



**FIRE BRIGADES UNION**

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## CIRCULAR 2011HOC0339MW

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**TO: ALL MEMBERS**

Dear Brother/Sister

### PREPARATIONS FOR ACTION ON PENSIONS

The attacks on our pensions have reached a new stage. Until now formal discussions on the various pension issues have been taking place between Government and a team from the TUC. It has now been agreed between both sides that talks should take place within each individual pension scheme. As a result of this development the Executive Council held an urgent meeting earlier this week.

The FBU is concerned that these scheme-specific talks are starting despite there being no resolution to the most important issues relating to the proposed pension changes:

- Cutting the way pensions are increased each year (RPI/CPI).
- Proposals for increased contributions.
- Proposals for increased retirement age.
- Proposals to scrap all existing schemes and replace them by 2015.

We are concerned that the Government appears to have initiated these scheme specific talks in order to meet its own deadline and statutory requirements for increasing our pension contributions and for further attacking our pensions.

Despite these concerns the Executive Council has agreed to participate in these discussions. We do this in good faith and we hope that the Government will now take account of the evidence we will submit. We have a great deal of evidence to present and this will be issued over the coming weeks.

Additionally, we remain extremely concerned with the Government's failure to act on the Part-Time Workers Pension settlement won by the FBU. The Government has failed to implement the outcome of a long legal battle which awarded equal pension rights to Retained Firefighters. We have raised our concerns on this matter in writing and directly with the CLG Fire Minister. We will also be seeking urgent discussions with Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on their failure to implement this settlement for Retained Firefighters.

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**FBU preparations for possible industrial action**

You will be aware that we have been consulting members through Branch Meetings and other mechanisms to canvass levels of support for industrial action which may be necessary. While this consultation is not yet complete, it is showing overwhelming support for such action.

The Westminster Government has made plain that they intend to commence and close consultations on contribution increases and the headline principles for the new and Fire Service pension scheme by end of October 2011.

The headline principles of these discussions are alarmingly straightforward - pay more, work longer and get less. In addition, our Retained members continue to be robbed of the pension they are legally entitled to.

Clearly the time in which to influence this process is short. The Executive Council believes we may need to utilise *all* the industrial tools available as we campaign to defend our pensions.

As a result we have now begun the process of preparing for the trade disputes and ballots which look increasingly necessary. All members and officials are therefore urged to re-double our efforts in building for a massive Yes vote in a national strike ballot.

We hope that the Government will use this time to address the very real concerns and the anger of FBU members.

**Your views matter.**

**Your vote counts.**

**Please attend your Branch Meeting.**

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack', written in a cursive style.

**MATT WRACK  
GENERAL SECRETARY**

*MW/sll*