

All Station/Brigade Reps – Briefing Note 01/08

Ill Health and Injury Pension Update

This purpose of this latest circular is to bring all members up to date with the latest developments on the current crisis involving pension provision for those who suffer serious injury on duty; you will be aware of this situation from previous newsletters in recent months.

House of Commons debate 22nd January 2008

We have been asked to brief a number of MPs on the effects upon recruitment and retention if this matter is not resolved and coincidentally pensions were the subject of a recent debate in the house. A number of MPs including the minister, Parmjit Dhanda took part as well as one MP whom we had briefed. From the “ringside” we were encouraged by the fact that an issue of such importance to our members in particular and RDS in general, was given an airing, however urgent action to resolve this matter is now a must! *Please refer to the Hansard transcript on the RFU website.*

Ill Health Review Group

Communities and Local Government (CLG) have been considering representations raised by the RFU both at meetings and in writing, about the operation of the current regulations which govern the ill-health pension awards for firefighters. An ill health review group has now been set up to find a way forward and meets for the first time on the 20th February; naturally the RFU will be attending this meeting.

Having lobbied every tier of government, I wrote to Hazel Blears the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to request that she steps in to bring about a solution. At the time of producing this ‘Briefing Note’ we still await her response.

Scotland gets ready to go it alone

Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister for Community Safety has already made a decision on this issue..... *"I have therefore instructed officials to revise current guidance in Scotland to resolve the situation for our fire and rescue staff here."*So irrespective of any outcome from the review group, Firefighters in Scotland look to have already benefited from ministerial intervention to the wellbeing of its firefighters.

To conclude; the amount of work which has gone on to address this matter has been huge, however as we’ve stated on more than one occasion *"I do believe that if society has an expectation that community-focused men and woman will volunteer to step forward to protect their friends and neighbours as firefighters, then society through the taxpayer should not see it as unreasonable for these brave men and woman to be compensated if something goes wrong"*.

Believe the truth, not the rumour.



John Barton
General Secretary