

FIREFIGHTERS



FIRE BRIGADES UNION CENTENARY 1918-2018



REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS 2018

91st CONFERENCE 5 – 8 JUNE 2018



Established 1 October 1918

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

91st CONFERENCE 2018

President: **Ian Murray**
Vice-president: **Andy Noble**
General secretary: **Matt Wrack**
Assistant general secretary: **Andy Dark**
Treasurer: **Jim Quinn**

National officers:
Dave Green
Tam McFarlane (Temporary)
Sean Starbuck

FIREFIGHTERS



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Bradley House
68 Coombe Road
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey
KT2 7AE

Telephone: 020 8541 1765
website: www.fbu.org.uk
email: office@fbu.org.uk
twitter: @fbunational

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**A full list of all Resolutions, Policy Statements and Conference Decisions
has been made available to all Officials and Members
in the booklet 'Record of Decisions 2018'**

This is also available on the fbu website www.fbu.org.uk



Established 1 October 1918

91st CONFERENCE 2018

BRIGHTON

5-8 JUNE 2018

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MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference come to order. Good start, good start. I now call upon Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders Committee to give the Standing Orders report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Conference, good morning. *Good morning*

The Standing Orders Committee seeks your cooperation with regard to conference credentials. Would all delegates and officials please make sure they have filled in their details on their credentials so stewards can identify them. The Standing Orders Committee stresses the importance of delegates stating their name and brigade or section when addressing conference as this assists the President and the verbatim report. We also ask you to speak clearly into the microphone at the rostrum.

Visitors and observers to conference are identified by different coloured credentials which must be displayed at all times. No visitors or observers are allowed on the conference floor amongst the delegates.

Voting cards should have been obtained from the Standing Orders Committee by regional officials and handed to leaders of delegations.

Access to the Standing Orders Committee room is through the partition doors behind you, out on to the corridor, turn right, and through the door on your right which is clearly marked. Delegates that have any more business for the Standing Orders Committee should inform the steward of their business and wait to be called by Standing Orders.

The Standing Orders Committee must report to Conference that the whole of the Grand Hotel is a no smoking building and trust this will be adhered to. Also, may I request that all delegates, officials, stewards, visitors and observers switch off mobile telephones, laptops, tablets and any other portable devices while the conference is in session. If you can make sure you have done that now, that will be much appreciated.

May I remind you that Conference is in session from 9.30 am to 5.15 pm every day. Also, may I remind Conference of Standing Order 16 which clearly states assembly, adjournment and comfort break times, all of which must be adhered to. Tea and coffee for all is to be served in the area immediately behind you, through the partition doors.

I will bring to your attention the provision of meals. Breakfast for those staying in the Grand Hotel will be available from 7 am in the hotel restaurant, which is situated directly behind reception. Breakfast for those staying in the Hilton Hotel will have been explained in your hotel welcome packs. Lunch for all is at 12.45. Evening meal for all is from 6.30 pm until 8.30 pm. All lunches and evening meals are here in the Grand Hotel and are served in the hotel restaurant as I have previously directed. On Friday there will be a packed lunch provided for all by the Grand Hotel. If business is to work through lunch on Friday there will be a short break to allow a comfort break.

The list of Scrutineers and Tellers has been circulated. The list of the Final Appeals Committee has been circulated. These lists are now be placed before Conference for endorsement.

The Standing Orders Committee must be kept informed of any changes to delegations, and we in turn will keep the President's list up to date and I will inform Conference of those changes. We rely on the regional officials to exercise some influence on this procedure.

Can you please turn to your delegates list now. Derbyshire: delete Tony Dempsey; replace with Mark Hudson. Northamptonshire: delete Ben Muddle; replace with Nick Ferrison. Hereford & Worcester: delete Neil Bevan; replace with Russell Broadbent. South Wales: delete Ian Buckley; replace with Gareth Brown. LGBT: Pat Carberry is now a delegate, and the LGBT have no sectional officials. ONC: delete Peter Traynor; insert Simon Amos.

Stall facilities. The Standing Orders Committee have agreed stall facilities for the following organisations: FBU Learning Fund, People's Assembly, Morning Star, Health Campaigns Together, Stop the War, Wortley Hall, BHSF, Stand up to Racism, Cuba Solidarity Campaign, and Bookmarks. The stalls will be situated in the corridor which is leading into conference.

The Standing Orders Committee has agreed the facility of the FBU shop at this conference. It is located in the Region Suite, which is through the partition doors behind you, on to and along the corridor, through the door on your right which is clearly marked.

The FBU Press and Research Department are in attendance at Conference. They are located in the George II suite, through the partition doors behind you, turn left, on to and along the corridor, and through the door on the left which is clearly marked.

The Standing Orders Committee has received a number of Emergency Resolutions in line with the guidelines and instructions that were sent out from Head Office. Emergency Resolution 1 Manchester Arena, Greater Manchester; Emergency Resolution 2 Grenfell Tower – Firefighter Safety, London; Emergency Resolution 3 Stop Israel's Repression of Gaza, Executive Council; Emergency Resolution 4 Pay, Scotland.

Could you now turn to your Programmes of Business. Page 2: Resolution 85 has been withdrawn to second Executive Council Policy Statement: Structures and Organisation. Page 3: Resolution 80 has been withdrawn; Resolution 81 has been withdrawn; Resolution 95 has been withdrawn, the amendment falls; Resolution 76 has been withdrawn. Page 4: no change. Page 5: no change. Page 6: after Resolution 15 insert Emergency Resolution 4 Pay, Scotland; Resolution 22 has been withdrawn. Page 7: Resolution 1 has been withdrawn; Resolution 9 has been withdrawn to second Resolution 24, amendment falls; Resolution 47 has been withdrawn. Page 8: Resolution 55 has been withdrawn; after paragraph D5 insert Emergency Resolution 1 Manchester Arena Attack, Greater Manchester. Greater Manchester have informed the Standing Orders Committee that they wish to remit this emergency resolution with the right to speak and that is where that business will take place. Page 9: no change. Page 10: Resolution 44 has been withdrawn. Page 11: Resolution 65 has been withdrawn to second Emergency Resolution 3 Stop Israel's Repression of Gaza, Executive Council; after Resolution 68 insert Emergency Resolution 3 Stop Israel's Repression of Gaza, Executive Council. Page 12: Resolution 58 has been withdrawn to second Executive Council Policy Statement Grenfell Tower Fire; after Resolution 61 insert Emergency Resolution 2 Grenfell Tower – Firefighter Safety, London. Page 13: no change.

Could you now turn to your Proposed Alterations to the Rules of the Union, the booklet looks like **that** (for those who can see). It is the Fire Brigades Union's Proposed Alterations of the Rules of the Union moved by the Executive Council and Brigade/National/Sectional Committees, Conference 2018. Everybody got these through the email system? You were told to bring all your business to conference with you. OK? Make a note then. If you have not got one of these, you will have to make a note. Page 2: Rule B2(1)(viii) from South Yorkshire has been withdrawn. Page 4: Rule B3(1) from Devon & Somerset has been withdrawn. Page 12: Rule C7(3) Devon & Somerset has been withdrawn. Page 13: Rule C7(4) Devon & Somerset has been withdrawn.

Speakers' times. Executive Council policy statement FBU Structures and Organisation, General Secretary, 10 minutes. Executive Council policy statement Pay in the Fire & Rescue Service, General Secretary 15 minutes. Executive Council policy statement Stop the Rot – Defending the Fire & Rescue Service, General Secretary 10 minutes. Executive Council policy statement Grenfell Tower Fire, General Secretary 20 minutes

Can I now go on to the voting on a challenge to the Chair of Conference. May I draw your attention to Standing Order 15. The number of delegates to conference is 132. Therefore, the number of delegates voting to carry a challenge is 88. Please note that the NRC delegates, ONC delegates, CSNC delegates, NWC delegates, B&EMM national committee delegates and LGBT national committee delegates, are all entitled to vote on procedural motions and challenges only. Regional officials who are not delegates have been issued with different credentials and they are not permitted to vote at all. May I remind conference that all credentials issued are the personal property of the persons to whom they are issued and cannot be transferred to other persons without the approval of the Standing Orders Committee. We therefore rely on the integrity of all to comply with this procedure.

To end this report, President, I need to make conference aware of a decision made by the Standing Orders Committee. Conference should be aware of an emergency rule change presented and agreed at last year's conference. As a result of the Trade Union Act, the Fire Brigades Union rules had to be changed and implemented by 1 March 2018. The certification officer has insisted on some minor amendments since the closing day of our alterations to the rules of this conference. The Standing Orders Committee have, as a result of what I've just explained, accepted that it was impossible to comply with the Standing Orders of Conference and have accepted an emergency rule change from the Executive Council that needs to be agreed by conference in order to comply with the legislation implemented on 1 March 2018. This rule replaces in its entirety Rule H1 Rules for Political Fund. The minor alterations within the rule have been highlighted in the paper before you. I hope that explains and is accepted why that business is in the Programme of Business for this conference.

President, that concludes the first report from the Standing Orders Committee. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Speakers?

BRO GREG O'NEILL (Buckinghamshire):

President, Conference, I'm seeking support here for a resolution and rule change that was ruled out of order for being too late. It was originally sent at just before the deadline of 2 o'clock. When the email landed it was gone 2 o'clock, but it was sent and I've got proof of a screenshot that it was sent prior to that. Obviously, the last few weeks has reiterated how delicate and poor the email system is. I took a screenshot. There is proof. It is Rule Change C5 and a resolution. On those grounds I am challenging Standing Orders.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Greg. Steve?

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. The Standing Orders Committee ruled out of order a resolution and a rule change from Buckinghamshire on the grounds that the resolution and the alteration to the rules of the union were submitted too late for the business of conference. The resolution forms provide a clear instruction and this was not adhered to. Rule C(7) states;

"The Standing Orders Committee shall, in consultation with the Executive Council, make the necessary arrangements for the holding of conference and publish details to the membership, including the procedure to be followed by the brigade committees and national sectional committees in submitting resolutions and amendments, alterations to rules."

Conference, you know and I know that you have received circular after circular about when this conference is, and the deadlines. The circulars started in October. You received notification in October of the dates for submissions. You received notification in November. You were further told in December. In fact, the Standing Orders Committee, in particular the National Officer who is the secretary to the Standing Orders Committee, put out extra emails to make sure that you got your resolutions and other business in on time. There was lots and lots and lots of notification, because we were aware that conference was in June, and it is usually in May. The deadlines are there for a reason. Times and dates for submissions are very, very clear on the forms. All forms are very clear when you have to submit your business by. Months of preparation go into making sure the Standing Orders Committee is prepared to deal with your business.

Conference, if you put a late submission in for a ballot – you've all been in ballot processes – and that came in after the deadline time and date, it would be out. If you put a submission into an employment tribunal and it had a time and a deadline date, it would be out. There are deadline times and dates for everything. This is ours, this is yours, your rules.

I'm no IT guru, I can assure you, but I know what an inbox is, I know what an outbox is, and I know what sent items are. OK? The evidence that's been alluded to, very kindly I must admit, by Buckinghamshire clearly shows a screenshot of an outbox with an icon on it going round at 1359. The sent items shows when it was delivered

through our server, which is timed at 1401. The deadline is 1400. I know it's one minute, but that's the deadline. The outbox: 1359. You've got to ask yourselves this: how many in this room screenshot their sent items? How many in this room have screenshot all your business for conference? You've got to ask yourselves why it has been screenshot. Because they knew. That's why it was screenshot, and they've used the outbox, not the sent items. It is very, very clear this business could have been put in well and truly before the time and deadline date. Your rules. We abide by them. Very clear. The resolution was required to be submitted on time in accordance with the instructions as on all the forms, as on all the correspondence that you have had. They were clearly not, so they were ruled out, on your behalf, on those grounds. I urge you to uphold the decision of the Standing Orders Committee, your rules, your instructions, and reject the challenge. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put that challenge to Standing Orders to the vote. All those in favour of the challenge please show. All those against the challenge please show. *That FALLS*

Is that report agreed? (Shout of Card Vote) I've already made the call. Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

We now move on to Section N of the Annual Report, the Obituary Section. Before I ask you to stand for a minute's silence in memory of those members who have died over the last 12 months, I would also ask you to remember the victims of the many recent natural disasters, and of course since conference last met, the victims of Grenfell Tower tragedy. Can members please stand for a minute's silence.

(Conference stood in memory of those who had died)

Thanks, Conference.

THE VICE PRESIDENT:

Conference, come to order. I now call on President Ian Murray to give his presidential address.

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I'd like to welcome you all to the Grand Hotel in Brighton for what I'm sure will be a very special and memorable four days of our centenary conference. We also have some international guests who have joined us from our sister unions in the USA and Australia. So I would like to pay a special thanks to them for making the long journey to join us for this occasion. I know they will be made most welcome by you all.

One hundred years of the Fire Brigades Union. There were many people that didn't believe we would survive to reach this milestone in our history. There were certainly those who didn't want us to even survive at all. I would like to say to those people: we're still here, and if I, the General Secretary, Executive Council, our officials and members have anything to do with it, we'll be here for another hundred years, fighting for the best fire and rescue service that we believe our communities have a right to at their time of need.

I was elected as your President and took up office earlier this year, the thirteenth FBU President in our union's history. Unlucky for some, some might say! It's not what I say. It's an absolute honour and privilege to be sat here in this seat, presiding over your conference, the parliament of our great union. I hope I'm still thinking that on Friday! So I'm the thirteenth president, following in the footsteps of some giants in our union's history, and giants of the trade union movement. If it weren't for them, this union wouldn't be where it is today and it wouldn't have the standing and respect within the trade union movement that it does have.

I'm sure I don't have to tell you in this room what we have faced over the last hundred years. It's been a hundred years of struggle because, as we all know, no employers, no politicians, no governments have ever given us anything. Everything our members have today was fought for and hard won by previous generations of firefighters, our members.

Unfortunately, Conference, sometimes we have to remind the current generation of firefighters of that historical journey when a small minority – and it is a small minority – start selling those hard fought for terms and conditions,

or even worse, sell jobs, all for a bit of personal gain. After several years of derisory pay rises and even pay freezes you can see why some of them are tempted by the offerings put to them. But, Conference, it's our job to remind them that they are just looking after that firefighter's seat until the day they retire and then they hand it on to the next taker. That seat, with its hard-won terms and conditions, is not theirs to give away for a silver shilling. I'm sure pay will play an important part in this week's proceedings so I will leave it there on that issue.

Firefighters are quite rightly held in the highest esteem by the communities we serve. They know, like we know, that when the politicians decide to close their local fire stations or get rid of one of their fire engines, the one and only voice shouting and screaming that their cuts will cost lives is the FBU. We are the one common voice who, day in day out, will campaign and fight to save their fire & rescue service. We've seen plenty of that over the last eight years.

Following the General Election in 2010 we saw a coalition government formed, pushing its austerity agenda, with fire service funding cut year on year. This has continued unchanged under subsequent governments and now we see 11,000 fewer firefighters since the Tories got their foot in the door of Number 10 all those years ago. What we do know is that cuts to firefighter numbers mean a reduction in our membership, which also means a reduction in our main source of income.

My predecessor, Alan McLean, presided over this union during some of the toughest times we've ever seen in our one hundred year history. Alan, alongside the General Secretary Matt Wrack, has led this union at a time when it needed to be led by the head and not entirely by the heart. They, along with the national officials and executive council, have brought some very difficult options forward over recent years to us at conference – none of which were palatable to any of us, but nonetheless had to be brought for you to consider, to ensure that the Fire Brigades Union remained a financially viable independent trade union within our industry.

I've said it before, as have others, the FBU is the conscience of the Fire & Rescue Service and never has a truer word been said. Governments, politicians, chiefs would never have made some of the decisions they have made over recent years if they had had a snippet of the values that our officials and our members have in abundance. Our industry has been decimated, decimated in the name of austerity that has led to fire deaths, be it cuts to local fire cover, the inevitable increase in response times and saveable lives being lost, and cuts to inspections and enforcements, both in the Fire & Rescue Service and local authorities. The stark reality is that it was the systematic deregulation by respective governments that led to the horrendous tragedy at Grenfell, a tragedy we've not seen in generations and one that was wholly avoidable.

I'd like to pay tribute to all of those who attended that unbelievable tragedy, and also all those dealing with its aftermath which is still ongoing and will be for many years, I suspect. We've had firefighters, officers, all our members who entered that inferno that night not knowing if they would be coming up, but they still did so. They did so in the knowledge that they might make a difference and save lives. Let's not forget our members in control who had to deal with the harrowing calls, not only from those outside but also from those trapped inside.

The heroics performed that night saved many lives, and looking at the footage and the stories emerging afterwards, it's an absolute miracle we didn't lose any of our people. I'm sure over the course of time we will gradually learn the full horror of what those trapped inside Grenfell faced, not to mention those who entered the building to try to rescue them.

I'd like to pay special thanks to our London officials who, on behalf of the union, are assisting and supporting members through the various investigations that they are now being subjected to. Also, all of the other reps who travelled the length and breadth of the UK to assist London officials in that mammoth task – a harrowing job.

A couple of weeks after Grenfell I was on the train and Ed Miliband, the former Labour leader and MP for Doncaster, came and sat opposite me, which was a bit of a surprise. I didn't expect him to be in the cheap seats, but he was. Anyway, we got talking as you would expect, as everyone was at that time, about Grenfell. He, like every other politician was saying that Grenfell is a game-changer. Well, Conference, from where I'm sitting we've still seen no game change. We're just approaching the first anniversary of Grenfell and we are still seeing exactly the same: cuts

to budgets, retirements and leavers outstripping recruitment, ultimately still seeing our industry decimated. Grenfell was a tragedy that should and could have been avoided. The FBU will continue to fight for justice for the victims of Grenfell. The FBU will continue the fight to reverse the deregulation of social housing, deregulation that put profit before the lives of the tenants. We are and we will remain a fighting and campaigning union.

Conference, one area we can rightly be proud of, and where the FBU has been the pioneers over our hundred year existence, is over equalities. It was our control, officer and retained members that got organised within the union and within the service in the fifties, well before others who claimed to represent them. It was this union that fought for equal pay for women members, both in control and for operational firefighters. It was women from this union that started getting organised in the 1980s to take up PPE, sexual harassment, maternity leave, and a host of other crucial issues. It was our B&EMM and LGBT members who organised to challenge discrimination and fight for equality. It was our control members, the majority of them women, who led the fight to defeat the failed fire control project. It was this union that won officers' pay back when it was docked in London. It was this union that won equal pay, pensions and other improvements for our retained firefighters. The list goes on. We did all of these things before the Thematic Review came along, and we've carried on fighting even after the Tories scrapped equality targets and imposed their cuts, which stopped recruitment in its tracks.

Our own brigade committees and sections, and especially our equality sections, have done a fantastic job holding the various employers to account. We all know it could be better, but we also know it would be a damn sight worse if the FBU weren't there, policing them and holding them to account.

Conference, as I have stated, we can be very proud of what we've achieved over the last hundred years of our existence regarding fighting for fairness and equality for all. Our rule book states that a member (and that includes all officials) "*commits an offence if they discriminate against, harass or bully another, whether on the grounds of race, creed, sex, sexual orientation or otherwise*", something we all believe reflects the true values of our union. I condemn anyone who does not uphold those values in any forum or on any platform.

This union respects an individual's right to have opinions and to debate them in an appropriate manner in an appropriate forum. However, that does not grant immunity from our rules. We know technology develops at a lot quicker pace than our rule book. The Executive Council will be reviewing our own policies regarding the issues that this raises.

Conference, I'd like to pay a couple more tributes in my opening address. Firstly, to the local officials and the brigade committee and the members in West Midlands. A massive well done on securing a massive YES result in their ballot for strike action (*Applause*) The first ballot under the new trade union legislation! What a result! 82% turnout with a huge 90% yes vote. Brilliant! What a message that does send out. The members in West Midlands have stood up to be counted after management imposed contracts on recruits and new starters that basically said they would serve anywhere at any time and do what management wanted them to do. They stood up to be counted when management imposed handling emergency calls on our control members that fall outside of the firefighter rolemap. The trade dispute is ongoing, and after attending mass meetings in West Midlands along with the General Secretary and seeing the anger and disdain that firefighters there had for their employers for what they were trying to impose on them, I knew we'd get a yes vote. After attending those meetings there's no doubt in my mind that it's a dispute we will win.

Secondly, I'd like to pay tribute to the officials and members in Hereford & Worcester. This is after their fire authority took the disgraceful decision to delegate the power to the chief fire officer to issue a section 188 dismissal and re-engagement notice to FBU members. They did this in order to implement the contractual changes that they wanted. The chief made it clear in his threat to the brigade committee: accept the proposals or I issue the section 188 notice. I attended a hastily arranged brigade committee meeting along with the regional officials. I was heartened to see that far from a disorganised, beleaguered gathering that the chief thought was the case in Hereford & Worcester, I was met with a well-organised, well-attended angry caucus that certainly wasn't willing to give into the chief's bullying threats. They unanimously rejected his proposals.

The threat of the 188 hasn't gone away completely in Hereford & Worcester, but I think on the last count (I'll have to check with Trev) it was up to version 12 on his proposals and still those section 188 not issued. Not that I want to

tempt fate on that one! Let's hope that remains the case. What I can say from what I witnessed is he has certainly got a fight on his hands if he dares. Just as we have on the last three previous occasions that this has been sanctioned – in South Yorkshire, London and GMC – we will fight it, and the national union will get fully behind our members in Hereford & Worcester to defeat that threat.

Finally, what I believe may be one of the most significant victories the FBU have had in recent years. That is the judicial review in South Yorkshire. The judge ruled that the fire authority are acting unlawfully by utilising CPC-type duty systems. The ruling was damning with the judge stating he was *“troubled as to the stance of the authority and the service offers an affront to the rule of law”* – something this union has been shouting and screaming about for many years at all of the Fire & Rescue Services running them.

I pay special tribute to the local officials, and especially to their EC member at the time and their brigade committee for the resolve and tenacity that they have shown to stick with it, often under severe pressure not only from management but from actual members working the duty system. Our conference back in 2011 unanimously agreed that we the union, which includes every one of us in this room, should campaign to end this draconian duty system, a duty system that cuts the number of firefighters employed by a fire station in half, requires the firefighters that are left to work double the number of hours. And for what? A 25% pay increase? It's a duty system that strikes at the heart of trade unionism by selling jobs for personal gain.

Well, Conference, I can tell you one thing. One brigade committee, South Yorkshire, has led from the front. It's been a long, hard slog, and along that journey before the judicial review victory there have been other, smaller victories in the battle. We've won employment tribunal cases for over 60 FBU members that were the ones forcibly displaced from their stations by the authority when they introduced CPC duty systems. We've still got to sort the compensation out yet, but that's progressing. This latest victory could be the catalyst for eradicating CPC or similar duty systems from the UK Fire & Rescue Service as per our conference policy. So I pass on this union's thanks to those local officials, including their former EC member, the head office officials who have greatly assisted in this full process, and of course the legal team at Thompsons and QC Oliver Segal.

Conference, the campaign to end CPC is still yet to be fully played out but by winning these victories South Yorkshire have cleared a path. It is now up to you to follow them down it.

Conference, I will finish. Although it's our centenary conference, there's still business to be done. We have an unbelievable number of resolutions to get through, not to mention policy statements and proposed rule changes. What I would ask from you is to be disciplined, very disciplined. Speakers' times will need to be kept under review. We don't want to cut them down, but unless you want to be here until midnight on Friday that may have to be the case. The Vice President will be policing them, and we will be cutting speakers off if necessary. You'll get an amber light as your one minute warning, and the red light means your time is up. Conference, I will also ask that you think about contributions in the debates. If another speaker has already said what you were going to say, don't come up and say it just for the sake of it.

Finally, as I've said, we've got a lot of business to get through. So short and sweet is good, but whatever your contribution style it will be comradely and delivered in the spirit of our union's values. If it isn't, we'll jump all over it. So let's get this show on the road and let's have a good conference. Thank you. *(Applause)*

We now move on to Section M Financial Accounts para M1, para M2 financial statement. I now call on the National Treasurer to move the financial statement.

NATIONAL TREASURER (Bro Jim Quinn):

Good morning, Conference. Now for the exciting stuff! President, before I move to the accounts themselves I'd like to thank Andy Noble, my predecessor. Andy's completed most of the work that we're going to refer to over the last 12 months as national treasurer. Andy handed over the reins to me a number of weeks ago, and thankfully, he also handed over a surplus in the accounts. That's a welcome start. Of course, a lot of work carried out on the accounts over the year in the FBU has been done by Nigel Headley and his team at head office. I can't thank them enough for their assistance in the preparation of this year's accounts. I'd also like to thank the regional treasurers for the work

they've done over the last year as well, but in particular for their work during the annual pre-audit frenzy which takes place between the actual year end and the period during which the auditors are active in head office.

It's important that the national treasurer doesn't just relay what the accounts say and read out a list of figures. But, more importantly, try to explain what they actually mean and how we should interpret the information and relate it to the situation that we find ourselves in. I'm going to try to emulate my predecessors and prevent any misinterpretation of that situation. To do that, I need to be as clear, concise and candid as I can be. That's because, as ever, those numbers in front of you won't suddenly change. They are what they are, but we need to examine what they actually mean for us going forward.

Conference was informed again last year that we were exploring the possibility of re-formatting the way we present the accounts to conference and, by extension, to members. Conference approved the appointment of new auditors last year to achieve this if necessary. In agreeing these accounts, I would ask conference to reaffirm that decision. As it happens, we retained our original auditors. But those of you who have looked at the accounts may have noticed that the formatting is again different from that of previous years. We've done this for a number of reasons, but mainly because spreadsheet accounts can be difficult for some to comprehend fully, even for those who spend far too much of their time looking at them. The truth is that quite often people simply look at the top line for income and expenditure and then move straight to the bottom line for surplus or deficit. However, the real story is in all the information that lies somewhere in between. It's not just about how much we're receiving or spending; it's about what we're spending it on, what proportion of income it is; and are we spending more or less on a particular budget heading than in previous years? That's the real story and that's why, when you're operating in an extremely tight financial environment, you need to focus attention. It's not solely presentational. We're trying to enable a good degree of understanding, and through that, ensure a greater degree of accountability. Of course, there's no point in making these changes, presentational or otherwise, unless there is a benefit in doing so. For us the main benefit is that the more accountable we are the better our forecasting for the future will need to be. The reality is the tougher the financial environment you're operating in the better your preparations need to be also.

I will move the accounts themselves now, President. In 2017 our income was £11.3 million. That was just up from £11 million in 2016, a small increase. Our running costs, we managed to bring them down a bit to £9.96 million last year compared to £10.13 million in 2016 – again, a small decrease. This gives a healthy operating surplus of £1.35 million compared to £873,000 in 2016, but that was before actuarial adjustments for pension liabilities. The 2017 pension scheme actuarial adjustments were £42,000 compared to a deficit of £1.96 million the year before, which gives an overall surplus of £1.39 million. It should be noted, as Andy pointed out last year, that these actuarial adjustments are outside of our control and are due to external factors, which means they can vary enormously.

Membership figures are still dropping, and are still down somewhat. In 2016 the drop was 1,168 or 5.5%. That was down to 800 last year, or 2.4%. It still means our income from contributions fell by £314,000. We did, however, manage to achieve an operating surplus through further reducing our expenditure. The pie chart in the report shows a breakdown of our 2017 expenditure. It clearly shows that the three main areas of our spending are on (1) staffing; (2) our running costs, protecting our members' interests; and (3) members' benefits. As a result of the 2017 overall surplus of £1.39 million our total funds have risen from £5.68 million to £7.06 million, made up of the AIF at £4.3 million, the political fund £529,000, General Fund £936,000 and Lottery Fund £102,000.

Anybody who has read them can see from the graphs of the seven year trends that whilst there is no significant change this year, there is a small improvement which we need to make sure continues by keeping our focus on careful oversight of expenditure. The General Fund graph also shows that by careful management of budgets you will be able to reduce costs but still providing the same level of service and benefits to our members. In conclusion, the income from contributions has fallen substantially over the last number of years. We've made £3 million savings in overall costs, and have had to absorb £3 million in pension deficits. We have and will continue to provide members with the same first-class service in benefits.

This doesn't mean we can now rest on our laurels and not continue to explore other ways of reducing expenditure. In fact, not only is it likely that more work will have to be done as in previous years, but we may have to take tougher and more difficult decisions this year coming if we are to make our stated aim of a surplus equal to 60% of the

General Fund. We are still some way off that position. On that happy note, President, I move the accounts and move reference back to the issue of reaffirming last year's decision on the employment of the auditors.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. Is that statement agreed, including the endorsement for potential new auditors if required? *AGREED*

We now move on to Proposed Alterations to Rules of the Union. I now call on Rule B2(1)(i) moved by South Yorkshire. The Executive Council oppose.

SIS NICKY BROWN (South Yorkshire):

President, Conference, at present the rules of the union require that anyone who has previously been a member and wishes to reapply for membership has to receive approval from the brigade committee. That's once they've been proposed and seconded by their branch. The brigade committee can therefore veto a reapplication based on personal knowledge of the applicant, their previous actions, and the reasons for them leaving the union in the first place. The brigade committee can also apply a rejoining levy if they think that is appropriate.

In our local dispute in South Yorkshire during 2009 we had many members leave the union and work against us during the strike. While some of these individuals were allowed to rejoin over time, this was not without the scrutiny of their motives by the brigade committee and the payment of a £100 levy to the hardship fund.

Under the existing Rule B2(1)(i) this level of scrutiny is not applicable to applicants who have not previously been members. They only have to get signatures from a proposer and a seconder on the application form, which can then be sent directly to head office, and once that is processed then they are in. During the recent pension dispute South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service employed (and in fact, they still do employ, with the help of Securitas) a team of contingency workers who they train up to ride appliances in case of need during strike action. It's been known for these prolific strike breakers, who were previously in other full-time employment, to be recruited in South Yorkshire as wholetime firefighters. Then they realised it's in their own best personal interests to be members of the FBU, and they've managed to gain membership by applying directly to head office with the signatures of possibly unwitting sponsors.

Whilst we do appreciate the need for recruiting new members, in South Yorkshire and indeed nationally, we believe that there should be some method for deciding who we accept into our ranks. For the majority of cases, any new applicants will be welcomed with open arms, and it wouldn't be much of an extra workload for the brigade committee each month to discuss the names of any new applicants as there aren't that many being recruited at the moment. When it comes to a strike ballot, or supporting industrial action, or sticking to a national or local position on an issue, the calibre of members becomes important. It's always better to have the support of 100% of 60 members rather than 60% of 100 members in these instances, especially with the new thresholds for balloting. There will always be a few individuals whose membership would involve more time, work and aggro for reps and other members than their contributions could be worth. In the past it's been a case of trying to ensure that no proposer and seconder are forthcoming, but we believe there should be an accepted, formal route to decline membership for new applicants whose actions, attitudes and values clearly do not meet the criteria for FBU membership. Please support the proposed rule change. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That's open for debate. General Secretary to give the opposition.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Thanks, Nicky, for moving that. The Executive Council do ask conference to reject the rule change. We understand the concerns of the South Yorkshire Brigade Committee, but we have to weigh those up against a number of factors. Let's be clear, the policy of this union, agreed by yourselves in conference, is that we seek 100% membership of the Fire Brigades Union in the Fire & Rescue Service. That is our agreed principle, our agreed aim, and our strategic ambition, agreed several years ago and built into the entire rule book.

The concern we have with the proposed rule change is that it actually puts obstacles in the way of people becoming members of the Fire Brigades Union. Actually, if you listen to the Treasurer's report and you monitor the reports that

we produce every year on membership, one of the problems we have in relation to this issue is that we have faced a declining membership. So we should not be putting obstacles in the way of individuals becoming members of the Fire Brigades Union. I was at the meeting at the end of the South Yorkshire dispute and where, as Nicky outlined (not large numbers, but some individuals), had left the union and worked against us. Nicky explained that in those cases clearly a brigade committee has a great deal of control over those individuals applying to rejoin.

The concern we have about this rule change is somewhat different. We want to provide, from day one, representation to people coming into the Fire & Rescue Service. We already have increasing obstacles being put in the way of our brigade organisers or whichever other official is doing the recruitment, of gaining access to training courses from day one. That means that we have cases where people may face injury in the workplace, or disciplinary matters in the workplace, or other conditions of service matters in the workplace without being members of the Fire Brigades Union. This rule change, in our view, would put further obstacles in the way of overcoming that difficulty.

Nicky mentioned the fact that this is not a significant burden for brigade committees, because of current low levels of recruitment. I have to say, Conference, we have to hope that that position doesn't remain the case. I'll tell you the stories of when I joined the Fire Service in the 1980s at times when there were, in the London Fire Brigade, large numbers of recruit training squads at the same time, and hundreds of people joining the Fire Service and joining the Fire Brigades Union at the same time. The idea that brigade committees may have to sit and read through individually, name after name, I think does potentially add to that burden on them.

So we understand entirely the sympathy and concerns that the South Yorkshire Brigade Committee have, but we urge conference: don't put obstacles in the way of members, particularly new recruits, joining the Fire Brigades Union. That's the key to maintaining the independence of this union, and we shouldn't be putting obstacles in the way of their membership. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

South Yorkshire, right of reply. Sorry, Nicky, no right to reply on a rule change. Sorry. I now put Rule B2(1)(i) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now call Rule B2(5)(ii) moved by Devon & Somerset. The Executive Council are supporting.

BRO SCOTT YOUNG (Devon & Somerset):

Conference, President, we've basically just put the rule in there to reiterate that we are actually keeping it as the membership card. We'd just like to make sure that for new members they now have the access to online facilities. Obviously, we've moved on now from when the rule was in before. We would like it put through on our online membership system. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Open for debate. No. I now put Rule B2(5)(ii) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Rule B3(6) moved by West Yorkshire. Executive Council oppose.

BRO MARTYN BAIRSTOW (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, I'll keep it short and sweet. The reasoning behind putting this change is efficiency has become a somewhat toxic word in the age of austerity and what efficiency has meant to our brigade is a loss of firefighter posts, appliances and closure of stations. So I just want to change it and remove Rule B3(6) and renumber Rule B3(7) to Rule B3(6). Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Open for debate. General Secretary to give the opposition.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Martyn raises an important debate around the fire service and what's happening and our

relationship to it. I think the Executive Council's opposition is based on this: that our view of efficiency is entirely different from the view of efficiency that exists in Whitehall with this Tory government or in the headquarters of many Fire & Rescue authorities. For us efficiency is not the same thing as making cuts to our service. Efficiency for us is about opposing waste. We have many examples of waste created by chief fire officers, chief fire officers who go and commission fire engines that don't work – that's waste; we oppose that; chief officers who build white elephant headquarters – that's waste; we oppose that. On the other hand, we don't see that efficiency means lengthening response times to emergency calls. That's not about efficiency; that is about worsening the service. We don't think that efficiency is about cutting the standards that operate within our profession and our service. We don't think that efficiency should be used in that way. So we are engaged in a battle where clearly we have certain people in this industry who claim to be the voice of the Fire & Rescue Service, the professional voice of the Fire & Rescue Service, but they do nothing about any of those things. The National Fire Chiefs Council, you don't hear them speaking out as you hear this organisation speaking out.

We stand for genuinely efficient Fire & Rescue Services and we're very clear that to produce an efficient Fire & Rescue Service in the current climate we need massive investment in it. So we shouldn't rewrite our rules because of what's going on in relation to austerity currently; we should keep that point in the rule book. I urge you to oppose the rule change. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Rule B3(6) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now call Rule C1(2) moved by the Executive Council.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Very quickly on this one, President. It's simply an administrative rule change taking account of mergers of a Fire & Rescue Service.

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Open for debate. I now put C1(2) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Rule C3(5) moved by London. Executive Council oppose.

BRO JASON HUNTER (London):

Conference, President, I am moving the proposed alteration to Rule C3(5). With this rule change we seek consistency and a greater level of democracy. Apart from the Executive Council, every other committee allows substitutes. They are in fact greatly encouraged. All we are asking for, Conference, is that you agree that this principle applies to the Executive Council too. We all know how hard our Executive Council members work. Likewise, brothers and sisters on the conference floor, as do you. As officials, when we get the opportunity to take a well-earned break, we do so safe in the knowledge that a carefully selected substitute will be in place. Should a vital decision need to be made, our members have a voice. Not allowing substitutes on the Executive Council potentially disenfranchises thousands of members. How can this be right? Under the rule book we allow substitutes for prolonged illness and for prolonged family care issues, so why not for other reasons?

We are calling on conference to ensure proper democratic representation at all times at the highest level of the union. There is no justification for exempting the Executive Council from the principle that we apply to every other committee of this union. Conference, with your support we can effect change in our centenary year, by stepping forward for consistency and democracy. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? Are you indicating to second? Go on.

BRO GREG O'NEILL (Buckinghamshire):

President, Conference, we are seconding London's rule change on C3(5) as ours was harshly ruled out of order. Generally

the same, although ours was better worded! (*Laughter*) We are fully supporting London's rule change. This happened to us 18 months ago at a recall conference where the EC member couldn't attend and the regional official wasn't allowed to attend so a region the size of ours had no voice. I would urge you to support the rule change. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT:

That is open for debate. General Secretary to give the opposition.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Conference, it's a very important issue that's raised, but we have some very significant concerns with the proposal from the London region, and also in terms of the precise wording within the rule change that has been submitted.

Firstly, in relation to the point that Jason made, I don't think it is the case that every committee in this union allows substitution. That's simply not the case. In terms of the way the current rule is written, it does mean that in certain circumstances substitution will be allowed. It sets out the reasons for allowing substitution. In our view, those reasons should be tightly controlled. We should not be allowing individuals to stand for a position as an Executive Council member and then frequently, for example, miss Executive Council meetings for whatever reason. It is a serious job that people stand for and they should be held to account for that. In fact, there are rules allowing the Executive Council to remove Executive Council members who fail to attend without due reason – a rule that doesn't apply in any of our other committees. So the reasons are important.

If conference wishes to vary those reasons, then the mechanism would be to introduce an amendment that varied the reasons within the current rule, not simply to eliminate the reasons. If the London amendment were carried, then there would be no obligation on an Executive Council member to provide any substantive reason as to why they were missing an Executive Council meeting. That's not something that we think can be acceptable to this conference in terms of the role of the Executive Council and its functions between conferences.

Then in terms of the precise wording of the proposed amendment, the current rule requires that that substitute would be a regional official. A regional official is an individual member who has been elected by the membership of the same region as the individual who is elected as Executive Council member. The rule change proposed by London would remove that requirement. So the individual who could be substituting for an Executive Council member, according to the proposed rule change, may have no status within that region whatsoever. Worse, there is no requirement in the proposed rule change that the substitute is even a member of the Fire Brigades Union. Rules have to be rightly written and carefully worded in order to ensure that there are no escape routes, dodges or whatever, that can be played. That's why we pay a great deal of attention to the drafting of rule changes.

So we could end up in a situation where, on a regular basis, for whatever reason, a particular region or any region may regularly substitute the attendance of their Executive Council member with the attendance of somebody else who may or may not be an official of the Fire Brigades Union, who may or may not be a member of the Fire Brigades Union. We think that is a nonsensical way to run an Executive Council, the body that is tasked between conferences with running the business of this organisation. It is simply not taking the matter seriously enough and I urge conference to reject the proposed amendment to rules. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Rule C3(5) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. (*Call for card vote*) A card vote has been called.

