



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

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**CIRCULAR 2010HOC0638MW**

8<sup>th</sup> October 2010

**TO: ALL MEMBERS**

Dear Brother/Sister,

**Hutton Report on Public Sector Pensions: Work Longer; Pay More; Get Less**

Members and officials will be aware that the interim report from John Hutton on Public Sector Pensions was released on 7 October 2010.

The final report is expected in spring 2011 and it will make recommendations to Government on the future funding and benefit structures for Public Sector pensions.

The FBU responded to the early call to submit evidence to the Commission from John Hutton on the Pension Schemes in the Fire Service, which included the 1992 Firefighters Pension Scheme, the 2006 New Firefighters Pension Scheme and the New Look Local Government Pension Scheme.

The interim report indicates that there will be recommendations to address issues both in the short term and the long term. In the short term, John Hutton suggests that increasing employee contributions and changing pension benefit structures may be areas to consider; while in the long-term he may be making recommendations to replace Final Salary Schemes with Career Average Schemes and raising the retirement age.

The FBU was aware that these areas would be considered and our submission reflected the specific nature of a firefighter's role and the recent reforms in the FPS and the introduction of the NFPS and New Look LGPS. You will be aware that these reforms were designed to ensure that Pension Schemes in the Fire Service remained affordable, sustainable and fair. These are all outlined by John Hutton as his objectives for the future Public Sector Pensions.

With the release of the interim review the media hype was obvious, and various stories suggested that Public Sector Pensions were spiralling out of control, were unaffordable, were an unfair burden on taxpayers and needed to be dramatically reformed. These stories were repeated continuously throughout the day.

FBU officials and members gave a great account of themselves, whenever they got the opportunity, in an attempt to restore some sort of reality to these over exaggerated claims. The FBU press release highlighted that firefighters pay up to 11% of their salary into their

Pension Schemes and that they had already undergone reforms to ensure that they would be affordable, sustainable and fair for the future.

The FBU is the only organisation that represents firefighters working all duty systems and in all workplaces with members ranging from firefighters working in Fire Controls to Chief Fire Officers and is the only union in the Fire Service with a proven record of defending pensions.

Many media stories claimed that strikes are inevitable in an attempt to provoke a reaction from the FBU. Members need to recognise that this is an interim report and that the FBU will be corresponding with John Hutton and raising our concerns and providing any evidence to show that the Firefighters Pension Schemes have been reformed and are already sustainable, affordable and fair.

Media myths about the cost of Public Sector Pensions are commonplace and you will find a myth buster document attached. This briefing document is designed to highlight some reforms/attacks that have already taken place and to give you some ideas of responses you may wish to use when these myths are peddled.

There is no doubt that this is a worrying time for FBU members and Branch meetings will need to be arranged to discuss issues as they develop. However, you can be assured that the FBU will continue to defend the Pension Schemes of its members, and will continue to campaign to defend quality Public Sector Pensions.

The FBU will continue to raise objections whenever and wherever there is an attack on its members Pension Schemes and will be seeking further meetings with John Hutton to discuss the issues he has raised within this interim report.

Members should not be embarrassed that they have a quality Pension Scheme and should use the myth buster to educate people. The final report by John Hutton with his recommendations will be out in spring 2011 and although we will not rule out industrial action to defend our pensions it is important that we get a clearer picture before any decisions are taken.

The Hutton report marks another step in the long term attack on Public Sector Pensions. We will need to ensure that all members have discussed these and future proposals so as to ensure we are prepared to defend our pensions along with colleagues in other unions.

Yours in unity,



**MATT WRACK**  
General Secretary



Myth Busters about  
the Firefighters Pensi

Attachment

SS/EMH