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To: **All Members**

Dear Brother/Sister,

FBU concerns about evacuation guidelines and research

Earlier this month, the Home Office published high rise evacuation guidelines for fire and rescue services. The FBU believes this guidance is too little and too late. The evacuation guidelines are here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evacuation-guidelines-for-fire-and-rescue-services-frs>

In October 2019, the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report made one recommendation to the Westminster government, which was to produce evacuation guidelines for high rise buildings. It has taken the Home Office more than four years to publish its response, which consists of just nine common sense truisms.

Members will be aware that firefighters have faced criticism over evacuation. Yet a trial in May 2022 found that it could take nearly half an hour to evacuate a ten-storey building with one stairway – even when the ‘residents’ are awake and aware it is an exercise. Real life presents many more challenges.

The Home Office does not clarify how many firefighters and what equipment are necessary to ensure a swift evacuation. Instead they have once again passed responsibility to the NFCC. Sadly, the NFCC have already produced some flawed guidance of their own, including the ‘waking watches’ that residents have quite rightly been unhappy with.

The FBU has therefore written to the Home Secretary explaining our criticisms. The letter is attached. Members should raise the matter with principal managers in their own brigades.

Yours in unity,

Matt Wrack
General Secretary

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