

Firefighter

The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union

Fight for 52

FBU launches campaign for 12 months
maternity leave on full pay

See p16



EQUALITY

MATTERS

August/September 2023



www.fbu.org.uk

**BREATHING APPARATUS
UPDATE**

See p4

**WILDFIRES HIGHLIGHT
IMPACT OF CUTS**

See p8

**UNION ORGANISES TO SAVE
SERVICE IN SCOTLAND**

See p14

CLIMATE CRISIS, FUNDING CRISIS

While some parts of the UK experienced the wettest July on record, much of continental Europe experienced weeks of dangerously high temperatures, as well as tornadoes, flash floods and hailstones as big as golf balls.

Our climate is becoming more chaotic and destructive. Firefighters are on the front line of this crisis, and we know from experience how under-resourced we are.

The FBU will continue to fight hard for decarbonisation. But we are also clear that after more than a decade of cuts, we will need serious investment in our service if we are to meet these demands. As Matt Wrack writes on page 10, we will be making that case loud and clear as we approach a general election.

FIGHT FOR 52

In this issue, we set out our stall for 12 months of maternity leave on full pay, ending the postcode lottery and the shameful situation in which firefighters are forced back to work too soon after giving birth because they cannot afford to stay off.

This is part of a broader push for equalities in the service – under the banner Equality Matters – and we are determined to win it.

ANTI-STRIKE LAWS

Despite the best efforts of the trade union movement, the Strike Minimum Service Levels Act is now law. Resistance to this anti-democratic piece of legislation is only just beginning. Already, devolved administrations have said they will refuse to implement it. By building a broad movement of non-compliance, we can render the government's plans inoperable – and in the coming months, the FBU will do just that.



Ben Selby

Service needs serious investment

BREATHING APPARATUS

Some chief fire officers continue to press ahead with dangerous proposals to push firefighters above the bridgehead without activating their breathing apparatus (BA).

As we report on page 4, the Health and Safety Executive has now said it will investigate, after initially failing to intervene. This is a direct result of our campaigning.

The union's position remains clear: you should not put yourself in a position of danger above the bridgehead with non-activated BA.

CUTS LEAVE SCARS

The FBU's campaign against cuts in Scotland is reaching a pivotal stage. These are some of the worst cuts faced by any fire service and we are determined to stop them. A nationwide mobilisation will take place in Glasgow on 24 August. If you can come, please contact your region.

MERSEYSIDE

Though it only features briefly in this magazine, members should keep their eyes fixed on Merseyside, where members are facing big cuts to night-time control staffing; exploitative duty

crewing systems; and an imposed expansion of the role.

The FBU is balloting for a control strike and action short of strike in the rest of the service, and we expect the dispute to be high profile later this year.

COMMON THREAD

Local reps and activists are the lifeblood of the FBU, and in this issue we report on several ongoing campaigns. At first sight, they may seem unconnected, but common threads run through them all: government cuts and bad management practices.

- In Northamptonshire, an unaccountable fire commissioner tried to appoint a chief fire officer with no operational experience.
- Oxfordshire is trying to appoint officers with no operational experience.
- Kent's fire chief persists with a degrading policy of "stripping off".
- Cuts left East Sussex dangerously exposed when the Royal Albion Hotel caught fire.

The FBU's response to all of these situations is the only one that makes sense: we need a well-funded fire service, led by firefighters and democratically governed.



Ben Selby joins members of the FBU national women's committee at the Local Government Association's headquarters in London to demand an end to the postcode lottery on maternity pay for firefighters



Did you know ...?

... that the number of work hours lost to heat across the globe increased from 199 billion in 2000 to 295 billion in 2020



PETROS GIANNAKOPOULOS/ASSOCIATED PRESS/ALAMY

8



JOHN GOMEZ/SHUTTERSTOCK

18



20



22



KATHLEEN WHITE/ALAMY

7



In this issue

August/September 2023

NEWS

- 4 BA win as Health and Safety Executive agrees to investigate
- 5 Campaign against 'direct entry' station manager appointment
Fire and crime commissioner told to quit
- 6 Pensions: union pushes for quick compensation payments
Firefighters force to strip to underwear in public view

FEATURES

- 8 Wildfires highlight effect of cuts
- 14 UK-wide support vital to push back Scotland cuts plans
- 16 Fight for 52 campaign aims to end 'postcode lottery' for maternity leave
- 18 NHS in danger as US private health giants move in

REGULARS

- 5 **Sounding off**
Hotel fire proves union's case on cuts
- 7 **News focus**
Dorset barge a death trap, union warns
- 20 **Equalities**
Trans rights and the 'war on woke'
- 21 **Meet the rep**
Scott MacRory, H&S rep for Scotland
- 21 **Legal Beagle**
Anti-strike minimum service levels now law
- 22 **Noticeboard**
The new FBU app for your smartphone
- 23 **Station cat**
Tories still yearn for deregulation
- 24 **Long service badges**

Firefighter

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

Firefighter production team:
Michael Chessum, Anna Zych,
Lisa Irving and Alan Slingsby
Cover image: Jess Hurd

Print: Walstead Roche, Victoria Business
Park, Roche, Victoria, Saint Austell PL26 8LX
Firefighter is mailed in a 100% compostable wrapper.
Please do not recycle the wrapper but dispose of it
in your home compost heap, your garden waste or
food waste bin.



NEWS

PENSIONS FIGHT

FBU keeps up pressure for quick payment of compensation

P6



POTENTIAL DEATH TRAP

Union condemns 'callous and reckless' asylum seeker barge policy

P7



BREATHING APPARATUS POLICY



Firefighters at a tower block blaze in Deptford, south east London

GARY CORRISS/LEV/AMNY

Breathing apparatus win as Health and Safety Executive agrees to investigate

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has said that it will assess the safety of the National Fire Chiefs Council proposal to allow firefighters to be deployed beyond the bridgehead wearing their breathing apparatus (BA), but not under air.

The FBU publicly criticised the HSE last month for failing to properly investigate the policy.

The union wrote to the HSE on 27 May 2022 calling on it to use its statutory powers to investigate and bring an end to the policy after several fire and rescue services pushed ahead with its implementation, despite a successful safety challenge to an independently chaired safety panel in London Fire Brigade ruling that the policy deliberately breaches health and safety laws.

After a year of delays, the HSE responded declaring that the issue fell outside of its remit.

This was despite a judge ruling in February 2022 that the concerns raised by the FBU should be dealt with within

the HSE's remit for investigation. It was on this basis that the judge refused to grant a judicial review.

In early August, the HSE appeared to be in the process of an about-turn on the issue.

In a letter to FBU officials, HSE representatives apologised for their lack of action and indicated that they would now investigate the safety of the policy.

They made clear in the same letter that the matter was not closed.

In the meantime, the FBU said all options remain available to challenge the practice, including legal and industrial action.

In a circular to members last month, the union made its position on the policy clear: **"as a professional firefighter**

'The change to breathing apparatus safety procedures is one of the biggest threats to firefighters' health and safety in decades'

and breathing apparatus-wearer you should not put yourself in a position of danger above the bridgehead with non-activated breathing apparatus."

Riccardo la Torre, FBU national officer, said: "The change to breathing apparatus safety procedures is one of the biggest threats to firefighters' health and safety in decades.

