SIPTU

SERVICES INDUSTRIAL PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL UNION

23rd February 2024

Mr. Eamonn Hunt,
Assistant Chief Executive,
LGMA,
Local Government House,
35-39 Ushers Quay,
Dublin 8,
D08 H56R.

Der Mr. Hunt,

I refer to our meeting on February 8th in respect of the Implementation of the 2023 WRC agreement for the Retained Fire Service. I would be obliged if you would confirm that the content below are an accurate account of the outcome of the meeting.

1. Payment of arrears

It was agreed that the union will submit a list of counties where arrears are not paid and /or where payslip information is outstanding.

2. Recruitment

SIPTU noted that recruitment at local level was ranging from good in some places to lacklustre in a number of locations. It was agreed that problematic areas would be specifically identified for the LGMA by the unions so they could be given the necessary support to progress recruitment.

It was agreed that the management side would share the developments of the national committee looking at recruitment at the next meeting on March 13th, including any developments on the distance/turn out times.

3. Recruits,

It was accepted by the meeting that recruits are entitled to avail of the week on/off roster – where it exists - and that no pressure, subtle or otherwise should be put on recruits in this regard.

It was also accepted that recruits should be supported in their training and that it was not acceptable for there to be reimbursement delays associated with the cost of training. 2 specific examples were identified and a commitment was given to resolve these and are SIPTU to provide detailed information.

4. Command Structure

It was noted that the LGMA position on the command structure is that there should be 4 incident commanders in each station. This must include 1 station officer, 1 sub officer and 2 others either at Sub Officer or D/M. The breakdown of the additional 2 should be agreed locally and it was confirmed that the post of senior sub officer does not exist.

5. Rosters

SIPTU noted that week on/off rosters were up and running in a number of locations and a variation on same was working in locations where they are still building their numbers. SIPTU protested that there were unnecessary blockages in some locations with some senior officers refusing to agree or cooperate with what is being agreed locally. The management side were clear that neither the staff side nor management may veto this process or delay it – subject to workable proposal where the station numbers are below 12. It was also agreed that recruits should be added to the roster in the normal way.

6. Cover arrangements for leave

The management side clarified that cover for annual leave should be provided on the roster that cover for sick leave should be agreed locally. If the station/crew number are depleted below safe levels because of sick leave and cover is not available, the station will come off the run. There are no additional payments to be made for the provision of cover.

7. Fortnightly pay

Management confirmed that the change to fortnightly pay was more technically challenging than had been anticipated. Quarter 3 is the realistic target for the completion of all station to fortnightly pay but if any county wants to expedite the change, SIPTU can send this list to the LGMA and they will prioritise those locations. Management are fully committed to the standardisation of pay across all fire services, including that all firefighters to be paid fortnightly.

8. Community hours

It was agreed that these are additional hours that arise from the WRC agreement that identifies the monies from these hours as additional income should a firefighter choose to avail of the additional hours of community work.

9. Phase 2 retainer payment

The LGMA and the Department will revert to DEPR to clarify their capacity to engage with SIPTU on this issue while the ballot on the public service agreement proposals are underway and will revert to the union.

Regards,

Karan O Loughlin
Divisional Organiser
PAC Division
SIPTU