FIREFIGHTER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION | WWW.FBU.ORG.UK | FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019

LEARNING FROM TRAGEDY

US FIREFIGHTERS TACKLE WORST-EVER WILDFIRES

LEGAL WIN FOR FBU ON PENSIONS

SEE P4

CONTAMINANT RESEARCH STARTS

SEE P14

FIRE BRIGADES UNION

MATT WRACK
PENSIONS: A MAGNIFICENT WIN FOR OUR MEMBERS

PENSIONS WIN

It seems only fitting that the end of our centenary year went out with a bang. The week before Christmas the Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the FBU in our battle with the government over our pensions.

The ruling was expected in spring this year, so when we got the good news in December, Christmas had truly come early.

The legal process has further to go so we should not get carried away. But this is a great step forward for our members. We have always said that we will never give up the fight for pension justice and our persistence has paid off. Please be aware that the government is seeking to appeal the result so there is much more to be done still. Regardless of anything they do, we will not stop fighting for what is fair for our members. You can find out more about the pensions case on pages 12 and 13.

WE CAN SUCCEED

2018, our centenary year, was a momentous year for the union, and as we head into 2019, we will undoubtedly face further challenges in the form of cuts and attacks on the trade union movement.

The Westminster government is imploding over Brexit, and what is most clear to me is that we need to give the British people a choice over who governs. We need a general election to break this deadlock, and we stand ready to help defeat this government which has attacked our pensions, frozen our pay and is wrecking our service through cuts. We need a reversal of the years of austerity imposed on the fire and rescue service and our members.

We will continue to fight locally and nationally against cuts; cuts which put the public at risk. The recent fantastic success in Merseyside shows that it can be done. When we all stand together, with one voice united, we can win.

At the unveiling of the plaque for John Noble: (l-r) Scottish FRS LSO Roddie Keith, WM Alan Faulds, FBU Scottish regional secretary Denise Christie stand with Lorraine and Linzi Noble, the wife and daughter of John Noble. Unfortunately, John's son Kyle was not able to attend the ceremony

A BETTER PAY DEAL

In the coming months, we're focused on getting you a better pay deal. This is the union's key priority.

Pay negotiations have started ahead of a July settlement, and we're hammering home the message that firefighters need and deserve more than they are getting.

The chancellor announced in November that austerity is over, but we see no signs of that being true.

The government must put its money where its mouth is, and give hardworking FBU members the pay rise they deserve.

FIREFIGHTERS 100 LOTTERY

The Firefighters 100 Lottery is continuing to commemorate our fallen comrades, and already this year a red plaque was unveiled in Scotland, to remember brother John Noble who died in 2008.

The legacy of the FBU centenary continues through the vital funds provided through the lottery, and this year, along with other projects, proceeds will be funding vital research into the contaminants that our members are exposed to at work (see page 14).

The research project, in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire, will be visiting sites across the UK to test firefighters and equipment for contaminants.

The three year study will be the first research of its kind in the UK, and will help inform best practice, and give us the information we need to protect you and our profession.

GRENFELL INQUIRY

As 2018 drew to a close, so did phase one of the Grenfell inquiry, and with it, the news that phase two of the inquiry will be delayed until late 2019, at the earliest.

The delay is a blow to anyone seeking justice. It appears that those who need to be held to account, the corporate interests, the politicians, the very people who have allowed public safety to be undermined over decades, will not have to answer questions more than two years after the tragedy.

Grenfell will continue to be a key part of the union's work in 2019, and working with community groups we want to ensure that the tragedy and the related national issues such as building safety and social housing provision, remain on the political and public agenda.

CONTENTS

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019

NEWS

4 FBU pensions win in High Court

5 Fire incidents on the rise
Cuts campaign win
Scottish national standards

6 Inspections expose effects of austerity
Firefighters honoured for bravery
FBU officers' seminar

FEATURES

8 California wildfires
Firefighter talks to a local union leader who fought the worst-ever blazes in the state

12 Pensions
Your questions answered

14 Contaminants
Frontline firefighters will play a crucial role in new research

16 So many near misses
Northern Ireland firefighters remember the Troubles – first of a two-part series

REGULARS

5 Sounding off
Time to act on Grenfell promises

7 News focus
Grenfell inquiry delayed

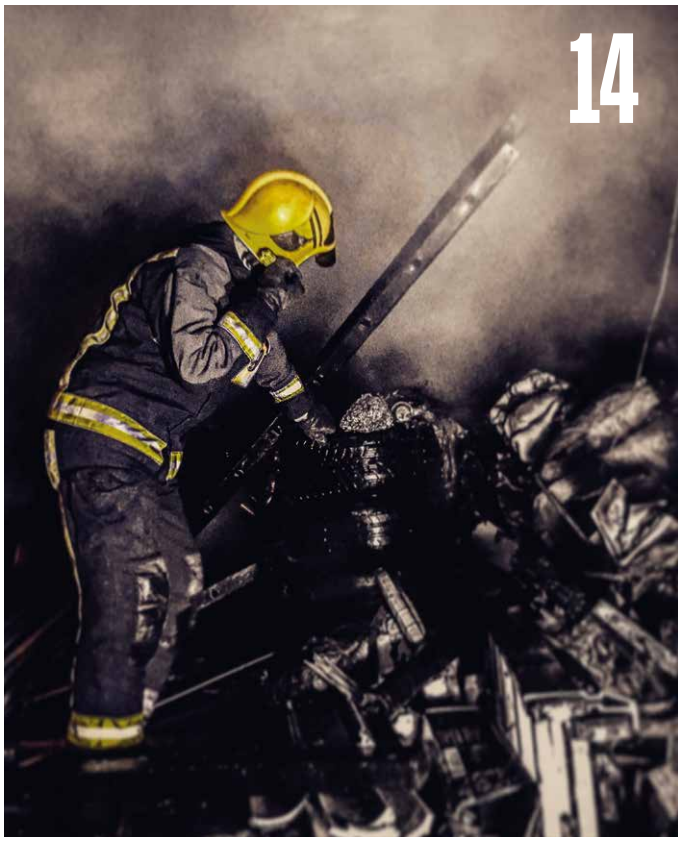
20 Equalities
Glasgow LGBT+ school
ULF – helping women to become firefighters

21 Legal Beagle
Hazardous substances – make sure you are safe

22 Noticeboard
FBU fire appliance is refurbished
Who gets a 40-year badge?

23 Station Cat
Ousted CFO was right

24 25 and 40 year badges



WAYNE ROE

FIREFIGHTER

Published by the Fire Brigades Union
Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road
Kingston upon Thames KT2 7AE
www.fbu.org.uk

Firefighter production team:
Lizzie Dowd, Anna Zych,
Lisa Irving and Alan Slingsby

Cover image: Christian Monterrosa/ SIPA/ PA IMAGES

Print: Southernprint Ltd,
17–21 Factory Road, Poole, BH16 5SN

PEFC Certified
This product is from sustainably managed forests and controlled sources
PEFC/16-33-582
www.pefc.org

SPECIAL EDITION FIREFIGHTER WATCHES

After two successful runs of watches with Elliot Brown, the project has so far raised an incredible £16,000 for the FBU's chosen charities so we've decided to run it again this year

There are two watch variants: 43mm Canford black dial, £400; and 38mm Kimmeridge blue dial, £395.
- Four versions with red, blue, green or white watch detailing
- Supplied on custom rubber straps plus additional premium leather strap (stainless steel bracelet option available)
- Special firefighter edition dial, hands and case back with personalised engraving included
- Only available to firefighters, FBU members and support staff, serving and retired

Order at www.elliotbrownwatches.com/fire before 15 May 2019 for delivery October 2019
Available only via pre-order

Elliot Brown donate £35 from every watch sold to the FBU's chosen charities

NEWS

AUSTERITY EXPOSED

Inspections reveal that cuts mean protection work is inadequate p6

GRENFELL INQUIRY DELAYED

Core participants fear momentum will be lost p7

IAN NARLOW

The imposed scheme forced younger and older firefighters into different pension arrangements

IMPOSED PENSION ARRANGEMENTS ARE AGE DISCRIMINATION, HIGH COURT RULES

PENSIONS

In a major victory for the FBU, the Court of Appeal has ruled that the government's transitional arrangements for firefighters' pensions amount to "age discrimination" by forcing younger and older firefighters enrolled in the 1992 pension scheme onto different pensions.

Reforms imposed in 2015 by the Tory-Lib Dem coalition government included a "transitional protection" that kept older members on the existing scheme while forcing younger members onto a new, worse scheme.

Under the new scheme, firefighters are not able to retire before 60. A review commissioned by the government found that between 23% and 92% of current firefighters will not be able to maintain the required level of fitness until 60.

Members choosing to retire at 55 would see their pension reduced by 21.8%.

"The Tory-Lib Dem government took no notice of the detailed evidence we provided about the specific nature of firefighters' work," said Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary.

"An occupational pension should be based on the realities of that occupation. The government ignored this."

The FBU initiated more than 6,000 Employment Tribunal claims that the changes amounted to unlawful age discrimination. The High Court ruling is the latest in an ongoing battle of tribunals and appeals between the union and the government.

Similar reforms were forced on judges, whose case was heard alongside the FBU's.

