

FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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UNION REAFFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO NOVEMBER AGREEMENT AND CALL ON SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY TO DO THE SAME

The Fire Brigades Union is urging South Yorkshire Fire Authority to return to agreed position that they laid out in a letter to the FBU dated the 5th November and in doing so, halt the mass sackings of firefighters and return to ACAs to help resolve their dispute over shift changes. The union has given the authority until 9am tomorrow morning to agree to return to ACAS.

At 10am on Friday South Yorkshire FBU's campaign committee meets to discuss its reaction to any response from the fire authority. The committee has the power to recommend that further industrial action be called which was temporarily halted after seven periods of strike action brought agreement on key issues on 4 November.

Ian Murray Regional Secretary said: "The authority ripped up the agreement reached on 4 November by issuing individual letters to firefighters informing them that unless they agreed to their shift changes they would terminate their contracts. Their aggressive stance has been clear from the very beginning and this has made resolving the dispute even more difficult.

"Our members are telling us bullying and harassment has been rife for the last 18 months and this has been formally raised with the fire authority and the Chief Fire officer, but to date not a single response has been received by either. It became so bad that fire crews were threatened with disciplinary action if they did not remove 'say no to bullying' badges, a threat later withdrawn. We now have a situation where firefighters are being compulsory moved to other stations, some of these are the other side of the county and they are of the opinion, it is because they dare to speak out against this management.

"If the people of South Yorkshire knew the details of how their fire crews are being treated, they would be sickened. I would urge people to see through the mask of moderation put on by this fire authority and look at what they are doing underneath and how they and their senior managers are behaving – ask firefighters how they feel they are being treated on a daily basis, discipline cases used to be 3 or 4 a year, we're now running at 3 or 4 a week.

"South Yorkshire fire crews have only ever taken action in response to very aggressive moves by SYFRA and their senior managers. It does not get more aggressive than to threaten to sack every firefighter to force through the changes being demanded.

"We have asked the fire authority to drop their threats and return to ACAS. If they do not do so we will consider our response and that may include continuation of the industrial action including the strike action if necessary."

Regional and local media contacts

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