



RECORD OF DECISIONS 2023

Fire Brigades Union
94th Conference, Blackpool
10th, 11th and 12th May 2023



RECORD OF DECISIONS 2023

FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENTS

EC 1. FIREFIGHTER PAY: BUILDING ON OUR CAMPAIGN: BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

(AS AMENDED BY HEREFORD AND WORCESTER)

Since Conference in May 2022, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has conducted a vigorous and sustained pay campaign. The campaign has made significant progress, but much remains to be accomplished. This Executive Council (EC) statement summarises the campaign and sets out the tasks ahead.

The Executive Council congratulates FBU members for the determination and unity shown throughout the past year during our campaigning on pay. It is notable that the Fire Brigades Union is the only organisation which has conducted a consistent and determined campaign for improvements in fire service pay.

KEY STEPS IN THE PAY CAMPAIGN

The key dates and events of the pay campaign were:

- On 31 May 2022, the FBU wrote to the national employers in the National Joint Council (NJC) submitting the union's pay claim. On 1 June, FBU officials put the union's pay claim directly to the employers' representatives at the NJC and the Middle Managers Negotiating Board (MMNB) meetings. We informed the employers that firefighters and firefighters (Control) are vital emergency service workers who served on the frontline throughout the entire Covid period. During this period, our members provided additional services to communities and undertook additional areas of work, with the agreement of the union, to help the country through one of the worst crises in living memory
- Despite this, on 27 June, fire service employers wrote to the FBU with a firefighters' pay offer of 2% on basic pay rates and Continual Professional Development (CPD). The FBU described this offer as an 'insult'. During July, the union held extensive consultation with members on the offer. On 19 July, after receiving report backs of the consultation, the Executive Council rejected the 2% offer and argued for the need to prepare for strike action
- On 2 August the NJC employers' side chair sent letters to the Home Secretary and other relevant ministers in other parts of the UK, arguing for funding on pay
- Throughout August and September 2022, the FBU ran a substantial campaign of membership engagement, branch meetings and mass meetings. Entitled 'Fair Pay or Fire Strike' the campaign publicly displayed the anger of FBU members at the 2% pay insult and the determination to move to strike action in the fight for fair pay
- On 2 September, with no further offers from the employers, the EC accelerated preparations to ballot members for strike action. The FBU held a programme of in person and online briefing meetings over the following month, engaging thousands of members and achieving an unprecedented uptake in membership email registration and updated details
- On 4 October, fire employers made a revised pay offer of a 5% increase on all basic pay rates including CPD. On 6 October, the EC recommended rejection of the revised offer and organised a further round of in person and online briefing meetings

- On 31 October, the FBU launched a consultative ballot of members on the employers' proposal for a 5% increase. On 16 November, the FBU published the consultative ballot results – the offer was rejected by 79% on a 78% turn out
- On 5 December, the FBU commenced a national ballot for strike action, with additional briefings, membership communications and resources. On 6 December, the FBU held a successful pay rally and lobby of the Westminster parliament. On 23 December, the FBU negotiated a major incidents agreement with the employers in the event of strike action
- On 12 January 2023, the London Fire Commissioner wrote to London members with a separate pay offer. This was for a 2022-23 increase of 6% on basic pay, backdated to 1 July 2022 and a 2023-24 additional increase of 5% on basic pay from 1 July 2023. On 13 January, the Executive Council insisted that all pay offers should be made through the NJC and apply to all members. The Executive Council gave the employers a 10 day window after the strike ballot closed to make another offer
- On 30 January, the FBU announced the strike ballot results:
 - o England, Scotland and Wales, 88% voted YES on a 73% turnout
 - o Northern Ireland, 94% voted in favour of action on a 68% turnout
 - o In North West Fire Control, 80% voted YES on a 64% turnout.
- On 9 February, after intensive discussions at the NJC, fire employers made a revised pay proposal (detailed below) the EC agreed to hold a consultation with members on the offer
- On 10 February, after extensive discussions and following liaison with brigade, regional and sectional committees, the EC made its assessment of the offer and recommended that members accept it. This was followed by further online and in person meetings to hear members' views
- On 20 February, the revised pay offer was put to members in a consultative ballot. On 6 March the consultative ballot results were announced.

FEBRUARY 2023 PAY OFFER

On 8 February 2023, fire employers made the following offer through the NJC.

Following the joint discussions earlier today, the National Employers have agreed to make the following offer:

- A 7% increase on all basic pay rates and Continual Professional Development payments with effect from 1 July 2022
- A 5% increase on all basic pay rates and Continual Professional Development payments with effect from 1 July 2023.

In addition, the employers' side of the NJC is committed to explore the additional points which were raised in your pay claim. Given the complexity of the issues, the following approaches are proposed:

- Retained Duty System firefighters: Firefighters employed on the retained duty system are an important part of the workforce. It is proposed that both parties commit to a joint working group to include review of the retained duty system pay and rewards package. Membership of the group and a schedule of dates should be agreed as soon as possible once the current pay award negotiations are concluded with the intention of the joint working group concluding its work within 8 months
- Firefighters (Control): The employers' side of the NJC recognises the important contribution of emergency fire and rescue control employees. To inform NJC consideration on the matter of the pay differential it is proposed that a joint job evaluation process be undertaken as soon as possible once the current pay award negotiations are concluded

- Pay progression: The employers' side of the NJC is content to continue discussions around pay structure and progression. It is proposed that both parties commit to a joint working party commencing as soon as possible once the current pay award negotiations are concluded with the intention of the joint working party concluding its work within 8 months
- New roles: The employers' side of the NJC also remains committed to developing the work of the fire and rescue service and to do so by agreement. It also recognises the need for this to be supported by appropriate investment as well as employee reward
- Continual Professional Development: The employers' side notes the issues raised in the claim and is open to exploring further. Given the overlap with the pay progression point, it is proposed that consideration be incorporated into that proposed working party
- Progress reports would be made on each point above to the June meeting of the NJC
- During our lengthy discussions throughout this process, we have explained that this offer reaches the very limit of what we can do, and it is made with the hope that it forms the basis of an agreement between the two sides.

NEXT STEPS IN THE PAY CAMPAIGN

Conference endorses the strategy and tactics deployed by the Executive Council and commits to continuing the pay campaign in the immediate period ahead. The decision of members for 2022 and 2023 does not conclude our campaign on pay. There remains much to do to deliver professional pay in the fire and rescue service and to restore ground lost during the years of austerity.

Conference mandates the Executive Council to continue the pay campaign through:

1. A review of the campaign undertaken to identify where the campaign brought about successes, but also where the union can learn and improve.
2. EC working groups, including support from the relevant sectional committees, progressing the additional pay issues, including control, retained, CPD, pay progression and the future role of, and demands on, the fire and rescue service.
3. A new and updated analysis of all aspects of firefighters' pay, including different measures of inflation and relative to other sectors.
4. A major campaign for investment in UK fire and rescue services, to improve the service to the public and secure long term improvements in pay for firefighters.
5. Campaigning to defend UK wide collective bargaining and the National Joint Council and opposition to the imposition of a pay review body.
6. Immediately beginning preparations for our claims on pay for 2024.

EC 2. THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY IN THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

(AS AMENDED BY HEREFORD AND WORCESTER)

The fire and rescue service has a significant crisis of discrimination, harassment, bullying and other forms of oppression. This includes mistreatment of significant sections of the workforce. This Executive Council (EC) statement is intended to call ministers, fire employers, chief fire officers and principal managers to account for these failures. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and its members will also put our own house in order. The union is committed to an immediate and fundamental change in how matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion are addressed in the fire and rescue service.

FBU CURRENT POSITION

The FBU has a long history fighting for equalities, including fighting for equal pay for men and women in the same roles, fighting the 'colour bar' and demands for equal opportunities. The Executive Council formed an Equal Opportunities Committee in 1986 and launched its first equal opportunities policy booklet the following year. This has included organising our NWC, B&EMM and LGBT+ sections to ensure better representation and voice for members.

The FBU's Rule Book (2022) is clear:

A2(3) To secure that the numbers of uniformed employees of fire brigades, members of the Union and appropriate post holders within the Union, are as far as reasonably practicable, representative of diversity in regards to our society.

A2(8) To support and promote working class unity through the Trade Union and Labour movement and therefore to oppose all forms of discrimination whether on the grounds of race, creed, sex, sexual orientation or otherwise.

B3 (3) It shall be the duty of every member to treat others with dignity and respect and to challenge offensive behaviour of any kind.

G1 (1) A member of the Union commits a disciplinary offence if that member: (iv) Discriminates against, harasses or bullies another whether on the grounds of race, creed, sex, sexual orientation or otherwise.

The FBU's All Different All Equal policy (2022) states:

Discriminating against individuals, harassing or bullying them because of their disability, age, race or sex, because they are gay or lesbian, because you think they are attractive or unattractive, because they have an accent, or a different religion, political opinion in Northern Ireland or because you simply just do not like them, is not acceptable behaviour. It is the politics of the playground, which have no place in a modern, professional fire service and no place in the Fire Brigades Union. Employers are also legally responsible for preventing discrimination, harassment and bullying behaviour. It is in their interest to make it clear to everyone that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

The National Joint Council (NJC) Grey Book states:

Section 2.1. The NJC expects fire and rescue authorities to set out and communicate the principles and strategies that are fundamental to developing an organisation which values all.

These should encourage continuous improvement to identify and implement best practice.

In this context, the NJC strongly encourages fire and rescue authorities to:

- a) develop equal opportunities and work/life balance in employment;*
- b) ensure that equality is a core principle that underpins service delivery, training and development opportunities and employment relations;*
- c) remove all unlawful discrimination; and*
- d) take a positive approach to the development of a diverse workforce.*

1.

In 2015, the NJC established the Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG). It consists of the FBU, fire service employers and chief fire officers. The IFSG has gathered evidence of the situation, published comprehensive reports and set standards. In 2017, the FBU and fire service employers signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing the fire service to take action to create a more inclusive workforce and culture.

The IFSG delivered the only sector wide developed equality, diversity and inclusion recommendations. However these have been largely ignored by chief fire officers and the inspectorate in England, even though they relate directly to the issues fire and rescue services face now.

In 2022, FBU conference passed further policies to tackle misogyny, homophobia and racism. Conference agreed an EC statement against sexual harassment and established a working group to tackle the issues. The FBU's equality sections have huge experience tackling all areas of discrimination, supporting members and fighting for equality.

