

FireFighter

The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union ♦♦♦ www.fbu.org.uk

April 2013



NO TO MASS SACKINGS

Pensions campaign at a critical stage
The threat to every firefighter

See p10

IRREPLACEABLE
FBU LEGAL SUPPORT

See p16





Matt Wrack

Pension proposals threaten us all

One of the privileges of being general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union is getting the opportunity to travel around the country speaking to our members.

In the last month I've been on the road speaking at mass meetings about the current stage of the pensions campaign and the FBU's plans.

The first thing to say is that the response in many places has been superb. Around 300 members came to a meeting in Manchester, filling the venue – the Friends Meeting House. Around 250 members attended a meeting in Cleveland – getting on for half of all firefighters employed by the brigade – a tremendous turn out.

The FBU has also held a series of other successful meetings across the UK. Union officials are organising meetings all the time and I urge all members to attend. It is

absolutely vital that every single member is well informed about the issues and understands why the FBU is so concerned about the current proposals.

The threat goes beyond the immediate issue of pensions and engulfs the whole service. The fitness requirements in the DCLG report by Dr Tony Williams would mean the threat of the mass sacking of firefighters right across every role, duty system, age and gender.

Unworkable

The central message is that we cannot let them implement a pension scheme and fitness regime system that will disrupt the fire and rescue service – a pension scheme which simply cannot work. That is what the government proposals are – unworkable and unacceptable.

Every firefighter is affected by these proposals, whether you are in the FPS, NFPS or no pension scheme at all. On

the government's own figures, more than half of existing firefighters will not be fit enough to work beyond 55. Tossing professionals out of jobs in order to meet an arbitrary normal pension age of 60 cannot be right.

It will decimate the fire and rescue service. It will ruin the lives of brothers and sisters we have worked alongside on the fire ground and have sat with around the mess table. Our job is centrally about teamwork. We stick together because it's what we do to get through the day safely.

The FBU will continue to seek a solution. We are not in any way looking for a fight. Our door is always open and we are willing and able to negotiate with government at any point. But we cannot allow this to drift.

To do nothing and simply wait is not the right approach when the stakes are so high.

I hope members and officials

will read all the materials we are putting out, discuss them at work and at home, and tell us what you think.

Campaigns continue

The pensions campaign is clearly occupying a great deal of the union's time and attention at present. But we cannot afford to drop the ball in our other campaigns. These all continue.

The Cleveland mass meeting discussed the proposed mutualisation of the fire and rescue service. Members in Cleveland overwhelmingly agree that it is a step toward privatisation, which would have a dire effect on their conditions of service and on those of firefighters across the UK. The meeting voted to oppose the mutualisation plans. Cleveland will not be left to fight this alone. Every firefighter should understand the threat and give support on this.

Our London members held a successful day of action on 16 March against the threat to close fire stations, cut firefighter posts and remove appliances. This is a pivotal battle and one where we are making progress. Public meetings are being organised across the capital and, as with the NHS, communities are waking up to the threat to their vital services.

There has never been a more important time for members to become active in the Fire Brigades Union. The union is only as strong as its members are active, prepared and resolved for united action.

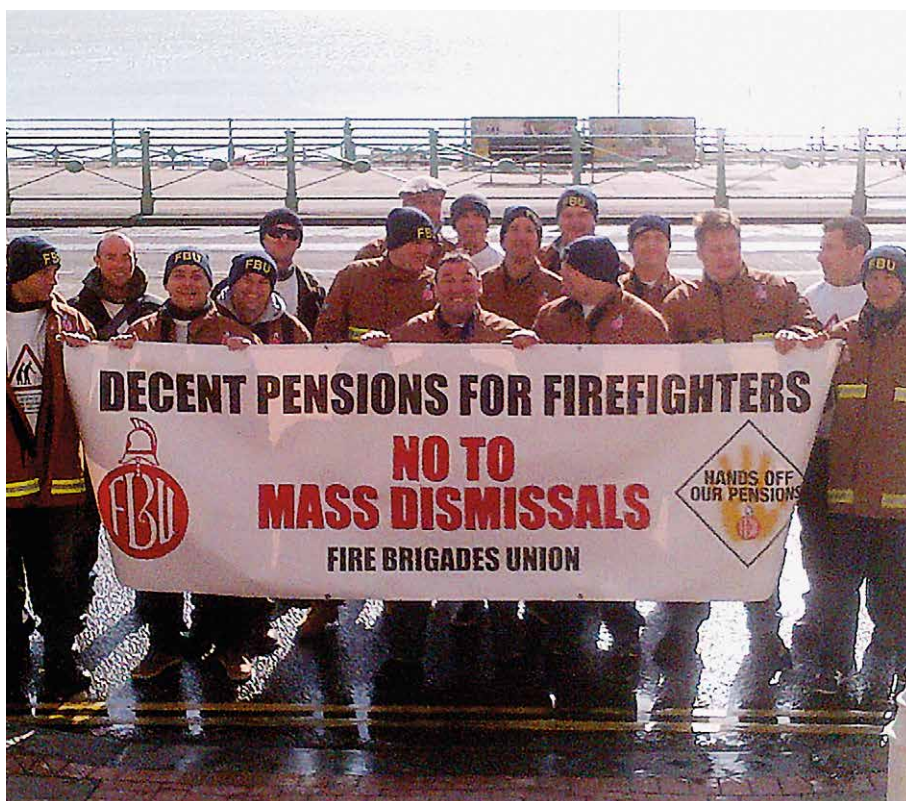


300 members filled the Friends Meeting House in Manchester

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Speak out at every opportunity

The FBU is sponsoring the UK premier of *Burn*, a film that documents the fire department in the struggling US city of Detroit



FBU members lobby the fire conference of the Local Government Association in Brighton

FBU lobby wins wide support

An impromptu gathering of FBU members and reps from the South East, London and East Anglia regions lobbied the Local Government Association fire conference in Brighton (left) on 12 March.

Fire authority councillors and senior managers from every brigade in England were at the conference, as well as some from Scotland and Wales.

The FBU members wanted to make sure everyone at the conference was aware of the FBU's concerns about pensions and the responsibility for ensuring affordable and fair pensions for firefighters that our employers share with government.

The banners, placards and tee shirts attracted attention outside the conference. Event managers became so concerned that they eventually allowed four FBU officials inside, where they were able to hand out leaflets and speak to nearly all the conference delegates in the lunch queues.

The members and officials were very disciplined and professional in raising the issues and they were well received by the delegates and public alike.

Many of the delegates were sympathetic to the FBU's message and promised to consider the issues raised and ask questions of government.

The protest showed that our arguments make sense, that we have strong evidence to back up our position and that we can win wide support for our cause.

I hope every FBU member will use every opportunity available to speak to politicians and management in defence of our pensions and our service.