In the latest hearing of a long and arduous legal battle, the Court of Appeal considered two questions:

- Did the government have a "legitimate aim" in introducing the transitional protection?
- Were the means used to achieve this appropriate and reasonably necessary?

The court determined that the government did not have a "legitimate aim" in its introduction of the transitional protection arrangement.

As the FBU won on the first question, the court said it did not need to consider the second.

Matt Wrack accused the government of wasting taxpayers' money, demanding "swift and tangible action to address this unlawful policy".

The government is now seeking a Supreme Court hearing. The Court of Appeal has rejected the government's initial Supreme Court application, but the government has now applied directly to the Supreme Court for an appeal.

■ Sean Starbuck, FBU national officer, answers your questions on page 12. Subscribe to Rollcall, our e-newsletter at bit.ly/FBUrollcall to keep updated on the legal case.

Campaign meeting: (l-r) Liverpool, Walton MP Dan Carden; Tommy Hughes, FBU Merseyside vice-chair; Les Skarratts, FBU North West executive committee member; and Mark Rowe, FBU North West region secretary

CAMPAIGN SAVES COVER, JOBS AND APPLIANCES

Working with local Labour party branches, MPs and the mayor of Liverpool, the FBU has won its fight to maintain night time cover at two fire stations and to increase the number of fire appliances in Merseyside.

The campaign against cuts proposed by the fire authority received widespread public support.

Almost 20,000 people signed a petition opposing the removal of night time cover at City Centre and Wallasey fire stations.

Chief fire officer Phil Garrigan responded to the campaign by proposing to increase the number of fire appliances from 26 to 30 and to increase firefighter jobs from 620 to 642, plus 20 recruits in training.

Mark Rowe, FBU regional secretary in the North West said: "We welcome these proposals and urge the fire authority to fully support them."

FIRE INCIDENTS ON THE RISE DESPITE MINISTER'S CLAIM

FIRE INCIDENTS

England fire minister Nick Hurd has claimed that fire incidents are decreasing, despite Home Office figures showing a 3% increase in the last year.

He was responding to a House of Commons question from shadow fire minister Karen Lee.

Fire services in England responded to 167,257 fire incidents in 2017/18 – the highest level since 2013-2014.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary said: "The government is choosing to ignore its own figures."

More than 9,000 fire and rescue jobs – one in five – have been lost in England since 2010/11. But in the same period non-fire incidents, including floods, rescues and road traffic collisions, have increased by 18% to over 170,000.

"Firefighting is no longer about just fighting fires, it is about much more," said Wrack. "These figures reveal the immense value of the work of firefighters, and also the scale of the challenge they face."

SOUNDING OFF

Government must act on promises, says Lord Kennedy of Southwark, shadow minister for local government and vice president of the Local Government Association

TIME TO ACT ON GRENFELL PLEDGES

In the days that followed the Grenfell Tower tragedy, government at every level expressed support for swift action to deal with the aftermath – a judge-led inquiry, homes for residents made homeless, support for local authorities to remove cladding, and a promise to remove dangerous material on buildings in the private sector.

But 18 months later, the position is very different. Some residents are still homeless, and people are still living in both private and public sector buildings with dangerous inflammable cladding.

There is currently no government funding for local authorities to remove dangerous cladding from public buildings if they are not above 18 metres in height. This is despite a ban on such cladding on schools, hospitals, care homes and other such buildings, which came into force last year.

The government must deliver on its pledge and empower local authorities to remove combustible cladding from all public buildings, with payments in advance to facilitate this work.

No action is being taken by the owners of private sector buildings. The government must provide upfront funding for local authorities to remove combustible cladding, and local authorities should be given powers to recover costs from the building owners, and then pay back the government.

Grenfell Tower shocked the whole nation, and the heroism of the firefighters and other emergency service workers on the night rightly deserves praise. As is often said in the aftermath of tragedies, we must make sure it never happens again.

To make that a reality in the case of Grenfell, the urgent action promised 18 months ago needs to be delivered now.

INSPECTIONS SHOW FIRE SERVICES FAILING TO PROVIDE PROTECTION

INSPECTIONS

Cuts mean some fire services are struggling to provide adequate protection work, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services has found.

Its report on a first tranche of services in England was the first since 2009.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said the findings highlighted the fragmentation of the service and the difficulties this presents.

"Since there are no longer nationally set standards for fire and rescue, it is hard for any inspectorate to measure against a benchmark," he said. "Fragmentation is resulting in a postcode lottery of 999 response times and standards."

The inspections looked at 14 fire and rescue services – accounting for less than a third of the sector – and assessed efficiency, capability to protect the public, response times and ability to look after employees.

In half of those inspected, they found outdated technology, under-investment and lack of proper resourcing.

A major concern was the inability of several services to provide protection work due to budget restrictions. Services are struggling to recruit, train and retain staff with the specialist skills needed to carry out more complex technical protection work.

The report found that protection work to improve standards of fire safety in premises such as hospitals and care homes is not always being done as often as it should.

"The report's findings are the stark reality of austerity – services are overstretched and under-resourced, and unable to fulfil key parts of their remit," said Wrack.

FBU BACKS ANTI-AUSTERITY RALLY

SURREY

Surrey firefighters joined other public sector workers on a 300-strong march through Woking town centre to protest against government cuts to public services. The protest was in response to Surrey county council's plans to cut £200m from public service budgets by 2021.

Lee Belsten, FBU brigade secretary in Surrey, stressed the impact of austerity, saying: "We have become reliant on other services, and there are fewer firefighters now than in 2010.

"Future cuts are going to mean fewer fire stations, appliances and firefighters. Every second counts – our lives will be at risk."

FIREFIGHTERS HONOURED FOR EXCEPTIONAL BRAVERY

HERTFORDSHIRE

Seven firefighters from Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service received the Queen's Gallantry Medals in the New Year Honours for an act of "exceptional bravery" in their rescue of 35 elderly care home residents.

The fire at Newgrange Care Home, Cheshunt in April 2017 *(right)*, spread inside the roof of the property, rapidly escalating the incident and preventing evacuation. Sadly, two residents lost their lives.

PAUL WOOD

Wayne Ansell, Simon Best, Ricky Davis, Christopher Meadows, Radoslaw Przemyslaw Pejk and Simon Waddington, and crew commander, Daniel Cooper, were all honoured.

The firefighters used their own bodies as shields to protect casualties as the flaming debris fell. Each firefighter repeatedly re-entered the care home "knowing that had they not, the loss of life would have been catastrophic," said the citation.

UNION PROVIDES TRAINING FOR FBU OFFICERS

FBU OFFICERS' SEMINAR

Delegates representing seven UK regions met in Sheffield for an FBU officers' seminar. Topics discussed ranged across Grenfell, standards of promotion, work streams, HMI and mental health.

Paul Gould from Northern Ireland attended his first officer seminar after a recent promotion and said: "It allowed me to engage with other officer members from right across the UK and facilitated fantastic debate on the issues we all face, as well as how best to develop the officers' role within the FBU for the future."

Kathryn Duncan also attended as a new officer, highlighting briefings on Grenfell and work streams input. She noted that the broad but detailed programme "provided a good starting point to my ONC knowledge".

Russell Byrne said that the seminar offered him "a glimpse of the direction other fire and rescue services are taking and how they are dealing with the subjects covered.

"It has enthused and reinvigorated me to discuss officer issues within my own service here in Scotland."

Attendees thanked Ian Murray, Andy Noble, Lindsey McDowell, Steve White and Greg Ashman, whose time and input were instrumental to the success of the event.

■ Any officer member from the rank of WC wishing to receive the FBU officer's newsletter should email FBU Scotland officers' secretary Phil McDonald at phil.mcdonald@fbu.org.uk – with private email address, name, rank and brigade.

FBU members in January this year taking part in the monthly 'silent walk' in remembrance of all those who died at Grenfell Tower

GUY SMALLMAN

PHASE TWO OF GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY IS DELAYED

The second phase of the public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire has been delayed and is unlikely to start before the end of this year.

Phase two will focus on the circumstances and decisions leading to the disaster and was expected to begin this spring, but has been postponed due to the scale of the investigation.

In his closing statements for phase one, inquiry chairman Sir Martin Moore-Bick acknowledged the eagerness to "shine a light"on the decisions leading to the tragedy, but said that there is "still much work to do: before phase two can begin".

The inquiry expects to disclose over 200,000 documents to core participants, but the exercise is currently not expected to be completed until the autumn of this year.

The delay has caused frustration amongst some of the core participants, including the bereaved, survivors and residents, who fear that momentum will be lost and those responsible will not be held accountable.

Karim Mussilhy, whose uncle Hesham Rahman died in the fire, fears the delay gives corporate and building organisations "time to regroup and find wiggle room and loopholes". He said: "We know the lifts, the insulation, the doors weren't suitable. We can call these companies out right now and put a stop to these manufacturing processes so these materials are no longer used.

