

RFU National News

Newsletter for the Retained

Vol. 3 Issue 03



RRT Update

The Retained Review Team, set up by the Minister and announced at a RFU Conference last December, met for a two-day workshop at Warwick University last week. Representatives from a number of organisations, including business and the voluntary sector attended, and discussed a wide range of issues, including the 20% shortfall and 10% annual turnover in retained personnel, and the following:

- *Raising Public Awareness*
- *Enhancing Equality, Fairness and Diversity*
- *Modernising Selection Tests*
- *Building on IPDS*
- *Engagement with and Incentives for the Business Community to employ Retained*
- *Remuneration, Commitment and Representation*
- *Building on IRMP*
- *Promoting Community Safety-from Reaction to Pro-action*
- *Pensions, Retention and the Retirement Age*
- *Terminology*
- *EU Legislation and the Working Time Directive*
- *The Commons Select Committee report on Retained matters*
- *The price of failing to improve the Retained and the Cost of Alternatives*
- *Morale and the Second-class Status*
- *Good and Restrictive Practices*
- *Involvement of Retained in the Changes*
- *National and Local Conditions of Service-A Barrier to Change?*
- *National Resilience and the Role of Retained*
- *What Sort of Service do we want?*
- *A strategy for Implementation of change*

Further more detailed information will be available later. The report of the Review will go to the Practitioners' Forum meetings in June and July.

Negotiations on the June 2003 Pay and Conditions Agreement

Members may have seen that the negotiations between the Employers and the FBU appear to have failed at the meeting of the NJC on 5th May, although discussions are ongoing. The FBU is saying that if the outstanding 3.5% pay increase (backdated to November 2003) is not paid, then their annual conference next week will be recommended to withdraw from the June 2003 agreement.

It is understood the sticking point in reaching an agreement is the employers insistence that "stand down" time has no place in a modernised, risk assessed service. Unless stand down time is removed, the employers argue, this will make it impossible to adopt new flexible shift arrangements.

If the FBU withdraw from the June 2003 pay agreement this could mean re-negotiating (with the possibility of further strike action) what has already been implemented, including:

- The 4.2% already paid from 7/11/02
- The 3.5% already paid from 7/11/03
- Ending of the Retained "Disturbance Fee"
- Abandoning the link of the Retaining Fee at 10% of the equivalent wholetime salary
- **Continuation of payment of a second turnout fee for redirections**
- The Retained hourly rate no longer being linked to the equivalent wholetime pay
- **The Retained hourly rate continuing to be paid for minimum of an hour, rather than 15 minute blocks**

Besides holding up the second 3.5% it would also mean non-payment of the 4.2% due from 1/7/04 and a failure to implement the new Grey Book, which has recently been issued in draft (see details on RFU website).

This is a mixed blessing for Retained personnel, many of whom continue to be unhappy about the new retained pay arrangements which see them turnout for less now than pre Nov 2003. It remains to be seen if the employers would withdraw the new retained hourly rate, as this came about through parity arguments put to the Bain Review by the RFU, rather than by negotiation in the NJC and had been agreed by the employers as long ago as August 2002! It is difficult to see how this could now be changed, as the parity issue has been conceded. However, much of the rest of the retained pay arrangements negotiated by the FBU last June would not be missed (redirections and turnouts on drill nights).

The outcome of all of this is unclear, especially as a significant element here is the continued in-fighting and power struggle within the FBU, with large elements hell bent on throwing out modernisation, regionalisation, and new standards of fire cover based on the risk to the public.

We will keep you informed of developments.