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Circular: **2020HOC0599MW**

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TO: **ALL MEMBERS**

Dear Brother / Sister

LOBBY YOUR MP – DEMAND FUNDING FOR THE FRONTLINE

Today we have launched #FundTheFrontline, a UK-wide FBU campaign for urgent investment in the fire and rescue service.

The fire and rescue service across the UK is the primary rescue service facing multiple existing and emerging hazards. Our service has played a key role during the COVID-19 pandemic. Firefighters have intervened on more than 400,000 occasions, delivering PPE and other essential items, undertaking body removal and assisting ambulance teams; in total there have so far been 14 additional areas of activity related to the pandemic.

The work we are undertaking during the pandemic is vital and highlights the expanding role and life-saving expertise which 21st century firefighters deliver for their communities.

The Westminster government's own national risk register identifies a range of emergencies that firefighters are major responders to. Whether it be tackling fires, increasing numbers of non-fire incidents, an intensifying climate crisis causing devastating floods and wildfires, the threat posed by terrorism and pandemics, the ever-present danger of major industrial or transport accidents, or the growing building safety crisis exposed by Grenfell, firefighters and firefighters control have proved themselves to be an invaluable 24/7, 365-day-a-year life saving service.

However, unprecedented cuts have left the UK with 11,600 fewer firefighters than in 2010. This equates to 20% of the entire firefighter workforce. We have seen the closure of over a third of emergency fire control rooms, 80 fire stations, and have witnessed huge cuts to numbers of fire appliances. This underfunding has also meant sustained attacks on our pay and conditions.

During any time, these levels of cuts would be dangerous, but when it is clear that the risks to the public are growing and changing - it is reckless.

Firefighters and emergency control room staff represent an irreplaceable component of critical UK-wide infrastructure. But they cannot be continued to be denied the resources required to perform this vital role. Preparing for short, medium and long-term risks cannot be done on the cheap.

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This is why we are running the #FundTheFrontline campaign, asking FBU members and supporters to lobby their MP and demand that Chancellor Rishi Sunak use his upcoming spending review to urgently invest in our service, including the immediate recruitment of at least 5,000 additional frontline firefighters in the next year.

Whilst responsibility for fire and rescue services is a devolved matter, each is still dependent on funding allocations from Westminster. This is why we are asking members and supporters in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to lobby their Westminster MP at this time.

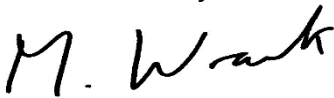
The risks to the public are growing and our fire and rescue services must be resourced accordingly. This is vital to protect our service and to deliver decent pay for the service.

Our ability to tackle intensifying flooding and wildfires caused by climate change, the growing building safety crisis, or deadly pandemics will be undermined without more resources and frontline firefighters.

Please visit our #FundTheFrontline webpage to find out more about the campaign and send a message to your local MP.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally

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

MATT WRACK
General Secretary

MW/jh