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TO: ALL MEMBERS (SCOTLAND)

Dear Brother/Sister

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – conditions of service issues

It is now more than four years since the creation of the single Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). This was done by the merging of the previous eight local authority fire and rescue services. However, despite the passing of four years, there remain a significant number of matters which have not been resolved. These include significant matters affecting the contracts of employment and terms and conditions of members of the FBU in the SFRS.

The FBU played a part in the discussions which led to the creation of the single service. The union was aware of the financial pressures on all fire and rescue services across the UK at that time. The FBU was clear that the creation of a single service should not be used to reduce standards or to cut jobs across Scotland. The union was also very clear that there would be significant costs associated with the creation of the single service and that the Scottish government would have to provide the necessary funding in order to meet these costs.

One of the most significant areas of such cost relates to the terms and conditions of those working within the SFRS. As you will be aware, the previous eight services had quite different policies relating to ARAs, allowances etc. there were also different rates of CPD operating across Scotland.

The expectation of the union was that these matters would be addressed quickly and that any funding necessary to equalise terms and conditions would be met within the Scottish government budget settlement for the new service. Such costs are an inevitable result of the political decision to merge the services.

It is therefore extremely concerning and disappointing that more than four years after the creation of the single service, these issues have still not been resolved. FBU members in different parts of Scotland continue to be on different terms and conditions to their colleagues elsewhere. In other words, people are being paid differently by the employer for doing the same job. This is unacceptable and the FBU has made it clear that this cannot be allowed to continue.

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Discussions attempting to resolve these issues have been underway for a considerable time; so far without success. An obvious matter of concern to the employees' side National Joint Council (NJC) is the failure to address the issue of CPD. In other services in the UK, there is a single rate of CPD (with adjustment for RDS members) and these rates are published by the NJC each year; the SFRS is an exception, where eight legacy, different CPD rates still exist and are paid to our members in the single service.

As a result of this position, we wrote recently to the Chair of the Board for the SFRS setting out our position. We explained that we had expected these matters to be resolved much sooner and that the delay was unacceptable. We had expected transitional costs to have been met by central funding from the Scottish government. It has now become clear through protracted negotiations, that insufficient transitional funding was provided.

We set out our concerns that we have witnessed a significant loss of jobs and the closure of emergency fire controls but the steps necessary to address the concerns of our members on terms and conditions have not been taken. We explained that the FBU would expect the SFRS to address the following as a matter of urgency and that these issues should be addressed in the first instance:

- The equalisation of CPD to all eligible Scottish firefighters at the highest rate currently paid.
- The equalisation of ARAs at the highest rate currently paid.
- Where ARAs are currently paid for particular skills or roles, they should be paid to all firefighters undertaking the same role or providing the same skill – at the highest rate currently paid.
- Any legacy allowance paid should be provided to all firefighters providing the same function or role – at the highest rate currently paid.

Four years on we fully understand members' anger and frustration at the failure of SFRS to resolve these issues. We are currently setting up further discussion with the SFERS to discuss these matters and further reports and updates on any progress achieved will follow.

Yours fraternally.



Matt Wrack
General Secretary

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