

EC Paper “31/24BS” Sexual Harassment action plan

The Executive Council is asked to:

1. Accept the findings and recommendations of the independent report, and to publish it *alongside the proposed action plan*.
2. To adopt the attached Initial Action Plan
3. To instruct the equalities sub-committee to take forward this area of work and to approve a full report to the Executive Council, no later than the summer

Initial Action Plan

The following action points are designed only as an initial response to the FBU’s independent report into sexual harassment.

1. The equalities sub-committee of the Executive Council is instructed to:
 - fully examine the recommendations and findings of the report
 - monitor the implementation of this initial action plan.
 - propose a full action plan for approval by the executive council no later than the end of June 2024
2. The General Secretary issues a circular and public comment regarding the outcome of the report.
3. The Executive Council issues the below statement, which will be announced at the start of all FBU events.
4. The Assistant General Secretary alongside the Head of Education will immediately begin to scope the development of training – both standalone and integrated into existing programmes – on sexual harassment. The training will be mandatory for all officials from Brigade level upwards, and will cover:
 - the definition of sexual harassment
 - addressing sexual harassment in the workplace and union spaces
 - confronting personal and societal biases
 - the FBU’s reporting processes and support available, and any new processes and support put in place in due course
 - ensuing safe spaces at FBU’s meetings and events

5. The Assistant General Secretary will ensure, as soon as practicable, that the union publishes an online hub with:

- the report
- relevant statements
- reporting processes
- support available to victims
- relevant policy and procedures

6. The Executive Council will immediately begin work on its first annual equalities audit, understanding the profile of union officials at each level of the union by gender, ethnicity and other protected characteristics.

7. The Executive Council to draft a policy statement on Sexual Harassment, for Conference 2024.

Statement to be announced at the start of all FBU events:

Statement on sexual harassment

To be read out at the start of all FBU events.

The Fire Brigades Union stands for equality – in the wider world, in the fire and rescue service, and in our union. Undermining equality means undermining the unity which makes us strong.

We aim to make FBU's events inclusive, respectful, and effective. Everyone here is responsible for making that happen.

The union is run by and for everyone, regardless of age, disability, sex, race, religion or beliefs, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership status, socio-economic status, and educational experience.

Sexual harassment is incompatible with this, and we do not tolerate it.

Sexual harassment is defined by law as any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose OR effect of violating the dignity of a person, when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Please be aware that while you may have friends in this room, you are at a union event and are expected to behave with respect and empathy.

Please be aware of the language you are using; and that what might seem like a joke to you could be humiliating or degrading to someone else.

You should be aware that everyone here is accountable for their words and actions.

Social events and online forums – including social media – are subject to the same policy.

If you experience or witness any behaviour that you think is out of order, please report it to your regional secretary. If you feel uncomfortable reporting it to your regional secretary, you can also approach the National Women's Committee or the Assistant General Secretary.

Ben Selby
Assistant General Secretary

BS/pw