A card vote was taken

Conference, has everybody voted? All the cards in. Take your seats, please. Conference, we are carrying on with business. I now call Rule C4(5) moved by LGBT committee. Executive Council oppose.

BRO PAT CARBERRY (LGBT):

Conference, President, it is not the first time we've come asking for this. It is something which we previously had an

entitlement to. What the rule change calls for is equality, equality in that when you ask the officials from the equality sections to attend your brigade and your regional meetings, when they sit round the table they should be sat there and participating in exactly the same way as any other official who is there. In order to do that, they have to be able to vote; they have to be able to participate in that part of the process.

When we lost the right to vote it was part of a necessary reform of our union, to make our finances sustainable. It was difficult and it was unpalatable, but it was necessary. However, part of that, when we lost the voting right, I don't see that that was necessary at the time, which is why we're back, asking for the voting rights to be returned. When it comes to voting, when you raise your hand, it doesn't cost any money; if you choose not to, it doesn't cost any money. So this isn't about finance. It's about letting people participate on an equal footing.

Conference, I would ask you to support the rule change. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Pat. Does that have a seconder?

SIS LUCY MASOUD (London):

Conference, in the last year members in London are now entitled to paid leave for male and female employees who are attending IVF appointments. In the last year our trans members are now entitled to paid leave when attending gender reassignment appointments, as well as full sick pay when recovering from gender reassignment surgery, rather than having to use their own leave, as was previously the case. Conference, in the last year we have forced our employer in London to allow members returning from ill health due to mental health issues to keep their base posting. Conference, these are all huge improvements to our working conditions. All these changes were initiated by the LGBT section in London.

The work the sections do across the country is absolutely invaluable and essential. It is work carried out by the sections that has given us, over the years, privacy for all, better maternity rights for male and female firefighters, and of course All Different All Equal, to name but a few. It therefore seems perverse that despite all the work that the sections perform their committee and brigade secretaries are prevented from voting at meetings and are unable to have their voices heard. There is no good reason for this to continue. It would not cost this union one extra penny to allow sections to vote at committee or brigade meetings.

Conference, if we demand that the sections do the work and that we, as union members, benefit from the work that they do, then it is surely just and fair that we support this rule change and give the sections the right to have their voices heard. The London region support this rule change. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Lucy. That's open for debate. General Secretary to give the opposition.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Conference, the Executive Council are urging you to oppose this rule change. As has been referred to earlier by the President and by others, we had a series of very major discussions about the structures of our union. That's a process which is ongoing. In the next debate we will report some further steps that are being undertaken currently to make sure that we continue to review our structures. That will include structures relating to equality and diversity in the Fire Brigades Union.

However, Pat, in moving the rule change, said this is about equality. He based the argument for equality on people sitting on a committee, in order to be equal, have to have the right to vote. It is the case that in fact in many of our committees there will be people sat around a table who do not have the right to vote at that committee. That is the case at the Executive Council, for example. Myself and the full-time officials do not vote at our Executive Council. We have no right to vote and nor should we have the right to vote at the Executive Council. I think the real answer actually has just been provided by the card vote that Lucy actually called for. When it comes to a card vote at conference we have 33,000 members. When you add up the votes of the members at conference, it has to come to 33,000; it cannot come to 33,000 plus another group of members who are voting again. No-one has ever, throughout the past 25 or 30 years, ever

come to conference and made the case that sectional representatives should have a vote on policy issues at conference because it would immediately highlight the problem that goes to the heart of this debate, which is about people not voting once, Pat, but voting in multiple forums in terms of policy development within the Fire Brigades Union.

So no-one has ever, ever come to this conference and made the argument that sectional delegates should vote on policy matters which we are discussing. That goes to the heart of what this is about. In our regional committees we have representatives of all our members through the brigade structures. Let us remind ourselves of the rules that set out the purpose and function of our sectional committees. They are very clearly set out in the rule book to provide specific advice to this union on matters pertaining to those groups of members. That's what the rule book says their purpose is in the Fire Brigades Union. But when it comes to voting, those votes may be on a whole range of issues. Indeed, they are on a whole range of issues. They are on industrial matters; they are on political matters. Again, no-one has ever come to this rostrum and made a viable case as to why, when we are discussing pay, for example, LGBT members, or any other particular group of members, should have an additional say on the question of whether we move to a ballot for strike action on pay or we do not move to a ballot for strike action on pay. Again, it is set out very clearly in the rule book that industrial matters like that are the property of the entire membership and those entire members are represented through the workplace branch structure. At the workplace branch, which should be central to our organisation, we encourage every member, regardless of what section they might be in, or whether they are in no section, to attend and participate in the collective decision of all members on those key political and industrial matters. When we come to pay later, obviously we'll address that.

I have to say that Pat wasn't clear in making the case for a vote as to whether this vote is restricted on certain issues relating to sectional matters, or in fact it's across all political and industrial issues. Clearly, if you agree the rule change, it would be on all political and industrial matters.

When we did discuss it, actually we didn't just address the question of finance, Pat. That's not the case. We made a case that actually this was also about democracy, about ensuring the most democratic structures in our union that are possible. I've sat through this conference throughout all of these debates over more than three decades on the question of equality in the fire service – a challenge that we need to take up and we need to continue. Indeed we do hugely value the contribution our sectional committees have made. Lucy rightly set out some of the pioneering work which they have made and contributed to over that period and in recent times. But we also identified that the route that the Fire Brigades Union took on the question of equality and diversity was only one possible option. My concern is that people are somewhat blinkered by the history of the Fire Brigades Union on these matters when other organisations have actually approached the issue in slightly structural ways that don't have the implications for wider democratic processing that occurred within this organisation.

So if we take one of the examples which I think was used when we discussed this in the major restructuring debate, on some of our regional committees we could end up, and indeed we did previously end up, with the delegates representing the entire membership (ie the brigade committee delegates) could be, and on occasion were, outvoted by members representing particular sectional committees. That's not the fault of any of those sectional delegates, but it is the fault of the structure that was created. We must have committees whereby majority rules. It's called democracy and we have to defend democracy. I have to say, regrettably, Pat, that the proposal from the LGBT committee would be a move away from those democratic structures. I urge conference to oppose the rule change.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Just before I take the vote on that, can all delegates please ensure that they indicate which way they are voting. I know there was a quick draw on the card vote last time, and somebody might not have had chance to actually get their hand in the air. Please ensure that you do indicate which way you are voting.

I now put Rule C4(5) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

Conference, we will now break for tea. We'll have you back in here twenty past 11, please. We have got a lot of business. Thank you.

Break for tea

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, can you take your seats. Conference, I now call Peter Greaves ** Chief Scrutineer, to give the result of the card vote.

BRO PETER GREAVES (Chief Scrutineer):

Conference, as Chief Scrutineer I'm here to announce the results of the card vote for Rule change C3(5). The result is as follows: yes 15,060; no 17,913. Therefore that *FALLS*. Thank you, Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Pete. I now call Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders, to give a quick report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Delegate change: London – remove Dave Young, insert Lucy Masoud. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

Point of order, come on.

BRO ROY HUMPHRIES (Suffolk):

Mr President, Conference, the point of order is how our good comrade from London spoke on the LGBT rule change and now we've just had her put on the attendance list as such, delegates list.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Roy.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Conference, as I reported this morning, we would keep the President's list and you up to date once we receive changes to delegation. We received the change to delegation after I'd given my report this morning. The Standing Orders Committee accepted it. I've just informed you of that change. If that was an official that had come up here, the Standing Orders Committee would have dealt with that. As far as the Standing Orders Committee were concerned that person that came up and spoke was a delegate. I've just updated your list and the President's list. That's what that information was. Is that OK?

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, on that, what we will do is make sure you are advised of any delegate changes before they are allowed to speak, if that would assist. OK, I now call Rule C6(2)(v)(b) moved by the LGBT. The Executive Council oppose. Déjà vu, Pat!

BRO PAT CARBERRY (LGBT):

President, Conference, we've just had the debate about whether we should have the voting rights within regions. This rule change is where we have voting rights at brigade level. The arguments presented are pretty much the same. I think I'd have to make a point, to add to what's already been said. This is about how much value you put on the people who attend your committees and what they bring to the table. I would reject the notion that the officials that go along would in any way have any intent to subvert the processes that go on within that environment. We're all trade unionists; we all have our union's members close to our hearts. I would reject any notion that that would be something which would be what sectional officials would be doing when it comes to voting. So although you have voted not to give voting rights to our officials at region, you have an opportunity now to forward those voting rights to our officials at brigade level. Thank you, Conference. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Pat. Does that have a seconder?

SIS LUCY MASOUD (London):

Conference, London seconds this rule change for many of the same reasons as we spoke about before. I would say that during the President's address he spoke about the wonderful work that the sections have done over the years, and the campaigns that we have fought and won throughout our history. It is surely for those reasons that we should support this rule change. Matt also spoke about the idea of democracy and how it cannot be fair that certain people in this union are given multiple votes. In keeping with what Pat said, I do not believe this to be the case. What must be kept in mind is many people within this union – LGBT, females, etc – do not feel comfortable attending their committee meetings and only go to their sectional meetings and therefore only have their vote taken once. For these reasons we ask you to support this rule change. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Lucy. That's open for debate.

BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

Comrades, I just want to pick up on the democracy argument. I remember years ago we had the conversation about democracy and I always thought that as a progressive trade union we accepted a slight, and a very slight, twist to that democracy to enable us to allow people who hadn't had their voices heard to have them heard now. I think it was a regressive step to take away the vote. I think we should repeal that change. Support the rule change. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Comrades, many of the arguments are overlapping the previous rule change and I would urge conference to repeat the decision. Pat said that nobody involving themselves in the Fire Brigades Union would seek to subvert the process. Nobody is suggesting that anybody would seek to subvert the process. It is a more fundamental point than that. It is the point that we need to have clear lines of accountability when decisions are made. If certain individuals, in this case sectional representatives, are given voting rights on committees then the obligation upon those individuals is to vote at those committees. It would be expected. Thereby the problem which we touched on in the previous discussion arises again: that some members are being represented in more than one way in the same vote at the same committee – whether that's on a brigade committee, or on a regional committee, or on the Executive Council. Some members of the union are being represented, and indeed are having more than one vote effectively, by voting. For example, a branch representative in one form of brigade committee or a divisional rep in another, and voting for a sectional representative. So people are being given additional votes in relation to matters which affect every member individually. As I said in my previous contribution, nobody has actually got up and made the case why, on the issue of pay, for example, (a matter that affects every single one of our members) or the question of whether we ballot for strike action on pay, should some groups of members have that additional representation? No-one has attempted to address that point. Indeed, no-one has attempted to address that point throughout the past 30 years of this debate coming to conference.

So nobody is accusing anyone of subverting the process. I wouldn't remotely suggest that. The question of how this might impact on brigade committees might depend on the structure. We have different forms of structures of brigade committees. Under the rules, some are directly represented from branches; in other cases on a divisional structure. In some of those divisional structures, certainly in the past (I don't know about the current situation) we have had very small brigade committees because of the small number of divisions that have existed in particular brigades. Therefore the same problem about the balance of voting on a committee arises in this case again.

What I would say to Pat and to conference is we are coming on to a debate shortly on structures. We are already raising the question about equality and diversity and whether our structures need to be addressed. We will be discussing in detail with all of our sectional committees and other committees around the country about what is the best form. That might include, by the way, revisiting the question of voting. Nobody is running away from that. What we are saying, Conference, is let's do that in a structured way through a review of our structures which, as you will hear shortly, is already underway.

Just a final point in terms of Alan's comments. I really hope, Conference, that we don't vote to support a rule change where someone makes the case that we support a "slight twist" to democracy. We can't twist democracy, Conference. We stand by democracy and we uphold the principles of democracy. Ultimately, democracy means the rule of the majority. It means rights for minorities, but it means that the rule of the majority has to be reflected in structures. By the way, this has been key to the history of the Labour Movement, in this country and internationally, about the fight for democratic rights, the fight for representative systems that ensure structures in wider society. Therefore it should be reflected in our own organisations to ensure they are representative in terms of that principle of majority rule. So, Conference, I would urge you to again reject and vote against the rule change. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put Rule C6(2)(v)(b) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now call Rule C7(2) moved by the Executive Council.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Very quickly, Conference. I think this was pointed out at a previous conference by a delegate from the floor. It was a phrase which refers to the Union Learning Representative which was removed in error from copies of the rule book. The Executive Council is reintroducing that phrase into the rules.

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. Open for debate. I now put Rule C7(2) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Conference, on the next batch, to save time the General Secretary is going to move them all together. That is Rule G1(2)(v) to G3(6) to (9). He is going to move them all together but there will be individual votes taken on them.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Conference, as the President has outlined, there is a whole series of rule changes relating to internal union discipline processes. The issue which the Executive Council identified relates to your decision to remove the rule on canvassing. We previously had a rule which barred people from canvassing in most circumstances and for most forms of canvassing. That rule was removed and replaced with an Executive Council policy statement which provides guidance. The Executive Council, however, has identified situations whereby breaches of rule which relate to canvassing – in other words, an individual who may have broken rules of the union which relate directly to an election – where, under the previous arrangements, an option existed for that person to be barred from standing in that election. The logic is that the individual had broken rules relating to a particular election so they should not therefore, at the end of that process, be allowed to stand in that election. The oversight which took place in relation to the removal of the former canvassing rule is that the current rules do not provide such a provision.

So a member could break the rules of the union and subsequently could still stand in the same election. It may be that that is the correct thing to do. The difficulty the Executive Council has is that the awards that are available currently are a reprimand or a fine or expulsion from the union. Expulsion from the union is obviously an extremely serious step to take and one that can only be taken very reluctantly. And a reprimand, in some cases, may not be deemed to be serious enough. We are not convinced that in all circumstances a fine would be appropriate. So these rule changes reintroduce the opportunity that one of the awards given in those circumstances is for an individual to be barred from standing in that relevant election, and also that in discipline cases generally one of the options that might exist is to bar the individual from holding office within the union for a period of time. That's the logic of the various rule changes, President. I urge conference to support them.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. Do they all have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. Can you make reference to which rule you are speaking on?

BRO JON WHARNSBY (London):

All of them!

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks for clarifying!

BRO JON WHARNSBY (London):

President, Conference, comrades, with widespread interference from Russia to Cambridge Analytica, the issue of true democracy and counterfeit democracy is big news. London opposes these rule changes as there is no option to restart the election, and streamlines the ability for persons who wish to, to interfere in the essential democratic process and eliminate unwanted candidates with no option for another candidate to stand. That is effectively deciding the outcome counter to the democratic values we hold for. As the President has said on repeated occasions, we must defend democracy.

We should not allow potential interference in our democratic process by those who may wish to subvert it. In our small corner of democracy we must be careful not to enshrine in our rule book the tools of oppression. We ask you to vote against it. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Anybody else? No. I now put Rule G1(2)(v) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Rule G1(3)(vi) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Rule G2(4)(iii) and (iv) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Rule G3(3) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Rule G3(4) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Rule G3(6) to (9) to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I am now moving on to the emergency rule change. General Secretary will give an explanation.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes, President, Conference, the Chair of Standing Orders explained the process whereby the emergency rule change was agreed. Clearly, whatever our views of the various bits of trade union legislation, including the recent Trade Union Act, we have taken tactical decisions that we will broadly comply with that legislation. The rules, for example on the political fund, are required by the certification officer to be subject to amendment as a result of that new legislation. We made alterations last year as a result of that dialogue with the certification officer. We then had further correspondence with the certification officer.

Just to explain the process, which is an important point for conference to know, the certification officer's advice to the union was that the Executive Council should change the rules of the union. Indeed, we are aware that in other unions that is what has happened. We took the position that the Executive Council has no authority under our rules to change the rules of our union. Only conference has the authority under our rules to change the rules of our union. So one of our national officers engaged in an exchange with the certification officer. I believe a bit of red wine had been drunk at the time of the letter. The certification officer was informed that we would not be complying with their initial request; we would bring the matter to conference. The principle that conference is sovereign is important to us. Nevertheless, we do believe that the emergency rule change needs to go through and urge you to vote for it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Open for debate. I now put Rule H1 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

We now move on to Section L Internal Administration para L1. I now call Executive Council policy statement FBU Structures and Organisation with amendments from London and Shropshire, seconded by Shropshire in the same debate. Both amendments can carry. The Executive Council are supporting both amendments to the policy statement.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Conference, the Executive Council has brought this statement to conference because we need to continue our dialogue about one of our key strategic aims: the maintaining of an independent firefighters' union, and to follow through the consequences of that key strategic aim. We should be immensely proud that we have reached our centenary this year. It is a remarkable achievement. None of us were there at the beginning and we stand on the shoulders of those who went before us, who built this union from scratch in very difficult circumstances. This union had to fight for its first 25 years simply to exist in a world of hundreds of different local fire brigades, including police brigades at the time that barred trade union membership from their employees. They built an industrial union that organised firefighters throughout the UK regardless of rank or role, and regardless of duty system. They built a union during the years of the Second World War under the blows of the Luftwaffe. They made the union central to the post-war Fire & Rescue Service, creating a UK wide bargaining system which remains in place today. They built up our profession and immeasurably improved our members' pay, conditions and safety, pensions and other matters.

The FBU is a highly democratic union, where conference is sovereign, where the EC and senior elected officials don't always get their own way – difficult as that might be for us to suffer. This is a union of firefighters. And let's be clear, when we say firefighters we mean that in the broadest terms. We mean people working in our emergency fire controls, we mean officers, we mean people working in our training departments and elsewhere. But this is a union of firefighters, led by firefighters and standing for firefighters. That is how it should be.

Conference has made clear on a number of occasions that maintaining and developing our union as an independent fire service union is our key priority. We want this because we believe it's the best way to achieve pay and conditions improvements for our members, for our health & safety, for our pensions and for our career structure. We believe it's the best guarantee of professionalising our job and our service. We believe it's the best way to build and deliver on equality and diversity within our service and our profession. We believe it's the best way to represent our members in operational roles, in fire stations, in emergency fire controls – whether they are wholetime or retained; whether they are the newest recruit or the most senior officer in a Fire & Rescue Service. We owe it to those who went before us, but more importantly to our members today, to ensure that that key strategic aim remains in place and that we continue to deliver it. The reality, Conference, is that we don't build our union in a vacuum. We have to survive as a union in a hostile environment. We face dire situations compared with other periods.

You will have heard the Treasurer's report and I won't repeat the detail, but you will know that we've lost something like a quarter of our members over the past decade, primarily due to cuts in Fire & Rescue Service budgets and consequential cuts in the number of jobs. With a high density union such as we are, every job cut, by and large, means a loss of a member in the Fire Brigades Union. A decade ago we were receiving around £11 million in our General Fund; today that's about £8 million. To maintain our organisation and our democracy we have the overheads that Jimmy spoke about: staff costs, facility time costs, publications, legal fees, and of course members' meetings, conferences and other mobilisations. We know that that is a bleak situation in terms of the period that we are currently going through.

We need constantly to evaluate the structures that we have built, to see whether they remain fit for purpose. The Executive Council wanted to bring this discussion to conference because this is your conference, your structures. The Executive Council has commissioned an external consultant to assist us in the next phase of this review, an individual who has already started work for us reviewing the structures across the most broad of ranges. Of course, any decision that affects national structures or the rules of the union will come back to conference for a report and for endorsement or otherwise through the conference processes.

I want to assure conference what that process means. We're already in the process of identifying committees, officials and structures with whom that external support needs to engage. Just touching on the previous debate, that will include our equality structures as well as our trade section structures. It will involve discussing with people at regional and brigade and national level about how well we function and areas where we might improve that function. We hope that that will involve meetings, interviews and other discussions with yourselves as part of that process. We hope that we will start to produce a report during the summer and we can start to finalise that in the autumn, so that next year's conference is in a position to discuss the next phase of any structural changes that might be necessary.

So, Conference, organisation and structure are not always the most exciting of issues, but the truth is we had to make changes to our structures. They are across the board – the size of the Executive Council, the number of staff we employ, how we employ staff, the number of offices we own. All these issues have been subject to a review over more than a decade now. We need to continue that work, difficult though it is. So, Conference, we urge you to engage in that process and we urge you to support the Executive Council statement. I move. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT:

Shropshire to second and move their amendment.

BRO STEVE MORRIS (Shropshire):

President, Conference, we are seconding the EC policy statement on Structures and Organisation and moving our own amendment at the same time.

Clearly, there have been many pressures on the Fire & Rescue Service and those pressures have had an impact on our union. 11,000 fewer firefighters since 2010 meant that we have already restructured our union dramatically. That's not been without difficulty. There are still austerity pressures on the Fire & Rescue Services. These also combine now with changing governance models, with Mayors, Police & Crime Commissioners, which will have wide-reaching implications for how the union operates now and into the future. We've opened the doors to Green Book staff, which of course may expand our numbers unexpectedly with the PCC takeovers. How will we represent Green Book staff? Their terms, their conditions. Will there be a need for separate trade sections for them? Who knows.

The fact is although we must continuously make sure that the union structure is fit for purpose, we will never get to a final position where we can say it is all sorted. There is clearly work we have to do for the immediate future and beyond. We have had, in the past, debate around the national officer positions that weren't being filled and could have potentially a large financial implication for the union. So we welcome this EC policy statement, and hopefully that will give us an objective critique of our set up and some constructive advice.

I'm sure that the recommendations that will come out of that will give plenty of debate at conference 2019, and we shouldn't fear that. This union has a strong tradition of campaigning for our members and indeed the fire service itself. To continue to do this and be the professional voice of firefighters in the country we need to keep on top of the game. This means making sure that our set up is conducive to sorting our officials in every brigade and indeed throughout the union. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. Does that amendment have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. I now call London to move their amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That is open for debate. Nobody? OK, I now put amendment 1 from London to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put amendment 2 from Shropshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Executive Council policy statement as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 79 National Database of Information Requests moved by Tyne & Wear. The Executive Council are asking Tyne & Wear to remit it or they will oppose.

Resolution 79 NATIONAL DATABASE OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

Conference notes that through the Mailgate system, the number and types of requests for information from Officials are increasing. Conference recognises that the gathering and sharing of this information is a very useful tool for Officials throughout UK FRSs. However Conference is also aware that because of the rotational nature of Officials within Brigade, Sectional and Regional positions the same or similar questions/requests are getting asked repeatedly. Therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to produce a secure database system for all information requests by Officials. In doing this the information requested can be stored securely and used by Officials, thus allowing a more consistent approach by all Officials. An update on the progress of this work will be given at the next Conference by the Executive Council.

TYNE & WEAR

BRO BRIAN HARRIS (Tyne & Wear):

Conference, President, access to information is vital in the role of officials and reps and this resolution is trying to address it by making access to important information quick and easy without duplication. Questions, and more importantly the responses, on the Mailgate system are essential. But, as you know, some get asked numerous times and often replies with a reply to all. This clogs officials' inboxes. This happens for a number of reasons such as no training or a change in reps who don't know if a question has already been asked. Conference, all we are asking for is that a secure system is produced that can store all the requests and responses that can be easily accessed. Conference, please support this resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That's open for debate. AGS will give the opposition.

ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, resolution 79 is not without sympathy at all from the Executive Council. The Executive Council has considered the number of requests, the type of requests, the existence of the requests that have been made by brigade officials – primarily brigade secretaries but brigade officials from around the union via the email system – seeking advice, seeking information to assist you in challenging brigades, in dealing with brigades or Fire & Rescue Services when they are coming to you with proposals, trying to find out what's out there, and trying, if you like, to make your own best judgement on how to address those issues. As I say, that has been discussed many times by the Executive Council.

In the past, I think in 2004, maybe 2003, the union did use the Labour Research Department to set up a facility similar to what is implied within the resolution. I think it was identified then that actually the quantity of documentation, the type of documentation that would go on that database could be and would be very extensive. It was sort of narrowed down into categories: leave, crewing systems, a range of others. But it was not as expansive as it could be. In truth, if you think about every nuance of the questions that are asked by officials – and I think I've captured every one into my subfolders on my inbox – capturing the questions and capturing the replies that are done by reply to all – are extremely varied. Some are very narrow points, some are very broad points. It is information that you require, totally understood and totally accepted. But what the resolution is calling for is huge. It needs to be done, but I don't think the resolution itself, if passed, captures quite how extensive that is, including the fact that once documents or responses or answers, information is provided through the database, it also needs to be updated. I don't know about individual Fire & Rescue Services. All I know is that when I worked in London there were shelves and shelves of different service policies – whether it was to do with terms and conditions, operational procedure. Shelves of them, shelves and shelves of documents, a whole range of documents.

If we make the database, what you supply into that database in month one of year one needs to be updated every time your service, with your agreement, changes that policy. Some of those policy documents (not necessarily terms and conditions) the service policy documents in respect of vehicles, in respect of procedures get tweaked, sometimes more than once each year. I know, for example, the breathing apparatus policy when I was in London,

in the space of about four years had 96 variations, with individual tweaks to different words. So that in itself is a huge task.

One thing the resolution doesn't address (and it's not a criticism of the resolution; it's not a criticism of the intent) which we're going to have to work on with you, is the first act. That is how do we make sure that we've got an efficient way of the question being asked, which isn't actually via the email system. I think, as Tyne & Wear said, it does tend to clog. But it's not efficient and it's not effective, and it's about finding a tracking system.

I will be frank, I mentioned earlier the Labour Research Department system which was quite clunky. That was because of the software that was available generally at the time. We've got Sharepoint now within the union. We do have a facility by which we can do it, but as I say, we need to have a robust system which means that people aren't relying upon a database where the information is out of date.

The final point I'll raise is that in asking the question, and asking the question of other Fire & Rescue Services, other brigades and brigade committees, what policy have you got, it doesn't mean to say necessarily that the answers you get back are good answers. They're correct answers, they're honest answers by the officials, but it does not mean to say that in Fire & Rescue Services you are getting what is right, what is proper, what is appropriate and actually what we would support. In other words, it can be a process by which we're sharing bad practice that Fire & Rescue Services have got.

There are huge issues. We have 92 resolutions on this year's conference agenda, we've had similar numbers for a number of years. There is a whole range of issues which this union, this Executive Council, this conference has never addressed because the issues that we would need to address are so wide-ranging. That said, where a brigade committee, any brigade committee, one brigade committee, or all of you, or a number of you have got a demand for information because it's something that you're having to confront because it's been brought to you by management or because you've identified it and know it needs to be addressed, you do need to have an efficient system whereby you can get that information.

With all those qualifications, I suppose, that's why we're saying to conference we're asking for it to be remitted. We get it. We know you need it. It is a huge gap. These aren't the big sexy issues which we bring to conference. These are the mundane but absolutely important issues that you need to deal with, that you need answers on on a day by day basis. We're asking for it to be remitted rather than pass the resolution with so many qualifications. We'll give you this commitment: we will deal with the issue. We know it is an issue for all officials of this union at whatever level. Thank you, President. I took too long!

THE PRESIDENT:

Tyne & Wear, right of reply.

BRO BRIAN HARRIS (Tyne & Wear):

Conference, President, with them reassurances we will remit. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I now move to Resolution 82 Fund Raising Sites moved by West Yorkshire. The Executive Council are seeking withdrawal or are opposing.

Resolution 82 FUNDRAISING SITES

Conference notes with great sorrow the apparent increase in cases of our Members dying whilst still in service. To that end this Conference applauds the local Official's solidarity and determination to support the families of our fallen sisters and brothers both financially and emotionally during this very sad and traumatic time. At the same time, this Conference notes the growing popularity of social media sites especially those whose aim is to fundraise, many of those sites offer this service for free.

Should Head Office receive a request for help to utilise such a site from the respective Brigade Committee, this Conference calls on the Executive Council to nominate the best person available to set up and facilitate the running of a fundraising site. Notification of the Members passing should be communicated to all Members by using all means possible and a recommendation of a donation should be made.

WEST YORKSHIRE

SIS MAGGIE MESZAROS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we're revisiting the fund raising sites. We did actually put this resolution in last year and lost, so hopefully we can go a bit further forward this year. We're not in opposition to the Fire Brigades Union lottery but we want this as an addition, and we want it to be endorsed by the union.

I'd like to ask the EC if an equality impact assessment was done, as we're very quick to jump on management if one is not done during the normal process of work. If one wasn't done, I'd like to ask why not? If one was done, what's the impact on the religious families receiving money from gambling as this is against their religion?

I'd just like to give you a bit of background for those that don't really know a lot about fund raising sites, and Justgiving pages. Some of them typically charge 5% although some don't charge anything. This is just one that I've looked at. So if one charges 5% they run, they monitor, they provide all the online tools, they provide the customer service, they give support and advice. They also provide tracking of any funds that's raised. You can instantly see the funds that are raised on your Smartphones etc. The best bit is that you donate £10, they deduct their 5% fee and any card charges, which are typically 1.25%, but the donation is boosted by 25% which is the Gift Aid. Also, the advantages are that they reached wider audiences through social media. It instantly shows the amounts raised, and there's no gambling involved. Also, although not in the motion that we've put forward (as that specifically talks about religion) if we had an FBU fund raising site that was endorsed by our union, we could then also support things like the West Midlands that are going on strike, we could have a Justgiving page for them. Thank you. I'd like you to just listen to our arguments and hopefully you'll agree with us. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. Open for debate. General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. I assume from Maggie's moving of it that the resolution is not being withdrawn, so on that basis, Conference, we urge you to oppose the resolution. In moving, Maggie spoke about the union's lottery. I will take the opportunity to just say a couple of things about that. The union's lottery partly came out of discussions here at conference where delegates urged us to look at other means of raising funds for union causes, and also discussions at the Executive Council. Within the couple of years that we've had the lottery in place, we have established quite a small but successful lottery operation. What I will say to delegates is that the effort that that has taken has been very considerable indeed. To research the background, to identify how to establish the lottery, to identify the people we would work with, and so on, was a considerable amount of work and effort of officials. Indeed, on some occasions, work by former officials, retired officials, has gone into that effort. We have, as a result of that, established funds which allow us to do work, some of which might in the past have come out of the union's General Fund, some of which we may not have done at all.

Some of the issues that are identified in the West Yorkshire resolution are, we believe, being addressed by the lottery. People will be well aware of the Andy Adams case in terms of the first donation that we made to that and we are developing our mechanisms for supporting families who are bereaved within our organisation.

So we do see that the West Yorkshire resolution somewhat diverts from the effort that we think needs to be put into establishing, building and developing our lottery, which we've agreed and we've discussed at conference previously as the primary route by which we raise solidarity funds for the five cause areas that are set out very clearly in the lottery.

We did discuss the ethical issues of this at the time. We are aware that some people object to lotteries because they see it as gambling. Some may do that simply on a personal basis, some may do it because of religious or other

beliefs. We entirely respect that, but we believe that we took the necessary steps to establish a lottery ethically. We are extremely pleased with the progress that has been made.

So we're not convinced that establishing fund raising sites, as set out by the West Yorkshire resolution, is a task that we can do centrally. Certainly, if brigade committees want to establish fund raising sites in those circumstances, then they are clearly free to do so. But we do not believe currently, with the other aspects of work that we're undertaking, that it's appropriate for us to do that centrally.

We've taken decisions to establish the Firefighters' 100 Lottery, and the focus of this organisation should be about building, developing and consolidating that lottery. I would urge West Yorkshire to withdraw at this stage or I would ask conference to oppose the resolution. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

West Yorkshire right of reply.

SIS MAGGIE MESZAROS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, my right to reply is just basically that this is an additional source. We're not taking away from the Fire Brigades Union lottery. We want this as an additional source. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Maggie. I now put Resolution 82 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now call Resolution 83 Direct Debit – Check Off moved by West Yorkshire. Executive Council are opposing.

Resolution 83 DIRECT DEBIT/CHECK-OFF

Conference condemns the Trade Union Act 2016 in its entirety and the vast majority of it should be repealed within 100 days of the next General Election Labour victory. Nevertheless, in the meantime this Conference agrees that the “one size fits all” view of placing everyone onto direct debit is not working and may result in some Members dropping out of the Union forever.

Conference notes Rule B(2)(5)(i)

A member shall pay his/her contributions to the Union by either deduction from salary at source or direct debit.

Therefore this Conference calls for an end to the campaign to switch everyone onto direct debit and allow individual Members the choice to remain on or revert back to check-off with immediate effect.

WEST YORKSHIRE

BRO MARTYN BAIRSTOW (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, our resolution came about with feedback from members. As the brigade organiser it was my task to try to get every member on to direct debit. We got to about 50%. Many people opted to go on to direct debit for a number of reasons. Yes, we fully acknowledge that the Trade Union Act and the effect that check off fees can have on union finances. But it's about offering choice to members who want to remain on check off, or that's the only way that they can pay. Some members have been bankrupt or have other financial problems which meant that they didn't want to go on to direct debit. So basically, the rationale behind it is just to offer members the choice. I think we've reached saturation at 50% of people who are resistant to moving over to direct debit.

I had one new recruit who was willing to join the union, filled in all the forms but wanted to pay by check off. When I said he was unable to do so, he didn't join the union. My fear is we might lose others in this way. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. It's open for debate. No. General Secretary to give the opposition.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Martyn's right that the driving force for launching our campaign was the Tory then-Trade Union Bill now the Trade Union Act. But I think we have to be aware that actually a number of other trade unions had already, prior to that debate, taken decisions for reasons of independence to move to a system of collecting contributions via direct debit. One of the problems has always been, but is now set out in legislation, that employers in the public sector are required to make charges for the operation of a check off system. The situation for the Fire Brigades Union is that we had some employers who already made charges, we had a whole number of employers who didn't make charges who will now have to make charges. Our view is therefore why would we want to pay money to Fire & Rescue authorities for performing an administrative task on behalf of this union?

I think the biggest concern that the Executive Council has is the amount of effort that has already gone into this campaign, that in many brigades we have 50% or more of members now on to direct debit. The truth is we've taken the foot off the gas a little bit in recent times. But the West Yorkshire resolution would allow members to revert to paying by check off. So our brigade organisers have primarily done the work, have gone out and done it. At a recent brigade organisers seminar we heard some stories of what they had done to be successful in the direct debit campaign. Having done that work, and in one case I think every wholetime member was now on direct debit, we would presumably write to those members saying, "I know we've spent two years trying to get you on direct debit but if you now want to revert to check off, please tell us and we'll do that for you." I think that is a huge waste of the efforts of those officials who took part in that campaign.

Also, introducing that choice when people join we think will complicate matters further. We've taken a decision. All decisions are up for review. We've taken a decision to move towards a direct debit system of payment. We need to see that through, Conference. That's a decision that you took. We now need to see that through. Please oppose the West Yorkshire resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

West Yorkshire right of reply.

BRO MARTYN BAIRSTOW (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, it was just to add that West Yorkshire (I don't know how many other brigades are still on four-weekly pay) is on four-weekly pay and the direct debit is monthly which does cause other complications for members' finances. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put Resolution 83 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now call Resolution 86 Arrangements and Organising for Conference moved by Cornwall.

Resolution 86 ARRANGEMENTS AND ORGANISING FOR CONFERENCE

Conference is concerned that the current timescales applicable to the submission of resolutions do not take proper account of the modern pace of change within Fire and Rescue Services and can leave resolutions out of date by the time they are tabled at Conference.

Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to instigate a review of the arrangements and organising of Conference with the aim of achieving a closing date for receipt of resolutions which is closer to the date of Conference than is currently the case.

CORNWALL

BRO GUY HERRINGTON (Cornwall):

President, Conference, officials around the UK spend many hours working with members and committees to write and check resolutions prior to submission before the declared closing date. The current constraints do not reflect the means of modern communication methods available to all of us. Resolutions submitted at previous conferences, and indeed this conference, have sometimes been out of date by the time the officials present them from these

rostrums. This extended period of time between the closing date and the start of the conference can make the context of the resolution seem less meaningful and even appear irrelevant.

Conference calls on the EC to instigate a complete and thorough review of the current arrangements and organisation of conference to explore all possible means of achieving a closing date for submission of resolutions which is closer to the first day of conference. This would ensure that the business of this union is conducted in a more effective manner. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Open for debate. No. I now put Resolution 86 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 91 Establishing a General Strike Fund moved by Cheshire. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 91 ESTABLISHING A GENERAL STRIKE FUND

Conference notes with alarm the biggest attacks in history on jobs, terms and conditions across UK Fire and Rescue Services.

To this end, Conference instructs the Executive Council to create a general strike fund, separate to the Unions other funds, supported by Member contributions, to support Members engaged in industrial action.

CHESHIRE

BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (Cheshire):

President, Conference, I imagine we'll spend much of this conference talking about pay, the need to secure fair and proper pay awards for our members and for our profession. In fact, we've spent much of conference for the last ten years talking about the same thing and so far we've failed to deliver that fair pay our members and our profession demands. History has shown us that our employers do not give as freely the rewards that our work deserves, the standards of living or opportunities by which society recognises and values. Conference, our movement's history is filled with illustrations that the only time we get an improvement in our lot is when we demand it and we fight for it.

We're talking about withdrawing our labour, organising our members and forcing those who deny us to pay us what we're worth. We have to be realistic. That means strike action, and not just a few hours or days, but sustained strike action. We have to be realistic that our members have concerns over sustained strike action due to having to meet financial commitments that are now common since Thatcher succeeded in deregulating the banks and opening the credit trap to the working classes in an attempt to oppress workers. In doing so, this makes strike action more difficult. But we need to give ourselves and our union the tools we need to succeed. We need to adapt.

In 2012 Unite created a general strike fund, funded by membership contributions to provide strike pay for its members engaged in industrial action. In recent years we have seen the British Airways cabin crew workers engage in 85 days of industrial action and they won. We have seen the Birmingham refuse workers engaged in five months of industrial action and they won. I imagine the General Secretary, in putting forward the Executive Council's opposition to this, will claim a difficulty in administering such a fund, that there may be income tax implications, and that as trade unionists we should be prepared to take strike action without receiving pay. In response, I would say other unions can administer such funds on a much larger scale. Tax on some pay is better than no pay at all. We are preaching to the converted in this hall today about the requisite to take strike action without pay, but it's about taking our members with us, to take on the government with a fund to support our members. What better way to mark the centenary year than establishing a general strike fund to set the agenda going forward and giving our members the confidence that they will be supported financially? Psychologically, it will make our employers think twice by sending a very clear message to our employers both locally and nationally that they can no longer starve our members back to work.

Conference, comrades, don't just be part of our union's history, make history. Support this resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO IAN HIBBERT (Merseyside):

Conference, President, whether we like it or not we cannot escape the truth that we live in a society where working men and women are beholden to the banking system and the credit which it provides. As a direct result we have seen not only declining numbers in trade union membership, but also a decline in the number of those trade union members who are willing to participate in protracted, meaningful strike action. Whilst the current ad hoc basis on which we provide support for our brothers and sisters engaged in industrial action is laudable, it often falls far short of what is actually required.

