
BFAWU Retired Members Network September 2025

Retention of Retired Members

A lengthy discussion about how we can retain members once they reach retirement age was had and why it is important to do so.

It is clear that people either don't realise that they can keep their membership up to date when they retire, or they don't understand the benefits or reasons to keep their membership up to date when they retire as they see the union as a work thing and not a holistic membership.

How do we make sure that circular information is distributed to district branch members, where retired members are likely to be placed, especially if it is around campaigns, or attending demo's, those that may want to continue to be active, but cannot do that if they don't know what is going on, some receive Foodworkers and emails that we send out, but not all..

As they are not in Workplace branches there aren't structures in place, though we have set up WhatsApp groups to try improve communications and have a retired members WhatsApp group too that people can join.

Could we encourage more zoom meetings for district branches so members can come together for a digital branch meeting? This might encourage activism and keep retired members involved for longer.

We should do a targeted email to retired members if possible, mentioning the WhatsApp group and the Network meetings and have specific comms for retired members where we can ensure that information from organisation's like the National Pensioners Convention is circulated.

We have lots of active retired members, how do we ensure that we keep them involved and active in BFAWU campaigns.

When members come up to retirement, do branches actively seek to keep them in membership, explaining the process for that to happen and the benefit of doing so, the reduced rate of subs or the one off payment, by remaining in membership they would still have access to legal benefits and other benefits that we have with partners like Quilter, Pay Plan and UIB.

Having information for branches about the ability to stay on as a retired member would be helpful, posters for noticeboards, regular circulars reminding branch secretaries to talk to members approaching retirement and having information in branch secretary inductions would be useful to keep the subject in people's minds as well as having it as an agenda item on branch meetings.

Keeping in contact with retired members and free cards is also integral, we wrote to all retired and free card members at the beginning of 2024 to check in and whilst this may not need to be done on an annual basis, every couple of years we should be reaching out to them to check in as we have no way otherwise of knowing whether they still want to receive information or be a member.

We also need to consider those retired members who don't have access to laptops or smart phones; how do we keep them engaged if they want to be?

Having a letter for Branch Secretaries to give to members that are coming up to retirement, it can either just be photocopied or personalised via a Word document and passed onto the member coming up to retirement – this could also be placed in an induction pack for branch secretaries.

Could we add a retired members section to the BFAWU Website, which can include information on the benefits, blogs and resources from organisations such as the NPC (National Pensioners Convention) and others, this would support the information that is in workplaces and ensure that members who aren't in workplace branches can access information that is relevant to them



Keeping BFAWU history alive

The union has a lot of history, much contained in old journals from branches, districts, regions and nationally. We should keep that alive by adding relevant articles in the current Foodworker or blogs on the Website, for example the signing of the recognition agreement at Greggs, TUC Young Member conference reports etc. What we don't have though is people's history, memories of the union, things that happened just to them because of being a BFAWU member and we should explore how we capture that; retired members have a wealth of experiences of the BFAWU.

Far Right

Concerns were raised about how people are being drawn into some of the far-right rhetoric that generations before us fought so hard to push back on and that we need to ensure that we have really confident arguments, based on facts to push back against some of the strap lines and myths.