"The Health and Safety Executive's failure to act to stop it is a dereliction of duty from a public agency, while their failure to respond to such an urgent matter in a timely manner was an insult to the firefighters whose lives are at risk from this policy.

"We welcome that they are now reconsidering their position.

"We will continue to hold the HSE to account and challenge any fire and rescue service that tries to implement this practice.

"We are prepared to take whatever action is necessary to stop this policy – and we will keep members updated on where this campaign goes next."

Firefighters rally over 'direct entry' station manager post

A campaign has taken off in Oxfordshire against "direct entry", the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) scheme that fast-tracks people with no experience of firefighting or the fire service into senior fire management roles.

FBU members from across Oxfordshire rallied outside a meeting of the county council on 11 July to demand that councillors reverse a decision to advertise for a station manager with no requirement of previous work in the fire and rescue sector.

Steve Wright, FBU executive council

member for the Southern region, described the scheme as adding "insult to injury by cutting opportunities for firefighters while putting the public at risk".

Oxfordshire is one of seven UK fire and rescue services to pilot direct entry, alongside East Sussex, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Avon, Leicestershire, and North Wales. Firefighters across the UK have warned against the scheme. Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service has already dropped it under pressure from local FBU representatives.



Firefighters and supporters rally outside a meeting of Oxfordshire county council

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

FBU petition demands better after 'embarrassing chaos' in service

An FBU petition calling for the resignation of Northamptonshire's police, fire and crime commissioner (PFCC) Stephen Mold had gathered more than 650 signatures as *Firefighter* went to press.

In July, Mold made his own staffer Nicci Marzec, who has no experience of firefighting, interim chief fire officer. Following a public outcry, she resigned from all posts. Mold remained in office.

On 27 July, local

FBU members rallied outside a meeting of the county's police, fire and crime panel, calling for Mold to be held to the "highest account". Two councillors on the panel, applauded by firefighters, walked out in protest at his failure to consult over the appointment. The panel has taken no action to date.

Most fire services are overseen by a fire authority of elected representatives, instead of an individual

PFCC. Ben Selby, FBU assistant general secretary, said events in Northamptonshire happened as a result of the introduction of the PFCC position "hollowing out democratic scrutiny".

The FBU has called on Chris Philp, minister of state for crime, policing and fire, to ensure this never happens again by scrapping the PFCC model.

■ Petition at: bit.ly/Northants-PFCC-must-go

Sounding off



How a hotel fire shows reality of cuts

Joe Weir, FBU executive council member for South East England, says effects are clear

Very rarely does a single incident neatly demonstrate the impact of cuts to public services.

But on Saturday 15 July, a fire broke out at the Royal Albion Hotel in Brighton, East Sussex. This was not the first time that firefighters had been called to the hotel.

In 1998, a similarly sized fire happened in the exact same place. The contrast between the two responses could not be clearer.

In 1998, 24 fire engines attended; in 2023, it was just 15. In 1998, crews were drawn in from surrounding counties, but this year the call went out as far as London.

There is only one explanation – cuts. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has lost nearly 140 frontline firefighters and control room staff to cuts since 2010.

As a result, East Sussex and surrounding areas were left without adequate fire cover as the fire service scrambled to deal with the blaze this year.

Six days later, the fire reignited. Firefighters worked through the night in unsafe and extreme conditions. Some did 13 hour shifts, while others were forced to urinate into buckets because of a lack of welfare facilities. There were inadequate arrangements for decontamination, putting firefighters at increased risk of exposure to cancer-causing fire contaminants.

Ministers can deny it, but the reality is clear.

Next time someone tells you that the fire and rescue service has not been cut to the bone, just say the words: "Albion Hotel".

PENSIONS

FBU keeps up fight for pensions compensation to be paid quickly

The FBU has had multiple wins on pensions in the courts. This will mean substantial compensation for thousands of firefighters.

The union is fighting hard to overcome a variety of bureaucratic and legal obstacles, and to get the money paid as quickly as possible.

Solicitor Ivan Walker, who has worked tirelessly for firefighters' pensions, has now retired. As a result, all current Injury to Feelings claims are being transferred to the care of Thompsons solicitors. The FBU will continue to cover members' costs.

Around 6,000 people – those who applied in 2015 and are registered claimants in England and Wales (first wave) – should now have

received a letter that will enable the process for them to reach the next stage. Members who registered claims in 2020 (second wave) will receive letters in due course.

It is vital that members read all correspondence carefully, and follow the instructions contained in it.

As these were legal claims submitted on behalf of individual members, only those members who registered a claim, are therefore registered as claimants in this case (in the first or second waves) and will be eligible for compensation.

■ The latest detailed information can always be found at fbu.org.uk/pensions



Ivan Walker at this year's FBU annual conference

KENT

Union demands action over firefighters having to strip to underwear in public

The FBU has written to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services and the fire minister highlighting "chronic management inaction" in relation to reports of firefighters in Kent having to strip to their underwear in full view of colleagues and the public.

In May, FBU brigade secretary Danny Barrett wrote to Kent fire service chief executive Ann Millington to complain that

firefighters were "on regular occasion stripping down to their underwear in full view of all prior to donning fire kit when attending operational incidents".

This followed concerns that were raised with the union's national women's committee.

Responding to the letter, Ann Millington dismissed the reports as the product of a "rumour". Later she appeared to defend the practice, stating that stripping

down to underwear could prevent overheating.

However, the union has confirmed that the practice is being used. It is not accepted in any fire and rescue service in the UK outside Kent, and could have a negative impact on protection from toxic fire contaminants.

National Fire Chiefs Council chair Mark Hardingham and the fire minister Chris Philp have failed to address the issue to date.

In brief

North West members to vote in ballots on action

A new industrial action ballot has opened in Merseyside in an ongoing dispute over terms and conditions. Firefighters and green book staff will vote on continuing their overtime ban over un-negotiated duty shift systems, non-agreed expansion of the role and apprentices forced into work on days off.

Merseyside fire control staff are voting on escalating to strike action in response to cuts to night-time staffing numbers. Both ballots close on Monday 21 August.

Members gear up to fight devastating cuts

North Wales firefighters are readying to fight off devastating cuts. Proposals by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service could see 36 full-time firefighters and 38 on-call firefighters cut, fire stations closed, and an engine taken away from Wrexham station. A consultation on the cuts closes on 22 September.

■ Stay informed on the campaign and how to get involved at sofrs.co.uk

Tribunal win for member who raised safety issues

Health and safety rep Tim Deegan felt "punished" by his employer Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, for flagging up serious safety issues with the region's fire control system. Disciplinary charges were brought against him, but the FBU, through Thompsons solicitors, fought and won his case. An employment tribunal found that he was "treated unlawfully in relation to an important role that he plainly took very seriously". He was awarded £6,000.

■ More details: bit.ly/Herts-ET-case



The Bibby Stockholm arriving in Falmouth, Cornwall, earlier this year, where it was refitted in a dry dock before it moved to Portland in Dorset

Government plans to house asylum seekers on board the Bibby Stockholm accommodation barge have come under fire from multiple sources, including the FBU.

Serious concerns have been raised about conditions aboard the vessel, which was initially designed to house 222 people but is now expected to take more than 500.

