

National industrial action SIPTU retained fire fighters

SIPTU have advised local authorities of the intention of Retained firefighter members to escalate industrial actions from 13th of June with rolling strikes to an average of 50% of Retained Fire stations and ultimately all out strikes commencing from the 20th of June.

This is a concerning escalation by SIPTU, however, as part of the normal industrial relations protocol of agreeing contingency plans, each local authority have engaged with SIPTU at local level to establish robust contingency arrangements. Local authorities wish to assure the public that every effort will be made to mitigate any risk to them arising from any industrial action protecting communities to the maximum extent possible during the dispute.

Members of the public should continue to call 999 or 112 in the case of an emergency; calls will be answered and responded to.

SIPTU have confirmed that throughout the strike action it will comply with the provisions of the Code of Practice on emergency disputes reflecting the professionalism and dedication of its retained fire service personnel to ensure that fire services are provided even in a strike situation and has confirmed that retained fire services will respond to all emergency calls involving life-threatening situations.

Fire Service Management initiated a negotiation process with SIPTU and agreed to the appointment of a Third-Party facilitator to shape a proposal that could be agreed by management and staff representatives. This led to a significant offer by Fire Service Management which would lead to an increase in fire service numbers allowing for greater levels of structured time off.

SIPTU then advised that in addition to the increase in numbers they would also require a significant increase in existing pay, however Management advised that the current national pay agreement, Building Momentum, means it cannot consider sectoral or grade-based pay and conditions claims during the lifetime of the agreement. Management remains available to continue the engagement through the mediator as its position would always be for constructive engagement with all stakeholders on any pay dispute.

The proposed escalation of industrial action is of major concern to local authorities, and we would call on SIPTU to reconsider and reengage in the mediation process.

ENDS