



FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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**TO: ALL RETAINED MEMBERS
(Home Addresses)**

Dear Brother/Sister,

Hands off our Pension Campaign - Access to modified pension scheme
Steps to address full access to pension rights

I am sure that you are aware of the long running campaign by the FBU to ensure that eligible firefighters working the retained duty system can join the modified pension scheme. This modified scheme gives eligible firefighters the range of benefits contained in the 1992 Firefighters' Pension Scheme within a structure outlined in the 2006 New Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

The delays in resolving this process have been hugely frustrating for RDS members of the FBU, and we have made sure that government officials and Ministers are fully aware of the level of anger that this has caused. This anger is exacerbated by the fact that the UK Government seems to be able to find adequate time and resources in order to **attack** and **reduce** the pensions of public sector workers. Unfortunately, when it comes to implementing **improvements** required following a clear legal ruling, they have delayed and delayed and delayed.

The FBU has been pressing government to produce and enact the appropriate legislation that allows the scheme to be introduced. Last year we had to threaten further legal action because of the seemingly endless delays. As a result of this and of raising the matter directly with the English Fire Minister Bob Neill, we received an assurance that the appropriate legislation would be developed to make the introduction of this scheme by April 2012 a reality.

Over the last few weeks the FBU and our legal team have been working with representatives from the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) and their legal team to ensure that this is progressed and that the legislation recognises all the elements and benefits that have been agreed. The FBU has been constantly pressing CLG to make certain that they adhere to this April 2012 timescale, and we have committed resources to assist wherever necessary. Although the work is progressing, the FBU remains concerned that this issue is not being dealt with as a priority by government who has concentrated their main resources on attacking the scheme benefits before individuals are given the opportunity to even join.

Hard won pension rights under attack

It is ironic and disgraceful that just at the very moment when we are on the verge of finally incorporating the pension rights won after a long legal battle, the Government is

pressing ahead at great speed with proposals which will undermine those rights. If government gets its way with its proposals, these attacks will mean that before you get a chance to join the modified scheme government will have;

- Increased future contributions rates;
- Raised the future Normal Pension Age;
- Substantially worsened future accrual rates;
- Dramatically reduced the future commutation factors meaning less of a lump sum available;
- Raised the future deferred pension age from 60 to state pension age;
- Changed the future scheme design from final salary to career average.

The FBU is continuing to oppose these attacks and defending fire service pensions. It is important that the benefits we have all won after a lengthy legal challenge are not worsened by these government proposals.

The pension discussions are moving at a pace and it is important that you and your branch are aware of the current position. Please ensure that you are up to speed with developments by reading the circulars, bulletins and visiting the FBU website www.fbu.org.uk

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/SS/JW