

Mr. L. Skarratts
Brigade Secretary
Fire Brigades Union
C/o The Peoples Centre
50-54 Mount Pleasant
LIVERPOOL L3 5UN

Glynis Lomax
TRM Manager
Merseyside Fire Service
Service Headquarters
Bridle Road
Bootle
Merseyside
L30 4YD

Telephone: **0151 296 4303**
Fax:

Email:
glynislomax@merseyfire.gov.uk

Our Ref:

MC/GL

Date: 13th May 2011

Dear Mr. Skarratts,

GM/SM Reductions

Thank you for your letter of the 26 May 2011 regarding the above matter.

For the sake of convenience I will address the issues in the same sequence set out in your letter.

1. I understand that the occurrence of major incidents and the impact that this might have with respect to the proposals to reduce the number of GM/SM is dealt with in the risk assessment that supports this proposal. I can also advise you that the risk assessment that was originally sent to you when consultation was initiated has now been updated following dialogue with FOA. Could I therefore request that you review this document as the new content may impact on the various questions you have raised in your letter pertaining to the risk assessment? I have therefore enclosed a copy of the revised risk assessment for your consideration.
2. You state that the FBU was not involved in previous consultations/negotiations regarding the historical reduction in GM/SM numbers to their current levels. As I was not involved in this process I can not offer any insight as to what did or did not occur and I do not propose to conduct an autopsy of the alleged failings of previous consultations. I would prefer to focus on the current proposal to reduce to GM/SM to a level of 8 and 16 respectively, which falls within the terms of reference of this consultation exercise and I would respectfully suggest that this should also be the focus for the FBU if both parties are to make best use of the time available.

3. I am not sure exactly what you are asking of me in this paragraph but my assumption is that you are making a request for the documentation relating to consultation with FOA. If you could clarify your position in this respect I might be in a better position to offer assistance and explanation.
4. Your point in this regard seems to be a semantic one and it is not my intention to lose focus with regard to the key issues that are presently the subject of consultation. There are currently a number of options on the table for consideration, irrespective of how they are characterized, and I would suggest that our deliberations should address the issues that arise out of these options, not a debate on how they might be described.
5. It is a matter of choice for individuals regarding which of the 2 systems they prefer. No individual is being denied the option to work more covers if they wish as they can elect to work within the more flexible duty system. Although I note that the thrust of the FOA position is that their members do not wish to provide additional covers.
6. My view is that the proposal you refer to in this paragraph does not require employees to opt out of the Working Time Regulations, although in this respect I would defer to the greater competence of the Clerk to whom I will refer the matter for a definitive answer
7. I have enclosed a copy the mobilizing data for GM/SM which I believe will provide the FBU with the detail sought.
8. With regard to your comment regarding the risks assessment could I refer you to the comment I made in paragraph 1 of this letter
9. With regard to the matters you raise in paragraph 9 and 10 I can confirm that the staffing model upon which the Service proposal is founded provides sufficient resilience to meet the leave needs of the Service.
10. See response to paragraph 9 above.
11. Thank you for your comments in paragraph 11 which I duly note and with regard to which I will take the appropriate action.
12. I have enclosed a copy of CFO/219/05 as requested.
13. You raise a number of issues in relation to the EIA in paragraphs 13 through to 16 and I will therefore arrange a meeting with Jayne Monkhouse, as a matter of priority, to hopefully assuage your concerns.

It you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely

Glynis Lomax
Group Manager
TRM
Copies to:

SM Murphy
Mike Cummins