LONDON CULTURE REVIEW

On 25 November 2022, the London Fire Brigade (LFB) published the Independent Culture Review report, carried out by Nazir Afzal and his team. It took evidence from more than 2,000 current and former staff and the public. The report found that LFB is "institutionally misogynist and racist", as well as evidence of homophobia and disability discrimination.

The Executive Council initial response stated that the union was "saddened and angered to read the details of incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment highlighted in the London Fire Brigade independent culture review". The FBU said:

The behaviour and attitudes towards women; Black, Asian and minority ethnic; LGBT+; and neurologically diverse staff, reported within it, have no place in the fire and rescue service, the Fire Brigades Union or in society as a whole...

The Executive Council stands in full solidarity with our equality section members. Racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and related discriminatory behaviour, bullying and harassment will not be tolerated by the Fire Brigades Union.

Following this report, there were various press reports of incidents of harassment and discrimination in various fire and rescue services across the UK. The FBU will not sit on the fence in the face of such allegations. We are on the side of members who experience any kind of discrimination. We are against those who perpetrate such behaviours, even if they are members of our union. Such behaviour is contrary to the principles, rules and practices of our union and may be grounds for exclusion from the FBU.

GOVERNMENT FAILURE

The Westminster government and its ministers carry heavy responsibility for failures on equalities in recent years. The 2010 Cameron government scrapped equality targets. It also cut central funding, hampering new recruitment. Successive governments gave no priority to equalities within public services, provided no new legislation or guidance.

Fire employers and chief fire officers also bear responsibility for these failures. They have implemented the agenda of governments, failing to fight for the policies needed to tackle inequality. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has done very little in the realm of equalities, providing a dented shield for ministers and senior civil servants instead of consulting with the FBU and driving change.

HMICFRS, the fire inspectorate in England since 2017, has also failed. Although it has carried out local inspections examining equality, diversity and inclusion, it has mostly given individual fire and rescue services and chief fire officers a clean bill of health. In some cases, this has happened not long before a major equality scandal has emerged.

THE FBU RESPONSE

Conference believes that the best mechanism to advance the equalities agenda is through collective bargaining. This means the NJC's IFSG must be central to negotiations about new regulations, standards and guidance. It means the FBU's voice must be heard around the table with ministers, employers and chief fire officers.

Conference further believes that meaningful action on equalities requires FBU representatives to be given time off during work time specifically to carry out equalities work, undertake training, convene committees, listen to members and feed back to management. Issues of equality, diversity and inclusion must be addressed formally, systematically and regularly through agreed specific structures established on the principles of collective bargaining. FBU reps must be negotiated and consulted with, be fully informed and given the resources to make improvements in every fire workplace across the UK.

Conference believes the FBU has to get its own house in order. The union and its members have to do better in the fight for equalities.

Conference supports the Executive Council's working group on the culture review, which includes representation from our equality sections, as the key driver of new work in this area.

Conference recognises the urgency of this work and mandates the Executive Council to:

Internal FBU

1. Adopt the Sisters to the Front General Secretary's Charter on sexual harassment and violence.
2. Develop the union's work on disability, including neurodiversity and mental health, to widen support for members facing discrimination in these areas.
3. Review our fairness and work representation and strengthen equality structures.
4. Create a more diverse union structure, including measures to increase the size and diversity of conference delegations.
5. Review regional and brigade structures to consider how they may be made more inclusive.

6. Commission an independent review of cases of Internal Union Discipline and All Different All Equal.
7. Review the processes for dealing with complaints for matters of discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
8. Continue to develop our education programmes to best be able to utilise such issues as equality impact assessments and public sector equality duty requirements.

Fire and rescue service

9. Work with our equality sections and brigade committees to identify and establish best practice standards for the fire and rescue service, against which they can be tested and measured.
10. Carry out a review of all services – inspecting every service and rating them against such equality standards.

Some in the fire and rescue service hold attitudes that are outdated, offensive and discriminatory. There are also long term failings from politicians and from chief fire officers in addressing such matters. We will not stand for this. The FBU reiterates its determination to create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all. Our values are based upon the need to build working class unity, as set out in our rule book. Diversity and equality are fantastic strengths in our workplaces, in culture and in wider society. They will be central to guiding us as we address these issues and build better workplaces and a more united and inclusive union.

EC 3. PREPARING FOR A GENERAL ELECTION (AS AMENDED BY HEREFORD AND WORCESTER)

There is likely to be a general election in 2024. While the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) prepares for this, the union cannot just simply wait for a changing of the guard. The FBU wants a government that introduces positive change for working class people. The FBU needs to take a leading role in the broader labour movement, to ensure the next Westminster government addresses political demands from our movement.

As a Labour Party affiliate, the FBU will continue to support policies that align with our members' interests (*The FBU does not use political fund money from Scotland or Northern Ireland for any party affiliation.*)

The FBU will make full use of our rights as an affiliate at national and local level to make the case for the policies agreed by conference and for candidates who will fight in the Westminster parliament for working people. The FBU will campaign for socialist policies, and will support and campaign for Labour MPs, councillors and candidates who stand for and speak out for our values and campaigns.

FIRE AND RESCUE

As the Labour Party begins the process of developing its general election manifesto, the FBU will campaign as an affiliated trade union for sector-specific commitments, including:

- Long-term and viable investment in the fire and rescue service, to restore the 11,500 jobs slashed since 2010 and restore service standards
- National standards of fire and rescue service emergency response
- A new national statutory structure for the development of policy and standards within our service, to include the voice of professional firefighters through the FBU
- Apply the lessons from the Grenfell disaster
- Ensure dedicated emergency fire controls under fire and rescue service governance.
- A public Fire and Rescue College to ensure that necessary training, research and planning is undertaken
- Reinstate separate governance arrangements for fire and rescue and police services
- Give fire and rescue services the statutory duty to respond to major floods in England, as exists elsewhere in the UK.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

The FBU will demand that workers' rights are prioritised to ensure that workplace relations are significantly altered to favour workers. Anti-worker policies have been the hallmark of successive Westminster governments. The Conservative government is pushing through the minimum service levels legislation that essentially bans effective strike action in various sectors. While the FBU is immediately building opposition to this attack, if the Bill becomes law the union demands its repeal in the first week of a future Labour government.

The FBU demands more than just the repeal of the minimum service levels legislation and the Trade Union Act 2016. All anti-trade union laws should be repealed including those that prohibit secondary action. The Labour Party's '*A New Deal for Working People*' should be implemented in full. The FBU supports legislation to introduce a positive right to strike, including the right to picket.

The FBU will continue to campaign, lobby and offer assistance to unions who are fighting for workers' rights, by for example, encouraging members to show support and solidarity at picket lines, offering our expertise and sector-specific knowledge, and promoting their disputes.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

The FBU supports the democratic public ownership of mail, rail, energy, water, broadband, banking and finance. The union opposes the creeping privatisation of the NHS. The FBU will make the case for the socialist green new deal, and for the public investment and public ownership that are necessary to deliver it.

LABOUR PARTY DEMOCRACY

As a Labour Party affiliate, the FBU supports and defends the democratic rights of Labour Party members. The FBU opposes the widespread use of bans, proscriptions, suspensions and expulsions against party members.

The FBU opposes the removal of left wing candidates from long lists and shortlists. The union supports the right of Labour Party members to select, re-select and de-select their candidate for parliament.

The FBU demands the restoration of the Labour Party whip to Jeremy Corbyn. The union demands that Labour Party members in Islington North – and in all Constituency Labour Party's – have the right to select their candidate for the general election. In Islington North that choice must include the option for Corbyn.

POLITICAL FUND BALLOT

The FBU's political work is central to achieving material gains for FBU members in the workplace.

All FBU campaigns – Fair Pay or Fire Strike, DECON, opposing the White Paper, the fight against regional controls and the defence of our pensions – involve lobbying and influencing politicians in Westminster, councils and the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

During 2024, the FBU will be required, under the anti-trade union laws, to ballot members for the continuation of our political fund. This legal requirement is a further undemocratic and burdensome interference in the rights of trade unions as voluntary and independent organisations of workers.

The Executive Council will develop a campaign to ensure that FBU members vote to maintain the political fund and continue to ensure firefighters' voices are heard.

EC 4. FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE DUTY SYSTEMS

(AS AMENDED BY HEREFORD AND WORCESTER)

Since the end of the pay dispute 2002-2004 and the changes to the Grey Book which were then introduced in relation to duty systems, Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) have periodically sought to introduce changes to the structural duty systems worked in the respective service. On a very few occasions the changes have been considered by members and their union to be 'benign', on a few other occasions the changes introduced have proven to be tolerable. In the main however, the proposed changes pursued by the employer have been motivated by spite, arrogance, disrespect for Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members and often an expression of the outright bullying nature of the advocates of the changes.

Many such proposed changes have been resisted and fought off by officials and members. In the main, the changes have not been welcomed and disgracefully have been forced through by fire and rescue services (with the support of the respective Fire and Rescue Authority) using what is known colloquially as "Section 188" which in more recent times is referred to in common parlance as "fire and rehire". In another instance, i.e. the "day crewing plus"/ "close proximity crewing" duty systems they have been imposed without the legally-required agreement of the Union under the Working Time Regulations. The Union has challenged this on a number of occasions including the successful judicial review into the failure to implement the prior judgment which found against the employer's action.

The proposed changes, whether subsequently defeated or introduced in some form, have not proven to increase overall sector productivity; nor improved service delivery; have exacerbated discontent in the sector; have often introduced difficulties for parents and those with other caring responsibilities; and as a consequence have been a disincentive to the recruitment and/or retention of women into the fire and rescue service. The unnecessary and frankly provocative attacks on FBU members are not confined only to those working the wholetime shift system. Attacks have been mounted on members working the Retained Duty System (RDS), Day-Crewing Duty System, the Flexi Duty System (FDS) and those working in offices and departments on day duties.

Conference is asked to approve a project to assess the scope of the changes, both those which have been introduced and those still being attempted by fire and rescue services and their impact. The project will include the provision of advice on how to challenge attempts to introduce change as well as advice on seeking a reversal and/or corrective alterations to changes already introduced, where appropriate. The project will be commissioned by Conference, overseen and shaped by the Executive Council (EC) and led by head office. Periodic reports will be provided through the structures of the Union with a final consolidated report being produced in time for FBU Conference 2024. This will be called the Executive Council Duty System Review.

The work involved in gathering of data and information will not be a simple task and will require assistance from and engagement by officials at all levels of the Union.

RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM (RDS)

The Executive Council notes various reports conducted by other organisations and by individual fire and rescue services into the RDS. These reports all highlight the real difficulties facing the

sector in relation to the recruitment and retention of firefighters working the RDS. Some FRSs have sought to design new duty systems that ostensibly seek to address matters of recruitment and retention. These systems have not been agreed between the National Employers and the FBU and are therefore not available to all FBU members.

FLEXI-DUTY SYSTEM (FDS)

The FDS section of the Grey Book details the principles and conditions that govern the operational rota our Officer members work. This long-standing collective agreement provides FDS Officers with a fixed financial allowance to provide an agreed number of standby hours, thereby ensuring the 24-hour availability of level two, and level three, incident commanders.

The Officers' National Committee (ONC) has identified a gradual deterioration in FDS conditions. FRSs around the country have implemented duty systems which are not in keeping with the grey book. Officer welfare is being put at risk through insufficient rest periods and excessive hours, which can include prolonged exposure on the incident ground making risk critical decisions.

The Executive Council's Duty System Review will consider whether this arises from structural problems within the FDS or a failure of FRS management to honour the national agreement on this duty system.

24 HOUR SHIFT WORKING

Whilst the Fire and Rescue Service Duty Systems project proposed above is generic, this statement also addresses one particular type of duty system. For many years Conference has discussed and debated the issue of 24 hour shift working. Conference policy is for a report to be placed before the membership by the Executive Council making recommendations in respect of FBU policy on the matter.

This statement recognises that 24 hour shift working has proved popular with some, perhaps most, members who work the shift system and is thought desirable by many other members. It is of note that it is not popular with some members who have worked the duty system. It is also of note that the National Women's Committee has reported that whilst it may be popular with some women members that a number of women have left the service because of the duty system. Finally, the Control Staff National Committee (CSNC) has made it clear that 24 hour shifts are not suitable nor appropriate for personnel working in emergency fire control rooms.

The actual popularity has not been measured. Moreover, popularity levels are likely to be changeable according to how the duty system operates and how its operation is changed by fire and rescue services over time.

Irrespective of 'popularity' however, the role of the Executive Council is to lead and to provide the best advice to the Union and the membership. Accordingly, this statement reflects the professional collective view of the Executive Council for adoption.

In formulating its position the Executive Council has been mindful of the arguments made in favour of 24 hour shift working and those against. The Executive Council has sought to be objective in its consideration. As it does at all times in respect of all duty systems, the Executive Council has sought to find the correct balance of a number of factors:

- a) A shift system must account for the needs of all groups of members.

- b) It is vital that a shift system is fit for purpose in an industry where scenes of operation include working in high-risk environments where situational awareness and clear-headed assessment and decision-making are crucial and where fatigue can result in fatal outcomes for the individual, their colleagues and for members of the public.
- c) It is essential that a shift system is fit for purpose to ensure that risk-critical assessment and decision-making by those responsible for exercising command control in order to ensure (as far as is possible) the swift and efficient resolution of incidents; the prevention of injury or death of firefighters and the public is not impacted by fatigue.

CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS CONFERENCE DEBATES

In developing this statement, consideration has been given to matters raised in previous Conference and Executive Council debates, including;

- 24 hour shifts are not considered appropriate for implementation in emergency fire control rooms because of the nature of the work routines and the understaffing
- Whilst there is mixed evidence on the issue, there is a serious question concerning the suitability of 24 hour shifts for women members (and, by extension, all members with primary caring responsibilities)
- Whilst the reduction of the carbon footprint arising from a reduced number of car journeys has been cited in debates at Conference, the primary arguments cited in favour of 24 hour shifts centre around the reduction in travel costs arising from the reduction of car journeys made in terms of fuel costs and also, in some cases, road toll charges. These are undoubtedly outcomes that arise from compressed shifts and unarguably are, in isolation, understandably attractive. However, the 2-2-4 shift which is worked in a number of configurations (9/15s; 10/14s; 12/12; 11/13 and others) which are accompanied by the important features of rest breaks and in-work rest periods have long been assessed by the Union as striking the right balance between length of shift and adequate time for rest and recovery; work-life balance and the availability of child-care / dependency care services.

ASSOCIATED RELEVANT CONFERENCE POLICIES

In the conference debates, those speaking in favour of 24 hour shifts have also highlighted the perceived failings / shortcomings of the 2-2-4 system (in relation to rest) which is the Union's preferred wholtime shift system as reaffirmed on many occasions at FBU Conference. The Executive Council does not believe that the 2-2-4 shift system has the shortcomings mentioned in the debates concerning 2-2-4 and does not believe there is convincing and definitive evidence to show that 24 hour shifts are more beneficial than the 2-2-4.

The Executive Council believes that altering shift systems to allow for working hours to be compressed, as is the case with 24 hour working, is not appropriate. Whilst lengthened periods of bed-rest whilst at work can be introduced, a busy 24 hour period negates the value and effect of the bed-rest.

Arguments in favour of 24 hour shift working based around bed-rest lend themselves to weakening the Union's case against day crewing plus duty systems. If the possibility of lengthened bed-rest is sufficient for one period of 24 hour working then the same arguments will be cited by employers as to why two or more back to back 24 hour length shifts are not detrimental to health, safety and welfare and do not pose problems of fatigue.

The Union has a proud of history of opposing job cuts in the fire and rescue service. Each year Conference agrees, in one form or another, policy positions opposing cuts. It is of note that in a

number of instances the introduction/ expansion of 24 hour shifts by a Fire and Rescue Service has been accompanied by the reduction on the number of posts at the relevant stations. Fire and Rescue Services do not propose 24 hour shifts in the interests of members or service delivery. They propose it in order to introduce job cuts, self-rostering and to deepen lean-staffing.

It is of note, that where introduced, 24 hour shift working is acknowledged by the employer as being likely to lead to heightened fatigue during working hours. In recognition of this, employers have sought not to have 24 hour shift working implemented at all its wholtime stations alongside introducing discretions for managers to take appliances off the run due to fatigue levels amongst personnel. On the one hand, FRSs know that firefighters' commitment to service delivery and public safety means that this facility will not be exercised on most occasions when required. On the other hand, the Fire Brigades Union with our commitment to service delivery and public safety and reduction of response times, cannot and does not condone reductions in fire cover/ availability of appliances arising from fatigue of crews that are the result of a shift system which we have agreed.

Current fire cover levels are inadequate. That has long been acknowledged and condemned by Conference. The FBU cannot and will not be a party to duty systems which build in further reduction in fire cover and increases in response times to fires and other incidents.

In an attempt to prevent the introduction of a myriad of different duty systems into the fire and rescue service, Conference 2017 agreed a flagship policy proposal:

Conference is concerned by the number and variety of new shift patterns being proposed around the country, and urge the Executive Council to instruct Brigade Officials to only negotiate on new shift patterns if they fall in line with Section 4, Part A, Paragraph 7 of the National Conditions of Service (Grey Book).

A Conference policy which advocates or supports the introduction of 24 hour shifts would render that policy redundant.

SIGNIFICANT FACTORS

All firefighters experience serious fires and other incidents which are of a long duration and involve working intensely hard under extreme conditions. These include, for example, responding to serious flooding and wildfires. The geographic scope of these incidents, coupled with the high call rates, large number of appliances deployed often having to be resourced from other fire and rescue services often result in long delays in crews being relieved.

Similarly, both in the UK and abroad, firefighters have had to work in extremely arduous conditions, at fires in buildings and other structures for long periods of time and have been committed into incidents for multiple BA-wears because of shortages of available crews.

On many station grounds across the UK the building stock may not include tall buildings or complex buildings. However, serious fires in all buildings can (and do) occur, are resource-intensive and the attendance, following a 'make-up message' being sent, can mean that the crews on any fire station may be mobilised.

As an example of serious fires, the Grenfell Tower incident is probably the one which is most prominent in many members' minds.

It is universally accepted that it is nothing short of a miracle that the tragic loss of the 72 lives as a consequence of the fire wasn't increased by firefighter fatalities arising from the terrible conditions our members had to endure, and for many of the crews, for an extended period of active firefighting.

The recorded first call to the fire was shortly before 01:00 hours. The first attendance had been on duty for 5 hours. Crews arriving on subsequent make-ups, almost all from London stations, also started their night shift at 20:00 hours. The physical near-complete exhaustion of many of our members, without doubt in the minds of members of the Executive Council, would have been exacerbated, with unthinkable consequences, had those crews been toward/at the end of a 24 hour shift.

As previously set out in this statement:

- i. It is vital that a shift system is fit for purpose in our industry where scenes of operation include working in high-risk environments where situational awareness and clear-headed assessment and decision-making are crucial and where fatigue can result in fatal outcomes for the individual, their colleagues and for members of the public.
- ii. It is essential that a shift system is fit for purpose to ensure that risk-critical assessment and decision making by those responsible for exercising command control in order to ensure, as far as is possible, the swift and efficient resolution of incidents; the prevention of injury or death of firefighters and the public is not impacted by fatigue.

This Union has borne witness to the failed prosecution in 2012 of fire and rescue service managers in respect of the 2007 fatal fire at Atherstone on Stour. The Metropolitan Police Service is still investigating the Grenfell Tower fire and won't be making (or revealing) any details of intended prosecutions until the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) has fully concluded its work.

Over the years, investigation of serious safety events involving firefighter fatalities by all relevant parties, notably the police and the Health and Safety Executive (and in the case of Grenfell Tower fire and the Manchester Arena bombing public inquiries) have, correctly, focused on contributory factors which can and should include issues such as training, assessment, procedures as well as possible fatigue.

Whilst it is noted that fire and rescue services that have introduced 24 hour shifts include measures in their policy documents to provide ostensible mitigation of the shortcomings of 24 hour shift working such as early reliefs, in practice they fail to deliver.

The Executive Council has concerns that the problems identified above will be deepened when the union realises its policy ambition for a broadened role for the fire service with the resultant increase in calls that it will bring.

Whilst not dismissive of the popularity of 24 hour shift working amongst some members who have worked the 24 hour shift system, the Executive Council believes that there is no convincing argument at this stage that a shift system comprising 24 hour shifts can be endorsed supported or promoted for the reasons explained in the narrative above.

