

FIRE BRIGADES UNION

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE DISPUTE - UNION REPEATS OFFER OF OPTIONS INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE SHIFT CHANGES, IMMEDIATE BINDING ARBITRATION OR NATIONAL MEDIATORS –FIRE AUTHORITY REJECTS

South Yorkshire Fire Brigades Union offered to consider the Independent Chairs proposal, binding arbitration at ACAS or calling in national employers and union to broker a deal in their dispute. All offers were turned down by fire authority negotiators in talks earlier today.

The union underlined its earlier offer of moving to 10 hour day shifts and 14 hour night shifts. It also said it would present the independent mediator's recommendation of moving to 10.5 hour day shifts and 13.5 hour night shifts to members if it was offered in its unaltered state.

The mediator rejected the fire authority's demand for 12 hour shifts. The union would not accept the additional conditions demanded by the fire authority on top of the recommendations put forward. The authority again refused to accept the mediator's recommendations without their own additional conditions.

The union also offered the alternative of immediate binding arbitration at ACAS or to seek the assistance of national and employer and union mediators. The national employer and union mediators have recently been called in to assist in a shifts dispute in Lincolnshire and a separate dispute in Merseyside.

The authority has once again refused to withdraw its notice to dismiss 744 firefighters to force through shift changes. The union believe the fire authority want to indulge in publicity stunts rather than proper negotiations and putting unrealistic conditions on future talks.

The fire authority also refused to withdraw the threats to dismiss 744 firefighters to force through changes, a key sticking point for the union. Ian Murray FBU regional secretary said: "We put forward three additional options in the hope we could call off the strike tomorrow. The fire authority refused our offers which were aimed at resolving our dispute.

"The fire authority says it will go to ACAS at the end of the process while insisting it retains the right to sack 744 firefighters. That sends us the signal that their offer to involve ACAS is little more than a charade.

"What they offered this morning was a slight variation in what they offered last week which was a re-packaging of an old offer rejected months ago. The authority is turning negotiations into publicity stunts, and that is wrecking the process and wasting our time.

“Unless they withdraw the threat of mass sackings and enter negotiations without preconditions, the strike action will go ahead tomorrow. South Yorkshire fire crews are not going to be threatened and bullied into submission.”

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