Carralyn Parkes, the mayor of Portland, said that the barge was “not a suitable place” to house asylum seekers. “Human beings belong in communities,” she added.

Most pertinent are the fire safety concerns. Now set to operate at more than double occupancy, the Bibby Stockholm has narrow corridors over three decks, with only two main exits.

Local councillors have described the evacuation point as “completely inadequate” for the numbers involved.

Speaking to the *Guardian* newspaper, FBU assistant



News Focus

'A potential death trap'

general secretary Ben Selby was blunt, saying that the barge was a “potential deathtrap”.

The FBU has publicly warned of serious fire safety concerns with such an increased occupancy rate and has written to Home Secretary Suella Braverman to demand a meeting.

In the letter, Ben Selby spelled out the union's position: “The FBU believes fire safety standards are universal and apply to everyone,” he wrote.

“These matters are both

industrial and political. They matter because our members will be called upon in the event of an emergency.

“They also matter to us because fire and rescue is a humanitarian service, designed to protect everyone regardless of their circumstances or background. Fire does not discriminate and therefore neither should safety regulations.”

People housed on the Bibby Stockholm are applying for sanctuary in the UK on the basis that they are fleeing war, torture,

persecution or other threats to their safety.

The government claims that the barge is a cheaper alternative to housing them in hotels, and says that the conditions aboard the barge will deter others from coming to the UK.

Human rights groups, fire safety experts and opposition parties of all stripes oppose the move.

The fire safety concerns for the Bibby Stockholm follow a wider watering down of regulations in recent months, with the government using its powers to exempt asylum seeker accommodation from the house in multiple occupation (HMO) licensing process.

The FBU has condemned this move as “callous and reckless”.

Asylum seekers began to be moved onto the Bibby Stockholm in early August. At the time of writing, the government had yet to respond to the FBU's request for a meeting.

Hottest month in modern history

July 2023 was the hottest month in recorded history around the globe, according to climate experts.

Recent record-breaking heatwaves have scorched the southwestern United States, northern Mexico, China and, closer to home, southern Europe, creating prime conditions for wildfires to take hold and spread.

On 24 July the temperature in Sardinia

was recorded at 48.2C – almost topping Europe's hottest-ever recorded temperature of 48.8 degrees Celsius, logged in Sicily in August last year.

Fierce wildfires have devastated large areas of land in Spain, Italy, Greece and Algeria – where 34 people are known to have died as a result.

Blazes were also reported in France, Portugal, Turkey and Croatia. Wildfires on the Greek islands of Corfu and Rhodes saw

thousands of holidaymakers evacuated after wildfires endangered several popular tourist destinations. And on the Greek island of Evia two pilots tragically died in firefighting operations when their plane crashed.

Countries in the region have shared firefighting resources. Italy and France sent firefighting planes to Greece to help it cope with wildfires – the planes and their teams of firefighters are part of an EU civil protection mechanism.



July 25, 2023: Wildfire in Gennadi village, on the island of Rhodes, south eastern Greece
PETROS GIANNAKOURIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS/ALAMY



London July 2022: 2,496 emergency calls to control

39 appliances off the run due to 'insufficient staff'

Matt Wrack says the official report on a major wildfire incident is a damning indictment of the effect of cuts and failures of leadership

1 9 July 2022 will go down as one of the most memorable dates in the history of the London Fire Brigade (LFB). It was certainly one of the busiest days in LFB's history, when a pan-London major incident was declared due to wildfires. Firefighters and emergency control staff yet again served the public with great fortitude.

Major incidents were declared on the same day in 14 other fire and rescue services.

Last month, the LFB published a major incident review of the day. It revealed the scale of the challenge created by wildfires in the capital on 19 July 2022:

- 2,496 calls to control
- 359 incidents
- 740 calls relating to grass alight
- 1,198 mobilisations.

Around 500 members of the public were evacuated with the assistance of firefighters.

SAFETY FAILURES

The FBU is rightly proud of our members' response to those wildfires. But the union also has a duty to examine the failure of principal managers to ensure our members can carry out their jobs safely.

The major incident review reveals a number of safety failures, which could have been foreseen and could have been avoided, had principal managers planned and prepared better than they did.

The report reveals there were 26 safety events on 19 July 2022. This included firefighters requiring hospitalisation and others treated for smoke inhalation. In one case, an incident commander was denied additional resources and rightly recorded this as a safety event, because the situation was "placing crews in danger of heat exhaustion or worse".

Control staff were so overwhelmed by the volume of calls that a control emergency was declared, with off-duty staff coming in to assist with the response. Nevertheless, when incident commanders requested further make-ups, they were told appliances were not



available. At one point there were no fire rescue units, command units or fire investigation units available for control to send.

The report reveals that there were shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) and that female firefighters were disproportionately impacted, twice as likely to be off the run because of no PPE.

SHORTAGE OF PERSONNEL

The major incident report confirms what the FBU said last year: “On 19 July 2022 the LFB had 39 appliances off the run because of insufficient staff”.

The report further admits that, in response, “the LFB has in place recruitment and promotion plans to address the establishment shortfall”.

In 2010, LFB had almost 6,000 wholetime firefighters and over 100 control staff. By 2022, the number of wholetime firefighters had been cut to just over 4,500. This means hundreds fewer firefighters on duty throughout the year and for peak periods like last year, on 19 July.

This is a damning indictment of more than a decade of austerity, ushered in by then London mayor Boris Johnson and implemented by Ron Dobson when he was London’s fire commissioner.

LFB principal management had not prepared

**19 July 2022 :
a grass fire in
Wennington,
East London,
destroyed
houses before
firefighters
could bring it
under control**

adequately before the incident. It had no wildfire tactical advisers nor other officers specifically trained for wildfire intervention. The high volume pump at Hainault was away for its annual service.

The London fire commissioner’s latest assessment of risk (April 2022), had highlighted wildfire risk – but this should have been identified years before.

The lack of preparedness was not unique to the LFB. The deeper failure of leadership lay with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). Wildfires have been on the National Risk Register since 2013.

NFCC policy on wildfire is woefully inadequate. Its national operational learning action note, issued in 2021, stated that: “All fire and rescue services have a foreseeable wildfire risk.”

Yet the NFCC and its predecessors presided over the austerity cuts, including the loss of one in five firefighter jobs. The council provided ministers with political cover for attacks on the fire and rescue service.

Chief fire officers told the public they were prepared for anything and that they had the resources necessary and plans in place. They accused the FBU of scaremongering. They alone were in charge and therefore they must accept the responsibility for failing yet again in the face of foreseeable emergencies.

FBU SHUT OUT

The FBU has warned about the risks of wildfires, floods and climate change for decades. Yet the union is shut out of committees advising politicians. Ministers and the NFCC want to further exclude the FBU from channels of communication, guidance and policy making, despite the magnificent response of our members every time there is an emergency.

Their model is broken.

As we prepare for a general election, the coming months will be pivotal in deciding the future of our service. The FBU will set out its stall for proper investment and reform, and we will call on every member of the FBU to mobilise and make their voices heard.

