



FIRE BRIGADES UNION

CONFERENCE 2024

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POLICY
STATEMENT**

**WORKERS' RIGHTS UNDER A
LABOUR GOVERNMENT**

Over the past 14 years, Conservative governments have consistently attacked rights at work, including major assaults on the right of trade unions to organise and take industrial action.

The Labour Party has committed to its Green Paper, the New Deal for Working People. This makes commitments that from day one, a Labour government will strengthen workers' rights, individually and collectively, including the right to strike.

The New Deal for Working People makes a series of pledges for decent, secure, safe and fair work. The Labour Party says that if it forms the next government, it will:

- Empower workers to act collectively to negotiate higher wages starting with a Fair Pay Agreement in social care. Fair Pay Agreements will establish minimum terms and conditions, which would be binding on all employers and workers in the sector
- Strengthen the protections afforded to all workers by scrapping the qualifying time for basic rights, such as unfair dismissal, sick pay, and parental leave
- Ban zero hour contracts to ensure all jobs provide a baseline level of security, and ensure all workers get reasonable notice of any change in shifts or working time
- Extend statutory maternity and paternity leave, introducing the right to bereavement leave and strengthening protections for pregnant women by making it unlawful to dismiss a woman who is pregnant for six months after her return, except in specific circumstances
- Review parental leave within the first year of a Labour Government
- Bring in the 'right to switch off' and introduce new rights to protect workers from remote surveillance
- Repeal anti-trade union legislation which removes workers' rights, including the Trade Union Act 2016 and Minimum Service Levels Act 2023, in order to remove unnecessary restrictions on trade union activity
- Introduce the right of trade unions to consult their members through secure on-line and workplace balloting
- Establish and properly fund a single enforcement body to enforce workers' rights.
- Review the law on health and safety at work to revise outdated legislation and make it fit for now and the future. We will review provision for stress, mental health, the impact of new technology
- Strengthen the rights of workers to respond to family emergencies with paid family and carers' leave, the right to have flexible working
- Act to close gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) as a union affiliated to the Labour Party, has played a role since 2021 in developing the New Deal for Working People. FBU officials worked with Andy McDonald MP and Angela Rayner MP on the original proposals. At Labour's National Policy Forum in July 2023, FBU delegates argued for workers' rights. The FBU's resolution at Labour Party conference was on the New Deal for Working People.

FBU policy on workers' rights goes much further than current Labour Party policy and demands an end to all anti-union laws. However, the FBU recognises that these pledges are an important start in unshackling the unions and shifting the balance of power at work towards workers.

These policies have been popular with trade union members and with voters as was acknowledged, for example, after the Rutherglen and Hamilton West by-election. However, there is growing pressure on the Labour leadership, particularly from big business interests, to roll back on these pledges. It is likely that these pressures will grow as the election approaches and after the election of a Labour government.

In these circumstances, the role of the FBU as a union affiliated to the Labour Party, Trade Union Congress, Scottish Trade Union Congress and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, is to organise and campaign against any retreat on these important policy pledges and to build a movement to campaign to ensure that a future Labour government delivers on these commitments within the timescales already set out.

Conference agrees:

1. That the Executive Council (EC) will publicise these pledges among FBU members and others to ensure that the FBU and the wider trade union movement is prepared and organised to fight to guarantee the delivery of these pledges.
2. That the EC will continue over the coming months to campaign inside and outside of Labour Party structures to ensure that Labour's commitment to the New Deal for Working People is maintained.
3. That the EC will provide resources and information to assist FBU members and officials at all levels in such campaigning.
4. That the EC will assess the tactics required under a Labour Government to best ensure the implementation of the New Deal for Working People, our policy on the repeal of all anti-trade union legislation and to introduce improvements to trade union and workers' rights beyond those set out in the New Deal for Working People.