

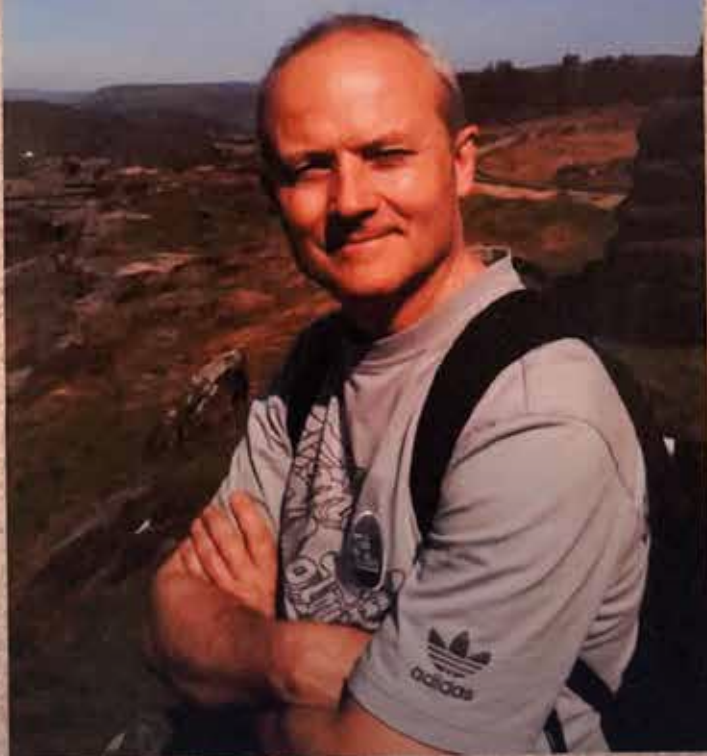
Firefighter

The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union

TURNING POINT

The story of a firefighter's widow fighting for justice

See p8



PULL-OUT
FBU POSTER
INSIDE

MAXED OUT? DEBUNKING
ARGUMENTS FOR AUSTERITY
See p12

THE SHIFT WE'LL
NEVER FORGET
See p18

December 2025-January 2026



www.fbu.org.uk

While the rest of the country tucks into their Christmas meal, or heads out for New Year's Eve, many FBU members will be keeping the public safe. Whether you're reading this in your living room, or in the mess on your station or control room, you have a right to be proud of the work you do.

This year has been eventful. It was also my first as general secretary. Whether it's on cuts, shift patterns, health and safety, equalities, or the day-to-day casework, the FBU has been there, in every corner of the country.

On a national level, we are facing a fight over funding, as we push this government to deliver on its promise of change. That battle will continue in 2026, and its outcome will shape the future of our service for years to come.

This year also saw the loss of two of our members, Martyn Sadler and Jennie Logan, in the line of duty at a fire



Steve Wright

An eventful year

Wherever you are and whatever you're doing, I wish you all the best for this festive season, and for the year ahead

in Bicester in July. Our thoughts are once again with their friends and families, and with the loved ones of all those who have lost someone, at this time of year.

Wherever you are and whatever you're doing, I wish you all the best for this festive season, and for the year ahead.

ROUTE TO JUSTICE

On pages 8 and 9, we give space to Anne Davies's fight for justice for her husband,

who died of cancer after many years as a firefighter. Her case is special because, in a rare move, a coroner ruled that his death was occupational. This could be significant for our wider DECON campaign, especially if Anne is successful in winning compensation. Read the piece to find out if you could help.

TOGETHER ALLIANCE

I'm proud that the FBU has been part of launching Together – a new coalition dedicated to bringing a message of hope over fear. We will replace the politics of division with working class unity. Join us in London on 28th March for a national demonstration, and read Sounding Off on page 5 to find out more. As Station Cat reports on page 23, Reform's record running the fire service is woeful.

CUTS

Across the UK, firefighters are waging a battle against austerity, and it is high time that the government listened. As the climate crisis takes hold and cuts deepen, firefighters are being asked to do more with less. In this edition, we report on campaigns underway in Oxfordshire, London, Avon and Scotland – and that is just the tip of the iceberg. There is no reason why we can't have well funded public services and decent pay – read Gregor Gall's analysis on pages 12 and 13.

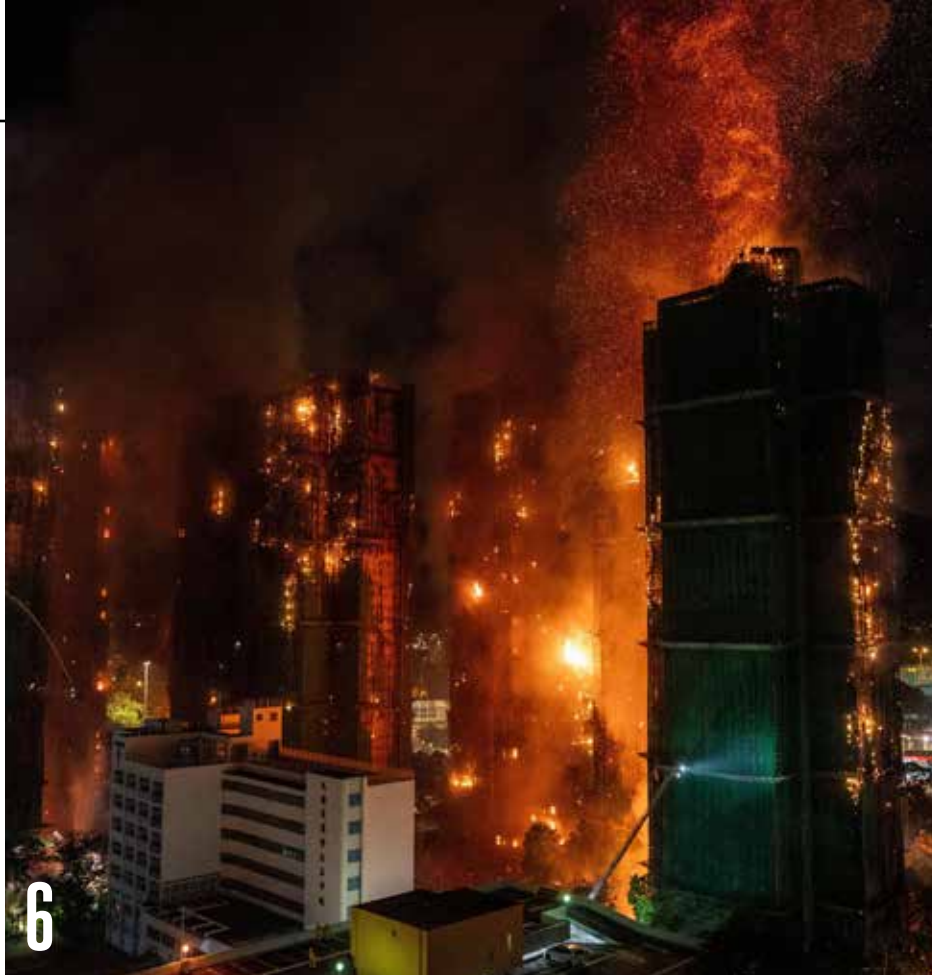
PFCCs NO MORE

Fire service governance isn't the most exciting headline, but on pages 10 and 11, you can read about a significant change – the abolition of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner model – and why it is a step in the right direction.

