



FIRE BRIGADES UNION

PAY IN THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Conference notes that for half a century, public sector pay in the UK has been bound within narrow constraints by central government, with public sector workers facing a long-term attack.

Westminster Government policy since Thatcher and continuing through every administration since has imposed tight limits on public sector workers' pay.

Conference condemns the pay freezes and caps imposed by the Westminster Government since 2010, which have held down the pay of all public sector workers.

Conference is appalled by the 13% real term cut in average full-time firefighters' pay (measured by CPI), equivalent to £4,000 a year.

Conference opposes the announcement on 25 November 2020 by Chancellor Rishi Sunak in his Spending Review that pay rises in much of the public sector would be frozen ("paused") for at least a year. This is a further attack on public sector workers who have been central to ensuring our communities survived the pandemic of the past year. We oppose any attempts by government to play off the private sector against the public sector, all workers need a pay rise.

Conference condemns the 'something for nothing' approach of fire employers and chief fire officers in relation to role maps and new work undertaken by firefighters.

Conference opposes the attempts, sometimes successful, by some chief fire officers to unilaterally introduce unpaid expansion of roles within fire and rescue services, whereby firefighters are trained, upskilled and expected to do more complex and risky work, but without the necessary pay in return.

Conference opposes attacks on collective bargaining on pay and conditions, including proposals to scrap the National Joint Council (NJC) and Grey Book, replacing them with a pay review body that excludes the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

Conference condemns the silence by individual chief fire officers and fire and rescue authorities; who have neither challenged the attacks on collective bargaining nor called for improved pay.

Conference rejects the view that nothing can be done to improve pay progression within fire and rescue services.

Conference has previously set out and agreed our views on the need for our service to adapt to the changing and emerging risks facing our communities but that this must be done by negotiation. New work and new roles must be linked to pay, investment, training and adequate resources.

Conference notes the complications for fire service policy created by the devolution of powers in relation to fire and rescue services. This may require different discussions in the devolved parts of the UK. Any such discussions must be authorised by the Executive Council and be conducted under their authority and in accordance with existing policies of the union.

Conference mandates the Executive Council to prepare for the greater campaigning which will become more possible as lockdown eases. This should include:

- The call for a united campaign across the public sector to challenge and oppose the Tory pay freeze
- Negotiating with employers around existing union policies regarding the future of our service, the changing risks facing communities and the changing skills of firefighters
- Developing an appropriate pay structure which improves pay progression for all FBU Members

- Officials engaging with FRA leaders & members on authorities, including those who are deemed as political allies, who have thus far failed to grasp the significance of the attack on national sectoral collective bargaining and what would replace it in terms of future discussions on the issue of pay
- Building the campaign to make the case for the investment in our service which is necessary to protect the service and to improve pay.

Conference agrees to campaign to make the case to politicians and employers for pay arrangements that reflect the irreplaceable contribution firefighters make to our communities.