



---

Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT2 7AE

**FIRE BRIGADES UNION**  
**General Secretary: Matt Wrack**  
Telephone: 020-8541-1765  
Facsimile: 020-8546-5187  
E-Mail : office@fbu.org.uk

---

CIRCULAR 2007HOC0709MW

22 November 2007

TO: ALL MEMBERS

Dear Brother/Sister

**JUSTICE FOR FIREFIGHTER PENSIONS - UPDATE**

Officials from every Brigade, Region and Section of the Union met today in Birmingham to discuss our campaign to win justice and to defend the pension rights of our members. The meeting heard that work is underway throughout the UK to ensure that every single member of the FBU is informed and consulted on the issues involved. Many Brigade Committees have already met to discuss the matter and have concluded that national strike action may be the only way to resolve this dispute.

Senior managers around the UK are increasingly realising that the warnings made by the FBU are proving to be correct and that the guidance on ill-health pensions issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) will effectively mean the ending of ill-health pensions in the Fire and Rescue Service. We have stated from the start that this is unacceptable. I am pleased to be able to report that others within the Service are increasingly coming to share this view.

Since the launch of this campaign we have written to every Chief Fire Officer seeking support. I am pleased to report that a number have expressed concern at the CLG guidance and broad support for the stance taken by the Union. Likewise, a number of Fire Service politicians have raised their concerns with CLG and with the Minister, John Healey.

The FBU has been able to meet with CLG officials as well as directly with the Ministers involved. At these meetings we have outlined our position and expressed the anger that has been provoked among FBU members. The Union's Parliamentary Group was also recently able to hold a meeting with Fire Minister Parmjit Dhanda where the concerns about this issue were raised once again. Nobody in Government can now be in any doubt about how seriously this matter is being taken. Neither can Government claim not to be aware that this anger is likely to lead towards industrial conflict in the Service unless this matter can be resolved.

I am pleased to be able to report that CLG Minister, John Healey has written to us in response. He has informed me that: *"I have asked for an examination to be made of the current arrangements, including the implications for Firefighters and employers. This will, of course, take into account the points that the FBU have made"*. We shall now continue to press that this examination leads to the right conclusion i.e. that the pension rights of our members are restored. It has always been our view that this matter could be resolved relatively easily.

Officials throughout the Union are working hard to ensure that the concerns and views of the FBU are heard and considered. In a number of areas this has led to significant progress being made. There are clear opportunities for developing this side of the campaign. It has been our experience so far that once the issues are explained properly the arguments of CLG officials are easily dealt with.

The Executive Council will consider this matter within the next couple of weeks. Brigade Officials will be able to report further information so that Branches can be kept fully informed. Information is regularly being posted on the Union's website (<http://www.fbu.org.uk/>) where a special page devoted to this campaign has been established. This includes press and television coverage on the issue.

Further information is being issued advising members on how the matter can be raised with MPs. We are also asking all Branches to meet to discuss this matter, including the possible need for industrial action.

This is a crucial campaign and it is one in which *every* member can play a part.

Please give your support in this fight for justice.

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/sll