Happy New Year.



Rallying against the county council's proposed cuts in Oxfordshire. See page 5



In this issue

December 2025/January 2026

NEWS

- 4 FBU to fight for funding in wake of Budget
- 5 Oxfordshire and London cuts, Sounding Off
- 6 Storm Claudia flooding, Hong Kong fire
- 7 On the frontline of the climate crisis

FEATURES

8 Anne's story: The route to justice

Anne Davies on her fight for compensation and safety in memory of her firefighter husband

10 Who's in charge?

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners scrapped

12 Maxed out?

Prof Gregor Gall debunks the economic arguments for holding down public sector pay

14 Cuts Kill – pull-out poster

16 For peace and workers' rights

Mark Rowe reports on a delegation to Colombia

18 The shift we'll never forget

Life-saving teamwork in Cleveland

REGULARS

20 Equalities Hurricane solidarity

21 Meet the rep Adam McKenzie

21 What's new? Artificial intelligence

22 Noticeboard and President's Dispatch

23 Station Cat Kent's Reform mess

24 Long service badges

Firefighter

Published by the Fire Brigades Union, Ken Cameron House, 171-173 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8UE

www.fbu.org.uk

Production team: Michael Chessum, Alice Dann, Alanna Gow, Lisa Irving, Gabriella Matkin and Tom Walker

Cover image:
Alanna Gow

Print: Walstead
Roche, Victoria
Business Park,
Saint Austell
PL26 8LX

Firefighter is mailed in a 100% compostable wrapper. Please do not recycle the wrapper but dispose of it in your home compost heap, your garden waste or food waste bin.



PEFC/16-33-582

PEFC Certified

This magazine is printed on paper from sustainably managed forests

www.pefc.co.uk

NEWS

HONG KONG

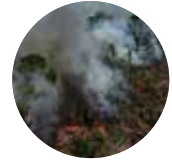
Safety questions
after high-rise fires



P6

WILDFIRES

Environmental groups
back firefighters



P7

BUDGET



Tax justice campaigners called for Rachel Reeves to tax wealth ahead of the Budget

ALAMY

FBU to fight for funding in wake of Budget

The Budget, Labour's second since it came to power last year, was presented by Rachel Reeves on 28 November. While noting some positives, the FBU reacted with disappointment overall.

Some measures were welcomed by unions. These included the lifting of the two-child cap on benefits, which should lift 450,000 children out of poverty by the end of the parliament, and the raising of the minimum wage by 4.1%, to £12.71.

The budget raised a substantial amount from taxes, primarily by freezing income tax and national insurance thresholds, and

reducing the amount workers can put into their pensions as a salary sacrifice. These are both de-facto tax rises on those in work.

However, it did not introduce a wealth tax, and did not aim to reverse the effects of austerity or real-terms pay cuts suffered in recent years.

GAPS REMAIN

Steve Wright, FBU general secretary, warned that "without meaningful action on taxing extreme wealth, this Budget does not yet provide secure, long-term investment or break with austerity."

He continued: "Although there are steps in the right

direction, significant gaps remain that must be addressed if our public services are to be rebuilt."

After 14 years of cutbacks under the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, the fire and rescue service had lost one in five firefighter jobs and dozens of fire stations.

Rather than repair that damage, the Labour government last year imposed yet more real-terms cuts on the service. FBU members are once again running anti-cuts campaigns in the face of proposed station closures and cuts to frontline numbers.

The exact shape of funding for fire and rescue services in 2025–26 will

be determined by the Local Government Finance Settlement, usually released in December and finalised in January or February. The FBU and fire services will look to push for more cash during that process.

Steve Wright added: "The fire service will continue to face huge pressure and the risk of further cuts, including fire station closures, cuts to numbers and continued real-terms pay cuts."

"As an affiliated union, we will continue to work with the Labour government. But, under my leadership, we will stand firm in pressing for the investment our service urgently requires to keep our communities safe."



Firefighters rally against council's cuts

Oxfordshire firefighters held a rally outside a meeting of the county council on 9 December, protesting dangerous cuts to the service. This followed a mass meeting of over 150 members gathering to plan a campaign in opposition to the cuts.

The county is facing proposals to close three fire stations – Eynsham, Woodstock, and Henley, and the merger of two major stations serving Oxford city: Rewley Road and Kidlington. Five fire engines could be removed and up to 42 firefighter posts cut.

At night, only five fire engines will be guaranteed to cover all of Oxfordshire. Response times are already nearly 2 minutes behind the national average.

A public consultation is open until 20 January 2026.

Jonathan Shuker, FBU Oxfordshire brigade secretary, said: “Firefighters across the county are furious at Oxfordshire County Council’s attacks on the fire and rescue service.

“Our packed-out meeting showed the strength of feeling on the frontline, and we are considering all options to fight these cuts – including industrial action.

“The council is threatening to close fire stations, remove fire engines, and reduce firefighter posts. This would leave communities across Oxfordshire without the fire cover needed to keep people safe.”

LONDON

Fire engines sit idle as London Fire Brigade threatens further frontline cuts

The London Fire Brigade (LFB) is facing £6 million in budget cuts next year, with a further £12 million in unidentified ‘savings’. The LFB 2026–27 budget submission also removes key operational budgets such as for uniform and communications upgrades.

The brigade has been criticised by the union for borrowing heavily for a new headquarters redevelopment while threatening these cuts to the already overstretched frontline.

David Shek, Fire Brigades Union executive council member for London, said that “senior leaders of the London Fire Brigade are sitting on reserves and borrowing millions for property projects while

fire engines sit idle, without enough firefighters to crew them”.

Recent figures show that the service only managed to keep its full fleet of fire engines available for 5% of shifts during the year to date.

Between 1 January and 8 November 2025, the full fleet was only available for 33 shifts as a result of cuts to crewing, amounting to 1 in 20 shifts. The last time that every LFB fire engine was available was 30 September.

The FBU is calling on the Mayor of London and the London Fire Commissioner to address this crisis in availability by prioritising funding for the frontline in the upcoming fire service budget.



Sounding Off

Fighting division

Kevin Courtney, chair of the TOGETHER alliance and former NEU general secretary, on why working-class people need to unite

It’s easy to see why so many people have lost faith in mainstream politics. Our country has become more and more difficult for working people since the banking crash of 2008.

It’s all but impossible to get on the housing ladder, with millions facing exorbitant rents. The NHS is in permanent crisis, schools and fire stations are being cut, and the cost of living is out of control.

Reform are riding high in the polls. But they don’t offer a way out. They are backed by multi-millionaires and landlords. In December, a cryptocurrency millionaire, Christopher Harborn, made a £9 million donation to Reform – one of the biggest political donations in UK history.

The super-rich like Reform because what they’re promising is even more cuts and deregulation. They’re super-Thatcherites; that’s why so many Tories are defecting to join them.

Nigel Farage likes to point the finger at migrants and refugees, just like his hero Donald Trump. But it’s not refugees who are to blame for the housing crisis or the NHS waiting lists or the cost of living squeeze.

We badly need change in our country, with the rich and the landlords paying a fairer share. The working class has to unite together to demand it.