Keith Handscomb
FBU executive council member for region 9

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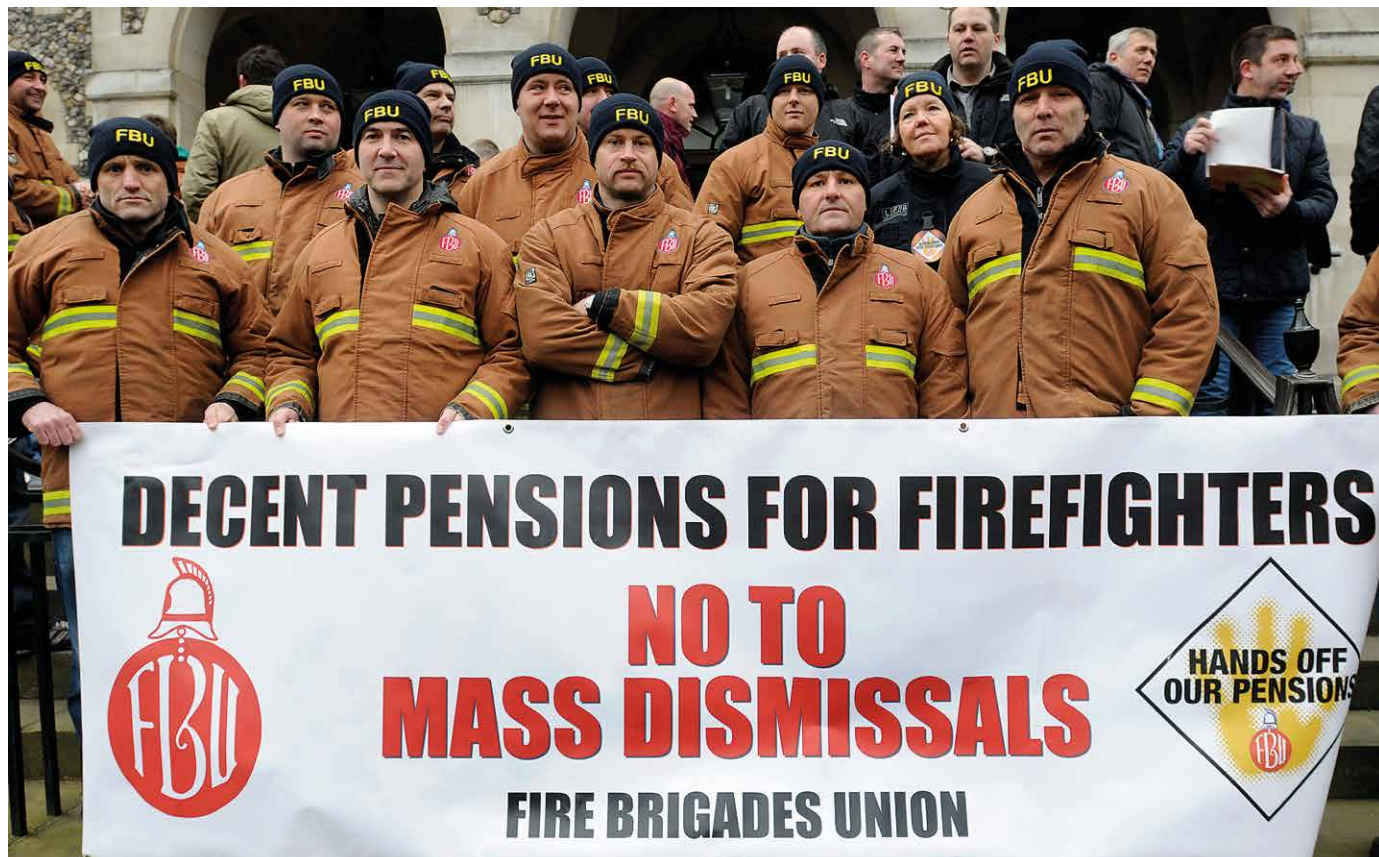


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No to mass sackings

Pensions

The FBU is continuing to put pressure on politicians and employers over plans for "ridiculous" changes to firefighters' pensions that would leave thousands facing the sack.

The union's campaign is reaching a critical stage, with the year 2 pension contribution increases due to be announced as *Firefighter* went to press and the Bill to change all public sector pensions close to becoming law.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "We have been to Westminster in recent weeks and have taken every opportunity to get our message across to politicians.

"The current pension proposals are unacceptable. They want to impose an unworkable and an unsustainable pension scheme on us. This will result in thousands

of firefighters facing capability dismissal on fitness grounds. This is ridiculous. It will wreck the fire and rescue service. The employers know it – but they have to tell the government to think again."

In February, FBU officials and members (*above*) lobbied a meeting of the National Joint Council (NJC) that sets firefighters' national pay and conditions and meets regularly, with FBU officials in attendance.

With employers and government officials also present, this was an opportunity to raise the vital matter of pensions.

Far-sighted foresee chaos

It is the employers that would have to implement the proposals if they go ahead. The more far-sighted of them can foresee the chaos that would ensue if the Westminster government forces through its plans.

Alongside the FBU's efforts to lobby fire service employers, the union has organised

scores of meetings across the UK to explain first-hand to members the situation on pensions.

These mass meetings have given members and local officials the opportunity to discuss the current situation, to ask questions and to mobilise thousands of members on pensions.

Wrack said: "FBU officials have travelled the length and breadth of the UK. Members who've attended are very aware of the gravity of the situation. The union has produced bulletins, briefings and stickers to highlight the threat to our pensions.

"We need every firefighter to understand the stakes involved, to discuss the issues around the mess table and to stand up for our pensions.

"We need to be ready to act if the Westminster government tries to ignore our concerns. They've created this mess – and they need to get round the table with the FBU to negotiate a solution."

Unions and
hazards
campaigners
stand up for
health and safety

www.fbu.org.uk

Mutual plan is 'back door privatisation'

Cleveland

The FBU has written to local authority councillors to express grave concern about plans to "mutualise" Cleveland fire and rescue service. The union says it is backdoor privatisation.

Fire minister Brandon Lewis wrote to a House of Commons committee earlier this year seeking advice on speeding through changes in the law that would allow Cleveland fire and rescue service and others to set up companies to take over the local service, opting out of the current national fire service framework.

Andy Noble, FBU executive council member for the North East of England, told councillors the minister had confirmed the worst fears of the Labour Party frontbench, local MPs, many local councillors, the FBU, and, "most of all, our members in Cleveland, who remain totally opposed to any move which takes the service out of direct local fire authority control and employment.

"It would lead to a procurement and tendering exercise that would open core fire and rescue service activity to the private sector from the outset." Previous examples had proved disastrous, said Noble, citing AssetCo in London and Lincolnshire: "It will inevitably result



Cleveland is home to many industries requiring specialist fire cover

in worsening terms and conditions of employment and pension provision for committed public servants."

Despite denials from chief fire officer Ian Hayton, the fire minister has made it clear that Cleveland is being used as a Trojan horse for privatisation.

Noble said Labour councillors who had supported the original proposal should wake up to "the monstrosity they had created" and put a stop to it before it was too late.

Family campaigners back FBU

Merseyside

The FBU on Merseyside has welcomed a campaign against cuts to the fire and rescue service by the family and friends of a girl killed in a fire.

The Francesca Bimpson Foundation, named after the seven year old who died in an arson attack in 2007, argues that the scale of cuts on Merseyside will cost lives. The campaign highlights the potential loss

of nearly 100 firefighter jobs as well as the loss of appliances and the closure of fire stations, describing

them as a "cull". It has adopted the FBU slogan: "They slash, you burn".

FBU Merseyside brigade secretary Les Skarratts said: "We are very proud to support the Francesca Bimpson campaign. It shows that the public really do care about the fire and rescue service and they know the value of firefighters. We will add our voice to those of local people standing up for our service."



SOUNDING OFF

Workers' Memorial Day

Tell the government: 'STOP IT: YOU'RE KILLING US!' urges Hilda Palmer of the Hazards Campaign

The TUC and affiliated trade unions are calling on UK health and safety representatives, trades councils and safety organisations to defend workers health and safety on Workers' Memorial Day, 28 April.

