

South Yorkshire latest 03/11/09 - 04/11/09

From: Duncan Milligan
Sent: 03 November 2009 17:37
To: 20 All Officials
Subject: South Yorkshire - URGENT

Please note - SY FRA are saying any firefighter taking any strike action during any period of their shift will be deemed to be on strike for the entire period of their shift.

FBU reaction to threat to suspend fire crews

At informal discussions this morning the FBU outlined a further offer from the union to resolve the dispute. This included the offer of how external assistance can help resolve the dispute.

The union was told this would be reported in full to the fire authority who would respond. No response has been forthcoming to any official of the union with regard to the union's outline of how external assistance could be achieved.

This followed numerous other informal discussions in the past few days initiated by the union. The union had been told we would be given a response to those initiatives but have received none.

If the fire authority had wanted to make an offer to the union it could have done this before the strike started at 4pm today. Instead of taking action which could have prevented a strike they have chosen to hold a press conference half an hour after the dispute started.

Instead of negotiating and responding to our serious initiatives they have chosen to embark on another public relations exercise.

Fire crews have notified the authority of the times and dates of further strike action. At other times fire crews are available for work.

To effectively suspend fire crews is a major escalation of the dispute by the fire authority. If fire crews are suspended during the time they are available for work then the consequences are a matter for the fire authority.

Regional and local media contacts: **Ian Murray** 07967 103345 Sean Starbuck 07872 837694 Graham Wilkinson 07977 931225

From: Duncan Milligan
Sent: 04 November 2009 10:16
To: 20 All Officials
Subject: FBU press conference - South Yorkshire

CALLING NOTICE TO FBU PRESS CONFERENCE IN ADVANCE OF TALKS TODAY 11.30am, Wortley Hall, nr Wortley, Sheffield

The Fire Brigades Union is holding a press conference this morning to outline some of the key issues it will be raising at talks with the fire service today. The new talks open the possibility that this evening's strike could be halted.

The press conference takes place at 11.30am, Wortley Hall, Wortley nr Sheffield.

The union will outline its thinking regarding the use of external assistance and key issues which have arisen in the current dispute.

The talks with the fire authority are scheduled to start at noon, at a neutral venue near Sheffield, a switch from the original venue of Wortley Hall.

Regional and local media contacts: **Ian Murray** 07967 103345 Sean Starbuck 07872 837694 Graham Wilkinson 07977 931225

From: Duncan Milligan

Sent: 04 November 2009 16:17

To: 20 All Officials

Subject: BRIGADES UNION CALL OFF STRIKE ACTION AFTER FIRE AUTHORITY ACCEPT OFFER MADE AT TALKS TODAY

South Yorkshire Fire Brigades Union has called off this evening's scheduled strike after breakthrough talks with the fire service this afternoon. As a gesture of goodwill the union had already agreed to delay the start of the strike to 6pm to allow fire service managers to consult the fire authority.

Central to the deal is the fire authority withdrawing the threat to sack firefighters to force through changes. The strings attached have now been dropped.

The fire authority has also agreed to immediately involve ACAS. It had previously agreed to their involvement, but only at a later date.

There has been a cessation of all current industrial action.

Today's offer from the union included a proposal to move to 10 hour day shifts and 14 hour night shifts, which would have less of an impact on working parents and carers. The fire authority would still, however, be able to put their own shift proposals to outside parties trying to assist.

The union would accept the employer's offer to declare the use of mass dismissal to force through new contracts 'null and void' if unacceptable strings were dropped. The union could immediately call a cessation to all industrial action currently taking place if the fire authority made such a move.

The union dismissed last week's offer because of the other obstacles the fire service put in the way of agreement.

Ian Murray, FBU regional secretary said: "South Yorkshire fire and rescue service has agreed to the offer we made to them this afternoon. They have now removed the strings attached to the offer they made last week.

"The union pushed very hard to get them to the talks today and that has paid off. There is a cessation of all industrial action, which will be finalised when ACAS terms of reference have been agreed by both sides. .

"South Yorkshire firefighters would like to thank the public for their unswerving support and understanding. We also pay tribute to those local MPs and others who were encouraging the steps which have now been taken by the fire authority."

An emergency meeting of South Yorkshire fire crews is scheduled to take place tonight at 6pm at Wortley Hall.

Regional and local media contacts: **Ian Murray** 07967 103345