

FireFighter

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

January/February 2014



KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE

Pensions myths busted p10

Control round up p12





Matt Wrack

Our values: unity and solidarity

I would like to wish all members a very happy new year.

As this magazine goes to press, FBU members have taken further strike action in defence of our pensions.

Visiting picket lines in England and Wales, I have been heartily impressed by the strength and fortitude of our members.

These days, the cynics often say that it's all about individuals and that people do not do anything for each other.

But FBU members have shown that the best way to defend your individual pension rights – whatever duty system you work, whatever stage of career you are at – is to do it collectively.

We have many thousands of members who have taken action even though their own pensions are “protected” and they may be able to retire very soon.

They are fighting for others, for the future of our profession and our service.

The strength of our union in the face of a hostile government is our own collective strength.

Together we can defend ourselves and make plans for the future; alone we will be picked off and beaten down.

Firefighters know that team work is essential on the fire ground – and so it is in all aspects of our lives, whether at work, in our communities or campaigning for our future.

Hard year ahead

As we look ahead to this year, no one is under any illusions. The coming year will be tough – tougher than the last one. The battle over pensions continues – and it is likely to be a prolonged fight unless the government seriously negotiates with the FBU.

The savage cuts to our frontline public service also continue, threatening jobs and fire stations, and putting the public we serve at risk.

The political process is cranking up towards a general election in May 2015. There will also be important European and local elections this May and, of course, the Scottish referendum in September.

In the spring of this year the FBU has to ask members, as we do once a decade, about the union's political fund.

This is not money given to politicians, but money spent by the union to give our members a political voice. The attacks we face come mainly from politicians and we have to engage politically to defend what we've got and fight for improvements. The ballot is vital for our union and further materials will be provided to members before the vote.

Nelson Mandela

The importance of politics was driven home to me by the death of Nelson Mandela. Here was a man who fought for freedom, who overcame massive obstacles and who inspired generations – not least because he showed it is possible to



Ken Cameron with Nelson Mandela

change the world. Today, world leaders sing Mandela's praise. It was not always the case. But we can be proud that as a union we stood up for freedom and democracy in South Africa from the start.

The FBU was a founder member of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1960, when campaigners in Britain and across the globe rallied to support the struggle in South Africa. Throughout the next three decades the FBU supported the anti-apartheid struggle in words and deeds, and we rejoiced when Mandela was released in February 1990.

The April 1990 edition of *Firefighter* magazine contains a letter from FBU general secretary Ken Cameron to

Mandela, which salutes his “courage and integrity which have inspired all opponents of apartheid”. The 1990 FBU conference made Nelson Mandela an honorary member of the union, to recognise “the supreme sacrifice made by Nelson Mandela over many years”.

When Ken Cameron retired in 2000, Mandela wrote to thank him. The letter (dated June 2000) was reprinted in the August 2000 issue of *Firefighter*. It says: “The FBU ... under your leadership campaigned unselfishly against the evil of apartheid” and that “our liberation from the darkness of apartheid was in no small measure due to people like you”.

It added: “The solidarity among your members, born out of their work experience and tempered by their own struggles, was the solid basis on which you lent your weight to a struggle by people you didn't know, some 6,000 miles away in another continent. It was therefore a great honour for me when I learned that I have been made an Honorary Member of the Fire Brigades Union and had so become a brother of so many wonderful brothers and sisters.”

We can be proud of our part in the epic struggle against apartheid. We will take that spirit into our campaigning in the year ahead.

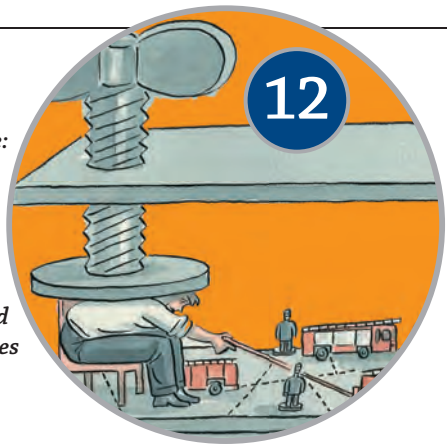


Follow the general secretary on Twitter: @MattWrack

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Fight for justice takes many forms

Under pressure: Control members face a range of attacks, including mergers, joint control, under-crewing and shift changes



FBU control rep Sharon Thorndyke supported fire crews on the picket line during recent strikes

LETTER

Grateful lecturer donates to pension campaign

An East Sussex lecturer and her husband have donated £50 to the firefighters' campaign over pensions and retirement age after a local crew helped deal with an incident in their home.

Dr Paula James and her husband phoned 999 after smoke from a wood-burning stove set off their fire alarm.

"A crew from the Uckfield station arrived very quickly," James wrote in her letter to the FBU. "Your firefighters were calm and careful and very professional."

"They thoroughly checked out the possible causes of the problem and then inspected the rest of the house – advising on potential dangers and suggesting solutions and so forth."

"Please convey our grateful thanks to the Uckfield station crew. We very much hope you win your dispute."

As well as expressing her thanks, Dr James enclosed a cheque for £50 for the FBU's strike fund.

University workers are currently in dispute over pay and conditions. Higher education unions UCU, UNISON, Unite and the EIS took strike action on 3 December and were supported by FBU members and other trade unionists.

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FBU members have organised vibrant picket lines during the pension strikes

More strikes as government persists in ignoring evidence

Pensions

FBU members in England and Wales took further strike action on 13 and 14 December, with more strikes planned as *Firefighter* went to press. FBU members also voted overwhelmingly by eight to one for action short of a strike.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "This further action is entirely the responsibility of central government.

"The government is ignoring our members' concerns about increasing contributions, which will mean most firefighters paying more than £4,000 a year towards their pensions.

"At 14.2% of pay this is one of the most expensive pension schemes for workers anywhere in the UK.

"By forcing thousands of firefighters into a new and worse pension scheme, the government is also refusing to honour the pension agreement they made with firefighters on joining the service.

"Our members have paid their share and expect the government to deliver the

pension we signed up to.

"The government's plans are to create a pension scheme which takes no account of the physically demanding job firefighters do and the fire service fitness standards they need to meet.

"Expecting men and women at the age of 60 to meet the same fitness standards required of 20-year-olds is just not logical.

"Unfortunately the government is ignoring all the evidence on this issue, including its own reports. It is a callous way to treat men and women who have put their lives on the line to protect others.

"The government has refused to take account of the issue, confining itself to issuing misleading propaganda about 'generous pensions'. These strikes are intended to ensure we cannot be ignored"

"We demand that the government sorts out the mess it has got itself into on this issue. We cannot stand by and do nothing as our members' conditions of service are eroded.

"The government has refused to take account of the issue, confining itself to issuing misleading propaganda about 'generous pensions'. These strikes are intended to ensure we cannot be ignored."

Firefighters taking home £1,650 a month pay £320 a month into the pension scheme. Firefighters face a retirement pension of £9,000 a year if they are unable to meet the physical demands of the job after age 55 – even if they have been paying into the scheme for 35 years.

"Firefighters are being punished for growing older," said Wrack. "This is a disgrace.

"Politicians often praise the work of our members. The very same people are destroying our pension rights and imposing an expensive and unworkable pension which will mean thousands facing the sack as their fitness declines. It is simply not acceptable."

www.fbu.org.uk

Cuts campaign wins widespread backing

Derbyshire

Derbyshire FBU members have won considerable public and political support through their strong campaigning, against cuts in recent months.

Derbyshire fire and rescue service proposes to reduce fire stations by 11, fire engines by 16 and wholetime firefighters by more than 100. The plans would also affect retained firefighters.

It wants to close all three stations in Derby itself, two of which are almost new.