This is our day to tell our stories: to explain that poor or non-existent health and safety means workers are injured, killed and made ill. This isn't due to freak, unavoidable accidents or rare diseases, but because employers did not care enough to obey the law and governments did not make them.

We utterly reject this government's destruction of health and safety regulation and enforcement based on the lie that it is a "burden on business". The real burden – of lack of health and safety – is borne by injured individuals and their families, and by the public purse, not business. Health and safety is not a joke. It is a matter of life and death.

Three years of scrapped regulations and slashed enforcement put workers and the public at greater risk of being injured, killed or made ill than ever before. Because of cuts in inspectors and reporting requirements, we are even less likely to hear about it.

We are fighting for our lives – deaths at work and ill-health are already increasing. We must defend health and safety for our own sake and that of our children and grandchildren.

We want "action not reaction" – proactive, preventive action that stops workers being killed injured or made ill – not mopping up after the harm is done.

Attend one of the hundreds of Workers' Memorial Day events across the UK, or organise one yourself. If you cannot attend an event, try to do something in your workplace. At the very least put up posters, wear a forget-me-not ribbon and organise a one-minute silence at noon and tell everyone about it.

... www.hazardscampaign.org.uk



FBU's learning school 'inspiring'

Education

Some 32 officials attended the annual FBU union learning reps (ULR) school held at Wortley Hall near Sheffield in March.

They included union learning reps, regional education and learning organisers, brigade organisers and other brigade officials.

Participants took part in a packed programme which looked at topics with a back-to-basics approach.

Project manager Trevor Shanahan gave an update on ULF funding and the future of FBU learning. Tom Wilson, director of unionlearn, spoke animatedly about the organisation's future and the key part FBU learning reps have played in helping so many members achieve qualifications.

TUC policy officer Richard Blakeley led a thought-provoking session on green issues and the skills needed to deliver the green

economy. Other speakers included Clare Wealleans, manager of the FBU's national learning centre, who gave a presentation, and national officer Sean Starbuck who gave a pensions update.

A session and workshop entitled "Building capacity to deliver" looked at the work needed to establish union learning in the FBU and the fire service.

The school finished with the launch of the updated dyslexia guidance document from Graham Humphrey and Andy Bricks and an update on the FBU's education and learning website from Bob Fitz-Gerald.

All who attended agreed it was a great two days. ULR Simon Jakey from London said: "Just wanted to say thank you for the warm welcome at the ULR school. It was very positive and inspiring."

ULR Tony Purnell said: "I thought that this was the best-organised ULR school that I had been to."



School participants

Calling all members ...

London

The FBU in London has stepped up campaigning against mayor Boris Johnson's plan to close 12 stations, withdraw 18 appliances and slash 520 operational firefighter posts.

London FBU organised a day of action on 16 March to take the union's message to the heart of the communities most affected. This included a march organised by local firefighters and FBU officials against the closure of Clapham fire station.

London FBU executive council member Ian Leahair said: "The FBU has sent boxes of campaigning materials to all fire stations. These include leaflets, posters, stickers, postcards

and petitions. We would encourage members to put these materials to good use in their local communities." Public meetings are being organised by the union, and adverts opposing the cuts will appear across the media.

Leahair said: "We are calling on our members

across London to hand out leaflets in the local high street or shopping centre, get the petitions and postcards signed, wear an anti-cuts sticker and encourage members of the public to take part in the consultation exercise."

❖ Station Cat – p21



Local people and trade unionists protest against the closure of Clapham fire station

IN BRIEF



The National Union of Mineworkers Memorial in Barnsley, Yorkshire

Wrack: Movement 'at a crossroads'

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack gave the National Union of Mineworkers lecture on 9 March, calling on workers to stand up against government attacks. The annual lecture commemorates two miners killed during the 1984-85 miners' strike.

Wrack said the labour and trade union movement was at a crossroads. It could either let the Tories continue to act in the interests of the people they really represent – banks and big business. "Or we fight back, here and now, challenging every single attack," he said.

Merger 'a diversion'

The FBU says that merging the Avon and Devon and Somerset fire and rescue services is a diversion that will not improve the service to the public.

Phil Jordan, FBU regional secretary for the South West, said: "Bigger is not necessarily better for the public or for firefighters. This merger is a diversion from the main issue, which is central government cutbacks to funding the fire and rescue service."

"Devon and Somerset only merged six years ago, yet it already plans to make cuts to one in five frontline firefighter jobs. Clearly the previous merger has not protected frontline services."

Commutation update

The FBU's challenge on fairer pension commutation is being dealt with by the Pensions Ombudsman. The Government Actuary's Department has obtained permission to appeal against the High Court's decision regarding the Pensions Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

The application was made at an oral hearing, having failed to secure permission from the High Court and from the Court of Appeal on a written application for permission.

The appeal will be heard on 10 or 11 July 2013 and further updates will be given when more information is available.



Firefighters at Croscombe in Somerset where village properties were in up to a metre of water following a downpour in 2012

Wet, wet, wet – but still no statutory flood response duty

Figures obtained by the FBU reinforce the demand for the right staffing and equipment, says FBU national officer Dave Green

Floods

Last year was a record one for rain: 2012 was the second wettest on record in the UK, according to the Met Office. It was the wettest year for England and the third wettest for Wales.

The fire and rescue service has always responded to floods, even though the law does not currently require this in England and Wales.

Figures obtained for the FBU by the Labour Research Department (LRD) using a freedom of information request show that firefighters turned out to nearly twice as many flood incidents in 2012 as in 2011 – and that these figures may underestimate

the scale of our intervention. All 57 fire and rescue services sent their returns.

In 2012 firefighters across the UK attended 22,518 flood incidents, compared with 13,042 in 2011. This represents a 73% increase in flood incidents attended by the fire and rescue service in one year.

England accounted for most of the incidents, rising to more than 19,000 in 2012 compared to 11,000 in 2011. Northern Ireland firefighters went to three times more flood incidents in 2012 than they did in 2011. In Wales the response more than doubled.

Three times higher

Turnouts were three times higher in the South West of England, Yorkshire, the East Midlands and the North East of England, while they doubled in the South East and the North West of England.

These figures are further proof, if it were necessary, that the fire and rescue service in England and Wales should have the same statutory duty to respond to flooding

as our sisters and brothers do in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The government's own projections for climate change show that there will be more floods and other forms of extreme weather in the coming years. This means more people, more homes and more workplaces will be affected by floods.

Quite rightly, the public expects professional firefighters to assist them in these emergencies. But the government has to fund the service accordingly, to ensure there are the right number of firefighters, properly protected with the right equipment.

The LRD figures also show that fire service involvement in flooding is probably underestimated. Fire services were asked how they counted flood incidents.

Most said that they treat a basement flood the same as pumping out a high street for 24 hours, even though the number of firefighters involved is hugely different.

● Full figures at www.fbu.org.uk



Change direction now

Hundreds attended a TUC rally in Westminster on 13 March where speakers outlined the tough time that ordinary families face thanks to government policies.

Speakers called on the chancellor to adopt a new economic direction that puts

families, jobs and growth first.

The rally heard how families right across the UK are feeling the financial squeeze as a direct result of the government's relentless pursuit of austerity:

- Price rises are outstripping pay rises – since 2009 the average worker has lost

£4,000 and will lose even more over 2013.

