

Cheshire FBU News

November 2007

Inside This Issue

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1 | Sickness Figures | 4 | Staff Attitude Survey |
| 2 | CPD Update | 5 | TRV or is it TRU? |
| 3 | Outstaffing Agreement | | |

1. Sickness Figures

It has taken almost two years for the Service to translate short term sickness into graphs for members to view and see if we are going to lose/gain a day back. Not a hugely difficult task, but we are still waiting. All reps must make sure they check the short term sickness figures with the Admin Manager to ensure they are correct.

Remember

1 Only count shifts not calendar days.

2 Short term sick is up to and including 8 shifts.

3 If someone is sick for more than 8 shifts i.e. 9 shifts or more then none of the sickness is counted as short term, the entire period is counted as long term sick. So you should **not** count any of the 9 continuous shifts sick as short term, these are **all** long term. Some of these figures had already been miscalculated by Station Admin Managers who had not been informed of the correct calculations.

If in doubt do not sign off the figures as correct till you have spoken to a Brigade official

2. CPD Update

The FBU dispute with the Service over the introduction of a 5th element for CPD payment was discussed at HQ on Friday 16th in the presence of the FBU's Regional Secretary and EC member. We at the newsletter do not have the details but have been told that a circular is on its way to members from the Brigade secretary explaining the detail of the meeting and the next steps. The Service would not agree to a referral to a higher level and it looks like they are imposing this 5th element on staff.

The union position is still clear that they have not agreed for managers to go on these training days off duty, it is voluntary. Further it is outside the National Agreement on CPD and so should not be used to grant or refuse a CPD application.

The dispute over this issue will not be resolved before the 14th December deadline for applications. So if you apply for CPD and are refused because you did not attend an insight day, inform your rep or Brigade Official immediately so a grievance can be started.

The union is taking further legal advice on what action it will take if grievances fail to resolve the matter to our satisfaction.

3. Oustaffing Agreement

How can a simple agreement take from the 26.09.2007 when it was to be implemented to mid November before you are told about it? If we did not know that Service management were such nice people you would think they were trying not to let you know about it for as long as possible.

Despite the agreement being widely circulated it appears already that a handful of Station Managers are refusing to pay out for legitimate claims. All members are urged to make sure they understand the policy and gain a signature at the station they are detached to and then pass the paperwork to their own Admin manager when they return to their home station for payment of the station imprest account.

4. Staff Attitude Survey

Well the report is out in some form as there are a lot of figures to show staff felt undervalued and bullied by management. The FBU has asked twice for a copy and have been told they will get a full copy once it is they have one. A report to the CFA has taken place so they must have one of some discription; maybe they have forgotten to give the FBU a copy.

However if you would like a full copy, then why not ask for one under a Freedom of Information request. If you are nervous about putting your name to such a request ask a friend to do one. If you are successful give a copy to a brigade official.

Some of the findings reported to the in the CFA paper.

From approx 1000 plus staff, response rate of 54%

1) 77% were satisfied with their immediate line manager.

2) 72% wanted to be working in the service in 12 months time. (69% operational/81% support staff)

3) 66% enjoyed their work (59% operational/82% support staff)

4) 26% felt valued by the service (17% operational/48% support staff)

26% only felt valued that means a possible 74% do not feel valued in the service and a whopping 83% of operational staff doesn't feel valued!!!!!!!

Of course there is not a problem with morale with staff working in the service, so senior managers tell us, so it must be true, and the survey is just an aberration, was it a rainy day when people filled in the survey? Or are they are happy not to be valued?

What do you think tell us at the newsletter email?

These we must assume are the best bits from the report; look at the number of operational staff who feel valued. What have they been teaching on these 'Tip of the iceberg' days? *In fact, like an iceberg it might be that the majority of the problems lie below the surface.* It looks like they should run a session for senior managers on what is the most important asset to an organisation, yes you guessed it YOUR STAFF. A massive training need has been identified from this survey for senior staff. Maybe they need to come in off duty and get some development. (We don't Fink so) Is it any wonder that the very department whose responsibility is the staff 'Human Resources' have such a high turnover of personnel?

5. TRV or is it TRU?

Having got the brigade officials sucked in for a pilot in Halton, management have gone back two years and decided to try and use the Retained to ride these replacements for real pumps. Northwich, Winsford, Stockton health and Frodsham are to lose their retained structural appliances for TRUs. Nantwich is to gain a TRU and keep their structural appliance.

The retained staff duty system is now in managements sights, as the Wholetime and Day Crewed have been reviewed it is time for the retained to get some attention. The Service look like they may be going for a salary scheme to replace the retainer and turnout fees exactly what the salary will be is unknown at the moment but it will most probably be based on some kind of sliding scale of current or historical turnout data. It is bound to mean there will be winners and losers in this review. The FBU job is to insure we have no losers and only winners and standards of fire cover are not downgraded.

It has been muted that the Brigade want to use retained staff from all over the county to go and ride these vehicles at different stations than their own., so taking the communities retained Firefighter away from his/her community to work elsewhere. This strikes at the heart of the retained ethos- that of a local Firefighters serving their local community. The proposed replacement of structural appliances with TRU will mean that the retained capability will be reduced as these vehicles will not carry a 135 and only hold 1000liters of water. How many 3 storey buildings are there in your station area, when Audlem was earmarked for a TRV the members there with the help of the Brigade officials saw off that challenge, but what is in store for them now the Brigade are looking like the retained will crew these vehicles instead of a structural appliance. If you don't have 135 to train with you will become 2nd class Firefighters. The FBU is totally apposed to making the retained less competent than the wholetime. What other equipment the vehicle will carry is part of the consultation process, however since the paper went to the authority on Nov the 3rd the consultation has stopped!

What are the issues with these vehicles?

- 1 They carry less water
- 2 They cannot carry a 135 ladder
- 3 They cannot carry anything close to the amount of equipment a structural appliance can.
- 4 Severe doubts over the axle weights being able to withstand the desired amount of equipment
- 5 No guarantee they always ride with 4 riders
- 6 There is no doubt that the TRU's will be used to reduce the number of structural 2nd appliances across the county
- 7 They have no off road capability.

**To contribute to further issues of Cheshire FBU News contact your
Branch rep or email: cheshirefbunews@googlemail.com**