Accordingly, Conference is asked to agree that until the outcome of the Union's duty systems review which will include a focus on 24 hour shift working that no new agreements or extension of the current scope of 24 hour shift working should be agreed or promoted by brigade committees.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF DUTY SYSTEMS

Conference is asked to approve:

1. A project to assess the scope of the changes, both those which have been introduced and those still being attempted by Fire and Rescue Services and their impact. The project will include the provision of advice on how to challenge attempts to introduce change as well as advice on seeking a reversal and/or corrective alterations to changes already introduced where appropriate;
2. For the avoidance of doubt, Conference is also asked to agree that the FBU review will not spend any time or resource on reviewing or revisiting conference policy in respect of Close Proximity Crewing / Day Crew Plus;

Fire and Rescue services have been informed that until further notice no new agreements on duty systems can be made without the express agreement of the Executive Council, via Head Office. The practical implication of this will be:

3. The Executive Council shall provide a process by which current duty systems and existing agreements are reviewed, to ensure compliance with the Grey Book;
4. That no collective agreements, including amendments to collective agreements, shall be reached with any fire and rescue service that lower the standard of terms and conditions as laid out in the Grey Book;
5. Where local collective agreements are already in situ, no collective agreements shall be reached with any fire and rescue service that would extend practices deemed to be outside of the provisions set out in the Grey Book, including 24 hour shift systems.

PAY AND CONDITIONS

2. CAMPAIGN TO SECURE CORRECT CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) PAYMENT FOR MEMBERS

Conference notes that resolution 'Underpayment of Continual Professional Development (CPD) Payments to Members' from Conference 2022 instructed the Executive Council (EC) to support brigade Officials in mounting an immediate challenge to the detrimental practice of underpaying our retained Members' CPD.

Conference notes that little progress has been made on this matter.

Conference demands that the EC conduct a survey of all fire and rescue services to establish current levels and methods of payments. This survey is to be completed within six months. On completion the EC will launch a campaign to work with affected brigade Officials in providing them with the necessary resources to take their fire and rescue services to task and resolve this situation.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

11. RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS – AT MEMBERS OWN COST

Conference instructs that the Executive Council seek to ensure that no Member should have to bear a vehicle related cost in order to respond to operational incidents on blue lights.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

14. PAY FOR SKILLS

Conference notes that pay scales within the fire and rescue service are relatively flat. This has been highlighted by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) during pay negotiations. However, it cannot be forgotten that this lack of pay progression for firefighters does nothing to encourage the learning of new skills.

Conference also notes that FBU Members across the country have taken on skills to aid the fire and rescue service in providing a response to a wide range of incidents. On most occasions, firefighters take on these skills purely based on which station they serve from.

Outside of the fire and rescue service, employees may take on additional skills to improve promotion opportunities or to progress their pay. Within the fire and rescue service, taking on skills such as driving, animal rescue, aerial ladder operators or swift water rescue does not come with increased promotion opportunities or remuneration. It is simply another skill to maintain, more equipment to check and more calls to respond to.

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to pursue a fair system of pay to remunerate individuals who take on additional skills beyond what is required to maintain competence as a firefighter or officer.

The EC must include this in the further negotiations with the aim of implementing for the 2024 pay award.

STAFFORDSHIRE AS AMENDED BY SOUTH YORKSHIRE

19. IMPROVEMENT OF PROVISIONS UNDER SECTION 4, PART D OF THE SCHEME OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE SIXTH EDITION 2004 (UPDATED 2009) (GREY BOOK)

Conference notes the shockingly low levels of paid leave provision for Grey Book employees when paid leave is required for maternity, childcare, and dependents.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to raise this issue at the National Joint Council, seek improvements and to report back to Conference 2024.

CLEVELAND

20. BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Conference notes the absence of a facility for 'Bereavement Leave' in the Grey Book. Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise this omission at the National Joint Council and enter negotiations with a view to an improvement to Grey Book provision, to include paid Bereavement Leave, in time to report to Conference 2024.

CLEVELAND

27. URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE (USAR) FUNDING CUTS

Conference notes the Home Office's decision to cease funding in 2024 for five USAR teams across England, namely those in Hereford and Worcester, Norfolk, Buckinghamshire and two teams in London.

Conference recognises the impact that this will have on Fire Brigades Union Members and instructs the Executive Council to do everything possible to protect Members, including a nationally negotiated agreement through the National Joint Council for pay protection measures, and in the event of redundancies a recall Conference to agree an industrial response.

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

28. MATERNITY PAY

Conference notes that since 2017 there have been five resolutions passed on maternity pay ('End Pay Disparity' Lancashire 2019, 'Maternity Policies' Cumbria 2022, 'Levelling up of Maternity Provision' Bedfordshire 2022 and two from the National Women's Committee in both 2017 and 2018). These resolutions have not been actioned and the Grey Book has not been improved.

Conference believes that if women are to be truly valued within the fire and rescue service, that the postcode lottery on maternity pay must end.

Conference is saddened to see that resolutions are being passed through Conference numerous times with no action taking place. This must stop.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to commence negotiations through the National Joint Council immediately following Conference 2023 to raise the minimum standards within the Grey Book and to report back the progress to all Officials by November 2023.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

29. BEREAVEMENT BENEFITS (REMEDIAL) ORDER 2023

Conference notes that following Parliament's approval of the Bereavement Benefits (Remedial) Order 2023, the Government has extended the eligibility criteria for Bereavement Support Payment and Widowed Parent's Allowance.

Conference is aware that previously this was only available to eligible bereaved parents who were married or in a civil partnership, the law change will ensure more children in bereaved families are supported, regardless of their parent's legal relationship status.

Conference also notes that the Department for Work and Pensions has now opened a special 12 month application window for bereaved parents with dependent children whose partner died before 9 February 2023.

Alison Penny MBE, Director of the Childhood Bereavement Network states:

"We are relieved that at last, cohabiting families who have suffered the devastating loss of their mum or dad will now have the same access to bereavement benefits as married and civil partnered families. These benefits are a lifeline for grieving families, helping parents and carers put their children's needs first as they begin to adjust to a life that has changed forever. Our charity estimates that thousands of families, some bereaved as far back as 2001, may be in line for a retrospective payment of the benefits they have missed out on, paid from August 2018".

Conference instructs the Executive Council to:

- use data from Accident Injury & Death Benefit Fund claims to identify affected Members
- write to those eligible to inform them of the change to eligibility criteria
- ensure that the above tasks are completed in a timely manner to allow affected Members (or their survivors) to apply before the closure of the 12 month application window in February 2024.

KENT

PENSIONS

31. ACCESS TO FIRE SERVICE SPECIFIC PENSION SCHEME FOR FIREFIGHTERS (CONTROL)

Conference acknowledges that as members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, firefighters (Control) are required to work until they reach state pension age, with the Government planning further increases in state pension age between 2026 and 2028.

Given the stress and additional pressure being placed upon firefighters (Control) it is obvious that many of our Members, especially those with longer service, may be forced to leave their jobs early and therefore may lose a portion of their pension as a result.

These Control Members, like those in the Firefighters Pension Scheme, will have planned their retirement around the rules of their pension scheme when they joined the fire and rescue service. Current Fire Brigades Union policy, as affirmed in the Executive Council (EC) Policy Statement to Special Conference in 2012, (and re-affirmed at Conference 2017) is “that Emergency Fire Control Members should be granted access to a Fire Service specific pension scheme”.

Conference recognises that there have been discussions with the Government in the past.

Conference believes that now is the time to press forward towards achieving this aim.

Conference calls upon the EC to work towards gaining access for firefighters (Control) to the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme with a normal pension age in line with other operational firefighters.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE AS AMENDED BY HEREFORD & WORCESTER

32. PENSIONABLE PAY

Conference notes and commends the historic work carried out by Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Officials on ‘Pensionable Pay’ and the legal victories achieved thus far regarding this matter and recognises the far reaching and evolving consequences of these legal rulings.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to clarify which payments made to firefighters constitute ‘Pensionable Pay’ and report this back to brigade secretaries so that they can assess if their respective fire and rescue services have adopted these payments as ‘Pensionable Pay’.

Conference also demands that an immediate review be undertaken to explore what other firefighter remuneration may be deemed as ‘Pensionable Pay’ under all existing Firefighter Pension Scheme (FPS) rules as a result of the legal rulings.

WEST YORKSHIRE

OPERATIONS, HEALTH AND SAFETY

33. FLAME RETARDANTS

Conference notes that multiple studies (which include the University of Central Lancashire 'Flame Retardants in UK Increase Smoke Toxicity Report' and 'Flame Retardants in UK Increase Smoke Toxicity More than they Reduce Fire Growth Rate' Chemosphere Volume 196 2018 page 6 by McKenna et al) have shown that chemical flame retardants used in furniture, increase toxicity in fires and are hazardous to human health and the environment. There is further gathering evidence that chemical flame retardants provide negligible delay to fire ignition, worsen fire conditions, and therefore will increase dangers to firefighter safety and welfare.

The levels and effects of flame retardant chemicals must be evaluated during fires, manufacturing, normal use in homes, workplaces and eventual disposal and recycling.

Conference notes the content of the Environmental Audit Committee report section 90 to 94 from 2019 highlighting these issues and the dangers posed to firefighters.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to actively lobby for robust legislation in order to ensure that any flame retardant chemical is properly tested for both efficacy and safety before being put on the market.

LONDON

34. CANCER SCREENING

Conference notes the extensive and thorough testing and report back from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and Professor Anna Stec during the DECON work.

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to raise immediately at the National Joint Council the requirement for an agreed in-depth cancer screening process, to include Galleri testing, to be introduced to all firefighters during routine periodic medicals given the enhanced likelihood of contracting the disease due to contaminants.

This screening will hopefully detect cancers a lot earlier in firefighters, making it more manageable, and will follow on with the work done by UCLan keeping detailed files on cancers in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation.

This process is to be completed by Conference 2024 and reported back.

LONDON

35. INADEQUATE AND DANGEROUS CREWING CAMPAIGN

Conference notes that resolution 'Inadequate and Dangerous Crewing Levels' from Conference 2022 instructed the Executive Council (EC) to compile information from all brigade secretaries and provide an up to date picture of how widespread the practice of inadequate and dangerous crewing is.

Conference further instructed the EC to formulate a national strategy aimed at reversing this safety critical trend. This strategy was to be published by the end of 2022. The National Retained Committee (NRC) do not believe this resolution has been actioned. We are now seeing our Members being mobilised in crews of just two persons.

Conference demands that the EC launch a campaign along similar lines to the successful DECON campaign. The aim of this is to educate and agitate our Members as to the detrimental effects of riding with less than five crew, and also to provide our Officials with the confidence and support that they need to oppose these dangerous practices.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

36. INADEQUATE DECONTAMINATION AND WELFARE FACILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

Conference applauds the lifesaving Fire Brigades Union funded contamination research and DECON campaign. This has brought in to stark focus the inadequate decontamination and welfare facilities nationally within many of our workplaces.