50+ organisations have joined the TOGETHER alliance – a grouping of unions, anti-racist and community organisations aiming to resist the rise of the far right.

Farage has made it clear that if he wins power, one of his big targets is firefighters’ and teachers’ pension schemes, along with other policies attacking unions.

That’s why TOGETHER is urging people to come together to demonstrate on March 28.

■ togetheralliance.org.uk

Severe flooding puts service under pressure

Storm Claudia resulted in severe flooding in parts of Wales and England on November 14, placing immense pressure on the fire and rescue service.

Communities were evacuated, homes and businesses flooded, and transport networks disrupted after some areas saw up to a month's rainfall over two days.

A major incident was declared in Monmouth after "severe and widespread" flooding affected the town and surrounding communities. Firefighters carried out rescues, evacuations, and welfare checks in the early hours of the morning, with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service reporting 82 flood-related incidents overnight.

Crews faced prolonged and complex flooding incidents with limited resources due to years of cuts.

Gemma Thomas, FBU regional



Flooding in Monmouth in November

control rep in the Mid and West Wales and South Wales joint control room, reported that the service had already been overstretched two weeks prior, receiving 450 calls in one 12 hour period. "These included calls for rescues, with people's lives at risk, people stuck in cars in flood waters, and even a major incident being declared when a care home flooded."

HONG KONG FIRE



The lethal fire spread across a total of seven tower blocks

Safety questions after high-rise fires

Over 160 people are known to have died in a huge fire across multiple apartment blocks in Hong Kong. At time of print, six people were still missing and 79 were injured.

The fire broke out at Wang Fuk Court, a residential housing complex, on Wednesday 26 November. Flames were first spotted at 14:52 local time, and had spread to two more towers within ninety minutes. Over the following hours, it spread to a total of seven 31-storey apartment buildings. The last fires were extinguished at 10:18 on Friday, 44 hours after it started.

More than 2,311 firefighters were involved in the response, with 391 fire engines mobilised. The fire service

reported that temperatures reached up to 500 degrees Celsius, preventing firefighters from entering the buildings at times.

Firefighter Ho Wai-ho, 37, died while tackling the blaze, and 12 firefighters were injured.

Police said that "the building's exterior walls had protective nets, membranes, waterproof tarpaulins, and plastic sheets suspected of not meeting fire safety standards", with some buildings also covered in bamboo scaffolding.

At time of print, eight people had been arrested on suspicion of corruption, including the directors of the construction company overseeing renovation works.

In brief

AVON CUTS PROPOSALS ON HOLD

Avon's chief fire officer has withdrawn proposals to cut 72 firefighter posts, following firefighters and the public raising the alarm. An FBU rally has been postponed, but campaigning continues with the potential for the threat to return at an upcoming fire authority meeting.

SCOTTISH CUTS POSTPONED AFTER CAMPAIGNING

Scotland Fire and Rescue Service has postponed a decision on cuts to the service until the New Year as a result of FBU members' campaigning. This follows public outcry being reflected in the results of a 12-week consultation, with 80% of 5,600 responses against the proposals.

CHAOS IN KENT AS REFORM SUSPENDS FIRE AUTHORITY

Kent's fire authority was plunged into chaos in November following Reform UK suspending five of the party's own members of the fire authority, including the chair and vice chair.

The removal of the councillors meant that the chief fire officer was unable to sign off on large expenditure, with the fire authority unable to carry out its full functions. FBU reps said that the Reform leader of the council had failed to respond to requests to meet.

■ For more on this story, see Station Cat on page 23



A forest fire in the Amazon, near the venue for the COP30 climate summit

Environmental and tax justice groups have joined the Fire Brigades Union in calling for major investment in the fire and rescue service.

In a letter to the Chancellor and Environment Secretary Ed Miliband, organisations including Greenpeace, Tax Justice UK, Friends of the Earth, Tipping Point UK and Global Justice Now warned the government that “the UK is dangerously under-prepared for the growing threat of wildfires, flooding, and the wider impacts of the climate crisis.”

The organisations are backing the FBU’s calls for:

- Significant new central government funding for the fire and rescue service, to ensure sufficient firefighters, emergency fire control staff and specialist resources to meet wildfire and flooding risks.

- A statutory duty for fire services in England to respond to flooding, consistent with the arrangements that already exist in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales.



News Focus

Environmental groups back firefighters

■ A UK-wide wildfire resilience strategy, developed with the Fire Brigades Union and other stakeholders, ensuring consistent standards for planning, training, and response.

Throughout November, the thirtieth United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) was held in Belém,

'The UK is dangerously under-prepared for wildfires, flooding and the wider impacts of the climate crisis'

Brazil, near the Amazon rainforest.

Speaking ahead of the conference, Lula, president of Brazil, said that the world needs “roadmaps that will enable humankind, in a fair and planned manner, to overcome its dependence on fossil fuels”.

Greenhouse gas levels need to drop by 43% by 2030 to keep the world’s temperature increase under 1.5C.

After weeks of talks, the conference’s final agreement contained no roadmap and excludes direct mention of fossil fuels. Research by campaign group ‘Kick Big Polluters Out’ found that 1 in

every 25 summit participants was a fossil fuel lobbyist.

But on the final day of COP30, the governments of Columbia and the Netherlands announced that they will co-host a landmark international conference to plan a “just transition” away from fossil fuels in April 2026.

The FBU has endorsed the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative, pushing for international cooperation to end new development of fossil fuels, phase out existing production, and develop plans to support workers, communities and countries dependent on fossil fuels to create alternative secure and healthy livelihoods.

Steve Wright, FBU general secretary, said: “Firefighters are on the frontline of the climate crisis, battling increasingly extreme wildfires and flooding, and we have seen first-hand how catastrophic climate change devastates communities.

“It is only through a united international strategy to phase out fossil fuels that we can prevent further harm and protect people everywhere.”

ANNE'S STORY

The route to justice

My husband was the first UK firefighter to have his death from cancer officially recorded as caused by the job. Now I'm fighting for a legal precedent that could force employers to act, writes **Anne Davies**



Anne Davies holds a picture of her husband Jeff Simpson



My husband Jeff Simpson was a wonderful man.

He joined the London Fire Brigade in 1983 before we moved to Sheffield in 1992, and was always a proud FBU member. He was a family man, a socialist, and loved being a firefighter. Jeff lived for the varied, busy days and the camaraderie of the watch.

Life was never dull. One memory that sticks out for me is when a young lad fell through the ice at Shadwell docks, and Jeff did everything he could to fish him out. He saved the boy's life. Like everyone he worked with, he was dedicated to saving others.

When he retired as a watch manager, our family received many messages saying that he was a real gentleman.

JEFF'S STORY

Jeff was active and healthy. He played football into his forties, climbed Munros with the children, cycled with his youngest son. Then in 2018 he was diagnosed with interstitial lung disease. This condition is known to be caused by long term exposure to environmental toxins, and is often linked to smoking – but Jeff never smoked.

The disease seemed to be progressing slowly. But two months later, he was admitted to hospital as an emergency. After he'd had an MRI scan, we were told he had lung cancer which had spread to his liver and lymph nodes, and



Jeff served as a firefighter for over three decades, first in London and then in South Yorkshire



the only treatment was palliative. He died in my arms less than 20 hours later.

