



The Fire Brigades Union

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To: ALL MEMBERS

Dear Brother/Sister,

CONSERVATIVE PARTY MANIFESTO: FURTHER ATTACKS ON WORKERS' RIGHTS

The Conservative Party manifesto was published today, and as expected, they have set out their plans for further restrictions on trade unions. The manifesto states:

We will protect you from disruptive and undemocratic strike action.

Strikes should only ever be the result of a clear, positive decision based on a ballot in which at least half the workforce has voted. This turnout threshold will be an important and fair step to rebalance the interests of employers, employees, the public and the rights of trade unions. We will, in addition, tackle the disproportionate impact of strikes in essential public services by introducing a tougher threshold in health, education, fire and transport.

Industrial action in these essential services would require the support of at least 40 per cent of all those entitled to take part in strike ballots - as well as a majority of those who actually turn out to vote. We will also repeal nonsensical restrictions banning employers from hiring agency staff to provide essential cover during strikes; and ensure strikes cannot be called on the basis of ballots conducted years before. We will tackle intimidation of non-striking workers; legislate to ensure trade unions use a transparent opt-in process for union subscriptions; tighten the rules around taxpayer-funded paid 'facility time' for union representatives; and reform the role of the Certification Officer.

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Members should be aware this is a direct attack on the Fire Brigades Union, including naming our sector as one of those targeted for particular assault. It clearly demonstrates their intention to attack anyone who stands up for their rights.

These measures are a direct response to our national campaign to defend our pensions - including through industrial action - as well as the various local campaigns which we have undertaken against cuts and other attacks on conditions. Although FBU members have consistently exercised their democratic right to strike and exceed these balloting thresholds, it is clear that the Conservative Party wants to encourage the use of strike breakers, restrict our right to picket, cut our facility time and hamper our efforts to collect members' subscriptions. It should be clear to all that the only reason these measures are proposed is because further attacks on jobs, pay and conditions of service are planned in the event of a Tory government. They seek to weaken and undermine any opposition to further attacks on the fire service or other public services.

FBU members will not be intimidated by these threats. But the promises in this manifesto underline the importance of voting in this election and the need to prepare ourselves as a union for the next government.

Yours fraternally

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack', with a stylized, cursive script.

MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY

MW/DG/jh