The National Retained Committee believes that the starting point for any improvements should be to have a thorough understanding of the current situation.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to commission a review of all decontamination and welfare facilities, at all workplaces of our Members, and to provide a report back before the end of the current calendar year.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

37. LITHIUM ION BATTERIES

Conference notes the significant acceleration to provide alternative energy solutions which comes at an increased risk, specifically regarding the risk lithium ion batteries pose to firefighters. The penetration of these devices into all levels of our society has far outstripped our knowledge of the risks and hazards associated with lithium ion batteries.

Conference is concerned at the lack of oversight, legislation or scrutiny in their application.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council (EC) to campaign and demand the UK Governments introduce the necessary laws, compliance, and regulation.

Conference also instructs the EC to call on Chief Fire Officers, National Fire Chiefs Council and the Home Office to provide better training, inspection and control of these devices for all UK Fire and Rescue Services.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

38. CHALLENGE TO NATIONAL OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE ON BA WEARERS

Conference notes that within the National Operational Guidance for Breathing Apparatus (BA), under the subheading 'Procedures for Breathing Apparatus Operations' it is stated:

"BA teams will consist of at least two BA wearers; only those trained in the use of BA can be BA wearers. One BA team member should be a competent firefighter."

Conference believes that the term "should" is open to abuse by fire and rescue services, leading to unsafe practices where two development and/or apprentice firefighters are allowed to wear BA together. Whilst this issue is being challenged locally, Conference feels that more could be done nationally.

Conference instructs the Executive Council, through the appropriate structures, to demand that the word "should" be changed to 'will', ensuring increased safety for firefighters and the public.

DURHAM

41. HEALTH MONITORING OF FIREFIGHTERS (CONTROL)

Conference demands that the Executive Council, assisted by the Control Staff National Committee, should carry out research into effective health monitoring for firefighters (Control) with a view to providing a best practice document to be used by all fire and rescue services.

This research should look at current practice and must take into account the suitability and level of hearing protection provided by headsets.

The resulting best practice document should be scheduled for release no later than Conference 2024.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

42. MENTAL HEALTH RELATED EMERGENCY CALL HANDLING

Conference recognises the important role that the Fire Brigades Union plays in shaping the fire and rescue service.

In recent years Emergency Fire Control Members have noticed a sharp upturn in the number of incidents involving members of the public suffering a mental health crisis. These incidents can range from panic attacks, to self-harm and, in the most severe cases, members of the public taking their own lives. With the current economic climate and the cost of living crisis we fear these call types will continue to increase.

Conference believes firefighters in Control do not currently receive adequate training on how to handle these calls, or how to deal with the physical and psychological pressures it places upon them. It is crucial this is remedied and that Emergency Fire Control Members are properly trained to deal with members of the public suffering a mental health crisis.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to undertake the following;

- raise this issue through the National Joint Council as an urgent health and safety concern
- write to all fire and rescue services to ascertain the level of training provided, if any
- conduct research to identify what training is available and appropriate
- lobby for the implementation of appropriate training across all fire and rescue services.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

43. RACIALLY DIVERSE COUNSELLING SUPPORT

Conference recognises the importance of firefighter health and the ongoing maintenance of our emotional, psychological and social well-being.

Conference noted this by agreeing resolution 'Support for Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Brigade and Regional Officials' at Conference 2022. Pressures from the role of a firefighter and firefighter (Control), can and often does take its toll.

Conference further notes the pressures Members endure within the workplace which can affect them as much as what they witness on operational calls.

Since passing resolution 'Support for Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Brigade and Regional Officials' at Conference 2022 the recently published Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade led to many accounts of racism, misogyny, transphobia, homophobia and discriminatory practices towards neurodiverse Members. Any discrimination of this nature, if left untreated can lead to a lifetime of trauma. Victims of this abuse often require intervention to support mental wellbeing.

To ensure black and ethnic minority Members are fully supported Conference calls on the Executive Council to:

- explore counselling and therapy services provided by black and ethnic minority health professionals
- create a database that can be shared via FBU structures to feed into the work outstanding on resolution 'Support for Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Brigade and Regional Officials' from Conference 2022
- write a letter to all chief fire officers and authority chairs, explaining the benefits and importance of providing counselling and therapy to black and ethnic minority Members.

B&EEMM

45. CREW DEFICIENT MOBILISING

Conference will be aware that the National Retained Committee, regional committees and brigade committees have consistently raised (at previous Conferences) the issue of fire and rescue services mobilising appliances with insufficient or deficient crew which takes place in many forms nationally.

Resolution 24 from Conference 2022 (Inadequate and Dangerous Crewing levels) was moved and unanimously supported; since then crew deficient mobilising has been implemented in other brigades, most recently Cambridgeshire.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to explore the options we have to combat this, utilising the National Health and Safety Committee and all their power, as well as any other means available to us.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

46. ACTIVITY SPECIFIC STRESS RISK ASSESSMENTS

Conference instructs that the Executive Council (EC) seek to ensure that all fire and rescue services meet their legal requirement and undertake activity specific workplace risk assessments. Conference believes these must include stress as a potential hazard.

Conference instructs the EC to publish best practice guidance during 2023 to assist our Officials in the standardisation of these critical assessments.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

47. DECON – CONTROL MEASURES FOR PERSONAL OR PROVIDED VEHICLES

Conference commends the excellent, internationally recognised DECON campaign.

Conference recognises the additional guidance to assist personnel who respond in their personal or fire and rescue service provided vehicle.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to seek to ensure that all fire and rescue services comply with this guidance and requests that further studies are commissioned to identify if any additional control measures should be introduced for this group of personnel.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

48. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES CORE FUNCTION

Conference recognises the vital work that Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Health and Safety (H&S) representatives undertake in fire and rescue services across the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.

Conference also recognises the support that those representatives receive from National Officers, notably Riccardo la Torre, amongst others, and from regional representatives.

Fire and rescue services however, are not so supportive, and all too often hamper the best efforts of the H&S representatives to carry out their core functions, as laid out in H&S legislation which includes the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.

Conference agrees that this continued flouting of H&S legislation cannot continue. The barriers that some fire and rescue services put in place, often citing Data Protection, is a clear breach of the rights of Safety Representatives to discharge their functions effectively.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to engage with all fire and rescue services via the Chief Fire Officers (or equivalent), via written communication, clearly stating what is expected of the fire and rescue service when engaging with FBU H&S representatives. This work should be completed by September 2023.

SHROPSHIRE

50. DECON NATIONAL DATABASE

Conference applauds the success of the work already carried out as part of the DECON project.

Conference also recognises firefighters in the UK face a postcode lottery of engagement with the project.

Conference notes control measures to minimise exposure to carcinogens vary from service to service where they even exist at all, and progress is rarely shared or replicated between services.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to produce a database or similar information technology solution to regularly capture the progress made in each service with regards to the DECON project and make the information available to all Fire Brigades Union Officials.

This work should begin as soon as practicable and progress must be reported back to Conference 2024.

TYNE AND WEAR

51. VIOLENT ATTACKS ON FIREFIGHTERS

Conference is horrified at the level of violence fire crews are subjected to regularly. All attacks on firefighters including verbal, physical and objects thrown are abhorrent. These attacks can also see lifesaving fire appliances being taken off the road due to damage, leaving communities and firefighters at risk.

Conference notes the apparent rise in the number of attacks ranging in severity from verbal abuse to attacks intended to cause severe harm or even kill.

Conference is clear that no firefighter should come to work and face this level of abuse.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council (EC), using the Office of National Statistics fire statistics table (FIRE0510 attacks on firefighters during operational incidents), to understand the scale of the issue and to coordinate a campaign to reduce attacks on firefighters.

Conference instructs the EC to report back no later than Conference 2024.

TYNE AND WEAR

52. BREATHING APPARATUS SAFETY LEVELS

Conference notes that firefighter safety when using breathing apparatus has long been campaigned for by our Union, holding the Fire Sector to task to ensure an evolution in equipment and auxiliaries are introduced to everyday use.

In recent years, the introduction of telemetry has proved once again an addition to safety levels whilst crews are committed in breathing apparatus, however the financial implications form a major reason for some services not purchasing this level of vitally important equipment.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to campaign for the inclusion of telemetry as part of breathing apparatus safe working practices to ensure cost is no longer an issue when it comes to breathing apparatus safety.

LINCOLNSHIRE

53. TWO TIER FITNESS TESTS

Conference notes that fire and rescue services are able to introduce two tier fitness tests to determine operational fitness levels for the role/rank of Watch Manger/Station Officer and above, potentially adding weight to the flawed argument that the pension age for firefighters should be 60.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to open discussions with our national employers to cease such practices and reintroduce fitness tests that are relevant for all Members regardless of their rank/role.

LINCOLNSHIRE

54. NATIONAL STANDARD ON ANNUAL FIREFIGHTER HEALTH MONITORING

Conference notes the Fire Brigades Union alongside the University of Central Lancashire have worked tirelessly on research surrounding firefighter exposure to contaminants and the direct links to cancer. What is now world-renowned research, DECON is the single biggest shift in how we approach everything we do in our role as firefighters.

Conference recognises that the World Health Organisation International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has officially declared firefighting as a cancer-causing profession. A move that has major implications for the manner in which cancer is managed for firefighters and fire services across the world.

Conference instructs the Executive Council through the relevant National Officer to establish a National Standard, negotiated through the National Joint Council, on annual firefighter health monitoring for all UK Fire and Rescue Services.

GREATER MANCHESTER

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE POLICY

55. TRANSPORTATION OF CASUALTIES IN FIRE SERVICE VEHICLES

Conference notes that some employers in services throughout the UK are imposing changes outside the agreed collective bargaining agreements, which include instructing crews to transport casualties at incidents on fire appliances. This is to include during periods of industrial action by UK Ambulance Services striking for fair pay with whom the Fire Brigades Union stands in solidarity.

Conference accepts this idea is dangerous and is an attempt to broaden the role of a firefighter.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to utilise the National Joint Council to ensure this practice stops and to support the relevant brigade committees to fight this issue industrially.

GREATER MANCHESTER

57. FIRE CONTROL CREWING

Conference applauds the work of our Fire Control Members. It is well known the stress and pressure our Members are under on a daily basis.

