. We have offered terms of reference without conditions and they can re-think their position.

“The South Yorkshire FBU campaign committee which represents crews from every fire station and workplace will meet at 10am on Friday to consider any response received

from the fire authority. That committee can advise the union on any future industrial action and it has been clear throughout that there would be no need for a further ballot if it did advise on a course of fresh action.”

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