When incident commanders requested further make-ups, they were told appliances were not available. At one point there were no fire rescue units, command units or fire investigation units available

As wildfires rage, questions on kit, training, resources and shortages of firefighters are looming larger

Firefighters across the UK face a postcode lottery when it comes to levels of equipment and training for tackling a rapidly growing threat, writes **Helen Hague**

The warnings from the Met Office are stark. Wildfires, droughts and downpours will become more severe and frequent. The heatwave that gripped Britain last summer – when a new temperature record of 40.3C was set “will be considered cool” by the end of the century. And, based on events across the world, the UN secretary general now speaks of “global boiling”.

Firefighters are at the sharp end when wildfires break out. At a time of cutbacks and raging inflation, many are questioning whether UK fire and rescue services have the resources and training in place needed to meet the challenges ahead.

Scottish frontline firefighters were confronted by such challenges in late May when they found themselves fighting against the forces of nature as a massive wildfire took hold for weeks in scrub and woodland near Cannich in the Scottish Highlands – a wildfire that could be the largest recorded in the UK.

Plumes of smoke drifting towards Loch Ness were detected in space by NASA.

Helicopters water-bombed the tinder-dry terrain and crews beat back flames on the arduous punishing shifts – in wildfire fire-kit issued to crew members just six months ago.

Will Burt, the FBU's Scotland North area organiser, is based at Elgin, the only full-time fire station out of 21 stations in Moray.

'JUST NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE'

He is concerned about cutbacks, and the struggle to recruit and keep retained firefighters in the area – where the minimum contract is 90 hours a week and crews have to live within eight minutes of the station. With the prospect of more wildfires, he fears “there are just not enough people”.

Davy Howe, crew manager at Grangetown in Cleveland, has worked at the station for 25 years. There have always been wildfires in the area, but now “the land is drier, and fires take hold quicker”. Highly combustible dried-out gorse bushes “can go up like petrol,” says Davy, who is the FBU brigade secretary

The wildfire earlier this year near Cannich in the Scottish Highlands, could be the largest recorded in the UK

in Cleveland and North East (region 3) treasurer.

When Saddleworth Moor caught fire five years ago, Cleveland firefighters went to help, “using beaters almost next to the flames” in “heavy, totally inappropriate” traditional fire kit.” Crew members are “still fighting fires with structural fire kit on. It’s not fit for purpose. We don’t even have proper firefighting boots for walking long distances over rough ground.

“The union is always pushing for new equipment and the right PPE for the job.” And though crews at the station are seasoned wildfire fighters, they have had no formal wildfire training.

It’s a very different picture over at Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service’s (GMFRS) Littleborough station, where the newly set up burns team is receiving specific intensive wildfire training.

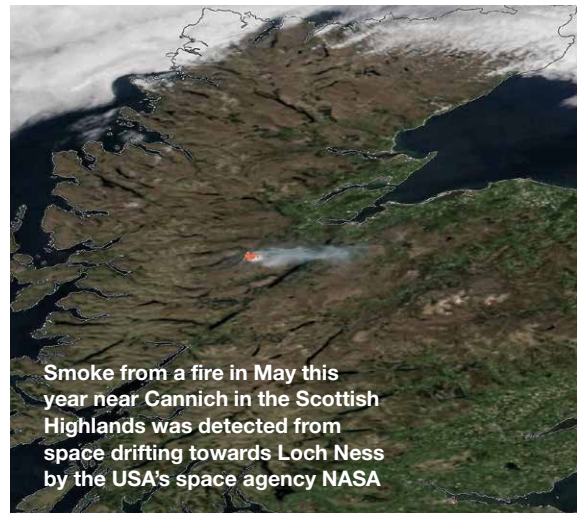
TRAINING IN SPAIN

Within the past year, all crew members have trained intensively in Catalonia, Spain – working in hot, tinder-dry conditions alongside wildfire experts with a world-wide reputation for excellence and innovation.

Burns team crew member Demi Efe, a frontline firefighter for over five years, relished the wildfire training in Spain, which included controlling wildfires through burning ahead of the flames – “fighting fire with fire”.

In highly physical training, the team used trench tools to cut through tough vegetation and, says Demi, GMFRS has now agreed to buy some of the tools used in Catalonia for the crew.

The team also attended an extensive debriefing session on lessons learned from last year’s widespread



Smoke from a fire in May this year near Cannich in the Scottish Highlands was detected from space drifting towards Loch Ness by the USA's space agency NASA

wildfires. Demi, an FBU health and safety rep involved in equality campaigns, now feels “better prepared” and “equipped to face the challenge of wildfires to come”.

Firefighters in Northern Ireland are among UK crews who have also trained in Catalonia. They have done so for the past decade, says Dermot Rooney, FBU regional chair and area manager. He reckons the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service is quite well resourced when it comes to fighting wildfires. Every firefighter has a “wildland coverall”, and there is specialist equipment – though every day, at least 30 of the region’s 112 fire engines are off the run because of staff shortages.

Speaking to four FBU members from around the country, a mixed picture emerges of readiness to meet the wildfire challenges ahead. It is not a level playing field – more of a “postcode lottery” according to Davy Howe, who, alongside colleagues, is still fighting wildfires in not-fit-for-purpose traditional PPE kit.

Any government which takes the threat of wildfires seriously should surely listen to those reporting from the frontline – and, as the world heats, ensure the service itself is fit for purpose.

'Members are fighting fires with kit that is not fit for purpose – some do not even have proper firefighting boots for walking long distances over rough ground'



Firefighters tackle a woodland area wildfire near Kingston in Moray, Scotland
JASPERIMAGE / ALAMY

Time to unite and end the constant cuts

FBU members in Scotland are organising to save their service from some of the worst cuts seen in modern times and are calling for UK-wide support for their campaign, says **Colin Brown**, EC member for Scotland

Following the announcement of a five-year “flat cash” budget last year, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is planning to slash around 200 firefighter posts in a bid to save £11m this year. By 2027, it is predicted to have had its budget cut by a total of £36m.

These are the most savage cuts inflicted on any fire and rescue service since then mayor of London (and now-disgraced former prime minister) Boris Johnson took a wrecking ball to the London Fire Brigade (LFB), closing 10 fire stations and slashing more than 500 jobs.

Those cuts were inflicted using the same narrative and corporate language that we now hear in Scotland: that “efficiencies” are “based on evidence” and will mean no reduction in fire cover, no risk to communities, and no risk to firefighter safety.

Last month’s LFB report into the 2022 wildfires, which destroyed 16 homes in the suburb of Wennington, gives the lie to these claims: 39 LFB fire appliances were unavailable to respond due to crew shortages, putting homes, safety, and even lives, at risk.

This year alone the SFRS has announced that it will “temporarily mothball” 10 wholetime appliances, reduce high reach cover, and downgrade the crewing of the dedicated rescue boat on the river Clyde.

This rescue boat is one of the most vital lifesaving resources across any UK fire and rescue service. According to internal SFRS documents, rescue boats on the Clyde carried out 22 rescues in 2022 alone, alongside multiple other mobilisations for searches and recovery. The overwhelming majority of these undertaken by the dedicated crew now faced with downgrading.

DISHONEST

“Mothballing” is a dishonest way to present cuts. You can’t ‘mothball’ 200 firefighters; and even if the specific 10 appliances are dusted off and put back on the run at any point in the future, the likely reality is that 10 others will be removed. The SFRS height strategy will reduce high reach capacity from 25 to 16 high reach appliances, and once they are gone, we know they are not coming back.