FBU Derbyshire brigade secretary Chris Tapp said: "We have been campaigning on the streets (picture, right), collecting signatures, attending meetings, including trades councils, lobbying councillors, fire authority members and MPs."

Chesterfield Labour MP Toby Perkins MP moved an adjournment debate on the subject in the House of Commons on 25 November.

Tapp said public meetings have been held, 60,000 leaflets were being distributed and that regular public stalls were organised. "Chris Williamson MP (Labour, Derby North) has been on the streets



campaigning with us, and both the city and county councils have come out against the Chief Fire Officers' Association.

"We hope the fire authority listens to this very clear message that the FBU has sent and the politicians, the public and firefighters have agreed with.

"We want the consultation document withdrawn and a new start with a clean sheet to see if any savings have to be made.

"The frontline must be protected. These proposals are dangerous to the public and firefighters alike. We say: Withdraw them and protect the people of Derbyshire."



The judicial review of mayor Boris Johnson's plans for deep frontline cuts to the London Fire Brigade took place at the end of November. The judge had not given his decision as Firefighter went to press. Around 50 firefighters lobbied the first day of the proceedings. Ian Leahair, FBU executive council member for London, said: "Whatever the outcome of the judicial review, the FBU will continue to be at the forefront of the campaign against life-threatening cuts to fire cover in London."

SOUNDING OFF

Time for the truth about Orgreave

**Bridget Bell outlines the
objectives of the Orgreave
Truth and Justice Campaign**

The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign includes former miners, trade unionists, activists and others who are determined to uncover police lies and cover-ups in the aftermath of picketing at the Orgreave coking plant in June 1984 – part of the 1984/85 miners' strike.

They are demanding justice for those who suffered false imprisonment as a result.

Some 95 miners were arrested and charged with riot, an offence with a possible sentence of life imprisonment.

Their trials collapsed due to lack of evidence.

No police force or officer has ever been disciplined or charged with perverting the course of justice, falsifying evidence or using violence against miners pursuing legitimate industrial action against the loss of jobs and the mining industry and the threatened collapse of their communities.

Following the hard-won victory of the Hillsborough campaign, supporters of the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign are striving to expose the truth about what really happened during those dark times and they deserve all the support we can give them.

We call for a full public inquiry to take place as soon as possible into the policing and subsequent statements recorded by the police at the time. We want everyone who seeks the truth and wants justice to support us in our campaign.

FBU members can help by:

- ❖ Donating to the campaign
- ❖ Supporting the early day motion (EDM) put down by Ian Lavery, MP for Wansbeck, Northumberland
- ❖ Attending the Orgreave mass picnic and festival, 14 June 2014.



More information:

<http://otjc.org.uk/>
orgreavejustice@hotmail.com



Jo Byrne at the Not in My Name event at the Senedd in Cardiff on 19 November

FBU signs up to combat violence against women

Equality

FBU officials took part in White Ribbon Day – a campaign to involve and encourage men to work to end violence against women. Jo Byrne, FBU brigade organiser for South Wales, told a meeting at the Welsh Senedd (national assembly) that domestic abuse had been viewed as a “women’s issue”. “With such a majority male membership, it is important for the FBU to support and promote the White Ribbon campaign,” she said.

The campaign asks men to pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about any violence against women. “The figures are frightening,” said Byrne. “One in four women in the UK will be a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime – many of these on more than one occasion. One incident of domestic violence is reported to the police every minute. On average, two women a week are killed by a current or former male partner.”

A number of organisations in Wales have signed up to this campaign, including Newport County Football Club and the Welsh Rugby Union.

After FBU intervention, South Wales fire and rescue service will be supporting and promoting the White Ribbon Campaign in 2014.

“If we really want to reduce the number of women subjected to domestic violence and are truly committed to supporting them and bringing the perpetrators to justice, then this can’t be just down to women to campaign, we need men on board with this too,” said Byrne.

IN BRIEF

Flooding law call

Firefighters were active in many areas during storms on 5 December, helping to evacuate those in danger, checking buildings, pumping water and helping to ensure basic amenities for those affected by flooding.

Some 400 homes were affected in the Humber region. In the Great Yarmouth area at least 30 houses were flooded.

As firefighters and volunteers helped rescue those trapped by the storms, the FBU insisted there was a need for an immediate end to cuts in the fire and rescue service.

The union also called on the government to clarify the law on the role of fire services in attending major floods.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: “Firefighters have done a magnificent job as they responded to flood and storm incidents across many parts of the country.

“It is a travesty that many of the crews, fire stations and special appliances involved in the rescues are under threat from government expenditure cuts.”

Asbestos

The family of a retired Newcastle upon Tyne firefighter who died from asbestos cancer has received compensation for his death.

The 78-year-old worked in Newcastle between 1960 and 1986. He was diagnosed with mesothelioma, an incurable form of cancer that affects the lining of the lungs, in August 2011 and died three days later.

Through the FBU, his widow contacted Thompsons Solicitors who, with union support, gathered witness statements about asbestos exposure from attending fires.

FBU regional secretary Pete Wilcox said that many workers had not been made aware of the danger asbestos posed to their health.

“Firefighters risked being exposed by the nature of their work when entering buildings, factories and, in this case, local shipyards.”

‘Not guilty’ plea in case against fire service

Ewan Williamson case

The Scottish fire and rescue service has dropped a challenge to the “competency and relevancy” of charges against it over the death of Ewan Williamson, the firefighter killed in Edinburgh in 2009.

The challenge was made at a preliminary hearing at the High Court in Glasgow on 7 November. The court decided that the challenge should be debated on 6 December at the High Court in Edinburgh.

David Bennett, FBU Scotland health and safety rep, said: “On the day before this hearing was to take place, we learned that the challenge had been dropped as the service accepted the argument of the Crown that the indictment was indeed both competent and relevant.

“The hearing was therefore a formality, apart from the judge instructing counsel for the Scottish fire and rescue service that they were required to enter a plea. They entered a plea of not guilty.” The preliminary hearing was extended to 29 January.



Ewan Williamson died while tackling a basement blaze at the Balmoral Bar in Dalry Road, Edinburgh in July 2009



Firefighters worked for days at the scene of the crash

Clapham Junction crash: dead remembered, lessons forgotten

Safety

A memorial service at Clapham Junction in London in December commemorated the 25th anniversary of the rail crash near the station that left 35 people dead and 500 injured.

Firefighters worked for days at the scene. It is important to remember these tragedies, because too often lessons are forgotten as soon as the horrors cease to occupy the front pages. It is certainly true of Clapham.

The facts are well established. On 12 December 1988 a train from Poole to Waterloo crashed into the back of a Basingstoke train that was stopped at a red signal. A third train, travelling in the opposite direction, slammed into the wreckage.

The subsequent inquiry led by barrister Anthony Hidden made no fewer than 93 recommendations for improving rail safety.

But perhaps the most important point was raised by the then FBU general secretary Ken Cameron in the issue of *Firefighter* that followed the crash. "There

can be no doubt whatsoever that the number of people killed and injured is directly related to the crowded conditions commuters are forced to travel in," he wrote.

Cameron touched on an obvious and important lesson. A quarter of a century ago, we resolved that something needed to be done.

Those who gathered at Clapham last month might like to consider a Department for Transport study from last year. It revealed that some trains in England are running at almost double capacity.

The most overcrowded of all was a First Great Western train running from

Henley-on-Thames to London Paddington. It had a load factor of 180%.

In second place was a South West Trains train – running from Woking to London Waterloo along the very route of the 1988 disaster.

The FBU's 1989 conference discussed the Clapham disaster. One speaker said: "Once again the tabloids are telling us what marvellous people our firefighters, ambulance crews, doctors and nurses are. And they are damned right, we are. But within a week it is history, forgotten."