Whilst we understand the potential legal issues surrounding the setting up of a general strike fund, we must also be aware that other unions have already undertaken such endeavours. For example, UCU have long since established a fighting fund to support its members during times of struggle and hardship. With this in mind, we can see no reason why our union should not show the same solidarity with its brothers and sisters whilst taking strike action. Conference, please support Resolution 91. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, that's open for debate. Nobody. General Secretary to give the opposition.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, we understand the motivation of the resolution from Cheshire, but we do urge conference to oppose it. I'll be frank that one of the biggest headaches we have had financially over the past ten years is the handling of strike funds that have been held at local level by our committees. I have to say to Ian, one of those major headaches related to Merseyside's strike fund. So there are huge problems. Andrew mentioned that I would make some of these points. That doesn't reduce the importance of them.

The truth is that if you take our general financial arrangements, we are subject to intense scrutiny by HMRC, in terms of allowances that are paid to officials and so on. We have been through a very difficult process several years ago to address that, including having to put large numbers of officials through a payroll system to ensure that there is no accusation of not complying fully with the tax requirements of HMRC. So the idea of creating a general strike fund on a national level exacerbates that problem a thousand-fold, in our view.

Nobody wants to take industrial action in the fire service. But in terms of the examples that Andrew gave I think we can put the record of this union next to any of those trade unions in terms of our ability to organise our members and to fight back when necessary. We can put our record in terms of supporting our members who take industrial action against the record of any other union in the British Labour movement. We've done it in different ways. We've done it by raising funds for local disputes on every single occasion. That's a system that has worked. It is not one, however, without problems as I say. We've had to deal with some very difficult problems, by the way Conference, including legal problems that have arisen in terms of the administration of strike funds at local level.

So we are not convinced at all that this resolves the issues of challenging employers or challenging government. One thing that we need to bear in mind is that anything that we do the employers will have a response for and we would need to think what their response to that would be.

Conference, the huge scale of the task that this resolution would impose on us we think is not a route that we want to go down. I would urge conference very strongly to oppose the Cheshire resolution. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Cheshire, right of reply. No? I put Resolution 91 Establishing a General Strike Fund to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

Conference, it's now my great pleasure to introduce Harold Schaitberger, General President of the International Association of Firefighters, IAFF. The IAFF represents over 300,000 full-time professional firefighters and paramedics

in every state of the United States and Canada. This is the overwhelming majority of professional firefighters in North America. The IAFF is also celebrating its centenary year this year. We think they got organised just before we did. I'm sure Harold is going to tell us all about that.

Harold was first elected to the office of IAFF General President in 2000 and has been re-elected many times since. He is also Vice President of the AFL-CIO which is the American TUC. I've been to Washington to see first-hand the way that the IAFF looks after its firefighters and I was extremely impressed with everything I saw. So please give a warm welcome to Harold, our comrade and friend from across the water. Thank you. *(Applause)*

HAROLD SCHAITBERGER (IAFF):

Thank you, and Ian, thank you for that introduction, and congratulations on your election as President of the FBU. I know that you'll be doing a tremendous job. I was very pleased that we met years ago and several times since in Washington. I'm proud to stand with you and your union in this celebration of your centenary. And to your General Secretary, Matt Wrack. I have to tell you that I have admired your work and your leadership over the years. It's almost a decade that we have been in respective positions in our two organisations. I have always viewed you not only as bright and smart, but a very tough trade unionist who has always stood up for your members. I'm also pleased that we have been part of working together with a global alliance trying to make sure that we're doing what we can to share our experiences and our skills and our resources to better the lot of all of the members that we represent. So congratulations to you and Andy and your whole team.

I'd be remiss if I didn't also acknowledge another great friend and another great trade union leader from the United Firefighters Union of Australia. Peter Marshall, who I've also had privilege to know and to work with over many, many years and who, by the way, recently won his re-election once again as UFUA's national secretary. Congratulations, Peter. I'm always pleased to see the work that you're doing making a difference around the world, particularly in addressing the scourge and the issues of cancer within the fire service. So thank you for your efforts. Always good to see you, Peter.

To conference, as I would embrace my sisters and brothers, to my sisters and brothers here in the UK, I'm very honoured to be here with you, as you gather to celebrate your union's one hundred years of progress and set the course for the next century of representing your members in their future. I bring you greetings and best wishes from International's executive officers, executive board, and the 311,000 men and women of the IAFF across the United States and Canada. This year also happens to be our one hundredth anniversary. Considering the attacks that you've been faced with here, and the many similar battles that we have had to wage in the US and Canada, there are those who would like to see our union simply annihilated, who would prefer that unions no longer exist, have come at us from every angle they can to stagnate our rates of pay, and coming after our members' jobs, and watching how they've come after you and the 11,000 jobs that have been lost over these last eight years. Considering all of those attacks I think it's a pretty damn big deal that our two unions, the FBU and the IAFF, are not only standing here together today, but we are strong and unified, and ready to take on whatever attack or whoever attacks us next, and always willing to support each other's efforts.

I like to remind my union's leaders across North America that it's important to keep in perspective that when our enemies ultimately move on – and they ultimately move on – or when we take them out, or when their careers are over and their anti-union ideologies have been defeated, the fact of the matter is we will still be standing together, FBU and IAFF, strong, long after they're long gone. I try to always keep a perspective of that in the work that we have done and the responsibilities that we have. It's probably not a coincidence that our early pioneers came to the same conclusion in 1918. That's because of the terrible working conditions, the schedules they were forced to endure, the dangers they faced, the pitiful pay. It was time for a union of firefighters for firefighters, both in the US, Canada as well as here in the UK.

It was in February 1918 that my union's founders met in Washington DC. 65 independent locals from cities across two great nations came together, deciding it was time for a single, international trade union to unify their power. On 28 February of that year they adopted, on that very first convention floor, the charter that gave birth to the IAFF. Later that same year in October your founders, who were then a part of the National Union of Corporation Workers, determined to take their action, to break away from their parent union to form the Firemen's Trade Union, now

the FBU. 1918 was truly an historic year for our profession. When our forefathers started down their separate but very similar paths, even though they were separated and divided by an ocean, they had a view of the future of a firefighters-only union that could better the lot of those that they chose to represent. They could make a difference in their members' lives and livelihoods, help them provide for their families and make their job safer. In those early days it was made clear that our unions were not formed to be some club or social gathering. No, they were established to fight for right, to be a force for the change that those engaged in an honourable but dangerous profession had to be fought for. I believe those early FBU pioneers would be astounded and so very proud of what all of you have built and achieved over these ensuing one hundred years. It has truly been a century of progress. The accomplishments for you here in the UK and for us in the States and Canada have only been achieved with the constant and persistent commitment of leaders like all of you out on this conference floor.

So let's take a look back for a few minutes. A hundred years ago, when our unions set out to stop a work schedule where firefighters laboured under the continuous duty system which really just simply required them to live at their fire stations day and night (maybe a generous chief would give them a day off every so often). Today we've built safe duty systems and shifts that are based on responding to the community while also providing the appropriate break needed for those who do this tough, physically and psychologically, draining job and to do it safely and effectively. A hundred years ago the thought of a secure and sound pension at the end of a career was, for so many of us, only a fanciful wish but today we've built on some of the early gains made after the formation of our unions, and our members have sound and secure retirement plans. Unfortunately, we regularly have to fight off those common enemies who are constantly trying to undermine them, forcing us to fight against ever-increasing attacks to gut them, destroy them, eliminate them in order to protect our pension schemes over this last decade. A hundred years ago in our profession you were expected to suck it up, no matter how traumatic, tragic or grisly the incident. The stigma that was created was to be superhuman and never show emotion, never sharing your pain with your colleagues, never shedding a tear. But today, both of our unions have made it a priority to ensure that the behavioural health and the mental health of our members is paramount. We're working to bring mental and psychological health injuries out of the shadows and into the light, addressing the alarming rates of suicide that are far higher than the general population – unfortunately, at least in our experience. In fact, the tragic truth is that my union right now is experiencing losing more of our members to suicide than we are to traumatic line of duty deaths. So to answer this incredible challenge both of our unions continue and enhance our work to address behavioural health and post-traumatic stress injury by creating the protocols and training, by creating our peer counselling structures, by pushing for cutting edge specialised treatments that our members need so they can get the care that they deserve and we can save and put them on a path of recovery.

It was a hundred years ago that our co-founders committed to keeping our members safe. But they had virtually no technology to work with in developing safer equipment, and little to no building codes or standards for appliances, staffing or PPE to force safer working conditions. Today, over the past ten decades, it's been our unions who have taken on this fight. It's only because of all of your tenacity that you've been able to force the development of better turn outs, better breathing apparatus and safer appliances.

Now, even noting that of all the success over these one hundred years, of all the advances in this great profession of ours, I suspect all of you also have to hear in your stations back home, with members too often asking: "What the hell is the FBI – FBU – doing?" (*Laughter*) I figured it would take me about five minutes before I would say that! We have that little FBI right down the street from our office. I always get a little concerned about that. But they do, they sit around the table, I suspect, and say "What's my union doing for me?" We hear the same thing. But I believe part of the reason that we hear that question is because of the new generations making their way into this profession. That's not to be critical; it's just to recognise that coming in are the X-ers, the millennials, the Z-ers. Are we doing a good enough job to make sure they understand the heritage of our unions, your unions? Do you do a good enough job so that they realise that what they enjoy today in the form of benefits or collective agreements and everything that they walk through the door and received, that it was this union that was at the forefront of that? We haven't made sure they truly understand how we've been the driving force behind virtually every single advance in the fire service, from safety to response protocols, to PPE, to turning what was one-time basically a slave labour job into one of the great professions in the world. We don't do a good job of that because of who we are. I suspect you're no different than we are. You're really as bold as you can be on the job; you're really an understated lot. You are uncomfortable being braggadocious about anything. You don't look for the spotlight, you don't call or see

yourselves as heroes. Others may suggest that. In fact, when receiving adulation about your work, I know what you typically say. I suspect it's the same that our members on the floor say and that is: "We're just doing our jobs." We bring too much of that understatement and that culture into our union work: you're just doing your job.

But the fact is that we have to do a better job of making sure that new generations hitting the floor on your stations know the history, understand the challenges of the past, the victories, realise what their union has struggled for and achieved for them, know how hard you continue to fight today on their behalf. We have to change that culture of "hey, if they don't realise what we're doing for them shame on them". You have to come out of our comfort zone and talk about what your union has been able to accomplish and to communicate that it truly is the FBU and all of you in this hall, on this conference floor, who have been the driving force behind the positive changes in this profession. We have to be able to communicate to them where they want to get their information and where they get their information. Right here. We have to embrace today's technology and social media networks and systems and platforms. We have to be able to develop the content (we call it), but the information, the narrative and to be able to feed that to them in a context and in a place where we know they reside and where we can likely communicate with them. We have to be clear that it hasn't been chief officers or the government leaders who have graciously bestowed upon them the benefits that you fought for and won on their behalf. No. In fact, it's those same government officials who regularly attempt to turn the clock back and undermine our standards, your safety regimes. So yes, we've got to make sure they know what's at stake – the challenges and the threats, but also the opportunities and the achievements.

When I think about all of the safety regimes and the work you do, it doesn't take me but a second just to think about the devastating Grenfell Tower fire that occurred one year ago next week, which we keep hearing about in the news so often. Your members responded that day to that horrific scene and it demonstrated the absolute best that your country has to offer. The complete dedication, courage and professionalism was clear as your members advanced into that inferno, risking their lives to save others. I want to make sure that all of you understand that my members back home have nothing but respect and admiration for what their comrades in the London Fire Brigade did that day. It was truly an incredible scene. Your members did all of us in this great profession proud, despite what all of those pencil pushers and desk jockey critics out there are writing about. *(Applause)*

Those in the media, by the way, who sit in the safety of their offices pecking away at their little computers, who have no other safety concerns to think about than maybe they'll break a fingernail on their soft fragile hands while they're typing the most inaccurate tripe about the fire and about your firefighters, at the same time are trying to ignore the devastating deregulation of the fire safety codes that allowed that building to be constructed with flammable cladding – essentially using panels covered in petrol. As a trade unionist I swell with pride that it was your great union taking on those critics, ensuring the investigations wouldn't allow those facts to get buried. I'm not quite sure how you would say it in your stations as you're sitting around your kitchen tables, but back home in the States we would all be telling those critics that they can just kiss our arse, that's what we'd be saying! *(Applause)*

One hundred years ago firefighters fought fires. There were a lot of fires, massive fires, because of the lack of codes and standards, because the building materials were all flammables, because the houses and city blocks had not been compartmentalised, no fire walls, no sprinklers, nothing to slow the spread of fire. The massive fires of World War II, so historic in nature. Your members faced incredible fire storms and did so with backs of steel. Yes, our original work was only fighting fires. But today, the number of fires has dropped significantly. That is a fact. Our critics, those little computer peckers I mentioned a moment ago, have made sure to point that out at every turn: "Hey, there are less fires". They still harp on that same old drivel, you know, that the number of fires has decreased so why do we need so many firefighters? They fail to note that the dangers that the public and you face in every single fire are much different and more hazardous than in the old days. They purposely fail to point out that synthetic and foam materials used in modern construction, in furnishings and coverings burn hotter, faster and more toxic. Do they note how you save countless lives every day in automobile crashes? That you're snatching flood victims out of running water, or performing high angle rescues? No. They only like to point out that there aren't as many fires. It's most frustrating that they write their columns and broadcast their reports about the ever-growing threat of terrorism, and then fail to recognise the life-saving role you play in many of those incidents, as was the case in the Manchester bombing, and how communication breakdowns in response to those incidents can hamper your members from doing their jobs.

The point I want to make to all of you is back home we have these same ill-informed critics. We too have elected politicians, decision makers at the federal state, provincial and local levels. We have the media and the bloggers who like to use fewer fires and all that bullshit to push for cuts in our Fire & Rescue Services. What we've done to counter their arguments is to fully embrace the expanded, all hazards roles of emergency response and increase the call volume that goes with that. By doing that we're taking our critics' arguments away from them. Before I get into this any further I want to say to all of you (and I am very aware that this is an important and a proper debate going on in your union right now and right here this week) I know you're discussing, experimenting and wrangling with the idea of expanding your roles into emergency medical response. I'm not here to do Matt's or Ian's bidding for them. I wouldn't stand for someone attempting to undermine my union's established decision-making process, nor would I attempt to impose our view on you in your house at your conference.

However, I think I'd be failing all of you as a union leader if I didn't at least share our experience and maybe this last point to help you at least give some thought to this debate. Of all the debates and the tough issues that we dealt with internally in the IAFF that I have personally witnessed and participated in over the last 48 years of my union involvement, none was more contentious and spirited (I took out the fist fight word) than the effort to expand the role of firefighters in the US into what we call the EMS response. For us, it all started back in the 60s and the early 70s as a large group of jurisdictions began expanding the basic medical training our members had been receiving and moving to full paramedic training and response. What we struggled with the most as a union were two things. First and foremost, we had to work through the culture and the traditions of our great profession. While many of the younger generation were fine with it, we had what I would call the "old guard" not wanting to expand into this broader EMS role. It was the culture of "Hey, I signed up to this job to fight fire, not to be a nurse". That was the toughest to overcome. In the face of it, though, the old guys (yes, I include myself in that description) had a point back then in saying what they came on the job for. But the fact of the matter is that we had to get away from that thought that "I don't want to get up in the middle of the night to pick some drunk up off the sidewalk who's puking on my boots". We had to start to understand as a union that we have to approach this issue cautiously, but also trying to see forward and into the future and what it might mean within our ranks.

I've seen the FBU statements about some of the recent experiments on this expanding role. Your concerns are exactly the same kinds of things that we were grappling with internally and with our employers as they push for that expansion: ensuring proper training, development of proper protocols, addressing the parameters of the response and collective agreements, including appropriate compensation for the expanding role, proper PPE. The list goes on. I'll say that this is exactly what a good union does. It faces new challenges head-on, and it works its arse off to make sure that in the end we're doing everything we can to enhance our members' work, their safety, their health, and ultimately their value to the community to ensure the need for emergency response is not only widely recognised at all levels and by the decision makers, but understanding that we have to put forward the resources to make sure you're staffed and resourced adequately.

Today in the US we now have over 85% of fire departments providing full EMS response and care across the country. We're also beginning to integrate the system into our Canadian departments. The result has really been stark. The result is simply every jurisdiction where we provide fire based EMS we have realised expansion of the fire department. And we aren't fighting cuts to budgets or staffing. Departments that remain resistant, our experience is, were now still fighting regularly against elimination of jobs and eroding fire department resources.

Simply put for us, our experience has shown that taking on this expanded role has increased our value to our nation and our communities, and it has resulted in growing numbers of firefighters in the US and growing numbers within our union. Just this morning I received our May membership report, showing for 60 months in a row another addition of new members – this time almost 1,000, pushing us over the 312,000 mark. It may not work the same here, but I just want to share that for us it really became part of protecting our industry and enhancing our profession and keeping our people working and more justification to see that they get good and fair pay. It has increased our leverage in the contract negotiations. It's helped us to influence government decisions more. And it certainly has brought us more respect from the public. Again, that's been our experience and I hope you take it for what it's worth, which is just an additional piece of information as you go through your proper and appropriate decision making process here this week.

Since I'm the only person standing between you and lunch, let me close with this. It was a hundred years ago that delegates representing our two unions stood an ocean apart, yet they were beginning parallel journeys down similar paths to create their respective unions of firefighters for firefighters. Over these last one hundred years we have made incredible strides. I think all that we have done within those ranks, that our forefathers would be so proud of what you have built, what we have built on our separate, long journeys. Now, as I look forward to our next one hundred years of work, as much as we've done there's still so much that we must and will do. Yes, there are some tough challenges hitting you right now, but you've been entrusted by your members, elected to lead, to deliver for those on the front line. I know that's exactly what you're doing. You, each and every one of you, has the chance through your union to make the next one hundred years matter for your members. It's all of your obligations to those members out there on the front lines, those who pay the freight, keep this union financially strong, and I know you will not let them down. It doesn't matter what part of the UK that your members come from – whether you're from Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland or England, rural or urban communities. You are all comrades within one prestigious union, the great FBU. When your successors look back at you and what you've done a hundred years from now, what will they say? How will they measure your work, your contribution to the cause? I know you want them to say, "They made one hell of a difference; they improved our members' lives, they left us a proud legacy of achievement and success to build on". I am so confident with the great leadership team that you have here that that is exactly what they will say.

Good luck to you in your work this week. Stand together, stand strong, stay united. God bless all of you. *(Applause)*

If I may – I said I was going to let you go to lunch but I have one more honour and that is from sisters, brothers, the comrades in the United States and Canada I'd like to present to you our bell of one hundred years of progress and unity from 1918 to 2018 to the Fire Brigades Union. *(Applause)*

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, I think Harold, on behalf of conference, first of all I just want to thank you for that fantastic speech that you gave to us. I want to say just a couple of words about Harold and his team and his organisation. I think part of what conference should know is Harold is really making a flying visit. He was telling us something about his scheduling. He does a huge amount of travelling, covering the United States and Canada. Clearly there are huge demands on his time, and he took the time out to come here for this centenary conference but has to depart again today. I think that's quite a tribute to yourselves that he took that time out to come here in that short space of time. Either that, or he can't stand our company and he needs to get away!

Ian mentioned a visit we paid to Washington. There are clearly lots of political differences between the UK and North America, but there are also lots of similarities in the challenges that we face. In Britain, our experience with talking to British unions is people are very reluctant to tell you what's really going on inside their organisations. They don't tell you about their staffing issues, they don't tell you about their pension issues, they don't tell you about their strategic thinking, everyone keeps it very close to their chest. I think that's part of the problem for the British trade union movement. When we visited Washington, Harold and his team really opened their doors to us and explained how they operate on a whole range of functions. We came back with huge numbers of ideas, some that maybe aren't appropriate, others that may be appropriate. Those are discussions for us to have over the coming period.

Harold, on behalf of conference we're so honoured that you've come here this week. We're a bit gutted that you were formed a few months before we were a hundred years ago. But it's fantastic that our two organisations have achieved that centenary together. We look forward to seeing you later this year at your convention in Seattle.

We have a small gift for you. I'm not sure we can match the bell at the present time. He's thrown a gauntlet down there, hasn't he? *(Laughter)*

We've got a small gift for you to take back and we will be over soon. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, before we break for lunch I've just got one important announcement. It is the official first outing of our FBU centenary campaign trailer today. This is going to be located down on the seafront opposite. Go down the

steps, turn to the right and it's located outside the sailing club. It's going to be there every dinner time. We don't want you dipping out of conference to go see it but it will be there every dinner time. Go there. It's also there after conference finishes. We've arranged also for the sailing club to be open for drinks, which is probably a lot cheaper than anywhere else in Brighton! I would encourage you to go see it, see what it's offering and then you'll hopefully be able to use that in your brigades for the various events.

On that note, with your agreement, we will break and back in here for 1400 hours. *(Applause)*

Break for lunch

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, can you come to order. Conference, come to order, take your seats.

I now call Steve Shelton, the Chair of Standing Orders Committee, to give the Standing Orders report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Sorry, Conference. Please turn to your Programmes of Business page 5: Resolution 3 from Cumbria Funding of Council Fire & Rescue Services has been withdrawn with the right to speak. Page 10: Resolution 74 Equality, Avon has been withdrawn.

Conference, I reported to you this morning that Devon & Somerset had withdrawn Resolution 58 to second the Executive Council policy statement on Grenfell Tower Fire. The Devon & Somerset delegation have advised at Standing Orders that they are no longer seconding the Executive Council policy statement on Grenfell Tower Fire after having discussions with London. Emergency Resolution 2 from London has been withdrawn to second Executive Council policy statement Grenfell Tower Fire. Is everybody clear on that piece of business? Thanks, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

Conference, before we move on, just a short announcement. I'm pleased to announce that we are going to be joined by Jeremy Corbyn this afternoon around 1600 hours, so we will try and work it around that.

Conference, I now call Resolution 94 Regional and Sectional Secretaries Meetings moved by Lancashire. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 94 REGIONAL AND SECTIONAL SECRETARIES MEETINGS

Conference notes that there is no requirement within the Rule Book for the Regional Secretaries and National Sectional Secretaries to hold combined meetings during any given year. Conference believes that the Regional Secretaries/National Sectional Secretaries are an integral, strategic and important part of our structure.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to convene a minimum of two combined Regional Secretaries/National Sectional Secretaries meetings per annum and to carry out any necessary alterations to the Rule Book that are required.

LANCASHIRE

BRO KEV WILKIE (Lancashire):

President, Conference, comrades, this is a very simple resolution that arose as a result of a former senior official of our union who, when questioned, informed the regional secretary that there was no requirement for regional secretaries and sectional secretaries to meet as there was nothing in the rule book to state that they should. The regional and national sectional secretaries therefore only meet when the Executive Council or national officers deem fit that they should do so.

The regional officials are drawn from a representative cross-section of our membership, including LGBT, B&EMM and National Women's Committee. They are an integral and important part of our union and need a structure in place to direct that they meet a minimum of twice per year. Twice per year, conference, is certainly not too much to ask. The Executive Council met 36 times last year to discuss, amongst other things, strategy.

Conference, we need to be clear that we're not asking for separate meetings of the equality section secretaries and the regional secretaries but two combined meetings per year of the regional secretaries including the national sectional secretaries. We don't know why the Executive Council would oppose this resolution as communication

between our structures are clearly key to our success. I'm sure the Executive will tell you that regional secretaries and national sectional secretaries meet twice a year anyway, so what is the problem with confirming that by putting it into the rule book?

Conference, please remember as you vote that you are not asking for separate meetings of the equality section secretaries and the regional secretaries, but two combined meetings per year of the regional secretaries, including the national sectional secretaries. Two meetings per year of those combined officials isn't too much to ask. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (Cheshire):

Conference, President, we are seconding Resolution 94. One thing we can all agree on is that FBU officials at all levels of the union have a huge workload that only ever seems to increase. The Executive Council members spend a great deal of time making sure that information discussed at the Executive Council meetings is passed to the regional committees so that full debate and the cascading of that information throughout our structures can occur. There's a huge amount of information that's relayed, but sometimes though different topics are discussed at regional secretary only meetings. Information is key to unity within our membership so the more information the better. The information relayed from the regional secretary meetings is often very detailed in other areas, other than that due to workload relayed by Executive Council members. That is not a criticism, that is just a fact.

We often say as officials, when we are dealing with management, that we will meet any time to discuss any issue and yet here we are apparently opposing or stopping regional secretaries and sectional secretaries meeting to discuss key issues and therefore in doing so assisting the Executive Council members in the flow of current, relevant and necessary information within their regions. We urge conference to support this resolution and let's improve the flow of information even further. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

BRO MARK WOODWORTH (Bedfordshire):

We are supporting Resolution 94. We rightly heard from the General Secretary earlier that regional secretaries are put in place by the membership and elected to represent the members across the region. It would be remiss of us not to use this valuable resource when today we have already heard of the ever-growing workloads of this Executive Council. Should we not facilitate this by cementing regular official meetings of our regional secretaries within our rule book? Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? No. General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, the Executive Council is asking you to oppose this resolution. I think, to be honest, we were somewhat baffled to receive it because in the meetings that we have with regional secretaries and in the meetings that we have with sectional secretaries this call has never been made, not once. So the regional secretaries have never made the call for such a meeting, and nor have sectional secretaries.

Just to explain what does happen, and this also touches on the fact that there are slightly different responsibilities and remits, in terms of the equality sections what is in place is that regular meetings are arranged with the secretary and chair of each of the equality sections with the general secretary and president. Those take place normally three times a year. Equally, at each business meeting on one occasion the trade sections will be asked to send representatives to attend the business meeting of the Executive Council, and on the alternate business meeting of the Executive Council the equality sections would be asked to send a representative to the Executive Council. So there are mechanisms for both the equality sections and the trade sections firstly to meet myself, the president and relevant national officer several times a year, as well as attending directly inputting into the Executive Council.

The issue about the rules and functions of regional and sectional committees is that clearly there are issues relating directly, for example, to equality sections which may need to be raised directly with the general secretary or with the Executive Council for the Executive Council to consider. I will come on to the regional secretaries' meetings in a moment, but the function is certainly somewhat different.

The regional secretaries meetings have been convened on a number of occasions, normally following a discussion of the Executive Council or a discussion at head office, sometimes as a direct result of a dialogue with regional secretaries. For example, the most recent one discussed how regions would organise attendance at the TUC demonstration. That was the key part of the discussion. Indeed, the sectional secretary who was in attendance made the comment that actually on that point there was nothing much to add because that work would be organised via the regional committee and the regional office.

So there are clearly different functions and we need to recognise those different functions. I think we need to remember that the regional secretaries meetings have no status in the rule book. They are not decision making meetings because there is no mechanism for regional secretaries to make decisions. That issue is completely avoided in the Lancashire resolution. I think conference really has to have some serious thought about this. I have to say it smacks of what I would term "committee-itis", that if we have a problem in an organisation what we do is set up a committee, to make sure that people have more meetings to go to, to supposedly resolve problems. In reality, there's little evidence that setting up further and further committees actually does resolve those problems.

We've discussed structures already. In terms of our previous discussions on structures we did identify that actually in relation to a number of our structures we would, in certain areas of activity, hold regular meetings, some of which were written into the rule book (as is being asked for) that head office had to convene meeting X so many times a year, and that we would have something like 25 people travelling from all over the UK – some of whom made a contribution, some of whom, for whatever reason, did not have contributions to make to those meetings. When we reviewed it we said: actually, this is not a sensible way of conducting business. Yet here we are, in danger of replicating exactly that problem.

In terms of writing into the rule book that this should take place two times, I've certainly been through one period of this union's history where we had several recall conferences in one year. The idea that we would have, for example, three recall conferences and then get to December and realise we have not called our two regional secretaries meetings; we'd better call them because it's in the rule book is frankly daft, Conference.

This is not the way to resolve it. We've said that there is a structure review. If people, delegates, committees, regional committees, regional or sectional secretaries want to feed these sorts of suggestions into that review then we can consider what is the best way of communicating and having a dialogue between and with the regional and the sectional secretaries. Conference, this resolution, I assure you, is not the way to do it. I urge conference to oppose the resolution. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Lancashire right to reply. (*Waived*). I now put Resolution 94 Regional and Sectional Secretaries' Meetings to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED (Card vote called)* Stay in your seats, don't run up. Scrutineers and tellers to the front, please. Conference, that carried. Do you really want to do this card vote? No? Is that a no? Nobody's calling for a card. No, that carried.

Conference, I've got to say, don't just shout out "card vote" for the sake of it. We've now got a short report from the Chair of Standing Orders.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

I apologise profusely for wasting conference time. I did mean to give you some delegate changes before.

Hertfordshire: delete Daren Scotchford. Scotland: delete John Malcolm and replace with Neil Gillespie. East Sussex: insert Mark Brown and Simon Herbert. Apologies for that. Thanks, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

Paragraph L2. I now call Resolution 84 Reporting Back Following Executive Council Meetings moved by London.

Resolution 84 REPORTING BACK FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS

Transparency and accountability must be at the heart of any democratic Trade Union. To ensure maximisation of trust, it is vital that Members are able to scrutinise the conduct and decisions of Officials. This applies particularly to the Executive Council, which is the governing body of our Union between Conferences and in whose Members is invested considerable power.

Conference notes that Executive Council Members are currently prohibited from reporting details of individual votes, other than their own, cast at Executive Council meetings. This has the effect of cloaking the decisions of the Executive Council in secrecy and undermining the relationship between it and the membership.

Conference therefore agrees that, with immediate effect, Executive Council Members will be free to report details of all individual votes following meetings of the Executive Council.

LONDON

BRO JON WHARNSBY (London):

President, Conference, comrades, a great man once said that censorship is the keystone of tyranny. I'd like to jump on board of what Brother Andrew from Cheshire said: information is key to unity, I would agree with that. The EC is the governing body of this fine union between conferences and as such is accountable to the whole membership. By censoring EC members from reporting the EC votes, the union is effectively denying the accountability and transparency we should all cherish in a trade union and free society. It is essential in the modern era of this union that we are all as open and accountable as possible. This established practice has a systemic flaw that would allow any EC member to not follow the mandate of their region as long as a single EC member voted that way, denying our members their representation. You may hear opposition to this motion comment that each EC member is accountable and therefore reportable to their own region alone. But how are we to have a freely and comradely open debate amongst regions that is essential in a democratic union if we are not to know what their decisions were?

This resolution asks that the EC members are allowed to make note of which regions nod or raise their hands and report this to regional committees. We feel nothing could be simpler and we ask your support in changing this archaic and secretive practice. No decision made by a representative on behalf of people or members should be shrouded in a veil of secrecy. It is essential within a free union that no decision should be without scrutiny. To better represent our members, London implores you to support this resolution. Conference, we move. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO IAN HIBBERT (Merseyside):

We are seconding Resolution 84. Conference, President, whilst we understand the need for discretion on occasion we must admit we find it a rather paradoxical state of affairs that transparency with our union has become something of a taboo. There has been much discussion surrounding potential bullying and harassment of national officers should voting positions be made public knowledge. To those that have raised these issues I'd say this: this union has strict anti-bullying policies in place and we would like to hope that all officials, both locally and nationally, can put their faith in those policies. If not, I would suggest that those policies are what we need to review.

When conducting our business on a daily basis we try to instil in all members the notion that you are the union. With this in mind, it is understandable that some members may find it somewhat strange that voting on the EC is often shrouded in secrecy. Conference, regardless of region, each EC member sat behind me worked on behalf of every FBU member in this country. As such, it is only right that votes taken on their behalf are completely transparent.

Conference, I'll finish with this thought: the voting record of every MP in every debate is in the public domain regardless of whether or not you are a constituent of theirs. I hope you will agree, Conference, when I say that I hold every EC member here more accountable and to a higher standard than any MP. Conference, please support the resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Nobody. General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, the Executive Council are asking London to remit the resolution to the Executive Council or asking conference to oppose it. Despite the resolution, we're not aware of significant concerns ever being raised about this issue in recent periods. I think we would reject the idea that there is some sort of censorship going on in terms of Executive Council discussions and/or decision making. Indeed, the minutes of the Executive Council are circulated to every region in the union and therefore are available to all members. That's in our view, a completely open and transparent mechanism.

The question of how votes are recorded depends upon the situation, as in many committees. Sometimes a decision will be made without opposition and will be simply a consensus decision sometimes there is a vote; sometimes in any committee people may need to record that vote to record the numbers concerned, and people may wish, for example, to have their opposition to a particular proposal recorded. When the resolution came up at the Executive Council we did have some sympathy for what is being expressed. For example, the suggestion that John made in moving that Executive Council members would make their own note of that decision making process and that would become the basis of the report back, we do have examples in any committee structure of people taking inaccurate notes. The mechanism for resolving that is through minute taking. So we take minutes at the Executive Council. Those minutes are then agreed by the Executive Council. That becomes the official record, not the record of one official but the record of the entire body. That's the correct and official record of that decision making process. So the idea that we would rely on individual Executive Council members to do that does raise some concerns about that.

But in general actually we had a lot of sympathy for what is being suggested by London, and we are quite happy to review the process. That means reviewing how the Executive Council takes its decisions, how the Executive Council records its decisions, the different forms of decision making that the Executive Council has (like every committee), and making that as open and transparent as possible. The one area of major concern that we had – and we've had several occurrences of these in my experience in my time of working on the Executive Council – is when we may have major industrial issues where there are potentially deep divisions in the union. That might be about the decision to move to a strike ballot, for example. The idea that we would immediately, all over social media, publish which regions were in favour of a strike ballot and which regions were against a strike ballot we think is potentially damaging to the wider interests of the union.

Similarly, if we are in a dispute and there is the possibility of some settlement or similar, then the idea that we would immediately, on social media, publish the vote and which regions were in favour of an immediate settlement and which regions were against an immediate settlement again we think does not necessarily assist this union industrially when we know that our enemies would be following such decisions closely.

We're not pre-judging that issue. It may be that it is entirely appropriate to publish such decisions, but certainly on the Executive Council there are considerable concerns that automatically requiring the Executive Council to publish that could be a significant mistake. We would urge conference to use some caution in making this decision. As I say to London, we are quite happy to discuss this issue and take on board the concerns that are raised. There is no intention to censor what people are reporting back. There is no intention to cover up how people are reporting. I don't accept that this allows people to breach mandates because clearly every Executive Council member is responsible to and accountable to the regional committee in the region from which they are elected. There is nothing within any decision that's been made on the Executive Council or by any President that prevents a regional committee from asking that member of the Executive Council how they voted on a particular issue, particularly if there was a regional position or a regional mandate. So we reject the idea that that allows people to bypass mandates if mandates are what regional committees are giving.

It is a serious matter, but we are not convinced that the approach set out in London resolution 84 is a mechanism to take it forward. We would urge London to remit the resolution and we will discuss it, or I would urge conference to oppose the resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

London, right to reply.

BRO JON WHARNSBY (London):

Thank you for your comments. I will just cover a few of them. If the minutes are available then I see no reason to oppose this if we're going to be open and transparent. The issues regarding the difficulty of recording a nod or a handshake in the hundredth year of this great union, I don't see that as an insurmountable problem if I'm honest. I feel we need to modernise and I hope conference is with us on that. This motion does not ask that we put it on social media; it doesn't ask that we dictate it to our enemies. We just ask that this is reported back to the regional committees. The suggestion that the regional committees that are represented in this room are not trusted with that information I find difficult to believe. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put Resolution 84 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. I will take that again. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 87 Resolution Progress Reporting from the Officers National Committee. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

Resolution 87 RESOLUTION PROGRESS REPORTING

Conference again demands that resolutions passed at Conference have updates provided on work carried out, with action plans for completion.

Conference requires a greater degree of transparency and accountability in order to demonstrate progress against resolutions.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

BRO SIMON AMOS (ONC):

Conference, here we are, Groundhog Day. We've swapped the Gold Coast of the Northwest for the English Riviera. Some familiar faces in the audience that I can't really see with these glasses on any more listen to me raising the same resolution for the third year on the trot. I was contemplating withdrawing this resolution as it looked like there was some work being done. There was a document produced last November that was exactly what we had asked for. That was resolution progress reporting, with what the resolution was, who was responsible for taking the action, and what action had been taken. Unfortunately, most of the action columns were blank. I've not seen anything since as an update, but that might be because I'm a sectional official and I don't get the same information everybody else does! *(Laughter) (Applause)*

Other than the balmy sea air and camaraderie of seeing each other again, what's the point of conference? We come here to raise motions/resolutions, debate those and vote on them. But ultimately, if they don't achieve anything what is the point of conference? We've heard the AGS give assurance already on one of the resolutions that work will be done. I urge you to support this resolution, Conference, and make conference resolutions worth raising in the first place. Let's please hold head office and those people doing the work on them accountable for their actions. Third time lucky, Conference. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. General Secretary to give the qualification.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

The qualification, Simon, is that it's already done. The relevant committee level to report to is brigade committees, because brigade committees send the delegates to conference. Regional and sectional secretaries automatically

receive brigade secretary circulars. So you're on that list, you receive brigade secretaries circulars. On at least two occasions – so the one that you referred to in November and the one that was issued in February – conference progress reports were given. Those are reported to the Executive Council, which is the correct body to report that progress to, and then circulated to all brigade secretaries. In fact, in preparation for conference we asked Executive Council members whether that was an issue with that mechanism of reporting and they reported back that in no regional committees had concerns been raised about that mechanism for reporting progress on resolutions.

So that's the mechanism by which progress is reported. It is already done and it is already in hand. The other mechanism for holding people to account is this conference itself, obviously. You can, under paragraph, get up and ask about progress on resolutions that were agreed at previous years' conferences. In preparation for conference the entire head office team are focused on ensuring that they can answer those questions. If they don't answer those questions you will make your views known in regard to that.

So it is already done, Conference. You have mechanisms, you have regional committees, you have sectional committees and you have those update reports. They are called the structures of the union and those are the structures of the union by which we ensure that the work set out at conference is carried out, is reported back. That happens through those reports and through your committee structures throughout the year following conference.

So it is qualified support on the basis that this is already done.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 87 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED (Applause)*

I now call Paragraph L3, para L4, para L5. I now call Resolution 89 Canvassing and Elections moved by Derbyshire. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

Resolution 89 CANVASSING AND ELECTIONS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to set up a task and finish group on the issue of canvassing for elections within the Fire Brigades Union.

The group should provide recommendations to the Executive Council on how to ensure that election candidates can make themselves and their commitments known to the membership. The Executive Council should establish a standardised procedure whereby Members receive notification of such details on candidates wishing to stand.

This process should be applied at the nomination stage, the election stage or both. Any information provided by candidates should be approved by the Executive Council to ensure equal and fair representation to the membership.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to provide a resolution on this issue to Conference 2019.

DERBYSHIRE

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, Matt's wry smile said it all when I came up here. I've spent a bit of time putting items forward about canvassing and elections, and chipping away at the difficult rules that canvassing brings. I still believe that this subject does belong in the rule book and not under an EC policy statement. I believe in the main we all want the same thing here. But it's finding the right ways of doing it, finding the right words and the right processes to go about it. In Derbyshire members have found it repeatedly difficult to engage with the processes of nominations and elections. This appears mainly down to one thing from what I can understand. The everyday branch members don't know the people who wish to stand for many positions of the union, nor do they have any information about them or their intentions in seeking election to such a position when they get the nomination forms to the branches. Inevitably, what they do then is they go off seeking information from somebody else who might be able to inform them about

certain people. But in reality the latter part isn't happening, because once they're disengaged by the first part of not knowing who anybody is or what they want to do, they just remain disengaged and take no active part in elections and nominations. I think that's evidenced in many election results that you will have seen in your regions and other places.

