

Industrial Relations Update

Purpose of the Report

To update the Fire Service Management Committee on the current key industrial relations issues.

Summary

This paper briefly describes the position in respect of the current key industrial relations issues as at the date of issue of the report.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to note the issues set out in the paper.

Contact officer:	Gill Gittins
Position:	Principal Negotiating Officer
Phone no:	020 7187 7335
E-mail:	gill.gittins@local.gov.uk

DCLG/FBU Pension Scheme Reform Dispute

1. Members will be aware that this dispute remains unresolved.
2. Since the last meeting of the FSMC there has been further strike action by Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members in England and Wales (excluding control members), including a continuous period over 4 days. Periods not covered by strike action are covered by action short of a strike involving matters such as refusal to undertake voluntary overtime, attend events or in some circumstances work across borders. The new Pension Regulations have been laid. However, the dispute remains active and a further 24-hour period of strike action in England has just been announced commencing at 09.00 on 9th December.
3. The FBU has lobbied at political level to ensure support for an Early Day Motion in order to oppose the introduction of the new Pension Regulations for the proposed 2015 pension scheme for England. Ed Miliband is the primary sponsor. Further signatories, can be viewed here: <http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2014-15/454> .
4. We remain in close contact with both parties to the dispute and available to further assist in identifying a resolution to this eight-point dispute in any way that it is appropriate to do so. In that regard, as far as fitness is concerned and under the auspices of the NJC, employer and employee representatives agreed an approach 'in principle' earlier this year. Members will be aware that work cannot conclude until such time as the position in the dispute around authority initiated early retirement has been resolved. We have also continued to work with both parties on the matter of the proposed joint working group on fitness issues and are optimistic that discussion will shortly result in an agreed position between all three parties.
5. Members will be aware that DCLG recently issued a consultation paper to fire authorities on matters relating to fitness issues, which mostly reflects the 'in principle' position referred to in paragraph 4 above. Whilst there is concern about the appropriateness of, or need for, inclusion in the National Framework a response has been provided to DCLG. A copy of the consultation response can be found here:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/12157/Proposed+changes+to+the+Fire+and+Rescue+National+Framework+Dec+2014/22b60000-55f0-47ea-a1d3-722f8c96c4e9>

NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services - commitment to joint work

6. The NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services has been engaged in constructive discussion through its commitment to work jointly on 'changes identified by each Side to ensure that there is a pay framework alongside terms and conditions in the fire and rescue service which reflect the responsibilities of, and current and future demands on, the

service and the profession'. This includes the increasing need to consider how the workforce's skills and commitment can best be utilised and the type of activities undertaken. To support this discussion a joint survey of fire and rescue services was undertaken to map out what currently happens on the ground and to identify the types of activity felt to be of additional value for the future.

7. A number of work streams have been identified, as set out in a circular issued by the NJC last month, which can be found [here](#) .
8. The National Employers have appointed a number of specialist representatives on each of the work streams and arrangements are currently being put in place to commence work as soon as practically possible.

Local assistance

9. Since the FSMC last met we have, through the NJC, undertaken conciliations for six fire and rescue services.
10. We have also, through the NJC, worked with two fire and rescue services to deliver joint industrial relations training for managers and trade union representatives so that they can review their industrial relations relationship and commit to specific improvements (and how and when they will be achieved) where necessary.