Conference also recognises that this stress and pressure is greatly compounded by inadequate crewing levels.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to form a task and finish group which will consider and report on:

- The current crewing and supervision levels in emergency Fire Control rooms
- How robust those arrangements are taking into account the requirements of reasonable foreseeable operating scenarios
- The resultant risks to fire crews and to the public.

This work will be completed and published prior to Conference 2024.

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER AS AMENDED BY CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT POLICY AND LEGISLATION

58. PROTECT THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

Conference is appalled by this governments attempt to undermine the democratic right of working people. When workers democratically vote to strike, they could be forced to work and sacked if they don't. That's wrong, unworkable, and potentially illegal.

These proposed laws are a direct attack on working people's fundamental right to strike to defend their pay, and terms and conditions. Instead of listening to the concerns of working people and negotiating fair deals, this government has decided to undermine the right to strike.

As the cost of living crisis continues to hurt workers everywhere, we need to be able to stand together and choose to strike when we must. These laws will do nothing to fix this crisis, they will make it even harder for working people to get the pay rises they deserve.

We must challenge and overturn these laws to protect our Members and future generations of working people.

The United Kingdom already has some of the democratic world's most restrictive laws on the right to strike.

Conference demands that all political, industrial and legal routes at our disposal are used to fight and overturn these proposed draconian laws.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

60. THE STRIKES (MINIMUM SERVICE LEVELS) BILL – AN ATTACK ON WORKER AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Conference condemns in the strongest possible terms the governments planned anti worker legislation, following the wave of industrial action ballots in response to the cost of living crisis which is nothing more than a biased political attack on workers and the trade union movement.

The proposed legislation targets minimum service levels for fire, ambulance, and rail services, education, other transport services, border security, health services and nuclear decommissioning.

The strikes bill shows the government is working against trade unions, unwilling to properly negotiate and is instead focusing its energy on further limiting workers' ability to strike.

Under the new legislation, employers will be able to issue a work notice to staff required to meet minimum service levels. Those workers who take industrial action, regardless of being requested to work, lose their right to automatic protection from unfair dismissal.

Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Members were rightly angered by the recent criticisms made of our service and our profession by His/Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). These criticisms, set out in three reports issued by HMICFRS, were part of the preparation of a serious attack on our service, our Union and our Members.

This attack also targeted the pay, conditions and collective rights of firefighters, and the ability and role of the FBU, and now we have been included in this anti strike legislation – at the very time we were balloting our Members over pay following 12 years of pay restraint and a service and industry struggling after losing a quarter of its workforce nationally under successive governments.

The FBU and the entire movement needs to be loud and clear in response to this political attack on our rights, our movement and our conditions of service – we will not accept any attempts to dismantle our collective labour rights or any attempt at silencing the voices of our Members.

Conference demands the Executive Council commits to opposing this legislation with all means necessary including a legal, political and industrial response.

CHESHIRE

TRADE UNION AND LABOUR MOVEMENT

61. REDISTRIBUTION OF FIRE BRIGADES UNION (FBU) TECHNOLOGY AND REDUCING E-WASTE

Conference instructs the Executive Council to conduct a feasibility study into the redistribution of old FBU technology to charities or causes we are affiliated to, to assist those most impacted by the cost of living crisis in accessing and addressing their mobile phone and computing needs. With global e-waste on the increase it will also sit well with our existing FBU environmental policies.

SUFFOLK

62. THE NEW FAR RIGHT AND HOW TO FIGHT IT

Conference notes that the far right is surging across the world, taking new forms and adopting new strategies as it works to roll back social advances, re-entrench capitalist exploitation, and repress the left.

Conference further notes we cannot rely on the state or on the institutions and ideals of liberal democracy as a bulwark against fascism.

Trade unions are the voice of working people and have a responsibility to detoxify the far right's poison.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to identify strategies to tackle the influence of the far right inside and outside of our workplaces.

OXFORDSHIRE

63. RIGHT TO LOVE

Conference recognises the prohibitive legislation that governs the amount of savings a person with disabilities can hold before being rendered ineligible for Universal Credit or other benefits.

Conference also notes that should a person with disabilities enter into a cohabiting relationship and that couples' joint income or savings breach the financial threshold, then the person with disabilities would automatically become ineligible for Universal Credit or other benefits.

Conference condemns this legislation and calls for the Executive Council to undertake the following;

- support the campaign to 'Allow disabled people to keep all their benefits if they move in with a partner'
- encourage all Members to sign and share the petition to 'Allow disabled people to keep all their benefits if they move in with a partner'
- support the social media campaign #RightToLove.

MERSEYSIDE

65. REFUGEE SUPPORT

Conference condemns and opposes the recent uprise in anti-refugee and anti-migrant activity being seen across the UK.

In February this year the Times Newspaper published a report on the increase in anti-refugee activity in the UK. The report found that hard-right protesters visited hotels housing asylum seekers 253 times last year amid a surge in anti-migrant activity.

Conference applauds Care4Calais (C4C) and all others, who have organised to resist this activity, often in hostile circumstances.

The tactic of setting working people against each other along lines of race and nationality is a tactic seen used throughout history to divide working people and disrupt our unity and organisation. This is ever more apparent in the recent far-right organising under a false banner of “protecting women and children”. There is much work to be done to stop violence against women and girls, but racist and xenophobic attacks on some of the most vulnerable people in our society is not the answer.

Conference is proud of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) refugee solidarity work with C4C and beyond and notes the Executive Council (EC) recent endorsement of the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) and C4C Safe passage Policy as an alternative to the Government’s inhumane Rwanda Policy.

As wages and living standards fall due to the cost of living crisis, now more than ever we need to stand as a class and resist any attempts to disrupt our unity as we see workers and unions organising to make a stand across the UK. Now more than ever we must stand with refugees and migrants to oppose racist, divisive scapegoating attacks aimed at them.

Conference demands that the EC refresh and restart the FBU refugee solidarity trips and wider projects at the earliest opportunity. This must expand to include exploring how the Union can offer full support to those organising to resist anti-migrant and anti-refugee activity in our workplaces and our communities in the UK.

LINCOLNSHIRE

EDUCATION

66. MENTAL WELLBEING OF FIRE BRIGADES UNION (FBU) REPS AND OFFICIALS OF ALL LEVELS

Conference recognises the tireless hard work and dedication of all FBU reps and Officials at all levels of the FBU, from station based reps to the Executive Council (EC). The commitment and subsequent workloads involved in fighting for, and protecting Members employment rights and their health and safety can be both mentally and emotionally exhausting.

Conference believes the EC should focus on the mental wellbeing of FBU reps and Officials. If FBU reps and Officials suffer mental fatigue that is not recognised or addressed, the FBU will cease to function effectively in fighting for, and protecting Members employment rights and their health and safety.

Conference instructs the EC to provide a course on mental wellbeing, to better educate and equip reps and Officials, with the knowledge to recognise when mental wellbeing is in decline and put in place mechanisms to better manage mental wellbeing.

SUFFOLK

68. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION TRAINING

Conference is aware of the increased publicly highlighted cases of racism, misogyny, transphobia, homophobia and also discriminatory practices faced by neurodiverse staff within the fire and rescue service, society in general and the impact on all following these revelations.

Conference recognises that education is a valuable tool used to underpin and bolster equality legislation, good practice and everyday behaviours and as such Conference values the education facilitated by our own Union, TUC, ACAS and other union bodies.

Conference further recognises that bespoke, standalone equality and diversity training is no longer advertised as part of the core training courses recommended for brigade reps, regional reps, Executive Council Members and all supporting staff.

Conference instructs that prior to Conference 2024 a training package of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), including, but not limited to, EDI literacy inclusive language and building good practice is developed, working in partnership with the equality sections B&EMM, LGBT+ and NWC engaging with outside specialist education providers as necessary.

Conference further instructs that before Conference 2024, alongside the rollout of an EDI training package, reference materials (akin to those supplied for DECON) are produced to promote and support the drive to educate, encourage, and promote inclusive behaviour across the board.

B&EMM

69. UNION LEARNING COURSES FOR THE RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM (RDS)

Conference is aware of the extensive education programme that the Fire Brigades Union offers; these courses are essential for both Members and Officials, and greatly aid Members to be as effective as possible.

Unfortunately, these courses aren't as accessible for some RDS Members/ Officials, due to the nature of their primary employment. Some RDS Members willing to undertake Union learning are at a detriment of having to either use holiday leave from work or take unpaid leave, this can be off-putting. Wholetime personnel have the ability to use Trade Union Leave, allowing them to be released from duty, thus not impacting on their pay.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to explore different options to make these vital courses accessible for our RDS Members and Officials, whether this is in the form of alternative delivery (evening/weekend courses, on and offline), modular e-Learning packages or regional sessions.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

70. WORKING TIME REGULATIONS (WTR) GUIDANCE

Conference notes that some Grey Book staff often have multiple contracts.

Conference also notes that with the increases in the cost of living, the issue of working time and rest periods needs to be understood more than ever. To fully protect the health, safety and welfare of Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Members health and safety representatives need a thorough understanding of the WTR and how they interact with Grey Book duty shift systems.

Conference instructs that the Executive Council produce a WTR guidance document for FBU representatives to use in local negotiations and consultations, to ensure compliance and protect the long-term health of our Members.

ESSEX

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS AT WORK

72. CHALLENGING BULLYING HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION WITHIN THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION (FBU)

Conference notes that the FBU is known for challenging bullying, harassment and discrimination in the fire and rescue service, however there have been reports of inconsistencies with how these issues have been dealt with within our own Union.

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to commission an independent review into the FBU on how complaints and concerns raised have been handled. This must be carried out by an external body and any reps and Members who provide information to the review should be allowed to do so anonymously if they choose to.

Conference instructs the EC to complete this work prior to Conference 2024.

LONDON

78. REVIEW OF ALL DIFFERENT ALL EQUAL POLICY (ADAE)

Conference notes the vital importance of the ADAE policy.

To ensure that the ADAE policy is fit for purpose both now, and in the future, Conference instructs the Executive Council to complete a full review of the ADAE policy involving all sectional and regional committees in this review, to put before Conference 2024.

