



Circular: 2015HOC0509MW

TO: ALL MEMBERS

14 September 2015

Dear Brother/Sister

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS: AN ATTACK ON THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

On Friday 11 September, the Home Office, DCLG and the Department of Health launched a consultation on “Enabling closer working between the emergency services”. This represents a grave threat to the Fire and Rescue Service and to firefighters in particular.

The measures proposed include:

- A new statutory duty on all three emergency services to collaborate to make “efficiencies”.
- Enabling Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to take on the responsibilities of Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs), where a local case is made.
- Allowing PCCs to create a single employer for Police and Fire staff to share back office functions and streamline management.
- Enabling a PCC to be represented on the local FRA in areas where they do not take on the responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services.
- Abolishing the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and giving the Mayor of London total responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service in London.
- Allow PCCs to sit on the council of governors for NHS ambulance foundation trusts.

Police and Crime Commissioners do not have the mandate, expertise and legitimacy to govern the Fire and Rescue Service. Putting PCCs in charge would abolish local Fire Authorities currently made up of democratically elected Councillors and replace them with unelected quangos packed with cronies.

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Threat to Pay and Conditions

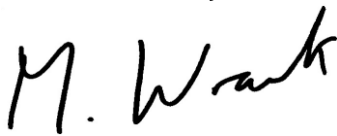
The proposals could take firefighters, emergency fire control staff and fire support staff out of national pay and conditions, pensions and other current arrangements, leading to worse conditions for all. These moves will worsen the service provided to the public and prepare the ground for wholesale privatisation of the Fire and Rescue Service.

The proposals will compromise the independence of humanitarian services such as the Fire and Rescue Service and the Ambulance Service, while undermining community engagement. They are an attack on independent trade unionism and the FBU in particular. The police are barred from forming a trade union and from taking industrial action.

The Government's consultation is open until 23 October. The Executive Council will strongly oppose the Government's proposals. We will produce material for members explaining why this is such a serious attack and how it can be resisted. We will launch a political campaign, working with others in the sector, to persuade politicians at national, local and devolved level of our case against this takeover.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack'.

MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY

MW/sll