Public authorities have a duty to consult on major changes such as these at a formative stage. Given how far these

proposals go, and that decisions already appear to have been made, it is hard to see how the SFRS plans are consistent with the Gunning Principles that outline how and when consultations must be carried out.

Merging Scotland’s eight fire and rescue services into a single service in 2013 was heralded as the only way to protect the front line, but as SFRS marks its first decade, FBU members see little to celebrate. The latest cuts come on the back of a decade of austerity-driven erosion of services across Scotland.

Based on the Scottish government’s own figures, around £57m has been stripped from the annual budget for the service since 2012. Five of Scotland’s eight controls have closed with the loss of over 25% of control firefighters.

Over the same period, 620 wholetime, 318 retained and 140 volunteer posts have been lost – a total reduction of over 1,100 (or 14.5%) of firefighter posts across Scotland. Add in the projected 200 for this year and Scotland is on





FBU members across Scotland have mobilised to resist the cuts and exert maximum political pressure on the SFRS and the Scottish government

course to exceed the disastrous cuts that have left other parts of the UK struggling to provide a meaningful emergency response to all incidents.

Scottish FBU members know that, based on Scottish government budget projections, there are more savage cuts and sweeping changes to duty systems and conditions still to come between now and 2027. If LFB had to close 10 stations and slash 552 jobs to save £28.8m, how deep will SFRS have to cut to save £36m?

MAXIMUM PRESSURE

Members across Scotland have mobilised quickly and en masse to resist these cuts and exert the maximum political pressure on both SFRS managers and the Scottish government, with petitions, community engagement, lobbying events and demonstrations.

We have mobilised outside local council scrutiny committee meetings in Fife, Dundee, Perth, Hamilton and Greenock, with further events scheduled for Polmadie and central Glasgow.

If LFB had to close 10 stations and slash 552 jobs to save £28.8m, how deep will SFRS have to cut to save £36m?

Local and national press, radio and television coverage has been building and multiple parliamentary questions have been asked directly on the back of members and councillors writing to MSPs demanding meaningful investment to avoid these cuts.

All of this is building to a major UK-wide FBU demonstration.

This will be held in Glasgow's

George Square on 24 August, less than a fortnight from when SFRS intends to implement the cuts.

To date, the response from the Scottish government has been depressingly predictable, with a stock statement repeated ad nauseam that "... it is right that SFRS continue to review its operations to ensure it is delivering value for taxpayers' money." After more than a decade of failing to adequately fund the fire and rescue service, the Scottish government is running away from its responsibilities.

Our mobilisation in August will be a chance to push the government and SFRS to answer the demands of the public, MSPs and firefighters for meaningful investment and an end to the decade of cuts.

■ It is vital that members from across the UK join us to push back against these cuts. We look forward to welcoming you to Glasgow on 24 August from 12.30. Contact your region for more information.

Fight for 52

FBU assistant general secretary **Ben Selby** explains why the FBU is fighting for 12 months (or 52 weeks) of full-pay maternity leave

How can it be right that a woman firefighter in Cornwall receives £15,000 less maternity leave pay than her equal in Derbyshire? Surely this is a case of stark inequality. Yet, sadly, this postcode lottery is the reality that women face in the UK fire and rescue service. Currently, maternity provisions are wholly inadequate, both in terms of occupational hazards and in terms of recruitment, retention and inclusion. That is why the FBU is firmly committed to addressing inequality in maternity arrangements.

Equality is a trade union principle and a priority for the FBU. That is why we launched our campaign Equality Matters in May this year to ensure that equality is part of everything we do as a union.

The FBU encourages all members to get involved in their union and actively

encourages under-represented groups. The FBU has three equalities sections: black and ethnic minority members (B&EMM), lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans members (LGBT+) and the national women's committee (NWC).

We are also beginning to better understand how we can support those with disabilities and neurodivergence.

Fight for 52 seeks to address the dire imbalances in maternity provision across the UK and is an important part of the Equality Matters campaign.

BETTER MATERNITY PROVISION

On 2 May, the FBU wrote to UK fire employers at the National Joint Council (NJC), where the pay and conditions of operational firefighters and emergency control staff are negotiated, highlighting the obligation on national employers to address inadequate maternity provision in the service and to ensure that maternity provision in it is fit for purpose.

The union demanded – among other things – that all UK fire employers extend the current arrangement for

maternity leave to 12 months on full pay following the date of birth. Pre-birth provisions must also be addressed, ensuring that expectant mothers are protected from the work-related exposures to fire contaminants.

These improvements must be reflected urgently in maternity provisions laid out in the Grey Book (the scheme of conditions which apply across the service).

For decades, the FBU NWC has outlined the stark disparities in maternity provision. In a fire and rescue service where the basic minimum is provided, women lose 10% of their pay as soon as they commence maternity leave. This only lasts for six weeks, after which they lose a further 40%. They then spend the rest of their ordinary maternity leave on half pay, which is usually 33 weeks.

The-soon-to-be-published Fight for 52 report details some of the awful situations that women firefighters have had to face.

One example displays the sub-optimal nature of current arrangements: “We



Matt Wrack joined members of the FBU's national women's committee rallying for better maternity pay outside the Local Government Association building in London



currently have one of our women's reps who is on maternity leave. Her provision is six weeks at 90% pay, then statutory maternity pay (SMP) only. "To return to work and leave her baby after six weeks would have a massively detrimental effect on her mental and physical health. It would also mean



EQUALITY

MATTERS

that breast feeding would need to cease and the bond with the baby could be impacted.

"The reason I became a rep was because, when I was pregnant, I had one contract terminated, and my temporary promotion ended, all because I was pregnant (this was made clear in an email sent to me).

"I went off for a year and wasn't told about a promotion opportunity, had no contact from line management to check on my welfare and just generally felt very let down. This contributed massively to me suffering with crippling post-natal depression."

Firefighters put themselves on the line to protect the public. They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, and to work in an inclusive environment.

An early return to work due to financial constraints has a detrimental effect on any new parent's long-term wellbeing; this effect can be both physical and mental. This has been compounded by the cost of living crisis, which is pushing many people to their financial limits and forcing

people into difficult positions.

The case for 52 weeks full pay and wider provisions is compelling. Across the country, women are being forced to return to work early after giving birth because they cannot afford to stay on maternity leave.

A lack of proper maternity leave puts mothers and babies at risk from fire contaminants. Inevitably, if your local fire service has bad maternity leave, firefighting will be a less appealing profession to join – or to remain in – to anyone who might get pregnant.

SERIOUS ACTION NEEDED

Ministers, the employers and chief fire officers need to be aware of the risks and rewards related to pregnancy and firefighting – not just in the first year but well beyond. Serious action is needed to ensure women firefighters have adequate maternity arrangements.

Women firefighters deserve better. Equality matters to the FBU. We will fight for 52 weeks of maternity leave on full pay everywhere in the UK.



The NHS at 75 – and at breaking point

Headlines about the NHS at breaking point have been written for years, but now the truth is far graver, says **Professor Allyson Pollock**, clinical professor of public health at Newcastle University

What happens in the National Health Service matters to everyone, and not just because almost everyone in the UK relies on it in some way. For decades now, our health service has been subject to an ideologically driven campaign of privatisation – and what politicians can get away with in the NHS, they may look to pursue in other public services, including the fire and rescue service.