The FBU warned at the time that the obsessive demand for profits through privatisation had only made the position worse.

Michael Roberts, chief executive of the train owner's club, ATOC, summed it up when he recently called overcrowding "the flip side to faster trains and better services". Not a scandal to be erased or a danger to eliminate; just a flip side to be tolerated.

What a pity he didn't try to explain that to the relatives of the Clapham Junction dead.

It is important to remember these tragedies, because too often lessons are forgotten as soon as the horrors cease to occupy the front pages. It is certainly true of Clapham

VIEW
FROM THE
AERIAL LADDER
PLATFORM



Make blacklisting culprits pay up and clean up

For more than 20 years employers in the construction industry used secret files to vet recruits and keep out trade union activists.

This blacklisting came to light in 2009 when the Information Commissioner's Office raided the premises of the Consulting Association, a now-defunct

firm whose list of the details of 3,213 construction workers was used by over 40 UK construction companies.

It is four and a half years since the firms were exposed as blacklisters. Yet, even now, most of the 3,213 blacklisted workers are unaware they have been blacklisted as they have not been contacted. Nor has a

penny been paid to any of the victims.

That is why trade unions and the Blacklist Support Group held a day of action against blacklisting on 20 November.

The companies involved need to own up and accept responsibility for what they have done in the past.



TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady joined MPs and union leaders to back the campaign outside the Houses of Parliament in London

JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

They also need to clean up and ensure that it does not happen again by having transparent recruitment procedures that are agreed with trade unions and properly monitored.

Then they must pay up and compensate all those who have suffered as a result of their actions.

Many of those who were blacklisted were unable to work in the industry again and suffered years of unemployment. They deserve compensation.

Although eight of the 44 companies involved have agreed to apologise and set up a scheme to compensate some of the workers, this only goes a part of

the way towards ensuring justice for the workers and also preventing a repeat of the scandal.

Unions want a full public inquiry into the blacklisting scandal along the lines of the Leveson Inquiry into press behaviour.

Only strong action now can ensure there is no repeat of this disgraceful affair.

5 government myths about firefighter pensions



Firefighter cuts through the government spin

The government has claimed repeatedly that its proposed pension scheme for firefighters will be “one of the most generous” in the public sector.

But the FBU argues that firefighters will be priced out of a pension by a scheme that will be far more expensive but worth much less than current arrangements.

Most firefighters are members of one of two pension schemes. About two-thirds are in the 1992 Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS).

Newer and retained firefighters are in the 2006 New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (NFPS).

Both schemes have already faced attacks and things would only get worse under the new proposals.

Here are five myths about firefighter pensions that can be easily busted:

MYTH 1: Firefighters currently get a generous pension deal

As a result of two years of increased contributions, firefighters already pay significant sums for their pensions.

Firefighters who take home around £1,650 a month will now pay around £320 a month (£3,800 a year) into their pension if they are in the FPS scheme. This is scheduled to rise to more than £4,000 a year from April 2014. Higher earners pay an even larger proportion of salary.

MYTH 2: Firefighter schemes are very expensive to employers and the taxpayer

The proportion of pension costs paid by firefighters will be one of the highest in the public sector. For most firefighters this will be 14.2% of their salary from April this year, with many paying even more. The government's proposals will mean that the proportion that employers pay in contributions compared to firefighters is among the worst in the public sector, making it far from generous.

MYTH 3: Firefighters will be able to retire with a pension of £19,600

This is only the case if a firefighter joins at 20 (which, of course, many firefighters do not), and is able to work until 60. The reality is that the majority will not be

able to achieve this. In fact, the government's own research reveals that up to 92% of current firefighters will not be able to maintain operational fitness until 60 and will have to leave with a significantly reduced pension to avoid a fitness-related dismissal – no job and no pension.

MYTH 4: Firefighters can retire at 55 with a pension

Under the government's current proposals, firefighters who are forced to retire at 55 because their fitness is declining will lose over 47% of their pension. This would mean that, instead of £19,600, they would get just over £9,000. The Westminster government had proposed in June last year that this reduction would be 21.8% – a proposal that is still the position in Scotland. But this proposal was withdrawn by Westminster fire minister Brandon Lewis on 1 November, when firefighters refused to endorse or agree to the unworkable proposals.

MYTH 5: This is just a temporary measure because of the need to cut costs as a result of the economic crisis

There is no end in sight for the government's attacks. Proposals for 2014 will see FPS members paying more than £4,000 a year and NFPS members almost £3,000. In 2015 contributions for most NFPS members will increase

“It is a callous way to treat men and women who have put their lives on the line to protect others”



Firefighters have demonstrated their determination to protect their pensions

to over £3,600 per year as they transfer into the new scheme. As a result, NFPS members' pension contributions will have increased by 50% in four years. FBU officials have also been warned to expect further increases in 2016 and subsequent years.

Dispute

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "Firefighters in the UK have been in dispute with government for almost three years because of proposals for their pension schemes that are totally unworkable and unaffordable.

"The Westminster government is refusing to budge on proposals and won't even protect all the current firefighters who were promised a deal and now have had it snatched away from them. FBU members need to keep up the pressure. Our industrial action is intended to ensure we cannot be ignored.

"Everyone else in the fire and rescue service recognises that the current proposals are unworkable. There aren't redeployment opportunities for older firefighters. The Williams review



recognised that two-thirds of firefighters may not make it to 60.

"Expecting men and women at the age of 60 to meet the same fitness standards required of 20-year-olds is just not logical.

"It is a callous way to treat men and woman who have put their lives on the line to protect others.

"We demand that the government sorts out the mess it has got itself into on this issue."



FBU control members face attacks just like those across the rest of the service

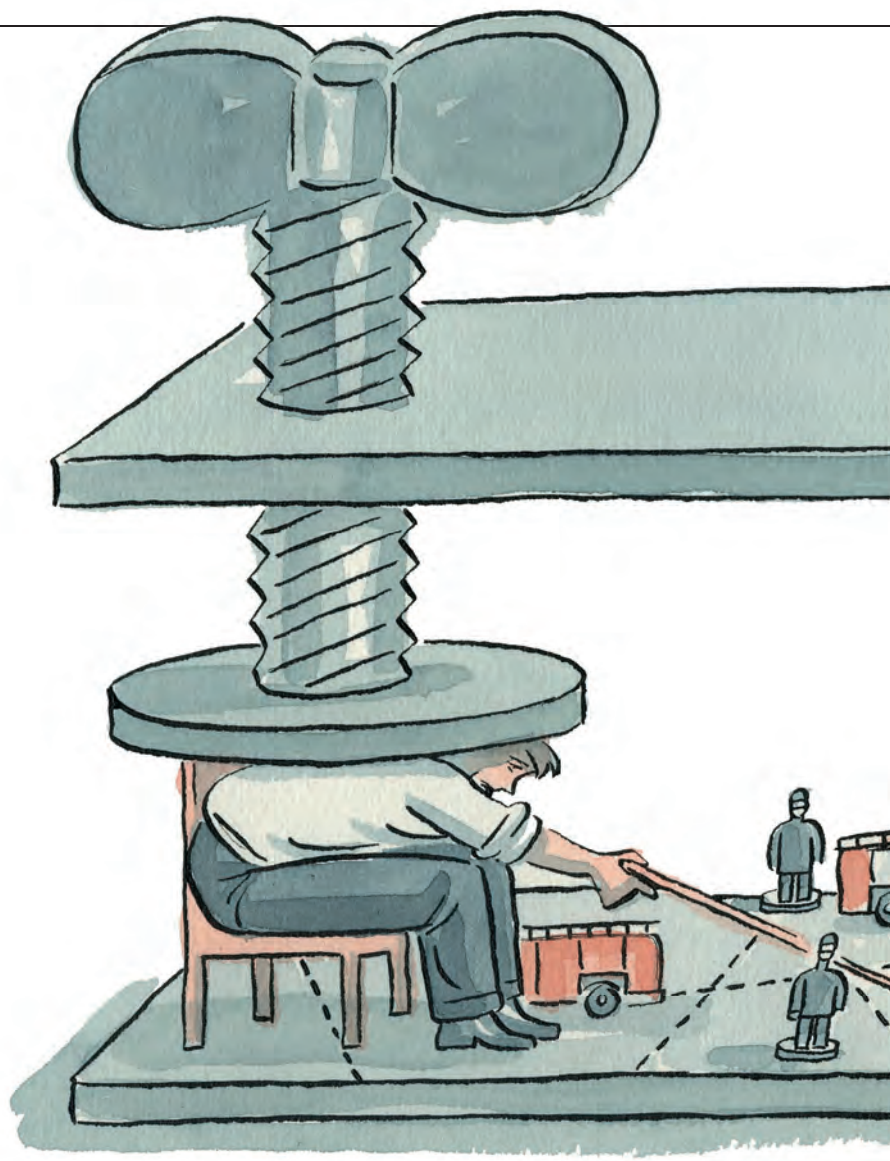
Control members have faced more than a decade of attacks on their conditions. They have often been the first to be affected by so-called reforms that hit the rest of the service later on.

