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To: **All Members**

Dear Brother/Sister,

Sexual harassment in the FBU – independent report and action plan

Today, the executive council approved a plan to address sexual harassment in the Fire Brigades Union.

Sexual harassment has no place in the trade union movement, or in society more broadly. The FBU stands with the victims of this behaviour, just as it stands on the side of everyone facing discrimination and oppression.

In recent years, investigations have uncovered how widespread sexual harassment is in the fire and rescue service. Reports into the internal workings of other trade unions – prominently the GMB, TSSA and Royal College of Nursing (RCN) – have also highlighted the scale of the issue within the labour movement.

In 2023, after discussions at FBU annual conference, we commissioned two independent consultants to undertake a report into sexual harassment in the union. We did so because we wanted to uncover the unvarnished truth. The FBU is determined to lead the fight for equality in the fire and rescue service, and to do this it is essential that we understand and combat the problem of sexual harassment internally.

The independent consultants surveyed all women in the union and all black and ethnic minority members, alongside a random sample of other members. In total, 9,675 people were invited to participate. Of these, 1,128 completed more than 70% of the survey and were included in the analysis. All data was collected anonymously and externally to the FBU.

The findings of the report were published today, alongside an initial action plan of immediate measures. The headline figure of the report is sobering: 30% of women members who responded to the survey said that they had been subjected to sexual harassment in an FBU context. The authors of the report made several recommendations on committing to change; valuing and increasing the presence of women; training and education; and creating safe spaces.

The executive council has accepted the report and its recommendations in full. Our initial action plan includes:

- Compulsory education for all officials from Brigade level upwards
- A statement which will be noted at the beginning of all FBU events
- An annual equalities audit of the union's officials
- A policy statement on the subject at this year's annual conference

The equalities sub-committee of the executive council will now digest the independent report in full and will develop a full action plan, which will be brought back to the executive council no later than the summer.

We understand that, while we must act quickly and decisively to root out sexual harassment, changing behaviours in the union and the wider fire and rescue service will take time, determination and resources.

I would like to pay tribute to the FBU's national women's committee, who have played such a crucial role in pushing this work forward. The union's equality sections will be at the heart of what we do on this issue.

The report and the initial action plan have been published in full on the FBU website.

Yours in unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack'.

Matt Wrack
General Secretary

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