- Child benefit freezes and cuts mean families with two children will have lost a total of more than £1,000 by 2015. Tax credit cuts have already seen some families out of pocket by over £2,000.
- Big spending cuts are set to slash the



value of public services like schools, public transport and hospitals by as much as £7,000 per household by 2018.

- NHS cuts have seen 6,000 nursing posts lost, and A&E and maternity services reduced in many places.
- Proposed fire station closures could see

families at increased risk as they have to wait longer for help in an emergency.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "The government's relentless pursuit of austerity economics is not only failing to cut the deficit, but is making life unbearably hard for millions of families across the UK.

"The government is wreaking long-term, and possibly irreparable, damage to our communities. The future looks bleak for the economy and for families unless the government accepts that its deficit reduction strategy isn't working.

"A change of direction is long overdue."

NO TO MASS SACKINGS

The government's proposals for firefighter pensions mean we really are 'all in it together'

The Fire Brigades Union's campaign to defend firefighters' pensions is reaching a critical stage. New developments will make a huge difference to the direction of our campaign.

The government's Public Service Pensions Bill is reaching its final stages in parliament. It imposes a normal pension age (NPA) of 60 on all firefighters, despite overwhelming evidence against it – including from the government's own experts. Such an unworkable NPA will mean older firefighters facing capability dismissal towards the end of our careers.

The Westminster government is due to respond to the review of the NPA for firefighters it commissioned. That review, authored by Dr Tony Williams and published in January this year, does NOT recommend an NPA of 60 for current firefighters.

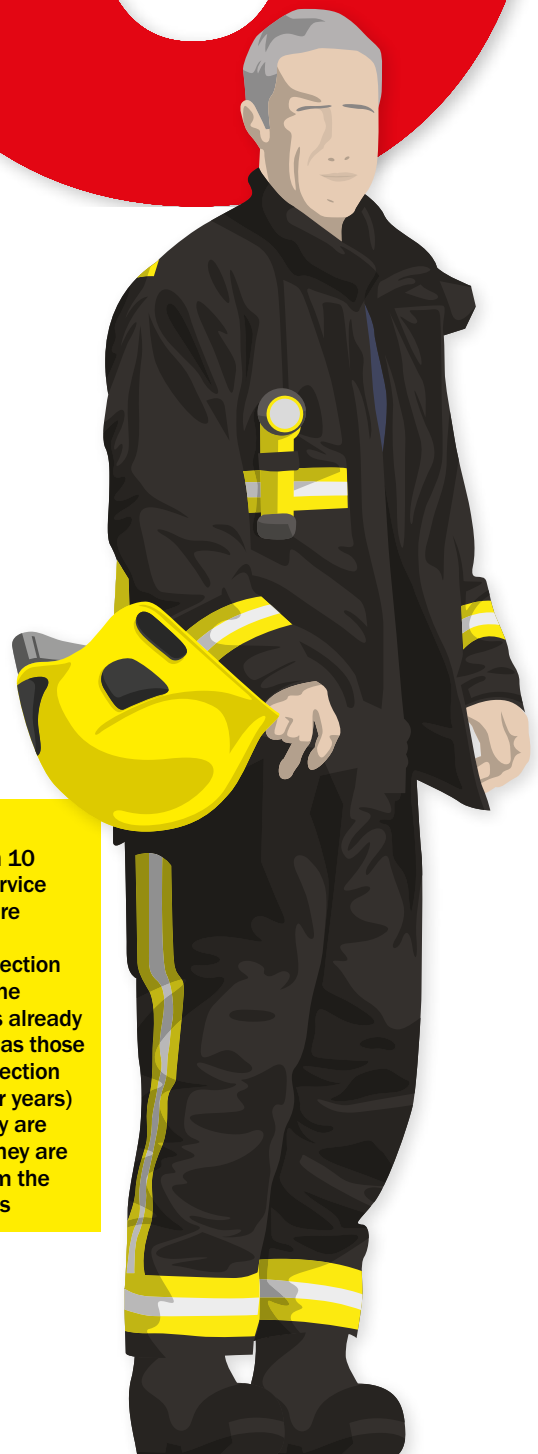
Capability dismissal

It makes clear that the majority of firefighters will not be fit enough to work to 60 and recommends additional protection. It clearly warns that mass capability dismissals are likely.

The clearest indication of government intentions appears on page 123 paragraph 9.1.2. Dr Williams describes an option for dealing with firefighters who

OLDER

Firefighters with 10 years' or less service to go and who are included in the transitional protection arrangements the government has already offered (as well as those with partial protection for a further four years) may believe they are protected. But they are **not** exempt from the fitness proposals





RETAINED

Retained firefighters are especially vulnerable. They would **not** get the opportunity to maintain their fitness that is built into the proposals for wholetime firefighters, but **would** be assessed to the same levels and face the same action if they could not meet these levels – the threat of dismissal

WOMEN

The Williams review says: "It is likely that a substantially larger proportion of women will find it hard to maintain fitness at the required level, leading to a disproportionate number becoming unfit for firefighting before age 60." It suggests they could leave the service on a reduced pension

cannot maintain fitness but do not qualify for an ill-health pension:

"Not all firefighters meet the criteria, so significant numbers will be in a position where they can no longer cope, often through loss of fitness, but the only option is to leave or have their contract terminated on capability grounds without early payment of pension. This is often a difficult process for all involved."

This is a real game changer. The threat of capability affects every firefighter. Nobody is safe.

No protection at all

Every firefighter is under threat if these proposals go forward. Firefighters with 10 years' or less service to go who are included in the transitional protection arrangements the government has already offered (as well as those with partial protection for a further four years) may believe they are protected. But they are not exempt from these fitness proposals.

With the stringent fitness requirements outlined in the report, capability dismissal is possible up to the end of a firefighter's career – with the consequent deferment of pension rights. So government may be saying older firefighters can retire as planned, but it is going to make it much harder to reach.

Retained

Some retained firefighters may believe that they are not threatened. But these proposals hit retained firefighters especially hard. The review says every fire and rescue service should implement regular fitness training and regular assessments to ensure fitness is maintained. It says wholetime firefighters should have 2.5 hours of fitness training built into their work routines, but only recommends that retained firefighters get "appropriate support and opportunities", whatever that means.

Retained firefighters are especially vulnerable because they will not get the same opportunity to maintain their fitness, but will be assessed to the same levels and face the same action if they cannot meet these levels – this means the threat of dismissal.

Women

The review was tasked to look at the reasonable expectation that a firefighter could work to and retire at the NPA 60 and this is where the report's

'We all face the threat of the sack – just for getting older'



OFFICER

The Williams review suggests a lower fitness standard for station managers and above so they can work to 60, overlooking the fact that they may be expected to undertake rescue duties on occasion. The implications of this are major changes in the way the service is run

VO₂ MAX

VO₂ measures the volume (V) of oxygen (O) a body consumes in a minute. If it is measured when someone is working at his or her maximum heart rate – after strenuous exercise – a ‘VO₂max’ figure is obtained.

recommendations impact disproportionately on women. The review says (page 138 paragraph 11.5.5): “The gender issue is important; only around 25% of women meet the fitness criteria to become firefighters, and a larger proportion will only just exceed the minimum level on entry. It is likely that a substantially larger proportion of women will find it hard to maintain fitness at the required level, leading to a disproportionate number becoming unfit for firefighting before age 60.”