CLEVELAND

79. MISOGYNY IN THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Conference notes that Conference 2022 resoundingly carried the National Women's Committee (NWC) resolution on Misogyny, the resolution set out that:

Conference instructs the Executive Council to;

- *support the campaign to make misogyny a hate crime*
- *publicly condemn misogynistic behaviours seen in our workplaces and the wider world*
- *encourage Members to challenge and report instances of misogyny or sexism in the workplace, home or elsewhere*
- *be vocal to employers on what constitutes misogynistic behaviour, where it exists in our workplaces, how it must be quashed and how victims must be heard and supported to justice*
- *introduce mandatory sexual harassment training for all FBU Officials.*

The Membership has not been adequately updated on ongoing work to ensure this resolution is enacted, particularly on mandatory sexual harassment training for all Officials.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to distribute communications to the Membership, within three months, of work done to date and with a clear timeframe of further work to be undertaken to ensure the NWC resolution is addressed.

WEST MIDLANDS

ORGANISING AND MEMBERSHIP

81. BRANCH OFFICIALS HANDBOOK

Conference notes the excellent Fire Brigades Union educational pathway that has expanded over the years, giving Officials the opportunity to learn and progress through various roles within the structures of our Union.

Conference also notes the important role that the Branch Officials Handbook plays in this process.

Conference will also recall Resolution 79 'Branch Officials Handbook' moved by Durham and Darlington at Conference 2019 and passed with the support of the Executive Council (EC).

This resolution agreed that the current Branch Officials Handbook was out of date and therefore unfit for purpose and called on the EC to update or replace the present handbook, with this work to be completed by Conference 2020.

To date this work is yet to be completed.

Conference instructs the EC to provide all necessary resources, and to work with regional committees, to ensure that this work is completed no later than Conference 2024.

SCOTLAND

84. NATIONAL ORGANISING STRATEGY

Conference notes that at Conference 2022, Greater Manchester submitted a successful resolution regarding the organising approach of our Union.

Amongst other items, the resolution instructed that following any necessary rule changes;

- each region appoints an Official responsible for organising within the region
- the National Officer responsible for organising should convene a national committee consisting of the aforementioned Regional Officials to critique the current organising strategy within the FBU, and endeavour to create a new strategy based on an 'industrial organising approach' and set out its targets and campaigns for the coming year
- the organising committee should meet quarterly and each region should submit an organising report to the relevant committees following EC business meetings
- the Regional Official responsible for organising should ensure the organising strategy is implemented and the expected work carried out alongside the Brigade Organisers.

However, today, organising is still done on a relatively ad-hoc basis. Whilst the Fair Pay or Fire Strike campaign undoubtedly made us work in a uniform way across the brigades, a similar approach has still not been seen on a day-to-day basis.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to consult brigade organisers and the responsible National Officer within three months of close of Conference 2023 to develop a strategy to assist in organising at the 'grassroots level' and to bring the substance of Greater Manchester's 2022 resolution to fruition.

The strategy will be distributed and available for implementation by November 2023.

STAFFORDSHIRE

86. FIRE BRIGADES UNION (FBU) DISABILITY SECTION

Conference is aware that the FBU currently has six sections representing Members from various walks of life, from LGBT+ to Officers section and Control to name a few. One section of the workforce that is currently not included but does have an ever increasing number of people is that of the disabled community.

Disability can be categorised into two sections, physical and mental. Approximately 14.6 million people in the UK are registered disabled, that's 22% of the population (source Office of National Statistics). Neurodiversity makes up a large section of that figure, with statistics showing up to 15% of the UK population are Neurodiverse (Source Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder Aware), with many more being undiagnosed. That equates to 1 in 7 adults in the UK (Source Acas diversity in the workplace 2016). Using that example ratio, it may be that in a fire and rescue service that employs 1,000 personnel, at least 142 could be Neurodiverse.

It is understood that certain professions attract more neurodivergent people than others, and the fire and rescue service is one of those due to the dynamic nature of our job (Source ADDitude: Inside the ADHD Mind). It is perceived as a very hands-on job, which can attract neurodivergent people who generally may avoid jobs with lots of written tasks for example.

The current approach to disability within the fire and rescue service is very sporadic, with different fire and rescue services taking different approaches. Although, legally under the Equality Act 2010, an employer must support the employee and consider reasonable adjustments, this again is very different across different fire and rescue services. A more standardised approach is needed to help our Members who live with these conditions by supporting their welfare and development.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to explore establishing a new FBU section to represent and support Members of the FBU with disabilities.

NORTH WALES

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION

89. RESOLUTION CLARITY

Conference applauds the ongoing achievements and commitment of this Union and its Officials. Conference recognises the demanding workload placed on the Executive Council (EC) but also notes the need for clarity with regards to the progression of resolutions passed by Conference.

In order to keep Members informed and avoid duplicate resolutions Conference instructs the EC to produce a report no later than the 31 January each year detailing any resolutions which required specific action but have not been progressed by the anticipated time scales, giving an explanation and proposed revised dates for completion.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

90. RESPONSE TO NEWS STORIES

Conference notes that following a news story which surfaced on the ITV news channel about complaints concerning Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, many local Officials were inundated with questions from Members of the Union and the public.

It was clear that a statement from the Union was necessary. In the absence of any clear guidance from Head Office local reps in conjunction with the National Women's Committee put together a statement and submitted it to the Executive Council (EC) for approval. As of 2 March 2023 no statement had been released and the news had moved on.

When news stories break about the fire service, the Union or its Members, it is vital to be able to respond in a timely manner.

Conference instructs the EC to put procedures in place to enable a timely response to any news story about the fire service, the Union or its Members, including input and agreement from the relevant section or sections.

DEVON AND SOMERSET

91. UPDATE BEST PRACTICE DOCUMENT ON DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Conference recognises that the impact of domestic abuse and sexual violence is as real and damaging now as it was in 2015 when Conference passed resolution 57 'Best Practice Document on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence' calling for the Executive Council (EC) to endorse the best practice document to provide Fire Brigades Union Officials with the necessary tools to implement policies within individual fire and rescue services.

Many fire and rescue services still have no policies on this subject, and those that do often have policies that are outdated and insufficient.

Conference instructs the EC to work with all relevant sections to update the current best practice document on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence to include changes in the law such as the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the overarching framework of the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

DEVON AND SOMERSET

92. REDUCE PAPER USE AT FIRE BRIGADES UNION (FBU) CONFERENCE

Conference recalls the remarks made by the Chair of Standing Orders Committee at previous Conferences about the enormous amounts of paper that is used during Conference.

Conference believes it is our collective responsibility to reduce this in order to support the preservation of our natural environment and all those that inhabit it.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to consider all necessary steps and options to support this resolution including the use of our email system, tablets for Conference and live document sharing in order to ensure a significant reduction in the use of paper is achieved by the FBU when facilitating Conference.

Any final outcomes in ways to achieve this should be utilised across our Union at other meetings and events wherever this is possible.

DERBYSHIRE

MOTIONS REMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

PAY AND CONDITIONS

3. DEVELOPMENT FIREFIGHTER PAY PROGRESSION

Conference notes the large pay differential between the roles of a development firefighter/firefighter control and a competent firefighter/firefighter control. Conference believes that a more appropriate way to deal with this gap would be to have an annual pay progression process rather than the current three year system. Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate through the National Joint Council, three annual incremental increases in development firefighter/firefighter control pay rates to replace the current one off increase after three years.

NORTHERN IRELAND

4. RETAINING FEE

Conference recognises the level of commitment that is given by firefighters working the Retained Duty System (RDS). Conference also notes that the retaining fee, which is set at 10% of a wholetime firefighter's wage, does not adequately compensate RDS firefighters for the time and commitment they provide. Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate, through the National Joint Council, a substantial rise in the retaining fee, by increasing the percentage of a wholetime firefighter's wage on which it is currently calculated.

NORTHERN IRELAND

16. TRADE UNION RELEASE AGREEMENTS FOR FIRE BRIGADES UNION OFFICIALS

Conference believes it is unacceptable that individual brigades should try to gag our representatives, preventing them from carrying out their vital work. This is a threat to our democratic freedom as a trade union.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate a nationally agreed Trade Union Official release agreement through the National Joint Council by Conference 2024.

BEDFORDSHIRE

18. RECOGNITION FOR FIREFIGHTER (CONTROL) AS FRONTLINE AND OPERATIONAL

Conference commends the continual great work carried out by sisters and brothers, nationwide, in emergency fire controls.

Conference welcomes the working group being set up to appraise the joint, National Joint Council and Fire Brigades Union, job evaluation. Sector wide recruitment and retention in control operations is suffering. Control brothers and sisters must be recognised on the same hourly rates and pay structure as firefighters, to improve future recruitment and retention.

Conference demands work is carried out by the Executive Council to establish a report, which identifies firefighter (Control) Members being recognised as frontline and operational.

WEST YORKSHIRE

22. SURVEY OF DRIVER LEVELS

Conference notes that pay progression within our service is relatively flat and that specialist skills taken on by our Members are rarely met with remuneration or reward.

Conference believes that those driving fire service vehicles, particularly whilst travelling to emergency incidents, take on a greater level of responsibility and are required to maintain a wider range of competence. They do not receive additional recompense for doing so.

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to survey all fire and rescue services on the numbers of drivers (and where there are driver deficiencies) in order to provide information which could aid any future talks around pay. This must be reported back by September 2023.

Conference further instructs that the EC ensure remuneration for driving service vehicles is placed as a fundamental tenet in any future pay discussions.

WEST MIDLANDS

25. BRIDGING THE GAP FOR FIREFIGHTER (CONTROL) MEMBERS

Conference believes that the recent pay dispute has highlighted again the disparity between firefighter (Control) Members and those employed elsewhere in the fire and rescue service.

Our firefighter (Control) Members are not only a vital part of the emergency response but they are the first point of contact and the last person that closes down the incident. The skills and pressures that they must contend with are no less than those faced by operational firefighters.

Conference asserts that one of the main reasons that this Union was able to show such strength in the recent pay dispute was because of our unity. We owe our brothers and sisters in Control that unity in supporting their demands to be paid at the same level as firefighters.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to ensure that pay parity for firefighter (Control) Members is of paramount importance in the working group discussions, and that this issue is made an integral part of the Grey Book so that we are all paid as one. Control Members must be paid at the same level as other firefighters and this must be enshrined in the Grey Book.

HUMBERSIDE

26. FIRE CONTROL PAY PARITY

Conference notes that should the revised pay offer be accepted that the Executive Council will establish a working group to focus on Control Pay.

Conference demands that one of the priorities of this working group should be to reaffirm the demands of resolution 'Pay – Control' agreed at conference 1997 and resolution 'Control Pay Parity' agreed at Conference 2017 and achieve pay parity for Fire Control staff.

