



FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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TO: ALL MEMBERS

Dear Brother/Sister

HANDS OFF OUR PENSIONS CAMPAIGN: FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON NORMAL PENSION AGE

As you are aware, the current discussion on pensions cover a range of issues including contributions rates, pension age, pension scheme design, protection arrangements etc. We continue to challenge Government pension officials on each of these aspects with a view to protecting the pension rights of FBU members.

A key aspect of this debate has been around the proposals for Normal Pension Age (NPA) in the post-2015 pension scheme. This debate is also of crucial importance to members of the New Firefighters Pension Scheme (NFPS) who already have a higher NPA of 60.

The FBU has argued throughout the discussion that the NPS of 60 is unworkable for the proposed 2015 scheme and is unworkable for the NFPS. We have argued since 2006 that the NPA for the NFPS must be reduced. The issue of NPA is also crucial to discussions around the cost and design of any pension scheme since these must take proper account of when members would be likely to retire and take their pension.

As you are aware we have presented considerable evidence to support our stance on this issue. This evidence is all available through the FBU website. Throughout the discussions no other party has been able to challenge the evidence presented by the FBU.

Employers call for a review

Following a recent discussion on this issue, the matter has been further considered by the Local Government Association (LGA) - representing English Fire Service employers only. As a result of this, the LGA have written to Government pension officials seeking a full review of the issue of Normal Pension Age. This is a clear acknowledgement of the fact that no evidence exists to support the Government case.

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The same matter was subsequently raised at a meeting of the Firefighters' Pensions Committee this week and received further support, including from CFOA. This is the first time Fire Service employers or CFOA have commented on this issue and it is welcome that they have done so, albeit late in the day.

We are aware that CLG officials will now be considering this matter of a review and we will report any further developments. The Executive Council also meets next week to consider this and all other matters relating to the latest pension discussions. We also expect that a statement on Fire Service pensions may be made to Parliament (Westminster) on Monday and we will monitor that closely.

We will attempt to keep members fully informed but you should be aware that as outlined above on the issue of NPA, the situation may change rapidly as discussions develop.

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