

THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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REACTION: COMMENTS OF SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE SERVICE

The Fire Brigades Union rejects the comments made by South Yorkshire's fire service

South Yorkshire fire crews have rejected the **threats of imposed changes** to their shifts. They have done so in a series of consultations carried out by the union station by station and in online polling. There is 98% opposition to the plans.

South Yorkshire fire crews say the changes would cause havoc with childcare and undermine their family life.

The proposed changes, which managers **are threatening to impose** on 4 May, would see their day shifts extended from 9 hours to 12 hours. Start and finish times have now been put forward to start work at 08.00 and finish work at 20.00 hours.

Ian Murray of the FBU said: "Our managers are using the language and methods of 1930s pit owners. South Yorkshire fire crews will not stand by and let managers rip up their contracts of employment.

"The fire service is looking to make £4 million savings from forcing through change while top managers have been raking in big bonuses. There is more to modernisation than managers filling their boots at the taxpayer's expense.

"There is nothing modern about working 12 hour day shifts. It will force the children of firefighters into childcare for 13 hours a day, that's Victorian, not modern.

"Managers have slammed the door on any compromise talks and are hell-bent on forcing difficult and worrying change by decree. This threat has gone down very badly with those who are trying their best to bring up children.

"Extending a long working day by 3 hours will cause havoc with childcare. Having to start at 08.00 in the morning and finishing at 20.00 hours will mean firefighters will have to make child care arrangements for at least 13 hours a day.

"What effect will this have on the children being in childcare for such long periods? All of this is causing enormous stress and anxiety on firefighters serving their communities.

"A threat is dangling over the heads of working parents and their children and has been rejected by 98% of firefighters in South Yorkshire. Managers are now rattled and have stooped to using the language of the playground."

Those fire crews who work shifts do so in 48 hour blocks of two 9 hour day shifts (9am to 6pm) followed by two 15 hour night shifts (6pm to 9am). The proposals would introduce 12 hours day working and 12 hours night working and would not mean an increase in hours worked but how they are worked.

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