This is a clear indication that women are disproportionately affected by the NPA of 60. The review goes on to say: “It is important to avoid discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. Allowing women to become firefighters ensures fairness. It is then important to ensure there are no provisions, criteria or practices that discriminate during service.”

This could not be any clearer – the NPA review is saying that it is right to let women become

firefighters and it is not right to put in place a pension scheme that discriminates against women. An NPA of 60 clearly does disproportionately discriminate against women.

The report recognises this and tries to mask it by suggesting that firefighters should be able to retire after age 55 with a reduced pension.

On page 145, paragraph 12.8.4 it states: “There is likely to be a substantially larger proportion of women firefighters who are physically and/or medically unfit over age 55. Allowing firefighters to leave after age 55 on a pension that is actuarially reduced from age 60 without any additional penalty could be considered a reasonable way to manage expectations, and to manage any potential discriminatory issues.”

The review acknowledges that the FBU has vigorously raised these concerns. But it is yet another example of where the proposed scheme does not give the scheme member the reasonable expectation that they will be able to work to and retire at NPA 60.

Wholetime

It is also important to recognise the number of people that this could involve, with the majority of wholetime firefighters under threat.

The report uses a fitness measurement of VO₂max 42 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹ for firefighting as a minimum standard to establish if firefighters can work beyond 55. The normal population drops below 42 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹ before the age of 40 for men.

This is the “worst case scenario” in the report. The report says that 85% of firefighters on this scenario would not have a VO₂max of 42 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹ by 55 years of age (page 49 paragraph 4.4.4).

Even someone who exercises regularly, has a BMI (body mass index – a measure of fat in the body) of 20 (over 25 is overweight; over 30 is obese), does not smoke and eats only healthy food will still see their VO₂max decline. This is the “best case” in the report. But 23% of firefighters in this category would still not have a VO₂max of 42 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹ by 60 years of age (page 49 paragraph 4.4.3).

Both scenarios are flawed because they both use a starting point of 47 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹. This is not, and has never been, the minimum standard for recruits on entry expressed in VO₂max terms. The National Firefighter Selection Tests equate to 42 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹. But if starting at this level, with age-related decline – even with lifestyle changes, most firefighters will not be fit to work beyond 55.

Officers

Dr Williams uses a lower fitness standard of 25 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹ to suggest that officers of station manager and above can work until age 60. This lower standard has not been discussed or agreed with anyone. It has not been the subject of any substantial research.

It overlooks the fact that officers may still on occasions be expected to undertake actual fire-fighting and other rescue duties, which require a higher fitness standard than this. In reality this ill-conceived idea would mean major changes to the way the fire and rescue service is structured and run.

Everyone threatened

The truth is that all firefighters are affected by the report. Whatever shift system you work, role you perform, age you are, gender, or pension scheme you are in, the threat is the same. This is not about whether you are in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) or the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (NFPS).

It does not even matter if you are not in any pension scheme. The fitness plans would apply to every firefighter, from the moment you are recruited to the end of your career, from the trainee to someone close to retirement. Capability threatens us all.

The NPA review is currently being considered by the Westminster government. Governments in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have all said that they will be implementing the same scheme as England, so whatever is proposed in England will, in reality, be UK-wide.

No agreement

There is no agreement on a standard that firefighters must maintain below which they are required to leave or face capability dismissal. Importantly, this issue has not been negotiated by the fire service employers with the FBU. Nor has the government discussed it with the union.

The FBU has already won a legal case in which members were faced with the "no job or no pension" scenario.

The Williams report suggests that people will not qualify for ill-health retirement as they are simply unable to maintain the required level of fitness. The FBU does not accept this position.

In all the scenarios set out in the review the scheme member would be faced with the "no job, no pension scenario".

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "Now we know what the government means when they say 'we are all in it together'.

"With these pension proposals, on the issue of capability dismissals, every firefighter is 'in it together'. No one is protected. We all face the threat of the sack – just for getting older.

"Despite overwhelming evidence to support our concerns, the government isn't listening to firefighters and it's not even listening to its own experts and evidence.

"No one seriously argues that firefighters can currently work to 60. We cannot endorse or sign up to changes to the firefighters' new pension scheme that will make it unworkable and will ultimately see thousands of firefighters sacked."

DESK JOB

The fitness plans would apply to every firefighter, from the moment they were recruited to the end of their career, from the trainee to someone close to retirement

WHOLETIME

The majority of wholetime firefighters would fail the fitness test suggested in the Williams review before they are 60 — even if they exercise regularly, have a BMI of 20, do not smoke and eat only healthy food

'We cannot endorse or sign up to changes that will ultimately see thousands of firefighters sacked'

“An exciting, action-packed film to show the public who firefighters really are”

The FBU is proud to sponsor the premier of a new film about firefighting

BURN is a feature documentary about Detroit, told through the eyes of Detroit firefighters, who are charged with the thankless task of saving a city that many have written off as dead.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said the FBU was “immensely proud” to sponsor the UK premiere of this film. “We have strong links with our American brothers and sisters, through their union the IAFF and through the solidarity our members have provided – for example after 9/11 and more recently Hurricane Sandy.

Hard hitting

“BURN is a hard-hitting film that shows the reality of firefighting and why we need unions organised in the service.

“Whether it is the drama of actual incidents, or the kit and equipment held together with duck tape, or just the humour among comrades, firefighters in the UK will enjoy the film.

“And I know the film will be welcomed by the public, who always tell us how

Scenes from Detroit

firefighting: Centre Detroit fire commissioner Donald R Austin



much they value their fire and rescue service.”

BURN follows the crew of Engine Company 50 — one of the busiest firehouses in America. Located on Detroit’s blighted east side, E50 stands at ground zero of the city’s problems.

BURN tells the story of these exceptional individuals who, despite the challenges and dysfunction, believe in their city and are attempting to make a difference every day.

Every time that bell rings, the doors of E50 roll up, its crew step into worn boots, climb into decrepit trucks and drive out into the crumbling streets of Detroit to battle these complex problems.

Laugh, cry and cheer

Breena Sanchez, who co-directed and co-produced the film with Tom Putnam, said: “Like every American firefighter who’s seen the film, we hope members of the Fire Brigades Union will see themselves up on that screen when they watch BURN.

“They’ll laugh, they’ll cry, they’ll cheer.”



Tickets for BURN film premiere

WEDNESDAY 1 MAY

18:00 Curzon Soho, London

Tickets Public £7.50
(plus £1 booking fee)

Discount £5.50

(plus £1 booking fee) for FBU
members — use this code:

FBU MEMBER

[http://burnlondon.](http://burnlondon.brownpapertickets.com)

[brownpapertickets.com](http://burnlondon.brownpapertickets.com)

THURSDAY 2 MAY

18:00 Odeon

**(The Printworks),
Manchester**

Tickets Public £7.50
(plus £1 booking fee)

Discount £5.50

(plus £1 booking fee) for FBU
members - use this code:

FBU MEMBER

[http://burnmanchester.](http://burnmanchester.brownpapertickets.com)

[brownpapertickets.com](http://burnmanchester.brownpapertickets.com)

FBU acts to ensure

The FBU and its solicitors Thompsons have got together to protect members and their families from the far-reaching and harmful effects of changes to the law on legal aid

A devastating attack on access to justice by the Westminster government means that, from 1 April in England and Wales, only union members and their families will benefit from a free legal service guaranteeing 100% of their compensation if they are injured in an accident (at work or otherwise) or develop a work-related disease.

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) became law last year despite opposition from trade unions, victim support groups and civil rights organisations.