So surely we can't let this continue. It's my belief that it's happening far and wide across our union. These processes elect everything from a brigade secretary (which is myself) or our newly elected President. We do need to do more to inform and engage the membership.

Conference, I've got to pick my words particularly carefully but we all know what's happening around nominations and elections so I would just ask for your support in setting up a small group of EC members to look at the issue and discuss how we can improve our processes. One area needs to be getting information to the members about people's intentions to stand for positions and therefore seek nominations to do so. Subsequently, if a ballot is called in an election, that further information is provided to best inform the members.

Our resolution asks for the Executive Council to provide a resolution based on the findings of the Task and Finish Group to the conference of 2019. So this means that the Executive Council still retain control of the process and also have the ability to move any required changes or amendments in the best way in the future. The General Secretary has already moved some rule changes on the issue at conference today, and I hope that when he returns in 2019 they will also propose further positive changes in this area.

The main thrust of the resolution is to engage further with the membership and give our members total control of the direction of this union by way of electing and nominating people on an informed basis. I still feel we need to do more on the debate around canvassing and how we as officials make our positions known, and do it in a comradely way. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Chris. Does that have a seconder? Seconder. *Formally* Thank you. It's open for debate.

BRO JON LAMBE (London):

Conference, President, London thanks Derbyshire for this resolution and we note the principle of ensuring candidates being better able to communicate their achievements and their ideas at an election is a hugely honourable one. Saying that, London opposes this resolution for two reasons. The first, brothers and sisters, receiving a nomination is a privilege. You should not be receiving one because you put your hand up. This will limit the field, and branches may well assume, if someone hasn't put a statement out they are not open to nomination, which may not be the case. Secondly, it does say "any information provided by candidates should be approved by the EC". Conference, from time to time we will disagree. It's good to have debate, especially at elections. If passed, this may well stifle debate when it is most needed. I will give you an example. In 2005 London's regional secretary stood and won the election for the AGS. In his statement that was sent out with the ballots he said (and I quote): "The outcome of the pay dispute was hugely disappointing. The union's leadership badly mishandled the dispute and the entire membership was sold short." Conference, if this resolution had been passed and had been in place at the time the EC would have had to approve that statement.

This resolution puts us in a position where the EC, to approve a statement, may look foolish, or if they don't approve it, it cannot be released. Comrades, when you receive a nomination for a position in this union it is a privilege. You should be able to stand on an unfettered campaign that is true to yourself and representative of how you would be in office. I fear if this resolution passes it could lead to a lack of debate during elections. I would ask conference to oppose. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? General Secretary to give the qualification.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

We've got qualified support from the Executive Council on this. Chris is right, Derbyshire have been raising this issue for decades, I think, the question of canvassing. It is one that divides opinion. It divides opinion in head office and

on the Executive Council. We took a decision to lift the canvassing rule and I take Chris's point about whether we might, at some point, need to put a rule in setting out clearly what is and isn't allowed. The experience since the lifting of the former canvassing rule has provided some lessons. There have been some difficult experiences that we have had there. It raises all sorts of things about the use of FBU equipment. If it's a free-for-all about using union's resources then clearly I've got an advantage over a branch secretary who decides to stand for the same position. We need to make sure there's a level playing field as far as possible. So we've run into problems about the use of FBU resources for canvassing purposes in election processes.

Where we had sympathy with Derbyshire's resolution, and a point that I think John is addressing, is that some members may be at a disadvantage in an election process because they are less well known, they are not officials of the union, for example, and don't have access to the same networks that other people do. So a preliminary process whereby people could put their names forward as interested in nomination might be a mechanism that might resolve that and make it a fairer process. We're open to having that discussion, which is why we would urge you to support it with the qualification.

The qualifications, however, are that this is about whether this is feasible because potentially it prolongs the election process, which is already a long process. There may be other problems that we identify. Although Chris was very clear that we may come back to conference and say we simply don't think it is workable in the way in which Derbyshire set it out this week.

Just a final point on the point John raised about the Executive Council elections, this resolution is specifically about the nomination stage whereby people would be seeking nominations. When it comes to elections we are governed certainly by our own rules, but we are also governed by legislation in terms of what can and can't go into election statements. There is very little any Executive Council can do about what somebody chooses to put in an election, certainly for a statutory election governed by legislation.

So we can see some potential problems with it; we have some sympathy with the points that Derbyshire are raising and we give qualified support and urge you to support the resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Derbyshire right of reply.

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

Conference, all I'll say is that I thank the comrade from London for making the points and I think they are fair points to consider. I think conference should decide. I'm not going to make the decision from the rostrum to withdraw or do anything otherwise. I think conference should listen to what the General Secretary has said, and what the comrade from London has said, and myself in moving the resolution. I just welcome the debate again. Have a think about it and make your decisions. I just thank you, Conference. Have a listen and make your minds up. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 89 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I'm on to para L6, para L7, para L8, para L9, para L10, para L11. I now call Resolution 88 Campaign and Promotional Material moved by Derbyshire. The Executive Council are opposing.

Resolution 88 CAMPAIGN AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

Conference instructs the Executive Council to research the options available for the supply of new branded FBU campaign and promotional material. Amongst other things this could include items such as flags, banners, t-shirts, caps and badges.

A set of items should be purchased for each individual Brigade to use and this should be sent to the Brigade Secretary for use within their Brigade. This work to be completed and facilities in place by the end of 2018.

DERBYSHIRE

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

We're all back to normal now with the Executive Council's opposition, so we'll try again. No, seriously. Currently, the Fire Brigades Union is facing unprecedented attacks from the government and the employers. At local level most representatives, if not all in here, will have had to deal with the various attacks on working practices which, you know, if we didn't fight against would see changes not only to the detriment of our members but also to the very public that we strive to protect and serve at all times.

As I'm sure you're all aware, the fights against these attacks are often won through public, political and press support. Rallies and demonstrations, press photo shoots, leafleting campaigns and attendance of mass meetings have, within Derbyshire at least, become popular and well supported tactics. When attending the events our members need the appropriate level of campaign material to ensure they are effective and recognised. This means we appear professional and united in our cause. The swift deployment of branded FBU campaign and promotional material is essential in achieving this.

It is true to say that on most occasions when these items are requested, they do eventually arrive and are sourced via our brigades and regions. However, this needs to be a much quicker and slicker operation as these campaigns gather pace very quickly. By having a small set of items held in each brigade with our up to date logos and branding, it would mean that a campaign can begin quickly and build as required through our normal channels. This could be anything ranging from flags, t-shirts, simple pull up posters or placards to support our members.

In Derbyshire both the General Secretary and the Assistant General Secretary have attended events and our members do send their thanks for that support. On both of these occasions reference was made to out of date flags that we've managed to scrounge from all over the place, and also new, freestanding posters that we have sourced and used. Indeed, you will see those freestanding posters in and around this hall, and also outside around the hotel. We sourced, designed and got those sorted out and forwarded on to the General Secretary and others. So it does make the opposition a little bit hard to swallow when they appear to be using the very same stuff that we have done.

All we're simply asking for is a small amount of generalised FBU material to be on hand at the drop of a hat in each brigade as we go about our daily business of fighting the cuts. Resolution 88 asks that the Executive Council research the options available, and once decided upon, a set of items to be sent to each brigade secretary before the end of 2018. It will be an emphasis on brigade secretaries and officials to look after stuff and take care and remember this is our members' money and it is our members' property and it's not "first come, first served, right that's my t-shirt, never seen again, I'm retiring anyway, see you". We do have responsibility to act in an appropriate way. So I think responsibility should be passed down for a small amount of campaigning material to be held and used as appropriate within our brigades. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. No? Tam is going to give the opposition.

BRO TAM McFARLANE (National Officer):

Thanks, Conference. I'm in charge of the shop so I've been given this one. I know we oppose it, but it is a sort of timely resolution because it does talk about several of the things I think we have been doing recently. The resolution talks about researching the options for the supply of new branded FBU material. It's actually getting lodged this month in Firefighter. I think you will see a lot of the new material that we've done in the FBU shop at conference. This is the first time it's sort of hit the road. We've got a series of new ranges. Yes, we have ranges. We've got a centenary range which features the new gold star and other logos which Chris is now claiming. We've got the station range which is going to be a range of branded sportswear that some of the comrades in the hall are wearing. Of course, we've got the good old FBU range.

There is a serious side to this stuff, by the way. It does come from the trip that was alluded to to Washington that a number of comrades from the FBU went on. To see the IAFF brand front and centre in the fire stations and fire service workplaces is a real reminder of the power of the union. That's what we are trying to achieve. There's no doubt, by the way, that ours is a very powerful brand, very powerful logo. All the chiefs don't want us to wear it. They keep telling us to take the badges off and stuff. Part of our strategy in getting this new gear designed is to

make sure that our people are wearing it and that our union is a visible presence in the workplace. It comes in a range of sizes, by the way, women's spec, male spec. We've got everything you need in that shop.

The difficulty, of course, is actually the second part because Chris is right, the current system is: if you need it you get it basically. That's what we've been working to. Unfortunately the resolution means that everyone would get a small amount of it, even if you don't want it. Of course, a union our size, we do have limited resources. Where campaigns happen they tend to happen in one geographical location. You get all the campaign material to that one geographical location. I've got to say, Conference, it's going to be far harder if we spread the stock that we have to all the brigade secretaries in the country and then, when a dispute kicks off in a certain area we have to get that stock back together again and forward it across.

We're very clear that we need to get our logo in the workplace. We think we're achieving that. We're very clear that we're a very strong, powerful campaigning union and that our logo and the materials that we have play a big part in the campaigns that we have with the public. But we are also very clear that we need to focus our limited resources and it is on that basis that we're asking you to oppose the resolution. With that, and my new station range, I ask you to oppose. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Derbyshire, right to reply.

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

Conference, it's great to be involved in some of the more lighthearted conversations that we have. That's the first point. Tam, thanks for your comments.

He talked a lot about the shop and all that kind of stuff, and I recognise the shop, I recognise the superb sales pitch that has just been made. I don't dispute any of that, but I don't think the shop's got anything to do with the resolution. I don't think that's what it talks about. It doesn't mention the shop in any way shape or form. This is about campaigning and about those sort of things. Just to be clear as well, I totally respect finances, resources and all those kinds of things. But I'm careful with these resolutions because I know how nervous everybody gets about it. That's why I try to leave a little bit of corn for the Executive Council to feed on if that can be the right terminology. That is why I've said a set of items should be purchased for each individual brigade to use to be sent to brigade secretaries. But just above that it says, "once decided upon". So when we've decided upon it, it might be that the decision is 50 flags per brigade. Conference, how many brigades have not had a campaign or not had something going on where they could use a set of flags? I'm not trying to strip everything away and say we're all going to get a thousand pounds worth of campaigning material. I'm talking about a small amount of easily deployable campaigning material.

That's where we're at. I leave it with yourselves to decide. I do respect the comments about finances and resources and all those things, but I think a small amount of things decided upon by the Executive Council would be appropriate. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 88 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now call Resolution 90 Mobile App moved by Warwickshire.

Resolution 90 MOBILE APP

Conference notes the ever expanding forms of digital communication and interactive platforms available and Conference also notes the wide range of FBU Members engagement with the various digital platforms currently being utilised by FBU Head Office and Brigade Committees.

Conference applauds the FBU digital communication strategy and welcomes the improvement to the FBU website. Conference recognises the hard work that is put into this by Head Office staff.

Conference agrees that a one-stop digital platform which is exclusive to FBU Members, where membership administration and benefits can be accessed and which also includes access to FBU resources, news and other information is an avenue not yet fully explored.

Conference therefore agrees that the Executive Council should begin a feasibility study into producing a dedicated FBU application which would be available on all mobile devices operating systems to further engage and inform FBU Members and to also give FBU Members an ability to view and maintain their membership details.

Conference agrees that subject to the Executive Council feasibility study, an FBU APP should be created and available to FBU Members by Conference 2019.

WARWICKSHIRE

BRO STEVE RULE (Warwickshire):

President, Conference, with the fast pace of technology, the way people run and organise their lives has changed apace. The majority of people now use Smartphones and download applications allowing them to bank, shop, read the paper, all online. It should be noted that the IT team at head office deserve credit for the progress made in the digital organising, but it is our opinion that this could be furthered with the next step being a mobile phone application. This would allow members to change personal details, save money through reduced mailshots, and most importantly, stay informed whilst on the go.

Conference, the digital era is truly upon us and we should embrace it and use it in our struggles. Not to utilise technology is a mistake we cannot afford to make. I would also like to thank Staffordshire for withdrawing their resolution in support of ours. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. No? EC supports. I now put Resolution 90 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Paragraph L12. Conference, para L13 Resolution 92 and L14 Resolution 93 will be taken on Thursday morning. We now rejoin at para L15. Section K para K1, para K2, para K3. I now call Resolution 77 Green Book membership moved by Merseyside. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 77 GREEN BOOK MEMBERSHIP

Following the decision taken by Conference 2015 to "broaden the scope for FBU membership to reflect the changing industry in which we work", the FBU have recruited a number of new Members from Green Book staff, those Members have welcomed the opportunity to join and are now proud to be FBU Members.

To date, FBU Officials have represented those Members on a wide range of individual issues and as word spreads about those experiences and the fact the FBU does now recruit Green Book staff those numbers are increasing.

Conference believes it would assist local Officials to recruit and represent Green Book staff if the Executive Council were to commission and issue a bespoke membership pack for Green Book Members including but not limited to; an introduction to the FBU, details of subscription rates and details of what specific benefits are available to Green Book staff.

Conference requests that the work to produce these packs should begin as a matter of urgency and that they should be made available to Officials as soon as is reasonably possible prior to Conference 2019.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO IAN HIBBERT (Merseyside):

President, Conference, when this union decided to expand our membership by taking on Green Book members I must admit we had some trepidation: additional workload and trying to understand and wade through the myriad of issues which face our Green Book brothers and sisters. To be entirely honest, once the dust had settled and new Green Book members began to trickle in the main issue we found was the material available whilst recruiting Green Book members. We have packs for when you join the Fire Brigades Union that do appear to be entirely frontline centric. They're emblazoned with flames and really don't seem to appeal to cleaners and other people within our Green Book members of staff.

What we were seeking with this resolution was to attempt to get some sort of more applicable pack to Green Book members. It was probably poorly worded of us, to be entirely honest, to go with a bespoke pack. We understand we're not looking for a pack that is just for Green Book members. What we want is just some assurance that basically there will be more information put into the packs in the future going forward which pertains to Green Book staff. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. Anybody? I call on Tam McFarlane to give the opposition.

BRO TAM McFARLANE (National Officer):

We are asking you to oppose that, and it's actually for the reasons that the comrade set out. Again, this is a timely resolution because we recently had our brigade organisers seminar for the first time in a while. I'm glad to report that we had just under half of brigade organisers from across the country attend that and these issues were discussed in some detail. As a result of that, we're putting a lot of work now into building the necessary resources right across the campaign organising remit.

Yes, the point is absolutely spelled out in the resolution about having a specific pack. We're really of the view that clearly a pack needs to cover all the necessary rights and all the issues appertaining to the workplace. But it needs to be one pack; it needs to be Fire Brigades Union pack. It needs to be a pack that everyone understands they're a part of one union, this union, the FBU. So it's on that basis that we're asking conference to oppose this resolution. But I want to stress this work is going on. We're committed to it, we're putting a lot of time into it and we will do so in the future. We are very keen to build a single set of resources that relate to the FBU and not split it up. So we ask you to oppose this resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Merseyside right to reply? No? I now put Resolution 77 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now call Resolution 78 Flexible Contribution Rates from the CSNC. The Executive Council are supporting.

Resolution 78 FLEXIBLE CONTRIBUTION RATES

Conference notes that rightly the contribution rate for Control Members is set at the same level as wholtime or job share operational firefighters.

Staff who are on reduced earnings but not on an exact 50% job share split are being charged full rate, not one relevant to their earnings, which can be a deterrent to them retaining their FBU Membership.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to review the application of Union contribution rates and introduce a sliding scale between 50% and full contribution rate to reflect the wages being earned by our Members.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

SIS KATE SCOTT (CSNC):

President, Conference, quite frankly we need to try to retain and recruit as many members as possible. We're looking at asking for an investigation into having a sliding scale of membership rates because currently we have

the 100% or the 50%. Particularly for control staff, we do have people that work, say, 75% shifts so we'd be looking at asking for a rate that potentially accommodates them, just as we did when we looked at the amount that apprentices were paying. That's basically it. I move resolution 78. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. No? I now put Resolution 78 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now go to para K4, para K5, para K6, para K7, para K8. We're on to Section B para B1. Come forward.

BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (Cheshire):

President, Conference, at Conference 2016 Cheshire moved an emergency resolution Pension Appeal Mechanism. That was passed. This related to the alarming finding that the pension scheme didn't have a provision to move from a lower tier to an upper tier award should the individual's condition considerably worsen. The resolution instructed the Executive Council to seek to establish the relevant appeal mechanism. Two years down the road can the Executive Council please provide an update to conference with where we are with that, please.

THE PRESIDENT:

Sean.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Yes, OK. I'll give you an update if there is an update. I have raised this, as you would expect, Andy. I've told you that as well. The problem is, as we pointed out in 2016, this is really, really hard to achieve. We have got a situation where, if you go out on a lower tier and it does worsen, the same issue, then we can't review it to an upper tier, and that's in the legislation. We have raised this. We've raised this with the pensions department a few times, I've made a note to self to do it again. What I will say is that what we do as part of our pension and medical appeals course is we do tell people about this issue and we do say to people if you're pushing for people to go out on ill health do bear this in mind and always push for a higher tier.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now Resolution 25 Grey Book Redeployment moved by GMC. The EC are giving qualified support.

Resolution 25 GREY BOOK REDEPLOYMENT

Conference notes the worrying lack of Grey Book redeployment opportunities both locally and nationally for Members who are no longer able to maintain their physical fitness.

Conference Policy 2005 states that should redeployment of an FBU Member be required, then that redeployment will be within their existing rolemap, as a minimum, thereby maintaining the same terms and conditions.

When the Westminster Government introduced the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (NFPS) on 6th April 2006 a promise was given that there would be sufficient redeployment opportunities for firefighters who could not maintain operational fitness. Penny Mordaunt the Fire Minister in 2015 also gave assurances over redeployment opportunities for firefighters unable to maintain fitness.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to:

- ***Establish the current number of Grey Book redeployment opportunities nationally***
- ***Reinforce and restate the 2005 Conference Policy position with the Employers via the NJC***
- ***Hold the Government to account on its failure to meet the assurances given in the 2006 Pension Scheme proposals.***

This work should be concluded prior to the next FBU Conference and reported to all Officials.

GMC

BRO KARL SORFLEET (GMC):

Conference, President, over the period of 18 months GMC officials represented a member who'd become disabled. He was unable to perform his duties as an operational firefighter, and he was also a deferred member of the pension scheme, so he was unable to access an ill health pension. He entered the redeployment register and from then on was offered one or two poorly paid positions on a much reduced salary whilst being overlooked for several Grey Book positions that he could have fulfilled easily but was denied the opportunity as the GMC policy was to employ only operationally fit staff in Grey Book positions. So eventually our member was successful in passing an application process for the role of fire safety enforcement officer. It was a Grey Book-advertised role and when it came to appointment he was offered only Green Book (the brigade words not my words) "poor level of fitness". He wasn't unfit; he was disabled. The GMC officials were able to secure him the position he applied for.

Conference notes a worrying lack of Grey Book redeployment opportunities both locally and nationally for members who are no longer able to maintain their physical fitness. Conference policy 2005 states that should redeployment of an FBU member be required, then that redeployment will be within their existing rolemap as a minimum, thereby maintaining the same terms and conditions. When the government introduced the new firefighters' pension scheme on 6 April 2006 there were assurances that there would be sufficient redeployment opportunities for firefighters who couldn't maintain operational fitness. Penny Mordaunt, the fire minister in 2015, also gave assurances over redeployment opportunities for firefighters unable to maintain fitness.

So Conference instructs the Executive Council to establish the current number of Grey Book redeployment opportunities nationally, reinforce and re-state the 2005 policy position with the employers via the NJC, and to hold the government to account on its failure to meet these assurances given in the 2006 pension scheme proposals. This work should be concluded prior to the next conference and reported to officials. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. Anybody? Sean to give the qualification.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The EC fully support this. The qualification is more of a clarification really and it is an important clarification. First of all, we have done a lot of this work before. As you know, in 2011 as part of the pension campaign we sent round to ask people how many redeployment opportunities they've got within role. We didn't ask our people; we asked HR departments and they're not allowed to lie, so we know we got the right answers there! *(Laughter)*

We asked in England. What we got at that point was that there was only five brigades in the whole of England who had any redeployment opportunities, and the actual figure was 16. We presented this as part of our evidence to say you're asking firefighters to ride fire engines until they're 60 and don't pretend any more that there's any redeployment opportunities, because there's not. And what we'll do is we'll do this work again, as we said in this resolution, and we expect it to be a lot worse if I'm really honest. We'll reinforce the conference statement, and we have taken that a little bit further. This is about redeployment in role. You can only be required to be redeployed in role, that's the requirement we've got. You can be offered suitable alternative employment but you can turn that down. You can't turn down redeployment in role. That's a requirement. We got that written into the IQMP guidance so the IQMP, when you take an ill health pension there, knows this as well, that the only redeployments they can actually offer you and make you take are the ones within role. So we can do that.

The one clarification I want to give is a real big clarification and it's about the Penny Mordaunt guarantee. When Penny Mordaunt wrote to Matt on 17 December 2014 she did confirm that there was a guarantee for firefighters who, through lack of fitness, couldn't work beyond 55 and that's the important part about this. It's not for all firefighters as it says in the resolution; it's for firefighters beyond 55.

So we will press on this again. So when I send out for information, if we use our people or we use HR departments again, please make sure you respond and we'll get a clearer picture on redeployments again and I'll share that with you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 25 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Sean is going to give us an update on para B2 in regard to age discrimination.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Yes, this is a really quick update. I thank Ivan at the back for all the help he's given me. I'm not going to thank him too much as part of our legal team because we haven't actually won anything yet! I thank him for the work he has done so far. The age discrimination has been a long fight and we've finally got another date for our appeal. Ours is being heard separate to the judges now. We've got the same legal team but it's separate to the judges. The judges is going to be heard over two days on 5 and 6 November, then they're going to have a reading day and then ours is going to be heard on 8 and 9 November. That is good for us because we'll hear all the arguments in the judges and we've got the same legal team. So as a matter of an update we're still confident. There's no gimme's in this, I'll tell you. We are still confident, our legal team is still confident, and when we've seen their arguments we're even more confident. But the legal process is the legal process.

What I will do, just to update you, I will send out a brigade secretary circular straight after conference giving you these dates so you can report them back to members.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 26 Pensions moved by Essex. Executive Council are supporting.

Resolution 26 PENSIONS

Conference notes Emergency Resolution 4 – Firefighter Pensions in the Aftermath of the General Election, passed by Conference 2015.

Conference further notes the inequity in actuarial reductions imposed by the Westminster Government.

Conference agreed; 'The FBU message to the new Westminster Government and to other governments is that we are not going away and we will continue to fight for pensions for firefighters which properly reflect the challenges of their occupation.' And that 'Conference reaffirms that the FBU's pension dispute is not resolved and our campaign will continue.'

Particularly, Conference notes that it is still the case that; 'The pension schemes remain unfair, unworkable and contain different elements in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, which ultimately result in different benefits for firefighters.'

Conference reaffirms that the FBU's pension dispute is not resolved and our campaign will continue.

Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to reinvigorate our political campaign and political work with sympathetic MPs and other political representatives.

Conference further instructs the Executive Council raise with the Westminster Government, as a matter of urgency, the inequity in actuarial reductions across the different schemes.

ESSEX

BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

The resolution is straightforward. It's about equality in pension provision. As we've already discussed, fairness and equality are the main things that we base our union on: unity, fairness, equality. At the moment, we've got a pension provision that doesn't provide any of that. We've got different pension provisions across the UK. This is asking for us to reinvigorate our campaign, particularly in Westminster. We would prefer to see a union trade-specific pension

that's fit for purpose, giving us access to our pensions when we want it without actuarial reductions. We would like to see far greater contributions from our employers. We would also like to see commutation figures that are fairer and more just. But at the moment we're not seeing that campaign. We would like to reinvigorate that campaign, and in particular ask the EC to raise, particularly at Westminster, with anyone that's going to listen – preferably those MPs that are supportive of us – to go back and try again on what we recognise is an extremely difficult campaign, to go back and try to get some sort of parity for firefighters in England. At the moment, our pension is worse than that of other firefighters across the UK. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. No? Sean, have you got a comment?

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Yes, I do want to make a comment because I think it's that important that we all stress how we fully support this. We've always said we'd keep all avenues of our pension campaign open and we haven't let it slip by. We have got a massive age discrimination pension case, but we've got to remember that there's people in the 2015 who aren't part of this and we can't just leave them behind. Yes, it's right, there are some really bad things within the 2015 scheme and we've made all the arguments about working to 60 and we can make those again. We've made all the arguments about the different actuarial reductions between England, Scotland and Wales, and the fact that we've achieved an age 55 in Northern Ireland. So thanks to Essex for raising this, because I do think we want to be reminded. We don't want to just focus on the legal challenge for the transitional protection; we want to focus on the fact that there is a pension scheme out there where we're going to have a lot of our members in it in the future and we've got to make sure it's workable and fair.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. I now put Resolution 26 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I am now moving to para B3, para B4, para B5, para B6, para B7, para B8, para B9, para B10, para B11, para B12, para B13. Section I para I1. Section J para J1, para J2, para J3, para J4, para J5, para J6, para J7, para J8. I'm now moving on to Section A Pay and Conditions, para A1, para A2. Conference, para A3 will be taken on Wednesday afternoon. That will be the EC policy statement, Resolution 1 from Dorset & Wiltshire, Resolution 11 from NRC, Resolution 14 from Norfolk, Resolution 15 from GMC, and Emergency Resolution 4 from Scotland. They'll all be taken on Wednesday afternoon.

We now move on to Resolution 3 that has been withdrawn with the right to speak. Cumbria.

Resolution 3 FUNDING OF COUNCIL FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

County Council Fire and Rescue Services are facing a greater financial crisis due to the simply devastating austerity cuts heaped upon the public services. These services have no ability to hold or use reserves and have limited funding income locally, these services are at breaking point forcing the downgrading and closing of fire stations.

Conference demands that the Executive Council negotiates at the NJC to secure recognition of the extreme funding differences of County Council Brigades compared to Fire Authorities, Metropolitan Authorities and other types of Authorities and seek agreement from the NJC to resolve this issue.

CUMBRIA

BRO ED BURROWS (Cumbria):

Conference, thank you for your indulgence. Conference, having had the experience of working in a fire authority and now a county council fire service I have had a direct insight into the differences and the unequal funding these services create. That creates risks to firefighters and the public we serve. When I left Hampshire Fire Service in 2010, a fire authority, they had a budget of £90 million. There were lots of departments fully resourced, work pressure was low due to the number of staff and the support available. I arrived in Cumbria, a council-run fire service with a

budget of only £20 million. Cumbria currently has eight wholtime stations, 38 retained stations, spread out over a geographical area of 2,613 square miles, the third largest county in the UK. Since 2010, due to the austerity cuts the fire service has endured, our fire service is only a small department of the council. It has had to give its share of savings with other areas of the council. Unfortunately for us, we have had chief fire officers who, through their management, have allowed further cuts, reducing us to an annual budget of approximately £16 million.

The upshot of this is underfunding and underinvestment in the service which means we are constantly fighting off attacks for downgrading and closing of stations, attacks on contracts, shift systems, and expectation of doing work way above our role with no ARA support or recognition. With the added Effective and Efficient mantra of the HMI, it means that finance has become the only driver for change.

We have to look at the risk this produces: riding with four, proposals for responding with depleting crews of two or three, a training department with a budget of £175,000 to train over 600 firefighters, managers being overworked, stress/mental health issues rising, more work being required from a diminishing service. The demand of usual reserves coming from government is no use to Cumbria. Cumbria has £10 million in reserves for the whole council, a small drop in the ocean considering the council budget is £384 million. This inequality of funding has to be recognised by the NJC and the government, and support has to be given.

I'd like to ask the General Secretary if you could just acknowledge our concerns and we'll withdraw the resolution.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

We discussed the resolution and I think there's a number of comments we would make. First of all, we would need to do a great deal more work on the impact of cuts between different types of Fire & Rescue Services. Clearly county councils are one of those who face major difficulties, as was explained, because they are part of the county council set up. That creates particular challenges. But the impact of cuts in general I think is a bit more complicated than that in that actually the experience is we've seen some of the biggest cuts in some of the former metropolitan Fire & Rescue Services in terms of proportionally the number of jobs lost, the number and scale of cuts. It has hit those in particular. So yes, the answer to it in reality is political change and investment in the Fire & Rescue Service which we will come on to in the debate on Stop the Rot and so on. There's no shortcut to doing that.

The concern we had about the resolution, which I think you acknowledged, is that funding for the Fire & Rescue Service is not done through the National Joint Council; it is a central government decision. That was the concern we had about raising it at the NJC. Their answer would simply be to say automatically that's not pertinent business for the National Joint Council. We take on board the points that were raised. I suspect other delegates from other types of Fire & Rescue authorities may well get up and say: we've got it just as bad with a different governance model than a county council model. The truth is none of us have come out of this unscathed, and we've highlighted in great detail the scale of the cuts that we've faced. But the concerns that are raised by Cumbria are indeed noted, and we will continue to campaign on the points raised.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 5 moved by Shropshire with the amendment from Merseyside. The Executive Council are supporting and supporting the amendment.

Resolution 5 FACILITY TIME FOR BRIGADE OFFICIALS

Conference recognises the increasing pressures placed upon Brigade Officials. Since the demise of the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council and national attendance standards being replaced by IRMPs (amongst other factors), Brigade Officials have increasingly found themselves protecting their Members' terms and conditions on a local level. Brigade Officials are often faced with changes to shift pattern, staffing cuts, compromised ridership levels and various other issues. Conference believes that increasingly the future direction of UKFRSs lies with Brigade Officials

and that they need greater support to carry out their role. Training and support is provided by the Union, but many Officials do not receive sufficient facility time to deal with these pressures.

Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise this issue at the NJC with a view to seeking better agreements for Brigade Officials' Trade Union facility time.

SHROPSHIRE

AMENDMENT

End of first paragraph delete full stop and insert 'or attend the necessary courses.'

MERSEYSIDE

SIS LOUISE FLETCHER (Shropshire):

Good afternoon President, Conference, I'm not going to pretend that there was ever a Golden Age for brigade officials, but from what I can make out it seems years ago issues were sorted out more at a national level. Most brigades broadly behaved themselves in complying with the Grey Book and Standards of Fire Cover, leaving brigade officials to police compliance and deal with individual members' representation needs. Now, issues are more and more being dealt with locally. The once-national shift system has proliferated into a free-for-all. There is now a myriad of types of fire engines with varying crewing methods. Closed and outsourced fire control rooms raise the spectre of redundancy and TUPE. Countless versions of IPDS and its successors have left each Fire & Rescue Service with different promotion and recruitment policies. Understanding rolemaps in depth, changes to incident command, OGBA and national operational guidance are baffling to many. Brigade officials also often have to deal with health & safety issues and will soon have to start to figure out all the nuances of Green Book. I dread to mention the word pensions. How new brigade officials can ever catch up and understand the pension scheme is also beyond me.

The aim of this resolution is this. If brigade officials are increasingly expected to balance all these demands and still deal with discipline, grievance, accidents, injuries and ill health for members then they need proper support and not just from the FBU. The employers also need to recognise the burden they are placing on the busiest officials and grant them commensurate time to undertake their role, time which undoubtedly at present is significantly lacking.

Brigade officials often find themselves achieving the impossible for the ungrateful on a regular basis and this has to change. Support the resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. I now call on Merseyside to move their amendment. *Formally* Thank you. Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate.

BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):

President, I am speaking in support of Shropshire's resolution. Also, it's just a little opportunity to thank the AGS. Very recently in the West Midlands our Chair facility time was taken away from us and quite remarkably, within 30 minutes of negotiation, the AGS got it back for us. So we do thank him for that. *(Applause)*

We're all under threat with our facility time and our facility time is absolutely vital so I'm sure we will all support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Anybody else? General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, we are very keen to support this. The mover outlined that we've faced an onslaught on trade union facilities in the Fire & Rescue Service going back for a decade and a half in reality. What we did have in many fire services in the 1980s and 1990s is unrecognisable compared with what we have today in terms of facility time. In many places facility time has been more than halved and yet workloads have increased during that time because of the fragmentation that's been set out. So we would have had more common national standards which made it easier to address issues; we had, by and large, common duty systems which would have been in place and common throughout the bulk of the UK Fire & Rescue Services. We've made this point many times: the challenges

that are faced by our brigade level officials today are a world away from the challenges that the generation round this table had when they were doing similar types of roles. We completely recognise that.

On top of that, of course, we've then had eight years of austerity which means that as their budgets are cut they're looking for every opportunity to make cutbacks in what they provide and one of the areas they've looked at is the question of facility time as part of those cuts. So it is a huge problem. I was simply alerting conference to the fact that (I'm sure no-one's expecting it to be otherwise) it's also a huge problem for us to try to resolve. We will raise this at the NJC when we can, at the earliest opportunity, and we can probably anticipate the sort of response we will get off the national employers.

I think additionally we need to start collating some of the information through our regional committees of what facility time is in place across regions and what attacks have taken place on such facility time, so that we can begin to build the case for reversing some of these. It is certainly acknowledged by the Executive Council that it is a huge problem, it creates huge difficulties for the brigade level officials, most of whom are here at conference today. So we do support the resolution and we will raise that at the NJC at the earliest opportunity. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Matt. I now put the amendment from Merseyside to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 5 as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Conference, we're going to break for afternoon tea. Could I have you back in at 1545 sharp, please.

Break for tea

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, can you start taking your seats. Conference, come to order. I now call the Chair of Standing Orders, Steve Shelton, to give us a report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Conference, please turn to your Programmes of Business page 5: Resolution 18 Missing Persons, Warwickshire has been withdrawn to support Resolution 6. Page 6: Resolution 19 Contracts of Employment, Merseyside withdrawn to second Resolution 20. Delegates List: Scotland: insert Stephen Gall. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

I now call Resolution 6 Work Outside of Firefighter Rolemaps moved by Shropshire. Executive Council are giving qualified support.

Resolution 6 WORK OUTSIDE FIREFIGHTER ROLEMAPS

Conference is concerned that the “duty to collaborate” between emergency services, and Police and Crime Commissioners taking over governance of Fire and Rescue Services, will put increasing pressure on our Members to carry out new work which may not fall within the firefighter rolemaps.

Conference deplores the decision of some Brigades to mobilise crews to searches for “missing persons” (MISPERs). These incidents are often not of an emergency nature and Conference strongly believes that this work falls outside the firefighter rolemaps and therefore should be negotiated at the NJC, similar to that of EMR.

Conference believes that these MISPER incidents are only one example of potentially many future challenges to the work of firefighters. To meet this challenge, Conference instructs the Executive Council to put the following in place:

- **Training for Brigade Officials to better understand and interpret the rolemaps**
- **Training and support for Brigade Officials to be able to resist efforts from Brigades to introduce work that does not fit within the rolemaps.**

SHROPSHIRE

BRO STEVE MORRIS (Shropshire):

Conference, President, clearly we've got brigade officials that are carrying out more and more work, more often on the frontline, defending union policy, members' terms and conditions. In some cases employers do have the decency to engage with us on issues, but there are plenty of examples where they just unilaterally introduce new work which often falls outside of our rolemaps. We also find ourselves frequently at odds with our own members who are eager to take on more responsibilities. Many of these need saving from themselves. Whichever is the case, we seem to be more often in disagreement with brigade over the interpretations of our rolemaps. Usually, it's the save and protect endangered life or promote safety matters to inform your community.

The example of searches for missing persons that we give in the resolution has been fraught with difficulties. Our members have been asked to assist the police to search for a vulnerable person, who turned out to be armed with a knife (information which didn't come at the start); to search for an alcoholic who'd been missing for at least 48 hours; and for patients suffering from dementia missing from care homes. Quite clearly, none of these are Fire & Rescue Service emergencies and we shouldn't be asked to do them by our brigades. I'm yet to be convinced why the police think it's a good idea to ask us.

It's a difficult enough position to argue on the basis of rolemaps because the brigades often throw in a duty to collaborate and a moral responsibility for us to save life. We believe that brigade officials are now the gatekeepers of rolemaps and job descriptions and we're coming under great pressure to protect them and will require much more ongoing training.

It's a bit like a Fire & Rescue Service taking over the running of a hospital, and the chief fire officer approaching the heart surgeon and saying "we've had to let a few people go, efficiency you know, would you mind just administering the anaesthetics yourself? It's needles, medicine, stuff like that. You can do it. Remember, you have a duty of care to your patient." Or another example. You can imagine if the National Fire Chiefs Council diversified into film production. The first film they'd make would be an airplane disaster movie. You can picture the scene: two engines down, the pilot's collapsed because he's had an iffy fish at dinner time and the tannoy announces "are there any firefighters on board?" Dutifully a firefighter presents themselves at the flight deck to be told by the flight engineer "just sit yourself down there and fly this plane and get us back to Heathrow as quick as you can." To a certain amount of consternation the firefighter says, "But I don't know how to fly a plane." "Come on, you should know this by now. Firefighter 3 save and preserve endangered life. Now get on with it and fly the plane."

I'm being facetious, I grant you, but increasingly we've heard chief fire officers and HR managers perhaps proclaiming we don't really need rolemaps after all; they're too restrictive. I heard that about the Grey Book once. They say, "We know what we should be doing and we should just get on with it". It's this frightening attitude that we need to counter. This week it might be missing persons; next week it's falls response, patient transfers, and who knows, maybe one day they'll teach us to fly a plane!

Conference, brigade officials are on the frontline in protecting our jobs and conditions. We, collectively as a union, need every support to fight every brigade. Otherwise you can guarantee whatever's happening today it will be coming to a brigade near you very soon. Support the resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council is giving qualified support to the Shropshire Resolution 6. What lies behind the resolution is something that is happening all across the service. That is employers at local level seeking to test the limits of what they can expect our members to do. Many of them would want a complete free-for-all and many of them are attempting to introduce a complete free-for-all on that. It was mentioned that some of them will say rolemaps are too restrictive; they want complete local flexibility where they determine what work they want to engage with and they effectively expect our members to then undertake that.

On the point about training, we accept that. There is training available and that training can be further developed. We will provide that training. But I think the qualification is this is more than simply a training issue; this is an industrial matter. This is about local employers and local chief fire officers bypassing national collective bargaining, nationally bargained agreements. The rolemaps are part of that national UK-wide collective agreement. We have to defend them and protect them. So the training will enable us to do that.

I don't want to pre-empt other debates in conference, but part of that reason, and the pressure that we are under at local level, is one of the factors for the discussions that we've had through this conference about the need to discuss nationally through the National Joint Council areas where we may agree to alter the type of work our members undertake, alter rolemaps and so on, because if we are unsuccessful in that, for example, we expect that the pressure at local level will increase and will continue as has been set out by Shropshire in moving the resolution. That's an issue that touches on our national discussions with our employers.

