

**DEFEND CONTROL JOBS**  
AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL



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Dear member,

After reading the tele-printer message from SM Bruce Gordon dated 21/10/10 the Hampshire FBU feel the need to clarify and point out errors contained within it to our members.

- At the recent RDS Strategy meeting there was a discussion regarding the position of HFRS should employees not concur to the letters sent out asking staff to agree to a new banded retainer scheme? A question was raised by a HFRS employee present at this meeting, what would happen to those who did not agree with the letter and asked if those people will be sacked? A statement was made that those who did not sign the current letters would not be sacked as that was illegal and that any employee who did not sign in agreement with HFRS letter would receive a one on one meeting with their line manager.

*The FBU are gravely concerned that the service is bandying comments around relating to the sacking of employee's should they not agree with HFRS proposed actions. The FBU believe that should any member or employee who is opposed to the services letter and does not agree, be invited to attend a one on one meeting with their line manager to discuss why they said no, would then be subject to coercion and even intimidation if that line manager asked them to change their minds and say yes. It's a plain and simple fact that we do not have to agree to what the service wants as currently our terms and conditions guarantee our retainer fee and in responding 'yes' to this we are agreeing to a pay cut.*

*Ask yourself this question....Would you give away on average £30 to £50 pound per month because someone asked you to? In some cases RDS staff will lose over £1500 from their annual retainer.*

- The draft letter supplied to the FBU stated that any employee who did not return the letter would automatically be counted as in agreement with the service – a positive implied response. This draft letter supplied to FBU was a great concern hence our honest opinions within our letters and poster statements. The service have now changed their tack and openly stated that a positive implied response will not be adhered to.

*The FBU are now delighted that this statement has been made public by HFRS by means of tele-printer message to all RDS stations.*

- HFRS's motives for the banding scheme.....The FBU has, over the course of several months, been involved in many negotiation meetings with HFRS on pay and conditions for the retained duty system staff along with other RB's. While we attend these meetings for purposes of negotiation it does not mean that we have approved or accepted any decisions

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made by HFRS. The FBU do not accept the HFRS banded retainer action and have stated that fact on a number of occasions. It is inaccurate for the service to imply that we have agreed within the consultation process, as stated by the service's letter.

Not wishing to sound like we are banging the same drum constantly to our members and HFRS retained employees but as a fire service workforce we already have in place a fair pay and retainer scheme for retained staff which has been agreed nationally and is now cast in stone within what we know as the Grey Book. It has lasted over 65 years and stood the test of time and previous recessions. HFRS are asking you the retained employee to cast aside the grey book conditions, take a pay cut, tighten your belts and as one SMT individual put it 'feel the pain along with the rest of the country!'

- SM Bruce Gordon states in the letter that that he was tasked with delivering the project with a 'nil cost' and that may initially have been the case however a statement was made by an SMT member correcting SM Bruce Gordon at a negotiation meeting saying that 'cost neutral is not on the table! We are now talking cost negative'.
- We all understand that our country is in an economic state of flux at this time with massive public sector spending cuts announced. The fire authorities throughout the UK have had their budgets slashed and they are now looking at ways to create huge financial savings. With the admission from HFRS that there will only be a total amount of £20K saved from this banded retainer scheme has astounded the FBU. This project has been running for approx. 5 years costing thousands upon thousands of pounds for meetings and the salaries of all those involved in the project.
- The coalition government have now stated that they have dropped the program that was originally instigated by the previous Labour government which wanted greater savings in the retained services, and therefore will not audit any service on this, yet HFRS stand solid and are pressing on with something that is now not required. The FBU are right to question the motives of HFRS after an SMT individual was heard to state that – 'I look at the RDS everyday and see pumps off the run – that's unacceptable! If employees cannot crew when the service needs it we will shut them down! What is easier to explain to local communities, do they know that their pumps are not crewed? It's easy to explain that when I close them'.

*There have been failings in management for many years regarding pump availability and crewing levels yet the service have allowed this to become common place and not addressed issues that arose in an efficient early manner. Now HFRS are penalising **ALL** RDS staff for the services continued failings. When a private sector company fails in its duties the buck stops with its director!*



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- Phased Alerting will bring an additional worry to the RDS employee. Currently some employees have been upgraded in their hours available for cover and some have been downgraded into lower bands according to the services proposed banded retainer scheme. If the service brings Phased Alerting into the equation as they intend then it is obvious that even more hours can be shaved off an employee's availability thus a further drop in retainer pay and banding will be unavoidable. The example is that on a one pump station consisting of 14 employees the 14 members of crew could be split into two crews of seven with one crew on call and the other crew not required on call. Instantly there is a cost reduction of 50% for the second crew as they are not required on call. Calculate this over a 17 week period and employees bandings will reduce significantly.

#### Food For Thought:

HFRS want the new banded retainer system in place by February 2011 along with new contracts and they are insistent that it will happen regardless. Members should also think about other factors that will affect employee's finances come 2011 such as the increase to 20% VAT and no pay rise for three years, projected pension increases alongside the reduction of family support and the overall cost increases in everyday items such as food and fuel. All UK residents will feel the pain of increased purchase costs but all RDS will have less to spend should this action by HFRS be agreed!

The FBU try to ensure that workers, however employed by the service have safe and fair conditions of employment and pay. The FBU try to ensure that members can improve their work lifestyle and lead a richer and fuller life. The FBU's aim is to serve its members by winning for them the best possible conditions and to serve the community by encouraging its members to be skilled at their craft. The Hampshire FBU is not in the business of continually battling the service and opposing all HFRS actions for the sake of it, however when the service tries to implement policies and procedures without negotiation with the appropriate RB's and affect the pay and conditions below the national standard then it would be remiss of the FBU not to oppose it. The actions of the RDS employee by way of responding to the service letter on banded retaining payments will be felt for many years to come.

Just Say No.....

Yours Sincerely

Bryan Stanislas

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