

Cheshire FBU News

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1. IRMP 6

Consultation on the draft IRMP is well under way and officials are busy putting together the formal response from the FBU which all branch reps have a copy of.

The main operational bone of contention is the proposed shift review and co-responding. It is disappointing to note that before any review has commenced reports are coming in that the CFO and the Chair of the CFA are telling members that they are having the new twelve hour shifts and that's that. Members should be used to this sort of intimidating nonsense by now and look to the FBU for reliable information. The brigade committee has decided to mount a campaign in order to resist the 12 hour shifts. Part of this campaign is for all members to go on the Service intranet or via email and make Management aware of your opposition to this proposal. Members should not be concerned about reprisals for taking part in the consultation as the intranet response is anonymous. As a branch you could send a collective email outlining your concerns. It is the duty of the Fire Authority to consult properly on its IRMP and therefore staff should be confident that their replies are treated with respect.

Silence from members on this matter will allow management to dictate the shifts that

2. Wilmslow Cuts.

Wilmslow branch members are mounting a brilliant campaign to inform the community about the dangers of increasing response times by 5-6 minutes. To date management have no idea how many local residents will apply to be retained Firefighters at Wilmslow and they are stating that Firefighters from the Airport are interested in taking up this retained role, however eligible Airport FF's have told the FBU they will not be applying and will support our campaign.

Such is the strength of our argument that local MP George Osbourne (Shadow Chancellor) has said he will stand up for local people who are entitled to the Service they have been getting and he has concerns about the downgrading of response times.

Further lobbying will take place of Councillors to put pressure on CFA members to withdraw this proposal from the IRMP. The Brigade Committee is calling on members to turn up at Wilmslow on February 28th for a mass day of action, see your local rep for details.

3. Drugs and Alcohol Policy

This policy started off with a zero tolerance stance but after lengthy discussions and a failure to agree that was heard at the Joint Consultative Committee a sensible compromise was achieved. Members will be getting briefed that before any random testing there will be a three month education program for staff and managers followed by nine months where testing will take place after which a review of the policy will take place at the JCC level.

Officials have been assured that during this pilot period staff who give a positive sample will be treated no different than what the previous policy allowed for.

Any employer should treat addiction as an illness that requires treatment but is also hard for an addict to admit they have a problem we therefore urge members to make full use of the education program when it is offered.

4. Discipline

Did you know that since the abolition of the old discipline regulations, Cheshire have never found a member of staff not guilty of an offence!

Over 100 cases without a single verdict of not guilty. Cynics might come to the conclusion that if they are investigated under discipline they should accept their guilt, not bother with a hearing and take their punishment.

With this high number of cases it explains why management have brought in a fast track system. Odd term for a process that can take months?

Suppose all terms are relevant. Did you hear the news that the tortoise was mugged by a gang of snails, when questioned by Police as to whether he could identify the snails he replied NO! It all happened to fast.

For the discipline process to appear fair and transparent one would expect that on the balance of probability some cases should go in favour of the member. If this trend of 100% guilty continues then staff confidence in managerial process of discipline would be greatly undermined.

For further details see the FBU submission for IRMP 6.

5. Drivers

The Service is reaching a crucial point with the number of EFAD qualified drivers reducing due to natural retirements, promotions and shortage in numbers of competent staff wanting to become drivers.

It was reported at the brigade committee that the Guru's of motivation and persuasion have in their wisdom decided to float the idea of charging the cost of their LGV training if they decide later on in their career to request coming off driving.

The brigade officials need to say no to this idea if it comes up for negotiation to protect members but also to prevent a shortage of drivers due to it not appealing to new members who are eligible to apply.

Thankfully management have finally listened to the Driving school and it's drivers and started to roll out EFAD refresher training, however rushed it may seem, as at least drivers are now getting the training that is long overdue.

6. Incident Command Course M.i.M

Following protracted negotiation brigade officials have achieved a satisfactory outcome for members who will be required to attend these courses at the Fire Service College. The details of which were given to reps at the Brigade Committee meeting. Staff will not have to have to attend in their own time and will be compensated with time back. Please see your local rep for details.

It has been reported to the editorial team that attendance will be required once every three years with the recently appointed Crew and Watch going first together with Firefighters who are still in development.

7. Promotion

Reports given to the Brigade Committee highlighted concerns over the current system of promotion with stories of staff being told they have failed the assessment then given the opportunity to retake it, members being told they haven't got an interview then asked to come in for one.

The lack of clear thinking and action which hints at there being no policy to back up any of this has had some calling it a case of jobs for the boys or girls.

As Cheshire strives for 'The right people in the right place at the right time' the number of staff turning down job offers that do not hold any interest for them makes one question this statement.

8. Safer Firefighters, Safer Communities, Progress.

Following the lobby of Parliament by FBU members in November a few important developments have come forward.

- The Minister Sadiq Khan has agreed to review the current recording arrangements for fatalities.
- Proposal for a new Operational Guidance Framework that would be UK-Wide for this issuing of key guidance for all operational matters, updated technical knowledge and as a result of operational incidents.
- A review of the processes for operational training and a look at how IPDS has been implemented in different FRS, as well as the impact of Integrated Risk Management Plans on the provision of training and training development.

All of this is welcomed by the FBU and is as a direct result of the pressure applied by the FBU and it's members.

To contribute to further issues of Cheshire FBU News contact your

Branch rep or email: cheshirefbunews@googlemail.com

Check out the website:<http://www.cheshire.fbu.org.uk>