I suppose the other point that we would want to make is actually ultimately this again comes down to an industrial issue that our brigade committees may have to consider: how do we take on? We have to ultimately say: "actually, we are not doing that work". This is what lies behind the West Midlands dispute that is currently underway, where again the employer has introduced completely flexible contracts for new employees precisely because of the reasons set out by Shropshire. Our response in West Midlands is absolutely the correct one. We've said: "You are not having that." We're willing to comply with national negotiations on this and that is a national matter, but what we're not having is locally determined flexibility around contracts and the roles that our members are undertaking.

We've had a number of disputes on these issues: the co-responding dispute in Nottinghamshire that led to the court case; now the West Midlands one. We will have to address these issues through training, yes, but we also have to consider addressing these issues industrially as well. With that qualification we do support the Shropshire resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now put Resolution 6 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Right, Conference, I think our special guest is here. *(Applause)*

Conference, I'm delighted to welcome Jeremy Corbyn, the elected leader of the Labour Party. The Labour Party, under Jeremy's leadership, represents the best possibility in generations for putting workers' issues at the heart of politics. Jeremy has been one of the FBU's most consistent supporters for decades. He's supported the FBU in disputes and on picket lines over decades going back to 1977, 2002/3 over pensions. Jeremy was a founder member of the FBU's Parliamentary Group at Westminster. This union supported his campaign for the leadership and he's used our fire engine as a speaking platform. Last year Jeremy proved at the General Election that a Labour government is a real alternative. Under Jeremy's leadership there is a possibility of developing a new trade union political agenda. So, Conference, give Jeremy your warmest welcome. *(Applause)*

BRO JEREMY CORBYN (Labour Party):

Conference, thank you very much for that very warm welcome and thank you for all the friendship and support that you've given me personally over a long time. Just coming in here, speaking to the people from the Lifelong Learning Campaign about celebrating the centenary is the spirit of the union: education, activism, and also taking that education and that activism into the wider Labour movement. Speaking on the top of the fire tender at so many

rallies all around the country is an amazing experience and thank you very much for that. It's not a fast vehicle, is it! You're getting a new one? OK, when's that coming? So thank you very much for hosting me here today in Brighton. It's great to be here.

I want to pay tribute to all of you. The FBU has consistently been one of the most active and bold trade unions in our movement, putting the case for internationalism and solidarity and a future that works for everybody. On the subject of internationalism I would just like for a moment, if you don't mind, to remember Ken Cameron. He sadly passed away a couple of years ago. I knew Ken very well. I got on very well with him and I want to say thank you, Ken, for all you did for the Labour movement here and across the globe in educating everyone that we do rely on each other. What a great General Secretary, what a great man! *(Applause)*

Of course, I want to thank your current General Secretary, Matt Wrack, and the Executive for all the support they've given me over the years, and all the support you've given to the Labour Party since your reaffiliation a couple of years ago. I've been a trade unionist all my adult life. As a backbench MP I was a founder member, along with my great friend John McDonnell, of the FBU Support Group in Parliament. I still treasure the 25 year membership badge you gave me for my 30 years in Parliament, because apparently you don't have a 30 year badge! There is some rule problem around that. I do treasure it and thank you very much for that.

As an affiliated union you've put forward arguments for workers' rights, a fairer economy and for a Socialist Labour Government that will do things very differently from how they are being done now. Our party is no longer just a political party based in Parliament but a growing mass movement of people across the UK. Well over 550,000 members, working together for a better society which we know is possible.

We have fantastic new initiatives in the party such as our community organising unit, bringing people together to organise in their local communities around the issues that matter to them: wages of course, housing (vital for everybody), safer streets, youth facilities, all kinds of issues – a campaigning organisation that's always out there. We have new types of political events as well, such as the Labour Live Festival which is happening next week on 16 June in Tottenham. It will have musicians, speakers, activists, trade unionists. I'm a speaker, not a musician but I will be there. All coming together in one place to learn from each other, but also to enjoy ourselves while reflecting on how far our Labour Movement has come. Anybody can buy tickets at www.labour.live. I would encourage everyone to do so and not miss out. It's bringing people together, organising activists and trade unionists that will really bring about change in our society. It's doing things together that inspire each other, and it becomes a much greater sum than the total of the individual parts of each of us.

Conference, when we look at the hardships that far too many people have to go through today, we realise that change, change is desperately needed. Next week marks one year since the horrendous, heartbreaking tragedy at Grenfell Tower. Last night I was at the mosque just near the tower. I thanked them for their work and I met some of the survivors of that awful event, and I thanked them for what they are doing to campaign with yourselves and many others. Images of that tower block engulfed in flames with people trapped inside would have stayed with anybody who saw them online or on their TV screens. For those who had to witness the fire in person, the scene and unimaginable horror will stay with them for the rest of their lives. I visited the site just after the fire. I saw the firefighters there, physically and emotionally exhausted after battling those deadly flames for hours on end.

Conference, I can tell you that nobody who had seen that in person, nobody who had actually been there to witness the sheer dedication and determination of those firefighters there on that dreadful day could ever, ever question their professional duty or their commitment. *(Applause)*

The way in which Matt Wrack described the commitment at last year's Durham Miners' Gala was extremely moving. It brought people to tears, his description of what had gone on. Those men and women who went into that building to save lives are heroes, as are all firefighters who regularly go above and beyond in order to save lives. That's not to say that lessons can't be learned from events at Grenfell, as lessons can always be learned. But it's impossible to see how any improvements could ever be made without a consistent and genuine commitment to fire safety, fire prevention, and a fully staffed fire service to be there when we need it. When I talked to some of the firefighters who'd been working in Grenfell I asked some of them "why do you do it? Why do you put yourself in such great

danger to save the lives of people you've never even met?" The answer came back immediately: "We do it because it's our job." It was an answer that completely encapsulates what it means to be part of the Fire & Rescue Service, doing so much to try to ensure the safety and well-being of others.

The time after Grenfell should have been a moment to reflect on the value of public service and the value of emergency services. Yet, what do we have instead? Tory MP after Tory MP lining up to go on television to praise the bravery of the emergency staff at Grenfell and other incidents, only for them to tramp through the government voting lobbies in the House of Commons as Conservative MPs, without a single exception, voting to keep your pay down! If that doesn't highlight the gap between this government's rhetoric and its actions, then I don't know what does.

But this is just one part of the government's failure to do what is right in the wake of the Grenfell disaster. People are still angry, and rightly so, about the government's failure to act. Where is the necessary overhaul of fire safety regulations that is so clearly needed? Where is the extra funding for the Fire & Rescue Service? Where is the action on dangerous cladding on other buildings? After Lakanal House, the 2013 Coroner's report recommended sprinklers be installed in tower blocks, and the government has failed to act. Even now, in the wake of 72 dead at Grenfell, they still ignore the advice of the Fire Brigades Union, the National Council of Fire Chiefs, and the Royal Institute of British Architects.

The Houses of Parliament are about to be renovated. The current plans include sprinklers being fitted. If it's good enough for MPs it's good enough for the people that we represent. *(Applause)*

After the fire the Prime Minister promised to do "whatever it takes" to keep people safe. It's not just on sprinklers they've failed. Since then, over 300 tower blocks have been found to contain dangerous cladding. Out of these 300 just seven have been confirmed as having had the cladding removed or replaced. The government still doesn't know how many tower blocks are unsafe and has failed to give any funding to any of the 41 local authorities that have asked the government for help with replacing potentially dangerous cladding. Even now, the £400 million the government has belatedly allocated to councils will be taken from the Affordable Housing budget, meaning fewer homes will be built at a time when fewer affordable homes are being built than for a quarter of a century. The fact that the government's Hackitt review into building safety allows for combustible materials still to be used on the sides of high rise tower blocks shows they are just not serious about giving people the confidence to know their homes are safe to live in.

Immediately after the fire, Labour made a very clear demand on the government. Grenfell residents must be rehoused quickly in the community they love. Shamefully that hasn't happened. 136 out of 210 households who lost their homes are still being denied permanent accommodation. Indeed, I met some of them yesterday. The fact that well over half of the Grenfell families have been failed by the government which pledged to rehouse everyone within a year should be front page news. Promises broken to Grenfell survivors are a national scandal which shows a heartless contempt for working class people and communities. There can be no more insulting excuses for inaction. All the while, Kensington & Chelsea suffers from a plague of empty homes – luxury property used as investments for the super-rich instead of homes for local people who are stuck in hotels or bed & breakfast. There can be no clearer sign of the total disregard this government has for those who were made homeless by the terrible fire nearly a year ago. The people living in the tower were failed before the fire, and they're being failed again now. Austerity has always had a class bias.

At the same time as they've been cutting the fire service, axing police and taking money out of schools, they've found billions in tax cuts for the super-rich and big business. Tax breaks for the rich and austerity for everyone else. And it's a disinterest we can see across the board, not least in the fire service. With the loss of one in five frontline firefighting jobs and the closure of dozens of fire stations since the Conservatives took office, the public in the UK are clearly less safe from fires and other dangers than they were eight years ago. But these cuts are not only extremely bad for public safety, as you will be well aware, it is also very detrimental to the morale of remaining firefighters and fire officers who feel increasingly stretched and overworked, having the added stress that it could be their job that gets lost in the next round of dangerous cuts. That is compounded with cuts to other emergency services, the loss of equipment, appliances and fire stations as well as the loss of almost a third of safety inspectors. That is why, the Labour Party, are committed to recruiting 3,000 new firefighters with a full review of staffing levels

and the implementation of a statutory duty to respond to flooding in England as well as elsewhere in the UK. All of this is essential if we are to improve response times and ensure you, as firefighters and officers, have the resources you need to do your job of keeping us all safe.

We're absolutely clear this must be part of a co-ordinated approach across government – a strong focus on fire safety and fire prevention, along with well-funded, fully staffed and independent Fire & Rescue Services that are not governed by Police & Crime Commissioners but have their own governance arrangements that will allow you to get on with your jobs. That's not to say that the Fire & Rescue Service should go without criticism. Women and ethnic minorities are still woefully under-represented in the service – even compared to other emergency services, although the FBU Women's Committee and Black & Ethnic Minority Members Section of the union must be congratulated for the work they do to remedy this. Indeed, the Fire Brigades Union is undoubtedly one of the leading trade unions in this country in terms of record of defending and protecting its members' working conditions, pay and terms of employment.

There is, for example, obviously huge strength of feeling amongst FBU members in the West Midlands, who last week voted overwhelmingly for strike action regarding new contracts. It's absolutely right, therefore, for both the union and the fire authority to find a resolution to that dispute as quickly as possible that the fire service are happy with. I make that call today, to bring about a resolution to that dispute, because putting power in the hands of as many people as possible is central to the Labour Party Socialism and central to our programme of government.

We do not know when this shambles of a Tory government will eventually fall. We do not know when the next election will be. We know the problems facing our society at the moment, and we know what must be done about it. We know young people are denied opportunities for the future as their government fails to invest in their education, and indeed drives them into debt merely for going to college or university, charging people thousands just for getting an education. We know that families are being denied affordable housing as prices spiral out of control. We need a huge programme of building council housing to deal with the housing crisis across this country.

We know that working people are being denied security at work. Nearly a million on zero hours contracts. And denied adequate pay that would enable them to lead fuller lives. We know that people suffering illness are denied the outstanding healthcare the NHS staff so badly want to provide, if only the government gave them the resources to do it. We also know that older people and their families are denied peace of mind as the crisis in social care continues to go unresolved.

But what we also know is that something can be done about it and that there really is an alternative. A Labour Government elected on a platform to transform our society, redistribute wealth and power throughout society is now not just a pipedream but a genuine possibility. If we work together, united as a Labour Movement it's now more possible than ever to build a future that really does work for the many not the few. That's what trade unions were founded to achieve; that's what the Labour Party was founded to achieve. I thank the FBU for all you do for your members, and our society and our community, and the fantastic contribution you make to the development of policies in our party, policies that will unite and excite people so whenever the election comes we're ready for it. But we're not going to wait for the election to be out on the streets campaigning. We do it all the time, every day. That's what gives us our strength, gives us our confidence, and puts them into retreat.

Conference, thank you for inviting me here today. *(Applause)*

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, I noticed the President's instruction not to have your phones and iPads out all got ignored there. Jeremy, it's fantastic to have you here again. I know many people will have heard us say some of these things before, but it is worth repeating. We affiliated to the Labour Party in 1927. It is our centenary year, as you know, and we've had a few ups and downs with the Labour Party during that time. Jeremy, some time ago sent me one of these pictures of him on a picket line in 1977. So there's not many Labour MPs who've got such a record of consistent support for the Fire Brigades Union as the comrade on my right here does.

We, as you know, have had some disagreements, shall we say, with Labour governments over the years and we did indeed disaffiliate in 2004. Consistently, throughout that period, despite whatever disagreements we had with then Labour ministers and so on, we had support from this man here and from John McDonnell and from other Labour

MPs. So when the campaign to elect Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party took off it was a no-brainer for us; it was an obvious decision that we should get behind that campaign. We then moved to affiliate again to the Labour Party and to play a full role in Labour Party structures.

I'll say this about that. Other trade unions have been affiliated all through this. We have never seen the level of engagement with trade unions from other Labour Party leaders as we have seen from Jeremy Corbyn during his time as Labour Party leader. That is face to face engagement with the trade union general secretary through TULO but also the dialogue about what sort of programme Labour will stand on in a coming election. It's been an amazing experience to see, and we need to work as a union to ensure that we feed into that process the demands that you want, to build a better fire service and to build a better society.

It was also therefore a no-brainer for us that when Jeremy experienced certain difficulties, we stood side by side with Jeremy, and our fire engine came out as part of that campaign as well. We're very proud that we supported Jeremy and stood by him throughout that period.

It is slightly surreal when we go to our Parliamentary Group that occasionally the leader of Her Majesty's Opposition just happens to pop in to see our Parliamentary Group, alongside the Shadow Chancellor and other people. It would have been impossible a few years ago. So, Jeremy, I think the response of conference that you have seen means you are extremely welcome, you are always welcome here. Whatever we can do to ensure that those policies in favour of trade unions, in favour of ordinary people, in favour of working class people are adopted and then implemented by a future Labour government, we will do it. He gets loads of gifts off us over the years, so there's a pen for you this time. *(Applause)*

BRO JEREMY CORBYN (Labour Party):

Thank you very much. I have the statue of a firefighter in my office for every visitor to see and I tell them where it came from, what it's about and how they should support the FBU. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Just to let you know, Jeremy's still going to do a bit more work for us. He's going to meet some of the members who actually attended Grenfell and he's going to do some over the West Midlands officials, and there was a video.

So we are now back in the room and back on business. I now call Resolution 7 Standard Rank Structure moved by the ONC. The Executive Council are opposing.

Resolution 7 STANDARD RANK STRUCTURE

Conference, to support the safe control of firefighting operations there needs to be a drive to stop the creation by Fire and Rescue Services around the UK of roles/ranks that sit outside any agreed framework.

Conference would like to see all fire and rescue services operating within the same rank structure, rank to role has resulted in a rush to the bottom with different interpretations around UK Fire and Rescue Services.

Conference supports a campaign by the FBU to get back a standardised rank structure for UK Fire and Rescue Services.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

BRO SIMON AMOS (ONC):

Thank you, Jeremy, for warming the audience up for me. Conference, the emphasis of this resolution was to look at whether there's an appetite to standardise the rank structure across the UK Fire & Rescue Service. We've got ongoing concerns with regard to the civilianisation of uniform posts and two-tier entry on individuals being given operational remits. On discussion with head office, however, the ONC will remit this resolution but with an assurance that we'd like to work with head office on this issue. We meet in Belfast next week. You're more than welcome to come and talk to us about it. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Simon. Sean to comment.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks, Simon. Firstly, I think what we've got to do is we've got to realise that if we're going to take on a challenge like this we really do need evidence because there's a lot of people saying what's wrong the role structure and I know there's an appetite in some places to look at moving back to the ranks. But we've got to realise this is going to be a huge operation. The roles, the rolemaps are enshrined in the Grey Book and we've got a national position on this as well.

It is about challenging it locally where it's going wrong. I had a lot to say in opposition, but for now what I will say is yes, I will be glad to work with people. We will find out, get some more evidence because we always work better when we've got robust evidence to support our position. Thanks for remitting that. We'll have a discussion about it.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 12 Audit of Part Time Workers' Conditions moved by the NRC.

Resolution 12 AUDIT OF PART-TIME WORKERS CONDITIONS

Conference tasks the Executive Council to undertake an audit of UK Fire and Rescue Services to ascertain to what extent that each is complying with their legal requirements under part-time workers legislation. That a subsequent report be generated and circulated not later than 12 months from the end of this Conference.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

BRO SEAMUS McMAHON (NRC):

President, Conference, on 1 May 2006 the Fire Brigades Union reported to members an end of 60 years' discrimination of retained firefighters in a momentous discrimination case at the House of Lords. On 16 November 2007 our solicitors made their closing remarks at the Employment Tribunal underlining that retained firefighters were in fact part time workers. On 11 March 2008 the Employment Tribunal also ruled in our favour and the Fire Brigades Union reported that "for retained firefighters and part time workers FBU wins eight year legal battle for pensions and for an end to discrimination".

Work has immediately started to ensure that this discrimination became a thing of the past and over the next three years much progress was made on this. However, we are now in the middle of 2018 and reports are still being received of retained firefighters' conditions of service failing to meet the basic requirement. The fact that our members are still bringing these issues to us across a number of brigades is a cause for great concern. Our union went to great lengths to ensure that this case was brought and ultimately won. This took almost eight years to achieve. We are here today, ten years after this historic victory, and still we are hearing reports of retained firefighters being less fairly treated. What is not clear is how widespread this issue is.

It is for these reasons that the National Retained Committee feel the need to move this resolution to enable us as a union to get a clear and full picture of the scale of this problem. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. We've got Sean to give us the qualification.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The qualification on this is quite simple really. If we're going to find evidence and we're going to do an audit we are going to need some assistance from yourselves and from the National Retained Committee. So when we ask you for the assistance we don't expect people to say, "we've got a massive workload; you're asking us to do this". So we're going to be asking you to assist as well.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 12 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 13 Fire & Rescue Service Apprenticeships moved by B&EMM and the Executive Council are supporting.

Resolution 13 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE APPRENTICESHIPS

Conference notes that increasing numbers of Fire Services are looking to adopt apprenticeship schemes leading to direct entry into a firefighter role. While this is an opportunity to secure and protect future establishments and save resources on Fire Service recruitment in the long term, it is important that our Union Officials are engaging with Fire Service Managers to ensure the best terms and conditions for apprentices.

Also as important is the recognition that apprenticeships can be an important tool in addressing the lack of diversity that still blights UK FRSs. The right outreach strategy for advertising apprenticeships has the potential to ensure that all Members of our communities can be made aware of this opportunity for a career in the operational Fire Service.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council, in consultation with the other equality sections, to produce an FBU Best Practice document on FRS Apprenticeships. This will assist our local and Regional Officials in any discussions with FRS management on the structure of their local apprenticeship schemes and to demand that diversity in local schemes is a priority. The guidance to be produced before Conference 2019.

B&EMM NATIONAL COMMITTEE

BRO DEAN POUNDER (B&EMM):

Good afternoon. When you look around this room you notice (no disrespect) a lack of young faces and a lack of B&EMM representation. This is due in part to a fall in firefighter recruitment and an inconsistent approach to addressing the lack of diversity across England. For many years we've suffered severe cuts across the board. Now our profession is catching up by the introduction of apprenticeship schemes. As much as we welcome this, there are concerns.

These schemes need to have proper pay and conditions. If we are to expect high quality, professional standards from apprenticeships we must provide equal pay and conditions. The Executive Council is resolute in its commitment to ensure that apprenticeships are treated with respect by employers, paid fair wages, provided with high quality training, and the best possible conditions of service for their health, safety and welfare, are provided with a job at the end of the apprenticeship which does not award them a second-class status, and are not used to cover up staffing deficiencies.

Access needs to be given to representative bodies to enable our apprentices to become union members. We need to support and protect them, no matter what stage they are at. The best schemes we have are partnership between management and union, ensuring the best outcome for the service. Schemes such as this provide a great opportunity for increasing the poor diversity of the Fire & Rescue Service. The FBU should be demanding that advertising for the schemes ensure that all communities are aware of the opportunities.

Take a look around the room. In 2018 we are still a white male UK Fire & Rescue Service. Approximately 42,000 full-time equivalent staff – 95% male, approximately 5% female, 3.8% from ethnic minority groups. If you think it's daunting for a grown, mature adult to approach the fire service seeking a career, when all they're seeing from a passing appliance is it is full of individuals that do not represent them, or of an identity that does not look like them, how much more intimidating and daunting could this be for a young adult seeking an apprenticeship? In a 1999 report the fire service had been branded institutionally sexist, racist and homophobic throughout England and Wales. Overwhelmingly white male staff believed that women were not up for doing a man's job; black firefighters faced routine name calling; and homosexuality was a taboo subject.

Has much changed? Yes! Has enough changed? No! In May 2016 the then Home Secretary reported: "I look at the Fire & Rescue Service. I see a service that has succeeded in spite of the framework it operates in, not because of it. A Fire & Rescue landscape still beset by poor governance and structures, a workforce lacking diversity and

still bound by many of the old ways of working, and a service that requires further reform to improve accountability, bring independent scrutiny and dry transparency.” That is why we need to take an aggressive approach when it comes to advertising such schemes. That is why the FBU should be demanding that apprenticeships should be an important part of the FRS outreach and positive action strategy in all FRS. That is why the FBU needs to be advising our reps and our officials engaged in discussions on these schemes. An FBU best practice document is the best way forward and can be shared with management to assist in delivering the best outcomes on apprenticeships. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO KARL SORFLEET (GMC):

We are seconding the B&EMM resolution. President, Conference, the resolution is not unachievable. We have apprenticeships in GMC. GMC officials have ensured that any apprenticeship intake are on Grey Book-compliant terms and conditions. There are no differences in terms and conditions, no difference in salary, we’ve had day one access for enrolment for all apprentices, and we also ensure that applications are open to all minorities and that they represent the diverse communities we live in. So GMC support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That’s open for debate. Anybody? No. I now put Resolution 13 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now Resolution 16 Unrestricted and Unconditional Pay when Diagnosed with a Progressive or Life threatening Condition moved by Northumberland. Executive Council are giving qualified support.

Resolution 16 UNRESTRICTED AND UNCONDITIONAL PAY WHEN DIAGNOSED WITH A PROGRESSIVE OR LIFE THREATENING CONDITION

Conference recognises the devastating impact that being diagnosed with a progressive or life threatening condition such as cancer or Parkinson’s disease can bring to an individual and their family.

Not only is it a mental drain but the financial implications whilst someone receives their treatment can become overwhelming.

Conference urges the Executive Council to work with Employers to recognise such illnesses in the same way that injuries in the workplace are recognised and guarantee that disability leave and full pay are given to that individual.

NORTHUMBERLAND

BRO ASH FOX (Northumberland):

President, Conference. Conference recognises and applauds the valuable work undertaken by the FBU and other major unions to gain rightful and just protection for members with terminal illnesses through signing up to or making significant progress towards the voluntary charter Dying for Work. Conference also recognises and values the 2017 resolutions from Cumbria on cancer as an industrial injury and Scotland on cancer and sick pay. Within these resolutions and the Dying to Work charter we see a focus on cancer and terminal illness. We believe this focus is divisively narrow and would in effect discriminate against members who suffer similar difficulties through the misfortune of falling ill with a condition which falls outside the specifically identified and agreed criteria on conditions.

There are, quite evidently, a much broader range of progressive, life-threatening or life-limiting conditions which, through lack of qualification, can then be responded to differently and ultimately less favourably by employers. You will likely have heard a cancer charity’s famous slogan “Cancer does not discriminate”. Well, neither does motor neurone disease, heart disease, Parkinson’s, dementia, or mental ill health. The onset of many or most of these conditions has a complexity of potential causes making us inevitably prey to a lottery of culture, gender, genetics, social status, wealth, personality, upbringing, diet, and a host of other factors. This is going to become more relevant

and pertinent as we move towards national pension age. It becomes clear the causation is unclear. By limiting our focus to cancer and terminal illnesses we risk being drawn into justifying compliance to qualifying criteria so the disability leave and full pay can be given. This may ultimately deflect focus from member-focused support at a time when it is desperately needed by members, and also their families and dependents.

Whilst promoting dialogue in respect of terminal or cancer-related conditions in the conditions of service, it is most important to maintain a wider perspective of what this discussion is about. It should not be about defining cause; it should be about looking for opportunities to support our members. There is a saying “you are what you do”. When we become firefighters, control operators, union officials and other roles within the room, we are influenced in many ways - not just professionally, but physically, personally, psychologically. Our conduct, behaviours and thoughts reflect that. They have a direct influence on us. To attempt to separate parts of people and to attribute a causal link is not helpful and gives opportunities for further distress, injury and discrimination.

We therefore request that the EC works with the employers to review the way injuries and illnesses are recognised and broaden them to include progressive, life-threatening and life-limiting conditions to guarantee disability leave and full pay for members. Conference, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. Anybody? I will call the AGS to give the qualification.

ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, it's the sort of resolution that we don't want to give a qualification to. I'm sure you will understand that. We fully understand what is in the resolution, what lies behind it. Our members, when they're facing the biggest threat to their employment security, when they're ill with these kind of conditions (and we've all known friends within the service and if not within the service certainly family and friends that have suffered conditions as referred to within the resolution) is the time when people should not be facing such concerns. They've got enough to contend with and actually it is the time when they are least able to do anything about their disposition. So we fully support the resolution.

The qualification, I suppose, is that the resolution does not make any reference to the Grey Book and doesn't make any reference to the NJC directly; it talks about the employers in the plural. There is the issue around achievability. I will qualify my qualification in a moment. There is the issue about whether or not we can get the NJC – a joint body where both sides have to agree a change – to agree a change. I suppose a second qualification as well as it is not just the job at national level. It's for you to continue doing the job that you are doing on a local basis as well, to get individual employers to face up to their, if nothing else, moral responsibilities to look after those who are very much in a time of great need.

I will be frank, we will be putting the pressure on the national employers. We need your assistance not just in terms of what you're doing locally to get individual employers to agree it, but to put the pressure on to create a situation where there is, if you like, a moral tide that the national employers need to respond to. Despite the qualification of achievability, I'm not entirely unsure, uncertain that we can't achieve it nationally. But I think it's right and proper that we bring those two qualifications to your attention and congratulate Ash and Northumberland for bringing the resolution to this conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. I now put Resolution 16 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 17 Maternity Pay and Conditions moved by the NWC. The Executive Council are supporting.

Resolution 17 MATERNITY PAY AND CONDITIONS

Conference is disappointed to have to raise this once again, the subject of the basic levels of maternity pay provided in most UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs). The issue of discrepancies across UK FRSs in the financial provision within maternity policies is extreme. In an FRS where

the basic or statutory minimum pay is provided, women lose 10% of their pay as soon as they commence maternity leave. This only lasts for 6 weeks when they lose a further 40% going onto half pay for the rest of their ordinary maternity leave, which is usually 33 weeks.

Several FRSs have negotiated improved policies for pregnant staff and have used the NWC FBU Model Policy: Negotiating Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Rights, as a basis for negotiations. Many FRS women and families have benefitted from this. If women are truly valued in the FRS community, then pregnancy and maternity needs to be revisited and better financial provision should be at the heart of every FRS policy.

Conference calls on the Executive Council, with support from the NWC, to immediately enter into negotiations with our employers to update and increase the minimum maternity pay and to also update the wording in the Grey Book, to include legislative changes, terminology, changes to parental leave and the inclusion of fertility treatment. This would provide the opportunity to have a more consistent and fair approach to maternity and related topics for all our Members.

NATIONAL WOMENS COMMITTEE

SIS DIANE CRITCHLOW (NWC):

President, Conference, there is a vast difference in maternity between services from the minimum statutory pay (which means your pay is reduced immediately by at least 10%) to 39 weeks' full pay. Adoption and fertility pay and leave are also a postcode lottery. There is also a huge discrepancy in working arrangements during pregnancy and when returning to work after maternity leave. Many women are forced on to days without being given meaningful work, just to be seen to be productive. This is often without consideration of the effect this can have on a woman, feeling isolated from their watch, a lack of confidence due to not being able to train operationally in a risk assessed manner and not being able to standard test equipment.

These poor policies result in women not informing their services as soon as they find out they're pregnant, putting their colleagues, their unborn children and themselves at risk. Sometimes they create a pretend injury. Women are also stopping breastfeeding early or not letting their services know they are still breastfeeding – again putting their babies at risk and going against the EU directive. Women are rushing back to operational duties because of financial restraints, putting physical pressure on themselves causing both short and long-term injuries.

I know of a woman having pelvic organ prolapse due to lifting the 135 ladder only six months after having a baby, resulting in surgery which, by the way, meant she was off work on full pay. This doesn't even take into account the mental stress or anxiety of trying to negotiate working arrangements at a time which should be a joyous occasion. I represented a woman in Dorset on a maternity-related sex discrimination case. Although she won her case she emotionally told me that she would never have another baby whilst being a firefighter because she could not risk going through the mental stress again.

Services are recruiting again and using positive action to attract minority groups, yet we're struggling to retain the females we already have due to a lack of support. Services are using the shared parental leave as a way of refusing enhanced maternity policies yet statistics show that less than 2% of men in the UK are taking advantage of it. We ask the EC, with support from the NWC, to immediately enter into negotiations with our employers to update and increase the minimum maternity pay, and to also update the wording in the Grey Book and include legislative changes, terminology, changes to parental leave and the inclusion of fertility treatment. This would enable a more consistent and fair approach to maternity and related topics for all our members. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO MICK MOSLEY (Staffordshire):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 17 brought by the National Women's Committee. Staffordshire has probably the best maternity provisions within the Fire & Rescue Service, provisions that were fought for and won by Sister Helen Harrison with support from the National Women's Committee. Enhanced maternity pay enables

women to take a longer period of leave which helps to reduce anxiety and helps new mums to bond with their newborns. It also increases the likelihood of the woman returning to work which also benefits the fire service. What's more, it gives time for women gradually, and more importantly gently, to get their fitness levels back, ready to return to work.

An example of our policy working well was Emma, a firefighter in Staffordshire, who had two babies close together. The enhanced pay and excellent maternity policy meant that this was a reasonably positive experience for her whilst pregnant, during her maternity leave, and on her return to work. Please support this resolution. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

BRO JON WHARNSBY (London):

President, Conference, comrades, Region 10 fully supports improved maternity pay and conditions for our members that is called for in this resolution. In London, hard work has negotiated very much improved IVF conditions. We congratulate Staffordshire and Cheshire on their success in the area of maternity benefits. Benefits to our members of improved terms and conditions are obvious and have been listed by the NWC, but many studies have noted the benefits to employers too including a report from the Institute of Employment Studies into pregnancy and maternity which listed employers' benefits as improved retention, improved productivity, improved recruitment, and improved morale and commitment. If we are truly to value our female colleagues we must take up the fight to improve maternity provision. We especially support the improved paternity and partner leave. We must be cautious not to unwittingly and blindly help to further indirect discrimination against mothers. Many reports, including those carried out by the Institute for Fiscal Studies concluded that maternity leave is partially responsible for the gender pay gap and that years spent on maternity leave has a long-term detrimental effect on the future career trajectories. If we're serious about equality for women we must improve paternity and partner rights to match those increased maternity provisions.

As stated, only 2% of men take up the option of paternity leave. If we are to succeed in improving maternity conditions without improving paternity we are adorning our sisters with chains of gold. The greater financial gap between maternity and paternity or partner provision creates a financial pressure on mothers to be the primary carers, reinforcing outdated stereotypes. We support the NWC resolution and call on conference to do the same. *(Applause)*

BRO JOSEPH MENDE (B&EMM):

President, Conference, we are supporting Resolution 17. Pregnancy is not defined as a sickness and therefore does not fall under the sickness policy as explained in the Grey Book. The big difference between sickness and pregnancy is the financial penalty levied upon women for a condition that, in most cases, is caused by men! But financial hardship doesn't only affect women in isolation but also the family unit as a whole with the loss of income causing a dramatic impact on how a family survives such hardship. In addition, by causing such hardship a woman is forced to return to full-time operational duties far earlier than her body dictates, causing not only physical stress but also mental stress. Pregnancy is not a given right and for many it has proved a struggle, which is why the numbers needing IVF treatment has increased dramatically over the years. Policy, pay and conditions have not moved along with advances in technology and do not reflect the right to equal treatment.

You've heard my brief statement on pregnancy and my brief statement on IVF and now I would like to add into the mix the inconsistency in pay received across UK Fire & Rescue Services. How can it be fair that if a pregnant firefighter from one FRS has a pay deduction of 10% the moment she goes on maternity leave and then a further 40% deduction after six weeks, when another pregnant firefighter in a neighbouring brigade suffers a far lesser penalty? For sure, we should have a way of making sure we deal with this. I support. *(Applause)*

BRO MARK WOODWORTH (Bedfordshire):

We are supporting the resolution. I will be very brief. Most things have been covered. Why, in 2018, are our HR departments treating our female firefighters as second class citizens? We've talked about equality, the majority of us being male. Our HR departments constantly talk about meeting their statutory requirements. Why is it a man

can receive full pay after he's had abdominal surgery, but a woman having gone through the most natural of events, including such things as C-sections, is treated differently? Please support this resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? No. I now put Resolution 17 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

We now move to Resolution 21 National Overtime/Additional Hours Ban moved by Cleveland. The Executive Council are seeking remit or they oppose.

Resolution 21 NATIONAL OVERTIME/ADDITIONAL HOURS BAN

Conference is extremely concerned by the ongoing cuts to frontline fire provision across the UK. These cuts affect negatively both firefighter and public safety.

Fire and Rescue Services are increasingly using overtime and single rate additional hours to 'prop up' staffing following cuts to frontline staffing numbers. Using overtime and additional hours over a long period of time leads to a smaller workforce, lower pay, working longer hours and a block on recruitment.

Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to ballot FBU Members as soon as possible with a recommendation to invoke industrial action in the form of a national overtime and additional hours ban.

CLEVELAND

BRO KARL WAGER (Cleveland):

President, Conference, we've been here a couple of times, like my comrade Simon Amos said. It seems like he's been here three years; we've been here a couple of times with this as well. But we're here because we believe it's really important and our members believe it's important.

Conference, fire services are increasingly using overtime to prop up staffing levels – additional hours, overtime, whatever you want to call it. It's counterproductive to what we all should be fighting for. Overtime in whatever format means, quite simply, less recruitment, reduced periods of rest, less time off with family and loved ones, reduced health & safety standards, increased risk of stress and mental health or even injury. Our own members are giving these service managers the easy way out by providing labour because of mismanaged shift systems. I don't quite know what we're worried about here. I don't quite know why we've asked to remit it. Are we worried about getting those things back? Are we worried about getting recruitment back? Matt said this morning we should not be putting up obstacles in the way of people joining our union. Overtime does exactly that. Overtime puts recruitment under threat. Why recruit new staff when our members are taking up the slack? New members of staff in the Fire & Rescue Service means new members to this union. Our members have asked us to bring this and they believe strongly that, and they have said over many years, the worst thing that we did was to lift the national overtime ban. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That's open for debate. No. General Secretary to give the opposition.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Karl's right, he has been here several times and it is a difficult issue. If the resolution isn't being remitted we would urge conference to oppose it. It is said that overtime and members working overtime for flat rate and other such mechanisms are being used to cut jobs and reduce recruitment into the fire service. I've got no doubt that is the case. The truth is that we have national agreements on the use of overtime and the first step that we need to take in all of these cases is to monitor and police that use of overtime and extra hours within each Fire & Rescue Service to ensure that employers are not in breach of that national agreement.

In terms of the use of flat rate overtime yes, that is something that is creeping into the fire service. We need campaigns to tell our members that actually working at flat rate additional hours undermines the conditions of every single one of us when we've got nationally agreed rates of overtime pay.

The biggest problem we have however, is in relation to the resolution (and it has come up before) that this union doesn't run ballots until we know that we are going to win them. During the period of the pensions dispute we took strike action. We also took action short of strike. The action short of strike, industrial action that we took, proved to be one of the most contentious and divisive actions during that campaign. We found that the picture in relation to the use of overtime across different Fire & Rescue Services was hugely different. Some services were very reliant on it; some services were not reliant on it at all. So it is not a universal picture that is set out in the Cleveland resolution.

Secondly, we found that actually the attitude of members towards taking that action also differed between members, between different parts of the country, and the Executive Council, in deciding to call that action, reported back great difficulties at local level in relation to that action. What's not clear from the Cleveland resolution is what is the purpose of that? It would be a ballot for industrial action. When we lifted the overtime ban (and I don't want to repeat the debates of 14 years ago) I probably strongly agreed with you, Karl, at the time that lifting the overtime ban was a pretty serious step to take. Nevertheless, that was the democratic decision of conference at this time – regardless of my views and regardless of your views. At the time that was the democratic decision of conference. Conference is supreme. Conference voted to lift that overtime ban which had been in place since 1973. It was a remarkable achievement, the overtime ban. But the overtime ban of the 1970s was introduced in a period when the legislation governing trade unions was entirely different. It was a policy of the union that members should not work additional shifts. It was a fantastic achievement of that generation to maintain that for 25+ years. Today, of course, we're in a completely different position. We would have to have a lawful trade dispute. It's not clear from the resolution what the trade dispute would be. Secondly, we would have to have a ballot and thirdly, we would have to win that ballot meeting the different requirements under the Trade Union Act, which of course we've just handsomely met in the West Midlands trade dispute.

We are not convinced at this time that that's the position that we're in. Yet the resolution, if you were to agree it, commits the Executive Council to ballot FBU members as soon as possible. There's no get out there. That means we move towards a ballot and you would have to be convinced that you are going to win that ballot in each of your brigades. We currently are not convinced that that's the position that this union is in. Therefore, again we ask Cleveland to remit the resolution or, Conference, we urge you to oppose. We don't stumble into industrial action in this union. We plan it very carefully because we have got a fantastic record of winning industrial action ballots and that's what would be necessary to pursue the call that Cleveland have made. So again I urge Cleveland to remit, or Conference I urge you to oppose the resolution. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Cleveland, right to reply.

BRO KARL WAGER (Cleveland):

Conference, President, we will agree to remit this. Not because we've been asked to by the EC, or not because, like some, we think we'll get a kicking today. However, we're going to do it to give you all an opportunity to go back to your brigades and discuss this. We do think it's important to get back to your brigades, speak to them, let them know about what overtime does. You know, it might give you a couple of extra quid in your pocket every now and then, but it's stifling recruitment. Like the comrade said earlier on, we've got no young faces in this room again. Sorry, very few young faces in this room. Let's get recruitment moving by stopping overtime.

We stand here, like I said, representing our members and our members really believe that we should be bringing back the national overtime ban. I will be back next year, believe it or not, and I will continue to fight to get this resolution over the line. Please go back to your brigades. Please let's get a bit of momentum going and next year please support it. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, there were some worried looking faces that I'd missed Resolution 20 out. That will be taken tomorrow. Sorry about that.

