

RETIRED MEMBERS COMMITTEE

Firstly, a belated happy new year to you all from the Retired Members committee.

As some of you will know, some time ago we joined with the National Pensioners Convention, which is an amalgamation of various retired sections of unions, combined to give pensioners a voice in matters that concern us all.

I have to be perfectly honest in that we hoped this was a step forward, and we attended annual and bi-annual conferences to voice your interests on the matters they were pursuing. Sadly, it was a bit of a fiasco. There didn't seem any clear leadership, organisation or direction in the way this organisation was heading; the infighting and disruption caused by certain members of certain unions was embarrassing and there didn't seem to be any progress for members. The way the organisation was heading it will probably be defunct during 2026.

This was discussed with the committee and the POA, and it was decided that this organisation wasn't in the best interests of us all, so we tendered our resignation.

The good news is that we were later invited to attend a function with an organisation called Later Life Ambitions (LLA). This brings together the voices of the National Federation of Occupational Pensioners, the Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance and the National Association of Retired Police Officers. It has around a quarter of a million members, and its aims are to set out in a clear plan for a fairer deal for older people, from protecting pensions to improving housing, transport and social care, outlining practical steps for living well in later life.

This organisation seems more professional and well led, and following discussions with the committee and POA, we successfully applied and joined. We will keep you up to date on the progress of this organisation.

BLUE LIGHT CARD

This saga continues. Following lengthy communications with Blue Light (BL), we came to a juncture where the main sticking point was that it was only accepting evidence that a member had served if they could produce something official that proved they were a prison officer. Many staff had retained old ID cards and, over the years, have been successful in obtaining membership by using those. But this was far from satisfactory and we needed a system that allowed staff to apply who didn't have that documentation.

Our pension statements (wage slips), unlike other organisations, do not state the role held, ie. prison officer, because it's a civil service pension. We couldn't move forward,



but I've been in touch with Shared Services, which holds our service records, and I'm asking BL if these would suffice. The only issue I can see is how long it would take to obtain the information from Shared Services. I plan to contact BL again and ask if a service record that would indicate the rank in the prison service is acceptable. In the meantime, it may be possible to get the ball rolling by contacting Shared Services: Customer Services Team on 0345 241 5351 or email MoJ-hr-enquiries@gov.sscl.com and requesting a subject access form for you records.

RETIRED MEMBERS PACKAGE

We have drawn up a package/advice for when you retire and you wish to join the Retired Members section. This can be downloaded from the POA website.

www.poauk.org.uk/our-union/retired-members

The NEC has said it will send it out to all branches and a circular will be published.

If anyone knows anybody retired or finishing for any reason, please mention it to them. In addition, the Retired Members committee is available at all times if you need to contact us for any help.

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