The FiReControl project was one such attack. But even now it has been scrapped, control members face a wave of botched mergers, joint controls, under-crewing and shift changes.

The FBU's control staff national committee (CSNC) has been tracking these attacks and helping members to deal with them.

Mergers and joint controls

Control rooms on the **Isle of Wight, Cumbria** and **Suffolk** have already been merged and



Control members u

Staffordshire control is going into **West Midlands**.

The **Scottish** fire and rescue service is currently proposing a reduction of eight to three control rooms. The **North West** control room is supposed to go live in April this year, while the **Thames Valley** consortium, including **Berkshire, Oxfordshire** and **Buckinghamshire**, is ploughing ahead.

In almost every control room in the UK rumours abound about possible changes.

Joint control arrangements with other blue light services are also steaming on.

The **Merseyside** joint control centre is due to open in May. It houses two adjacent, but separate, fire and police control rooms, along with gold and silver command rooms and the North West ambulance service emergency planning office. There are no current plans for further integration of the two control rooms.

Wiltshire fire control was stationed in the same

Control staff face stress on the individual, working outside the role map, feeling pressured to provide cover on rota days and increased sickness levels

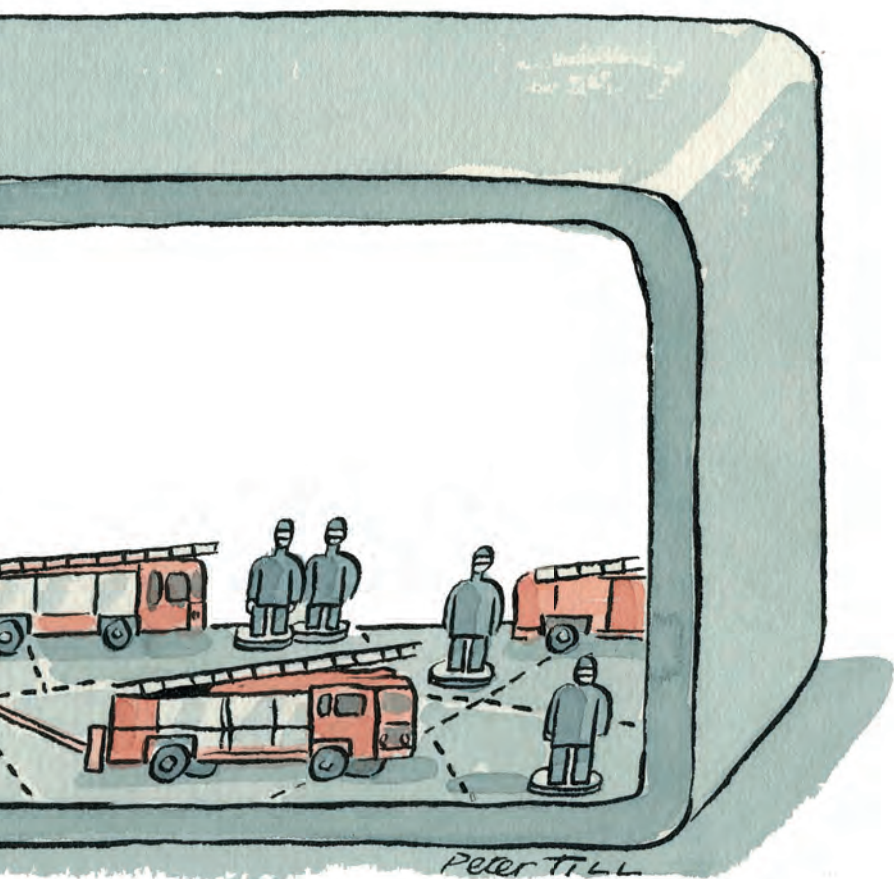
building as Wiltshire police with a partition wall and separate systems. However, the service has now decided to go back to its own fire HQ and is looking at a merger with **Dorset** control.

Kent fire control shares premises with the police, while **East and West Sussex** are planning to merge control. **Gloucestershire** are in a tri-control room building, but the mobilisation system is at end of its life span.

There is a significant threat from police and crime commissioners, in **Northamptonshire, Hampshire** and **Warwickshire**, for instance, who want take over the running of all blue light services. Certain fire and rescue services are touting around to take on additional control rooms.

CSNC chair Kath Smith said: "Brigades are not working off a blueprint since the collapse of the FiReControl project.

"These are just schemes thought up locally, with the main driver being finance. Little consideration



controls' staff members and operational crews.

For control members, there is stress on the individual, working outside the role map, feeling pressured to provide cover on rota days and increased sickness levels.

Operational crews believe they have a fully functional control at the end of the line when at incidents. But when they do not, firefighter and public safety is compromised.

Other attacks have come from changes to shift patterns. One brigade wants to introduce retained duty system control jobs, even though these do not exist either as a role map or in the Grey Book.

Action

FBU control reps are under huge pressure. Kath Smith said: "As union officials, we attend meetings to negotiate our terms and conditions, but often these meetings turn out to be just 'consultation'. Consultation quite often takes the form of: 'We have given you the new document. We have noted your responses, but we are imposing the changes'."

The CSNC organised a control seminar at the union's AGM which discussed workforce development, the action-short-of-a-strike ballot and employment issues. The committee is planning a full seminar this year and a FAQs to help reps deal with the range of attacks on the horizon.

Kath Smith urged members to become active in the union. She said: "Members are the union. You

nder huge pressure

has been given to integrated risk management planning and servicing local needs."

Critical under-crewing

Since the FiReControl project failed, there has been little or no recruitment to control rooms and significant job losses. There has been a steady decline in the rank structure in control rooms, with some control watch managers taken off shift and put onto days.

There are instances in which the minimum crewing is three, but the control regularly runs with two. The CSNC has evidence of occasions where there has been one control staff member on duty assisted by two operational managers.

Many controls are running at minimum or below for most of the time and many shifts are brought up to minimum crewing by covering with overtime, swaps of duty or time owing.

This has serious implications for both the

can attend branch meetings and debate the issues concerning your control room, attend brigade committee meetings to raise the problems you are experiencing, become a branch rep, attend union education schools and make yourself more aware of how you can fight to keep what you already have.

"Stand on picketlines with your other members to show solidarity. We are all part of the same team. Try to fight the cuts any way you can – before it's your job that is disappearing."