I now call Resolution 23 Trade Union Facilities – Full-time Employees moved by North Wales. The Executive Council give qualified support.

Resolution 23 TRADE UNION FACILITIES (FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES)

Conference notes Section 4, Part C, Paragraph 28 of the Grey Book (as amended by CIRCULAR NJC/04/11) which states:

“28. Where a part-time employee (including an employee on the retained duty system) attends a joint consultative or negotiating meeting outside of his or her normal working time the time spent at the meeting should be paid or time off in lieu granted. Where a retained duty system employee attends such a meeting and receives payment instead of time off in lieu they shall be paid at the appropriate basic hourly rate for his/her role”.

Conference recognises and applauds the vitally important contribution that part-time employees make to the work of the Union and insists that they should continue to be remunerated in keeping with Paragraph 28.

Conference also recognises that whilst full-time employees may be afforded facility time to carry out their trade union duties, they may not be fully released from their primary employment to do so and may therefore occasionally find themselves compelled to attend consultative or negotiating meetings outside of their normal working time.

Conference insists that full-time employees be treated in the same way as part-time employees in this respect and therefore demands that Paragraph 28 be amended to read:

“28. Where an employee (including an employee on the retained duty system) attends a joint consultative or negotiating meeting outside of his or her normal working time the time spent at the meeting should be paid or time off in lieu granted. Where a retained duty system employee attends such a meeting and receives payment instead of time off in lieu they shall be paid at the appropriate basic hourly rate for his/her role”.

NORTH WALES

BRO PARRY DAVIES (North Wales):

President, Conference, North Wales Fire & Rescue authority recently announced that it was facing a shortfall of nearly £2 million for the year 2019-2020 with its reserves at approximately 2%. In the same report it outlined options for consultation that would lead to more cuts to frontline fire services. The options included the removal of appliances, firefighters' jobs, retained fire stations, day crewing allowances, and of nationally recognised duty systems at some locations. The ability of the service to maintain adequate operational cover is already being challenged. By way of example, wholtime crews and appliances are routinely sent to work from remote, off the run, RDS stations. To save money, standby crews are no longer being called in to cover those base stations.

Our communities are now exposed to longer response times and decreased levels of service which translate into increased levels of anxiety and risk both for operational staff and public alike. Our members face these threats in the context of great uncertainty, relentless austerity and organisational cultural and behavioural challenges. The situation is clearly similar, if not worse, in many other brigades as illustrated by the situation in West Midlands to whom we have sent messages of solidarity.

The work of the FBU is clearly as important now as ever and it's essential for us to have representatives and officials who are effective, empowered, highly motivated and well supported. The FBU officials (all the ones I know for sure) give freely and generously of their time, routinely going the extra mile to support other members and protect our communities. This resolution seeks to clarify and ensure that when they are entitled to remuneration or compensatory time in lieu for their valuable work they receive it. This objective is therefore similar to Resolution 5 from Shropshire which seeks to ensure that officials receive sufficient facility time.

Some officials are fully released from their roles to facilitate their trade union activities. Others may work the day duty system and find that they are able to take facility time to attend the majority of consultative or negotiating meetings. For some officials, such as those working the shift, day crewing or retained duty systems, their periods of work may not align so well. But being entirely dedicated and highly motivated individuals, they will attend a significant number of meetings in their own time, which inevitably affects their work/life balance.

The Grey Book does address this to some extent: Section 4 Part C para.28 which says; *“Where a part-time employee, including an employee on a retained duty system, attends a joint consultative or negotiating meeting outside of his or her normal working time the time spent at the meeting should be paid or time off in lieu granted.”* Unfortunately, the same provision is not made for some full-time employees who are either expected or compelled to attend meetings outside of their normal working time. Whilst it may be possible to negotiate local policies or agreements to secure such provisions, it may, in times such as these, not be achievable.

The ACAS Code of Practice 3 provides some helpful information about payment for time off for trade union duties. Section 18 says: *“An employer who permits union representatives time off for trade union duties must pay them for the time off taken.”* Section 19 says: *“There is no statutory requirement for pay for time off where the duty is carried out at a time when the union representative would not otherwise have been at work unless the union representative works flexible hours such as a night shift but needs to perform representative duties normal hours.”* It goes on to say that *“staff who work part-time will be entitled to be paid if staff who work full-time would be entitled to be paid. In all cases, the amount of time off must be reasonable.”*

So if only for the purposes of clarity and fairness, and hopefully as something that can be used to inform any work that the EC is able to do under the previous Resolution 5 that we mentioned and the GS's response, I feel that it would appear to be entirely safe and proper to amend the Grey Book as proposed. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. Anybody? AGS to give the qualification.

ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thank you, President. The qualification is on the basis of achievability, taking account of everything that was said when the resolution was moved. What's written on paper doesn't always translate into what can be achieved through negotiation or sometimes through taking matters to an Employment Tribunal. That said, as with Resolution 5, the question of facilities, this aspect of trade union facilities does need to be and will be taken seriously and will be pursued with vigour. There is just that qualification about achievability. As Conference will know, the part-time regulations, as good as they are, do have a shortfall in as much as whilst they ensure parity for part-time workers in comparison to full-time workers, they do not operate in such a way vice versa, ie parity for full-time workers in respect of conditions or arrangements that part-time workers enjoy. With that qualification we do urge support in the same way as we urged support for Resolution 5 earlier.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. I now put Resolution 23 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Conference, we're about to wrap up but I've got a couple of announcements. Could all of the EC members and officials who had previously indicated that they would assist in the reading of the Grenfell Tower inquiry statements meet in the Consort room immediately after conference ends tonight. It's along the corridor near where you had the dinner. It's where apparently it was flooded. Best not mention that!

Also, just to remind you, if you do get time to pay a visit to the FBU Centenary Campaign trailer down on the seafront. We'll see you back in here at 9.30 sharp in the morning. Thank you very much.

Conference adjourned

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference can you take your seats. Conference, come to order. I now call Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders Committee to give the Standing Orders report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Conference, good morning. *Good morning*

Programmes of business page 6 please: Resolution 20 Contracts of Employment, West Midlands has been withdrawn with the right to speak. Page 7: Resolution 48 National Standards for Promotion, ONC has been withdrawn to second Resolution 52. Page 12: Resolution 62 Universal Basic Income, West Midlands remit with the right to speak.

Delegates list, please: West Yorkshire: remove Maggie Meszaros; insert Dave Williams. North Wales: remove Blythe Roberts; insert Mike Edwards. West Midlands: remove Andrew Scattergood; insert Aaron Pell. South Wales: remove Gareth Brown; insert Ian Buckley. Scotland: remove Stephen Gall; insert Denise Christie; remove Jamie McCallum; insert Brian Cameron. Northamptonshire: delete Nick Ferrison; insert Ben Muddle. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

Conference, we now turn to page 7 in the Annual Report, Section D Fire & Rescue Service policy para D1. I now call Executive Council policy statement Stop the Rot: Defending the Fire & Rescue Service with amendments from Shropshire and Oxfordshire. Executive Council oppose amendment from Shropshire and oppose amendment 2 from Oxfordshire, and support amendment 3 from Oxfordshire. General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, the Executive Council has put this statement together because we can't ignore what's happening to our service, our profession and our industry. We brought it because what they've done has a direct impact also on firefighters' pay and conditions. We put on record the concerns that we set out in this Executive Council policy statement, not just to register our concern, but also to organise our campaign against what is going on in the Fire & Rescue Service.

We're in a fight of our lives to try to save our service, to save our profession, and to defend the communities that we serve. The last decade has witnessed the most devastating cuts in the modern history of the Fire & Rescue Service. This is clear from the research that we do, from the official figures that are published by the various governments in the UK. They don't like to advertise what has been going on, but when we dig down we find a trail of devastation the like of which we've never seen before.

So in England, even the National Audit Office found around 30% level of cuts between 2011 and 2015. We know from the Audit Scotland reports that the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service has been cut. It was cut before the single service was introduced, and it has been cut after the single service has been introduced. We've also seen the Local Government settlement figures which show that the Tory government at Westminster plans to cut a further 20% from central funding to Fire & Rescue Services by 2020. The situation is similar in Wales.

In Northern Ireland we have a slightly different position. The cuts have not been as severe, and it's a credit to our officials and members in Northern Ireland that they've managed to keep the pressure on politicians of all parties, and the cuts have been somewhat reduced there, although there is no complacency there and that campaigning continues.

For the UK as a whole what used to be something like a £3 billion a year service is now more like a £2 billion a year service. That's the scale of what we've been through. You're feeling it at local level all across the country. These cuts

have continued despite the remarkable work that our members undertook at Grenfell Tower last year, despite terror attacks, despite floods, despite all the new risks that our members are dealing with. Those cuts have continued despite the tremendous work that our people do day in and day out in trying to keep our communities safe. Cuts have continued even though, as we report (and we're the only organisation which collates these figures) that our members are rescuing 40,000 a year across the UK – more than one hundred a day. We have to be clear that for us cuts are not acceptable. We don't accept excuses from politicians that they have to manage a decline in the fire service because of declines supposedly in the number of fire calls that we're receiving.

I have to say, particularly to Labour politicians in local government, that we don't accept excuses from Labour fire authorities, or Labour mayors or whoever, about the need for them supposedly to implement cuts. No, we don't accept cuts in our service, we don't accept cuts in other local government services. No representative of the Labour Movement elected into position on local authorities or fire authorities should be cutting services to working class communities. Our message to those people is: Stop, stand up and fight with unions to defend the service, stand up and fight with this union to defend the Fire & Rescue Service, and if not, frankly stand aside and let people who are willing to fight take those positions.

It is our duty also to report an issue that has come up and is reflected in some of the other debates here at conference, a matter that has been raised with us and with local authority employers by ministers at Whitehall. In a recent meeting between ourselves and the employers and the Westminster fire minister the fire minister made a point to the fire service employers about the level of reserves which they hold in many English Fire & Rescue Services. We looked at the figures, and we know from the reports from local officials, that the reserves do seem to be unbelievably high. At the very time that they've been making cuts, many fire authorities have also been building their levels of reserves. They have not provided a satisfactory answer. They weren't able to provide a satisfactory answer to the Tory minister. So a Tory local government leader was unable to provide an answer to a Tory fire minister, and they haven't been able to provide a satisfactory answer to ourselves. We will be taking up the issue. Indeed, we are taking up the issue. We've started to discuss that through the National Joint Council the level of reserves that exist in Fire & Rescue authorities across the country.

When we look at jobs we have to look at what these cuts mean in reality. First and foremost, the largest cost within the Fire & Rescue Service is the people who undertake that service: the firefighters, the control staff, the trainers, the fire inspecting officers and so on, who perform and deliver this service. We've reported, and it's well known among our members, that some 11,000 jobs have gone between 2010 and 2017. You know this because they are cuts that are implemented at local level. A devastation of our services at local level for the past seven or eight years. We've just collated, through Freedom of Information requests, the latest report on that and we can report that a further 500 jobs have gone this year already alone. So although there is some recruitment going on in some Fire & Rescue Services, that is not outweighing the job losses that continue to take place. It means that around one in five frontline firefighter jobs have been cut. In England, some 9,000 since 2010; in Scotland 1,000; in Wales 300; in Northern Ireland around 100.

Those cuts don't simply mean job cuts; they also mean attacks on our members' conditions of service at local level reflected in the debates here today. One of those (and we'll be discussing it later today) is the question of duty systems. It means attacks on duty systems. If you go back twenty years, by and large most wholetimes firefighters across the UK were working the same duty system. Now, we have a plethora of duty systems working in many different ways in different Fire & Rescue Services. The one common feature of those duty systems, when they're introduced is they are a mechanism to reduce staffing levels even further. So our members pay the price both ways: they end up working on a worse duty system and there are fewer of them at the end of that process to deliver the service.

It means that in many of our services they are attempting to get rid of fire engines and introduce some form of van. They get a van, they paint it red and they put a couple of firefighters on it, and they pretend that they're delivering some sort of fire service. They have different names. I got asked to sit in the back of one in the West Midlands – a cramped, ill-fitting, badly designed vehicle, and those things are being introduced all across the country. It means them sending firefighters out, riding three or two; it means increased levels of jump crewing. Cuts to our profession damage our people and damage to the service we provide. These cuts are a disgrace! The Fire Brigades Union set

out in our Executive Council policy statement demands for a moratorium on those cuts. In the aftermath of Grenfell Tower, that is surely a perfectly reasonable demand to place on Central Government politicians.

But also, Conference, we have to get out there from this conference and begin to strengthen our campaign at local and at national level to make the case against the fragmentation, against the rot that is taking place in our service. We'll do our part, the Executive Council will do our part, but we need every single delegate in this hall and on our brigade committees and regional and sectional committees to organise that campaign. It's a matter literally of life and death because it's about the safety of communities. But it's also about the life and death of our service and our profession, and indeed the future of our union. Conference, I urge you to support the Executive Council policy statement and get back to our brigades and organise that campaign from this conference. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Does that have a seconder?

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, it's a little bit hard to follow Matt's speeches, so please don't compare our contributions in any way, shape or form!

I think it's worth making sure that we do second this policy statement from the Executive Council. Matt's already adequately covered the picture in the UK: job cuts, cuts to fire stations, cuts to fire engines, changes in these things are all things that are damaging our practices, damaging the communities we serve, and ultimately are having a massive impact on the communities of Derbyshire for myself and all your communities that you serve. Conference, the national picture is bleak. Let's not hide away from that. We know all the different things Matt has already orated about and said what effect these things are having.

Right across the UK Fire & Rescue Service chief fire officers, supported by all colours of politicians (and I think that's an important point. I'm glad it was made. It was something I was going to bring up), are making these cuts. So we've had Jeremy here yesterday. Yes, we are affiliated to the Labour Party and yes we stand with working people and for working people to protect our communities. But let's not hide away from the fact that Labour councillors, some Labour MPs, will stand up and make cuts in public services and the Fire & Rescue Service. So we must be as aggressive as we possibly can with all politicians of any nature regardless, and make sure that they know that we will stand up against all cuts. That is what we will do. We will not say that we're affiliated to the Labour Party so it doesn't matter, it's fine, we'll protect you, don't worry, we'll look after you. We cannot do that. We cannot do that, we cannot afford to do that.

We don't take it lightly, Conference, when we say that these cuts will cost lives. I think it's a slogan that we use. We like to use it, we like to put it on to things and maybe it's a soundbite for media pressures. But it is a serious matter. I think now we are down to the bare bones right across the UK. I think many tragedies in our country, all over the UK, have shown that. So don't feel that when we say cuts cost lives it's just an FBU slogan and we like to throw it out there. I think we're at the point now where I would also possibly argue that we could prove that with the statistics that Matt has talked about, that we take time to research, to publish and put out there. The FBU Matters is a good bulletin to use, to take out there and actually prove the point that we're making. So when we say cuts cost lives they really do. This government is not having any let up in that.

In Derbyshire, I will just briefly say we've experienced changes in shift patterns which has been reductions in jobs, which means talking about Monday to Friday fire cover, so don't have fires in the evenings or at weekends folks, please put the message out there; don't crash your car if you're visiting the Peak District, for example, at the weekends. We've suffered those things. We've had the small fire engines that Matt referred to. Some of you may have seen the incident on the main A50 when it was hit by a tanker, so that was fortunate in the sense that nobody was more seriously injured than they were. That proved the fragility of these smaller vehicles as well, operating in such dangerous environments on dual carriageways.

So we have experience of all these things. We have seen cuts right across the service: retained, wholetime, officer numbers being reduced, and they're all having an impact. We touched on fire safety officers as well and again, that's

having a huge impact. So I think Stop the Rot is a good title and I think it's something we can all work towards. Conference, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Chris. I now call Shropshire to move their amendment.

BRO STEVE MORRIS (Shropshire):

President, Conference, the EC policy Stop the Rot is a very important document for the Fire & Rescue Service and for the union. Defending our service and our professionalism is vital. The amendment we have submitted, we hope you can see, seeks to enhance this document. There are three bullet points under point 5, the third of which calls for a minimum of five crew on all pumping appliances. For our members' health & safety, for a more likely successful conclusion of an incident, for public safety, and for any chance of a reversal to the cuts in firefighters' numbers, surely this must be the key campaign pushed in all brigades. We must concentrate on achieving five crew on all pumping appliances, and indeed stop the rot, as the statement puts it.

The difficulty with the first two bullet points, and why they need to be changed, is that we feel they undermine the third for five riders. This is because the first bullet point calls for a maximum response time of five minutes from the time of call, and that's largely unachievable and therefore makes it aspirational. Following it to its logical conclusion, if the first bullet point is aspirational then so must be the third.

Conference, everything that we have campaigned upon in recent times – pensions, pay, broadening the rolemap, fitness standard – has had an evidence-based approach. Indeed, we heard in one of yesterday's debates that the union always works best when we use robust evidence. We already have an evidence-based approach to response standard based upon the CAST scenario planning, which has been the union's policy for the last 14 years. Our amendment states that we should maintain this evidence-based approach and not replace it with an arbitrary clutch in the dark.

Recently the West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service has tried to claim that they responded to an incident within five minutes, but once looked at, you realised that they weren't including call handling time and therefore it transpired that the attendance time was well over five minutes. What we're saying is that if a brigade like the West Midlands can't achieve it, what chance has any brigade with a retained duty system station got? Many retained duty system station grounds cover huge areas in which their travel time from their station to the edge of their area is well in excess of 10 to 15 minutes, let alone five! You've got to add to that the greater likelihood that the call handling times are going to be greater due to locations, lack of landmarks. That means that a five minute turn out standard is completely unrealistic.

The response from brigade managers and employers to a five minute attendance is probably predictable. It's easy for the union to set an unachievable standard, they'll say. How does the union suggestion we set about reaching this target, they'll say? What have you based that standard on, they'll say? This is all avoidable, we feel, if we stick to our current CAST IRMP standard. Importantly, that standard calls for a maximum lag or delay between the first and second pumping appliances arriving of only three minutes. This should provide enough for brigades without retained duty systems to justify the current turnout times, and it doesn't indicate to brigades that we will stand for station closures based upon eight to ten minute first attendance standards.

The point is this, Conference, if we want our officials seriously to raise this document with a view to pushing for five crew on all pumping appliances to the benefit of our members' safety, the public's safety, and union's membership numbers, it's probably best done if brigade managers and employers haven't had a wry chuckle at our expense at an aspirational five minute attendance standard only moments before. Please support the amendment. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that amendment have a seconder? Does it have a seconder? *Formally*

Oxfordshire to move their amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally*

Oxfordshire to move the third amendment. *Formally* Seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That's open for debate. Denise.

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Scotland):

Thanks, President. We are supporting the EC policy statement, opposing amendments 1 and 2, and supporting amendment 3.

I think it's important for conference to know what's been happening within Scotland. We amalgamated the eight Fire & Rescue Services in 2013 into one and we were promised at that time by the Scottish government that it would not impact on the frontline, but it has. As the General Secretary alluded to, since 2013 we've lost over 700 frontline firefighter posts, we've seen the reduction of five operational control rooms impact in the most on our women members. Every day in Scotland there's between 60 and 100 fire appliances off the run because we've not got enough firefighters to crew them. And then just recently, an FOI was put into the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. In the last two years we've seen an increase in work-related stress – five-fold for firefighters.

So we were promised there would be no attacks on the frontline, but it's come in, and it's come in thick and fast. So the General Secretary said we need to mobilise and we need to organise. We've been doing that in Scotland. We had a lobby at the Scottish Parliament just before Christmas time and from that we did a briefing pack for our members to go and lobby our MSPs. They have been inundated in the Scottish Parliament by our members talking about the attacks within Scotland. In Scotland there's only been three emergency questions in the history of the Scottish Parliament. In the last six months two have come from the FBU and the Fire & Rescue Service. That's a credit certainly to our members.

So the General Secretary is right, we need to mobilise and we need to organise in order to stop the cuts. Scotland is not a haven for an Easy Street, trust me. There's issues going on there. We will be absolutely mobilising our members to support this campaign. Thanks. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Denise. Anybody else? Anybody else? No. General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Thanks, Conference and to Shropshire for bringing the amendment, although we are asking conference to oppose amendment 1, oppose amendment 2 and support amendment 3. Some important points were raised in that contribution and I want to address those.

Clearly, I think we've had a longstanding policy in relation to a minimum riding crew of five. There is a consensus around that. On the question of response times, let's address a number of those points. It is correct that actually part of the fragmentation of the service, part of this rot that is creeping in is a complete mish-mash of how Fire & Rescue Services record their supposed response standard. They set their own targets and then they report to the public that magically they've met the targets that they set for themselves. Some of them record response standards from the time of call, some record it from time of mobilisation. One advantage that may emerge from the new role in England of the inspectorate is that it may allow us to challenge that sort of fragmentation that exists as a result of IRMP. So in a dialogue that myself and the AGS have had with the inspectorate, we raised this point: how can you compare one Fire & Rescue Service in this part of the country with this one when they measure things completely differently? That point, I think, was taken on board. So we'll see what comes out of that. Clearly for us the question of time of call and call handling times are important and we should build that into a proper emergency response standard.

On the question of what that standard should be, the Executive Council did discuss the issues raised by Shropshire and did revisit the union's IRMP national document. In that document it makes reference to a minimum standard of eight minutes. The concern that the Executive Council has on reflection about that is that certainly at the time the document was written many parts of the country would have had a response standard better than eight minutes. Certainly any A risk and B risk, under the old standards, would have had a better response standard than eight minutes. Many parts of the country, even today, will have a better response standard than eight minutes. Our concern therefore is that if this union is seen to be saying that our minimum response standard is eight minutes, we are actually setting ourselves up to face further attacks on response standards. The conclusion of the Executive Council therefore was that the target we should set was actually at least as good as the best of the old national

standards of fire cover standards, which is five minutes. That's why the argument has been made for five minutes. Conference does need to consider that point. It is an important point, but that's the conclusion the Executive Council reached, and we urge conference to support us on that point.

On the point that was raised about whether it's achievable or not, a couple of points. Reference was made to retained duty system stations. Of course, if we simply are going to set some form of national standard on the response standards at retained stations, then again I think we're setting ourselves up for some very difficult debates. It's inevitable that with a retained station response standards and response times will be slower than at a wholetime station. It stands to reason; it's well-known fact. So we must be able to challenge that and say one of the reasons, for example, why we would oppose the downgrading of a wholetime station to retained duty system is precisely because it would slow down response standards. Unless we're taking that on board, I think we're creating problems for ourselves.

In terms of whether this is aspirational or achievable, actually I think we need to set our sights high. We did used to have national standards of fire cover that, for many parts of the country (certainly in big urban areas) there would have been a national standard that required a fire engine to arrive from time of call within five minutes. If we could do it from the 1950s to the 2000s I don't see why we can't reasonably demand that we can achieve those sorts of standards in the 21st century. I think we should be setting our sights high in terms of that. What has happened since the introduction of IRMP actually is a gradual slow down, slow down, slow down of response standards. We've therefore got to address that, and that's what this document seeks to do.

I'll finish on this one point. I mentioned yesterday the dialogue that we've had with the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn. Genuinely, comrades, it has been quite remarkable the extent to which they have sought advice from us and from other unions about what we want in our sector. I think that does open a door to say: actually, we want to discuss seriously some of the issues that are in this policy statement about what sort of fire service we would like to see if we get a Labour government. So I think that is entirely possible. There's no guarantee of Labour government, but if we did get a Corbyn government (and that's what we have to fight for) then within that we need to be making the case for a genuinely modernised fire service and response standards. The sorts of issues that are set out in the policy statement here are the sorts of things that we need to be aspiring to and submitting into that policy development process.

Conference, I urge you to support the Executive Council statement, oppose amendments 1 and 2, and support amendment 3. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now put amendment 1 from Shropshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now put amendment 2 from Oxfordshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now put amendment 3 from Oxfordshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put the Executive Council policy statement as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Staying on page 7 of the Programme of Business, we now call para A17 Duty Systems. I now call the following resolutions, which will all be taken in the same debate: Resolution 4 Shift Systems moved by Hereford & Worcester with amendments from South Yorkshire and Merseyside; Resolution 8 Duty Systems, moved by South Yorkshire with amendments from Merseyside and Shropshire; Resolution 24 Shift Duty Systems, moved by Humberside, seconded by Nottinghamshire. The Executive Council support Resolution 4 and support both amendments, give qualified support to Resolution 8 and support both amendments, they support Resolution 24. Resolutions 4, 8 and 24 can all stand. Resolution 4 Shift Systems, Hereford & Worcester to move.

Resolution 4 SHIFT SYSTEMS

Conference opposes the opportunistic methods employed by Brigades to impose an agenda of cuts to operational staff in the name of modernisation. Conference instructs Officials that when a Fire and Rescue Service conducts a review of shift systems this must be done in a holistic way across the service, from top to bottom rather than simply target the operational crews in isolation. Conference also instructs Officials that all proposed shift systems for Grey Book staff must adhere to the principles of Grey Book shift systems and be compliant with the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

AMENDMENT 1

On the fifth line insert a full stop after 'bottom' and delete the rest of the sentence.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

AMENDMENT 2

Second to last line: After the word 'systems' insert full stop and delete 'and be compliant with the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan.'

MERSEYSIDE

BRO RUSSELL BROADBENT (Hereford & Worcester):

President, Conference, good morning. Firstly, I'd like to thank South Yorkshire for reminding the management that there are consequences to their actions. I'd like to think that the employers will now go back to the government for more money to fund properly the Grey Book-compliant shift patterns that we've always enjoyed. But I imagine the Old Boy Network, the Moreton-in-Marsh Old Boy Network, are already discussing ways to undermine our terms and conditions further, before they have even started to sort out the mess they have created. It is no doubt time, as we discussed yesterday, to see some new faces in our organisation but particularly across the other side of the table, faces that aren't afraid to go to the government to demand more money and to remind the government that efficiency is not less, and modernisation does not mean worse.

Therefore, Conference opposes the opportunistic methods employed by brigades to impose an agenda of cuts to operational staff in the name of modernisation. Conference instructs officials that when Fire & Rescue Services conduct reviews to shift patterns this must be done in a holistic way from top to bottom rather than simply targeting frontline crews. Conference also instructs officials that all proposed shift systems for Grey Book staff adhere to the principles of the Grey Book and be compliant with their integrated risk management plans. Thank you. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* I call South Yorkshire to move their amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally* I call Merseyside to move their amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you.

I now call Resolution 8 Duty Systems, South Yorkshire.

Resolution 8 DUTY SYSTEMS

Conference notes the varied nature and number of shift patterns in operation throughout the United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Services.

Furthermore, that some shift patterns exist with collective agreement and some exist without.

Conference therefore asks that an audit is undertaken of individual Brigades to ascertain the structure of all shift systems and whether or not such systems are working by collective agreement. The findings of the audit will be produced in a report by January 2019 and a strategy developed to assist Brigade Officials in resisting trials of shift patterns which are not in accordance with Section 4, Part A, Paragraph 7 of the national conditions of service (Grey Book).

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

AMENDMENT 1

Third paragraph after ‘resisting trials of’ insert ‘or changes to’

MERSEYSIDE

AMENDMENT 2

In final sentence, delete ‘, Paragraph 7’

SHROPSHIRE

BRO MICK THOMPSON (South Yorkshire):

President, Conference, the President yesterday mentioned in his address the victory we’ve recently had in South Yorkshire with the judicial review on CPC. I thank him for those words on behalf of all South Yorkshire members and officials. I will pass on his praise to our previous EC member.

I stand here today to move Resolution 8, accepting the amendments. Duty systems have been an ongoing issue at both conference and throughout the fire service in the last few years now. We in South Yorkshire brought a resolution back in 2016 as part of our fight against CPC and the draconian 96 hour shift system introduced within South Yorkshire back in 2012. We fought at the time and have continued since, culminating in the recent victory at the judicial review which I’m sure most of you were aware of, partly because the judgment will and could have massive consequences to other brigades throughout the country.

The legal battle began in October 2015 when a group of South Yorkshire firefighters argued that the system was unlawful, and at an Employment Tribunal we were successful, which led to the recent judicial review where, in his ruling, Mr Justice Kerr stated: “...*the illegality is continuing and there is a concerted plan to continue the unlawful conduct.*” And, when discharging its statutory duty and functions: “*You [the defendant, South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service] cannot perform one legal duty by breaching another.*” He also went on to mention the inaction of the Health & Safety Executive, stating: “*The Authority must be aware that its position under the criminal law is not comfortable, but it is currently afforded a measure of de facto protection by the refusal of the HSE to take any action ...*”

So, Conference, had the Health & Safety Executive actually taken action, the authority could have faced criminal charges for operating an unlawful system and putting firefighters and public at risk through these draconian hours of work. If anyone had been injured or worse, whilst working these shift systems, I’m not sure how the Health & Safety Executive could have defended itself, not having taken action following the initial Employment Tribunal and their own acceptance that these shift systems were an issue for the Health & Safety Executive to police and monitor.

Also, what these systems allow is a reduction in firefighter numbers, and instead of four shifts they operate with only two, halving the number of staff required and, as a consequence, reducing our membership numbers, and, without the EC policy statement just now, continuing the rot within the fire service.

Having now won the judicial review we will have to negotiate an alternative shift system, one that is Grey Book-compliant and affords proper fire cover for the public. Therefore, we call on the EC to undertake an audit of all brigades to ascertain all shift systems and structures in operation that are Grey Book-compliant or under a collective agreement. This audit to be produced in a report by no later than January 2019, with a strategy developed to assist all brigade officials in resisting any trials or introduction of such systems that are not in accordance with the Grey Book Section 4 of our National conditions. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mick. Does that have a seconder? Yes.

BRO BRIAN HARRIS (Tyne & Wear):

Conference, President, we are seconding Resolution 8, South Yorkshire. Having read the High Court judgment from Mr Justice Kerr in the close proximity crewing judicial review handed down to South Yorkshire recently, the paragraph which states that: South Yorkshire authority is “*afforded a measure of de facto protection by the refusal of the HSE to take any action*” is a concern to us, and should also be a concern to conference. The HSE are the police of the working time regulations and their failure to grasp the nettle or understand the compliance of the 2-2-4 duty

system within the Grey Book collective agreement has ensured that this authority has been allowed to further and continue this system, flouting the law and ignoring the information contained in the Employment Tribunal judgment handed down by Employment Judge Lancaster in 2016.

As a responsible trade union we feel we must challenge the intransigence and abject failure of the HSE in this matter because members who may be injured whilst working this duty system, and society as a whole, expects this body to be acting responsibly in pursuance of their responsibilities. Support the resolution. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Merseyside to move their amendment. *Formally* Thank you. Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Shropshire to move their amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally* I now call Humberside to move Resolution 24.

Resolution 24 SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM

Conference notes there are currently a large variety of different shift duty systems being worked throughout UK Fire and Rescue Services. Some of these duty systems comply with Section 4, Part A, Paragraph 3 of the National Conditions of Service (Grey Book) and some do not.

Resolution 5 from Devon and Somerset carried at Conference 2017 stated:

Conference is concerned by the number and variety of new shift patterns being proposed around the country, and urge the Executive Council to instruct Brigade Officials to only negotiate on new shift patterns if they fall in line with Section 4, Part A, Paragraph 7 of the National Conditions of Service (Grey Book).

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to carry out objective research into the different duty systems being worked in UK Fire and Rescue Services and produce a report of its findings. This research should look into whether these systems follow the principles set out at Section 4, Part A, Paragraph 3 of the National Conditions of Service (Grey Book) and should also consider whether or not there are benefits to shift systems that do not comply with the existing national duty systems set out at Section 4, Part A, Paragraph 7 of the National Conditions of Service (Grey Book). The report should be made available by December 2018 in time for it to be considered by the Executive Council and Conference 2019.

HUMBERSIDE

BRO ROB VAUX (Humberside):

President, Conference, this resolution has come as a result of Humberside remitting our resolution last year that requested the ability for brigade officials to negotiate on a 24 hour duty system. We agreed to remit our resolution to the Executive Council so that they could carry out objective research into whether or not there are benefits to such duty systems. The AGS spoke about the FBU doing what it always does, and that's carrying out objective research into the benefits of such duty systems, and whether, in any case, it might not be a starter.

In Humberside, we've been on a rollercoaster of a ride over the last few years with regard to our duty systems and like you, we've faced many proposed new shift system changes from management on the back of the cuts agenda. Thankfully, we've rejected all of them and the management have gone back to the drawing board time and again. Out of this negotiation came a trial of a 24 hour duty system which was proposed by one of our wholetime branches. They kind of adopted the attitude that if anything was going to change, it would be on their terms, it would be a duty system that benefited members, and it wouldn't be a duty system that meant that we would cut any more numbers to firefighters in our brigade.

During this period we've learned that a number of brigades across the country are either working or trialling a variation of 24 hour duty systems. This is either across the board (in the case of Bedfordshire who are doing it for the seventh year), and ourselves working a 24 hour duty system at all of our wholetime stations from January this year, or, in various self-rostering shift systems which allow for back to back shifts to be worked like in examples such

as Herefordshire, West Yorkshire's reserve, Merseyside, Kent and Surrey to name but a few. Also this year we've learnt that yet another brigade has brought a resolution to conference that asked for the ability for brigade officials to negotiate locally on such 24 hour duty systems. They've remitted their resolution to support ours.

To us in Humberside it seems strange that we're being told not to collectively agree to a 24 hour shift system that was already being worked in brigades across the country – in some cases, like I've said, for six years or more. Our members were asking: "why are we being told not to do it in our brigade when other brigades are doing it?" Regardless of your opinions on such a duty system, or whether such a duty system has been collectively agreed or not within your own brigade, I urge you to support this resolution, instructing the Executive Council to carry out the objective research.

We believe that we'd all benefit from such research and we'd like the research to be carried out as soon as possible, at the very least in time for the Executive Council and conference to consider it in 2019. We've nearly all seen changes to our proposed duty systems over the past few years, and it has left us with such a variety being worked. Some have been subject to industrial action, and, like we've just heard, some have seen success in the form of legal challenges and Employment Tribunals and judicial reviews. Yet we all seem to lack a consistent approach when it comes to looking at the benefits that can be gained or learned from good practices being utilised or worked up and down the country. President, Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Rob. Does that have a seconder?

BRO MARK STILWELL (Nottinghamshire):

President, Conference, we are seconding resolution 24 from Humberside. Current shift patterns like 2-2-4 create an environment where members are not fully rested before starting work. Many of our members have secondary employment, having to find childcare, or are engaged in activities before starting nine shifts. It is the responsibility of our members to ensure they are fully rested before starting work. However, it's not always possible. Even under current shift systems members are potentially active or working for 24 hours. In the shift systems like 24-72s worked in Bedfordshire, their members start after a full night's sleep. It's then the employer who is responsible for providing sufficient rest during that 24 hour period. These systems still use the same number of employees, watch-based crewing, and still have an average 42 hour working week. In seconding this resolution Nottinghamshire call for an objective look at the shift patterns by the Executive Council. This research should consider is the shift system family friendly? Will it impact on an engaged and motivated workforce? Does the shift system reduce short-term sickness? Is there a better work/life balance? Are there any health benefits to working a different shift pattern? Is there a potential for enhanced training? More importantly, are our members happy working the shift patterns?

Nottinghamshire believe systems such as the 2-2-4 meets the above criteria. In fact, it is inside Grey Book terms and conditions, as are many other shift patterns. It's time to look at what's happening across the brigades and embrace what could have a positive impact on our members' lives. Conference, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. That's open for debate. Dave, come up.

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, just clarifying that the operation resource pool do not work 24 hour shifts. They do work flexibly. Besides that flexible agreement was well before, about 2009 I think, well before Conference's decision with the motion from Devon & Somerset. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Yes.

BRO MARK LEE (Bedfordshire):

President, Conference, I feel compelled now to speak on this, since we were mentioned a couple of times. We're in our eighth year now of the 24 hour shift system. All I'd like to say is that we do work a 24 hour shift, 24 hour on and

72 off in Bedfordshire, and it comes under the umbrella of a collective agreement. Our shift is supported by robust risk assessment and a policy which, among other things, ensures that watch commanders and crew commanders are afforded the ability to stand crews down if they've been at an arduous incident. That's irrelevant to what the borough commander says. So the watch commanders and crew commanders have the autonomy to make that decision and it can't be argued with. That is embedded within the risk assessment.

The majority of firefighters in Bedfordshire enjoy the work/life balance that a 24 hour shift provides. You're absolutely right, the crews are well rested when they turn up for work. We would support the EC in any research they like to do on the 24 hour shift and provide all the policies and procedures that we have. So I support the resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Anybody else? Yes. Chris and Karl.

SIS KATE SCOTT (CSNC):

Just regarding if you are going to be looking at this can we make sure that we consider that 24 hour shifts is not possible for control staff. We don't have the resilience or the numbers; we don't have the opportunity to get our heads down, so working 24 hours and three days off is just not acceptable for us. We want to keep the 2-2-4. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Chris.

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, I just want to clarify one point that the comrade from Nottinghamshire mentioned about secondary employment. I think we've got to be really careful here, comrades, because you know this is a full-time professional career if you're a wholetime firefighter. I brought a resolution about wholetime-retained contracts and those sorts of attacks. I don't think we need to go out there and say our members have got to get out the building; they're knackered. There's MPs and councillors saying, "we don't need wholetime firefighters because the retained can do all that". So it's not an attack on my retained comrades sat right here. I know Paul well. But I just think we need to be careful about our language around secondary employment. I spoke to the comrade from Nottinghamshire and he understands my point. I just want to make that clarity. If you are wholetime, this is a whole time professional career. This is not a part-time job if you are wholetime. This is not about being a window fitter or a builder. This is about being a professional firefighter with professional standards to the best level that we can achieve. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO KARL WAGER (Cleveland):

Conference, President, I just want to reiterate what the comrade just said really. It's really important for us. Conference, are we really asking the EC to take responsibility for members working second jobs? Seriously! As my comrade said, we're firefighters. We should be proud to be firefighters and we should make sure that that's our first job and our only job.

We definitely, though, agree with a look at a standardised shift system, but members should take the responsibility of resting. We shouldn't be putting it on the EC to say, "let's get a shift system that's going to mean that they won't have a full night's rest before they start work". They should be doing that anyway, because, as my comrade said, this is our first job and should be our proper job. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? Yes.

SIS CLARE HUDSON (NWC):

President, Conference, speaking on Resolution 24 Shift Duty System. When we look at whether or not there are benefits to shift systems that do not comply with the principles set out in the Grey Book we still need to be considerate of family friendly shift patterns and not make being a woman firefighter even more difficult than it can be with regard to child care and work/life balance. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Clare. Anybody else? AGS

ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, we really do welcome the reiteration of the union's commitment to safe duty systems as contained within all the resolutions that have come to conference. I think it's shown up by the fact that there are so many resolutions, either submitted and taken on the floor or those that were submitted prior and then subsequently withdrawn. It does show that duty systems are recognised as being key to not just the performance and the future of the service but the safety of our members. As the President has outlined, the Executive Council support them all with a minor qualification. That qualification, such as it is, is that clearly we are mindful that we have signed up to the Grey Book, and we did that at the end of the pay dispute.

