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Circular: 2023HOC085MW

14 February 2023

To: All Members

Dear Brother/Sister

Revised Pay Offer – Online members meetings

On the evening of Wednesday 8 February, we were issued with a revised pay offer by Fire and Rescue Service employers. It is for 7% on NJC-negotiated pay rates and CPD backdated to July 2022, and a further 5% from July 2023.

This offer will be put to a ballot of all members. The ballot will open on Monday 20th February and close at 2pm on Monday 6th March. It will be run online and by post.

The Executive Council of the FBU unanimously agreed to recommend that **members vote to accept this offer**, and I am writing to you to outline why.

We should all be proud of the campaign we have run to get this far. We have now moved our employers from 2% in June last year, to 5% in November, and now to 7% plus 5%.

This achievement was only possible because of our overwhelming mandate for strike action. It is clear evidence of the value of collective bargaining and negotiation as opposed to so-called "independent" pay review bodies.

I can also confirm that there are no 'strings' attached to this offer. It places no conditions on our working conditions or role remit, and for the first time our employers have formally recognised the importance of key FBU demands around Retained members, Control members, pay progression and CPD.

However, we will not sugar-coat this offer, or the realities of firefighter pay. Since 2010, firefighters have lost more than 12% of the value of their pay.

Given the current rate of inflation, 7% is another real terms pay cut for the current pay round (which runs from July 2022 to July 2023). For the following year (July 2023 to July 2024), when inflation is forecast to be lower, 5% may amount to a slight increase in real terms pay.

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This is your union, and it is now for you to decide whether this offer represents a good enough improvement for us to resolve this dispute. The FBU's mandate for strike action is still live.

The Executive Council has weighed up the positives and negatives and decided that, on balance, we recommend that members vote to accept this offer. **It was honest and sober in its assessment, but it was also unanimous.**

We should be clear that this offer, and our Executive's assessment of it, is the result of specific circumstances and negotiations within the Fire and Rescue Service and must not be seen as setting a maximum for public sector pay offers. The FBU stands in solidarity with all workers struggling for decent pay.

Finally, I would like thank every single member of the FBU for the role you have played in this pay campaign so far. From rejecting the initial 2% offer in June 2022 to delivering an 88% mandate for strike action last month (94% in Northern Ireland), our campaign has maintained unity and demonstrated the collective power of FBU members at every stage.

We are also holding two online meetings for all members this week to discuss the pay offer and our response to it. Members can register for a meeting using a link below. Both meetings are the same so members only need to register for one meeting.

<u>Wednesday 15 February @ 6:30pm</u>
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AbWsY-SGSmmUYGbP07SrmQ

<u>Thursday 16 February @ 11:00am</u>
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Esj7qtwvS2aKBR8cQrhC2g

Yours in unity

M. Wrack

Matt Wrack
General Secretary

MW/sll