

MP TABLES BILL TO PROTECT EMERGENCY WORKERS



Private members' bill tabled in Westminster today would make it a specific offence to assault, obstruct or hinder emergency workers such as firefighters

The Union is backing the Private Members Bill tabled today by Labour MP Alan Williams which seeks to extend the protection for emergency workers which has recently come into force in Scotland. The Bill seeks to make it a specific offence to assault, obstruct or hinder emergency workers such as firefighters.

The FBU recently published research showing that attacks on UK fire crews are running at 40 a week with the problem getting worse. The research found that under-reporting suggested the figure could be as high as 120 attacks a week.

In some parts of the country, fire crews are served a daily diet of bricks, bottles and missiles as they fight fires. In other incidents ambushes have been set for firefighters.

The attacks include: scaffolding poles being thrown through windscreens of fire engines; crews being attacked with concrete blocks, bricks and bottles; being shot at; spat at; equipment tampered with or stolen; direct physical assaults on fire crews; and equipment being urinated on.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "The number and ferocity of the attacks seems to be getting worse. It can never be part of anyone's job to get a brick or bottle in the head.

"Many attacks are in deprived areas with poor youth facilities and poor housing, where bored young people turn to drugs and alcohol. But in some areas there seems to be a

culture of recreational violence where fire crews are the targets. Bill 'should complement package of measures"

"If we can't carry out our job because of violent assaults then it is our communities which are being put at risk. Fire crews will welcome this Bill which should complement a package of measures to tackle the underlying problem and we hope it gets widespread support."

The full research report has been sent to FBU branches across the UK as well as to fire authorities, MPs, representatives of the devolved parliaments, other fire service stakeholders and a range of interested parties.

Lobby of parliament : control regionalisation

As part of the ongoing campaign against the regionalisation of controls, a lobby of MPs will take place on the 6th July 2005.

A pre-lobby meeting will be held at Westminster on the 6th July in Committee Room 5, and will commence at 13.00hrs.

Members and officials should arrange to meet their MP's after 14.00hrs. This can be done by writing to your MP prior to this date or by attending Westminster and completing a 'Green Card' on the day.

The General Secretary will address the pre-lobby meeting at 13.00hrs and it is envisaged that MPs will also attend this meeting.

Brigade secretaries should contact the office of John McGhee with information on those attending in order that we can co-ordinate and monitor numbers.

Brigade Secretaries should co-ordinate the lobby from their brigade.

Over 100 MPs have signed Early Day Motion 229, EDM 229: Risks Associated with Regional Emergency Fire Control, which calls for a full independent assessment of the final business case before this project proceeds, and an amendment calling for the project to be scrapped.

West Mids TAP

The Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) has recommended changes to the proposals on modifying shift patterns put forward by West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service. The recommendations, made at a meeting on 14 June, will now be put to FBU members in the brigade. The Union has commenced a round of 25 meetings with members and the members' decision will be communicated to the TAP on June 29. If FBU members accept the recommendations then they will form the basis of a collective agreement with the fire authority.

Coalition urges action on pensions

An alliance calling on the government to deliver radical solutions to the pensions crisis has been backed by trade unionists,

pressure groups that represent the elderly and consumer organisations.

The People's Pensions Coalition said Britain was stoking up a pensions crisis "with governments of all parties and employers retreating from providing a decent income in retirement".

The coalition, which is backed by the Trades Union Congress; Which? the consumer organisation; Help the Aged; and Age Concern, said most people could not "afford to save for a pension and even those that can aren't saving enough". It said workers should have more choice about when and how they retired and that everyone in retirement "should be able to count on pension provision from the state that lifts pensioners above the poverty line".

Source: www.ft.com

Cabinet Secretary retiring at 60 (on £100k+) urges retirement age of 65

The civil service has to adjust to the fact that the pension age is going to rise from 60 to 65, Sir Andrew Turnbull, outgoing cabinet secretary, said yesterday. Sir Andrew, who will retire in July aged 60 on a pension worth, at the least, just under half his £220,000-a-year salary, said one of his biggest regrets was that "we still haven't got over the argument that moving the pension age up to 65 is just life. We just have to face up to it".

Source: www.ft.com

25 year badge photos for Firefighter magazine

Members are reminded to send your photographic prints or digital picture files to: Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE, or firefighter@fbu.org.uk.

Please note that inkjet prints from digital pictures reproduce very poorly. Please include FULL DETAILS for every picture - full names of everyone who is in it, their station/watch etch; where they are in the photo (eg left, right); their union posts/branch if relevant. And where and when it was taken.

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