



FIRE BRIGADES UNION

CONFERENCE 2023

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POLICY
STATEMENT**

PREPARING FOR A GENERAL ELECTION

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.

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.

AMENDMENT

Page 1, under the heading "Workers' rights" **insert** a third paragraph:

"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."

Hereford and Worcester