You can imagine how shocked I and my children were, how lonely and bereft I felt.

Jeff's death was so unexpected that the coroner launched an inquest into the causes. The pathologist found that he had died of a rare cancer called metastatic small cell carcinoma.

I started researching cancer, and read the papers by Professor Anna Stec, commissioned by the FBU. I learned that, due to preventable exposure to toxic contaminants in smoke, firefighters are more likely to be diagnosed with certain diseases including cancers. Firefighters and their families have similar stories across the UK – and it's a scandal.

When I was asked to submit any concerns I had around his death, I shared what I had found.

The coroner concluded that Jeff's death was a result of his occupation. I didn't realise it at the time, but this was the first time that a firefighter's death from cancer has been recorded as caused by the job in the UK.

It turned out to be a huge milestone for all firefighters.

SETTING A PRECEDENT

Now I'm working with the FBU and

Thompson's Solicitors to bring a legal case for compensation for Jeff's death. I'm doing this in his memory, to set a precedent for all firefighters and their families.

Firefighters put themselves on the line for others, and deserve the safety and protection of good PPE, equipment, policies, health monitoring.

Fire service employers and the government must take responsibility, and that's why we're taking the fight to the courts.

If we can win for Jeff, we can open the route for better protections for all firefighters in the UK. The end goal is presumptive legislation for UK firefighters, which they have in the USA, Canada, and Australia.

This legislation would mean that certain cancers and diseases would be

classified as 'occupational diseases': caused by the job. This would make firefighters and their families entitled to compensation and support.

It would also mean that employers come under increased pressure to put more protections against exposure in place.

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

To win this case, we need to gather evidence about working conditions in the past. Specifically, we need to hear from firefighters who served in London between 1983–1992, and South Yorkshire between 1992–2017.

Back then, firefighters didn't know that smoke and soot could cause these illnesses. It was normal to come home in contaminated clothes: stations often didn't have washing machines or showers, and some still don't.

By gathering witness statements about what conditions were like – policies, PPE, facilities – we can build a picture of firefighters' preventable exposure to contaminants.

I don't want any other family to go through what I have been through. And I know that there won't be any change unless the government and employers are forced to act.

Jeff always fought for what is right, and that motivates me to keep up the fight. Together we can win the change needed to protect firefighters – whether retired, serving or in the future.

"A huge milestone for all firefighters"

Can you help?

If you served as a firefighter in London between 1983-1992 or South Yorkshire between 1992-2017 and can share details of working conditions, please email membershipservices@fbu.org.uk with the subject line "witness evidence for cancer case".

WHO'S IN

The government has announced that Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners will be scrapped. FBU general secretary **Steve Wright** explains what this means for fire and rescue services

It matters who oversees fire services. The Fire Brigades Union plays a crucial role in keeping chief fire officers accountable to firefighters and other fire service employees.

But who is their actual boss? At the moment, there are four different models. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service sits directly under the devolved government. In some places, like London and Manchester, it sits under the elected mayor. In most brigades, it's run by a fire authority made up of local councillors (in Northern Ireland, it's called a 'fire board' and has a slightly different make-up) or in some cases, a county council department.

In four brigades, however – Cumbria, Essex, Northamptonshire, and Staffordshire – fire brigades have been rolled in with the remit of a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. That system was introduced in 2016, and the FBU fought hard against it from the start.

I'm happy to report that, last month, the government announced it was scrapping Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) outright from 2028.

A FAILED EXPERIMENT

In announcing the end of PCCs, the government called them a "failed experiment". They were right. Firefighting is about humanitarianism – we help everyone, and we're not there to enforce the law.

To protect the public, we need to be trusted and respected by everyone, including people who don't, for whatever reason, trust the police. Pushing fire into the same governance structure as the



police always ran the risk of blurring the lines between the two.

It was also undemocratic. With a fire authority, decisions are made directly by elected local representatives. Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners, on the other hand, are much more powerful, and are paid big bucks – up to £100,000. They are often elected on low turnouts, and it is much more difficult to hold them to account.

REMOVE THE MOLD

Northamptonshire's experience provides a good – and awful – example of how the system went wrong. In the summer of 2023, the fire service had a vacancy for chief fire officer. It fell to Stephen Mold, the Tory PFCC, to pick an interim chief.

He chose Nicci Marzec, his chief of staff, who had no operational fire experience. The FBU opposed the appointment.

Firefighting is a highly technical, skilled profession; it is absurd to have a service managed by someone who has never



CHARGE?



fought fires before.

But it got worse. Marzec turned out to be a “close friend” of Stephen Mold, and quickly resigned when that story broke. Mold remained in post.

In autumn, he decided to appoint yet another non-firefighter, Nikki Watson, a former chief police officer. The FBU opposed her appointment as well, without success. Then, in March 2024, it was reported that Mold had used abusive and sexist language to describe Watson while meeting with firefighters.

Throughout this whole period, the FBU fought to get rid of Mold (“Stop the rot, remove the mold” was the slogan). Firefighters held meetings, passed

The FBU fought hard against PFCCs from the start



An FBU rally in Northampton calling for the end of the PFCC model

motions of no confidence, and launched petitions. They regularly protested outside meetings of Mold’s scrutiny panel. There was a public outcry.

But none of this got rid of him. It was only in March 2024 that he announced he would not run for re-election. That is the reality of the PFCC model – it allowed people like Stephen Mold to act with total impunity. Under the Tories, it was Westminster government policy to expand this system. Now, it is being scrapped.

WHAT'S COMING?

The Labour government is planning big changes in terms of how fire services are governed. These changes are taking shape through the English

Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, which is currently being debated by the House of Lords.

There is a lot of detail in the Bill, but the broad direction of travel is that more fire services will be brought under the remit of elected mayors. The Bill gives ministers power to alter boundaries to make this happen.

For instance, the Tees Valley Combined Authority and the West of England Combined Authority don’t align geographically with fire authorities – so boundaries may shift to bring fire services under the mayor.

Two key principles will drive the FBU’s response to the proposals. Firstly, we need to end the fragmentation of the fire service. Having a patchwork of different governance models – and no national standards on crewing, equipment, training and response times – lets the public and firefighters down. We need national standards, and we need a rational governance model.

Secondly, we need democracy. It is no good bringing the fire service under the control of an elected mayor if there is no way for local councillors and elected representatives to hold them to account and correct their mistakes. We need real scrutiny and accountability, and FBU officials and members must use the structures to push their elected representatives. Firefighters are the experts. Politicians need to listen.

MAXED OUT?

Do governments have to “balance the books” – and why is it always workers who pay the price? **Professor Gregor Gall** debunks the spin

At times of economic and political crisis, governments often erode and undermine – in other words, attack – public sector workers and their terms and conditions of employment. This might be on their pay, pensions, job security or working hours.

At first sight, this seems counter-intuitive and somewhat irrational. Why would a party in government do this when it needs the votes of these workers and their families to get re-elected?

But there are obvious goals being pursued here. One is economic – to get more work out of the workforce for less money. The other is political – to be seen by the electorate as “fiscally responsible”.

WHOSE INTEREST?

The starting point to understanding all this is the notion of the ‘national interest’. All governments, whether Labour, Lib Dem, SNP or Tory, have always subscribed to the so-called ‘national interest’.