There has always been a two-tier system in the UK, where those who can afford to pay, or who have medical insurance, can go private. But after

more than 30 years of reducing public capacity, increasing marketisation and promoting private health care, what now exists, especially in England, is a two-tier service which increasingly resembles American health care.

There is a blurring of public and private provision and funding as patients use the private sector to queue jump.

PRIVATISATION GROWING

Multinational corporations and private equity investors have now well and truly penetrated every part of the NHS and the problem of privatisation is growing with, NHS hospitals now actively advertising private health care.

Covid exposed the major shortages across NHS and social care. The number of NHS beds more than halved from

299,000 in 1987/88 to 141,000 in 2019/2020. NHS hospitals including University College London Hospitals (UCLH) are turning over some of their beds to private companies via joint ventures such as HCA Healthcare UK (Hospital Corporation of America), which describes itself as “the largest private health care provider in the world, and the largest provider of privately funded health care in the UK”.

Tens of thousands of staff are working across public and private sectors on a fee-for-service basis or as employees of private companies exacerbating the critical shortage of NHS staff. There are now 40% fewer nurses than 10 years ago.

Many medical doctors have equity shares in joint ventures with private hospitals, such as HCA and other private



health companies.

Instead of rebuilding the NHS, this government is pouring money into the private sector. Additional contracts valued at £10bn were awarded in the summer of 2022 to 52 private companies in order to help reduce waiting lists.

FEEDING SHAREHOLDERS

That same year, NHS England planned for a 20% increase in the use of the private sector in comparison to 2019/20 levels; these contracts are a lifeline for private hospitals, especially for those whose profits were falling before the pandemic and who rely on NHS funding to feed shareholders.

NHS dentistry and long term social care gives a taste of what is to come – decreased access, more corporate

provision and out of pocket payments; and fewer services for those with the greatest needs. It's already happening: people are extracting their own teeth because of the high costs of dental care. Eye doctors worry that the privatisation

**Many politicians who
voted for increasing
marketisation of the
NHS had a financial
interest in doing so**

and loss of NHS eye services will be followed by an epidemic of blindness.

The 2012 Health and Social Care Act ended the duty of the health minister to provide key health services throughout England. It shifted care away from planning services and the workforce on a geographical basis, and introduced virtually compulsory commercial tendering, giving companies more say over services.

The 2022 Health and Care Act went further still, handing control of public expenditure and decision-making to networks of NHS and private providers which resemble US health maintenance organisations in several respects.

Many of the politicians who voted for the dismantling and increasing marketisation of the NHS had a financial interest in doing so, owning shares in private healthcare companies or receiving donations from them. Private healthcare companies have directly donated almost £1m to the Conservative Party over the past 10 years.

GROWING UNFAIRNESS

Higher costs, more waste, lack of access, growing unfairness and poorer outcomes are well-documented effects of marketised two-tier systems – with the US being a good case in point. The USA spends far more on its healthcare system than other developed countries, but performs poorly on life expectancy and infant mortality.

The Labour Party is, sadly, silent on the need to end privatisation and rebuild NHS as a public funded, publicly owned and accountable system of care. Instead, it continues to endorse the use of the parasitic private sector. If we are to save the NHS, this will have to change.

It is up to the people – and their trade unions – to rise up and fight for the NHS. The past year has witnessed a number of big industrial disputes, as doctors and nurses demonstrate their desperation and frustration at falling pay and chronic staff shortages.

The task now is to draw these movements together and bring pressure to bear on the political system.

We must demand that an incoming government reinstate the NHS as a planned system of universal public health care throughout England, available to all on the basis of need, not ability to pay.



FBU delegates at this year's TUC LGBT conference (l-r) Pat Carberry, Maria Buck, Gemma Betts and Shelley Morgan



FBU members at this year's London Pride event

Trans rights and the 'war on woke'

It seems clear that trans rights are being used as a political football says FBU LGBT+ national secretary **Pat Carberry**

Many will recognise the increase in profile that the issue of trans equality has received in recent years.

The 2001 census revealed that around 262,000 people in the UK said their gender identity and sex registered at birth were different, which is 0.5% of the population. So why are trans rights being pushed to the forefront of so much political debate?

The rights of trans people are undoubtedly an important issue, particularly if you happen to be trans. At the heart of it is the freedom for those individuals to live a life in the gender that they identify with, yet those basic entitlements are being decided by people who will not be living that life.

The debate is a classic smoke and mirrors diversion tactic: attack a tiny part of society, demonise and make people frightened of them and divert political debate away from the wider issues such as the cost of living crisis, economic failure and incompetent leadership by government.

While all of this is happening, members of our trans community are the

ones who suffer the most.

This July, a leaked report by the Cabinet Office and its Government People Group revealed draft guidelines for UK civil servants.

The new draft policies for the UK's 500,000 civil servants would restrict trans staff from using single-sex spaces such as toilets and force staff to accept transphobic views in the workplace.

Access to facilities such as toilets would be restricted to the gender at birth of the individual unless they have a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC).

As only 5,000 GRCs have been issued, only one in 50 of those trans workers would be afforded the dignity of using the facility that aligns with the gender

they identify with.

The draft policy also protects gender critical views being expressed in the workplace which would effectively permit the expression of transphobic speech.

Many believe that the leaking of these draft policies is an attempt to trigger a wider, even further anti-trans debate in what is being titled a "war on woke".

The content of the proposals would also likely be a breach of the Equality Act 2010 so it poses the question: why make such provocative proposals?

It seems clear that trans rights are being used as a political football and, despite the reforms being passed by the Scottish government, the unprecedented intervention by Westminster to veto these reforms shows a clear direction at political level that positive change will be resisted.

The fact that the census shows over a quarter of a million people identify as a different gender than that at birth yet only one in 50 has acquired a GRC, demonstrates the process of legal gender recognition is not fit for purpose.

The debate is a classic smoke and mirrors diversion tactic



DEREK IRONS/NEWSLINE MEDIA

Meet the rep

Scott MacRory
H&S rep for Scotland

1. What made you want to become a rep?

I was 'encouraged' to become a rep by an existing area/brigade official on my station who I had been questioning over things I didn't feel were right within the service. He saw an opportunity for me to channel that frustration into something which would give me the ability to influence positive change. Becoming a branch rep was one of the most enjoyable, rewarding things I've done in my fire service career.

2. What is your proudest moment as a rep?

Seeing 700 firefighters standing outside the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, mobilising en masse, making their voices heard, campaigning for better pay for firefighters. Also, seeing the positive changes our ongoing DECON work is bringing as we work collaboratively with the fire service in Scotland.

3. Who are your ultimate heroes?

Tam McFarlane, with his impeccable dress sense and witty sense of humour!

4. Describe yourself in three words.

Persistent, passionate and relentless.

5. What was the last conversation you had that made you think differently about something?

With my wife. I thought I was right, she told me I was wrong! No, jokes aside, I often have discussions with management

in my service over things where I go in with quite rigid, tunnel vision, and a specific end goal in mind. Whilst not always unhelpful, I often end up realising that there is a bigger picture to be considered and it's maybe not as straight forward as I initially thought.