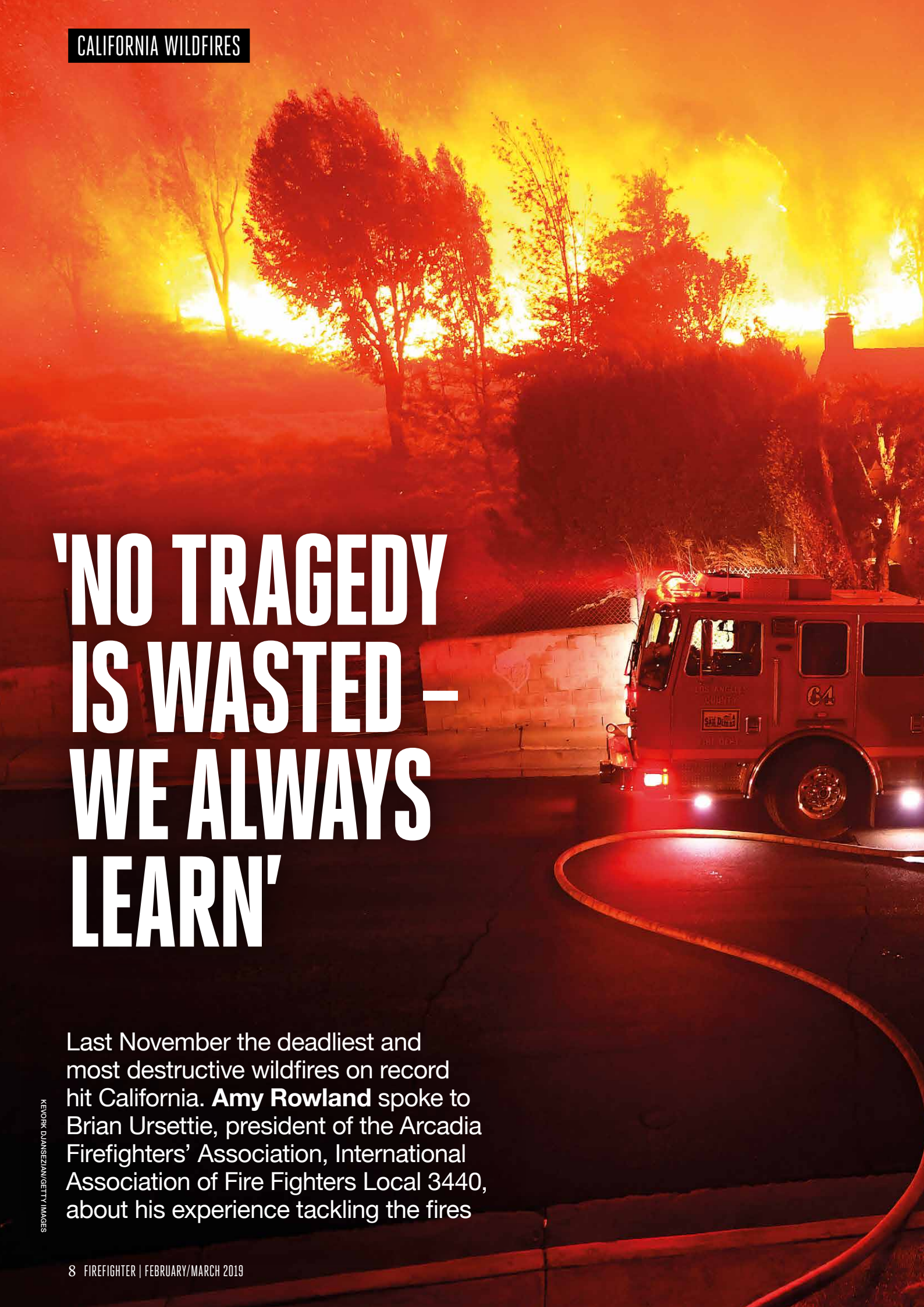
'THIS PUBLIC INQUIRY HAS TO MAKE SURE THIS FIRE DOESN'T HAPPEN AGAIN'

"This public inquiry has to make sure this fire doesn't happen again."

The FBU submitted recommendations in its closing statement to phase one of the inquiry, calling for the government to immediately remove all dangerous cladding from high rise residential buildings as well as for a review of evacuation procedures in the event that "stay put" becomes untenable.

The union has also called for a review of fire service procedures and training.

The inquiry is due to publish a preliminary report into the findings of phase one, including urgent recommendations, but a date for this has not yet been confirmed.



'NO TRAGEDY IS WASTED – WE ALWAYS LEARN'

Last November the deadliest and most destructive wildfires on record hit California. **Amy Rowland** spoke to Brian Ursettie, president of the Arcadia Firefighters' Association, International Association of Fire Fighters Local 3440, about his experience tackling the fires

KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES

Los Angeles County firefighters look on as the out of control Woolsey fire explodes behind a house in the West Hills neighbourhood. About 75,000 homes were evacuated in Los Angeles and Ventura counties

In the 11 years that Brian Ursettie has been a firefighter, the wildfires that hit California last November, were the worst he had seen. The fires raged for over a week, killing 87 people and forcing more than 250,000 to flee their homes.

Brian says: "Living in California, I've seen and dealt with many wildfires before, but I've never seen one on that scale. It touched so many parts of the city at once, destroying everything in its wake.

"The blaze started on 8 November near Thousand Oaks, an area 40 miles north-west of central Los Angeles. Another blaze, the Hill Fire, started at about the same time, also near Thousand Oaks. Strong winds of up to 70mph aggravated the conditions, intensifying the heat with the flames spreading fast."

Brian was on the second day of a 48-hour shift when his station got the call to help. "We train every year for wild fires and try and prepare for every eventuality, learning from each one. But quite early on I could tell this was different and on a bigger scale. It was so windy and intense."

HARDEST DAYS OF HIS CAREER

Indeed, Los Angeles fire chief Daryl Osby said the blaze "signified a shift" adding that fire crews faced "the most erratic and challenging fight of their lives".

For Brian, it was the start of the hardest eight days of his firefighting career. "There were four of us on one engine. Luckily, we're a solid crew who work well together. We drove into one neighbourhood and there were houses burning on the left of us, and to the right, as we drove down the middle. We had to adapt quickly to areas we didn't know, remembering entrances and exits. You have to put your trust 100% into your crew.

"And knowing your limitations is important. We only have a 500-gallon tank, therefore only have the capacity to focus on saving lives and structures. As the fire moved, we were unable to work on containing the flames. We just had to pull back and move on to the next house to do what we could to stop the fire from spreading.

"It became an impossible task. We were awake for 56 hours before I was finally able to speak to my wife and three children. Adrenalin was what kept us going. We couldn't think about victims and what they had lost, you just can't, it's too overwhelming.

"Other firefighters had lost their homes, but carried on with their job. It was a privilege to work alongside them."

The local union acted fast, setting up a base camp. Debit cards loaded with money were handed out to the firefighters and their families who had lost their homes to get essentials. There were sleep trailers and food stations and, in the first aid tent, peer support counsellors.

Brian says: "I'd never seen counsellors on the ground before and it was great to see. It certainly showed how far the fire service has come in breaking down the macho image of 'you shouldn't talk about your feelings'. We saw devastation, houses burnt to the ground and people running to safety leaving everything they'd built behind. Of course, it's going to affect you.

"I've never been afraid to say I was scared by things I had seen or jobs we had been on to my colleagues. But so many were. It's good that the union are helping to break down the mental health stigma and opening lines of communication. It provided a huge level of comfort at a time when everyone was so stressed and exhausted."

HEARTBREAKING

87 lives were lost in the Woolsey and the Camp fire. 18,000 structures were destroyed and more than 250,000 people were forced to flee their homes, with Mark Ghilarducci, of the California governor's office, saying: "The magnitude of the destruction of the fire is unbelievable and heartbreaking".

Three months on, the residents of California continue to try and piece their lives back together.

Brian says: "I can't speak for everyone, about how they feel emotionally after a tragic incident like this, but it's so hard to go from 100mph to stillness and normal life.

"But I hope as a result of the tragedy the government will put more funding into our fire service.

"In our city there are three firefighters on every engine. During wild fires there are four but the union are saying we should have four all the time so I hope this happens.

"But no tragedy is wasted – we always learn and take something away as we will with this."

GENE BLEVINS/ZUMA/PA IMAGES

ROB SCHUMACHER/SIPA USA/PA IMAGES

Firefighters tackle a hotspot as the Hill Fire burns in a canyon in Thousand Oaks

'THE UNION IS HELPING TO BREAK DOWN THE MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA AND OPENING LINES OF COMMUNICATION'

Firefighters battle the Woolsey fire

PENSIO

In December, the FBU secured a major legal win. The Court of Appeal ruled that the government's transitional protection for firefighters on the 1992 pension scheme constituted age discrimination. This is what we know so far.

What does this judgement prove?

The judgement proves that, by imposing the new scheme on members born before a certain date, while allowing older members to remain on the old scheme, the government's actions were discriminatory. Because of this, the government was not able to show "legitimate aim" for its actions, as those actions were unlawful.

Is the government able to appeal the decision?

The government did not have an automatic right to appeal this decision. Rather, the government had to apply to the Court of Appeal for permission to appeal to the Supreme Court. The Court of Appeal have rejected this application. However, the government has now applied directly to the Supreme Court for an appeal hearing. This avenue is available to all cases refused by the Court of Appeal.

What are the next steps in the legal process?

The application for appeal will be considered by a three-judge panel. This panel will consider if the application raises an arguable point of law that is of importance to the general public. The panel will bear in mind that the matter has already been the subject of judicial decision and may have already been reviewed on appeal. The government will not be able to use this process to introduce new evidence.

Can we oppose this application to appeal?

