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To: All Members

Dear Brother/Sister

Pay campaign: time for the fire service employers to wake up; time for government to invest in our service

Last week, I reported on two developments in relation to our pay campaign. Firstly, there was a proposal on pay received from the London Fire Commissioner. Secondly, the Executive Council agreed to seek an urgent meeting of the National Joint Council, within ten days of the close of our national strike ballot (i.e. by 9 February). The Executive Council also agreed that no call for strike action would be made until the expiry of this deadline.

As we approach the close of our ballot, it is worth reflecting on how we got to this situation and what needs to be done to avoid national strike action.

The FBU Executive Council is governed by the rules and policies of the union. Our campaign is based upon those policies. The key aims of our campaign at the current time include the following:

- A. *To achieve a pay rise for all Grey Book members of the FBU across the UK;*
 - a. *Avoiding strike action, if possible, but*
 - b. *Through strike action, if necessary.*
- B. *To defend UK-wide collective bargaining through the National Joint Council (NJC).*
- C. *To oppose the Westminster government's white paper which seeks to attack our rights to collective bargaining.*
- D. *To oppose imposition of a pay review body.*
- E. *To oppose the new anti-strike laws.*
- F. *To maintain maximum unity among all FBU members in all services.*

It is worthwhile to reflect on why there has been such a delay in resolving the issue of pay, which should have been settled before 1 July 2022:

1. The FBU set out our case for a significant pay rise in writing to the fire service employers in May 2022.

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2. The employers responded on 27 June 2022 with a pay offer of 2%. This proposal was, frankly, an insult to FBU members and was unanimously rejected by the Executive Council, after consultation with members.
3. The union then began our campaign towards strike action, including meetings around the UK. However, it took until 4 October 2022 for the employers to make a revised offer of 5%.
4. The FBU then consulted all members by means of a secret ballot. FBU members voted by 79% that the offer should be rejected.
5. That decision – of our members through a ballot – is what prompted the union to move to a national ballot for strike action. The strike ballot closes on 30 January 2023.

We do not yet know the outcome of our strike ballot but all indications from members are that there will be a decisive vote for action. The FBU will seek to avoid strike action but only if the fire service employers wake up to the seriousness of the situation. The delays in resolving the issue of pay for 2022 are the result of decisions **they – and the government** – have made.

The proposal from London is one sign of the seriousness of the situation. We are aware that other employers are also considering what needs to be done. The answer is actually simple; make a **national pay offer** through the National Joint Council – a pay offer which will be found acceptable by FBU members. Last Friday, I attended a meeting of the London Regional Committee which was also clear that they sought **a national offer on pay for all Grey Book members**.

To allow time for these issues to sink in with the employers, the Executive Council agreed the ten-day process for a meeting of the NJC as set out above. We hope they will take the opportunity to avoid strike action and to significantly improve their pay proposal for all members and through the NJC.

In these circumstances, employers, governments and some Chief Fire Officers will always attempt to spread fear and misinformation and to play divide and rule; we should not be surprised. They thought they could scare us into accepting 2%. They thought they could con us into accepting 5%.

So far, we have proved them wrong at every stage.

I urge all members to stand firm and stand together.

Yours in unity



Matt Wrack
General Secretary

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