The media concentrated on cuts to the legal aid budget. But the Act also ended arrangements that enabled injured people to get legal representation without the risk of having to pay from their own pocket if their claim was not successful.

Under the new Act the unsuccessful party, usually the employer or their insurer, will no longer have to pay the insurance premium that the injured person takes out to cover the cost of things like medical reports and court fees should they lose their case.

Vital costs

Such costs, called disbursements in legal jargon, are usually vital in the pursuit of a case. They are necessary to prove who or what caused the accident that led to the injury; the exact nature of the injury; and the short and long term prognosis. These costs can run into thousands of pounds.

In addition, the Act means that the successful claimant's lawyer will no longer be able to claim what is known as a "success fee" from the losing side.

This fee, usually paid by the employer or their liability insurer, recognised the risk that the claimant's lawyer would not get paid for their work should the claim fail.

This enabled the lawyers representing claimants to take the risk of no payment in unsuccessful cases, meaning that they could take on cases that might be risky, such as complex injury claims and test cases.

Success fees have not been banned by the government, but the injury victim, and not the party at fault,

Lawyers will be likely to take on only the most straightforward cases

will have to pay them. Lawyers will be allowed to take up to 25% of a claimant's compensation to cover this.

Although after 1 April many lawyers may continue to promise no deductions from compensation, they are likely to refuse to take on cases that are anything other than those that are straightforward and which will not require a lot of investigation and evidence (which is rare in work-related accident and disease cases) and which they cannot be sure will succeed.

They may agree to take on a complicated claim, but only if the claimant is able to pay up front for the necessary fees, investigations and medical reports.

FBU legal officer Paul Woolstenholmes said: "The FBU has always said that members and

their families who successfully claim compensation if they are injured because of the negligence of someone else should receive it in full.

"An injured person doesn't have to accept being referred to a law firm provided by an insurance company, just because they may have legal expenses insurance added onto their household or motor policies.

Genuinely independent

"Injured people have a right to genuinely independent legal advice, not to be told what their claim is worth by a lawyer who has been given the case by an insurance company.

"That is why, since LASPO became law, the FBU has been working closely with its solicitors Thompsons to work out ways in which claims can still be supported.

"As a result we have negotiated an agreement with Thompsons which will continue to guarantee members and their family members throughout the UK 100% of their damages and the ability to instruct lawyers directly."



To benefit from this service, members and their families

with personal injury claims should contact Thompsons directly on 0808 100 6061 (or in Scotland 0800 089 1331)

Although the initial contact will be direct with Thompsons, your case will still be run on FBU terms and the union will be fully involved and support the case throughout.



justice for members



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

The new system

The new system for funding personal injury claims in England and Wales is the result of intense lobbying of government by the insurance industry, which claims that a rise in compensation pay-outs has resulted in a big increase in motor insurance premiums.

About 80% of personal injury claims are for injuries sustained in road traffic accidents. They have indeed been rising, but this is partly because insurance companies and claims compensation firms harass people who have been in accidents to try to get them to settle their claim without getting independent legal advice.

It is those injured in complex work-related accidents or who suffer industrial diseases, who do not have the benefit of FBU membership, who will be turned away by high street lawyers unwilling to run the financial risk of taking them on.

The new system will not save any money for the government. But more injured people will be reliant on the NHS and benefits, while compensation for their accident would have helped pay for their care and rehabilitation.

Only the insurance industry will benefit from the changes because it will have to pay out less on fewer cases.



JOHN HARRIS/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

80% of personal injury claims are for injuries sustained in road traffic accidents

194 miles of undulating Cuban terrain and a world heritage site

Pete Wilcox first visited Cuba as part of an FBU delegation. Now he's planning to raise money by cycling through the country

Cuba

Pete Wilcox hopes to make 2013 a year he remembers for years to come – by raising funds for a worthwhile cause and revisiting a country that continues to intrigue. Next month the FBU's North East regional secretary is getting on his bike to raise much-needed resources for children at a special school in Cuba.

The need is great: the United States' blockade of the country, the most enduring in history, continues to restrict supplies to the island. More than 100 blind and visually impaired children at the Abel Santamaria school in Havana will benefit from the sponsored ride.

Coast to coast

Pete has completed UK coast-to-coast cycle rides for pleasure – but this will be his first fundraiser. He plans to cycle 312 kilometres (194 miles) through undulating Cuban terrain, bustling market towns and the Vinales Valley – a UNESCO world heritage site where soaring limestone mogotes (isolated, steep-sided hills) erupt from the valley floor like huge haystacks.

The fund-raising ride is organised by the Music Fund for Cuba, the charity set up to

commemorate UK singer/songwriter Kirsty MacColl, killed by a speedboat off the coast of Mexico 13 years ago. She saved her son's life by pushing him away as the boat sped towards him. She was on holiday with her family after making a music programme in Cuba – a country she loved.

Secret headquarters

Pete and fellow cyclists will have a chance to meet and socialise with locals at evening events along the five-day route, stopping off at farms and villages, enjoy traditional salsa – maybe even dipping into a thermal spa after a hard day's pedal-pushing. On the last day, they will lunch at Los Portales, the secret headquarters of the legendary Che Guevara during the 1962 missile crisis.

Pete, a firefighter in Essex before moving to the North East, has had a longstanding interest in internationalism and the Cuba Solidarity Campaign. He is determined to raise as much cash as possible for the Abel Santamaria school to fund equipment, help nurture talent, build confidence and enable pupils to harness their potential.

The North East regional TUC has already agreed to donate funds raised at its annual



PETE WILCOX

Pete Wilcox, FBU North East regional secretary, is going back to Cuba to raise money for visually impaired children five years after his visit on a union delegation



Cycling to raise funds in Cuba



dinner. When the ride is over, cyclists will visit the school to meet the children whose lives fresh funds will enrich and the staff delivering programmes tailored to individual needs.

But Pete's personal journey will not end when the cycle ride and the school visit finish. He is combining his fund raising trip to Cuba this year with a personal commitment to continue work he began five years ago as part of an FBU delegation to the island, led by the late FBU president Mick Shaw.

Pete was then an LGBT rep and reported back to a TUC conference on the experience of gay people on the island – where rights and public attitudes lag behind those in the UK.

"We visited a couple of fire stations," Pete recalls. "When Mick disclosed there happened to be a number of lesbian and gay firefighters on our delegation, the look of shock and horror on the Cuban firefighters' faces was reminiscent of attitudes in the UK 30 years ago. It's a very macho Latino culture." The FBU team did not get to speak to any gay firefighters.

In Cuba, "coming out" to colleagues can be much more difficult than it is in the UK. To learn that the UK firefighters' union has an LGBT section to progress equality at work and in the broader culture could well be empowering. Over the last two decades equality issues have advanced in the UK fire service with the FBU's equality sections at the forefront of making those achievements possible.

International Day Against Homophobia

Pete says: "I am a personal beneficiary of the hard work and support provided by the FBU LGBT section. Work remains to be done, inappropriate comments continue to be made around the mess table, having a negative impact on an individual's confidence and their ability to feel safe in speaking about their sexuality. It has to be about positive role models."

Progress is being made in Cuba. Although there are no Pride events, IDAHO – International



Day Against Homophobia – is celebrated every 17 May and could be used as a springboard for progressive change.

Pete will be there this year, networking with committee members and primed to report back to colleagues in Britain.