6. Which TV show could you not live without? (What's your favourite band or musician?)

The Good Doctor. Having an autistic son, myself, I can really relate with the main character. As for music, I'm fairly eclectic so I like a bit of everything, especially Motown.

7. If you weren't a firefighter, what would you be?

Unemployed! I'm not sure really, I was looking into the armed forces before becoming a firefighter, so maybe something there.

8. If you could travel back or forward in time, where and when would you travel to and why?

Sticking with fire service related stuff, and knowing what we now know about the real health risks of contaminants, I would go back 30 years and start trying to do the work we are now embarking on. Trying to encourage positive, cultural, and behavioural changes to keep the past generations as safe as we are trying to make the future generations of firefighters.



Legal Beagle

Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act

The Act became law on 20 July. Neil Todd, a partner in Thompsons Solicitors' Trade Union Law Group, outlines its provisions

New rules give the secretary of state for business powers to introduce regulations specifying minimum service levels (MSLs) in public services including fire and rescue.

The MSLs do not have to be agreed with a trade union. The regulations have not yet been published.

What else does the Act provide?

- Fire and rescue employers will be able to serve a "work notice" on the FBU if the union has given them notice of strike action.
- In a work notice, employers can (i) identify individuals required to work on each strike day to maintain MSLs, and (ii) specify the work to be carried out by those individuals.
- Strike action will not be protected if the FBU fails to take "reasonable steps" to ensure that all its members, who are identified in the work notice, do not take part in the strike.

The government has said it will introduce a code of practice to clarify the obligations of unions under the new law, including the "reasonable steps" they must take to ensure that workers comply with a work notice.

It has also stated that there will be a public consultation on this code of practice over the summer.

Contact

FBU Freephone legal advice:
0808 100 6061

In Scotland: 0800 089 1331

[thompsonstradeunion.law/
trade-unions/fbu](http://thompsonstradeunion.law/trade-unions/fbu)



FBU member Tony Walker at Everest base camp in the Himalayas – has an FBU flag been seen higher (5,364 metres / 17,598 feet above sea level)?

Officers' committee stalwarts are honoured at head office

Two FBU stalwarts, officers' committee national chair Greg Ashman, and officers' rep for the South West, Guy Herrington, received retirement gifts from FBU general secretary Matt Wrack and assistant general secretary Ben Selby at the union's head office.

An FBU member

since 1993, Guy Herrington became officer rep for Cornwall in 2013, brigade secretary in 2015, and then regional chair for the South West in 2018. He has made a huge difference to the officers' national committee (ONC) and the role that it

performs supporting officers across the country.

His ONC role started in early 2019, and regional secretary role in August the same year.

A big highlight for Guy was helping members to save fire control in Cornwall earlier this year.

Greg Ashman has been an FBU member since March 1993. He has been an official since 2011, serving locally on the joint committee for middle managers for 11 years, and on the ONC for 12 years.

His first speech at conference was about coercion to leave the FBU by his senior managers if he wanted further promotion. Well, he got promoted and did not leave!

He has supported officers through many challenges, including Grenfell, the pensions dispute and strikes.

The ONC would like to thank these two individuals for supporting officers across the country and wish them well in all their future adventures.

Richie Green
ONC vice-chair
@FBU_ONC officials



Presentation: (l-r) Ritchie Green, general secretary Matt Wrack, Greg Ashman, assistant general secretary Ben Selby, Guy Herrington, Tony Walker (new ONC chair) and Nick Bourke

THE FBU APP

DOWNLOAD

GET THE LATEST NEWS

EASY

EVERYTHING FBU IN ONE PLACE

Available on the App Store

Get it on Google play

EVERYTHING FBU, ALL IN ONE PLACE – DOWNLOAD THE APP

Accessing everything FBU has just got a whole lot simpler.

We are in the process of launching our new FBU mobile app that will make it easier than ever for you to stay connected with your union.

You can get the latest updates on the move, while updating your details is as easy as taking your phone out of your pocket.

No more scouring for the latest news on the FBU website, wondering what the union is saying on Twitter, or searching for education courses and events – it's all in one place - on the FBU app.

Download it today from the Apple App Store or Google Play and follow the instructions on how to register and use it.

The app brings together all your FBU content in one place, including:

- The latest FBU news and events
- Resources to help you on the issues you face at work
- The FBU's latest updates on social media
- The newest FBU campaigns

It is free for all members to download and use – all you need is your email address attached to your membership record.

Download, get the latest news – easy.



Wrack on the Road



■ 8 July – Durham Miners Gala

■ 13 July – Rally for improved maternity pay standing with the national women's committee



■ 14 July – Very pleased to attend Ilford fire station to present Terry Jayes with his 40-year badge. 40 years serving people of London; 40 years as an FBU member. Well done.



■ 20 July – Commemoration event for firefighters Billy Faust and Adam Meere in Bethnal Green

■ 21-23 July – Labour party national policy forum at East Midlands conference centre

COMING UP:

■ 24 August – National rally against cuts to the Scottish fire service @24 George Square. Glasgow (see p14)
[#EnoughIsEnough](#)
[#CutsLeaveScars](#)

As if Grenfell never happened

Station Cat: Tories still yearn for deregulation

Your cat has recently been nuzzling up to the exquisitely tailored trousers of Sir Jake Berry.

Sir Jake, you will recall, is the expensively educated lawyer who has been a government minister and chairman of the Conservative Party, but routinely claims that he is being got at by “the establishment”.

The “Sir” comes courtesy of Boris Johnson’s resignation honours list, and we are sure it has nothing to do with the fact that Sir Jake’s wife used to be Johnson’s office manager.

And just recently, on 28 June, Sir Jake told *Newsnight*: “We can either be a high tax, high regulation country, a bit like our European neighbours. That works, but it doesn’t work if you’re outside the European club. I think when we made the decision to leave the EU back in 2016, part of that ... was, let’s do things differently in Britain, let’s be more globally facing, let’s be a lower tax, low regulation, highly competitive economy.”

Yes, we’re back in “bonfire of the regulations” territory, just as though the Grenfell fire had never happened.

Back in 2014, the then prime minister David Cameron (*inset*) said 100 standards and building regulations were facing the bonfire – a move which he claimed would save around £60 million a year for housebuilders – or £500 for each new home built. Criteria relating to the size of windows, sizes of rooms, and demands for renewable energy sources, among other “burdens on business”, were to be scrapped.

