

SERVING FIREFIGHTERS



SERVING THE COMMUNITY

RFU

Firefighter House

Station Road

Attleborough

Norfolk NR17 2AS

t: 01953 455005

f: 01953 454760

www.rfuonline.co.uk

e: office@rfuonline.co.uk

John Barton: National General Secretary

To all RFU Executive Officers, Brigade and Station Reps

NJC Update

I write to advise you that the RFU chose not to attend the first meeting of the NJC under the new constitution on the 28th September, for the avoidance of doubt we did not reject the offer. The reason for not taking up its seat at this time is due solely to ongoing work on its structure at local and regional level. The RFU is also at liberty to apply to take up its seat at any time during the next three years. Although we were not at the meeting we welcome the news that the new NJC constitution has now been agreed.

Employers Circular EMP10/07 refers at para 6

"In response to an invitation to attend today's NJC meeting the Retained Firefighters Union indicated that they wished to continue to focus upon developing local and regional structures at this time. The Retained Firefighters Union will, of course, be able to take advantage of the new recognition mechanism contained in the constitution as and when they wish to do so which will include a count of their members before taking up one or more seats."

We believe that the method of calculating and allocating seats on the employee's side is unbalanced in that as the RFU only recruits members who hold an RDS contract, the maximum amount of seats we could obtain is 3.

As many of you will be aware, "the level playing field" which allows and encourages part-time personnel to undertake the valuable work you do on our members behalf is not yet fully fit for purpose. The demands of a full-time job, RDS duties etc is a big challenge for us and we are unique in the service in this respect. Executive Officers and full time officials here at the office have been working on this issue for a number of months and slowly but surely we are getting there.

This is why we believe it is important to be best placed to participate fully at national level before formally seeking NJC recognition and will take up the invitation to sit on the NJC at a time that best suits the organisation and its members.

FBU CIRCULAR: 2007HOC0537MW

I feel it necessary to correct the misinformation contained within the aforementioned FBU circular.

'Following a review, a revised NJC Constitution was provisionally agreed. This would reduce the seats for both sides (employers and employees) to 12. Therefore any organisation seeking representation would need to demonstrate that it represented 1/12 of the workforce. A mechanism for seeking representation was also agreed.'

However, following this, and following lobbying by the RFU, the employers sought to lower this threshold to $\frac{1}{14}$.

This is totally inaccurate, as you will see from EMP Circular 03/05 the reason for 14 seats each side was nothing to do with the RFU but to accommodate all the relevant political parties and devolved administrations within the UK.

'During the past week we were informed that the RFU have withdrawn their request for a place on the NJC and would not be submitting their membership for an independent audit.'

Again more misinformation, the RFU has chosen not to take up the invitation to sit on the NJC at this first opportunity, we can sit on the NJC any time we like.

The RFU now has 'full collective bargaining rights' in more brigades than ever and it is here at local level that we are making a big difference to the working environment and conditions of our members.

Remember we all say that we do not do the job for the money, so why should it matter so much as to whether we are on the NJC or not, it hasn't stopped thousands of fire service employees joining the RFU in the past. The reason people do join is because they know that locally we are the only union who defends the RDS station from closing, we are the only union who fought to stop the demotion of Sub Officers in charge of stations and we are the only union fighting for the RDS to be awarded 100% of the CPD allowance.

It's disappointing that we have to correct misinformation from another fire service union, but it just proves how much of a threat they believe us to be!

Believe the truth, not the rumour.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Barton', written in a cursive style.

John Barton
General Secretary