Gay Cubans cannot adopt children nor have their relationships formally recognised. Pete will be participating in workshops and events being organised by the government department responsible for LGBT issues (Cenexes) and the IDAHO committee.

Changes are taking place and LGBT Cubans may eventually share the same freedoms and protections as we in the UK are fortunate enough to have.

FBU members can help Pete raise funds to make life better for blind and visually impaired Cuban children by donating through the link below. Advancing the drive to sexual equality in Cuba is a longer game – and Pete will be updating FBU and fellow trade unionists when he gets back home.

 www.justgiving.com/peter-wilcox1 or text TOYA69 (inc amount) to 70070



At the Abel Santamaria school

Prize quiz



Win a Hotspot Square Firepit

To win a firepit please send your answers by 30 April 2013 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (April 2013) FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE. Please include your name, address and membership number. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.

1 What colour shoes does the pope traditionally wear?

- A – Red
- B – White
- C – Black
- D – Brown

2 What sport would use the word 'musher'?

- A – Basketball
- B – Cricket
- C – Bowling
- D – Sled dog racing



4 In which country would you find St Basil's Cathedral?

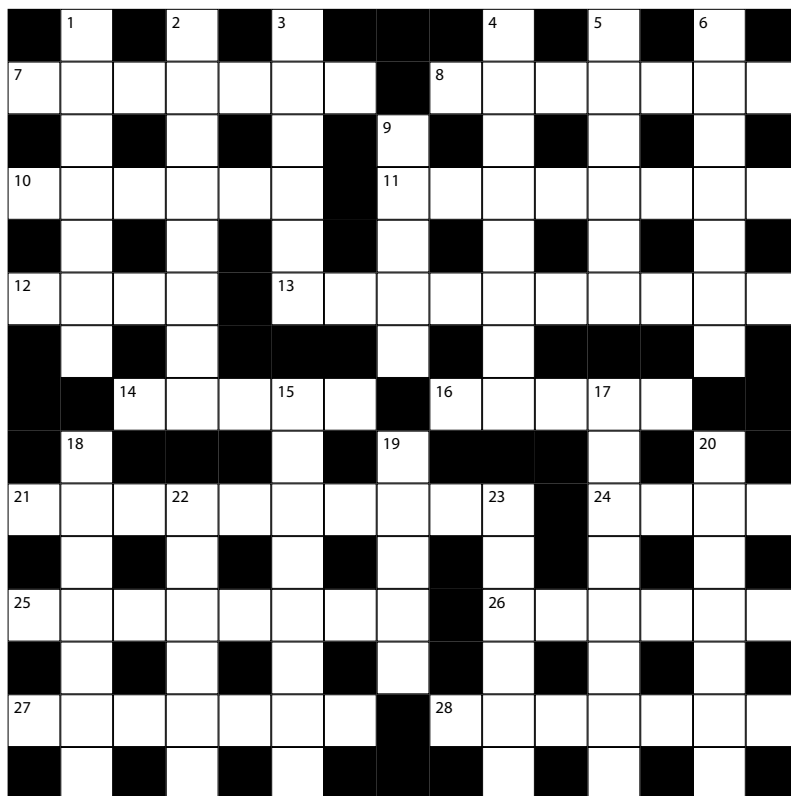
- A – Lithuania
- B – Latvia
- C – Russia
- D – Estonia

5 Hinckley, Illinois was the home of the first Harlem Globetrotters game in what year?

- A – 1927
- B – 1937
- C – 1925
- D – 1955

3 In which country would you find 'Le Cinque Terre'?

- A – Holland
- B – Italy
- C – Germany
- D – Argentina



CROSSWORD

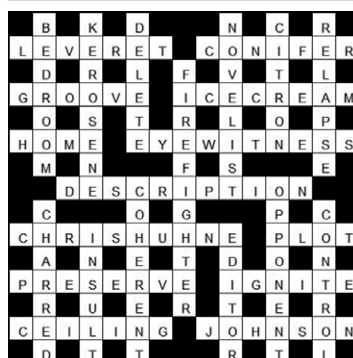
ACROSS

- 7** Mobile home (7)
- 8** Biblical rock band? (7)
- 10** Place in which to lose money! (6)
- 11** Yearly (8)
- 12** Root vegetable yielding sugar (4)
- 13** ...451 – Ray Bradbury's fiery novel (and film) (10)
- 14** Inert noble gas (5)
- 16** Pair – of pheasants? (5)
- 21** Agreement – on where to live? (10)
- 24** One who crosses picket line (4)
- 25, 27** 1974 Newman/McQueen disaster film of skyscraping blaze (8,7)
- 26** Floor covering (6)
- 27** See 25 (7)
- 28** Navigation aid (7)

DOWN

- 1** Floor show – by Minnelli? (7)
- 2** Small container – of gas? (8)
- 3** We all need one – between shifts (3,3)
- 4** Rudolph, for example! (8)
- 5** Separate (from) (6)
- 6** Lost, temporarily (7)
- 9** Sailing vessel (5)
- 15** Compliant to instructions (8)
- 17** Neuter (male) (8)
- 18** Recall, or recalculate (7)
- 19** Shrub boundary (5)
- 20** Chilli pepper used as food flavouring (7)
- 22** Conical tent of native Americans (6)
- 23** Heart or clock (6)

Last month's answers and winners



Crossword solution March

March

quiz answers

- 1.** A – Mercedes
- 2.** A – Muirfield
- 3.** B – Corsica
- 4.** C – Angelo Dundee
- 5.** A – Jacksonville Jaguars

Winner of the January/February quiz
Rikki Harden, North Wales

Station Cat

Tough on firefighters, soft on media

Turned out nasty again

 London Fire Brigade boss Ron Dobson thinks public squabbles are a bad idea and prefers to resolve differences behind closed doors. At least, that's his view of dealing with politicians responsible for savage cuts to his service.

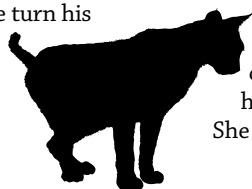
But when it comes to his own staff, Commissioner Ron is surprisingly trigger-happy. He responded to a safety notice on turnout issued by the FBU (and approved by his own health and safety officer) by abusing the union on his blog.

The notice came in response to some depressingly familiar actions by the service. An arbitrary 60-second turnout target was set without consulting the union; action plans (which can lead to formal disciplinary proceedings) were sent to firefighters at one station that could not hit the target; and intimidating emails were sent to crews who might have missed the target.

The emails appear only to have been sent to crews attending incidents in areas that stand to have fire cover downgraded.

The union's notice was designed to make sure that members were not skimping on safety at the behest of management, in order to meet a target they had no say in setting.

Comforting to have a boss who is prepared to come out fighting. Now, can he turn his belligerence away from his workforce and on to those who want to decimate it?



Trust me, I'm a journalist

 What does firefighter Sarah Curtis of Edmonton fire station think about using Minis instead of fire engines? I ask because she was quoted in *The Sunday Times*, in an article on smaller fire response vehicles with the cringeworthy headline "Little squirts to the rescue". It was illustrated by a picture of Ms Curtis with a Mini used for firefighting purposes at the Olympic Park. She said how good it was to drive through the crowds there.

The implication, of course, was that ordinary firefighters agree with the London Fire Brigade and support the Mini being rolled out across London. They don't, of course: Minis can't carry enough firefighters and equipment, they just provide the London Fire Brigade with a useful excuse to cut jobs.

