



The Fire Brigades Union

LONDON REGION

Established 1918 John Horner Mews, off Frome Street, London N1 8PB. Tel: 020 7359 3638 Fax: 020 7359 3686 E-Mail: llra@fbu-ho.org.

All London FBU Members

1st July 2009

Dear Brother/Sister

Membership consultation

You will recall my circular to all branches (20th May, attached) and you will by now be aware of the serious position that members of the London region now find themselves in, in respect of all the matters outlined in the circular.

We assured members that we will keep them up to date with developments. We are now putting the final touches to a series of DVDs which should arrive at branches shortly.

We further gave a commitment to ensure that our membership is in control of any dispute which may arise and it is for this reason that we have now taken this opportunity to write to you personally.

Since 2006 the FBU have attempted to secure better industrial relations where agreements can be reached through compromise and good practice. However, it is now apparent that contrary to the commissioner's recent letter to you all, the same cannot be said for our employers LFEPA.

Rarely has the FBU in London threatened industrial action since the 2002 national pay dispute. One such example was when our employers refused to negotiate with us over station officer protected pay, a dispute which ended in an agreement which met with the approval of those affected, so it is somewhat disingenuous for the commissioner to state that the FBU is always threatening industrial action.

The FBU considers that industrial action should only ever be used as a last resort, a point that senior managers would do well to consider when they consistently choose to ignore policies and procedures, one such example being that of the targeted calling policy.

That said, it is now with much disappointment that we need to highlight to you that we have now reached that last resort, we therefore have no alternative but to launch a campaign which will include a ballot for industrial action short of strike action to force our employers to abide by agreements and polices agreed both locally and nationally and an acceptance that they can no longer consider consultation as a simple tick box exercise.

Principal Managers and heads of departments have refused to accept that issues such as a drug and alcohol policy and an unagreed streamlined CPD process cannot just be imposed; they further believe that these are matters for mere consultation and not proper and meaningful negotiation.

These polices signify such detrimental changes to members conditions of service that the FBU maintains that the authority are now in breach of contract and we cannot allow our members to be subjected to such changes.

It is for these reasons amongst so many others that are highlighted in my circular (attached) that the FBU is now in the process of formalising a trade dispute letter which will be followed up with a ballot of the entire London membership for industrial action short of strike action which will include a pre arranged overtime ban.

It is not too late for our employers to do right by our members, in fact the FBU have agreed to attend a meeting on the 14th July 2009, with both the head of industrial relations and the commissioner, in a last ditch attempt to convince our employers to do the right thing.

Whilst we have agreed to such a meeting we are not postponing our planned course of action merely on the basis of a meeting taking place, branch meetings and mass meetings will continue to take place in order to keep members up to date with developments.

1. This lawful ballot will cover action short of strike action and only forms of action short of strike can be called. A call for strike action would require a separate, home-address; postal ballot and a yes vote result from members.
2. There are two broad categories of action short of strike;
 - (a.) *those forms of action that ask members to refrain from undertaking voluntary/discretionary activities for which it would be unlawful for the employer to deduct pay.*
 - (b.) *those forms of action that may be regarded as partial performance of contractually obliged activities for which an employer may make lawful deductions of pay proportionate to the partial performance.*
3. The mandate currently being sought from members is to call for action which we would regard to be voluntary and therefore unlawful for pay to be deducted. The London Regional Committee would only seek a change in this action if/when members indicate they support it.

We are now asking members to complete and return by the 15th July 2009 the attached questionnaire, so that we can ensure that member's views are taken into consideration for the planned industrial action short of strike action, your answers will ensure that the London Regional Committee can demonstrate clear leadership that meets with members approval.

Whilst changes to shifts is a further matter that our employers are contemplating at this stage it is not our intention to ballot members on this issue at this time. This is due to the fact that the Brigade is yet to impose any detrimental change, and until it threatens to, a ballot would not be appropriate. Should it become necessary then we would not hesitate to ballot and members will be fully informed of developments.

Yours Fraternally

Ian Leahair

Ian Leahair
London FBU Executive Council Member
for and on behalf of
The London Regional Committee

LONDON FBU MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE JULY 2009

Below you are asked to carefully read each question and then place a cross into the appropriate box of your chosen answer;

Question	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Core skills and training are being detrimentally affected due to the demand to meet CFS targets?			
Watch Officers and Middle Managers have seen significant increases in work loads since 2004? <i>(officers only)</i>			
Scale B leave including additional leave above GM 381 is now harder than ever to obtain?			
The Brigades London Safety Plan will not deliver a first class service fit for the 21 st century?			
I do not support the Brigades attempt to introduce 12hr shifts?			
As an employee of the LFEPA I do not feel valued. Morale & commitment is at an all time low?			
I would be prepared to take part in industrial action short of strike?			
I would support a ban on the following being included in any industrial action short of strike?			
<i>a. Volunteering to undertake pre arranged overtime?</i>			
<i>b. Volunteering to act up to a higher rank/role?</i>			
<i>c. Volunteering to accept temporary promotion to a higher rank/role?</i>			
<i>d. Volunteering to work at times outside normal contracted hours?</i>			
<i>e. Volunteering to undertake occasional activities in schemes/projects that do not form part of a contractual requirement?</i>			
<i>f. Volunteering not to adjust positive managerial hours having responded to calls during on call periods (officers only)?</i>			
<i>g. Volunteering to work at times outside normal contracted hours, positive managerial hours or on rota-days (officers only)?</i>			