"We are all part of the same team. Try to fight the cuts any way you can – before it's your job that is disappearing"

10

reasons why firefighters need the FBU's political fund



FBU members will decide in spring whether the union's political fund should continue. Since 1992, all trade unions have been forced by law to ask their members whether the union can spend money on political objectives. Without this formal mandate from its members, the FBU could not undertake huge amounts of its work.

So the union is asking members to answer with a resounding "Yes", just as they did in 2004. Here are ten reasons why the political fund is crucial to the union's ability to stand up for members and for the fire and rescue service.

1 The pensions campaign

The campaign to protect firefighters' pensions from government attacks is a massive task. Campaigning costs money – whether for posters, banners, leaflets and petitions for picket lines or to organise October's national demonstration and rally, which saw thousands of firefighters from across the UK descend on London to give the government a clear message.

2 Fighting cuts to fire and rescue services

The government is implementing the worst cuts in the history of the fire and rescue service. Over 3,500 frontline firefighter jobs have been slashed in the last three years. For ourselves and for the sake of public safety, we must continue to make a stand against devastating cuts. By mobilising firefighters locally, lobbying the government nationally and working with other organisations and communities to make the case for properly-funded services, we can defend our service.

3 Supporting sympathetic MPs

The FBU is not affiliated to any political party, but it is important that firefighters have a voice in Westminster and the devolved governments. Our political fund helps us to support candidates that are sympathetic to the needs and views of firefighters – and who are willing to put fire and rescue services first.

4 Campaigning alongside other organisations

Many of the issues that members tell the union they want to campaign over also affect others. Campaigning coalitions help pool resources and win successes that benefit everyone. The Campaign for Trade Union Freedom, for example, was established last year and campaigns

Campaigning, international solidarity and responding to members' views – they all require the political fund and your approval of it



HANNAH JOHNSTON/GETTY IMAGES



IAN DAVIES

to defend and enhance trade unionism, oppose all anti-union laws as well as to promote and defend collective bargaining across the UK and internationally.

5 Connecting with firefighters around the world

UK firefighters have a great deal in common with firefighters overseas. We campaign on many of the same issues and we receive solidarity from other firefighters across the globe who are facing the same difficulties as we are. On top of this, the sharing of knowledge and best practice is vital to our work, for example, on health and safety issues specific to firefighting, such as the increased risk of cancer.

6 Campaigning at local level: cuts, conditions of service

In England and Wales the fire and rescue service is a local authority service. The decisions which affect us every day, on cuts, on standards and other fire service matters, are all made by local politicians. Our political fund is used at local level to campaign around these issues and to ensure we can try to influence the decisions. Local political campaigning is therefore essential and our political fund is a vital tool in this aspect of our work.



7 Devolved government

As power has become devolved from Westminster over the last 15 years, the FBU has had to ensure that it can influence not just one government, but four: in Westminster, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast. While we will always believe that everyone in the UK should have the same right to the same levels of safety provided by a fully funded and resourced fire and rescue service, as more and more decisions are made by devolved governments and at local level, we need to make sure we are fully aware of the political process across the UK.

8 Keeping members up to date

Every FBU office – whether our national office in London or in one of our regions – is a hive of campaigning activity. But it is vital that members are kept up to

date with what is going on and have the opportunity to have their own say on what the union's priorities should be. The political fund helps us stay in touch with everyone, via traditional methods like circulars but also increasingly through digital channels, like the website and e-newsletters.

9 National campaigns – FiReControl

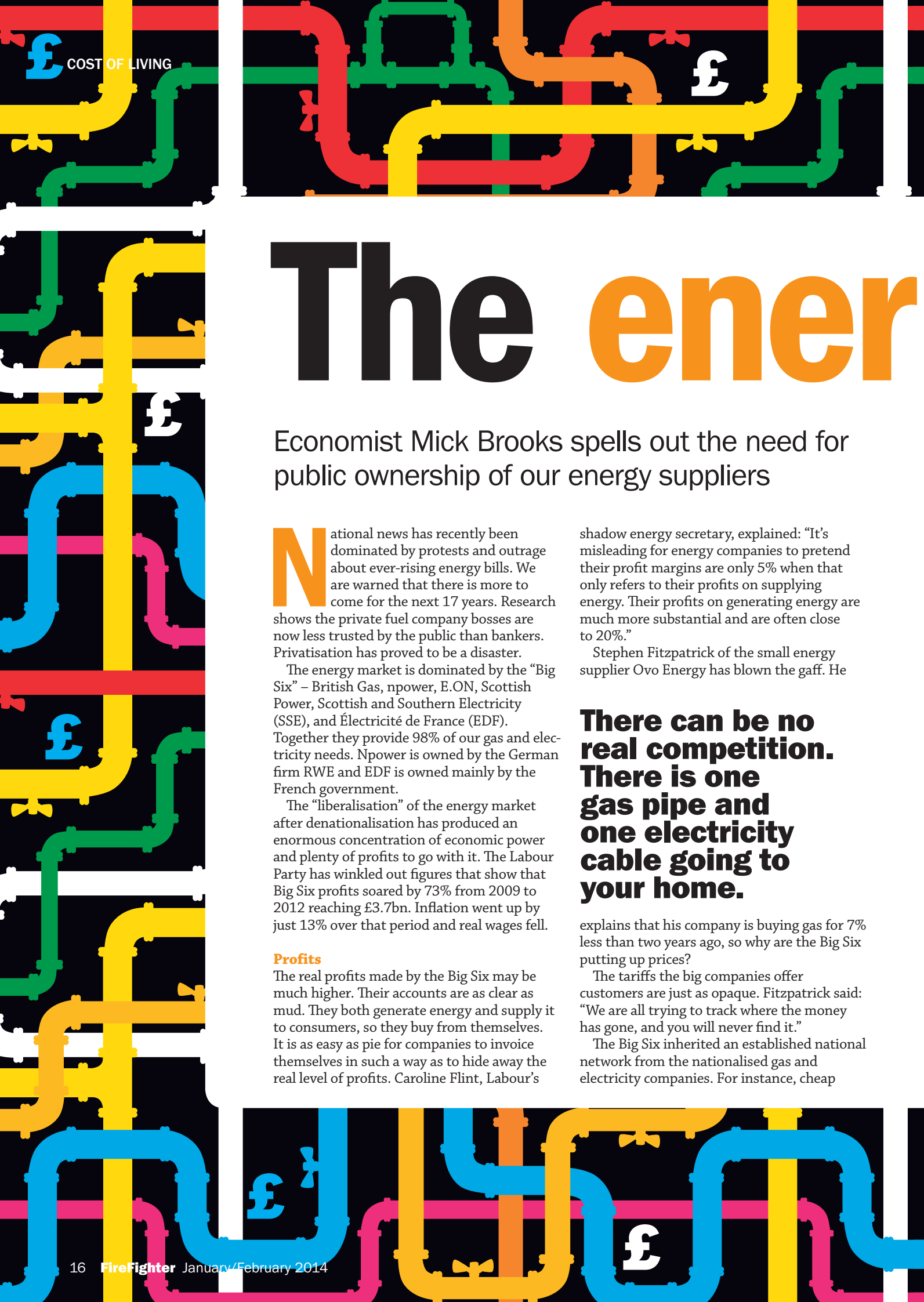
The FBU has run successful national campaigns in recent years. A good example was the campaign against FiReControl, imposed from Whitehall with no consultation with control members. The union's work at every level made the case against the project and persuaded politicians to think again.

10 General election 2015

Firefighters will have the chance to put MPs to the test in 2015. The FBU plans to help members do that by making sure all members have a political voice and holding politicians to account for what they have done and plan to do to our public services, our careers, our standard of living – and any other issue that matters to our members.

