

THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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LONDON FIRE DISPUTE – UNION WARNS OF ESCALATING ACTION AFTER FIRE AUTHORITY MOVES TO CUT PAY

London fire crews have warned that industrial action may be stepped up if the fire authority goes ahead with threats to start cutting pay. The union has accused the fire authority of bully-boy tactics.

The dispute currently consists of a ban on voluntary activities such as overtime and refusing to act up for more senior staff.

London fire chief Ron Dobson wrote to all 300 crew managers yesterday (9 September) telling them their pay would be cut if they refuse to act-up to fill short-term vacancies. ‘Acting up’ is voluntary and there is no contractual obligation to do it.

Paul Embery, FBU regional official, said: “These are bully-boy tactics putting individuals under enormous pressure to stop taking industrial action. The brigade claims to have a robust stance on anti-bullying and harassment but that is what they are doing to a loyal group of workers.

“The fire authority has let the mask of reasonableness slip and shown why this dispute started in the first place. The public would be disgusted at the way its firefighters have been treated behind the scenes for the last few years.

“The action we’re taking is about making a stand against our treatment. That’s why the ballot produced a nine to one vote in favour of action.

“These new management tactics mean we will face calls to intensify the action. We will haul the brigade before a court of law if a single penny is deducted.”

Industrial action began on 13 August after a nine to one yes vote in a row over attempts to cut pay and allowances, contrary to agreements. This included injured firefighters returning to duty also having their pay cut. Those who refused to move away from nationally agreed terms and conditions were threatened with demotion.

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