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

OPERATIONS, HEALTH AND SAFETY

49. DECON SURVEY

Conference notes the incredible work undertaken by Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and University of Central Lancashire, to educate, inform and drive change in the fire and rescue sector that will undoubtedly save the lives of many firefighters for years to come.

Some fire and rescue services have undoubtedly taken this information and made the necessary changes and investments to better protect their employees' health, safety and welfare in the workplace, and should be commended for doing so. However, others have dragged their heels to say the least.

Conference instructs, to ensure that we maintain the highest possible standards and consistency, that the Executive Council conduct a survey of brigade secretaries, to gain further insight as to what fire and rescue services have achieved in this vital campaign and then publish the results.

Not only will this be a source for spreading best practice but will also highlight possible discrepancies in the services that have been slower to react to the FBU DECON campaign.

ESSEX

EDUCATION

67. COUNSELLING TRAINING FOR REPS/OFFICIALS

Conference notes the excellent education program that the Fire Brigades Union provides for reps and Officials. Conference believes further education could and should be provided, especially relating to providing reps and Officials a foundation in counselling. Due to the nature of the roles that are undertaken by both reps and Officials they come in contact with Members who are suffering from mental health issues as well as dealing with stressful situations on a regular basis. Conference recognises that specific training in dealing with these Members is a necessary part of the education of reps and Officials, not only for the benefit of our Members but also for the mental wellbeing of reps and Officials. Conference instructs the Executive Council to investigate the implementation of basic counselling training for reps and Officials, and further investigate if this would be best suited for a pre-existing course or if a standalone course would be necessary.

DURHAM

71. INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE (IUD)

Conference notes that the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Rule Book contains rules covering IUD. However, unlike the All Different All Equal policy FBU Officials receive no training or guidance on how to carry out an IUD investigation, and there are no specific timescales in which to complete the processes. This has the potential to have an impact on all parties involved with regard to workloads and stress.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to;

- produce a guidance document including expected timescales for any Officials who may be required to carry out an IUD investigation
- develop a training course via FBU education specific to IUD investigation.

This work to be completed before Conference 2024.

TYNE AND WEAR

80. EQUALITY FOR MAINTAINING FITNESS IN THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Conference is reminded of the following resolution from the National Retained Committee from 2018, which was carried and therefore policy of the Union:

Conference notes the content of the Firefighter Fitness Best Practice Guide produced by the NJC. Conference is alarmed at the lack of provision of fitness training equipment or fitness training time available to Retained Duty System firefighters across the UK. Conference agrees that Retained Duty System firefighters have the same requirements as wholetime firefighters on the issue of firefighter fitness and that the same safety standards should apply to both equally.

Therefore this Conference instructs the Executive Council, at the earliest opportunity to try to negotiate a number of paid hours per week for Retained Duty System firefighters to carry out fitness training in order to maintain their fitness to the required standard, these hours must be in addition to the already agreed hours for training, development and maintenance duties.

Conference is also reminded of the requirements under the Grey Book, which sets out guidance on firefighters' health and safety at work for local fire services to follow, maintaining the principle of a fit and healthy workforce while providing an efficient and effective fire service.

Conference is disappointed that some five years later a significant number of fire and rescue services do not provide paid positive hours for thousands of Retained/On Call firefighters up and down the United Kingdom nor provide parity to RDS firefighters.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to commence collective legal action against any fire and rescue service where this is the case, under the Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 or any other relevant legislation that is deemed appropriate by our legal team.

CHESHIRE

ORGANISING AND MEMBERSHIP

83. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (EC) MEMBER FOR WOMEN

Conference is deeply concerned by the consequences of the removal of the EC Member for Women in 2012.

Conference believes that it is having a profound impact on our women Members and the National Women's Committee.

Conference has made this judgement based on various reports back from our women reps and Members including the following;

- women reps reporting an increase in sexism and misogyny within the fire service and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU)
- a high turnover of national, regional and brigade women reps
- a decrease in organising activities and work output because of reduced resources.

Conference notes that the FBU was held in high regard within the movement for pioneering reserved seats on its EC that included women. These were decision making seats at the highest level of the Union which were put in place to increase the representation of our underrepresented Members and to support representative democracy.

Conference fully supports representative democracy.

Conference is committed to redressing the disadvantages and oppression faced by women in the fire and rescue service and believes that to do this women must have reserved seats in FBU decision making committees.

Conference instructs the EC to undertake a review to address this matter which must be completed by September 2023.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

85. NATIONAL ORGANISING STRATEGY

Conference commends brigade organisers for their tireless work in communicating to our Members. They often organise not only branch reps, but also assist sectional reps, health and safety reps, and others, to set up lines of communication with our Members and activists.

Conference wishes as many Members as possible to hear about the work the Union does and to be inspired to be more active. This requires solid lines of communication in every region and section of the Union.

Conference instructs the Executive Council, in conjunction with Head Office communications department, to provide a template and the relevant support for every region and Section to produce a twice-yearly bulletin for our Members to inform them of what is happening within our Union, to celebrate and inform about the work of the Union and to maximise the ability of Organisers to reach all Members and drive forward the Union's aims.

WEST MIDLANDS

EMERGENCY MOTIONS CARRIED

E 1. SOLIDARITY WITH JEREMY CORBYN

Conference recognises that the Fire Brigades Union re-affiliation to the Labour Party in 2015 was in part due to the relationship that our union enjoyed with Jeremy Corbyn.

Conference notes with dismay the decision taken by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party on 28th March 2023 which approved a motion from Keir Starmer to prevent Labour endorsing Jeremy Corbyn from standing as a Labour Party candidate.

Conference believes the decision taken by the National Executive Committee to be another step to rid the Labour Party of socialists.

Conference instructs the Executive Council, at the earliest opportunity, to seek the support of other trade unions and write to the leader of the Labour Party demanding the whip be restored to Jeremy Corbyn and that he be allowed to stand as a Labour Party candidate if chosen by the Constituency Labour Party.

MERSEYSIDE

E 2. VOTER IDENTIFICATION

Conference notes that new rules on voter identification were used for the first time on 4 May 2023 in the local government elections. On 5 May, the press reported that the chair of the Electoral Commission had acknowledged that voters had faced challenges in exercising their right to vote.

Conference notes that this legislation was introduced despite the negligible number of cases of voting fraud in the UK.

Conference believes this legislation was introduced to suppress voter turnout. It will disproportionately affect young people and students, older people, people in larger urban areas and those from ethnic minorities.

Conference believes this is a cynical and undemocratic step designed to reduce the anti-Tory vote.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to campaign against all similar measures in the future.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

E 3. PROTECT THE RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH AND THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

Conference notes that on Saturday 6th May 2023, a number of republican protestors were arrested in central London, whilst attending an approved demonstration of the Coronation.

Conference believes that the right to assemble, the right to free speech and the right to protest are essential democratic rights and must be defended.

Conference condemns this attack on citizens exercising their democratic rights.

Conference notes that the current Westminster government is introducing further undemocratic restrictions through the new Public Order legislation.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to oppose and campaign against this legislation.

Conference further instructs the EC to research the recent arrests and, where appropriate, support those arrested.

Conference believes that the underlying reason for the arrests made on Saturday 6th May 2023, is the unwavering government support of the inherited rights and privileges of unelected positions at the head of state.

Conference further believes that these inherited rights and privileges have no place in any democratic system.

DURHAM

E 4. CAMPAIGN TO DEFEAT THE STRIKES (MINIMUM SERVICE LEVELS) BILL

On May 9 2023, the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill had its third reading in the House of Lords, it is important to note that while the Lords can propose amendments, the commons majority held by the Tories means that there is no guarantee that these amendments will be taken, and offers no realistic expectation that this Bill will not become law.

In contrast, Conference notes the comments made on April 17 2023, by Scotland's First Minister, Humza Yousaf.

In his address to the Scottish Trade Union Congress, the First Minister stated that the Scottish Government would never issue work notices under the proposed Minimum Service Levels legislation.

Conference welcomes these comments.

The strategy of others in the trade union movement to see this Bill delayed appears not to be having the desired impact and therefore Conference re-affirms the call made by the Executive Council (EC) for the building of a mass movement of opposition and non-compliance with this undemocratic legislation.

Conference calls on the EC (working with other unions if possible) to convene a conference of trade union delegates with a view to building and developing the campaign to defeat this attack on workers and make this legislation unworkable.

SCOTLAND

E 5. FREE JULIAN ASSANGE

On 5th May 2023, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva at a meeting with Rishi Sunak called for the freedom of Julian Assange. His support is part of a growing international clamour for his release.

Conference notes that Julian Assange remains locked alone in a six feet by 12 feet cell in Belmarsh Prison merely for receiving and publishing truthful information that revealed US war crimes.

Conference further notes that if extradited to the United States, Julian Assange, father of two young British children, would face a sentence of 175 years in prison.

Conference demands immediate release, charges to be dropped, safe passage to the secure location of his choosing, and compensation for the psychological torture and arbitrary detention he has endured.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to campaign to stop the extradition of Julian Assange to the US and to write to the Home Secretary, the Shadow Home Secretary, and the Shadow Justice Secretary making the union's case on this issue.

MID & WEST WALES

MOTIONS DEFEATED...

6. 24 HOUR VOLUNTARY SHIFTS	LANCASHIRE
7. BROADENING OF THE FIREFIGHTER ROLE	MERSEYSIDE
15. DRIVING ALLOWANCE	BEDFORDSHIRE
40. PROVISION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) EQUIPMENT FOR BRIGADE HEALTH AND SAFETY REPS	LANCASHIRE
44. FACILITIES FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICIALS	CAMBRIDGESHIRE
64. LABOUR AND MINIMUM SERVICES LEGISLATION	ESSEX
82. STRUCTURES OF THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION	MERSEYSIDE
87. DISABILITY IN THE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE	GREATER MANCHESTER

FINAL APPEALS COMMITTEE

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	John McKenzie
Region 2	Phil Millar
Region 3	Brian Harris
Region 4	Gavin Marshall
Region 5	Ed Burrows
Region 6	Mark Stilwell
Region 7	Sasha Hitchins
Region 8	Duncan Stewart-Ball
Region 9	Rebecca Lewington
Region 10	Jon Lambe
Region 11	Andy Petch
Region 12	Mark Chapman
Region 13	Guy Herrington
BEMM	Amit Malde
LGBT	Pat Carberry
NWC	Robyn Richardson
CSNC	Caroline Saunderson
NRC	Paul Revill
ONC	Peter Trayner

ELECTION OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

ELECTED

Phil Millar	4 years
Gary Lennie	4 years



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