To do that work effectively, we need a political fund.

**Your union.
Your rights.
Your voice.**



The ener

Economist Mick Brooks spells out the need for public ownership of our energy suppliers

National news has recently been dominated by protests and outrage about ever-rising energy bills. We are warned that there is more to come for the next 17 years. Research shows the private fuel company bosses are now less trusted by the public than bankers. Privatisation has proved to be a disaster.

The energy market is dominated by the “Big Six” – British Gas, npower, E.ON, Scottish Power, Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE), and Électricité de France (EDF). Together they provide 98% of our gas and electricity needs. Npower is owned by the German firm RWE and EDF is owned mainly by the French government.

The “liberalisation” of the energy market after denationalisation has produced an enormous concentration of economic power and plenty of profits to go with it. The Labour Party has winkled out figures that show that Big Six profits soared by 73% from 2009 to 2012 reaching £3.7bn. Inflation went up by just 13% over that period and real wages fell.

Profits

The real profits made by the Big Six may be much higher. Their accounts are as clear as mud. They both generate energy and supply it to consumers, so they buy from themselves. It is as easy as pie for companies to invoice themselves in such a way as to hide away the real level of profits. Caroline Flint, Labour’s

shadow energy secretary, explained: “It’s misleading for energy companies to pretend their profit margins are only 5% when that only refers to their profits on supplying energy. Their profits on generating energy are much more substantial and are often close to 20%.”

Stephen Fitzpatrick of the small energy supplier Ovo Energy has blown the gaff. He

There can be no real competition. There is one gas pipe and one electricity cable going to your home.

explains that his company is buying gas for 7% less than two years ago, so why are the Big Six putting up prices?

The tariffs the big companies offer customers are just as opaque. Fitzpatrick said: “We are all trying to track where the money has gone, and you will never find it.”

The Big Six inherited an established national network from the nationalised gas and electricity companies. For instance, cheap



gy racket

electricity was made possible by the Central Electricity Board's grid which swept away sub-optimally small suppliers, imposed uniformity upon chaos and linked up millions of homes to the network. Energy provision was regarded as a public utility, not an opportunity for profit-gouging.

There can be no real competition between the big firms. There is one gas pipe and one electricity cable going to your home. Whoever you pay, you get the same gas molecules and the same electrical energy entering your house. Privatisation has just enabled a few companies to abuse market power.

Green taxes

The Big Six are blaming green levies for the price rises. This is nonsense. According to the government these amount to about £112 on an average £1,267 household bill. Apart from renewable obligations of £53 a year, the Energy Companies Obligation (ECO) of £58 a year goes to directly subsidise fuel poor households' bills and to install insulation. SSE has the cheek to denounce this subsidy to the poor as "morally wrong".

The Big Six have taken more than £1bn from their customers for ECO but, according to the energy regulator Ofgem, have completed as little as 3% of the work. As a result they have twisted £1bn in surplus profit out of their customers.

Fuel poverty is defined as having to spend more than 10% of your income on keeping warm. By this definition, 4.5 million people regularly have to choose between heating and eating. Fuel poverty is set to get steadily worse as long as the Big Six run the show.

One player has been entirely absent in the furore about rising fuel bills: Ofgem. The regulator has shown itself as useless at doing anything except wringing its hands.

How about switching suppliers? Certainly you should seek the best deal for yourself. But the energy supply system is a natural monopoly. Privatisation has changed it from a system that was, in principle, publicly accountable to a bunch of unaccountable rip-off merchants.

Here is what they really think – from the SSE website:

“OUR DIVIDEND OBSESSION

We have just one strategic priority: sustained real dividend growth. Receiving and investing dividends is by far the biggest source of investor return over the long term. Our dividend obsession ... has delivered for shareholders.”

Dividends are not invested. They flow straight from your bills to the shareholders without even touching the sides.

Decisions about energy provision – such as whether to go nuclear and the role of renewable energy – involve vital choices about our future and the future of the environment.

These decisions are being taken over our heads in the interests of private profit. According to YouGov, 68% want renationalisation of energy.

The case for taking the industry into public ownership under democratic control and developing a system of public accountability in deciding its future is overwhelming.

HSE WATCH

We can no longer rely on official figures

Employers may be far less likely to report injuries

Workplace injuries

Hugh Robertson, the TUC's senior policy officer for health and safety, reviews the latest developments at the Health and Safety Executive

Lies, damn lies and statistics

The most recent statistics from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) make comparison with earlier years difficult because of changes in the way that injuries must be reported.

Previously, RIDDOR – the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations – required an injury to be reported if the employee affected did not go back to work for three days as a result.

Now “over three day injuries” only have to be recorded, not reported, by employers. Only “over seven day injuries” must be reported.

The HSE is claiming that major workplace injuries were at an all-time low in 2012/13. Yet the figures show that the number of days lost through workplace injury rose from 4.3 million to 5.2 million – which implies that the number of people injured is increasing.

Unions have always relied on HSE statistics to give a reasonable picture of the state of health and safety in the UK.

HSE statistics come from a number of sources. The most accurate is probably the Labour

Force Survey, which involves questioning actual workers. The HSE also uses doctors' reporting schemes, the number of people who claim industrial injury benefit and RIDDOR.

For injuries, RIDDOR had always been the most important comparison, despite under-reporting by employers.

Now that RIDDOR has been changed (twice), it is almost impossible for anyone to use the HSE statistics to measure accurately what is happening to workplace injuries.

Are they going down, as one set of the HSE statistics appears to show, or going up, as indicated in another set of statistics?

It would also be good to know how much under-reporting of injuries and accidents has increased or decreased as a result of the introduction of the “fee for intervention” cost recovery scheme which came into effect in October 2012.

It means that HSE can

Are workplace injuries going down, as one set of the HSE statistics appears to show, or going up, as indicated in another set of statistics?

recover costs from an employer who breaks health and safety law, including costs for inspection, investigation and taking enforcement action.

Coupled with the new ban on proactive inspections in many workplaces, this may mean that employers are far less likely to report an injury.

But, because the whole reporting system has changed, it is almost impossible to know whether, or to what extent, this is happening.

It also means that it is almost impossible to prove what we all suspect: that government policies over the past three years have driven up the number of injuries (occupational diseases

take longer to show up in the figures).

Changes to inspections, together with some of the deregulation measures and removal of guidance, are bound to have an effect on what employers do.

Victory on ‘risk of over-compliance’

The TUC recently described an HSE news release as a “disgrace”.

The HSE had said its approved code of practice on workplace health safety and welfare had been reviewed “to make it easier for employers, building owners, landlords and managing agents to understand and meet their legal obligations and so reduce the risks of over-compliance.”

This was akin to telling employers that they must not go beyond the absolute legal minimum in providing things like office space, toilet facilities and all the other things covered by the regulations.

Well – good news! The HSE to its credit seems to have accepted that this was a mistake and has removed the offending phrase.

This is welcome and the TUC has thanked the HSE for listening. But it is worrying that it has to operate in a climate where it was ever thought appropriate to come up with nonsense like that.

I hope that the HSE will be more willing to encourage employers to go beyond compliance and promote good practice. That, after all, is what good health and safety is all about.



Changes in the rules on reporting workplace accidents make it almost impossible to measure the impact of government policies

Legal Beagle

Changing agreements and contracts

FBU
FREEPHONE
LEGAL ADVICE
0808 100 6061
IN SCOTLAND
0800 089 1331

Q I'm concerned that my employer might try to change the terms of my contract. Is this legal?

A Although there is no legal requirement for employers to provide a written contract, they do have to provide a written statement of particulars of employment. It is legally OK to change the terms in individual contracts of employment (except for certain statutory minimum terms). But neither party can alter the terms without the agreement of the other side as the contract is a legally binding agreement. If your employer tries to vary any term of your employment contract but does not get your consent, that variation is not recognised as lawful.