But the language used by these parties – of ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘the country’ – is a cunning sleight of hand.

This becomes clear when we hear the phrases ‘our nation cannot afford’ and ‘the country cannot afford’ or ‘we haven’t got the money’.

The rich and powerful in society use this framing mechanism to allow them to

maintain their own interests while making it look like they are thinking of us, the majority.

FALSE ECONOMY

Margaret Thatcher did it by comparing the nation’s finances to a family’s household budget in an interview with the Murdoch-owned News of the World on 5 January 1984. She said you cannot spend more money than you have coming in.

Dave Cameron said the ‘nation’s credit card was maxed out’ as he launched his ‘We’re all in it together’ austerity assault in 2010.

In echoes of Thatcher, we now have Keir Starmer implementing their fiscal rules, defined in Labour’s manifesto for the 2024 general election as meaning that the ‘current budget must move into balance, so that day-to-day costs

are met by revenues and debt must be falling’.

Trying to be an ‘iron chancellor’, Rachel Reeves has said these rules are ‘iron-clad’.

PROTECTING PROFITS

Behind this rhetoric of “fiscal responsibility” are ideological motives. It is an attempt to reassure shareholders, investors, The City and the international money markets. This is about protecting the conditions for profit-making.

When we drill down a bit, we find out this ideology is made up of three main components.

The first is the idea that pay rises cause inflation. The second is that the so-called ‘national debt’ – which is government debt – is all our responsibility. The third is that public sector pay rises have no positive part to play in the economy.

Let’s look at these in turn.

Successive governments have held down pay rises for public sector workers even as inflation soared

"Austerity is not an economic necessity"

ALAMY



Tam McFarlane, FBU national officer, speaks at a rally of striking NHS phlebotomists



MYTH #1

Pay rises are the cause of inflation

Inflation is simply defined as when demand for goods and services is greater than supply, leading to prices rising. So, pay rises aren't causing inflation: they prevent wages from decreasing in spending power. If supply is short, then that's a problem of inadequate production of goods and services. Or it's because businesses raise prices in order to raise profits – known as 'greedflation'.

MYTH #2

The government has to cut services

Government debt rises when governments borrow money because the money collected in taxes is lower than expenditure. Decisions about funding versus cuts are always political. For instance, Labour has recently pledged to increase defence spending while threatening to cut benefits for disabled people – but most people want welfare, not warfare.

Just as importantly, government debt can be used to stimulate the economy by spending it on public works like schools, hospitals and other infrastructure, creating jobs – especially in construction. Debt is not necessarily bad.

MYTH #3

Workers' pay rises are bad for the economy

Contrary to the mainstream myth, when public sector workers get pay rises, they spend them far more on items that boost demand for domestically produced goods than the rich do when they receive tax cuts.

Spending on food is a simple illustration of this. So, the multiplier effect of what public sector workers do with their wages is much better for providing the basis for better paid jobs for others elsewhere in the economy.

As Labour MP John McDonnell said in 2015 when shadow chancellor: "Austerity is not an economic necessity, it's a political choice." It is a choice that benefits the few at the expense of the many, under the subterfuge of being for the benefit of the nation.

We all need a pay rise

pcs



■ Gregor Gall is a visiting professor of industrial relations at the University of Leeds

CUTS KILL

PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES



COMMUNITY

FIRE

SAFETY

STRUGGLE
- IN -
SOCIETY
- IN -
NUMBERS

DEFEND THE FIRE SERVICE





For peace and workers' rights

A delegation of trade unionists led by the Justice for Colombia campaign travelled to Colombia this November. National officer **Mark Rowe** reports

Justice for Colombia (JFC) was set up in 2002 by the British trade union movement to support Colombian civil society in its struggle for human rights, workers rights, peace and social justice.

Our delegation was made up of trade union members from the TUC, NASUWT, Forsa, Aslef, POA, PCS, Unison, Thompsons Solicitors and the FBU.

The purpose of our visit was both to learn and build solidarity. It's vital that our movement continues to do so, as Colombia is still one of the world's most

dangerous countries for trade unionists. More than 3,000 trade unionists have been murdered since 1989 – more than in the rest of the world combined.

On the trip, we met with peasant and indigenous groups, political activists, human rights lawyers, the British and Irish embassies, sectorial trade unions, former guerrillas, and the Social Movement for Peace.

THE HISTORY

The roots of current conflicts trace back to 1948, when popular workers champion Jorge Eliecer Gaitan ran to

be president – and was assassinated. Gaitan had promised to take on the oligarchy and deliver land reform to benefit the poor.

After his killing, protests erupted across Colombia, and the oligarchy cracked down hard. The decade that followed came to be known as 'La Violencia', with 200,000 Colombians – mainly peasant farmers – killed. This era of bloodshed ended when the Liberal and Conservative parties agreed to alternate in power.

Peasant workers formed self-defence groups, inspired by the Cuban



The FBU and other trade unionists on the Justice for Colombia delegation

revolution, to fight for land distribution. An internal armed conflict between these groups and the army continued for decades, with some 500,000 civilians assassinated or disappeared. In the 1980s, large landholders, business leaders and drug cartels banded together to create the paramilitary groups, supported by the military, that still wreak destruction today.

Land inequality remains one of the key drivers of conflict, with 65% of land still controlled by less than 1% of landowners.

Finally, a peace deal was agreed in 2016, with six main points designed to tackle these root causes and enable the modernisation of Colombian society. However, a far-right government failed to implement the peace deal between 2018 and 2022, leading to the conflict reigniting.

THE STATE NOW

President Gustavo Petro was elected in 2022, well known as an advocate for workers' rights. He announced the "Total Peace" policy, promoting dialogue between armed groups – though this has been criticised for making slow progress. Some of the groups we spoke to talked of the need to build a grassroots movement for peace based in communities.

Now, presidential elections are



scheduled for May 2026 – but Petro is constitutionally barred from standing again, despite his popularity.

Colombia's political situation is made more difficult by the growing hostility of the United States. Trump is threatening to impose tariffs, which could deal a serious blow to the Colombian economy given that the US is by far its biggest export market.

The US has deployed forces near to Venezuela and has promised funds to undermine the government there, as well as in Nicaragua and Cuba, under September's "America First" legislation.

U.S. THREAT

There is no doubt that Trump is motivated by his opposition to Petro's labour reforms. Unions we met with told us that these worker-friendly reforms are the first in recent history and included introducing regulation of the working week and overtime pay. However, Congress had been able to block measures that would further strengthen unions.

The purpose of our visit was both to learn and to build solidarity

Workers harvesting coffee in Colombia



The city of Popayán

We also spoke to many people living in areas with ongoing conflict, and it is clear that the security of former guerrilla combatants remains a huge issue, with almost 500 killed since 2016. More must be done on this, as government representatives admitted.

PROGRESS

We also heard about transfers of land to peasants; the formalisation of their entitlement to the land they farm; and efforts to reduce inequality. Activists we met made it clear that an immense financial effort has been going into implementing peace, with 34 billion pesos spent on it in three years (compared with 14 billion over the previous government).

The Petro government has also pushed through pensions reform – currently only one in four workers qualify for a pension – healthcare and education reform, though many of these are being stalled in the courts.

