



OFFICERS' NATIONAL
COMMITTEE SECTION
STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-26

Welcome to the 2022 strategic plan for the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) officers' national committee (ONC). The UK fire and rescue service is constantly evolving and has a great many future challenges which officers will be integral to. As a trade union we have a proud history and work closely within the National Joint Council (NJC) and regions to evolve whilst keeping our members interests at the forefront of our approach.

History of the FBU

Founded on 1 October 1918, the FBU is one of the UK's oldest specialist trade unions. Over 100 years, our members have shaped the modern fire and rescue service and the union has been the voice of firefighters across the UK. Since 1918 it has supported firefighters, influenced fire safety policy and won improved pay, terms and conditions for its members.

As a trade union for firefighters, the FBU has become a UK-wide union, representing around 36,000 firefighters and control operators in the fire and rescue service.

As the professional voice of firefighters, the FBU continues to play a vital role in shaping the fire and rescue service that exists today.

ONC

The officers' national committee represents all FBU members who hold the rank of watch manager upwards and is responsible for representing interests which are specific to their managerial role. It also provides individual support and can represent all senior ranks across the service.

National representation

The officers' national committee represents all 13 regions and nations across the UK and is responsible for the organisation and strategic vision of all officers who are FBU members. This unique level of involvement within the national picture ensures a sense of purpose and currency for all officers.

The ONC comprises two national sectional officials (secretary and chair) and a representative from each of the 13 FBU regions and nations. Each regional officer representative sits on respective FBU regional committees. Supporting the regional structure, the FBU has brigade committees which are co-terminus with fire and rescue services. Within each fire and rescue service the FBU has an officer representative who sits on the respective brigade committee.

ONC secretary Phil McDonald

ONC chair Gareth Cook

For your regional officer representative please visit:

www.fbu.org.uk/sections/officers

Strategic direction

Following the ONC's 2019 AGM it was tabled that we should organise, formalise and agree a strategic direction for 2021/22.

Following recent reports from the HMICFRS and in the post pandemic political landscape we are also likely to be subjected to further scrutiny and budgetary constraints over the coming years. The realistic expectation is that the aforementioned will likely have a significant impact on every region. It is now, more than ever, important that we are proactive. A reactionary approach will be destructive in most cases during this period and the region must remain vigilant and embedded in all initiatives to deliver the very best for its members.

For 2021/22 the officer's national committee will:

- Continue to represent officer members through every available forum, including:
 - National Joint Council (NJC)
 - Middle managers negotiating board (MMNB)
 - Regional committees
 - Brigade committees
 - FBU national conference
 - Any other appropriate platforms as and where necessary

The ONC will continue to assist and advise the executive council on all matters and in particular those matters specific to officers:

- Our brigade-level officer representatives will continue to:
 - Represent officer members on FBU brigade committees
 - Advise brigade committees on all matters and in particular those matters specific to officers
 - Represent the officer members in joint FBU-FRS management forums
- Raise awareness of the FBU's campaigns to all members
- Ensure the production of FBU materials for officer members
- Continue to utilise social media to raise awareness of officer issues
- Continue representation to ensure there is at least one FBU officer's event each year
- Continue to work within the rule band structures of the union and with all committees including other FBU national sections to ensure currency in our approach
- Engage with every available opportunity and initiative and seek to embed an FBU representative on every working group
- Seek the best possible training, development and career opportunities for all members
- Campaign for improvements to the grey book to recognise officers (overtime, recall to duty rates and public holidays etc)
- Support regions with regional-level issues when requested
- Campaign for better pay and conditions for officer members

How we will achieve this

COMMAND ROLES

Communication – and comprehension of all union matters

Organisation – a structured and deliberate approach, adjusting where required

Manager/officer representation – through all available forums

Measure – in all that we do

Awareness – of officers' issues regionally and nationally

Necessary – and proportionate action when required

Dynamic – intuitive and forward thinking in all circumstances

Resilient – as a collective demonstrate solidarity in all circumstances

Openness – to change and challenge

Leadership – encouraging effective leadership from our section in all industrial relations

Emotionally intelligent – understanding and meeting the needs of the firefighters as union members and as fire and rescue service employees

Strategic – as a collective demonstrate vision and purpose

COMMUNICATION

The officers section will produce a national newsletter. We will also continue to utilise social media and use email to communicate. We will also programme meetings of the officer's section where required.