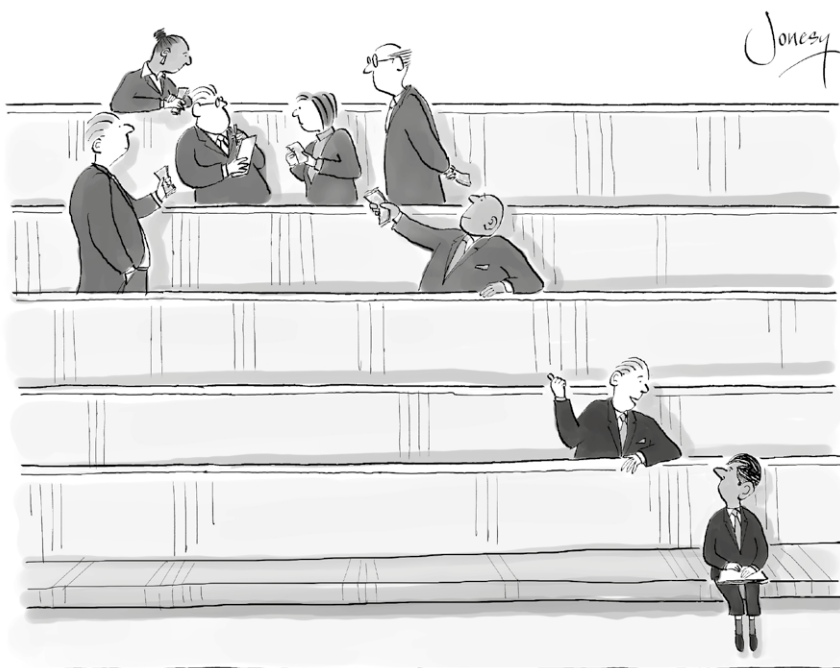
Three years later, the Grenfell Tower burned down with the loss of 72 lives, because greedy contractors had been allowed to fit a cheap cladding which they knew was highly flammable.

An internal memo in the company that made the cladding noted that, despite being lethal, they could still sell it “in countries whose regulations are not so restrictive” as they are in the EU.

Of course Cameron, whose personal wealth is estimated at over £50m, lives in a safe home – one of the many perks of the wealthy which, it seems, this government would rather the rest of us did not enjoy.



RUSSELL HART / ALAMY



Fancy a tenner in the resignation sweepstake?

25-year badges



Gavin Lowry (l), North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from officer rep Dave Griffiths



Brian Kirkbride (r), Walsall training facility, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from John Williams



Osian Hywel (l), Rhyl, Wales, receives his 25-year badge from North Wales brigade organiser Ruth Bateman



Robert Goldsmith (l), white watch, Westbourne, and Hamworthy, Dorset & Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership organiser Scott Blandford with watch members (l-r) | Matt Fry, Martin Tuckey, Craig MacLeod, Steve Nicol and Adam Clarke looking on



Nicholas Mottram (r), white watch, Stockport, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Matt Fryer alongside colleagues



Paul Ellams (l), operation department, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Ruth Bateman



Steven Dixon (r), training, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Ruth Bateman



Matt Repton (r), white watch, Worcester, Hereford & Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andrew Faizey



Mark Deane (r), white watch, Plumstead, London, receives his 25-year badge from London SE area chair Dan Lawrie



Maslen Carter (l), Tipton, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Andy Hobley alongside member colleagues



Tim Kingswell and **Ross Bennett**, white watch, Tottenham, London, receive their 25-year badges from London NW area organiser Brian Flanagan with colleagues looking on



Paul Dowling (l), blue watch, Gorton, Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Matt Fryer with colleagues Eion Meaney, Hannah Butler, Andrew Rafferty, Jon Raw, Craig Welby, Kieran Stacey and Tony Garrott



David Mackie (l), protection, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Julian Loader



Gareth Boyd (l), community fire safety, Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Callum Hodgkin



Lee Kenneth (r), white watch, Southgate, London, receives his 25-year badge from London NW area organiser Brian Flanagan



Chris Pugh (r), green watch, Finchley, London, receives his 25-year badge from London NW area organiser Brian Flanagan



Scott Baker (l), green watch, Plumstead, London, receives his 25-year badge from London SE area chair Dan Lawrie



Kevin Harber (r), HQ, London officers' section, receives his 25-year badge from London officers' rep Gareth Cook



Kevin Mitchell (r) green watch, Woking, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from Michael Goddard with colleagues (l-r) Brad Steer, Dan Head, Lucy Downs and Mat Esquire



Jonathan Pass (l), Swansea Central, Mid and West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Sam Phillips



Leigh Hosy-Pickett (l), FBU education officer, Eastern region, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Stephen Gill



Adrian Place (l), Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Julian Loader



Shane Price (l), Caernarfon, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Ruth Bateman



Shayne Tottle (l), South Yorkshire officers' branch secretary, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Matt Nicholls with members of the brigade committee



Gary Bloomfield (r), white watch, Surbiton, London, receives his 25-year badge from London SW area secretary Dave Young



Dean Peaty (r), Crewkerne, Devon & Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Dave Lock with colleagues looking on



Karl Clifton (r), blue watch, Lewisham, London, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Jon Lambe



Dave Allen (l), white watch, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from fellow member Paul Lunn, with branch members looking on



Warren Manners (r), white watch, Colchester, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Luke Beardmore with colleagues (l-r) James Chambers, Adam Cornell, Stuart Abbs, Alan Dear, Michael Gunther and Leigh Hosi-Pickett



Ian Lovatt (r), red watch, Wythenshawe, Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Sarah Noden with (l-r) Finn Burnham, Mike Fox, Dave MacGregor, Mark Flynn, Matt Jones-Roberts and Theresa Brennan



Mark O'Donnell (r), green watch, Hornsey, London, receives his 25-year badge from London NW area organiser Brian Flanagan



Paul Osborne (r), HQ, London officers' section, receives his 25-year badge from London officers' rep Gareth Cook



Kerry Williams (r), Control, Wales, receives her 25-year badge from North Wales brigade organiser Ruth Bateman



Louise O'Meara (l), blue watch, Rhyl, Wales, receives her 25-year badge from brigade organiser Ruth Bateman with watch colleagues looking on



Martin Hill (l), Braintree, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from officer section rep Richie Green



John Bristow (l), branch secretary, Worcester, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from FBU president Ian Murray after the FBU lobby of Parliament in December 2022

Please send 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 Humberside, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire

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

The Waterside Offices, Pavilion Road, West
Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 5FA
Region06@fbu.org.uk

REGION 7 West Mids, Staffs, Warks, Hereford & Worcester, Shropshire

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

Alpha House, 100 Borough High Street.,
London SE1 1LB
020 7359 3638, london@fbu.org.uk

REGION 11 East Sussex, Kent, Surrey, West Sussex

Unit 11, Hunns Mere Way,
Woodingdean, Brighton, BN2 6AH
11rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 12 Bucks, Berks, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire

Eleanor Marx House,
Unit 2, 12 Richfield Place,
Reading, RG1 8EQ

REGION 13 Avon, Cornwall, Devon & Somerset, Dorset & Wiltshire, Gloucestershire

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

England, Wales and N Ireland

0800 100 6061

Scotland 0800 089 1331

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


William Wood
LONDON



Scan QR Code



To Explore



The Fire Brigades Union are proud to partner with William Wood Watches to produce this limited edition range of FBU Watches made from upcycled firefighting materials. William Wood was the name of the founder's late grandfather. He served in the Newcastle & Gateshead Fire Brigade for 25 years winning commendations for his bravery. He participated in the first ever national strike undertaken by firefighters in 1977. We have designed three unique watches that can be worn Off Duty, On Duty or for a Dress Occasion. The watch case is made from a melted-down original British brass firefighter's helmet and the straps are made from upcycled fire hose.

William Wood Watches have discounted the watches for members and are kindly donating 10% from each sale back to The Firefighters 100 Lottery.

Pre-order your new FBU Watch now at williamwoodwatches.com/collections/fbu