Colombia's landed elites, the multinational corporations stealing Colombia's mineral and environmental wealth, and militarised politicians want a return to the old days – when their entrenched privilege and wealth continued the cycle of inequality.

Upcoming elections next Spring will have implications for the trade union movement across South America, and the world. Our fight for improved workers' rights in the UK grows stronger when we support the struggle for workers' rights everywhere.

■ Learn more and join the campaign: justiceforcolombia.org



"The shift we'll nev

When a watch in Cleveland faced a medical emergency on shift, their teamwork proved to be life-saving. **Steve Morgan** meets the crew

'Safer, stronger, together' runs the FBU mantra. For Alex Sutherland and his colleagues at Cleveland's Grangetown Red Watch – laughing and joking as they shift seats, musical chairs style, so all can be seen and heard – the tightness of that connection is clear, even over a Teams call. Theirs is a bond for life – and certainly one that saved Alex's life.

Out on call, attending what appeared to be a routine fuel spill from a truck now stuck on a bank, crew leader Alex

suddenly collapsed: two undetected fluttering heart valves a ticking time bomb, typical in cases of SADS (sudden arrhythmic death syndrome).

Alerted by the truck driver banging frantically on his cabin window as they worked on the other side of the truck, colleagues Adam Bell, Andy Spall and Paul Harforth found Alex face down. As Adam recalls: "He was actually with us for a little bit – but he didn't know what had happened.

"Then, maybe over the course of maybe a minute and a half, his heart rate went from 140 or 150, just dropping –

90, 70, 60... Then he flatlined on us and started turning blue, which is obviously when we got the defibrillator out."

THE LONGEST 14 MINUTES

"From starting it, I think we were on our own for 14 minutes. But that was probably the longest 14 minutes I've ever experienced."

Of the trio, only Paul had previously done live CPR, but their training was sound. After a third shock with the defibrillator, the endless wait was over: Alex's heart started beating again.

With Paul's frantic 'firefighter



From left to right: Adam Bell, Anthony Trattles, Alex Sutherland, Craig Strike and Andy Spall



er forget..."

down' radio signals sent out, the unit had by now been joined by a second crew containing Connor Temple (who'd joined the brigade with Alex), Josh Holmes, Stuart Charlton and Gary Flynn. Stuart recalled how their "blood froze" as the message came in. Thankfully, an ambulance arrived shortly after they turned up.

BACK ON THE RUN

Eighteen months and five operations on, Alex, who now wears an internal defibrillator to monitor his heart rate, is back at work full-time, and on temporary promotion as watch manager at Stockton. Not that he needs any invitation to return to Grangetown Community Fire Station.

While he has no recollection of the

events that April 2024 day, he has checked out the facts.

"I looked on our incident log, and the time gap from the message coming in that I was in cardiac arrest and had started CPR, to the message that I was breathing on my own, was 33 minutes," he says.

He can recall his delirium when he came round from his coma. "I'd be on

"The endless wait was over: Alex's heart started beating again"

the phone going: 'Right, what's going on? Why am I here?' I kept saying: 'I need to go, I'm supposed to be on a night shift in two hours.' They had to sedate me and keep me in bed."

His colleagues smile, recalling the gibberish he spoke when they were able to contact him via Facetime in the mess room 48 hours later. "There's also a picture of me – you all came to see me in hospital," says Alex. "I'm sat outside the wagon in a wheelchair, I look a bit rough, and still to this day I don't remember it."

SAVED BY THE SHIFT

The fates were clearly on Alex's side. With a resting heart rate still at 195 when he came out of his coma, his life was arguably saved by the fact that he'd only been at work due to a switch of leave arrangements – otherwise he'd have been home alone. Ditto Paul Harforth, whose knowledge and calm head proved critical.

The experience has only strengthened the group's existing camaraderie. Now 38, Alex joined up 14 years ago this April, Paul is 20 years into his service, with Andy and Adam arriving at Grangetown five years back.

WATCHING OUT FOR EACH OTHER

Christmas, always a time to take stock, is approaching. The group laugh as they reject the notion of a festive-themed photo – "we can have a photo of us in the pub as Alex is buying us all a pint" is offered to much mirth.

There's a tangible warmth, and a tacit acknowledgment that nothing should ever be taken for granted. Asked if he has anything to add, Alex, mostly happy to let his colleagues do his talking, outlines the tale of a firefighter who came to him with health concerns over his own heart palpitations – and the fact that they were all, including him, paid overtime for their efforts.

The members of both crews also received a service commendation for their 'professional, heroic and prompt' response. All in a day's work – albeit one they will never forget.

Standing in solidarity with the hurricane-hit Caribbean

After Hurricane Melissa hit the Caribbean in October, the FBU Black and Ethnic Minority Members (B&EMM) Committee launched a donation drive. BE&MM sectional chair **Karen Bell** reports



FBU members at the annual Black and Ethnic Minority Members (B&EMM) school in 2025

When Hurricane Melissa hit the island of Jamaica no one could have imagined the storm's ferocity, or the trail of destruction it would leave behind. The category 5 hurricane was one of the worst the islanders have ever faced. Lives were lost and hundreds left without food, water and shelter.

Nearly 40% of the population live in the hills and countryside of the island. People in those areas are feeling the impact of the hurricane most acutely, with homes left destroyed, limited access to building materials and resources, and any aid slow to reach them.

Families are now living in makeshift shelters as they begin to rebuild their lives, surrounded by contaminated mud. Clean water supplies are scarce and there is little or no electricity

supply. With many members of the B&EMM section connected to the Caribbean, the B&EMM committee knew it was important to take action in solidarity.

When we started a donation drive the response was overwhelming, with support and donations coming in from FBU branches, regions, and sections, as well as from members, friends and families.

In under a week, we were able to raise funds to enable us to send essential items to Jamaica, including:

- 70 care packs containing toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant and flannels as well as food packs with rice, noodles, cups of soup, sardines, tuna, tea and biscuits
- 80 school bags filled with pens, pencils, rulers, sharpeners, erasers and exercise books.

We were also able to purchase solar lights, batteries, torches, work gloves,

medical supplies, hundreds of sanitary products, razors, new clothing and footwear for all ages, baby products, and much more.

Our original aim was to fill one large barrel. In the end we were able to fill three and one box. The barrels have now set sail for Jamaica and will take approximately 21 days to arrive. Once they clear customs, they will be collected and distributed to communities in rural areas of Wakefield and Deeside.

FBU members' unwavering commitment to supporting those in need of humanitarian aid has a long and proud history. We stand with the people of Jamaica and Cuba who are rebuilding in the aftermath of this climate disaster.

■ Contact the B&EMM section to support the donation drive: bit.ly/BEMMsection



Meet the rep

Adam McKenzie, Warwickshire B&EMM rep
and Coleshill station rep

What made you want to become a rep?

We were facing significant changes within our fire and rescue service, and I wanted to make sure that we had a voice as the frontline - so that instead of being passive, we could shape those changes as a collective.

What are the major issues impacting members in your region?

The main issues that people come to me with are typically around workload, issues with equipment, and concerns for their future with the service. We are also concerned about new models of breathing apparatus equipment, and are raising issues with the emergency alarm being too quiet. Because in our service we only ride with a minimum of four crew instead of five, it means if we have to go into a fire, the alarm could be missed while firefighters inside a burning building could be in danger.