There are four ways that terms of employment can be changed:

- the employer and employee agree on the change or the employee actively accepts a change, e.g. by carrying on working under the changed contract without protesting;
- the contract itself provides for changes;
- the contract is varied by collective agreement which binds individual employees;
- the employer terminates the existing contract and introduces a new one, but must consult collectively where there is a collective termination and

re-engagement.

An employer who terminates an existing contract and offers a new contract which contains the variation will only be acting within the law if the full contractual period of notice is given and it is clear that the original contract is being terminated.

The employer is obliged by the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide you with written notice of any changes

to your terms and conditions within one month of the change taking place.

Employment Tribunals will treat an employee as having consented to a variation if they do not object to the change within a reasonable period of time, which is often referred to as a "variation by affirmation".

It is important to contact an FBU representative and raise any objection as soon as possible.

Q I've heard friends mention collective agreements. How do they work?

A Changes to terms and conditions in individual employer contracts most commonly occur through collective bargaining where there is a recognised union in a workplace. While the Grey Book is incorporated into FBU members' contracts, collective agreements can also be incorporated into all employees' contracts whether or not they are a member of a union.

Collective agreements are not normally enforceable between negotiating parties – the employer and the union(s) – unless this is explicitly stated. But if changes are incorporated into individual contracts of employment they become legally enforceable as between employer and employee, whether or not individuals are aware of the changes, or of the existence of the collective agreement.

Employers have a duty to consult collectively if they plan to change terms and conditions to make 20 or more employees redundant. A recent Employment Appeal Tribunal has increased the likelihood of the requirement for collective consultation being triggered. It held that employers should consult collectively if 20 or more employees' contracts were changing in the whole organisation, irrespective of the number of redundancies in an individual workplace. Trade unions can claim for protective awards of up to 13 weeks' pay per employee if this is breached.



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

Prize quiz



An all-new Kindle Paperwhite with wi-fi, paperwhite display and next-gen light



HOW TO ENTER

To win an all new Kindle Paperwhite please send your answers by **28 February 2014** on a postcard to: **Prize Competition (Jan/Feb 2014), 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 Nelson Mandela became post-apartheid South Africa's first black state president in what year?

- A – 1990
- B – 1992
- C – 1994
- D – 1999

2 The film 'Fifth Estate' is about Julian Assange's stay at which embassy?

- A – The Uruguayan embassy
- B – The United States embassy
- C – The Ecuadorian embassy
- D – The Ethiopian embassy



3 In 2013 the NHS became how old?

- A – 60
- B – 50
- C – 100
- D – 65

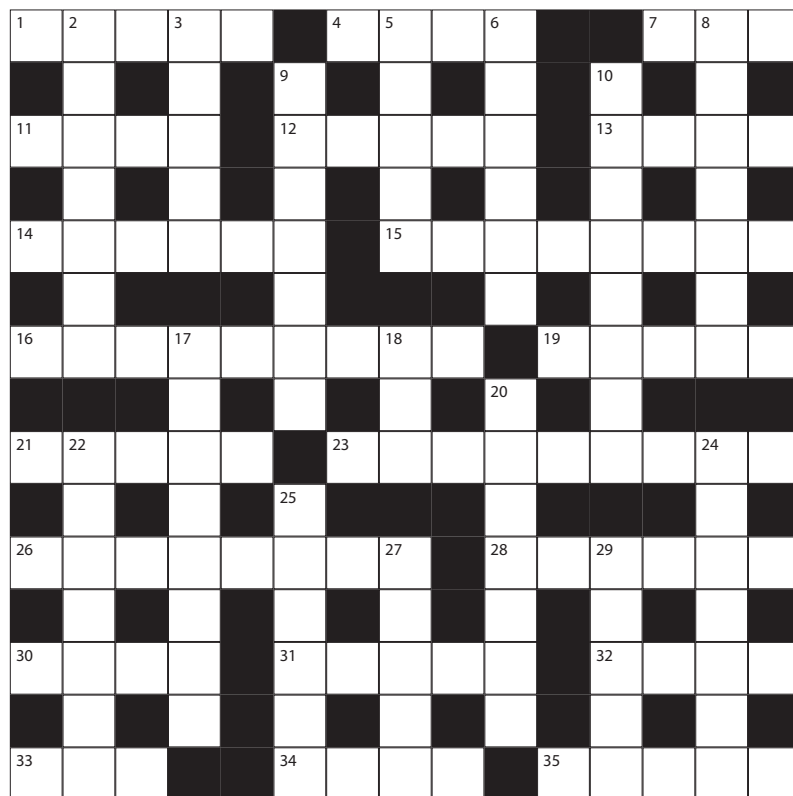
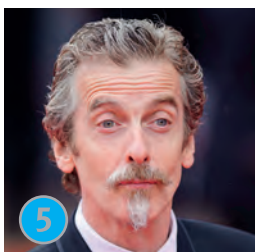


4 50 years ago last November – which US president was assassinated?

- A – John F. Kennedy
- B – Richard Nixon
- C – Franklin D. Roosevelt
- D – Robert F. Kennedy

5 Which BBC programme with a connection to time travel reached its 50th birthday in November 2013?

- A – Catweazle
- B – Doctor Who
- C – Star Wars
- D – Star Trek



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1** Content to be one of 7 (5)
- 4** Some say this is more! (4)
- 7** Short medic – to be one of 7 (3)
- 11** Our job is to make sure it doesn't! (4)
- 12** Stroll (5)
- 13** Back of foot – or part of shoe (4)
- 14** Join to – email, perhaps (6)
- 15** News-gatherer (8)
- 16** German sausage (9)
- 19** Slightly mad – and covered in spots? (5)
- 21** Cornish cathedral city (5)
- 23** Collection of literary works (9)
- 26** Shrivelled (8)
- 28** One of 7 – with hay fever? (6)
- 30** Port town on Scotland's west coast (4)
- 31** Canada's syrupy tree? (5)
- 32** wheel-bearing bar (4)
- 33** Raptor – with wisdom? (3)
- 34** This toy has its ups and downs (2-2)
- 35** Brimless hat (5)

DOWN

- 2** Jenny of Railway Children fame (7)
- 3** Bamboo-eating bear (5)
- 5** If you see this, the fire's not out (5)
- 6** One of 7 ready to drop off (6)
- 8** Pig out! (7)
- 9** Shy one of 7 (7)
- 10** Barbecue fuel (8)
- 17** Setting afire (8)
- 18** Murdoch's mouthpiece (3)
- 20** 'Water of life' – the Irish way (7)
- 22** Result of light refracted through raindrops (7)
- 24** Type of antelope known for its speed (7)
- 25** Less than 1 to be one of 7! (6)
- 27** One of 7 less than bright (5)
- 29** Rub out (5)

Last month's answers and winners



Crossword solution November/December

November/December quiz answers

- 1** – A – Paul Simon
- 2** – B – Verve
- 3** – A – Bob Dylan
- 4** – D – Jerry Lee Lewis
- 5** – C – The Rolling Stones

Winner of October quiz

Rob Hosking, Cornwall

Station Cat Outsourcing: their hands in our pockets

Invoice of the living dead

Turns out that we've been paying the private security company G4S to keep tabs on offenders after they've died. Very necessary, of course. A person doesn't stop being a bad lot just because he's no longer breathing. Still, you might have thought even the rapacious G4S could give the hard-pressed taxpayer a bit of a rebate. After all, keeping tabs on them can't be that onerous. Dead folk aren't known for being fleet of foot.