As part of this application process the FBU submitted a written objection in late January arguing why permission to appeal should not be granted.

When will we find out if an appeal has been granted?

The panel which considers permission applications only meets periodically which will have a bearing on the timescale for any decision. This makes it difficult to give an accurate indication of when we expect to find out if this application has been successful. We will update members as soon as possible.

What does the union plan to do next?

The FBU is waiting to see if the government is granted the right to appeal. If the Supreme Court decides to hear its case, the FBU will continue to defend its members from discrimination. If not, the case will progress to a remedy hearing.

What is a remedy hearing?

A remedy hearing allows participants in a court case to agree a solution to the matter, following a successful ruling. In this, the FBU will attempt to negotiate a settlement with the government that does not fall foul of discrimination legislation.

What, if any, impact, will this have for those enrolled in the 1992 scheme?

Following a remedy hearing, members of the 1992 scheme will have a remedial solution applied to undo the effect of age discrimination. There may be several remedies. Our aim will, of course, be to try to extend the transitional protection to all 1992 scheme members. However, this is only one potential solution which will be considered in the remedy hearing.

Will this have any effect on members enrolled in the 2006 pension scheme?

The ruling only covers 1992 scheme members. The FBU has not submitted a claim in relation to 2006 members.

Will there be any further action in support of 2006 scheme members?

This is currently being discussed. More details will be available when the discussions have concluded.

NS Q&A

Sean Starbuck, FBU national officer, answers your questions on the FBU's legal win for members of the 1992 pension scheme

What does this mean for the pensions reforms introduced in 2015?

This ruling was made solely in relation to the transitional protection applied to those on the 1992 scheme and does not reflect the 2015 scheme.

What is the recommended course of action for those who left their pension scheme as they did not want to transition onto the new scheme?

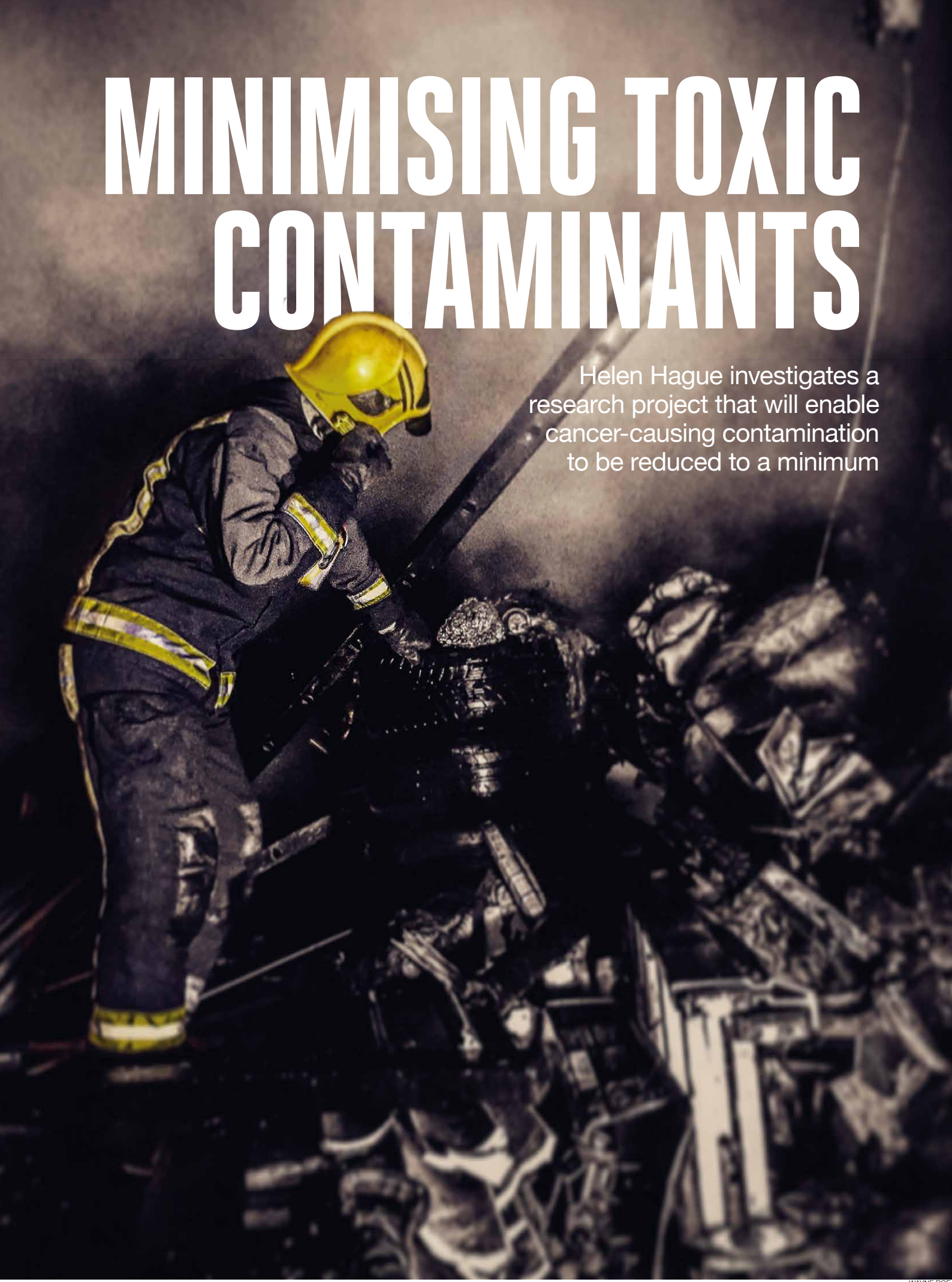
The FBU has consistently told members not to opt out of their scheme. This has been of greater importance still as our challenge has remained ongoing. Members who opted out may be in a difficult position and may not be covered by this decision in the same way as active members. That being said, we will be raising this issue and will try to address some of the concerns. However, members in this situation must realise that this is a challenging issue and we cannot guarantee any success.

■ **You can find the most up-to-date information on this case and all of our pensions campaigns on Twitter, Facebook, or the FBU website.**

■ **Subscribe to the union's e-newsletter: bit.ly/FBURollCall**

MINIMISING TOXIC CONTAMINANTS

Helen Hague investigates a research project that will enable cancer-causing contamination to be reduced to a minimum



WAYNE ROE

Firefighters never know what the next shift will bring. Crew members could find themselves rescuing people from burning buildings, dousing down flames belching out of a warehouse or attending a multi-vehicle road crash. One thing is for sure – it will never be a risk-free profession.

But risk can be minimised - and a new three-year project, bankrolled by £250,000 from the Firefighters' Lottery Fund and the University of Central Lancashire, aims to minimise the risk of exposure to contaminants linked to cancer.

It is being led by FBU head office and Professor Anna Stec, lead researcher in fire chemistry and toxicity at the University of Central Lancashire, recognised nationally and internationally for her ground-breaking work.

PIONEERING RESEARCH

The project aims to build on pioneering research Professor Stec and her team published last year. This concluded that skin absorption, rather than inhalation, is a leading cause of exposure to carcinogenic elements released in fires.

These toxins are known as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons or PAHs. The study also found that a firefighter's risk of developing cancer may be increased when high levels of harmful chemicals remain on personal protective equipment (PPE) following exposure to smoke.

When the report was first published, Professor Stec said: "We already know the incidence of cancer is higher amongst firefighters compared to the general public, and that it is their leading cause of death. We have now identified skin absorption as their principal source of exposure to cancerous gases."

This was the first UK study to identify the occupational exposure of firefighters to PAHs and to establish whether particular practices may affect their health.

Researchers found even kit that looks clean can be contaminated from a previous job. This is because methods used to clean PPE might not always be up to scratch, as procedures have not been properly adhered to.

Because of this, skin can be exposed to dangerous fire toxins for longer periods.

The FBU is already on the case. Following the report's publication, fresh guidance has been issued outlining simple steps firefighters can take to minimise the risk of exposure to contaminants.

Making sure PPE is cleaned after every "shout" and using wet wipes to wipe soot off skin promptly after exposure at the fire ground will help reduce risk.

And never stuff dirty gloves into fire helmets. The study found this practice led to a high concentration of PAHs that remained in the helmet long after the gloves had been removed.

Sean Starbuck, FBU national officer, says the team's initial research is already making a difference, by flagging up bad practices and encouraging firefighters to "ditch bad habits and learn good ones".

Simple procedures can help transform a culture. He also hopes this could lead to collaboration for the greater good. There's already been a lot of "buy-in" to Professor Stec's project from fire authorities.

"Once we've explained it, everybody sees the benefit," says Starbuck. "It's win-win all round. We need to find out what works best in minimising contamination, get rid of ways of doing things that aren't delivering – and share the information so everybody benefits. It's not about naming and shaming."

FRONTLINE FIREFIGHTERS AND OTHER STAFF MEMBERS WILL PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE THREE-YEAR PROJECT

LONG CAMPAIGN

The union has long campaigned for better workplace safety for firefighters – and the risk of exposure to toxic contaminants has moved up the agenda in recent years, as anyone who has been to FBU conference will know.

It can be years before contamination takes its toll. Which is why awareness of contaminants and minimising the risk of exposure to known toxins released by fire is so vital. Retired firefighters can remember only too well practices that may have exposed them needlessly to toxic gases. Some may even remember the "smoke-eaters" of yesteryear – who went into smoke-filled buildings without breathing apparatus.

Professor Stec's initial research said long-term detailed follow up studies were needed to capture the "individual contaminant exposures" responsible for raised cancer levels among firefighters. It was "important to track and monitor as many active firefighters as possible".

FRONTLINE FIREFIGHTERS

This is where rank-and-file FBU members can play an important role in helping make the workplace safer for those who risk being exposed to toxic contaminants.

Frontline firefighters and other staff members will play a crucial role in the three-year project that has just got under way.

Equipment, protective gear and appliances will be swabbed.

Sean Starbuck is keen to spread the word among FBU members and fire and rescue services that this project stands to have a positive impact on firefighters' long-term health.

In the coming months, FBU officials will be seeking volunteers prepared to give blood, saliva, urine, hair and skin samples – a swipe from a wipe, nothing too grisly – so researchers can gather crucial data to identify risks and improve safety for all.

The data captured will include a short survey of participants' health, smoking habits, and time in the service – under strict confidentiality and ethical research guidelines. Eventually, when all the data is gathered, it will enable Professor Stec and her team to "generate a robust risk paradigm" to minimise contamination from toxic substances.

So why not volunteer to be part of a project that stands to make life safer for firefighters – out on the fire ground or back at the station. And, in doing so, help minimise the risk of contamination in the line of duty.

Contact your regional representative to find out more about how to get your fire and rescue service involved.

PART 1

WE HAD SO MANY NEAR MISSES

In the first of a two-part series, **Will Stone** uncovers the stories of firefighting during the Troubles in Northern Ireland

Left: 2 July 1993: Donegall Road, Belfast. Armed, masked men hijacked and burned a fire appliance

Below: Police, soldiers and firefighters at the scene of the Abercorn Restaurant bombing in central Belfast on Saturday afternoon, 4 March 1972. Two young women were killed and more than 130 people injured.

MIRRORPIX

One of the least known stories in firefighting history is the experience of firefighters during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. An arguably peaceful civil rights campaign had morphed into a nasty, bitter and bloody conflict between armed Republicans and the British government and those loyal to it, known as loyalists or unionists.

Between 1969 and 1997 the fire service in Northern Ireland was stretched to the limit of its resources on numerous occasions by street violence, attacks on crews, and relentless bombing and arson campaigns.

Under such conditions, firefighters were required to carry out their duties in different and far more dangerous circumstances. There arguably had not been such a heightened risk to firefighters' lives since the Blitz. Why? Because unlike most fires that happen accidentally, in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, many were intended. This meant that antagonists on both sides of the conflict might not always take kindly to firefighters putting them out.

A young Tony Maguire, who served as the Fire Brigades Union regional secretary in Northern Ireland from 2000 to 2008, recalls responding to an incident at a supermarket in West Belfast in 1981 where smoke was billowing out.

"We were aware that some rioting had happened earlier in the evening but, on our arrival, the area was deserted and appeared to be all quiet," he recalls.

"We set about forcing entry into the premises and while I was at breathing apparatus (BA) control preparing to go into the premises, a man appeared as if from nowhere.

"He was wearing a balaclava mask and was carrying a pistol. He approached BA entry control and introduced himself as being from the Provisional Irish Republican Army and instructed us to leave the area.

"We followed his advice to the letter, intending to return whenever the police had secured the area however this took considerable time and when we eventually returned, the shop was a burn-out."

Tony confesses that the incident did not frighten him: "I did not believe that the gunman would harm us so long as we did what we were told."

Although sometimes angered "by the senseless destruction of property," Tony accepts that on occasion buildings were left to burn out if it wasn't certain that there were no further bombs that could kill firefighters as they tried to put out the fire.

Perhaps shocking for some, although clearly very much part of the reality of being a firefighter during the Troubles, Tony says: "We were attacked, threatened and intimidated on thousands of occasions in a wide range of circumstances.

"Attacks on fire crews increased exponentially during my career and there are many complex sociological reasons for this.

"On some occasions, firefighters were intimidated and threatened in a more direct and personal manner."

Mark McCartan, who started as a firefighter for Northern Ireland fire brigade aged 24 in March 1992, later in the Troubles, can identify with this experience.

He says that at various times he has been attacked with BB guns, kicked, punched, spat on and had bricks thrown at him,

"generally by disrupting youths", and brought about by the "badness" of the situation.

Mark recalls one day being saved by the reinforced glass on his fire truck's window: "I was driving one day and someone threw a car jack that hit the windscreen in front of me.

"We were obviously in the middle of riots and lots of riots were going on."

Throughout this era, the FBU in Northern Ireland faced great difficulty and had many uphill battles to protect and represent members. Cohesion within the membership was imperative and the service had at all times to walk a tightrope to ensure it was not only serving the community but was recognised by everyone for its total impartiality.

OUTSTANDING OFFICIALS

During this period the union's membership was served by some outstanding officials. People like Ken Kernaghan, Hugh McKay and Archie Culbert set down most of the initial groundwork for future safety and wellbeing of members.

Things like shatterproof glass, double windscreens and enhanced door locks on appliances had to be fought for.

The reason for these safeguards was to reduce the traumatic effect on firefighters. Still, the FBU faced a hard fight to have a counselling service introduced, which only truly succeeded after the notorious Shankill Road bombing, in which an explosion in a fish and chip shop killed ten people, including two children, a loyalist paramilitary, and the IRA bomber.

At times of high tension, officials would endeavour to talk to influential leaders in the community and elsewhere to gain support and recognition for fire brigade neutrality.

Management did not always support or agree to these ideas and initiatives, and at times had to be dragged forward kicking and screaming.

Jim Hughes, also a former Northern Ireland regional secretary, who held the position before Tony, is at 70 a veteran firefighter of the Troubles. He served almost throughout the period, starting out aged 22 in 1970, months after the Troubles started, and retiring in 2000 – two years after the signing of the Good Friday agreement that marked the end of the major conflict.

His family were victims of a burn-out during the infamous riots of 1969, after their home in the Catholic area of Bombay Street was set on fire. Jim and his father, who had served as a firefighter during the war, fought a losing battle to put out the fire themselves after firefighters were forced to withdraw in the back of an ambulance because of extreme violence and gunfire. They were eventually rehoused, but

Right: Ten people, including two children and one of two bombers, died in the Shankill Road bombing of 23 October 1993. More than 50 were wounded

Below: (l-r) Mark McCartan, Jim Hughes and Tony Maguire

FIREFIGHTERS WERE OFTEN RESPONDING TO FIRES IN WAR-LIKE ZONES

his parents had to wait eight years for compensation.

Over the years Jim has seen further first-hand attempts to prevent fires being put out.

On one occasion in West Belfast, he recalls: "I was driving the fire truck when armed men stepped out to try and stop us.

"I managed to swerve around them and got away, but I'm fairly certain they knew where we were heading and sought to try and prevent us from putting out the fire we were being called to.

"There were other occasions when complete fire crews were taken hostage and individual firefighters kidnapped."

Little surprise then that deaths, and plenty of injuries, to firefighters occurred during the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

One firefighter, Brian Douglas, was shot dead by loyalist paramilitaries in the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) on February 7, 1973. Gunmen shot at the fire brigade when they turned up to respond to a shop fire and car burnings in Sandy Row, Belfast.

Jim and Brian had trained together in the same recruitment class but served on different watches.

"Brian's death certainly made firefighters more cautious," Jim says, explaining that it was a wake-up call to the fact that they were often responding to fires in war-like zones.

"We were so lucky in many ways. There were days when we could have easily had half a dozen firefighters killed. It was a very traumatic time and a struggle not to let it get to you.

"We had so many near misses it was unbelievable. One incident in College Square North in Belfast saw five firefighters

injured as a secondary bomb went off while they were in the building firefighting. Some retired soon after that so traumatic was the incident. They literally had bricks and rubble collapsing all around them."

A poignant early memory of Tony's is the death of sub-officer Wesley Orr of Lisburn retained station, who was killed in an explosion on November 16, 1978.

When he arrived at the station that morning he knew something was up as both fire engines were out.

"I went to the duty office to listen to the radio traffic from the incident on the ground," he says.

"We could tell by the tone and anxiety in the voices of those sending the messages that all was not going well and that some firefighters had been injured.

"No details of the nature of the injuries were passed. I can recall the tension and apprehension amongst my colleagues gathered around the radio.

"A lot of cigarettes were smoked in that office that morning."

Eventually they learnt from a district officer that four firefighters had been caught in the blast of a second bomb. It had exploded while they responded to a fire caused by an IRA bomb at Bass brewery in Belfast. Early word was that Wesley Orr had been badly injured.

"It was less than a year since the national strike and relationships between us and the Lisburn firefighters were not good," Tony says. They had not always observed the call to strike.

"I had little experience of working with them but they were the next station to our area and very often we turned out with them. When the blue watch members arrived back at the station some of them were visibly upset and we learned the full extent of what had happened.

"The blue watch members had been injured and the Lisburn sub-officer had been killed. I can still remember the tension, anger and sadness that we were feeling. Although I had never spoken with Wesley Orr I felt as if I had lost a family member.

"It was a very sad time and served to intensify the caution with which we handled such incidents."

HORRIFIC INCIDENT

Tony became a firefighter 10 years into the Troubles on January 1978, immediately following the pay strike, where he was posted to Cadogan fire station in South Belfast.

At 20, he was anxious to get his hands dirty, admitting that at the time he saw firefighting as one big adventure, not a job, occupation or career.

Yet he was not weeks into the job before colleagues attended a particularly horrific incident at a hotel in another fire station's area where 12 people were burnt to death in a fireball caused by a bombing.

Tony recalls: "I did not attend this incident but I remember becoming aware that this adventure I was enjoying was not always beer and skittles."

PART 2 NEXT ISSUE OF FIREFIGHTER

LGBT+ SCHOOL

AN INCLUSIVE SERVICE

February is LGBT+ History Month, a time to reflect on advances in LGBT+ representation and past struggles. **Sharon Lewis-King**, who attended an FBU LGBT+ school in Glasgow, writes about her experience

Coming out to your colleagues can seem intimidating, daunting, even life-altering. But David Braniff-Herbert, an award-winning LGBT+ campaigner from the National Education Union, believes it's worth the jump.

Too many LGBT+ firefighters are wasting their energy hiding who they are. David helped attendees to develop ideas for expanding LGBT+ networks locally, regionally, and nationally.

Members of The Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) campaign shared their experience of tackling homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Scottish schools. Research shows that nearly half of all British LGBT+ pupils are bullied for their sexuality.

Last year, TIE successfully campaigned to embed LGBT+ inclusive education in the Scottish curriculum. Pupils will learn about the history of LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex) equalities and movements, as well as tackling homophobia and transphobia and exploring LGBTI identity.

Just as we can learn from LGBT+ movements across the country, we can learn from the progress of our equality allies in the women's and B&EMM movements. This year's Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards showed progress, with categories for most influential woman in fire, and most influential BAME individual in fire. But we have yet to see a category for LGBT+ firefighters.

As we reflect this month on what our community has achieved, I encourage LGBT+ firefighters, and our allies across the service, to consider how we can work to ensure an inclusive fire service where LGBT+ firefighters can thrive.

■ The FBU's equality sections play an important role in ensuring that marginalised groups have strong representation in the organisation and a strong network of peers. These educational opportunities allow members to discuss equality issues with the FBU network and to hear from external experts. **FBU LGBT+ committee national secretary Pat Carberry and chair Yannick Dubois**

■ **www.fbu.org.uk/lgbt**

INSPIRING WOMEN

PROUD TO HELP OTHERS

Laura Wilton used opportunities made possible by the Union Learning Fund to help other women become firefighters

Laura Wilton is the new East Midlands regional education and learning organiser (RELO) and, through the Union Learning Fund (ULF), recently enrolled on the L2 nutrition and health course to supplement her completed Level 3 qualification in personal training.

Laura *(inset)*, 32, five years on blue watch at the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) Arnold fire station, says: "I have benefitted massively from the opportunity to learn new skills through ULF and by taking on the role of RELO hope to contribute by making others aware of the opportunities available."

Notts FRS, ran a recruitment initiative in 2017. It highlighted the diverse range of skills required to be a firefighter today. It encouraged people from all walks of life to apply, with an emphasis on attracting applicants who may have never considered a career in the fire service. To assist with the campaign Laura ran weekly Firefit training sessions for women who were interested in becoming a firefighter. They prepared them for the physical aspect of the recruitment process.

The job-related tests took place in May 2018. The sessions – for members of Nottinghamshire FRS and also for others who are interested in applying in the future – are continuing, so successful applicants can attend before their course start date.

Most of the successful female applicants who have now begun their employment as apprentice firefighters have benefitted from Laura's training sessions. Her commitment and achievement was recognised at the annual NFRS award ceremony.

Laura says: "It was so gratifying to see their commitment and physical improvement over the months, culminating in successful recruitment. I am immensely proud to be able to help others to join a job which I love.

"Without the opportunity given to me to study a Level 3 personal training apprenticeship with the ULF this would not have been possible."

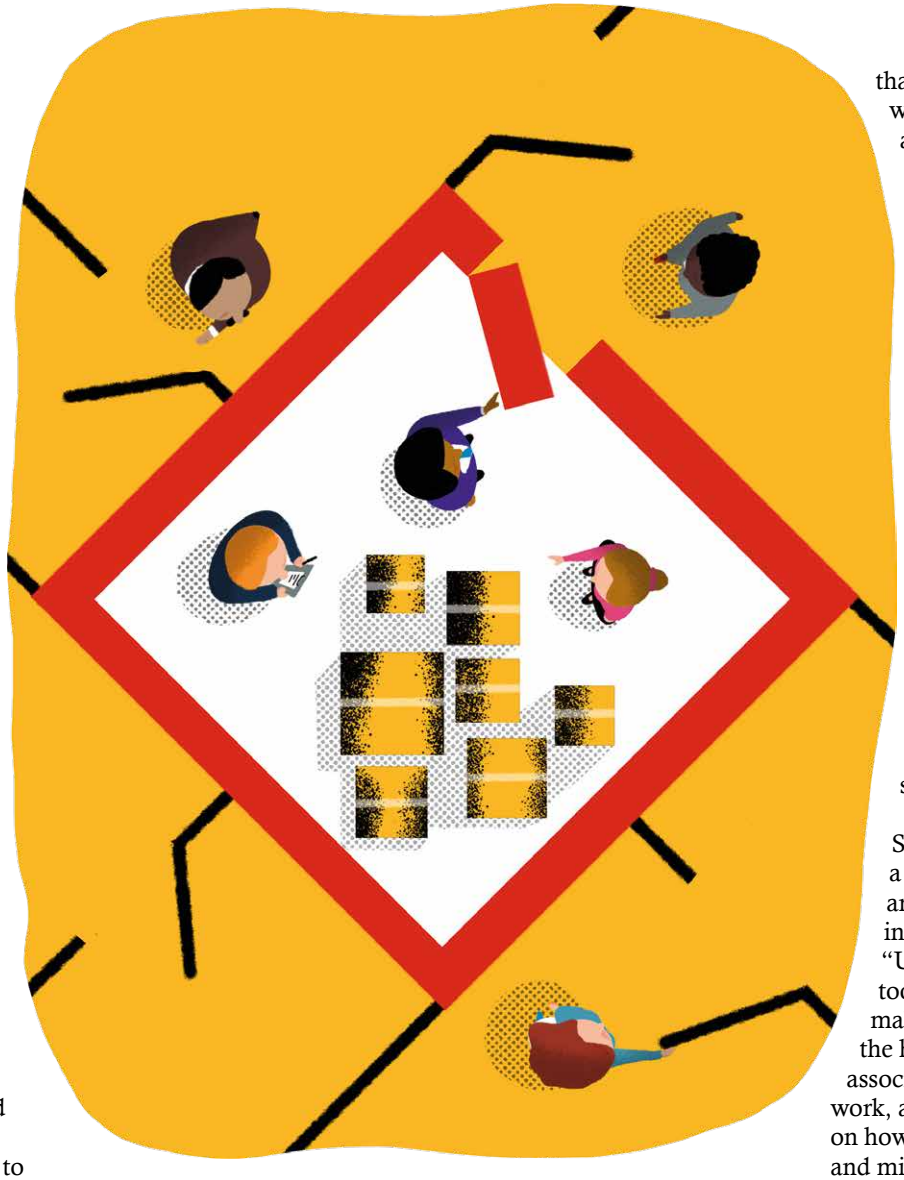
FBU East Midlands women's rep Clare Hudson said: "Since Laura completed the personal training apprenticeship she has been working tirelessly to engage and support women who have expressed an interest in becoming firefighters.

"She has used her skills and her passion to educate, inspire and develop these women.

The apprenticeship Laura undertook through the ULF gave her the skills and confidence to make this huge difference to the face of NFRS and to the 10 women who Laura developed and have since been offered a firefighter post."

FBU FREEPHONE
LEGAL ADVICE
0808 100 6061
IN SCOTLAND
0800 089 1331
WWW.THOMPSONSTRADEUNION.LAW/
TRADE-UNIONS/FBU

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE SAFE



Thousands of workers are made ill by hazardous substances every year. Often, this is because employers have failed to take basic steps to prevent or control their employee's exposure to them.

According to government statistics, 13,000 people die each year from exposure to chemicals and dust at work. Many of these deaths would have been prevented by a robust health and safety culture.

Employers have a legal duty of care for the health and safety of workers. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 outline how employers should assess risks and the measures they should have in place to limit employees' exposure to hazardous substances.

ARE YOU UNDER THE COSHH?

COSHH requires employers to control substances hazardous to health and makes them responsible to provide a safe workplace as well as put procedures in place to prevent or, where that is not possible, to control workers' exposure to hazardous substances.

Before workers carry out any jobs involving hazardous substances, employers must complete a COSHH risk assessment to determine what they should do to protect their employees.

WHAT IS A COSHH RISK ASSESSMENT?

Hazardous substances that require a COSHH risk assessment include but are not limited to: dust, fumes, oils, glues, disinfectants and even biological agents such as mould, fungi or sewage.

As part of a COSHH assessment, employers should:

- Identify all hazardous substances
- Decide who may be at risk and consider how likely it is that their health will be affected
- Evaluate limiting the amount of exposure or using a safer substitute
- Plan and organise the workplace so that hazardous substances are safely stored away and waste is disposed of properly
- Review and frequently monitor the level of exposure to substances at work.

If you are concerned that substances used at work or that you come across in your work could put your health at risk, then you should ask yourself these questions:

- Has my employer ever provided me with any health and safety training?
- Does my employer carry out regular health and safety risk assessments?

If the answer is "No" to either, then you or your trade union representative should speak to your employer immediately seeking the information and training you need to stay safe.

Thompsons Solicitors has compiled a toolkit for employers and employees to share in their workplaces. Our "Under the COSHH" toolkit is designed to make workers aware of the hazardous substances associated with their work, and provide advice on how to prevent ill-health and minimise the risk of accidents.

■ You can find the toolkit at www.thompsonstradeunion.law/news/campaigns/under-the-coshh

If you or a loved one has suffered an illness as a result of exposure to hazardous substances at work, you may be able to make a claim for compensation. Contact our specialist team today for free legal advice on numbers at the top of the page.

FBU FIRE APPLIANCE READY AFTER AN EXTENSIVE REFURB

For more details about the fire appliance and how to book it for campaigning work and union events, please email Gabby on press@fbu.org.uk

MARC BOLAN CRASH APPEAL

Bari Watts is writing a book about the death of 1970s pop star Marc Bolan who died in an RTA on Queen's Ride, Barnes, in South West London, in the early hours of 16 September 1977. A car he was travelling in left the road and hit a tree, killing Bolan instantly and seriously injuring the driver, his then girlfriend, Gloria Jones. He asks that any reader who was on the scene, or is in contact with crew members who were, or has memories of the event, to contact him via 01797322272 or bjhend69@hotmail.com

TWEETS

LETTERS

BADGES AND RETIRED MEMBERS

I was pleased to read in *Firefighter* about the first members to receive a new badge, marking 40 years of FBU membership.

Brilliant, I thought, I will contact FBU HQ and ask when I get mine, as I have been an FBU member longer than that. I emailed straight away, only to find out, that ROOT (retired and out of trade) membership does not apply, and that the criteria for a 40-year badge is to be a union member and employed by a fire authority for the 40-year period.

This is unjust. I became an FBU member when I joined the fire service in 1976 and, upon retirement, in 2006 immediately became an out of trade member. Other out of trade members have belonged to the FBU longer than I have. We didn't decide that we didn't need the FBU once retirement was forced upon us. Out of trade members are an integral part of the FBU.

Come on FBU leaders, let's remember fairness and equality and recognise the dedication and support of these members who have continually given their support for half a century and more, and award 40-year badges irrespective of type of membership.

Terry Day
ROOT member

Dear Terry,
Thank you for your letter. We have received similar feedback from a number of ROOT members, and I recognise the strength of feeling. ROOT members have always been a crucial part of the FBU, and I am committed to ensuring that all members feel valued and heard.

In response, the executive council will discuss the issue, and review the qualifying criteria for the 40-year badge, at the next meeting in February.

We will report back to members on that discussion and any subsequent decisions.

Matt Wrack
General Secretary

STATION CAT WRITING WAS ON THE WALL

PA IMAGES

Fighting a California wildfire – see Cut and burn

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS?

Your Cat wonders if Russell Pearson, the former chief fire officer of Surrey, looks back over the events of 2018 and thinks, "I told you so!"

In July last year it was claimed Mr. Pearson had been "ousted" as CFO as a punishment for his warnings that a further reduction in funding would leave Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) unable to protect the public.

His departure followed repeated concerns raised by the service and its firefighters who feared further budget cuts could decimate frontline response and ultimately put lives at risk.

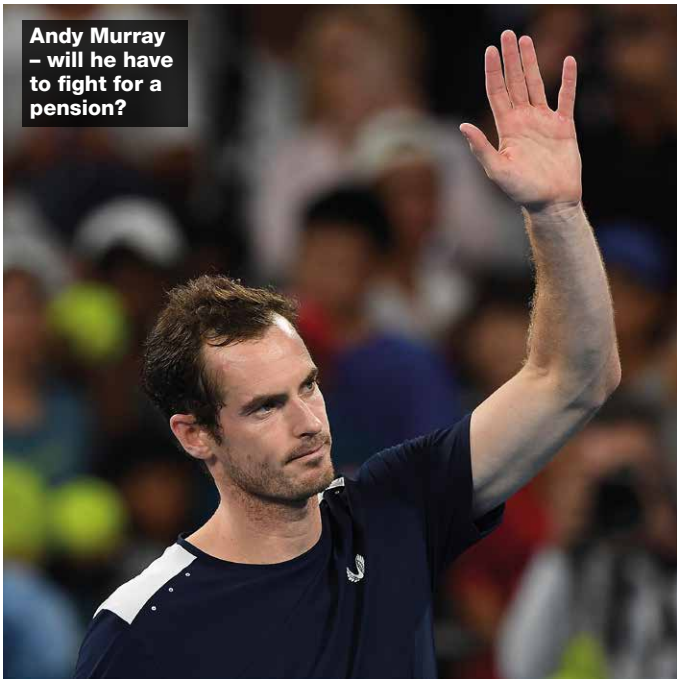
But there again what would Mr. Pearson know about the situation, he was only the CFO and had been so for the past 11 years.

Apparently Mr. Pearson knew quite a lot. A report published in December by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) said: "We have concerns about the performance of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure".

As well as being rated "inadequate" for efficiency, SFRS was rated as "requires improvement" for effectiveness and how well it looks after its people.

SFRS is not alone. Fire services across the country are overstretched and under-resourced and unable to fulfil key parts of their remit.

Your Cat is left pondering whether there is another CFO in the country who is prepared to highlight the plight of their brigade like Mr. Pearson did. It seems unlikely.



Andy Murray – will he have to fight for a pension?

LICENSED TO BILL

Your Cat has been reading a report about Norfolk's Conservative Police and Crime Commissioner Lorne Green who had fallen victim to the much-publicised television licensing scam.

Mr Green gave his credit card details away after receiving a fake email saying he needed to pay £150.50 to renew his TV licence.

The former diplomat was forced to cancel his credit card after realising he had been duped by fraudsters. He said the incident left him feeling "a little embarrassed".

The article revealed that Mr. Green had previously warned Norfolk residents against falling victim to scams but defended himself by adding: "I have to say it was very convincing and it just goes to show just how vigilant you have to be."

Under the patronage of the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, legislation was bulldozed through parliament enabling police and crime commissioners in England to run fire services. It is claimed this piece of legislation is one of the least scrutinised pieces of legislation to pass through parliament in the 21st century.

CUT AND BURN

Following the devastating fires in California last year, Donald Trump continues to threaten to withdraw Federal Emergency Funding Agency funds from America's most populous state.

The president tweeted that "there is no reason for these massive, deadly and costly forest fires in California except that forest management is so poor. Billions of dollars are given each year, with so many lives lost, all because of gross mismanagement of the forests. Remedy now, or no more Fed payments!"

Yet President Trump's shutdown of the US government halted California's preparations for the 2019 fire season. With staff remaining unpaid specialist training has been stopped for thousands of firefighters.

The US Forest Service could not sign contracts for much-needed equipment, including planes and helicopters. In forests across the West, no federal employees were working to reduce the dry "fuel" that feeds these catastrophic blazes.

Unfortunately, it is not only in America where cutting budgets, decreasing staffing levels, under-resourcing and reducing vital training of fire services in the face of an increase in fires, fire related deaths and loss of property is easy to reconcile.

Just blame someone else!

WORK INJURIES AND PENSIONS

I am sure we all extend our sympathies to Andy Murray as he announces his (probable) retirement from tennis.

The 31-year-old multi-millionaire, who accepted both a knighthood and an OBE for playing sport, cites a chronic hip injury as the reason for him being unable to continue to do his job.

Your Cat hopes that Sir Andy will not have to take costly and lengthy legal action to protect his pension.

25-YEAR BADGES

Davy Murray (r), North Anderson, Aberdeen, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary David Hendry with colleagues looking on

Fred Sinclair (r), North Anderson, Aberdeen, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary David Hendry with colleagues looking on

Ashley Todd (l), blue watch, Phillips Park, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from divisional rep David Yearley with colleagues looking on

Michael Walsh (r), Northern Ireland HQ, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Mark McCartan

Gary Judge (r), fire behaviour school, Exeter, Devon & Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Dave Lock

Roy Bradley (r), Dalkeith, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from East area vice-chair Gus Sproul

John Nolan (l), Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Karl Sorfleet

Andy Garwood (r), red watch, Twickenham, receives his 25-year badge from SW London secretary Dave Young

Steve Vassell (r), branch rep, Twickenham, London, receives his 25-year badge from SW London secretary Dave Young

Lee Conlon (r), green watch, Richmond , London, receives his 25-year badge from area secretary Dave Young

Jon Hill (l), fire protection manager, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigde organiser Karl Sorfleet

Randy McComb (r), southern area command, Northern Ireland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Dermot McPoland

Michael Parker (r), Morecambe, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Martin Sears with Stephen Brown looking on

Mark Warwick (l), service training centre, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Kev Wilkie

Mark Dunnett (l), Devon & Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade vice chair Chris Balcombe, with (l-r), Mark Rollings, Gary Martin, Nadine Watson and El Plant

Steve Jones (r), white watch, Port Talbot, Mid and West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from H&S rep Derek Skhane with watch colleagues looking on

Charlie Pack (l), green watch, Weymouth, Dorset & Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from officers' rep Simon Dennett with colleagues looking on (l-r), Pete Nixey, Darren O'Shea, Ross Connor, Nic Courtice and Nick Thirkettle

Jonathan Punchard (l), Five Rivers, Dorset & Wiltshire HQ, receives his 25-year badge from South West treasurer Val Hampshire with colleagues looking on

Steve Vassell (r), Twickenham, London, branch rep, receives his 25-year badge from SW London area secretary Dave Young

Andy Garwood (r), red watch, Twickenham, London, receives his 25-year badge from SW London area secretary Dave Young

Kev Wilkie (l), Lancashire brigade secretary, receives his 25-year badge from North West regional secretary Mark Rowe

Craig Hope (r), South Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Alex Psaila

Andrew Graham (r), Porthcawl, South Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Alex Psaila

Adrian Jones (r), Aldridge, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Billy Holland

Jimmy Hendricks (r), red watch, USAR/tech rescue centre, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from Malcom Cowie with colleagues looking on

Jim Crielly (left), green watch, Bellshill, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from branch official John McDonald

Steve Preston (l), blue watch, Kingston, London, receives his 25-year badge from area secretary Dave Young

Ian O'Hara (r), Bathgate, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Craig Kennedy

Mark Billingham (l), Tettenhall, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Nigel Meredith

Darren Higginson (r), green watch, Mill Hill, London, since retired, receives his 25-year badge from FAW rep Greg Edwards

Grant Waldron (r), blue watch, Mill Hill, London receives his 25-year badge from FAW rep Greg Edwards

Harrogate, North Yorkshire, green watch members, (l-r) **Paul Swiers**, **Andreas Papadopoullos**, **Richard Timms**, **Ian Anderson** and **Robert Wicks**, receive their 25-year badges from brigade chair Simon Wall

Paul Will (l), Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from GMC women's secretary Rosa Crowley-Bennett with colleagues looking on

Pat Gaughan (i), blue watch, New Malden, London, receives his 25-year badge from area secretary Dave Young with colleagues looking on

25-YEAR BADGES

Wayne Matthews (r), white watch, Port Talbot, Mid and West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from H&S rep Derek Skhane with watch colleagues looking on

Graham Hodgkinson (l), Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire, receives his 25-year badge from NRC chair Paul Revill with crew members looking on

Edward Parkinson (r), Fulwood, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Stuart Darby with colleagues looking on

Wil Tell (l), Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from Eastern EC Member, Brian Hooper, with Suffolk brigade committee members (l-r), Trevor Bryson, Sally Hammond, Jules Loader, Chris Willis, Peter Gray, Steve Collins, Andy Message and Phil Johnston

Eddie Zanetti (r), blue watch, Mill Hill, London, receives his 25-year badge from FAW rep Greg Edwards

Iain Jones (r), Kirkcaldy, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Niall Miller

Magherafelt, western area command, Northern Ireland, members (back row, l-r): **Robin Caskey**, **Trevor Leacock**, **Rodney Caskey**, **Ronnie Duncan**, **Barney Kearney**, (front row, l-r), **Mukesh Chada**, **Colm McKeever**, **Allan York** and **Derek Quinn**, receive their 25-year badges from regional secretary Stephen Boyd (standing right)

Martin Tuckey (l), white watch, Westbourne, Dorset & Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Rob Goldsmith with watch members Debbie Roberts, Martin Charles, Craig Macleod, Adam Clarke, and Steve Ansell at Westbourne on the new ALP

Andrew Rae (r), green watch, Blackpool, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Kev Wilkie

Dave Meehan (r), green watch, Mill Hill, London, receives his 25-year badge from FAW rep Greg Edwards

John Beard (r), fire safety team, London NW, Wembley Area HQ, receives his 25-year badge from FAW rep Greg Edwards

Gary Phillips (r), Mossley, Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from colleague Gareth McWatt

David Mansfield (r), red watch, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, receives his 25 year badge from brigade chair Simon Wall with colleagues looking on

Georgio Petrelli (l) blue watch, Northolt, London, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary David Shek, with colleagues looking on

Robert Hancock (l), Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire, receives his 25-year badge from NRC chair Paul Revill with crew members looking on

40-YEAR BADGES

FBU president Ian Murray (l) and general secretary Matt Wrack (r) presented members with a new badge, marking 40 years of FBU membership while still in service, at the union's centenary event in October

Catherine Scarth, Merseyside

Ronald Goldwater, Yorkshire and Humberside

Paul Pryce, Shropshire fire control branch rep

Paul Hesford, Great Manchester

Trevor Lee, West Midlands

Paul Gant, Staffordshire

Stuart Hobson, Yorkshire and Humberside

Please send good quality, high resolution digital files or prints to: firefighter@fbu.org.uk or Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE.

For your image to look its best, we need the original, full-resolution image. One lifted from a website may not do justice to a unique occasion. We do our best with images that are low resolution, taken directly into a bright light or suffer from camera-shake, or have other problems, but cannot perform miracles. Please include details for each image – full names of everyone who is in it; their station/brigade/watch etc; where they are in the picture (eg: left to right); their union posts/branch if relevant; and where/when it was taken.

FBU REGIONAL OFFICES

Region 1 Scotland
52 St Enoch Square, Glasgow, Scotland G1 4AA
0141 221 2309, 01rs@fbu.org.uk

Region 2 N Ireland
14 Bachelors Walk, Lisburn, Co Antrim, BT28 1XJ
02892 664622, 02rs@fbu.org

Region 3 Cleveland, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear
1 Carlton Court, 5th Avenue, Team Valley, Gateshead, NE11 0AZ
0191 487 4142, 03rs@fbu.org.uk

Region 4 Yorks and Humberside
9 Marsh Street, Rothwell, Leeds, LS26 0AG
0113 288 7000, 04rs@fbu.org.uk

Region 5 Greater Manchester, Lancs, Isle of Man, Cumbria, Merseyside, Cheshire
The Lighthouse, Lower Mersey St, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 2AL
0151 357 4400, 05rs@fbu.org.uk

Region 6 Derbyshire, Notts, Lincs, Leics, Northants
19-21 Musters Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7PP
0115 981 7489, Region06@fbu.org.uk

Region 7 West Mids, Staffs, Warks, Hereford & Worcester, Salop
195/7 Halesowen Rd, Old Hill, West Midlands, B64 6HE
01384 413633, 07rs@fbu.org.uk

Region 8 Mid and West Wales, North Wales, South Wales
2nd floor, Hastings House, Fitzalan Court, Cardiff, CF24 0BL
029 2049 6474

Region 9 Herts, Beds, Cambs, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk
28 Atlantic Square, Station Road, Witham, Essex, CM8 2TL
01376 521521, 09rs@fbu.org.uk

Region 10 London
John Horner Mews, Frome Street, Islington, London, N1 8PB
020 7359 3638, london@fbu.org.uk

Region 11 Bucks, Berks, Hants, Oxon, Isle of Wight, Kent, Surrey, E Sussex, W Sussex
Unit 11, Hunns Mere Way, Woodingdean, Brighton, BN2 6AH
01273 309762, 11rs@fbu.org.uk

Region 12 Cornwall, Devon & Somerset, Avon, Gloucs, Wilts, Dorset
158 Muller Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 9RE
0117 935 5132, 13rs@fbu.org.uk

Change of address or next of kin
Advise your brigade organiser of any change of address and head office of changes to next of kin or nominations for benefits.

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE

0808 100 6061
ENGLAND, WALES AND N IRELAND

0800 089 1331
SCOTLAND

The line provides advice for personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues. For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU representative.

THOMPSONS SOLICITORS

Lorraine and Linzi, the wife and daughter of John Noble, attend the unveiling of his red plaque

A FITTING TRIBUTE

A red plaque, in memory of watch manager John Noble, who died in the line of duty, was unveiled on 23 January 2019.

John was on his way to an emergency call at Strathdevon Primary School, Dollar, in central Scotland when his fire appliance was involved in a fatal collision outside Tillicoultry on 23 January 2008.

Denise Christie, regional secretary of the FBU in Scotland, said: "John's death was a tragedy that every firefighter felt. The Red Plaque scheme is a fitting tribute to the ultimate sacrifice John paid in the line of duty. We are honoured to have John remembered in this way and our thoughts are very much with his family, friends and colleagues on this anniversary."

HELP US REMEMBER OUR FALLEN COMRADES

The red plaque scheme is run by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and aims to honour firefighters killed in the line of duty. It is funded solely from proceeds of the Firefighters 100 Lottery.

FIREFIGHTERS 100 LOTTERY

FIRE BRIGADES UNION | SERVING FIREFIGHTERS SINCE 1918

Buy your tickets at www.firefighters100lottery.co.uk

Always play responsibly, if you need to talk to someone about your gambling please contact www.gambleaware.co.uk. Firefighters 100 Lottery is promoted by Fire Brigades Union, a Society Lottery licensed by the Gambling Commission. Gambling Commission Registration No: 000-046564-R-324800-002 © 2017 Gatherwell Ltd an External Lottery Manager (ELM)