What's been your proudest moment as a rep?

Representing a member who had worked in the service for 30 years, but had to leave due to ill health. He was worried about the finances but having a rep there to support him through the ill health retirement process made it much less of a precarious and isolating position. I felt proud when he thanked me.

Who are your working class or trade union heroes?

My granddad, who was an organiser and a member of the fifth Pan-African Congress, held in Manchester in 1945. It was a historic gathering of trade unionists and anti-colonial organisations from around the world, demanding an end to colonial rule, full racial equality, and workers' rights.

What piece of advice would you give to a new rep?

Attending courses is a great opportunity to meet people and learn. The old cliché of knowledge is power does ring true when you're pushing back against misinformation.

When was the last time you had a conversation that made you think differently?

I recently attended a workshop on the struggles of Black and ethnic minority women in the workplace. It was an eye opener, and I started to truly grasp the scale of the inequality and discrimination they face at work. Solidarity is the only way forward.

If you had the aux chord at a rally, what song would you play?

Harder than you think by Public Enemy.



What's new?

Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence has rapidly become part of everyday life. More than just clogging up social media feeds, it is reshaping the world of work for millions. The government says that "AI has the potential to radically change public services". So what might this look like for fire and rescue?

AI companies are already promoting their wares in the fire safety industry – seemingly with their sights set on winning contracts from UK fire and rescue services.

Some control rooms are already using machine learning to track fire and incident related posts on social media, with alerts monitored by staff.

One company website claims that AI can be used for "painting an immediate and detailed picture" during incidents, by aggregating data from sources including CCTV feeds, live drone footage, sensors, and social media. Uses listed include virtual reality training simulations, and analysis of incident data to "rigorously evaluate operational effectiveness".

It'll be the frontline determining whether this is an aid or a danger to the very physical world of firefighting.

The unpredictable and astounding array of rescues firefighters carry out mean that there's one thing for sure: in our time of need, it won't be machines saving the day.

Is your service using AI? Share your thoughts with firefighter@fbu.org.uk





President's dispatch

All members can help build the union, says FBU president **Ian Murray**

The Fire Brigades Union is only as strong as its membership. Our power to improve working conditions in the fire and rescue service is built on the power we have as workers within each workplace.

In control rooms, retained and wholtime fire stations, training centres – and all fire and rescue workplaces – we are stronger when all of us are in the union.

If your station or control room is 100% union, wear it loud and proud.

But if you work alongside people who aren't members yet, it often just takes a conversation.

As a member, you already have a wealth of knowledge to share. Your experiences at work will paint a clear picture of why it's important to join. Having worked as a team under immense pressure, you'll know what's at stake – and why you never want to be out on your own without back up.

The vast majority of firefighters are FBU members for a reason. And it's through members getting active, standing up for what's right in fire and rescue workplaces, that we build our collective strength.

By signing up new members, you are building our union, defending our service, and helping them make one of the best decisions they can make.

Reach out to your brigade organiser for support with recruiting new members in your workplace.

LGBT+ SCHOOL



Applications open for 2026 FBU LGBT+ school places

Applications for LGBT+ school 2026 are now open.

This is an opportunity for members to:

- Meet fellow LGBT+ members from across the UK
- Hear from leading campaigners
- Gain skills for building solidarity in the workplace
- Get more active in the union.

■ Manchester, 11 – 13 Feb 2026

■ Find out how to apply:
bit.ly/LGBTschool2026

CALENDAR

FBU 2026 calendar still available to order



Scan here to get yours:



It's not too late to get organised for the year to come!

Order your FBU calendar now, featuring winning images from our firefighting photo competition.

Proceeds go towards supporting firefighters and fire service good causes.

■ bit.ly/fbucalendar2026

CONTROL SCHOOL



First National Control School in union's history in 2026

The FBU is holding the first National Control School in the union's history in March 2026.

Through this school, control members will be part of:

- Sharing experiences and solidarity.
- Gaining knowledge and skills to make things better in your workplace.
- Strengthening control members' voice within the FBU to fight for the issues which matter most to you

Applications are open to all FBU members working in a control role. No former experience required.

■ Wortley Hall, Yorkshire, 3 – 5 March

■ More info and how to apply:
bit.ly/controlschool

PODCAST



Scan the QR code to listen to the latest episode of Red Notice, a new FBU podcast series updating on the latest union and fire service news.





Wright on the Road

■ **1 Dec** – Joined the North West regional committee meeting and members' annual general meeting

■ **2 Dec** – launched the TOGETHER alliance along with prominent trade unions and the TUC

■ **3 Dec** – Attended a mass members' meeting in Oxfordshire after joining the Leicestershire brigade committee meeting

■ **8 Dec** – Fed back to the annual general meeting of the Officers National Committee



Steve speaks at the FBU mass members' meeting in Oxfordshire

COMING UP

■ **16 Dec** – meeting with secretary of state for Health and social care Wes Streeting to raise issues around firefighter health

■ **8 Jan** – appearing on BBC Politics Live

Kent Reform's fire authority mess

Station Cat looks at the fall-outs on Kent County Council

It's six months since Reform took control of Kent County Council, so your Cat headed south to how things were going. She found that Farage's party has expelled or suspended no fewer than nine of its 57 councillors. And the county's firefighters are right in the middle of the battlefield, becoming collateral damage in a bitter civil war on the fire authority.

Most of the nine expelled councillors placed enticing saucers of information out for your Cat. They seem to have been targeted for trivial offences that include starting a WhatsApp group, or writing an email accusing the leader of the council, Linden Kemkaran, of running a dictatorship.

Then there was the leaked video of a Zoom meeting of the Reform councillors, where Kemkaran is heard telling her colleagues that if they don't like her policies, they should "f—suck it up."

None of the Reform councillors has ever so much as said hallo to any FBU officials, but that didn't stop the leader going on BBC Radio Kent to call union reps liars.

Councillor Brian Black, who was the chair of the fire authority until he was



expelled, told your Cat: "The Reform leadership in Kent have lied to the people and to the firefighters of Kent."

After his expulsion from Reform, there was a six week gap before a new chair was sworn in. During that time the fire authority was leaderless, and unable to agree large spending.

That was potentially disastrous, says Kent FBU brigade secretary Danny Barrett, and Councillor Black agrees. "Linden Kemkaran says that didn't put Kent people at risk, but it did," he says. It complicated the urgent task of buying new fire engines, and Kent is still using fire engines that are 15 years old.

Councillor Kemp, the vice chair until she, too, was expelled from Reform, offers "my full support for the FBU's position that the removal of the Chair, Vice Chair, and other key members of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority presents a serious and unacceptable risk to both the public and the employees."

She adds: "Decisions taken by Kent County Council leadership have had a direct and detrimental impact on the stability and effectiveness of these essential services."



"You really must learn to switch off when you get home from work..."