The resolutions themselves call upon us to audit duty systems, things that we've done before, but clearly it is something that we should keep on top of, and keep doing periodically. The resolution commits us to that, and the Executive Council will see that through. Of course, the resolutions do go further (particularly Humberside's) in terms of researching and evaluating let's say non-traditional wholetime duty systems. Again, we will do that.

Within the debate there were arguments made, if you like, in favour of 24s and those against. Certainly I think it would be inappropriate to pre-empt the review. I do not intend to respond to or comment on those remarks made within the debate because that is the purpose of the review. But we do need to be clear: part of that review, part of that evaluation will be asking brigade committees, through regions I would imagine, for their views and comments, rather than just go trawling back through conference speeches looking for evidence and arguments. But I do think it is essential to say in advance at this time that conference has taken a general policy and has actually taken a policy review indirectly with regard to 24s. It has indirectly taken that decision already. Just because it's taken once doesn't mean to say it lasts for ever, but we do need to be clear. We are living in a world where we have seen Grenfell. So the arguments for 24s in terms of safety must be robust if it's going to convince that report that it can be anything different.

But I do need to say this: saying that the solution to tiredness and exhaustion (which can happen through 24st is that we're taking the fleet off the run I don't think is going to convince the Executive Council, and I don't think it's going to convince conference. But do contribute to the review. It will be an even-handed review, but know that if you're going to support 24 hours, long working shifts – whether you call it back-to-back or it's a singular 24 shift – you will have to be robust in the evidence that you give. I think that's fair comment to say that.

I think you also need to bear in mind (I don't think we can ignore it from here) fiddle hours, secondary employment. The whole lot has to be counted by an employer. In carrying out this review there may be things which are uncomfortable for a number of our members. We may need to be careful about how we present that because the employers out there, certainly most of them, will consider whether it can be used as a stick to beat our members and to blame the union when that happens. All hours that you work, whether for the firm or not for the firm, must be counted and considered by an employer. We should not lose sight of that. But we will wait for the review; you will see the report as and when it comes.

I don't think it would be appropriate and I wouldn't want to do anything other within that debate. We heard from South Yorkshire. On behalf of the Executive Council and the General Secretary, on behalf of the whole of conference, it would be wrong not to make comment on the significance of that dogged campaign that's been carried out by those brigade officials and that brigade committee over a long period of time. An absolutely sustained effort resulting in frankly one of the most tremendous results that this union has ever had. The officials are here, the committee is here. I would like you to join me in appreciating the work that they've done, and showing that appreciation in the old-fashioned way. *(Applause)*

I will say I think those congratulations also need to be extended to Thompsons, who have been working extremely hard to achieve this result. It's groundbreaking, this result. I will come on to that. And, I've got to say, the work by the counsel who was commissioned, Oliver Segal. It was a great bit of work. But it goes beyond congratulations; it's actually gratitude. At the beginning of this morning's session the General Secretary moved the Executive Council

policy statement on Stop The Rot. CPC, day crewing plus, whatever name it comes under, is the rot in the fire service. Small at the moment, but if it hadn't been checked it would have spread through service, through service, through service, expanding in those services where it's currently in existence, and would be very much a nail in the coffin of the effectiveness of a safe and efficient Fire & Rescue Service, certainly in England and Wales, maybe not so in Scotland and Northern Ireland but who knows what the future may have held.

Some of those findings are of great significance. I think probably you have read it line by line extremely closely. For the record, for the future generations that will, in their sad moments, read through our Report of Proceedings, it is important that we do draw reference to some of the significant parts within that finding. For me, for a head office official who's been banging his head along with the others with regard to the HSE, the most significant one was the comment made about the HSE. It was amongst the most important that was made. Their lack of action was said by the judge to be "unsustainable". It means the HSE will have to review what they've been doing and are going to have to act. That is a highly welcome finding by Mr Justice Kerr, particularly when he backed it up by saying that their performance had been "patently bad". I make no apologies for the HSE. Like us all, they can say there's lack of funding, but it doesn't stop this organisation on the lack of funding or "we haven't got as much as we want", from being dogged in terms of pursuing safety in the interests of working people. Whether they're short of funds or not, we'd rather hoped that the HSE would take the same view but they don't. Presumably, this will be a turning point.

But it is groundbreaking. It is groundbreaking because the working time regulations have one serious flaw and that is to challenge what an employer does is framed within the regulations. A case has to be brought by someone who is being affected negatively by the action of the employer. That's what we did with the detriment case, which was the first hearing heard at the Employment Tribunal, as you know. But this judicial review did not have to be brought by an individual employee, a member. Our challenge was that the union could go to a court to get a judgment enforced when it came to the working time regulations. That is groundbreaking, not just for this union but for this movement. That's why I think again we need to express our gratitude to those involved and particularly the legal team.

So far, as you know, Mr Justice Kerr refused the fire service the right to appeal. They can now go and plead to the Court of Appeal for the right to have an appeal heard. They must do that by the end of the month. If they do that, they will be using more public money in a venture which has got no chance of being sustained. I think Mr Justice Kerr was very clear in what he said when he said that what the fire authority and the chief officer had done had "flouted the law". They had known since 2012 that what they were doing was against the regulations. They said it for themselves in writing. So for this fire authority ever to win this case, I think, is just improbable. Nothing is impossible I suppose, but improbable.

In an act of continued stupidity, having been told already that he has flouted the law, the chief officer has, in the last week, written to all staff in a blog saying, "the judgment may have gone against us; we don't intend really to act [that's the impression given by the blog] and we'll just wait for the union to injunct us". This is the chief officer that is thinking of going to the Court of Appeal saying, "I do believe in law and I'd like another chance to have my case heard".

Just so you know, to be clear, it doesn't stop there for us. You will have read in the findings that the judge said that these findings do not apply to other Fire & Rescue Services where similar duty systems are in place. But he explained that by saying "because I don't really know the detail in those FRSs". We do know the detail and there isn't a cigarette paper between what was happening in South Yorkshire and happening in other FRSs where the chief officers introduced those duty systems. So as a consequence of the finding, we are currently in dialogue with Thompsons and shortly after you get back from conference we will be writing to all the chiefs of all the affected Fire & Rescue Services and giving an ultimatum frankly, an ultimatum to say "get your house in order, tell us how you intend to get your house in order, else you'll be in court in a case brought by this union in the same way as South Yorkshire was; and you, as Fire & Rescue Services will be found to be in breach of the law as well". Await those details. They will be coming next week. We've got dialogue with Thompsons on that score.

In finishing, appreciation and thanks to the South Yorkshire officials and the committee. In terms of the resolutions, just to reiterate, we're supporting all including the amendments. Thank you, President. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. I now put the amendment to Resolution 4 from South Yorkshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put the amendment to Resolution 4 from Merseyside to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 4 as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put the amendment to Resolution 8 from Merseyside to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put the amendment to Resolution 8 from Shropshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 8 as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 24 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Conference, can you now turn to page 6 of your Programme of business. We are on to para A7, para A8, para A9, para A10, para A11, para A12, para A13, para A14, para A15. Simon.

BRO SIMON AMOS (ONC):

Conference, very quickly. Officers car tax. If you're not aware of the stealth tax that HMRC were threatening to impose on flexible duty officers coming in this March, we've had a stay of execution: it's not coming in until April 2020 but it is still coming. We still would encourage you to work with the ONC on behalf of your officer members because they are going to be in financial hardship through this stealth tax by HMRC. We're working with head office but we need your help to do that. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Simon. Para A16, para A17, para A18, para A19. I now call Resolution 46 moved by Dorset & Wiltshire with amendment from Devon & Somerset.

Resolution 46 AERIAL APPLIANCES

Conference notes the vital role of aerial appliances in fire and rescue operations across UK Fire and Rescue Services. These appliances are indispensable across a wide range of tasks and provide firefighters with effective firefighting and rescue capabilities which mitigate damage and save lives. Conference believes that these appliances must be primary crewed in order to ensure rapid deployment and a guaranteed attendance at incidents.

Conference believes it is a disgrace that so many of these appliances have seen crewing levels cut due to politically driven budget cuts caused by the Government's austerity programme. Conference applauds Fire Brigades Union Brigade Committees who have fought such cuts but recognises that centrally driven budget cuts by Government require a national campaign of defence. Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council launch a national campaign which highlights the vital role of aerial appliances within the UK Fire and Rescue Services and the necessity for such appliances to be primary crewed. Conference demands that this campaign has as its aim the provision of additional finance from Government to Fire and Rescue Services to provide for primary crewing of aerial appliances.

DORSET & WILTSHIRE

SIS KAREN ADAMS (Dorset & Wiltshire):

President, Conference, aerial appliances, along with other specialist appliances, were introduced by Fire & Rescue Services to meet the needs and demands of a growing population, growing buildings and modern firefighting techniques and practices. These appliances were given primary crewed status to help meet the need for a quick and immediate response, to make the public, their homes, businesses, and firefighter safety a priority for a modern Fire & Rescue Service. What has changed? The population has grown, people living and working at height has increased, building sizes have increased. What has changed is a reduction in funding and austerity. Finances have dictated these changes to crewing and response, not public safety, not saving homes and businesses, and not firefighter safety.

What is the real cost if an aerial appliance or other specialist appliance is delayed? In that delay what risks are we taking? We have committed to fight cuts. Anything but primary crewing is a cut. Put the public, their homes and businesses first, make public and firefighter safety a priority. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Karen. Does that have a seconder?

BRO SCOTT YOUNG (Devon & Somerset):

President, if I may move the amendment at the same time?

THE PRESIDENT:

Yes.

BRO SCOTT YOUNG (Devon & Somerset):

Conference, we are not only saying the importance of having aerial appliances primary crewed, but we also want the establishment of emergency response attendance time standards for aerial appliances across all UK Fire & Rescue Services. We cannot have ad hoc arrangements, as in my brigade, where we are either not crewing or having delayed turnouts. As the bullet point states in the EC document Stop the Rot, jump crewing or double jumping. Conference, it is therefore essential that we get a national standard for emergency response attendance times. Please support the amendment. I second Resolution 46. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does the amendment have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That's open for debate. Yes.

BRO ADAM TAYLOR (Leicestershire):

President, Conference, we are supporting Resolution 46 and withdrawing Resolution 51. In Leicestershire, like many Fire & Rescue Services across the UK, we have been forced to make cuts to fire cover, firefighter numbers including control and officer numbers. These are cuts to the service we give to our communities in the name of austerity, an agenda pushed by the wealthy for the wealthy. Budgetary cuts made by this government, willingly accepted by braggadocious chief fire officers and fire authorities --*(Applause)* I don't think I'm the only one using that today, I've found out! Accepted by braggadocious chief fire officers and fire authorities, have seen our capability to tackle high rise fires become very problematic. Not only do high rise fires naturally require more firefighters in attendance (which in itself is now hugely difficult), but they require the prompt attendance of special appliances and more specifically, high rise appliances, whether they be aerial ladder platforms, turntable ladders or hydraulic platforms.

It is the view of our fire authorities and chief fire officers that making cuts not only to the number of high rise appliances but additionally slashes to watch numbers are easy financial gains. As a trade union we shall continue to oppose such cuts, but due to them, we have seen our special appliances, including vital high rise appliances, dual crewed, or as we often refer to it, jump crewed. There have been occasions in Leicestershire, and therefore I imagine many brigades, where fire appliances have been sent to incidents only to find high rise appliances are required. The mobile or in attendance fire appliances have, on occasion, been sent back to station to collect the high rise appliance. These accepted procedures (accepted only by management and not the FBU) are inevitably meaning our attendance times are delayed which is wholly unacceptable. We have, as a union, seen the devastating incident within the last year. Although we shall learn many points for such incidents, we need not wait for the

investigation outcome or a report to start pressing fire authorities to ensure their high rise capability is permanently crewed, as they once were. Please support. *(Applause)*

BRO DAVE YEARLY (GMC):

President, Conference, I'm a divisional secretary for E Division Greater Manchester. There are seven stations within my division, one of which is Manchester Central. At Manchester Central we have two pumps and an ALP. Members at Manchester Central are confused and frustrated as to why our brigade continues to not primary crew these aerial appliances.

Conference, members at Manchester Central keep raising this issue, and local reps and officials will continue to bang the drum on their behalf. We wholeheartedly support this resolution in Greater Manchester. Our Mayor, Andy Burnham, supports the primary crewing of special appliances and we will continue to work with him. We encourage conference to support our brothers and sisters in Leicestershire (this was written for resolution 51) in moving this resolution. Greater Manchester support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I now put the amendment from Devon & Somerset to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 46 as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Conference we will now break for tea. Sorry, the AGS will add a qualification. Sorry, tea break!

Break for tea

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, come to order. I now call the chair of Standing Orders, Steve Shelton, to give his report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thanks, President. Conference, Programme of Business page 6: after Resolution 20 insert Emergency Resolution 5 Facing Attacks on Collective Bargaining, West Midlands; Resolution 20, I reported previously that this was withdrawn with the right to speak. This has now just been withdrawn with no right to speak. Staying on page 6: Emergency Resolution 4 Pay, Scotland with remit with the right to speak. Page 12: Resolution 57 has been withdrawn to second Resolution 59; Resolution 64 has been withdrawn.

Delegates list: Cleveland – remove Darren Fawcett; insert Dave Howe.

Conference, as soon as I have finished my report business will start on page 6 with Emergency Resolution 5. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

I now call Emergency Resolution 5 Facing Attacks on Collective Bargaining moved by West Midlands.

Emergency Resolution 5 – FACING ATTACKS ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Conference notes the ongoing attacks that members in the West Midlands are currently facing in their trade dispute, which includes the imposition of non-NJC compliant contracts, imposition of work on Control members outside the role map, dictatorial management and interference with trade union activities. Conference condemns these attacks on collective bargaining and on the rights of FBU members in the West Midlands.

Conference is alarmed that the Labour controlled fire authority and the senior management of WMFS are attacking FBU members' ability to collectively bargain, undermining the nationally agreed role maps, circumnavigating the NJC and showing complete disregard for FBU officials.

Conference also recognises that FBU members in the West Midlands are on the frontline of a new wave of attacks on firefighters by using contracts of employment as a tool to unilaterally change the role of a firefighter and control firefighter. This approach, if adopted, would allow senior management or the fire authority to unilaterally impose further changes to work activity, either now or in the future.

Conference congratulates FBU members in the West Midlands on the ballot result showing 90% in favour of strike action on an 82% turnout. This is a clear indication of the anger felt by West Midlands members. The ballot turnout is applauded and Conference notes that the thresholds imposed by the Conservatives under the recent Trade Union Act, designed to restrict workers in essential services from organising trade disputes and industrial action, proved to be no obstacle whatsoever.

Conference condemns the treatment of members in the West Midlands and sends a clear message to the Fire Authority that an attack on one FBU member is an attack on all. This is an attack on our members' rights as trade unionists and threatens our collective bargaining at a national level. Conference agrees that the Fire Authority, through their actions, have not only launched an assault on our members in the West Midlands, but have launched an assault on the FBU at a national level.

In response to the ballot result, officials were made aware on 2nd June that the Fire Authority executive are meeting on 5th June to assess their options and will need to address our concerns raised in the trade dispute or face escalation of action.

Conference offers complete support and solidarity to West Midlands members and agrees that Brigade Committees will mobilise members at every level to support them through this trade dispute by any means necessary.

Conference instructs the EC to provide any resources and support to the West Midlands that are required during this vital dispute.

WEST MIDLANDS

BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):

President, comrades, I must apologise; I wasn't moving this emergency resolution today, Andy Scattergood was but unfortunately he can't be with us at the moment, so bear with me.

I think it's pertinent to read out some extracts of this contract that some of our members have been issued. It's also worth noting that every individual who has joined the West Midlands Fire Service in the last few months has joined the Fire Brigades Union. I'm sure most of you are aware of this, but this is grim reading and you never ever, no matter the amount of times you read it, understand how bad this contract is. I'm going to read out some of the relevant points of this.

"The main duties at your position are set out in the relevant rolemap which is a guide to the activities you will fulfil. Your rolemap is not exhaustive and may be added to or varied from time to time by the service based on the current and future needs of the service and providing reasonable notice." Thank you, West Midlands Fire Service, for the "reasonable notice". "Some examples of these activities may be falls response, non-medical emergency and hospital discharge activities". And these are taking place. "By signing this document you are specifically agreeing to accept changes and additions to your role with reasonable notice and may be required, by current and future needs of the service including but not limited to undertaking additional duties, carrying out alternative funding work and working to department and individual targets, and working in close conjunction with other external organisations on

a full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent basis.” I don’t believe there’s ever been a more catch-all contract ever issued to an employee.

It doesn’t end there. It goes on to talk about the contracts also allow management in discipline cases to suspend members with no provision for pay during the process, whereas the Grey Book stipulates it does – and we’ve got plenty of people suspended as we speak. There are numerous other unilateral changes such as requirements to work at non-service sites, and an onerous new term on deductions from pay. These contracts are outrageous!

This isn’t just about contracts in the West Midlands. This emergency resolution is to cover a wide variety of problems that we’ve currently facing in the West Midlands. This is also an attack on our control members. West Midlands Fire Service seem to believe that our emergency fire control, who are dedicated professionals, are now just call centre handling services for any agency that they will get paid to answer the calls for. It is unacceptable and we will stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in control. This dispute won’t be settled until it’s to their satisfaction. *(Applause)*

This is also interference with trade union duties. Serious incidents have happened and our health & safety officials have been obstructed from carrying out their duties. This must stop. It’s also the age-old problem of that dictatorial management which we’ve seen in the West Midlands at a level that we can’t actually believe is happening.

When it comes to these contracts what I will say is this. What our American comrade said: when these Fire & Rescue Services are coming to us and these pen-pushers and these keyboard peckers are writing up these ridiculous contracts, what we need to do is take a leaf out of the Americans’ books and tell them to kiss my a---! *(Applause)*

There will be further news and developments in the coming days on this trade dispute and the action is going to be needed to be taken. We will be calling a national demonstration and we ask all officials in this room to mobilise as many of your members as possible to Birmingham when that day is needed.

Finally, if these contracts are allowed to remain in the fire service then this is not just an attack on the West Midlands members, this is an attack on the whole of the British Fire & Rescue Service. These contracts must go. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Does that have a seconder?

BRO IAN HIBBERT (Merseyside):

President, Conference, we are seconding emergency resolution 5 from West Midlands. I’d like to start by congratulating our brothers and sisters from the West Midlands on their recent ballot result. Not only was it an excellent turnout, but an overwhelming call to arms. Despite what I’m sure we’ll hear over the coming weeks and months, no FBU member ticks that box for strike action lightly. As such, that result is a testament to the hard work carried out daily by local officials. *(Applause)*

Since we embarked on our strategy to broaden the role of the firefighter whether for pay or to increase relevance, it’s become abundantly clear that nationally our position has been fractured. Conference is only too aware that before, during and after the NJC Workstream trials local practices and attitudes towards broadening the role could be described at best as a broad church. It would, however, seem that in the West Midlands, Merseyside and other locations we are now realising the magnitude of what we unleashed when we opened Pandora’s Box. I’ve heard it said by members that we’ve opened this during our recent broadening discussions. However, I’m sure many of us will be aware that there have been issues like this creeping in for some time.

In the confusion that surrounded some of the national workstream trials it would appear that a cabal of chief fire officers has arisen clearly emboldened by our perceived inaction. It would not be news to any of us in this room that chief fire officers have long since wanted to break away from the NJC and set themselves up as some sort of governing body to preside over our terms and conditions of service. Maybe they could call themselves something catchy like a National Fire Chiefs Council. In what can only be described as one of the most pernicious attacks on our members in the history

of this union, fire authorities and chief fire officers have taken it upon themselves to issue new contracts with worse terms and conditions to new entrants and are now attempting to issue them to existing members also, with a complete disregard for nationally agreed terms and conditions of service. Furthermore, and in what can only be described as a blatant act of defiance, chief fire officers are refusing the agreed dispute mechanism from the NJC.

Comrades, this is not an issue we can continue to fight locally. It must be driven from the very top of this union and our collective strength must be brought to bear against those who would seek to undermine us. Merseyside wholeheartedly supports our comrades in the West Midlands and we share in their belief that we must ascertain the extent of this latest attack on our members. The employers side of the NJC need to be held to account, and they in turn must rein in any and all chief fire officers who believe it is their gift to introduce non-rolemap contracts on a whim. Conference, please support the resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Ian. That's open for debate. Open for debate. Anybody? General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, this is, in a way, one of the most important debates of the week because it's a live dispute as conference is taking place. It reflects the fragmentation that we talked about in the debate this morning. Ian mentioned Pandora's Box. I think I would argue Pandora's Box was opened probably more than a decade ago. One of the reasons we've been trying to grapple with that is because all over the UK in Fire & Rescue Services members have been voluntarily in some cases undertaking work which hasn't been agreed, sometimes on non-Grey Book rates of pay, sometimes on second contracts. In other cases chief officers have pushed and bullied our members into doing work that has never been agreed. That's the background to the discussions that we've had at conference. Part of the strategy of this conference has been to try to get a grip on that through the NJC.

Then we come to the West Midlands and what is going on there, and the response of our members. Let's be clear, we have a chief fire officer who has driven this, who has an agenda for completely restructuring what the Fire & Rescue Service does, and who has convinced the fire authority. And precise relationships between who's saying what and who's driving what we don't do and frankly we don't really care. We have a Labour controlled fire authority that is ignoring national collective bargaining, and a Labour controlled fire authority that has issued the contracts that Steve just read out to you there, and you will have read on the All Members Circular.

I don't think we make any apologies, and Jeremy Corbyn knows our views on this, that if Labour controlled fire authorities are going to do that then we'll take on those Labour controlled fire authorities. We don't care which political party is in power, we will defend our members' rights and we will defend our members' collective bargaining, and we will defend the National Joint Council. It is utterly disgraceful that a Labour controlled fire authority has gone down that route.

Let's remember what these people have been saying. They issued those contracts and I think they have something like 56 or so people now on those new contracts. The newest and most vulnerable group within the workforce. But there are five points to that trade dispute and I just wanted to touch on some of the other ones because this is a much bigger problem in the West Midlands, as the brigade officials have been telling us consistently for some time now, than simply the question of the contracts. It is about an employer that is refusing to engage properly with the Fire Brigades Union, refusing to negotiate properly, refusing to conduct health & safety business properly. They have attempted to intimidate our health & safety officials from carrying out their normal duties in relation to health & safety.

I'll just give you an example: we had some supposed legal advice that they got in relation to a survey that was going to be carried out where they threatened our officials and used supposed legal advice that we were in breach of data protection regulation. I wouldn't normally say this in conference, but when we talk about issues to our lawyers, our lawyers said that is utter bollocks! *(Applause)* So that's the quality, that's the sort of game that's being played in the West Midlands by that management.

We then had the rumour machine in the fire authority first of all claiming that the Fire Brigades Union couldn't create a lawful trade dispute around the issues that we'd identified. They don't know this union. We've got the best record

in the trade union movement of getting trade disputes that are not open to challenge by the other side. We're very careful in how we draft trade disputes, and we do our research and we do our preparation, and remarkably we were not challenged. So they told people on the fire authority that. Then they said there's no support. Then they said they won't go to ballot. They misjudged our brigade committee and our brigade officials and our members in the West Midlands very seriously. Then they said they won't win. The brigade committee – I have to say this – have worked their socks off over the course of that ballot. They knew that they were in the spotlight. This was the first ballot that we had in the aftermath of the Trade Union Act. Every eye in the fire service, every chief fire officer, the Home Office, the minister, the fire authority members all over the country were watching that ballot to see what the outcome was, because it would send a message about where this union stands, and where our members stand when we're put to the test. So it is absolutely fantastic and remarkable. Those officials have done a fantastic job and I think they deserve the thanks of conference for what they have done. *(Applause)*

I'll finish on this. I think that Steve and the other delegates from the West Midlands know this. They have the absolute 100% support of myself, of head office, of the Executive Council, of this conference. When and if that action is called it will be well-organised. When and if we call that demonstration I know that everyone in this hall will organise to ensure a massive turnout, but the reality now is the ball is in the other side's court. The fire authority now know the strength of feeling. They were taken aback by the strength of feeling, by the strength of that ballot. Myself and the AGS were at a meeting just recently. I won't say where or who said it, but it was someone senior in a uniform post in a fire service who said, "That was a bloody good result for you, wasn't it!" So chief officers know what has happened here. Everyone is watching this.

The onus now is on the West Midlands chief fire officer and the West Midlands fire authority. They now need to resolve the five points of our trade dispute. If not, they will have a hell of a battle on their hands. Those people there, and our members in the West Midlands, will have the full support of this conference and this whole organisation. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now put Emergency Resolution 5 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is UNANIMOUS*

Conference, can I now ask you to turn to page 7 of your Programme of Business. I now call Resolution 49 National Firefighter Selection Process moved by Devon & Somerset.

Resolution 49 NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER SELECTION PROCESS

Conference notes that a number of Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) in the UK have begun to recruit new wholetime firefighters. Conference is concerned that a number of these Fire and Rescue Services have used their own local recruitment process and have failed to implement the "National Firefighter Selection Process". The "National Firefighter Selection Process" is a DCLG led piece of work developed with the support and assistance of many different groups within FRSs, including the FBU, and published in 2009.

The processes were developed nationally and were put in place to ensure that Fire and Rescue Services had a robust process based around the necessary PQAs, which was equality impact assessed and legally compliant.

Conference believes that a failure to implement the "National Firefighter Selection Process" by an FRS could lead to the dilution of nationally agreed standards for firefighter roles and a potential for firefighters to lack confidence in colleagues recruited by a different FRS.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council raise this issue with the NJC and Government and seek an assurance that the "National Firefighter Selection Process" is recommended as best practice for all recruitment within UK FRSs.

DEVON & SOMERSET

BRO SCOTT YOUNG (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference, I will keep this brief. For more than ten years our brigade has not held a recruitment campaign for wholetime firefighters. I know that we are not the only ones. It was greatly encouraging when Devon & Somerset agreed to hold a recruitment process for 28 posts. Not only was this numbers that we desperately needed to fill spaces on watches, the bonus was we got them all to become FBU members.

Conference, what is extremely disappointing is the way in which the Fire & Rescue Services have used their own recruitment process to ignore an agreement in 2009 which was led by the DCLG that a national firefighter selection process was developed with the support and assistance of many groups within the Fire & Rescue Service, including the FBU. My brigade did just that: changed the rules, putting in things like needing a minimum of 4 GCSEs at C and above, only having approximately half the agreed time limit to answer questions online. When questioned about this by us, we were deemed locally as being unreasonable and not working within the interests of the service. This is the service which had ignored all guidelines in the recruitment process.

Comrades, we all work together in one way or another, we all have one thing in common and that is the way we were recruited, going through the same process equally. So when Fire & Rescue Services start to divert away from a recruitment process which has been agreed nationally we dilute the standards that have been set, and the backlash of this is that we have the potential for firefighters to lack confidence in colleagues recruited by different Fire & Rescue Services.

Comrades, it is important that firefighters understand the process is there for a reason. It has to be equal. If we allow this to carry on, management will attempt to undermine the union locally by ignoring an agreement which is in place and all brigades will run their own recruitment processes. It's typical management tactics of divide and conquer when they say if such-and-such brigade do it then why can't we? We do not want a divide amongst our members that some deem a certain standard was not met because Fire & Rescue Services changed the rules for entry.

Conference, we would therefore like the commitment that EC raise this issue with the NJC and government and seek an assurance that the national firefighter selection process is recommended as best practice for all recruitment within the UK Fire & Rescue Services. Conference, please support the resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. The National Officer has got some comments.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The EC support this but I do want to make some points. We have done some work on this before. A few years ago we did a trawl round to see how many brigades were actually using the national firefighter selection process. I've got to be honest, it was pretty inconsistently applied. The mover made a strong point that brigades are doing more or less what they want. We were part of agreeing the national firefighter selection test. We agreed a functional test which is based upon VO2. It is a fitness test, but it's a fitness test which should be applied consistently. What we will do is we will look at the new suggested amendments which the NFCC have just made. We will look at those, we will trawl round, see what the position is, gather some evidence and then we'll move on the resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 49 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 50 Fire & Rescue Service Recruitment moved by B&EMM. The EC give qualified support.

Resolution 50 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (FRS) RECRUITMENT

After years of austerity measures that have seen the Fire Service operating at dangerously low establishment levels, many Fire Services are now looking to recruit firefighters.

The level of BME operational staff remains scandalously low, especially in Fire Services that have a high density of BME in their communities. In many of those services there has historically been little or no regard given to positive action or outreach initiatives that give BME communities an awareness of the Fire Service as a career option.

Conference recognises the work of the Inclusive Fire Service Group and the FBU role on it. We believe that the role of the Union is vital in demanding that the Fire Service takes measures to encourage and increase the numbers of BME staff in UK FRSSs.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to produce, in consultation with B&EMM, Positive Action and Outreach best practice for our Brigade Officials so that they can demand of local Brigades:

- ***Positive action and outreach activity prior to all recruitment campaigns that give all in our communities the opportunity to apply for firefighter roles***
- ***Fair and transparent selection processes***
- ***A consistent presence in BME communities so that there is an awareness of a Fire Service career.***

This guidance to be produced before Conference 2019.

B&EMM NATIONAL COMMITTEE

BRO JOSEPH MENDE (B&EMM):

President, Conference, I was going to begin by asking you to just have a quick look around and see the formation of conference. But then again, I thought what's the point? What's the point in preaching to a preacher? We all know the gospel. This is our centenary conference. When I look behind me, the formation doesn't look like it has moved with time. I think it has actually been moving according to the slowest snail's pace. Then I look in front of me again and the situation is not even better. I guess what I'm trying to say is the formation of conference should have at least tried to mirror the workforce that we represent which in turn should mirror the people and neighbourhoods that we are supposed to be representing. I think most fire services try to champion that they try to recruit a workforce that mirrors the communities they serve. We all know what that is.

B&EMM have not long ago celebrated their 20 year anniversary, and today I regret to say that we've got to a point where we are running the risk of not even having a functioning executive council of members. Mickey Nicholas is one of the first founding members. Most of them have retired, and he is on the point of retiring. Then we will be struggling.

We will be struggling because with the cuts everyone is affected, but the sections are affected more. We don't have a pool to select from. We are still finding that there are a lot of regions that don't have reps. We don't have a good pool to select reps from. I hope the EC will at least find a way of entering into dialogue with Fire & Rescue Services when it comes to recruitment. I know there has not been a lot of recruitment lately but there are a few services that are recruiting. Make sure at least when they do, let them think of selecting a workforce that represents the communities that we serve and not to wait until it's two weeks and come round stations looking for B&EMM members, section members, taking photos and putting on their social media sites so when people look outside they will see they are trying to make sure they are recruiting to reflect the communities that we serve. But then, practically, that does not even reflect the recruitment at the end of the process.

Conference asks the EC to say to them: if you still want to use that slogan "we want to have a workforce that represents the communities that we serve", time is running out; say to them "chop, chop". *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Joe. Secunder?

BRO STEVE McGREAVY (Avon):

Conference, President, we are seconding Resolution 50. My service has been subject of a minister-ordered investigation into bullying and harassment, and diversity and inclusion issues. The report has made the service aware that a transparent recruitment process was needed. The service has carried out two recruitment campaigns since the report, with good outreach programmes operating, producing a rise in successful candidates from underrepresented groups of about 25% of candidates. The question is: is this good enough? Does it reflect society? At the moment, I think not, but it's a start. The resolution will help to give every service the ability to reflect society. I support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Again, Conference, it's a very important discussion. I won't go into this in too much detail, but you may have seen in the press today that in relation to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry a question has been raised as to whether there is institutional racism in the London Fire Brigade. I don't want to address that point in any detail here, but it certainly flags up that nobody can afford to be complacent on some of these issues. The very fact that that question is raised in relation to a public inquiry reminds us that actually, despite debates at this conference over 30 years or so, and despite debates in the Fire & Rescue Service over something like 38 years, the Fire & Rescue Service has pretty abysmally failed in terms of increasing its diversity. That's something I think we have to look at ourselves about as well, because this isn't the first time that B&EMM or one of our sections has raised this point at this conference.

That debate has existed the entire time that I've been in this union, and yet we have consistent failure by Fire & Rescue Services to address it. The point was made by Joseph in moving and is made in the resolution that we have communities, particularly in our urban areas, which are diverse and yet the Fire & Rescue Service doesn't remotely reflect those communities. We have notable differences between Fire & Rescue Services. We have some Fire & Rescue Services which have been more successful than others, but that simply raises the question of why Fire & Rescue Services can't apply the best practice that has been adopted elsewhere. For example, Fire & Rescue Services with similar constituencies, similar make ups of communities have very differing approaches and very differing success levels in terms of recruitment. I think that does raise fundamental problems about those recruitment processes, development and promotion processes and the like. I think this is a serious matter that we have debated over many years and we need to return to it. It is therefore very welcome that B&EMM have brought this resolution.

There are two minor qualifications. In terms of doing that work we would want to address all issues in relation to equality and diversity. That means discussing with all of our equality sections. Secondly, that it will require the input from the equality sections to assist the Executive Council in that work.

There was a point that was raised in one of the resolutions that has now been withdrawn. Certainly within head office we've had some discussion about the concerns that we have. We are very conscious that we do have an all-white male executive, and an all-white male team at head office, and that is not something that we want to see. We mentioned the restructuring review. We have addressed to the people conducting that review that actually that needs to be key to the discussion we have in relation to the structure of this union. We want to see a more diverse body up here and at head office. I suppose one glimmer of light in that regard is a report which Lindsay McDowell, our new head of education, reported to me recently that our membership is, for example, 7% women but in terms of take up of educational opportunities within the Fire Brigades Union it is 22%. That's a very good sign. That is in relation to the women's section.

So there are big challenges, and we do understand the scale of that. With those two minor qualifications the Executive Council will get on with this work. We thank B&EMM for bringing the issue to conference's attention. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now put Resolution 50 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show.
That is CARRIED

I now call Resolution 52 National Promotion Process, moved by Derbyshire, seconded by ONG.

Resolution 52 NATIONAL PROMOTION PROCESS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise the issue of promotion, along with any associated processes, in UK Fire and Rescue Services with the national employers. This, with a clear position to seek a national standard for promotion across all the Grey Book roles. In turn this will provide a fair and equal system across all Fire and Rescue Services which allows roles to be easily transferable and recognisable across all Brigades.

A report should be presented at Conference 2019, with updates provided through the FBU structure on the progress of this issue.

DERBYSHIRE

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, this is the same resolution that I brought last year but it was ruled out of order because of using the word “rank”. But you will have already seen in resolutions this year that we’ve used the word rank again. So I’m not sure where we are, but we’re back. I’m not aware of any kind of standardised process on this issue. This resolution is designed to try to bring all Fire & Rescue Services into line in terms of role and attainment of that role.

Currently, we’ve got a system that means that someone could be ineligible for promotion in their own brigade due to certain promotional criteria such as Institute of Fire Engineers exams. They could apply to another brigade for promotion that don’t require such exams, be promoted, and then transfer back again to their own brigade. So the current requirements for promotion are set by each individual brigade from what I can see. Within our own region we have differing standards, and I’m sure across conference there are differing standards for possibly different roles as well for what you require. This is just an inconsistent approach that, on my view, has a very negative impact on our members with people being asked to do certain things in certain brigades and not in others. I don’t think it’s a positive way forward for our union or for our members.

Our resolution asks for the Executive Council to raise the issue with the national employers with a view to standardising a promotion process, and the requirements at each role. This will provide a fair and transferable system for all FBU members, wherever they work in the UK. It will support members who need to or wish to move brigades and will ensure that each role carries the same credibility in every brigade. We’ve asked for a report to be presented to Conference 2019, updates on the issue in the meantime through our normal communication structure. We recognise that it may not be an easy task for the Executive Council and national officers to carry out, but updates are important to see where we are heading, I think.

Conference, any role in the Fire & Rescue Service should be attained and recognised via a fair and equal system throughout the UK. Some members, as I mentioned, are being asked to go to extraordinary lengths to gain maybe their first promotion or others, while others are simply attending (and when I say “simply” please don’t take that the wrong way) one interview. I appreciate it’s not a simple process. I’m not quoting what is right, wrong or appropriate here. I’m not suggesting what is the right way forward. What I’m saying is that’s for the Executive Council and our national officers to discuss and negotiate with the national employers. What I’m asking for and what we’re saying is that it should be one recognised national promotion process that treats all our FBU members in a fair way. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Chris. Conference, I forgot to give the EC position and that is qualified support. ONC to second.

BRO PHIL McDONALD (ONC):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 52 National Promotion Processes submitted on behalf of Derbyshire and after withdrawing Resolution 48. Conference, since the abolition of the fire service examination board, brigades around the UK have adopted their own promotion processes with varying standards for achieving competency, and offer no transferability or recognition of qualifications gained for members who choose to transfer between brigades.

Conference, I recall having a conversation with a colleague who was present at a meeting in 2005 at Moreton-in-Marsh where the former chair of the Fire Services Examination Board stated: “You will rue the day that you abolish your own statutory technical and promotion qualifications.” What have they adopted? Psychometric testing, ADCs whereby you’re in charge of a hotel, a care home or even a cruise ship, subjective application processes, and little or no training for our officer members who have to oversee these processes, and very little quality assurance. What happened to the requirement in the past to have a working knowledge of building construction, fire science, fire service operations, tools and equipment and drills? I put it to you that it’s further dilution of the standards within the UK Fire & Rescue Service. We have effectively, in most cases, handed control of our own uniform promotion

processes to HR directors, HR managers and occupational psychologists who have no operational knowledge and who take great delight in promoting two-tier entry and further diluting the standards. But they will use the excuse: you can't transfer from brigade to brigade; you can transfer in from outside the industry because the qualifications are generic.

Conference, can we honestly say that adopting and handing over control of these processes is consistent with our objectives of enhancing firefighter safety? This must change. I ask you to support this resolution and begin the work to change the current situation and develop a new national standard of promotion, transferable between brigades, which supports the commanders on the incident ground and enhances firefighter safety. ONC stands ready to help if we can. Please support this piece of work. Thanks. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Anybody? No. Qualified support. Qualification, National Officer.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Yes. One of the areas that we're going to qualify this is when we raise this with the employers we're not going to say, "can we have a national process for development"; we're going to say, "there is one, we need to enforce it" and we will do some work to see what the variations are around the country. We need to get information back from yourselves. I welcome the support of the ONC working with us. I know before we've raised issues about development pay on promotion, and some brigades pay development pay, others don't pay development pay, and the fact that there should be a system for people to be able to check how they are being developed, which in itself is a national process. So yes, we can do this work.

There are some brigades who think that they can just pay everybody competent pay; they don't need to develop them. That's not the way forward. So I think we need to take a look back at the things we've agreed before, look at 09/05 circular, because we have got national processes for being developed which would work. But I think everybody, as has been pointed out, has amended it to suit their own needs. So before we go to the employers let's do a little bit of work. I'm going to need your help, I'm going to need the help of the ONC to get a clearer picture. Let's not go cap in hand saying can we have one; we should be going there saying "we've got one; we want you to enforce it". *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 52 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 53 Attendance Times moved by Essex. The Executive Council are asking Essex to remit or they will be opposing.

Resolution 53 ATTENDANCE TIMES

Conference notes the devastating effect the Conservative Government's ideological austerity program is having on our public services, including the Fire Service.