The one-man tag team

That other big outsourcing company, Serco, billed the Ministry of Justice four separate times for the same tag, because the same person was under four different supervision orders. So naturally, they had to tag him four times. The Serious Fraud Office isn't amused. They're investigating Serco and G4S. So if you see a representative of these companies hanging around trying to pick up fire service work, you might ask, in a friendly way, how it's all going.

Chilli sauce with that?

Fire minister Brandon Lewis has important matters on his mind, as a glance at his website will show. It tells us that he is calling on his Great Yarmouth constituents to

nominate their favourite kebab restaurant or restaurateur for the British Kebab and Retail Awards 2013.

"The kebab industry," writes the fire minister, "is hugely important to the economy, both in Norfolk and nationally. The industry currently contributes £2.2bn to the UK economy."

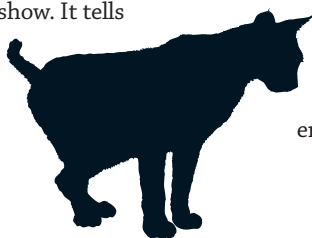
Nominations closed on 11 December. But you can go to the awards ceremony. Or you can stand outside it with a placard saying "Don't kebab our fire service".

Its website tells us that this will take place on 14 January in that well-known kebab house, the Park Lane Sheraton, between 7 and 12pm. "Three course meal with unlimited drinks will be served," it says here.

Do as I say, not as I do

Spare a thought for Paul Bates, deputy chief fire officer with the Mid and West Wales fire and rescue service. Mr Bates put his name, with others, to a letter to fire officers saying that speeding is reckless, and warning them to stay within the speed limit. Anyone caught breaking speed limits gets a written warning from Mr Bates, the officer responsible for discipline. So being caught doing 56 mph in a 30 mph zone, on the B4336 at

Llanfihangel-ar-Arth, near Carmarthen, was a tad embarrassing.



Enough to make you ... Fire minister Brandon Lewis wants his constituents to vote for their favourite kebab shop



The things they say

"Taking the knife to front-line capability is short-sighted and cowardly" – James Cleverly (above), Conservative member of the London Assembly for Bexley and Bromley, on cutting armed forces reserves, 18 April 2009.

"The proposals put forward involve a degree of change but they absolutely protect our core ability to protect Londoners and deal with emergencies and do so within the budget we've been set ... we need to save money without compromising our ability to protect people" – James Cleverly, chair of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, after forcing through fire service cuts including the closure of ten fire stations, 12 September 2013.

Don't hold the front page

Lots of stuff in the papers about firefighters going on strike. Not so much about the serious fire on Tottenham High

Road on 26 November which put three firefighters in hospital. The FBU's executive council member for London, Ian Leahair, says: "The media show little interest when firefighters put their lives on the line to protect others at serious fires, but they are only too happy to denigrate us when we take action to defend our pensions."

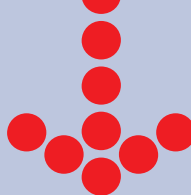
Billion dollar Blair

US Secretary of State John Kerry's Middle East initiative has given us an interesting insight into how our former prime minister Tony Blair, now, among other things, Middle East envoy, is perceived abroad. David Horowitz, editor-in-chief of the *Times of Israel*, is, like most Middle East commentators, sceptical about the Kerry initiative.

He wrote: "So what magic had he wrought? What did he have to present to us all? An economic plan. Bigger and better and bolder and brighter than anything hitherto attempted for the Palestinians ...

"How? What? Who? Where? The answer to all such questions, it seemed, was: Tony Blair. The indefatigable former British prime minister, shaking hands with those sheikhs at the side of the hall, he was going to fix it. Somehow, Tony the economic tiger was going to rustle up the necessary \$4bn in investment and – presto! – all our problems would be solved ..."

25-year badges



David Lawrence (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Eddie Sweeney (r), white watch, Philips Park, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade fairness at work rep Neil Messenger with white watch looking on



Karl Hindhaugh (r), red watch, Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Russ King



John Quinlan (r), white watch, City Centre, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from retired watch manager Tim Groves



Barrie Hughes (l), Glynneath, receives his 25-year badge from Mid and West Wales vice-chair Lawrence Larmond



Craig O'Donnell (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Steve Glass (r), premises risk management officer, receives his 25-year badge from Kent officers' chair Dickie Baugh



Trevor Devine (l), St Neots, receives his 25-year badge from Cambridgeshire brigade chair Cameron Matthews



Mark Cook (c, r), Keighley, receives his 25-year badge from West Yorkshire health and safety co-ordinator John Rankin with blue watch colleagues looking on



Steven Buchanan (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Rod Johnson (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Ned Bailey (l), red watch, Falmouth, Cornwall, receives his 25-year badge from brigade official Stuart Pulley



Derek Neill (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Jeff Evans (l), blue watch, Swansea Central, Mid and West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Barrie Davies



Alan Campbell (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Adam Paley (r), Keighley, receives his 25-year badge from West Yorkshire health and safety co-ordinator John Rankin with blue watch looking on



Nick Congrave (r), red watch, Coventry, receives his 25-year badge from borough secretary Emmett Robertson



Kenny Hay (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Fred Kent (l), Horley, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade safety rep Steve Harrod



Allan Morrison (l), blue watch, Renfrew, Strathclyde, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Alan Johnston



Jim McLaughrie (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Martin Ross (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Stew Oliver (l), Birtley, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade health and safety rep Brian Harris



John Wiggins (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Robert Thomson (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Phil Sherwood (r), purple watch, Coventry, receives his 25-year badge from borough secretary Emmett Robertson



Bob Bishop (r), red watch, Rhyl, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Mike Davies



Peter Watters (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



(l – r) **Martin Douglas, Mark Cook, Iain Barbour, Derek Ronaldson and Tam Fyfe**, Cupar, Fife, receive their 25-year badges from brigade organiser Phil Randall



Brian Fyfe (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Andy Fish (2nd left), white watch, Maindee (Newport), South Wales, receives his 25-year badge from FBU Wales health and safety rep Simon Fleming



Neil Jones (r), blue watch, Rhyl, North Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Mike Davies



Keith Price (l), green watch, Swansea Central, Mid and West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Barrie Davies

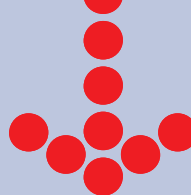


Nigel Ridd (l), white watch, Neath, Mid & West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade vice chair Lawrence Larmond



Richie Greenwood (l), white watch, Swansea West, Mid and West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Barrie Davies

25-year badges



Steve Jones (l), Mid and West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from region 8 ONC rep Mick Higgins



Hugh McIndewar (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Ash Howard (r), Swallow, Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Dave Turner



Nigel Maguire and **Martin Smith** (front l,r), white watch, Solihull, receive their 25-year badges from West Midlands brigade secretary Paul Cockburn (c) with watch colleagues



Brixton station rep Paul Eveson (2nd l) presents 25-year badges to (l-r) **Mat Rosendale**, **Steve Ismail** and **Stuart Phillips**



Mick Housden (l), St Neots, receives his 25-year badge from Cambridgeshire brigade chair Cameron Matthews



Liam Hudson (r), specialist response manager, receives his 25-year badge from Kent officers' chair Dickie Baugh



Carl Francis (l), Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade fairness at work rep Andy Message



Alan Hyem (l) receives his 25-year badge from Scotland Central brigade secretary Stephen Thomson



Dave Cogger (r), Danes Castle, Exeter, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Wayne Broom



Paul Nicholson (l), Exmouth, receives his 25-year badge from Devon and Somerset brigade organiser Andy Gould with colleagues looking on

Please send prints or digital 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
(England, Wales and N. Ireland),
0800 089 1331
(Scotland),

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

T THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS