



RECORD OF DECISIONS 2024

Fire Brigades Union
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RECORD OF DECISIONS 2024

FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENTS

EC 1. THE WAR ON GAZA

(AS AMENDED BY SCOTLAND)

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) condemns the attacks in Israel by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and calls for the immediate, safe and unconditional release of hostages held in Gaza.

The FBU condemns the onslaught against Gaza by the Israeli forces since the Hamas attacks. During the first five months of conflict, nearly 30,000 Palestinians in Gaza were killed and almost 70,000 Palestinians injured, according to United Nations figures.

The FBU condemns the appalling loss of civilian life, the destruction of large areas of Gaza, including residential buildings, schools, refugee camps and healthcare facilities, and the withholding of water, food and fuel from Palestinian civilians. Some 1.7 million people have been displaced across Gaza, many multiple times, according to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). These actions amount to the collective punishment of the Palestinian people by the Israeli forces, illegal under international law including the Geneva Convention.

The FBU opposes the actions of settlers and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in the West Bank. Since 7 October 2023, almost 400 Palestinians have been killed and more than 4,000 Palestinians injured in the West Bank. The FBU sends its support and solidarity to the people of Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

The FBU sends solidarity to firefighters and other emergency service workers as well as medical personnel who are delivering humanitarian service in the most appalling conditions. We condemn the killing of UNRWA personnel in Israeli attacks. We condemn the killing of significant numbers of journalists attempting to carry out their work inside Gaza.

The FBU stands with millions across the world who are opposed to the relentless onslaught on Gaza and applauds our members who have attended demonstrations calling for peace.

The FBU supports the small but growing movement in Israel, opposing the war and calling for a just, peaceful and democratic solution addressing the rights of the Palestinian people. The union pays tribute to those in Israel such as Standing Together, who fight against racism and discrimination and seek to build dialogue and unity between Palestinians and Jews. Despite the current isolation of such initiatives, they offer a source of hope for the future.

The FBU has no trust or confidence in the ability of great power politics, including those of the British Government, to bring any solution for the Palestinian people or for Jewish people in Israel. Instead, we support the building of a mass workers' movement across the world to oppose Israel's war and to fight for justice, an end to the occupation and for a genuine democratic solution.

The FBU condemns any manifestation of anti-Semitism, anti-Palestinian racism or Islamophobia. The labour and trade union movement has a responsibility to intervene to oppose any such racist attacks, including those which may appear to be linked to the war in Gaza.

The FBU calls for:

- an immediate ceasefire and the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and from the occupied West Bank
- the immediate, safe and unconditional release of all hostages held in Gaza
- the immediate release of all Palestinians held without charge by Israel
- an end of sales or export of arms by the UK (and other states) to Israel
- international workers action to enforce this policy, by all means available
- support for the anti-war movement in Israel and for the building of a movement of unity between Palestinian and Jewish workers and youth
- the Westminster government, to increase the UK's international development funding for the reconstruction of Gaza and to significantly increase immediate practical humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza.

EC 2. WORKERS' RIGHTS UNDER A LABOUR GOVERNMENT

(AS AMENDED BY HEREFORD AND WORCESTER)

Over the past 14 years, Conservative governments have consistently attacked rights at work, including major assaults on the right of trade unions to organise and take industrial action.

The Labour Party has committed to its Green Paper, the New Deal for Working People. This makes commitments that from day one, a Labour government will strengthen workers' rights, individually and collectively, including the right to strike.

The New Deal for Working People makes a series of pledges for decent, secure, safe and fair work. The Labour Party says that if it forms the next government, it will:

- Empower workers to act collectively to negotiate higher wages starting with a Fair Pay Agreement in social care. Fair Pay Agreements will establish minimum terms and conditions, which would be binding on all employers and workers in the sector
- Strengthen the protections afforded to all workers by scrapping the qualifying time for basic rights, such as unfair dismissal, sick pay, and parental leave
- Ban zero hour contracts to ensure all jobs provide a baseline level of security, and ensure all workers get reasonable notice of any change in shifts or working time
- Extend statutory maternity and paternity leave, introducing the right to bereavement leave and strengthening protections for pregnant women by making it unlawful to dismiss a woman who is pregnant for six months after her return, except in specific circumstances
- Review parental leave within the first year of a Labour Government
- Bring in the 'right to switch off' and introduce new rights to protect workers from remote surveillance
- Repeal anti-trade union legislation which removes workers' rights, including the Trade Union Act 2016 and Minimum Service Levels Act 2023, in order to remove unnecessary restrictions on trade union activity
- Introduce the right of trade unions to consult their members through secure on-line and workplace balloting
- Establish and properly fund a single enforcement body to enforce workers' rights
- Review the law on health and safety at work to revise outdated legislation and make it fit for now and the future. Review provision for stress, mental health and the impact of new technology
- Strengthen the rights of workers to respond to family emergencies with paid family and carers' leave, the right to have flexible working
- Act to close gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) as a union affiliated to the Labour Party, has played a role since 2021 in developing the New Deal for Working People. FBU officials worked with Andy McDonald MP and Angela Rayner MP on the original proposals. At Labour's National Policy Forum in July 2023, FBU delegates argued for workers' rights. The FBU's resolution at Labour Party conference was on the New Deal for Working People.

FBU policy on workers' rights goes much further than current Labour Party policy and demands an end to all anti-union laws. However, the FBU recognises that these pledges are an important start in unshackling the unions and shifting the balance of power at work towards workers.

These policies have been popular with trade union members and with voters as was acknowledged, for example, after the Rutherglen and Hamilton West by-election. However, there is growing pressure on the Labour leadership, particularly from big business interests, to roll back on these pledges. It is likely that these pressures will grow as the election approaches and after the election of a Labour government.

In these circumstances, the role of the FBU as a union affiliated to the Labour Party, Trade Union Congress, Scottish Trade Union Congress and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, is to organise and campaign against any retreat on these important policy pledges and to build a movement to campaign to ensure that a future Labour government delivers on these commitments within the timescales already set out.

Conference agrees:

1. That the Executive Council (EC) will publicise these pledges among FBU members and others to ensure that the FBU and the wider trade union movement is prepared and organised to fight to guarantee the delivery of these pledges.
2. That the EC will continue over the coming months to campaign inside and outside of Labour Party structures to ensure that Labour's commitment to the New Deal for Working People is maintained.
3. That the EC will provide resources and information to assist FBU members and officials at all levels in such campaigning.
4. That the EC will assess the tactics required under a Labour Government to best ensure the implementation of the New Deal for Working People, our policy on the repeal of all anti-trade union legislation and to introduce improvements to trade union and workers' rights beyond those set out in the New Deal for Working People.

EC 3. THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION AND THE COMING GENERAL ELECTION

(AS AMENDED BY HEREFORD AND WORCESTER)

Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Conference 2023, agreed the Statement: Preparing for a General Election. As a general election approaches, this statement supplements what was agreed in 2023.

For many months, opinion polls have estimated that the likely result of the general election is the defeat of the Conservative Party and the election of a majority Labour government. This should be a watershed moment in modern history.

Since 2010, the various Conservative and Conservative-led governments have engaged in brutal austerity policies, which have attacked public services, workers' rights and working class living standards. In the fire and rescue service, 12,000 jobs have been lost, hundreds of fire engines have been axed and unprecedented numbers of fire stations closed.

Firefighters, along with millions of other workers, have seen attacks on our pensions and an unprecedented attack on our wages and conditions. The defeat of this Conservative government is clearly in the interests of FBU members, of the trade union movement and of the working class as a whole.

The FBU is affiliated to the Labour Party, although no political fund money is used for this purpose from members in Scotland or Northern Ireland. As an affiliate, the FBU has argued and campaigned for policies within the democratic channels of the Labour Party, in line with FBU conference policies and the policies of the wider trade union movement. The FBU has also defended Labour Party democracy and opposed attacks on the rights of party members and on individual MPs, such as Jeremy Corbyn, Diane Abbott and Andy McDonald.

Under the current leadership, the Labour Party has retreated from many of the policies that the FBU supported since re-affiliation in 2015. Recently, these disagreements have been sharply exposed during the Israeli government's war on Gaza. The Executive Council (EC) has clearly set out a different position to the course adopted by the Labour leadership. The FBU has expressed support for those Labour MPs who have broken the whip in order to vote for a ceasefire.

As the election approaches, the FBU must set out an assessment of the issues we face, within the context we've faced over the last two decades. As the fire and rescue service's union, we need to make an assessment of the challenges facing our own sector as well as the wider political situation facing workers.

THE ELECTION AND THE FUTURE OF OUR SERVICE

The abolition of all national structures and standards between 2002 and 2004 opened the door to the fragmentation of the fire and rescue service. This absence of national standards and the drive towards so-called 'localism' opened the door to the savage austerity cuts that our service has suffered since 2010. The FBU should never forget that the abolition of national standards and structures by a Labour government created the mechanism for the subsequent cuts imposed by the Conservatives.

Despite this, it remains the assessment of the EC that it is in the best interests of FBU members and of our service that the Conservatives are defeated and replaced with a Labour government.

In this situation, it is incumbent upon the union to advocate for the necessary reform and changes that we need to see for the benefit and safety of our members, our service, our communities and for all workers. In line with this approach, the FBU launched the Firefighters' Manifesto in November 2023 at our national rally at Westminster. Since then, members across the UK have engaged in campaigning and lobbying activity to support the manifesto.

The union has also identified key areas of the manifesto to raise and discuss with politicians who may hold ministerial positions in a future government.

These have focused in particular on:

- The case for ending fragmentation through a new statutory advisory body to develop and advise on all areas of fire and fire safety policy
- The case for a new initiative to develop and rebuild resilience, including the unique role the fire and rescue service could play tackling emerging risks, such as extreme weather events linked to climate change
- The case for improved workers' rights and the repeal of anti-union laws.

Any such approach requires long term investment and the creation of thousands of new jobs in fire and rescue.

In this campaign, as in every other, there can be no guarantees of success. Nevertheless, it is the job of the union to make our case and to provide the evidence to support it – even in challenging circumstances.

Conference agrees that the FBU must use every possible leverage, including its status as a Labour affiliate, to set out the case for a major change of direction for our service. The FBU wants to see a service genuinely fit for the future, with the investment necessary to face the emerging and changing risks confronting our communities.

PREPARE FOR STRUGGLE UNDER A LABOUR GOVERNMENT

There are already growing pressures on the Starmer leadership to roll back on any radical pledges.

Big business interests will oppose any relaxation of the anti-union laws or extension of other workers' rights. There will also be huge pressure to maintain policies of austerity and privatisation.

The task facing the FBU and the whole trade union movement is to prepare to resist such pressures and to fight for policies which benefit the working class.

In addition, our movement cannot merely rely on developments at Westminster and the devolved governments but must build and rely upon our own strength and that of other trade unions to campaign to improve trade union rights and our members' pay and living conditions.

Accordingly, Conference agrees:

1. The positions set out in this EC statement.
2. That the EC will continue to campaign inside and outside Parliament for FBU policy to be adopted and implemented by the Labour Party in government and for a new approach to fire and rescue policy.
3. That the EC will provide resources and information to assist FBU members and officials at all levels in the role that we can all play in this campaign.

EC 4. CHALLENGING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN OUR UNION AND OUR SERVICE

(AS AMENDED BY HEREFORD AND WORCESTER)

In recent years, the issue of sexual harassment has been identified as a significant concern in reports into other trade unions. The Trade Union Congress has sought to address this challenge through specific initiatives, policies, monitoring and training.

During the last two years, there have been various reports investigating bullying, discrimination and harassment in the fire and rescue service. Such behaviour has no place in our union, in our service or in our profession.

Conference 2023 agreed a renewed agenda to address this issue within UK fire and rescue services, while also looking at behaviour, culture and policy within the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

In September 2023, the FBU launched an independent sexual harassment survey. Laura Harrison and Robbie Wishart were commissioned by the FBU to survey members and report their findings to the Executive Council (EC).

On the 7 February 2024, the FBU published the report and findings, alongside an immediate action plan. Final analysis was based upon the returns provided by 1,128 respondents. The report included alarming findings:

- 30% of women who completed the survey reported having experienced sexual harassment in an FBU context. This compares to 5% of men
- One-quarter (26%) of respondents (men and women) who experienced sexual harassment did so at a 'social occasion' after an FBU event
- One-fifth (20%) of respondents who experienced sexual harassment did so by phone or text message
- 16% of respondents reported that a perpetrator was a brigade/area official, and 13% of respondents reported that a perpetrator was a branch official. The remaining 69% of respondents identified that a perpetrator was an FBU member with no official role.

The EC has agreed to all recommendations made in the report, agreeing that the equalities sub-committee, a group consisting of EC members, sectional and regional reps should scope out their implementation.

COMMITTING TO CHANGE

Conference agrees that all members and officials of the union shall actively challenge misogynistic attitudes and behaviour. All members and officials should speak out on this and act immediately on any issues brought to their attention. There is no excuse to turning a blind eye or hiding from unacceptable behaviour. We must challenge such behaviour immediately.

Conference agrees that the equalities sub-committee will consider how the FBU builds a deeper understanding of the prevalence and impacts of sexual harassment (in society as well as in the FBU) and faces up to personal biases or prejudices that may result in a default setting towards disbelief of women. The equalities sub-committee will report to the EC which will consider the findings and any recommendations made.

Conference agrees that the EC will review the rules and policies of the union to establish more efficient and effective reporting mechanisms for reports of sexual harassment. This should include a truncated reporting mechanism to build the confidence of members in the rules, policies and processes of the union.

VALUING AND INCREASING THE PRESENCE OF WOMEN

Conference agrees that the EC will consider how better the union can support women becoming involved in our trade union. This should include reviewing opportunities for women to develop as workplace union representatives and to progress through the union's structure and where to invest in initiatives to support women members.

Conference and committees of the union should seek to be more representative of women in the union and to overcome any obstacle which prevents the full involvement of women members.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The FBU should undertake work to train and educate officials and members on several key points arising from this project including:

1. Sexual harassment is not a 'women's issue.' It is a trade union issue that goes to the heart of the union's aims in terms of justice and fairness at work. An attack on one is an attack on all and our union is weakened where the bond of unity is broken.
2. What constitutes misogynistic behaviour and sexual harassment, e.g. 'jokes' that belittle, demean, humiliate, or objectify women are not acceptable in any environment.
3. Building understanding and competence in developing and running events and meetings that reflect the experiences of under-represented groups (for example distinguishing equity from equality, making sure that all know that they are valued and belong). This understanding should play directly into how meetings are run, chaired and how agendas are developed.
4. The FBU's policies and processes on sexual harassment.

Conference agrees that the EC will ensure mandatory sexual harassment training is delivered for new and current brigade, regional and national officials.

CREATING SAFE SPACES

Conference agrees that the FBU needs to establish and ensure safe spaces for all when attending FBU meetings, events, and education. This must be both in physical and online settings.

The FBU must be an organisation where everyone feels safe and able to contribute without fear of harassment. It is now time we ensure equality really does matter. If you continue to be a perpetrator of harassment, you have no place in our movement. If you are a victim of harassment, we shall ensure our union is a place you feel safe in, full of people you can turn to. If you're a bystander, make sure you stand up and challenge and report harassment. Equality matters.

PAY AND CONDITIONS

1. PUBLIC HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT FOR MEMBERS WORKING THE RETAINED DUTY

SYSTEM Conference is concerned that many members who are employed on the Retained Duty System (RDS) are not being allocated the same entitlement to eight days public holiday leave as is allocated to their full time counterparts as set out in Section 4, Part C, paragraph 12 and 15 of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book).

Conference notes that the Part Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 requires that part time workers, which our RDS members are now categorised as, are not treated less favourably than our full time members who work for the same employer. Therefore, if the full time firefighters are allocated the eight public holiday days as additional paid days off work, which can be taken on alternative days to the public holiday, then our part time RDS firefighters must also be afforded this option and be allocated eight additional days of paid absence from their RDS duties.

Conference notes that the Working Time Regulations 1998 as amended by the Employment Rights (Amendment, Revocation and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2023, requires that the part time worker is paid an amount equal to their average earnings for each public holiday and that the pay is calculated based on their previous 52 weeks' earnings.

Conference instructs that the Executive Council (EC), as a matter of urgency, identify which fire and rescue services are not allocating and paying public holiday leave correctly to their RDS employees, and that the EC then assist the local officials in those services in securing the correct allocation of paid public holiday leave.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE AS AMENDED BY SCOTLAND

2. PROTECTION FOR RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM MEMBERS WHO SUFFER AN INJURY WHILST RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY CALL

Conference notes that Section 4, Part A, paragraph 16 (2) of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book), requires members working the Retained Duty System (RDS) to attend duty “promptly at the station to which the employee is attached in response to an emergency call”.

Conference believes there is no clarity as to when the employee is deemed to be “on duty” or from what point in time they are to commence being paid. This lack of clarity can have dire consequences should an employee suffer an injury or medical emergency whilst responding to the emergency call, as the employer could refuse to recognise this as an “on duty” injury or illness and reduce the entitlement to full pay from twelve months to just six months.

Conference believes that our RDS members cease to be “on call” at the time that they are alerted to respond to the emergency call, and that they therefore become “on duty” at the “time of call” and must be paid from that same time.

Conference instructs the Executive Council in order that our RDS members are protected whilst responding, to urgently secure confirmation from the employers through whatever means they deem suitable, that our RDS members are on duty and on pay from the moment that they are alerted to respond to an emergency call.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

5. NATIONAL FIRE CHIEFS COUNCIL GUIDANCE

Conference is concerned by the amount of guidance and policy being issued by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), which has the potential to be included in local service instructions, standard operating procedures and in some cases, the contractual terms of Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members.

Conference believes that as an unelected private company, funded by central government, the NFCC should not be allowed to dictate policy that directly affects the terms and conditions of FBU members.

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to immediately commence discussions through the National Joint Council, to ensure that any guidance provided by the NFCC that has the potential to alter the terms and conditions of FBU members, is subject to negotiation and agreement with the FBU.

Conference further instructs the EC to report back on this matter to members within 6 months of this Conference.

MERSEYSIDE

6. MANDATORY EMPLOYEES' INTERESTS REGISTER

Conference notes following the publication of the Morris Review of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service it was identified that there is a perception of a high level of nepotism and cronyism existing within a boy's club culture that stems right to the very top level of management in the service.

Conference further notes that this could be a significant barrier to cultural change and equality of opportunity within all Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs).

Conference demands more accountability and transparency on the matter and notes that the Grey Book states;

"Fire and rescue authorities should introduce a voluntary register of employees' interests that invites employees to declare membership of any organisation that is not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance, and which has secrecy about rules or membership or conduct."

Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate through the National Joint Council for this to be made a mandatory register for all persons, at all levels, employed in FRSs across the UK.

SOUTH WALES

7. SUSPENSION FRAMEWORK

Conference is aware of the significant number of suspensions of our members across all fire and rescue services.

Conference believes that a culture seems to have developed of suspend first, investigate later.

Conference notes that while suspensions obviously have a role, they must only be used when it is the only reasonable way of dealing with a situation. Suspension must not be used automatically or as a knee-jerk reaction to a situation. Additionally, it must not be used arbitrarily as a tool to protect the service.

Conference believes that when used arbitrarily, the impact upon suspended members and their families can be catastrophic, and as a consequence serious mental health interventions are often required.

Conference notes that Section 6, part B - Conduct, capability and discipline of the Scheme of Conditions of Service Sixth edition 2004 (updated 2009) covers Suspension. Under Section 2.5 Gross Misconduct, paragraph 53 it states that, "If a manager considers an employee guilty of gross misconduct, and thus potentially liable for summary dismissal, it is still important to establish the facts before taking any action. A short period of suspension with full pay may be helpful or necessary, although it should only be imposed after careful consideration and should be kept under review." Conference believes the vague terminology, "short period" leaves members open to punitive action where a suspension can last for several months without a review taking place, further compounding the mental impact of a suspension.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to initiate research in order to quantify the increasing number of suspensions that have taken place within the last 18 months across all brigades. Following this, a best practice framework must be sought and adopted at National Joint Council level at the earliest opportunity, alongside amendments to the Grey Book section 6, subsection 3.5.

GREATER MANCHESTER AS AMENDED BY HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

8. DRIVING ON DUTY – LEGAL REPRESENTATION PROVIDED BY EMPLOYERS

Conference recognises the increased risk of driving emergency vehicles under blue light conditions to emergency incidents, and the skills and training required of our members who undertake these activities.

Conference also notes examples where Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members have incurred significant legal costs when involved in road traffic collisions, whilst driving Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) vehicles, where they have been found to be at no fault in both FRS and legal investigations.

Conference notes that the inclusion of the word ‘may’ within Section 4, Part E, of the Grey Book could allow employers a way to avoid providing legal cover for their employees under such circumstances.

Grey Book – Section 4, Part E – Allowances and Reimbursements states; “Where an employee is prosecuted for an offence under the Road Traffic Acts committed whilst on duty the fire and rescue authority, where it considers him or her to be personally blameless or where there are strong extenuating circumstances, may reimburse all or part of the costs awarded against the employee including the cost of any legal assistance, the amount of the fine and any additional costs charged by the court.”

Conference also notes the previous resolution brought by South Yorkshire, Resolution 26 – Fire Service Drivers Afforded Legal Representation Funded by Employers, passed at Conference 2009 and supported by the Executive Council (EC), which demanded “The Executive Council immediately seek the employers agreement via the National Joint Council that should any driver be involved in any road traffic accident and subsequently require legal representation, the respective FRS will be responsible for the provision and associated costs of any such legal representation.”

Conference instructs the EC to raise this issue at the National Joint Council, to reach an overarching agreement with the national employers that in the event of a member being subject to personal legal costs incurred when on-duty, and operating a FRS vehicle, that the respective FRS will provide and fully fund legal representation on the members behalf.

SCOTLAND AS AMENDED BY HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

9. CONTROL AND STANDARDISE ADDITIONAL ROLES

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to seek to ensure that properly negotiated additional operational roles undertaken across our fire and rescue services are quantified, weighted and standardised to ensure the necessary competency standards can be acquired and more importantly maintained.

Conference instructs the EC that a report should be commissioned into these properly negotiated additional operational roles, reporting back no later than Conference 2025. This proactive measure should assist in managing both the workload and work-related stress of our members.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE AS AMENDED BY SCOTLAND

IMPROVED IVF PROVISION AND RIGHTS COMPOSITE A

Conference notes that there is no legal right to time off work or remuneration for time off work for In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) treatment or for any related sickness.

Conference recognises the impact that fertility difficulties can have on Fire Brigades Union members and their families. There are disparities in policies and procedures nationally, to offer members recognised support during IVF treatment.

Conference also notes that IVF can be a lengthy, costly and stressful process for those who undergo the procedure and that the added worry of taking time off work or the need to book sick for the process can lead to further stress and can have a detrimental effect on the individual's wellbeing.

Conference believes that the right to time off work and remuneration for that time off for those who undergo IVF treatment are wholly inadequate.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to immediately develop a campaign and begin discussions through the National Joint Council for the implementation of the right to time off for fertility treatment and the right to remuneration for time off for fertility treatment and to report back before Conference 2025.

DURHAM

13. NECESSITY FOR A RIGHT TO APPEAL INFORMAL DISCIPLINE

Conference notes the absence of a right to appeal for informal discipline in the Grey Book.

Conference notes that without this right, individuals are left vulnerable to the whims of those in authority, undermining the very foundation of due process. At informal discipline, where the stakes may not be as high as formal proceedings, the need for a right of appeal is no less important.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise this omission at the National Joint Council and enter negotiations with a view to an addition within the Grey Book, in time to report to Conference 2025.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

PENSIONS

15. PENSION'S JUSTICE

Conference recognises, and commends, the work undertaken by Fire Brigades Union (FBU) officials and employees, who have contributed to consultation responses across all four Home Nations on behalf of the FBU regarding the application of the McCloud/Sargeant remedy.

Conference, however, remains frustrated that despite this work, many FBU members are now at risk of accruing interest costs on outstanding contribution payments.

Conference notes, this is a direct result of the actions of the then Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government's attacks on firefighters' pensions, which were subsequently found to constitute unlawful age discrimination.

Conference also recognises, that the financial consequences of this unlawful age discrimination were then passed on to firefighters by fire and rescue services across the United Kingdom.

Conference demands that all fire and rescue services put measures in place to ensure that no firefighter accrues interest costs on outstanding contribution payments as a consequence of the McCloud/Sargeant remedy application.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to raise this matter with the employer's side of the National Joint Council, to reach a resolution which ensures no member has to absorb these costs.

SCOTLAND

17. PENSIONS ADVICE

Conference notes the hard work that has been carried out by the National Officer and head office informing members of the work that has been done involving pensions.

Conference believes that members are relying upon individual Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) for advice on how their pension scheme works when coming to retire. FRS's and local pension's administrators are not always helpful to our members and give incorrect advice and also the wrong pension forecast.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to support brigade officials in gaining a broader understanding of the fire services pension schemes in order to give better advice to our members, and design a course for brigade officials as part of the officials education pathway so that they understand the legislation and how each pension scheme works so that they assist our members in the future.

LANCASHIRE

OPERATIONS, HEALTH AND SAFETY

22. FIREGROUND WELFARE FACILITIES

Conference 2019 agreed the resolution brought by Greater Manchester which highlighted the issues of fireground welfare facilities for all. In 2022, firefighters across the country spent one of the hottest summers on record extinguishing wildfires. Much has been made of the need to hydrate and decontaminate, but Conference also needs to be talking about the need for mobile hygiene units and fireground toilets.

Significant numbers of firefighters will experience bladder issues at some point in their lives. Holding urine for extended durations may cause lifelong pelvic floor issues for firefighters. This can also lead to urinary tract infections, cystitis, bladder pain and kidney stones. Toilets are a necessity for anyone suffering from irritable bowel syndrome or any other bowel disease.

Firefighters are relying on the good nature of local businesses and residents, where firefighters are then taking contaminants into those homes and places of work. This is not professional, appropriate or safe.

Addressing the challenges related to toilet access is not only a matter of convenience but also a critical aspect of safeguarding the health and wellbeing of firefighters.

Conference calls on the Executive Council (EC) to work with the national women's committee to campaign for and negotiate a national minimum standard for welfare facilities. This must be in addition to the need for appropriate facilities for firefighters who experience periods and/or menopause.

Conference calls upon the EC to provide an update for this no later than Conference 2025.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

25. POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER SCREENING IN THE FIRE SERVICE

Conference notes that there are significant mental health challenges faced by firefighters, including the risk of exposure to traumatic events and the prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to;

- explore the establishment of PTSD screening programs within UK Fire and Rescue Services (UKFRSs)
- call upon the government to allocate dedicated funding for the development, implementation and maintenance of such programs
- call upon all UKFRSs to collaborate with mental health professionals that specialise in trauma, to help develop evidence based screening protocols that are tailored to the unique needs and experiences of firefighters.

Conference instructs the EC to report its findings to brigade secretaries to allow meaningful talks to begin at local levels.

LINCOLNSHIRE

27. WORK RELATED SUICIDES

Conference notes the increasing number of firefighters experiencing poor mental health related to workplace stress and the increased exposure to traumatic events which can be attributed in part to the huge reductions in firefighter numbers since 2010. Unfortunately, the consequences of this are that the prevalence of firefighters taking their own lives is becoming all too common.

Conference also notes that in the UK no data is collected on suicides that occur in the workplace, or that are identified as work-related. There is currently no regulation or oversight of work-related suicides. Suicide is excluded from the health and safety framework that applies to all other work-related deaths and there is no Health & Safety Executive (HSE) inspection of a workplace following a suicide by an employee.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to instigate research within the fire and rescue sector focusing specifically on work related suicide which will seek to change legislation and place a statutory duty on the HSE to investigate all work-related suicides.

GREATER MANCHESTER

32. HEALTH & SAFETY FORMS

Conference recognises the vital role that Fire Brigades Union (FBU) health & safety representatives undertake whilst carrying out their functions, which include inspecting workplaces, raising health and safety concerns with employers and investigating accidents. In doing so, they contribute to making our workplaces safer and healthier.

Conference notes recent campaigns have highlighted the dangers of carcinogenic fire effluents to our members and employers. Promoting the principles of DECON is a clear example of the hard work carried out by those representatives.

Conference calls on the FBU health & safety subcommittee to update the FBU health & safety inspection checklist form to include additional DECON references and best practice.

Conference also calls on the health & safety subcommittee to develop a wider range of forms and pro forma letters that FBU health & safety representatives can access easily. This will assist them in carrying out their functions and raising issues with employers in a professional and efficient manner.

Conference instructs that the health & safety subcommittee should consult with FBU health & safety representatives no later than September 2024 to ascertain what forms and pro forma letters would assist them in fulfilling the functions of a health & safety representative.

Conference also instructs that the health & safety subcommittee should set up a working group with regional health & safety representatives to produce the requested documents by Conference 2025 and that the documents produced, are made accessible via an online platform and developed so they can be completed electronically.

SHROPSHIRE AS AMENDED BY SCOTLAND

33. PTS(D)

Conference believes that there needs to be a change in all Fire Brigade Union (FBU) and UK Fire and Rescue Services (UKFRSs) literature that currently refers only to the diagnosable medical condition Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), to also include the new term Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS).

Conference agrees PTS would work alongside PTSD for those with undiagnosed, acute symptoms of PTS, and those who do not wish to be labelled with a disorder to allow our members and colleagues to have a choice and ownership of their mental health.

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to ensure PTS is included alongside Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in all future literature produced by the FBU.

Conference also instructs the EC to negotiate this issue at the National Joint Council (NJC) at the earliest opportunity with a view to urgently address the inclusion of PTS in all relevant literature. Progress of the NJC negotiations are to be reported through brigade secretary circulars.

WARWICKSHIRE AS AMENDED BY SCOTLAND

35. OPPOSING THE USE OF UNSUITABLE WATER RESCUE TRAINING VENUES

Conference notes that water rescue and flood response remains outside of all agreed rolemaps.

Conference also notes the damage to our rivers and waterways caused by privatisation of water utilities, and budget cuts to the Environment Agency and the Canal and River trust, is in little doubt. This has resulted in a continued degradation of our waterways and has even made many safe swimming areas completely unsuitable to enter.

Conference demands that the Executive Council instructs Fire Brigades Union brigade officials to vehemently challenge the suitability of water training venues used by fire and rescue services where poor water quality poses a risk to the health and safety of our members. Brigade and regional officials should collate and share sickness levels at facilities used to ensure unsuitable venues are challenged appropriately at brigade level.

LEICESTERSHIRE AS AMENDED BY HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

36. DRIVER TRAINING

Conference believes that adequate training must be provided in order for members to be safe whilst conducting their duties.

Conference is concerned by the level of training provided in many critical areas, including driving. Drivers of blue light vehicles are not only responsible for the safe transport of a crew to the scene of an incident, they also carry out many of the key roles on the fireground. Drivers have to pre-empt and react to other driver's often unpredictable manoeuvres and if anything goes wrong then it is their license on the line. Drivers must be trained to deal with all foreseeable eventualities and conditions, such as ice, snow and flood water.

Conference is aware that not only are drivers at risk but the Officer in Charge (OIC) is also vulnerable if issues arise. Some OICs have no driving experience or knowledge of a vehicle's capabilities and limitations yet they risk being subjected to formal disciplinary action if an error occurs. Drivers rely on a banksperson to safely reverse or to help manoeuvre a vehicle through narrow gaps, yet often there is no formal practical training provided. This puts all members of the crew at risk, plus the safety of the public and anyone in the vicinity.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to form a task and finish group that will examine driver training to formulate guidance for brigade officials concerning the levels of training required for drivers. Factors including, but not limited to, duration of courses, frequency of refresher courses, types of terrain and conditions, plus training for OICs and bankspersons should also be analysed and reported on. This guidance should be shared with all brigade officials by the end of January 2025.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE POLICY

37. RESIST MULTI-TIER ENTRY

Conference notes resolution 39/2022, opposing the National Fire Chiefs Council Direct Entry scheme.

Conference is concerned that new entrants are joining our service at senior levels on the understanding that they will reach a competent level in three years. It has been reported that a number of these new recruits have never reached a competent standard and either retire or move on before the competency deadline is reached. Multi-tier entry increases cost, reduces opportunities, and is open to abuse, it is an insult to our members.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to campaign to resist multi-tier entry.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT POLICY AND LEGISLATION

38. FIREWORKS LEGISLATION

Conference is appalled by the rise in attacks on firefighters and other emergency service workers during the pursuance of their duties, with home office statistics showing that around 20 percent of all attacks on firefighters take place around the periods before and after November 5th.

Firefighters and other emergency service workers are routinely subjected to attacks with projectiles and fireworks.

Conference believes it is now essential that legislation governing the sale of fireworks is amended to prevent explosive devices coming into the hands of members of the public.

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to lobby the government to enact legislation to ensure that fireworks are sold only to licensed organisations for display purposes and not to the general public.

Conference demands an update on the work carried out by the EC on this matter by November 2024.

MERSEYSIDE

39. PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL FEES

Conference is appalled by this government's proposal to reintroduce Employment Tribunal (ET) fees after the previous fees were defeated in the Supreme Court six and a half years ago for being unlawful.

Conference notes the government is proposing just one option, a one-off fee of £55 to be paid when lodging a single or multiple claim in the ET and £55 for an appeal in the employment appeal tribunal. With workers having to make tough choices in this cost-of-living crisis, it will undoubtedly have an adverse impact.

Conference demands the Executive Council commits to opposing this proposal, working together with the Trade Union Congress, using any legal and political means necessary.

WEST MIDLANDS

40. RESCUE BOAT CODE FOR THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Conference notes that in 2021 the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) implemented the Rescue Boat Code for Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs), stating the reasons for its creation as "... the existing need for boat coding and the finding of the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) fatal accident investigation report 17/2020". Contained within Part 4 of the document is a section relating to minimum staffing levels, which is being used by fire and rescue services to force cuts to crewing levels and lower training requirements for staff. The result of this is a reduction in operational availability as well as reduced safety for members, partner agencies and members of the public.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to investigate, through the appropriate channels, the now commonplace diminishment of safety standards in and around watercraft operations, and should it deem it necessary, demand that the boat code document is rewritten in a way which increases safe working practices rather than lowering them, then report back to members with an update, in a timely manner, no later than Conference 2025.

DURHAM

41. INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO POLICE FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

Conference notes the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) position on the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) governance model, in which the union opposes Police and Crime Commissioner's taking over fire and rescue services.

Conference notes that during 2023 and 2024 a spotlight was put on the PFCC governance model owing to the failings of the Northamptonshire PFCC, failings which were reported by national media outlets.

Conference believes firefighters and fire and rescue services control expect to work with democratic, accountable and honest governance of their fire and rescue services.

Conference demands the Executive Council make the case with the new government after the expected general election in 2024 for an urgent independent public inquiry in to the PFCC governance model, ensuring the inquiry is;

- fully independent of government
- accountable
- fully engaged with the FBU
- has the authority to make recommendations it deems necessary.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

42. MEDICAL AND OCCUPATIONAL EVIDENCE FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION REGULAR UPDATES

Conference notes that in 2004, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published a document titled 'Medical and Occupational Evidence for Recruitment and Retention', primarily as a resource guide for use by medical advisers and occupational health staff within fire and rescue services.

Conference also notes that with the passage of time, some of the evidence within the original document has been superseded and republished in 2011. The current version is some 13 years out of date, with some services still referring to the 2004 document.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to explore all options to ensure that this document is regularly updated.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

TRADE UNION AND LABOUR MOVEMENT

43. IMMEDIATE CEASE FIRE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Conference is horrified by recent events in Israel and Palestine, by the escalating violence and by the appalling loss of civilian life.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to immediately lobby all political parties to push for an immediate and unequivocal cease fire.

MERSEYSIDE

44. STRIKES (MINIMUM SERVICE LEVELS) ACT 2023

Conference believes that the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 is frankly ridiculous and an all out attack on our union and class. The potential that some brigades may find themselves in, is the absurd position of finding a greater number of workers in work during industrial action than is normally available to them on a day-to-day basis, which shows this act for the preposterous piece of legislation it is.

Conference notes that UN Special Rapporteur, Maina Kiai said; “The right to strike is a fundamental one enshrined in international human rights and labour Law and its protection is necessary in ensuring just, stable and democratic societies.”

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to prioritise a national campaign against this draconian legislation amongst the membership of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). This campaign will involve the FBU membership at every level, including education resources to ensure every member understands the legislation, with the aim to build resistance to the Act.

Conference instructs the General Secretary through the Trade Union Congress (TUC) to bring together the 48 member unions of the TUC to join the FBU in a coordinated act of non-compliance towards this oppressive legislation.

Conference also demands that the EC ensure that any Labour government holds true to its promise of repealing this act.

Conference is clear, the FBU will not comply with the Minimum Service Levels Act.

WARWICKSHIRE AS AMENDED BY MERSEYSIDE

45. REMOVAL OF SUPPORT FROM PROSPECTIVE PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE WHO HAVE NOT SUPPORTED THE CALL FOR A CEASEFIRE IN GAZA

Conference instructs the Executive Council to withdraw support from any prospective parliamentary candidate who has not supported the call for a ceasefire in Gaza.

DEVON AND SOMERSET

46. PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATES & ANAESTHESIA ASSOCIATES

Conference is concerned with the use of Physician Associates and Anaesthesia Associates (PAs and AAs) within the National Health Service.

PAs and AAs are not always qualified doctors or anaesthetists and yet may have made decisions that have affected the health of patients.

Conference calls on the Executive Council (EC) to use its influence within the political movement to oppose this dangerous practice.

Conference also instructs the EC to encourage all Fire Brigades Union members to oppose the use of PAs and AAs through the use of lobbies, letters to Members of Parliament, petitions and any further action that may be appropriate.

LANCASHIRE

EDUCATION

48. NEURO-INCLUSIVE TEXT BASED COMMUNICATIONS

Conference notes the positive steps that have been made regarding the education and implementation of neuro-divergence inclusivity within the union.

Conference also notes, however, that there is still progress that can and must be made.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to make the necessary changes to all text based communications so that they are neuro-inclusive, allowing those who are neuro-divergent to be able to understand and interpret text based information. Where possible, text based communications should be jargon free or written in the simplest terms to increase comprehension and the ability to adapt and change font size and colour should be included on all electronic text documents.

Conference instructs that this work should be undertaken and implemented as a priority through consultation with the education department and should be completed as soon as possible, but no later than within six months starting from the close of Conference 2024.

TYNE AND WEAR

49. ACTIVISM FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Conference recognises the distinct lack of political representation of the working class. It has therefore never been more urgent for trade unions to engage, inspire and mobilise.

Conference accepts that although the strike waves of the past two years has arguably made up positive ground, there has been a multi-generational trend of trade union membership decline. This is in no small part due to an array of anti-trade union legislation, implemented by a succession of restrictive governments. With this in mind, it is unsurprising that this, amongst other factors, is symptomatic of a mass consensus of political disengagement and apathy within the wider working class, and therefore the trade union movement within it. This lack of engagement amongst members is of immediate concern to the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

Conference instructs the Executive Council to conduct a research study into how this has impacted the FBU membership and how it could be rectified. The production of a pragmatic plan to combat this by improving engagement levels within the membership, is to be completed and delivered to Conference 2025.

CUMBRIA

50. LIFELONG LEARNING

Conference notes the removal of government funding to the union learning fund, which resulted in the closure of lifelong learning centres and courses.

Conference notes the purpose of the union learning fund was to assist trade unions in the creation of a learning society, developing the capacity of trade unions and union learning representatives to work with employers, employees and learning providers to encourage greater uptake of learning in the workplace. Unionlearn was established by the Trade Union Congress (TUC) who administered the union learning fund. They estimate that for every £1 invested into the union learning fund, it generated an economic return of £12.30 – made up of £7.60 to the individual and £4.70 to the employer. Clearly this was money well spent.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to demand that should Labour form a government they should re-establish the union learning fund. This would provide a benefit to Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members and allow the FBU to restart its lifelong learning program. The importance of trade union education cannot be overemphasised.

STAFFORDSHIRE

51. GREEN BOOK EDUCATION FOR REPRESENTATIVES

Conference notes the excellent education program that the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) provides for officials and members.

Conference believes education specifically related to green book terms and conditions should be provided following higher numbers of green book staff within our services joining the FBU.

Conference recognises this education will not only benefit our officials and representatives in their roles, but also our green book members, having the assurance of receiving the best quality representation.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to explore the options of providing a standalone course in understanding the green book and report back no later than Conference 2025.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS AT WORK

53. THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF WORD CLOUDS IN STAFF SURVEYS AND CULTURAL REPORTS

Conference is against using word clouds to represent members' experiences in staff surveys and cultural reports. Word clouds oversimplify language use and fail to capture the complexities and nuances of experiences and perspectives, particularly in underrepresented groups. Additionally, low numbers of participants from a given group can compromise the confidentiality of responses, leading to a distorted view of the issues and challenges faced.

Conference demands that the Executive council produce a best practice guidance document to identify alternative approaches that account for contextual and cultural factors, and researching alternative data representation methods that better capture the experiences and perspectives of all members. The best practice guidance is to be shared with brigade officials and equality sections, to enable a challenge within brigade equality and diversity forums.

LEICESTERSHIRE

54. ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP FOR COMMISSIONING NEW RESEARCH ON FIRE FITNESS BEST PRACTICES

Conference notes UK Fire and Rescue Services (UKFRSs) utilised a fitness research document, 'Fire Fitness Best Practice Guide', from the Home Office published by Stevenson, R (ed 2016). The data of this research document informed that only 50 males and 12 females were invited as participants. This report doesn't indicate the diversity within this pool of people, as 62 people is insufficient for a true reflection or representation of the Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs).

Conference instructs the Executive Council that a working group be established to identify appropriate parameters and consider commissioning new research on fire fitness best practices for FRSs. The working group should include representation of all sections and ensure adequate representation of members concerning gender, gender identity, gender reassignment, and black and ethnic minorities. The group should also ensure that the new research has a diverse pool of participants that reflects and represents FRSs.

LGBT+

55. HOLDING A FULL DRIVING LICENSE RECRUITMENT REQUIREMENT

Conference believes both the LGBT+ and Black and Ethnic Minority communities tend to reside predominantly in inner city areas. Inner cities have better public transport networks and are often subject to additional charges for use of a private motor vehicle. This means that people who live in inner cities are less likely to own a motor vehicle or hold a driver's license.

Conference notes that some UK fire and rescue services require applicants to hold a full driving license and this could indirectly discriminate against members of communities with protected characteristics which creates a further barrier to recruiting employees who reflect the community they serve.

Conference believes that if driving is an occupational requirement, then it should be for the employer to provide the necessary training and to cover such cost.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to raise the matter through the National Joint Council with a view to removing the requirement at recruitment to hold a full driving license and to place the responsibility for cost and training, to acquire a license, on the employer.

LGBT+

ORGANISING AND MEMBERSHIP

57. CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP AFTER RETIREMENT

Conference believes that it is more important than ever that members remain in the union after they retire.

Conference notes that Retired and Out of Trade (ROOT) membership currently requires a member to fill in an application form and send it to head office during a time of massive change in their lives and is often overlooked. It would be simpler if membership automatically continued after retirement and all that changed would be the type of membership and contribution rates, until such times that a member decides to leave.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to commission a report into the possibility of making ROOT membership automatic, including any necessary rule changes to be brought to conference next year.

DEVON AND SOMERSET

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION

60. CHILDCARE SUBSISTENCE

Conference notes that childcare is one of the main barriers for women to be involved in the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). Officials with children are often faced with financial shortfalls when undertaking union duties. Many parents do not have registered childcare in the early years, nor do they have childcare providers that provide cover outside of their usual hours or on an ad-hoc basis. Women often rely on the goodwill of family and friends to assist with childcare and it is our officials that are left paying for any additional costs incurred as a result of this.

Conference notes that Unison have a section in their childcare policy to include the provision of childcare that is provided by a family member or friend (not including a parent) providing a one off subsistence amount at a day or night rate.

Conference believes committees of the union should seek to be more representative of women and to overcome the childcare obstacle which often prevents the full involvement of women members.

Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council (EC) to explore options for providing fit for purpose subsistence to support the type of childcare needed so that parents and guardians can attend FBU business and education. It is apparent we need to move with the times and update our childcare policy.

Conference calls on the EC for an update to be reported back, no later than Conference 2025.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE AS AMENDED BY SCOTLAND

61. STRIKE FUND

Conference is all too aware of the numerous cases of industrial action taken by sister unions and while some fights go on, successful action which was supported by their unions' general strike fund, has resulted in victories.

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to commence the preparatory work to create a Fire Brigades Union (FBU) strike fund, with consideration given for it to be funded through a voluntary increase in monthly contributions to support FBU members engaged in strike action. The preparatory work should include;

- a survey of all members to gauge support for a strike fund
- the establishment of a working group to assess the feasibility of a strike fund and to agree the parameters of any such scheme.

Conference instructs the EC to report back to members on this work no later than six months from the close of Conference 2024.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE AS AMENDED BY SCOTLAND

62. NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL CIRCULAR ELECTRONIC LIBRARY

Conference notes the difficulty in locating National Joint Council (NJC) circulars especially historical ones, which are usually titled 'Circular NJC/1/16' where 1 denotes that it is the first circular of that year, and the year is denoted by 16. Circular NJC/1/16 is simply the first NJC circular in 2016. This naming convention can make it difficult to locate specific circulars, which in turn can make it difficult for officials to remind fire service management of the contents of those circulars.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to investigate and implement an electronic library of NJC circulars. This library should have topics or key words. For example, pay, leave, fitness etc. This will enable circulars relating to that topic to be easily located. This library should then be accessible to all Fire Brigades Union officials. This will enable brigade officials to conduct business with brigade management easily armed with any NJC circulars.

STAFFORDSHIRE

63. SERIOUS ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION ELECTRONIC LIBRARY

Conference notes the outstanding work carried out by health and safety representatives across the union representing members in all health and safety matters whilst also conducting investigations into accidents at work and where warranted, Serious Accident Investigations (SAIs).

Conference notes the outcomes and recommendations of SAIs are vitally important to the work our officials do, these reports can not only help us to learn lessons but can have an impact on the health and safety of our members nationally. All officials should have easy access to all accident investigation reports.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to investigate and implement an electronic library, where all SAI reports can be accessed by brigade officials.

Conference also demands that upon completion all SAIs should be electronically emailed to all brigade officials, this will enable officials to keep track of any recommendations and ensure services implement those recommendations where necessary.

STAFFORDSHIRE

MOTIONS REMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

PAY AND CONDITIONS

3. RETAINING FEE

Conference recognises the level of commitment that is given by firefighters working the Retained Duty System (RDS).

Conference also notes that the retaining fee, which is set at 10% of a wholetime firefighter's wage, does not adequately compensate RDS firefighters for the time and commitment they provide.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate through the National Joint Council a substantial rise in the retaining fee, by increasing the percentage of a wholetime firefighter's wage on which it is currently calculated.

NORTHERN IRELAND

4. UNSOCIAL HOURS PAYMENT

Conference recognises the commitment of Fire Brigades Union members whose work is undertaken outside normal working hours, namely nights and weekends.

Conference also recognises that a disparity exists between UK Fire and Rescue Services' employees and other emergency services' workers, who also work unsocial hours. Many of these workers receive a payment for working unsocial hours in addition to normal pay.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate through the National Joint Council unsocial hours' payments in order that those working unsocial hours are remunerated appropriately.

NORTHERN IRELAND

11. ROLEMAPS AND CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

Conference is concerned that despite the current rolemaps having existed for almost 20 years there is still a level of uncertainty and debate surrounding them. All members should have a very clear idea of what is contractually required of them regarding the rolemaps.

Conference is aware that the duties of Fire Brigades Union members have been looked at in great detail yet there is no clarity given as to what duties are considered voluntary or non-contractual.

Conference recognizes that FF9 of the firefighter rolemap covers driving, manoeuvring and re-deploying fire service vehicles.

Conference is aware that in order to be deemed competent in role there is no contractual obligation to complete FF9.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council enter into discussions at the National Joint Council regarding rolemaps as part of the ongoing working groups to clearly define the contractual obligations. A result of these discussions will be to provide clarity to all members regarding the rolemaps. This document will be an invaluable resource and help determine what duties are simply voluntary and can therefore be refused, and what duties must be carried out.

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

AMENDMENT

Delete paragraphs three and four.

MERSEYSIDE

PENSIONS

14. CLARITY FOR FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME 2006 (FPS 2006) SCHEME MEMBERS

Conference applauds the hard work already undertaken with regard to injury to feelings claims for our members. Members of the FPS 2006 scheme however, are unsure of their ability to claim.

Conference calls for the Executive Council (EC) to clarify and communicate the legal status of FPS 2006 scheme members with regards to potential injury to feelings claims.

Conference also calls for clear guidance on identifying potential FPS 2006 scheme member claimants and actions required by those members.

Conference instructs the EC to carry out this work as soon as possible but no later than 3 months from the close of Conference 2024.

TYNE AND WEAR

16. PENSION AGGREGATION

Conference commends the achievements of the Executive Council (EC) for what has been achieved with regard to firefighters' pensions.

On the 9th of March 2020 the EC agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in relation to a legal judgement (O'Brien vs Ministry of Justice) that positively affected fire service pension rights for those on the Retained Duty System (RDS). This agreement set out terms for those affected to claim additional pension benefit further to the Fire Brigades Union's (FBU) successful case of Matthews vs Kent Medway Fire Authority.

An unresolved issue was identified within the MOU relating to the aggregation of pensionable service as an RDS firefighter with periods of service as a Wholetime (WT) firefighter. A commitment was therefore included to resolve this within an additional six months from the date of MOU signing (09/09/2022).

Conference is clear that resolving the issue of aggregation is imperative to ensure members are placed in the position that they would have been entitled to as a result of the legal judgement.

To date, no agreement has been reached and no formal response on the issue has been received from the Local Government Association (LGA) beyond a holding statement. After consultation in September 2023 legislation was passed in October 2023 without resolution to the aggregation issue.

Conference recognises the effort and commitment to resolving the issue by the EC and our legal team including the lodging of employment tribunals, however progress seems to be minimal and with no anticipated timeframe to remedy the issue.

Conference notes, RDS members who transferred into a WT role post 2006 may receive an arguably superior pension accrual rate and are not only able to aggregate time served but also take their benefits at 55, whereas those who transferred prior to this date are forced to defer taking any pension until age 60, despite both groups potentially having continuous service.

Conference also notes that in addition, when the RDS modified scheme was introduced, it was not expected that any individual could accrue more than 15 years' service on the scheme owing to the governments planned changes to the public service pension schemes. The age discrimination challenge has materially changed that, any member who has transferred from the RDS service to the WT service has the potential to accrue both RDS and WT pensionable benefits simultaneously. The ability to aggregate this service under one common set of pension terms to maximise the members pension benefits irrespective of which WT pension scheme (1992, 2006 or 2015), should be afforded to ensure no less favourable treatment to the member.

Conference is concerned that whilst the number of affected members may be less than those for other pension issues, there are a considerable number nationally that stand to be financially disadvantaged by any failure to resolve the aggregation issue and other identified points, including;

- consequential loss
- aggregation of RDS and WT pension service
- those that transferred from RDS to WT prior to 2000 and therefore deemed out of scope under present terms
- relatives claim of a deceased claimant.

Conference instructs the EC to seek to expedite a remedy to the issues and obtain legislation change for any, or all aspects of agreement concerning the four points above with the LGA as a priority.

Conference also instructs that on the points where no such agreement can be made, that legal action via the employment tribunal process are submitted for hearings without further delay.

SUFFOLK

OPERATIONS, HEALTH AND SAFETY

21. ROUTINE MENTAL HEALTH CHECKS

Conference notes that there has been a huge rise in mental health conditions over the last few years. A number of institutions including the World Health Organisation, UK Parliament, Royal College of Psychiatry, the charity MIND and the National Health Service have reported its increased prevalence. Other reports have indicated that the cost of living crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated these. Our members are not immune.

The Fire Brigades Union's (FBU) own guidance acknowledges that mental health conditions disproportionately affect women. The FBU mental health training package notes the following statistics;

- women are twice as likely to experience anxiety disorders than men
- 60% of the people with phobias or obsessive compulsive disorder are women
- the risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder after any traumatic event is 20% for women and 8% for men
- one in four women will require treatment for depression, compared with one in ten men.

This is obviously not just a women's issue. Studies show that Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans plus (LGBT+) and Black & Ethnic Minority Members (B&EMM) are also disproportionately affected by mental health conditions and suicide is now the biggest killer of men under 40. We cannot forget that officers and firefighter control members experience stress in ways that are directly and specifically associated with their role.

Women's reps are often faced with harrowing cases with members that have been through a variety of traumatic incidents such as sexual violence, grooming, stalking and sexual harassment. With confidentiality, non-disclosure agreements and the general sensitivity of these types of cases reps are often unable to offload on anyone. This secondary stress can have a detrimental effect on women's reps and can often trigger emotion from their own lives.

The Grey Book agreements highlight the express contractual right for routine periodic physical medicals, however, health and safety legislation means that 'well-being' is a legal statutory duty of our employers.

Conference believes that fire and rescue services should be treating the mental health of our members with the same importance as their physical health.

Conference calls for the Executive Council to demand that fire and rescue services install, as a minimum, a session with a trained counsellor as often as members have a physical health check.

Conference calls for an update to be reported back no later than Conference 2025.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

24. MANDATORY CANCER SCREENING

Conference notes that there is still no mandatory cancer screening within UK Fire and Rescue Services.

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to negotiate through the National Joint Council, mandatory regular cancer screening, for all firefighters regardless of their age.

Conference also instructs the EC to negotiate that any agreed cancer screening must take place at intervals of not more than 12 months, and at more frequent intervals for firefighters identified as being at greater risk due to their role.

NORTHERN IRELAND

AMENDMENT

Insert “serving and retired” before “firefighters” in the 2nd paragraph.

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

28. INVESTIGATE FUNDING FOR A ROLE SPECIFIC STUDY FOR BREATHING APPARATUS INSTRUCTORS AND THOSE DELIVERING TRAINING IN HOT ENVIRONMENTS

Conference applauds the work done by Professor Anna Stec and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). The data collected from the study participants will undoubtedly shape improved protection measures for firefighters from the carcinogenic effects of fire effluents. Findings will also undoubtedly affect the working practices of UK Fire and Rescue Services.

Conference believes that Breathing Apparatus Instructors (BAIs), and others providing training and assessments in hot environments, are at the heart of training departments and potentially put themselves at greater risk from the effects of fire effluents, which may require additional protective measures and health monitoring than for firefighters exposed during the normal course of their role.

Conference calls on the Executive Council (EC) to investigate the potential for funding a role specific study for any fire service employee that carries out a BAI role or regularly delivers training and assessments in hot environments currently, and those that have previously carried out these roles during the course of their employment.

Conference instructs the EC to produce the result of the funding investigation within six months from the date of Conference 2024.

WEST MIDLANDS

31. MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS FOR FIREFIGHTERS

Conference agrees that fire and rescue services have a duty of care to protect the health, safety and welfare of our members at work.

Conference recognises that our members can be subject to psychologically distressing situations when carrying out the functions of their role, contributing to negative impacts on their mental health.

Conference believes mental and physical health should be viewed equally. Mandatory workplace mental health assessments carried out by a qualified, registered mental health professional must be adopted into practice, alongside regular physical and medical assessments.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to begin negotiations through the National Joint Council with the intention of ensuring that employers establish regular, mandatory workplace mental health assessments.

SCOTLAND

34. NO TO LONE WORKING AT NIGHT

Conference demands that brigade officials should not permit lone working at night in unstaffed fire stations and should take necessary measures to ensure the safety of firefighters.

Conference notes with concern the increasing number of reported thefts of fire service equipment, such as road traffic collision cutting and spreading equipment, from unstaffed fire stations. The practice by fire and rescue service managers placing whole-time firefighters at otherwise unstaffed fire stations is putting our members in a vulnerable position. They are at risk of incidents occurring as they lack the protection of intruder alarms, the backup of others and no assistance in the event of a medical emergency. These fire stations are often not designed or equipped for extended rest periods and pose additional risks to staff members placed at such premises.

Conference instructs the Executive Council (EC) to commission a survey to identify how many brigades currently operate this policy. The EC is to explore all options available to challenge this policy. A report on the finding should be shared with brigade officials to enable a robust challenge of this dangerous practice.

LEICESTERSHIRE

AMENDMENT

2nd paragraph, 3rd line, after “managers placing” **delete** “whole-time”

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

EDUCATION

47. MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION PACKS

Conference notes the lack of appropriate mental health resources and support available within the structures of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) for representatives and officials of all levels.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council, to better support all representatives and officials in their roles, to produce a FBU mental health information pack to be made available to all representatives and officials by Conference 2025.

CLEVELAND

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS AT WORK

52. CULTURAL CHANGE

Conference welcomes the opportunities presented by the Independent Cultural Reviews in South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and London Fire Brigade for real and lasting change.

Conference commends Fenella Morris KC and Nazir Afzal OBE, and their teams, for their work, their impartiality, and the thoroughness with which they undertook these significant tasks.

Conference believes that these independent reviews offer an opportunity; an opportunity to change, to grow and to lead.

Conference must grasp this opportunity with both hands and must do this so that the brave and hardworking employees of the Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs), throughout the UK, can work in an environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination, an environment which will allow them to reach their full potential.

Conference demands that this must be a turning point.

Conference calls for central and devolved governments to conduct independent reviews into culture across all FRSs in the UK and gives an unwavering commitment that the Fire Brigades Union will play an active role in achieving meaningful cultural change.

SOUTH WALES

AMENDMENT

2nd paragraph after “Conference” **delete** “commends” **insert** “recognises the work undertaken by”

MERSEYSIDE

ORGANISING AND MEMBERSHIP

56. RETIRED OUT OF TRADE MEMBERSHIP NETWORK

Conference notes the value of the experience and expertise of Retired out of Trade (ROOT) members (especially ex representatives and officials) of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

Conference believes that this is a relatively untapped resource that current representatives and officials could utilise to the betterment of the FBU.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to support and encourage, via a social media campaign, brigade committees across the United Kingdom to engage ROOT members to establish a network of ROOT members to assist with the business of brigade committees.

CLEVELAND

58. RETIRED AND OUT OF TRADE (ROOT) MEMBER BADGES

Conference recognises the incredible contribution Retired and Out of Trade (ROOT) members make to the Fire Brigades Union.

Conference believes that this contribution should be recognised by allowing ROOT members to accrue years towards the milestone badges and certificates, so that 25 year and 40 year badges will then be presented to ROOT members when they reach these prestigious milestones.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to allow years obtained as a ROOT member to count towards these milestone badges.

BEDFORDSHIRE

AMENDMENT

Insert “and certificates” after “40 year badges” in the 2nd paragraph.

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

59. RETIRED AND OUT OF TRADE (ROOT) MEMBER'S INFORMATION STUDY

Conference recognises and applauds the large amount of research that has been carried out in the DECON project. This work has highlighted to our members the contaminants that firefighters regularly encounter through their daily work which cause cancer.

The Fire Brigades Union currently stay in contact with Retired and Out of Trade (ROOT) members through Firefighter Magazine and other avenues. These members could provide real time evidence of medical conditions that retired firefighters are being diagnosed with. This data could be used to identify trends and provide evidence for presumptive legislation.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to contact ROOT members and create a database to identify any trends of medical conditions that retired firefighters are being diagnosed with and use this data to inform the campaign for presumptive legislation.

BEDFORDSHIRE

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION

64. TAX RELIEF

Conference instructs the Executive Council to engage with His Majesty's Revenue and Customs and apply to be included on the list of professional bodies and learned societies approved for tax relief.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

EMERGENCY MOTIONS CARRIED

E4. A CULTURE OF INCLUSION BUILT UPON PARTNERSHIPS WHO EXCLUDE

Conference is concerned that Fire & Rescue Services (FRSs) are receiving responses to tender for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) contracts from organisations with links to Plymouth Brethren Christian Church (PBCC).

On the 24th April 2024, London Region raised concerns that a company with links to this organisation was being used to trial PPE before being considered to award a contract.

Equality and inclusion should be the corner stone of any organisation wishing to make profit from our FRSs and this organisation does not share the principles of our FRSs. It also seeks to use their relationship with various FRS to promote their own agenda.

Conference is shocked that these organisations are further being invited to tender through various other FRSs and indeed the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC).

Conference notes that in 2022 a resolution "Fire Service Provision for Fire Ground Feeding" was passed and called for the Executive Council to raise this matter with the National Joint Council.

Conference calls on all Brigade Officials to raise this matter with their FRSs to end procurement practices with companies who do not share our values and demand full and inclusive Equality Impact Assessments completed with the support of an Equality Section. This should be raised within 6 months of conference 2024.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise this through the National Joint Council and remind each FRS of their obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty and their duty to uphold their own FRSs core code of ethics and values and report back via a circular within 6 months of conference 2024.

LGBT+

E5. MINE SAFETY APPLIANCES (MSA) WORKING GROUP PROJECT TEAM

Conference following the tendering and procurement process for breathing apparatus sets and equipment, several fire rescue services (FRS) signed up to MSA around the same time several years ago including the London Fire Brigade (LFB). Since then, other FRS's have also signed up to MSA.

When equipment and safety events started escalating on an alarming scale in training, the Fire Brigades Union became involved. It was discovered that there was a national user group set up between MSA and several FRS's. Those who attended on behalf of the FRS's describing themselves as VIPs, these VIPs were selected members from each FRS and met regularly with MSA. It has become apparent that this group was potentially not acting in the interests of firefighter safety on the most risk critical equipment firefighters use.

Conference notes that members of the London Region Health and Safety Committee met with the LFB Respiratory Protected Equipment (RPE) project board chair on the 2nd May 2024 to outline serious concerns in regard to safety issues and concerns regarding the MSA national user group.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to demand a full independent enquiry into the actions and conduct of the national MSA user group and the VIP's involvement, to be carried out by the relevant authority and to report back to all members with progress no more than 4 weeks following conference 2024.

LONDON

ALTERATIONS TO THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION RULE BOOK

Rule B2 (1) (ii)	Executive Council	Carried
Rule B2 (1) (v)	Executive Council	Carried
Rule C1 (3)	Executive Council	Carried
Rule H2 (8)	Executive Council	Carried

ALTERATIONS TO CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS

Standing Order 7	London as amended by Scotland	Carried
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FINAL APPEALS COMMITTEE

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	John McKenzie
Region 2	Chris Blayney
Region 3	Brian Harris
Region 4	Gavin Marshall
Region 5	Andrew Fox-Hewitt
Region 6	Mark Stilwell
Region 7	Sasha Hitchins
Region 8	Duncan Stewart-Ball
Region 9	Rebecca Lewington
Region 10	Jon Lambe
Region 11	Ed Fox
Region 12	Mark Chapman
Region 13	Dave Roberts
BEMM	Amit Malde
LGBT	Maria Buck
NWC	Robyn Richardson
CSNC	Caroline Saunderson
NRC	Paul Revill
ONC	Peter Trayner

ELECTION OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

ELECTED

Ian Hibbert

4 years



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