

Dear Colleagues,

As one of the retirees who is in scope for Immediate Detriment, I am writing to advise you of the Service's current position relating to the progression of Immediate Detriment cases.

As a reminder, the term "Immediate Detriment" covers two categories of people that have been discriminated against, and who have lost out, or will lose out, due to the way their pensions have been, or will be calculated. This involves members like yourself who are already drawing a pension; and secondly, members who will retire before the law is changed (expected October 2023).

As you are aware on October 8th 2021 an announcement was made to all Fire and Rescue Services regarding the agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding between the FBU and the Local Government Association. This was to outline how Fire Authorities could progress Immediate Detriment cases.

As the Memorandum of Understanding is not legally binding, the Service will be reporting to the Fire Authority's Staffing Committee on 8 November 2021 to explain how it intends to deal with immediate detriment. The intention is to try to do this as far as is practicable in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, and it is expected that the Committee will be supportive.

In the meantime the Service is accepting applications from individuals in your position who are already in receipt of their pension. It should be noted however, that these cannot be progressed until we have Fire Authority support and are satisfied that suitable governance arrangements are in place. At this time we also are unable to commit to the timescales proposed within the Memorandum of Understanding but will endeavour to work towards this.

Due to the complexity, coupled with the many variations in individual's circumstances, it is also important to be aware that all calculations will need to be undertaken manually. To this end the Service is in discussion with its pension provider to establish the capacity and resources available and we are seeking to understand how Immediate Detriment cases will be handled with absolute accuracy and efficiency. We are also in discussions with them about ensuring that correspondence is as clear as possible so that you are able to make informed decisions.

Please be reassured that we are working with a genuine sense of urgency on all matters relating to immediate detriment in conjunction with the FBU. With this in mind, I would ask for your patience and understanding as we work through the information and put the necessary governance arrangements in place. Further information will be provided as the situation becomes clearer, including an explanation about the process and timescales associated with it.

Please also be reassured that the Service and the FBU have committed to meeting regularly to review the situation and to work together to remove the discrimination as soon as is practically possible.

To apply to have your pension reviewed if you have not already done so, or if you have any questions, please email Jill Swift, Pensions Manager at jill.swift@cheshire.police.uk .

Yours sincerely

Andrea Harvey
Director of Transformation

