

NEWS RELEASE

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Agreement reached between the States and Airport Fire fighters

AN AGREEMENT has been reached between the States and the airport fire fighters guaranteeing no repeat of the industrial action that closed Guernsey Airport in May.

The deal has been negotiated between the fire fighters and their union Unite, the Public Sector Remuneration Committee and Public Services Department.

It brings to an end the long-running disagreement, which culminated in the walkout of fire fighters in May.

Public Sector Remuneration Committee chairman Deputy Allister Langlois said one of the aims of the new package is to ensure turnover of staff at the Airport Fire Service does not return to previous levels.

‘The financial element of the deal will be paid for through efficiency savings achieved by reducing the turnover of staff, and the fire fighters also taking on a broader role in supporting airport operations,’ he said.

Deputy Langlois said the precise terms and conditions were a matter for the employer and employee and the Public Sector Remuneration Committee has agreed with the Union Unite not to release details at this time.

Airport Director Colin Le Ray highlighted that previous arrangements had contributed to a high turnover of staff at the fire service, and it cost around £10,000 in training costs alone for each new recruit. It also took four to six months to train up a replacement fully.

Mr Le Ray said the new deal should help to address these critical issues.

‘The new conditions address the operational requirements of the airport far better, in particular the issue of retention which in recent years has seen us incur very high costs. We have also been able to clarify and strengthen arrangements in terms of providing guaranteed cover,’ he said.

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Unite regional industrial organiser Ron Le Cras said:

‘All parties have approached the negotiations with a view to putting behind them the industrial action that we saw earlier this year and work constructively towards an agreement that addresses the key issues on all sides. That co-operation has enabled us to reach agreement on a new package covering both pay and conditions, and importantly guaranteeing fire fighter cover at Guernsey Airport,’ he said.

ENDS

For further information, please contact:-

Jim Anderson
mobile 07781 108325
Jim.Anderson@gov.gg