ORGANISATION

We recognise the workload and potential increase in work streams over the coming twelve months. We will seek to ensure that the officers section is organised to meet those demands. We will take further action to ensure full representation at regional and brigade level. We will assist the union and the membership by using our skills and expertise as part of the union's engagement with the wider public sector.

MANAGER/OFFICER REPRESENTATION

We will continue to represent the officers through all available forums. We will also ensure that members are represented for any disciplinary proceedings or investigations. We have previously secured discipline training for middle managers and we will continue to identify, highlight and request the best possible training for officers to discharge their duties.

MEASURE

As officers we will apply measure to all that we do. It is with this measure that we are able to make clear, strategic and critical decisions. The ONC will collectively offer critical challenge through the prescribed channels to ensure the best possible representation of the section and FBU as a collective. With a considered and strategic ideology, we will ensure currency and inclusion.

AWARENESS

We will continue to raise awareness around current and forthcoming issues and initiatives. It is fundamental to professional trade unionists that they are professional officers, being a professional means being aware, current and ready to act where required.

NECESSARY

We will always act when necessary and will always act when required. We operate with democratic principle and as such we will do whatever is necessary when required to do so. We will always be proportionate in our responses.

DYNAMIC

We will act swiftly to address risk critical issues and we will actively horizon scan to ensure the best possible preparation as a collective.

RESILIENT

We will stand firm with a robustness and dignity of professional trade unionists in the face of challenge and will strive to achieve the protection and improvement of our working conditions.

OPENNESS

Open to constructive change and critical challenge in order to deliver the best for our membership

LEADERSHIP

We will support our members to be the best possible leaders that they can be in all industrial relations arenas.

EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT

As committed trade unionists we operate on compassion and the overarching approach of fairness and equality for all. Studies have shown that people with high emotional intelligence (EI) have better mental health, greater job performance, and leadership skills. Daniel Goleman (internationally known psychologist and science journalist), indicated that EI accounted for 67% of the abilities deemed necessary for higher performance in leaders, and mattered twice as much as technical expertise or IQ.

STRATEGIC

Using the skills acquired and exercised through our leadership roles in the fire and rescue service and as a collective, we will strategise and work intuitively with all when appropriate and necessary. We will seek early involvement in all work streams to influence, advise and assist in decision-making and to the best outcomes in our working practices efficiently and effectively.

NFCC direct entry scheme

The strategic plan covers a number of broad headings which affords us the ability to engage on this matter.

- **Engage with every available opportunity and initiative and seek to embed an FBU representative on every working group**
- **Seek the best possible training, development and career opportunities for all members**

The ONC feels best placed to advise and contribute on this matter and others with regards to officer development, standards, recruitment and retention.

Summary

We are confident that this strategy provides a framework and foundation that will ensure the best possible representation for officers both regionally and nationally. It is always at the forefront of our minds that we are all members of one union. We work collectively for the needs of all and for the specific needs of all sectional interests within the membership. We have common professional aims and together we can meet the demands of the most challenging circumstances. The majority of officers in fire and rescue services across the UK are members of the Fire Brigades Union. The officers' section do not take this for granted. We have earned that loyalty and must continue to do so and constantly seek to improve how we do that. In turn, an active and critically challenging officers' section is of paramount importance to ensure that we succeed in all that we do. The union works hard for us. We must help the union where we can. It's your union, be proud, own it.

Phil McDonald, ONC Secretary

phil.mcdonald@fbu.org.uk

G Cook, ONC Chair

gareth.cook@fbu.org.uk

Andy Dark, FBU Assistant General Secretary

andy.dark@fbu.org.uk



April 2022