As Dan Stephens, Merseyside's chief fire officer, who is in charge of technical operations at the Chief Fire Officers Association, says in the article: "The big saving with smaller vehicles is with the people".

So Sarah must be an LFB plant, right? Wrong. She was hoodwinked. She agreed to pose for the picture after she was told that it was for a car performance magazine, and she spoke only about its performance among the crowds in the Olympic Park, where it dealt with small fires in waste bins and false alarms caused by steam from hot showers.

She asked several times



In step: Boris Johnson and Ron Dobson

whether the article would be political and was assured that it would not.

"The context of the article was never explained to me," Sarah told us. "I was given assurances by the brigade's media department which turned out to be hollow. During the shoot, a journalist even asked me if I would like to see the Minis rolled out throughout London, and I made it clear that I did not support that."

Unfortunately, Sarah's objections didn't make it to the final article. The quote that did spoke of how well the Mini drives. And the reader could easily have come away with the impression that Sarah and her colleagues welcomed Minis replacing proper fire engines. Which they do not.

The London Fire Brigade has apologised, but the newspaper hasn't corrected the story. Maybe the LFB media department will put pressure on them to do so. Or maybe they won't.

Not a lot of room in the back of a Mini ...

PA PHOTOS



Boris's criminal tendency

 London mayor Boris Johnson graced the people of Lewisham with his presence at a people's question time event, where the population of the capital get together with the mayor and ask the questions that bother them. When compromising the safety of Londoners by swingeing cuts to the fire and rescue service came up, Johnson dodged the question and started talking about what he wanted to discuss, which happened to be youth crime.

But the people were having none of it. Your Cat has heard the audio of what happened next, and was torn between fits of uncontrollable laughter and genuine fear for the mayor's safety. Share in the joy of listening to an angry mob berate the mayor at www.tinyurl.com/cum29hb

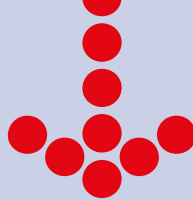
You think you have it bad ...

 FBU members fighting privatisation will sympathise with firefighters in Karachi, Pakistan.

Despite paying a workshop nearly £350,000 for a repair service, only 22 of the service's 47 vehicles are fit for use in a city whose population is double that of London. And the ancient vehicles have a fuel allowance of just 60 litres a month.

Some sources indicate that firefighters haven't been paid in two months, while uniform allowance has been cut and overtime payments are three months overdue.

25-year badges



Steve Bake (r), Richmond, North Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from divisional secretary Kelvin Thewlis



Gareth Sydenham (l), Devon and Somerset SHQ, receives his 25-year badge from health and safety coordinator Dave Chappell



Phil McDowell (r), green watch, Upton, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Les Skarratts



Mark Griffiths (l), Neath and Port Talbot business fire safety, receives his 25-year badge from region 8 ONC rep Mick Higgins



Clive Durbin (r), since retired, Wheatley, Oxfordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Allen



Simon Gent (l), Camels Head, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Gould



Paul Malabone (l), green watch, Rugby, Warwickshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Steve Roberts



Peter Smith (r), Wheatley, Oxfordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Allen



Andy Corbett (l), red watch, Leamington Spa, receives his 25-year badge from Warwickshire chair Steve Roberts



Cliff Joyce (l), red watch, Leamington Spa, receives his 25-year badge from Warwickshire chair Steve Roberts



Derrick Lloyd (l), red watch, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Steve Roberts



Michael Cunningham (r), Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Eric Thompson



Robert Giles (l), Bicester, Oxfordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Allen



Alan Cutter (l), white watch, Colchester, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Sam Collins.



Kevin Robbs (r), green watch, Stanground, Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Phil McQuillan



Martin Harrison (r), Bedale, North Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from divisional secretary Kelvin Thewlis



Vince Willcock (l), Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Karen Adams



Joe Heathcote (r), Devon and Somerset training centre, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Gould



Vinny Riley (r), green watch, Whiston, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Les Skarratts



Rob Williams (l), Ferndown, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Scott Blandford with (l-r) Martin Beevers, Gary Bown, Richard Cowley and Graham Kewley



Dave Powell (l), red watch, Chorley, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Stuart Roxburgh, with Ed Stephens (l) and Mal Dewhurst looking on



Adele Pheminster (r), green watch, Paddington, (since retired and OOT member) receives her 25-year badge from London women's action committee secretary Sally Harper



Dave Cooper (l), white watch, Poole, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from membership secretary Scott Blandford with (l-r) Tony Thorpe, Mike Turner, Nic Courtice, Leah Stewart, Steve Giles and Allen Frias



FF Mackay (l), Sutton, London, receives his 25-year badge from borough secretary Dik Tompkins



Tim Thompson (r), blue watch, Dogsthorpe, Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Phil McQuillan



Kevin Pawley (r), Dovercourt, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from area rep Aston Everett



Dave Prior (r), white watch, Springbourne, receives his 25-year badge from Dorset brigade membership secretary Scott Blandford with watch colleagues (l-r) Steve Ansell, Lee Thomas and Rob Phelps



Louise Garland (r), green watch, Avon control, receives her 25-year badge from brigade secretary Chris Taylor



Mike Tier (l), Bridgwater receives his 25-year badge from Devon and Somerset brigade organiser Andy Gould



Nick Dampney (l), Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Karen Adams



Kev McCarthy (r), green watch, Whiston, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Les Skarratts



Pete Nicholson (l), Bridgwater, receives his 25-year badge from Devon and Somerset brigade organiser Andy Gould



CM Corfield (l), Sutton, London, receives his 25-year badge from borough secretary Dik Tompkins



Chris Lacey (c), receives his 25-year badge from West Sussex FBU chair Mick Cambers (l) and Worthing branch rep Andy Hockley



Alan Crichton (r), training officer, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde, receives his 25-year badge from Strathclyde chair Paul Donnelly

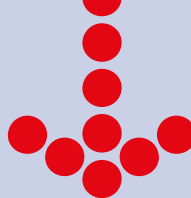


Sean Frampton (r), Westbourne, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Scott Blandford



Simon Nicholls (l), Taunton, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Gould with colleagues looking on

25-year badges



Chris Richards (l), Cullompton, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Gould



Helen Hemmings (r), red watch, Avon control, receives her 25-year badge from brigade secretary Chris Taylor



Trevor Watson (l), red watch, Colchester, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Sam Collins



Pete Coyne (r), West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from Paul Cockburn with colleagues from driver training looking on



Mark Stubbs (l), blue watch, Poole, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Scott Blandford with blue watch colleagues looking on (l-r): Andrew Gorrington, Mark Orchard, Pete Stone, Stuart Gillion, Simon Ballam, Ian Read, Brian Baker and Paul Johnson



Stuart Matthews (r), London, receives his 25-year badge from Victoria Metz



Nigel Gosney (r), Yeovil, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Gould



Gwyn Lewis (l), Neath and Port Talbot community safety, receives his 25-year badge from region 8 ONC rep Mick Higgins



Chris Chidlow (l), Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from Craig Langton



Phil Baskerville (r), Oxfordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Rachel Dobson



Pete Sanderson (l), East Grinstead, West Sussex, rep, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Francis Bishop



FF Standbridge (l), Sutton, London, receives his 25-year badge from borough secretary Dik Tompkins



Martin Avent (r), community liaison officer, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from area rep Aston Everett

Please send photographic prints or digital picture files to: Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE or firefighter@fbu.org.uk. Please include full details for every picture – 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 and when it was taken.

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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

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.