25-year badges



Mike Novell (l), Berkshire control, receives his 25-year badge from rep Chris Hunt (r)



Matt McIen-Howells (l), Southampton, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, receives his 25-year badge from Eastleigh branch rep Andy Davis (r)



Mike Cowie (l), Dunfermline fire station, receives his 25-year badge from Stuart Taylor, East Area lead rep (r)



Stephen Oliver (l), red watch, Balmossie and RDS Carnoustie, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from executive council member Colin Brown (r) with Balmossie members watching on



Mike Clyne (l), amber watch, Dunfermline receives his 25-year badge from Stuart Taylor (r) East Area lead rep



Steve Barnes (l), Officers, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Kev Wilkie (r), with Darren Ferneyhough



Ian Lewis (l), Bridgend, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Sean Cayford (r)



Howard Ottywill (r), CDC, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andrew Kerry (l) at Ipswich East fire station



Geoff Davidson (l), Chertsey fire station, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Karl Jones (r)



Wayne Henson (l), red watch, Carlton, Nottingham receives his 25-year badge from brigade vice-chair Duncan Dandie with members from green and red watches looking on



Andy Trustcott (l), white watch, Epsom, Surrey receives his 25 year badge from branch rep Will Keenan (r)



Jason Burley (r), Camberley Surrey branch rep, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Graham Kitchen (l)



David Aston (r), Sutton, West Midlands receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary John Sims (l) surrounded by members of Perry Barr fire station



Chris King (r), red watch, Kirkcaldy fire station, receiving 25-year badge from Kirkcaldy branch secretary Gary Hill (l)



Dave McGregor (l), Lochgelly, amber watch, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Steven Reid (r)



Alun Jones, (r) Service Training Centre, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Kev Wilkie (l)



Simon Thompson (r), Officers section, South Yorkshire receives his 25-year award from Birley branch secretary Pat Renshaw (l) with members of Birley, Central, Parkway, Rivelin and TDC



Janine Thomson (centre), Liberton, Edinburgh, receives her 25-year badge with Amber Watch colleagues



James Butcher (l), Darwen, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Kev Wilkie (r), with Mark Laws and Fee Dransfield looking on



Richard Short (r), Carnforth, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary, Kev Wilkie (l)



Chris Stainton (r), Officers, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from Wayne Love (l)



Wayne Love (l), Officers, Lancashire, receives his 25-year badge from Chris Stainton (r)



A group presentation of 25-year badges at Manchester Central, with members on the same recruits course in the year 2000. FBU general secretary Steve Wright presented badges to: **Jim Norcross, Dave Campbell, Paddy Boyle, Martin Collins, Gavin Kearsley** (front row l-r), **Matt Rooney, Steve Twinn, Rob McCauley, Paul Cowin** (Merseyside Fire & Rescue), **Brad Farron, John Duffin**, with Dave Pike (FBU Manchester Brigade Secretary)



Daniel Roberts (l), blue watch, Dunstable, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Darren Barrett (r)



Steve Burns (l) and **Richard Coomber** (r), West Sussex receive their 25 year badges from West Sussex officers rep James Mackay (c)



Paul Wilcox (l), green watch, Blackley, Manchester receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Matt Fryer (r)



Mark Read (l), Berkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Sam Underwood (r)



Chris Edwards (r) receives his 25-year badge from Bickenhill rep Antony Cox (l), surrounded by members of Bickenhill white watch



Dan McGouran (l) receives 25-year badge from Craig Lightfoot with Killingbeck white watch looking on



Andrew Waterhouse (r) receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary James Cheverton (l) with colleagues from Rochdale white watch, Greater Manchester



Brian Ritchie (l), amber watch, Methil fire station receives his 25-year badge from Gary Stewart (r), health and safety rep, Glenrothes fire station

40-year badge



Andrew Bland (l), white watch, Exmouth receives his 40 year badge from organiser **Chris Grantham** (r)



Ann Stevens (l), brigade control, Bedfordshire, receives her 25-year badge from brigade organiser **Darren Barrett**, surrounded by members of red watch



Nerys Church (l), brigade control, Bedfordshire, receives her 25-year badge from brigade organiser **Darren Barrett**



David Haynes (l), brigade control, Bedfordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser **Darren Barrett** (r)



Steve Pringle, Swalwell, Tyne and Wear receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser **Chris Swift-Hunter**

Please send high resolution digital files or prints to: firefighter@fbu.org.uk or Firefighter, FBU, Ken Cameron House, 171-173 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8UE

For your image to look its best, we need the original, full-resolution image. One lifted from a website may not do justice to a unique occasion. We do our best with images that are low resolution, taken directly into a bright light or suffer from camera-shake, or have other problems, but cannot perform miracles. Please include details for each image – full names of everyone who is in it; their station/brigade/watch etc; where they are in the picture (eg: left to right); their union posts/branch if relevant; and where/when it was taken.

FBU REGIONAL OFFICES

REGION 1 Scotland

52 St Enoch Square, Glasgow,
Scotland G1 4AA
0141 221 2309, 01rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 2 N Ireland

14 Bachelors Walk, Lisburn,
Co Antrim, BT28 1XJ
02892 664622, 02rs@fbu.org

REGION 3 Cleveland, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear

1 Carlton Court, 5th Avenue, Team
Valley, Gateshead, NE11 0AZ
0191 487 4142, 03rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 4 Humberside, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire

9 Marsh Street, Rothwell,
Leeds, LS26 0AG
0113 288 7000, 04rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 5 Greater Manchester, Lancs, Isle of Man, Cumbria, Merseyside, Cheshire

The Lighthouse, Lower Mersey St,
Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 2AL
0151 357 4400, 05rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 6 Derbyshire, Notts, Lincs, Leics, Northants

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

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

195/7 Halesowen Rd, Old Hill,
West Midlands, B64 6HE
01384 413633, 07rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 8 Mid and West Wales, North Wales, South Wales

2nd floor, Hastings House, Fitzalan
Court, Cardiff, CF24 0BL
029 2049 6474

REGION 9 Herts, Beds, Cambs, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk

28 Atlantic Square, Station Road,
Witham, Essex, CM8 2TL
01376 521521, 09rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 10 London

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

REGION 11 East Sussex, Kent, Surrey, West Sussex

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

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

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

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

158 Muller Road, Horfield,
Bristol, BS7 9RE
0117 235 7605, 13rs@fbu.org.uk

Change of address or next of kin

Advise your brigade organiser of any change of address and head office of changes to next of kin or nominations for benefits.

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE

England, Wales and N Ireland

0800 100 6061

Scotland 0800 089 1331

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



THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS



**FIREFIGHTERS 100
LOTTERY**

FIRE BRIGADES UNION | SERVING FIREFIGHTERS SINCE 1918



WIN PRIZES CHANGE LIVES

PLAY THE FIREFIGHTERS 100 LOTTERY

For just £1 a week, you can enter weekly prize draws while helping to:

- Support injured firefighters and their families
- Commemorate the bravery and sacrifice of firefighters killed in the line of duty through the Red Plaque project
- Fund ground-breaking research into firefighter health
- Provide humanitarian assistance for people affected by disasters

TO BUY TICKETS GO TO WWW.FIREFIGHTERS100LOTTERY.CO.UK

The Firefighters 100 Lottery is a weekly, online lottery licensed by the Gambling Commission. It is open to the wider fire and rescue community and the public to play. The sale of tickets, the weekly draws and the paying-out of prizes are all undertaken independently of the Fire Brigades Union by an external lottery management company, also licensed by the Gambling Commission