The reduction in Government funding for the Fire Service has resulted in a reduction in fire cover and a subsequent increase in risk to both our Members and the public.

Fire Authorities and Chief Fire Officers often implement the reductions through their IRMP, distributing fire cover against demand and not risk, agreeing extensions to attendance times to facilitate the downgrading of fire cover.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to produce an annual report, collating attendance targets and actual performance with the intention of assisting local Officials in their campaigns against cuts.

ESSEX

BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

President, Conference, I was a little bit surprised by the President's opposition there because I thought having listened to Matt eloquently give my speech on how important attendance times were, they might have changed their minds in the break! Unfortunately that's not the case.

Apparently, according to our General Secretary (and he's spot on), there has been a trail of devastation to our service. We've seen attendance times increase dramatically. In Essex alone we've seen a 23% increase in attendance times since 2010. I won't go on with the rest of the speech because I think it's all been captured by Matt far better than I captured it. The only thing I will say is that this isn't a panacea to solve our issues. What we want is a report every year on attendance times to give brigade and regional officials another tool they can use to campaign in their political campaigning with local authority members, PCCs, mayors, anyone that they can do their campaigning with. The more tools we get, the more it will be helpful. I recognise it's another job for the EC and I do recognise that we give them a lot of work every conference but Conference, comrades, I think this is an important tool. It's something we need so we can go out and defend our service. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. AGS

ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, there are some resolutions and the intent of some resolutions which sometimes it's quite uncomfortable for the Executive Council to make a decision to oppose, in this case remit or oppose. I will explain why. I think it's obvious why we've got that difficulty: because of the intent of the resolution and the commitment of Essex as with conference, to ensure that we do campaign to get appropriate attendance times, get appropriate weight of attendance, and to ensure that we do have an effective fire service.

In terms of what the resolution is calling for in the broadest sense, in terms of data, in terms of evidence, perhaps the most overt publication (you will probably be able to correct me) we did on that was Sounding the Alarm – the thick document, the middle size document and the leaflet, and the work that we did around that, taking that directly into parliaments. That was the most overt publication where we have brought attention to that. But alongside that there is a whole range of others where that information, that story, that narrative has been placed. It runs through everything. Everything we do, everywhere we go, locally and nationally, at the forums and seminars attended by head office officials, EC members and indeed regional officials is on top of what you do locally. But it's in an array of our reports: the Parliamentary briefings that we produce, the Firefighter magazine which we circulate not just amongst members and ROOT members but to MPs and the range of fire authorities; pitted in our work in social media; and of course in media interviews; articles to the media and letters. We make these arguments, we target that information to get that narrative across, to get the story across, to get the message across. We do that.

In terms of why we are asking Essex to remit, and if Essex won't remit, asking Conference to oppose, it is not on the basis of the fact that this is a big piece of work. It's a factor, but at the end of the day, if work needs to be done, and this kind of work is important, it must be done. We know that, we recognise that, we've been doing it as a national union both nationally and in terms of what you produce locally. We've been doing this for decades actually, for decades.

The reason we need it to be remitted is because we've got the wording here. We've got the wording of the resolution. It's calling for an annual report of the attendance times, the attendance targets, and the performance against those actual targets. In the first instance, Fire & Rescue Services have not got attendance targets that we're particularly proud of, that we would support, that we don't argue against. Essentially, what we would have is a series of league tables in the way that the resolution is worded, which I'm not so sure really are of much benefit to us. I don't think it is helpful to take a document on a yearly basis, or throughout a year but on a document that is produced annually, to say this is the terrible state of play across other Fire & Rescue Services, that you would use as a tool with your Fire & Rescue Service. That data which we do produce is used in a targeted way through the Parliamentary briefings and when we're seeing ministers and basically doorstepping the ministers if we can, but certainly doorstepping the lead officials within the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, Diane Abbott, Karen Lee, whoever, and also in terms of very much being done by Denise and her team up in Scotland. That's where we use that

information. But to produce it as a published report I don't think is useful to you. I think the problem is we've got fire authority chairs and members who would see it as: why have we got better attendance times than some of these other brigades? Why can't we drop to their level?

I don't believe it is a tool. But the intent of the resolution, which is to produce data to enhance and increase our evidence-based work, we get that. That's why we don't want you to oppose it; we want it remitted because that's the work we have been doing, the work we intend to do, and will continue to do.

I will be frank. I just want to use one broad example. The brigade I came from, London, after the pay dispute were leading the charge to say there is no loss of life caused by increased attendance times; there's no correlation, no correlation between increasing attendance times and loss of life of members of the public. Totally banal, but it was a narrative they got an echo from within the government of the time, and that argument still resides there from the leadership of that fire brigade at that time. It spread across the service. It's used, for example, in Merseyside. It is battled against by our officials in Merseyside, but that chief will at times argue, and has argued strongly, that there needs to be a stronger ops response but has actually seen the attendance times worsen there. Actually, try to find a fire station in Merseyside. You don't trip up over them like you used to. Those chiefs and those fire authorities will use it in that way and have used it in that way to say: "we don't get that many fires, we don't get that many fires". They then do indices to show the number of fire deaths and injuries of members of the public per minute or increased minute on the attendance time. Their little datas: 0.19s and 0.22s, these are people's lives that they're talking about and they convert them into statistics! We don't want to be part of assisting them in that job.

I will say, we've got Peter Marshall from the Australian firefighters union in the back there, been here throughout conference; as you know, Dan Stevens has now gone to Australia – good luck with that one, Pete! *(Laughter)* Seriously, we really do support the essence, the aim and the intention of the resolution. But the resolution does not contain the best means to achieve it. We genuinely believe that in the way that it's written if you ask us to deliver it, it will be counterproductive. Essex, please do remit. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Essex, right to reply.

BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

President, Conference, I understand the arguments put by the Assistant General Secretary and that they may use it as a way to generate a race to the bottom. Unfortunately, we're almost there because the race to the bottom started a long time ago and soon we're going to have to live with that because otherwise there won't be a fire service attending any time soon. All I'm asking is we have something, the data that we've got, so that the local officials can campaign. We've just said how important attendance times are. We've made a document, we're setting out that we want those attendance times enshrined at five minutes. So give us something to compare it with then. That's all we're asking. If you want a five minute attendance time give us some of our local information, and information comparable to other brigades, so we can say: "the Fire Brigades Union stand by a five minute attendance time. That's the standard we should be aiming at and look how poorly you're performing." The Assistant General Secretary summed it up. He didn't think it was a useful tool for us. It's up to you to decide.

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put Resolution 53 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 54 Critical Attendance Standards moved by Mid and West Wales. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

Resolution 54 CRITICAL ATTENDANCE STANDARDS (CAST) 2018

Conference previously supported the use of the Fire Brigades Unions' Critical Attendance Standard (CAST) and intervention window methodologies (as recommended in the 2004 Fire Brigades Union National IRMP document) when formulating Brigades IRMP plans. However, in light of significant changes in Fire Service knowledge and procedures, namely Operational

Guidance Breathing Apparatus (OGBA), National Operational Guidance (NOG), Incident Command and the significant lessons learnt in tragic events since its inception, there is a need to comprehensively scrutinise and rewrite the FBU CAST document in order to ensure that the content is current and consistent with the needs of the Fire Service today.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to make provision for this work to be completed as a priority in 2018.

MID & WEST WALES

BRO BARRIE DAVIES (Mid & West Wales):

President, Conference, as you all know, the FBU's critical attendance standards have been around for some 14 years. Officials in Mid & West Wales have used it as a valuable tool to argue against and, sometimes successfully, fight off station closures and downgrades over the years, as have many other officials in this room and throughout the UK, I'm sure. However, the critical attendance standards make reference to outdated guidance and documents, making it harder to rely on when using it to argue against cuts today. Mid & West Wales are asking for the Executive Council to update the critical attendance standards to reflect up to date health & safety and operational guidance. We're also asking for the Executive Council to review the planning scenarios contained in these standards to ensure that the minimum numbers of firefighters to different incidents is still correct or needs increasing to take account of the resource requirements in modern guidance such as OGBA, for example.

The CAST is an important tool in our armoury to support our arguments against cuts. They go hand in hand with the Executive Council's policy statement Stop the Rot, and we would like to see it updated as a priority. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. AGS to give the qualification.

ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

The qualification, President, is of a few parts in truth. It is that the resolution does not call for us to incorporate NOG guidance, it doesn't call on us to incorporate OGBA. It asks us essentially to take it into account. Let's be frank, the OGBA, that guidance on BA is something this union does not support. It has watered down TV197, so we will not be incorporating it; we will be taking it into account. Fortunately, the resolution is fairly ambiguous on that, although the intent probably isn't the way that I'm describing it. But it suits us because we don't want to oppose the resolution.

Similarly, with the operational guidance. The operational guidance is not the product of our work. It's guidance which is reached by consensus. It isn't the guidance that we would want; it's not in the format that we would want. If you think about it, operational guidance in the way it's written is actually contrary, and can be contrary in the way it operates, to national standards that you will have an appliance that will attend in such and such a time; it will have this kind of crewing; it will be consisting of a pump with this leverage in terms of tank capacity. So in terms of what the resolution is asking for, in that sense we take that as being that it should inform the thinking in producing the CAST work.

But there is another problem. In terms of the CAST that we have got (we're not in closed session) but let's say we borrowed heavily, when those CAST scenarios were created, from the work that was done through CFOA and the departmental structure known as the Pathfinder trials. We borrowed heavily when we wrote those CAST scenarios. That was the value of them, if you remember, they had been created by the other side in conjunction with us. They no longer exist.

In terms of the planning scenarios which are used in the creation of the CAST, they don't exist for a number of new scenes of operations that we would want to cover and would need to cover. We can create them, but we'll have the dual task of trying to persuade the service, the sector, to agree our scenarios and therefore our response task and finish analyses around our response to those scenarios. It's not an impossible task, but I suppose we're just trying to be clear on two things. Don't underestimate, not the problems in writing them but the problems in writing them in

such a way that they will get traction. Secondly, on the first point that I raised, we won't be adopting or incorporating bad or poor guidance such as OGBA. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Davy.

BRO DAVY HOWE (Cleveland):

Just a point of order, President. I might have been set up here, I don't know, but I don't think you asked for a seconder for that resolution?

THE PRESIDENT:

Just in case, is that seconded? *Formally* Thank you.

I now put Resolution 54 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I'm on to para D2, para D3, para D4, para D5.

BRO BRIAN HARRIS (Tyne & Wear):

President, Conference, in 2016 Tyne & Wear brought a resolution instructing the EC to campaign for minimum national standards of training, equipment and procedures for all operational personnel who had the likelihood to attend these types of incidents. Since then there have been terrorist attacks at Westminster Bridge, Manchester Arena, London Bridge and Borough Market. We understand that the Westminster government has so far refused to acknowledge the attendance of non-specialist crews at these types of incidents but we all know they do and they have. So members of Tyne & Wear would like to see progress on this campaign and this resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Dave.

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, it was remiss of me earlier, President, not to congratulate you on your election. I just hope that you offer the same compassion and understanding as the previous President.

We're quite the opposite with Brother Brian from Tyne & Wear. We're getting drawn into a mixed message regarding MTFA where the broad position (and that's why I brought it up here so I didn't get it wrong, and I got it wrong twice!) has been support in principle for a Fire & Rescue Service role in MTFA response, support independent upon safe systems of work, sufficient pay, compensation and pension arrangements, existing engagement by members being undertaken on a voluntary basis only, and members not committing to contractual arrangements via the primary or secondary contract outside of a national agreement. They're the four broad positions, and yet we are getting involved regarding negotiation and consultation for training and PPE. I think it's sending a very mixed message when we need clear guidelines regarding our pay campaign. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

AGS.

ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, I've got to say the Executive Council and head office could not let those remarks go uncommented upon. I just want to say we totally get the frustration that's out there in terms of the progress of actually getting this on to a firmer footing so that we can decide do we want to make it part of broadening the role. Frankly, that comes down to: are the arrangements in place and being offered correct? Is the pay right for that broadening of the role?

I get what Dave's saying about the mixed message. That mixed message goes all the way back to the very start of the introduction of the small units, of a commitment by Fire & Rescue Services to commit our members, their people, into these scenarios. You will recall, we reflected that way back when in that emergency resolution which

was like a book, actually covered that issue. Let's be frank, it was written that way very consciously and very clearly, unambiguously saying we are in a pickle because we have members that have volunteered for a whole host of reasons: under threat of that particular station going if people didn't take on MTFA work; on the basis of: we will threaten you, we will discipline you, you won't get promotion – a whole range of things which made our people volunteer. Alongside that is a genuine and understandable – not too far from where we all are as firefighters – general, personal commitment, a professional commitment to want to assist members of the public in their time of need. But they volunteered too quick, they volunteered against interest. In their enthusiasm these members have not assisted our case. We know that. But the problem we had is that we do know and did recognise that there was a real risk that these members could walk on the basis of overtures being made by chief officers and by direct line managers to our members.

So it is an unhappy picture, we know that. I sense the frustration to an extent, voiced by Brian and Dave. Actually, I think it's shared by more of you out there. You simply haven't voiced it at the rostrum. We are very clear on those issues. It is extremely difficult for yourselves when you've got chiefs, you've got training managers coming up: can you agree this, can you agree that, what about the PPE? The truth is we haven't got direct solutions for you on that. On the one hand we could say: just tell them to go away; we're not having anything to do with it. Then they go and buy the PPE on the basis the FBU didn't have an opinion on what PPE to buy. The truth is, as and when it happens, the mop up will be that we will give the standard of the PPE that we want, what we expect from training in terms of content, frequency and so on. And that will be part of the deal. So whatever arrangements your FRS's have put in place will have to be subject to those national requirements which will be part of our national agreement.

We understand, we know the frustration. Clearly, the key way to address this will be one of two things. One is that we will get a deal which we will be bringing to you, bringing to the membership in terms of pay for broadening the role. Or it may come down to the position whereby this isn't moving on and we then need to make a decision about how we address that in terms of restricting the role that we do to increase our leverage to get a pay rise and get a pay deal. We're not at that stage yet. That's been covered within the pay discussions that you've had locally and also at this conference.

It would be remiss of the Executive Council not to acknowledge your concerns and to give a commitment. We are doing all that we can in the very difficult situation that we all face because of those volunteers that we have.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. Conference, I want you to give a warm welcome to Frances O'Grady, the General Secretary of the TUC. Frances is a great friend to this union. She's been a regular at our events and our picket lines and conferences over many years, she's attended our conference since the time she was the TUC's deputy general secretary and several times since becoming the TUC General Secretary. We've said already at this conference that we face many battles ahead. We know the Tories are still attacking our pay, our public services and our unions. We know that workers solidarity and unity is our answer. Frances, welcome to our conference. Could you give us an insight into what the TUC is doing to respond to the attacks? Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS FRANCES O'GRADY (TUC):

Thanks very much, Chair, thank you Matt. The very late Frances O'Grady – apologies for that. Thank you, delegates, for the invitation to speak, although I'm never quite sure how much choice you get in the matter. It's good to be here. I am delighted to join you on your one hundredth anniversary. As you know, the TUC is celebrating one hundred and fifty years, so as far as I'm concerned you're just a whipper snapper!

I also want to thank you for the work that you do. I'll start by paying tribute to the amazing bravery and professionalism your members showed at Grenfell – both firefighters at the scene and control staff behind the scenes. Bravery and professionalism that saved scores of lives. To everyone involved I express our gratitude on behalf of the whole trade union movement. You, and the whole emergency services team, proved that you really are the best of us. I mean that, so thank you.

Now, like the residents of Grenfell and their loved ones, you deserve answers. We all need to know how 72 people could lose their lives like this in London in the 21st century. We need to know how it is that working class lives are

treated so cheaply. What we already know is that the building was clad in dangerous materials, apparently to cover up what wealthy neighbours regarded as an eyesore. In what I think is the sickest of ironies, it was cladded in a material the colour of which was called champagne.

The public inquiry has to be the most forensic investigation possible. Not a whitewash, not a stitch-up but a proper public inquiry that leaves no stone unturned, and one that listens to the voices of FBU members and to local people. An inquiry that asks hard questions, not just about what happened on the day but about what happens when public housing is deregulated and privatised, when corners are cut, when health & safety it seems across our workplaces is routinely trivialised, when our system of regulation is captured by those it is supposed to be regulating. We need to find out how it is that residents' concerns were dismissed time and time again. Who, in that long lucrative chain of outsourcing and contracting out, was supposed to be responsible for what? Why did politicians fail in what should be their first and most fundamental duty which is to put people's safety first?

Given what I see as an Eton code of dishonour that dominates British elites, I knew it wouldn't be long before someone tried to pin the blame on firefighters, just as we saw some of them turn on firefighters in the wake of the Manchester attacks. These are the kind of people who know all too well that it is not uncommon for people whose job it is to save the lives of others to end up feeling personally guilty. They know that firefighters and other life-saving professionals often torment themselves about whether they could have done more. It seems that some are cynically setting out to exploit that trauma. So let me make this quite clear on behalf of the TUC. Firefighters facing such disasters have nothing to be ashamed of. Every day your members put their lives on the line. In my view, those who criticise FBU members are not fit to lace your boots! *(Applause)*

So we need to hold to account those who are really responsible, whether that's corporations, regulators, the government, the landlord or the boss. So one year on we send our solidarity and our support to the community, we reaffirm our determination to secure truth and justice for everyone affected, and we re-commit ourselves, brothers and sisters, our absolute resolve never ever, ever again!

Conference, Grenfell has rightly dominated the headlines, but beyond that human tragedy it also raises profound social questions about inequality in Britain, about the way that our public sphere has taken second place to private profit, and about how dedicated public servants have been mistreated – prices up, rents up, yet in real terms wages down.

I wish you and all our public service unions every success with your pay negotiations, but let me say this. However good the settlements we win are, the government better not expect us to be grateful. Trade unionists tend to be pragmatic people. We do deals, but that doesn't mean that we forget. We don't forget that we've had seven long years of pay freezes and real pay cuts. We don't accept robbing services is the answer. And we reject divide and rule. We believe it's high time that all public servants got a real pay rise, and we want it fully funded now.

The truth is that the government's whole policy of austerity, out-sourcing, privatisation has failed. They have set about ripping the heart out of our public services while economic growth in Britain is still the weakest in the G7. As the TUC's report on the collapse of Carillion exposed, it's a case of privatising profits and socialising the risk, and when things go wrong it's the taxpayer who picks up the tab, and the workforce that gets shafted.

The fire service is no exception. David Cameron (remember him?) in 2010 promised that there would be no cuts to frontline emergency staff. Since then, the budget for the fire service was slashed by 30%, together with endless top down reforms imposed with little consultation and zero evidence. Integrated risk management plans, regional control, police and crime commissioners taking over fire services, and in the West Midlands an attempt to impose new contracts on new entrants. The thin end of the wedge.

On behalf of the TUC I want to congratulate you on that ballot result, and for smashing those thresholds to smithereens! *(Applause)*

But more than that, I want to congratulate you for standing up for young firefighters and for solidarity, and for the fire service.

Conference, management by diktat is no way to run any public service and no way to treat the skilled, committed and dedicated people who run them. The fire service costs just £1 per taxpayer per week. It already offers outstanding value and the British people know that. They are proud of you, they trust you. Conference, you know that working people in all walks of life are getting a raw deal. That's why the TUC has been calling for a new deal for working people, a new deal so that everybody has the chance of a decent job on fair wages, for more council homes and strong communities, and for the great public services that we all rely on. No more cuts, no more flogging off the family silver. It's time to bring our industries, like rail, like the post, back under public control where they belong.

This matters more than ever because, delegates, I can't get away without mentioning the B word, Brexit. The kind of deal that we get we know will be critical to jobs, to the safety net of rights at work that our collective agreements build on, and to the jobs and the growth that we need to fund our public services. We're already getting a bit of a taste of what the future could hold. Look at Donald Trump, he of the tiny hands, imposing tariffs on our steel industry. We're very clear as a whole trade union movement, whichever way people voted in that referendum, working people must not pay the price. The TUC is demanding cast-iron guarantees that our rights at work will be safe, because British, Irish, French and German unions campaigned hard to win that level playing field of rights like holiday pay and parental leave right across Europe, and we are not going to stand by and let this Tory government trash them.

Of course, Theresa May promises that those rights will be protected. I think she even says they will be enhanced. But the truth is, delegates, we don't trust her. Those prime ministerial wannabes like Boris Johnson and Michael Gove (he's getting a lot of press recently, isn't he? I wonder why) don't even bother to disguise what their real agenda is. They've already briefed their media friends that Brexit is going to be a great opportunity to get rid of the EU working time directive. That means limits on long hours, the right to paid holidays and important protections for night workers too. Frankly, we are kidding ourselves if we think they would stop there.

Delegates, the TUC is very clear. We respect the referendum result, but we want an EU deal that protects jobs, livelihoods, rights at work, and keeps pace with our friends in the rest of Europe. We say that employers should invest more in local jobs, training and apprenticeships and that they should be made, required, to pay everyone the rate for the job. We also stand firm to defend the Good Friday agreement that this movement on both sides of the water worked so hard to achieve. The government's solution to the border issue, of course, involves technology that hasn't been invented yet, and an option called Max Fac. Frankly, a customs arrangements named after a makeup brand was never going to inspire us with confidence. If David Davis thinks his Dad's Army alternative of creating some kind of no man's land buffer zone in Ireland will work, I think that man needs his head examined.

Unlike the hard Brexiteers we are not reckless with the history of the Irish border. It also seems a bit ironic that the likes of Davis told us that we would be taking back control of our borders but now says that there will be no immigration controls on the only land border that we actually have with the rest of the EU. I know that immigration featured strongly in the referendum campaign, and I know that there are real worries about migrant workers being used to undercut pay. But, delegates, we are trade unionists, we never blame workers for low pay and lousy treatment. We blame the greedy bosses who exploit them. *(Applause)*

If this government really wants to end exploitation then they should stop using the law to attack trade unions and instead let us loose on those greedy bosses. Give unions new rights to organise, place a duty on employers to bargain with us, make the minimum wage a genuine living wage, and ban zero hours once and for all. The truth is that this Cabinet can't negotiate its way out of a paper bag, let alone come up with a practical deal with Europe. Theresa May is too busy worrying about defending her own job to worry about defending everyone else's.

So we will keep on organising for that new deal and top of our agenda is young workers. We need that new blood to grow the union movement. If trade unionism is about anything, then it is about the strong helping the weak. Without help there are far too many young people, millions of them, stuck in low paid, dead end jobs, tens of thousands on agency and zero hours contracts, and many of them telling us that they put off starting a family because they can't afford it, and they couldn't even dream of ever owning their own home.

As one of the world's richest economies still, we think we can do better than this. If you're a young firefighter, odds on that you'll join the FBU. But it's a different story elsewhere. If we end up with islands of trade unionism in a sea of exploitation then we'll all end up weaker. This very week 150 years ago the TUC held its first ever congress. I always believed that the best way to commemorate the past and those pioneers is to start building for our future. So yesterday, backed by our biggest private sector unions, we launched a new digital trade union to reach young workers. It's a pilot. A thousand young people have signed up already but we're taking it slowly, step by step. We don't know if it's going to work. But what I do know is that we've got to keep on trying.

Trade union models may change. They've changed over history, but our values stay true. The only way that young people in Britain are going to win a better working life is if they band together in a trade union. So I think that we can build a new mood in this country. If you look at what we've achieved together in the last few months – young workers at McDonald's and TGI Fridays taking their first ever strike action, the first time we have ever seen strike action against a powerful multi-national like McDonald's, and the first strike action ever against unfair tips. The government's employment tribunal fees crushed by the Supreme Court thanks to a trade union, Unison, taking them to that court. And of course, one that means a lot to me, that poster boy of union busting, Michael O'Leary, finally forced to recognise trade unions at Ryanair.

Delegates, I believe that throughout our history we've been best when we're boldest, and when there is hope. I also believe that under Jeremy Corbyn (and I know you heard him yesterday) we know that Labour is now the biggest political party in Europe. Labour has more members than all the other political parties in this country put together. Labour's manifesto, I think, gave us all a vision worth fighting for. Your union has been at the heart of our collective story as a broad Labour movement. For the past century you have led the cause. You kept the war effort going during the Blitz, you've won and pioneered important fire safety legislation, and last year your members rescued more people than ever before. Under Matt's outstanding leadership I believe that you can face the future with confidence.

So together, let's get on with it, let's rebuild our movement, let's bring hope to working class communities, and let's win that new deal for all working people by delivering our values of dignity, equality, and not least for the people of Grenfell, justice. Thank you very much indeed. *(Applause)*

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Frances, thank you very much for your contribution to conference. I think you can see from the response that you're very welcome here, and always have been very welcome here at the FBU conference. As you mentioned, it is the TUCs 150th and our own centenary. I think we would agree with you that the dialogue that we've had about our centenary has been about what lessons we can learn in order to build for the future. We've done quite a lot of work and we've found some fascinating stories about how people organised in very difficult circumstances and how central this organisation has been to building the modern Fire & Rescue Service.

We have got a slightly different gift as a result of that. This is a visual history of Fire & Rescue Service helmets. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That is the very first one. Right, Conference, we are at lunchtime so can we have you back in the hall at 2 o'clock. Can I remind you that the trailer, the FBU campaign trailer is still down on the front. If you haven't seen it yet, go have a look. Thank you.

Break for lunch

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now call Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders, to give the report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Conference, could you turn to your Programmes of Business, please, page 6: Resolution 2 Emergency Fire Control, Dorset & Wiltshire has been remitted with the right to speak. Your delegates list: Cambridgeshire – delete Martin Harding, replace with Amy Ratcliffe. Surrey – delete Lee Belsten and replace with Jamie Devey. Thanks, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Chris.

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, I just need to make a point of clarification, please, President. I've been summoned to Standing Orders to provide clarification on my comments regarding rank and role. When I said I was unsure of where we were, I'm sure now. *(Laughter) (Applause)*

That's lightened the mood a bit anyway!. Resolution 7 from the ONC sought to regain a rank structure. Our resolution from Derbyshire in 2017 referred to a national promotion process for all Grey Book ranks which had already been superseded by our agreed roles. Hence, our resolution was ruled out of order in 2017. I trust that provides the clarity and sets the verbatim record straight for conference, that Standing Orders have required. President, thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Chris.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thanks, Chris. The Standing Orders Committee accept your apology! *(Laughter)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that report agreed? *AGREED* Thank you.

Conference, could you now turn to page 6 of the Programme of Business para A3 Pay Rates and CPD payments. I now call Executive Council policy statement Pay in the Fire & Rescue Service with the amendments from London and Oxfordshire to be taken in the same debate with the following resolutions: Resolution 11 Retaining Fee from NRC; Resolution 14 Pay Strategy, Norfolk; Resolution 15 Pay, GMC; Resolution 2 Emergency Fire Control, Dorset & Wiltshire; Emergency Resolution 4 Pay, Scotland. Resolutions 11 and 14 can stand with the Executive Council policy statement. If either the Executive Council policy statement or Resolution 14 carries, Resolution 15 falls. The Executive Council give qualified support to the amendment 1 from London and support amendments 2 and 3 from Oxfordshire. The Executive Council are supporting Resolutions 11 and 14. The Executive Council are opposing Resolution 15. Matt, Executive Council policy statement.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, the Executive Council has made a detailed statement to conference on pay, the current situation. We hope that indicates the importance attached to the issue. Pay has been a huge element of our work over the past year and indeed a complex and difficult area of work over the past year. It's been necessary to review our campaign because of those complexities. We warned last year that these discussions were likely to be complex and difficult, but perhaps none of us anticipated quite how arduous they would be.

We need to understand the context within which we are operating and in which this conference, over several years, has set out and adopted an approach and a strategy. We also need to understand the hurdles that we are up against in the coming months.

Firefighters, along with five million other public sector workers, including nurses, midwives, civil servants, teachers and others, have been subjected to the longest period of pay restraint in living memory. TUC research estimates that real wages are not expected to return to 2008 levels until at least 2025. This means that the current pay squeeze is the longest in modern history. In 2011/12 the Westminster government imposed a two year pay freeze followed by a one year pay cap on public sector pay until 2015/16. After the 2015 election the new Tory government reimposed the 1% pay cap on public sector workers until 2020. To be blunt, therefore, we've been stuck with that government pay policy and that formula of 1%.

Over the last year we've seen some weakening of that 1%. In local government in April unions accepted a two year pay offer. In the National Health Service unions are currently consulting on a three year pay offer. There are some indications that in relation to police there may be a pay rise above 1%. But in most of the public sector the 1% remains in place. Or, in some of those sectors, employers, government departments and so on have been advised that if they were to pay above 1% it would be self-funded, ie funded by further cuts to the relevant service.

Conference has adopted a twintrack strategy in relation to these issues. Firstly, we have campaigned, along with other unions, against the government's pay restraint. That's why we took a resolution ourselves to the TUC in 2017 and urged unions to take part in a joint campaign, and if necessary, joint action. That's why we took part in the TUC demonstration last month, with delegations from all across the union attending. The truth, however, comrades, is that there is no common TUC pay coordination. Negotiations are taking place on a sectoral basis and each union is indeed doing its own thing. That's why we have the second strand of that approach and that's the FBU's strategy on pay.

I think it's important to note in relation to that that the discussion that we've had over several years about the future of the Fire & Rescue Service, the future roles of firefighters and so on is not simply about pay. Indeed, pay was not the primary motivation in developing those thoughts. Rather, it was about the onslaught on jobs, the onslaught on the level of service provided within our service. So there were various elements to what we have discussed here at conference in recent conferences, primarily about protecting the long-term viability and future of a publicly funded, publicly accountable Fire & Rescue Service. It was out of that that the discussions with employers about broadening the role have developed. As we've said consistently throughout that, any development of our role, any development of our function also requires the appropriate levels of pay. So pay has also been central to those discussions.

The Executive Council remains committed to that strategy, and this policy statement re-commits us to developing those discussions, including discussions around possible broadening of the role as the best route towards significant and viable pay rises. However, we do need to assess the events of the past 12 months since we met last year.

Last year we gathered our evidence using independent pay experts and some joint work with the employers. Conference mandated us to submit a pay claim to the employers based on the additional work firefighters have already done over the past decade, and the real wage cuts we faced in terms of the broadening of the role, including the emergency medical response trials.

You will know that the employers, during those discussions, offered a 2% pay offer with strings. The Executive Council sought further clarification of their position, which was provided. In September you will recall the following consultation with members. The Executive Council concluded we could not accept the employers' proposals. At that point the union informed the employers that the EMR trials would cease nationally. The employers then made their offer, an interim offer subject to further discussions, of 1%. That was implemented in December following discussion through the structures of the union.

I think we need to assess why we rejected the employers' offer. There were many reasons. I think members reacted differently in different parts of the country and in different brigades, and indeed differently on individual branches. Firstly, there was no guarantee that those pay rises would be funded. The failure currently of the Westminster government to put up new money, as they have done in other sectors such as the NHS, is critical to that issue. Secondly, the assessment of members was that the offer was simply not good enough for the extra work firefighters have already been undertaking for years, including the years of austerity, but also for the potential of broadening the

role. Thirdly, the employers' proposals ignored, in our view, some of the very real concerns that we had expressed regarding two key areas – one around EMR and one around MTFA.

On MTFA let's be clear that we cannot agree to members being sent into highly volatile and dangerous situations without the necessary guarantees in relation to safety, in relation to procedures, in relation to pensions and compensation, and of course in relation to pay. That's been a source of considerable difficulty in our dialogue with government, as we discussed this morning. The union does, however, accept that firefighters can and could play a role at terrorist incidents, but our members have to have the necessary training, equipment and protection to do so.

In relation to EMR, it is clear that during those trials our members saved lives. The union recognises that this life-saving work, particularly around cardiac arrest, was generally well-received in many areas by the public, and carried out extremely professionally by our members. We know it is a potential supplement to ambulance service work but not a substitute. However, the employers failed to tackle a range of concerns which were highlighted during the course of those trials. Those were highlighted in the report commissioned by the NJC and carried out by the University of Hertfordshire, the Broadening Responsibilities report with which conference delegates will be familiar.

Some of those schemes were entirely unacceptable, most notably the West Midlands Telecare work. It was wrong and in reality should never have been authorised. Since it was signed off by the employers and by head office, we need to accept our share of responsibility for that. But in any case, the FBU never agreed to any permanent scheme. A trial means a trial, and some trials fail and some trials cease. We ceased those trials on the conclusion of those discussions around pay.

In relation to EMR additionally, it is clear that in some services local employers and local principal managers failed to engage with the union in order to resolve problems identified on the ground. To be fair, many of our officials, including many of you in the room, did intervene and address operational issues arising out of those trials, and in some cases – indeed, possibly in many cases – we were able to make progress and we were able to achieve satisfactory improvements during the course of those trials. But to be blunt, some of our employers took liberties with the goodwill and professionalism of our members.

We also acknowledge the inconsistencies between different trials in different Fire & Rescue Services. For example, in relation to inoculations and welfare matters, it's ridiculous that in one fire service undertaking EMR trial members will receive automatic inoculations and in a neighbouring Fire & Rescue Service doing the same trial members do not receive such inoculation. That is the responsibility of the employers and those are the sorts of issues which, if this union were to embark on agreement about broadening the role, would need to be addressed. There was not enough work done to tackle mental health issues, although we also had examples of very good practice relating to mental health in some of the Fire & Rescue Services where trials were undertaken.

In retrospect we should have done more and we should have done more much earlier on. We held some very successful meetings with officials involved directly in EMR trials. The truth is that we should have done that much earlier, and we should have intervened much earlier. We will learn from that experience for the future.

In relation to where we are currently, and conference meets at an unfortunate time because a number of discussions are shortly about to take place, we meet the employers at the NJC this month and pay, of course, will be a central feature of that meeting. We also have scheduled meetings with ministers in various parts of the UK. One of the central questions to this issue is: is there going to be funding for investment into the Fire & Rescue Service in terms of taking on potential broadened roles for the firefighters who deliver it? That is a key question about the future of this dialogue with our employers.

We will, of course, continue with other unions to press government, to campaign, to lobby, to force the government to end their pay cap. We will work closely with the Labour Party about what we expect from a future Labour government in relation to pay and investment in our Fire & Rescue Service. So we need to operate on many levels, we need to campaign on many levels. Most of all, our campaign continues. The Executive Council does not rule anything out, as is set out in the Executive Council policy statement. If necessary, at the appropriate time, we need to discuss the question of strike action then that's the discussion that we will need to have. Of course, what this

union will not do is embark on strike action or a ballot for strike action without the necessary campaigning being put in place. We need to replicate the sort of success that we've achieved in the West Midlands if we were to embark on such an action. The Executive Council does not believe at the present time we're in that position, nor that it is necessary since the discussions with neither our employers nor the various governments in the UK have not currently concluded.

So the Executive Council reports that to you in terms of updating conference on the progress, and in many cases the lack of progress, in relation to pay and discussions with our employers. Nevertheless, the measures are in place potentially to resolve the concerns that we have about pay. I think the next few months will be crucial in relation to this dialogue as to whether we are able to make progress or not. If we're not then I think we return to a consultation through the structures of our union with the other options that are available. We know what those options are. Those are set out in the Executive Council policy statement.

Conference, on behalf of the Executive Council I move the Executive Council policy statement on Pay in the Fire & Rescue Service. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Does that have a seconder?

BRO ASH FOX (Northumberland):

Conference, we second that statement. We hope to see some action very soon. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

London to move their amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Oxfordshire to move the amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Amendment 3 from Oxfordshire. *Formally* Seconder? *Formally* I now call Resolution 2 from Dorset & Wiltshire.

Resolution 2 EMERGENCY FIRE CONTROL

Conference recognises the vital, lifesaving role that Members in Emergency Fire Control give to the Fire and Rescue Service. This is highlighted at incidents such as the house fire in Warminster on 18 December 2017 when Fire Control gave lifesaving advice to a woman trapped by the fire and made sure she was by a window so that firefighters could carry out an immediate rescue on arrival. Conference recognises that this incident, which is in the finest lifesaving traditions of the Fire and Rescue Service, has been replicated on numerous occasions across UK Fire and Rescue Services.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council mount an immediate campaign to raise political awareness of the lifesaving work of Emergency Fire Control with the aim of achieving a rate of pay for Emergency Fire Control Members which is the same as that of the equivalent pay rate for firefighting roles.

DORSET & WILTSHIRE

BRO HAMISH DAYA (Dorset & Wiltshire):

President, Conference, Resolution 2 is to raise political awareness with regard to pay parity and the life-saving work of emergency fire control. Surely this is a self-evident moral duty of our union. But we are aware of issues that have arisen recently and we have been asked to remit this resolution. In close consultation with our colleagues in CSNC we have agreed to remit this resolution, but I would like to say a few words, President, if I may.

Remitting this resolution is on condition of an assurance that we've had from the General Secretary that he will meet with the CSNC as a matter of urgency and by the end of August at the latest. Conference, we will insist that this meeting happens and we will hold the General Secretary to account and ensure that he listens to the CSNC of their concerns and their points of clarification.

Conference, too often our comrades in control get forgotten in our discussions on fairness in the Fire & Rescue Service. While we were fighting for our pensions control rooms were being privatised, they were being merged,

staffing levels were being cut, members were being made redundant. They have taken on significant new areas of work, developed significant new skills. They have increased their workload due to the cuts and the mergers. Their workloads have increased further and as a result, so have their stress levels.

Conference, when we point people to that fantastic trailer down on the seafront extolling the virtues of our union, please remember to tell them when they get to the end of that display to pick up the red phone and try to empathise with the incredible work of our comrades in emergency fire controls up and down this country. *(Applause)*

When we remember Grenfell we will never forget the victims. We will never forget the heroism of the responders and we will never forget the heroism and sacrifice of our control brothers and sisters. They are still suffering the aftermath, along with everyone else who was affected by that tragedy.

Conference, in remitting Resolution 2 I insist that our campaign for fair pay for our control staff must continue and must go up a gear. I remit. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Hamish. I now call Resolution 11, Retaining Fee, moved by the NRC.

Resolution 11 RETAINING FEE

Conference notes the decision made by Conference in 2009 in respect of Resolution 18 on the Retaining Fee, moved by the National Retained Committee. Conference also notes the position taken in respect of pay last year.

The current and inadequate Annual Retaining Fee is still no longer deemed to be acceptable to our Retained Duty System (RDS) Members. It still fails to recognise the commitment of RDS firefighters, the disruption to their family life, the adverse effect on their primary employment and the increasingly high expectations from Fire and Rescue Service Employers. More worrying still, in many Brigades, the retention of RDS firefighters is becoming increasingly difficult with more leaving than joining. Taking a look at our own RDS membership over the last eight years will highlight this trend.

Conference re-affirms that the Executive Council use all necessary resources, to negotiate and agree a substantial increase to the Annual Retaining Fee paid to RDS employees.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

BRO SEAMUS McMAHON (NRC):

President, Conference, first of all, I'd like to thank Northern Ireland for withdrawing their resolution on this. Last year the NRC moved a similar resolution but it was opposed by the EC as it was felt that it would restrict negotiations on pay at the time. Perhaps surprisingly conference sided with the EC on this occasion and our resolution was not successful. We note and welcome the EC support this year and look forward to support from the floor of conference too.

As reported last year, the problem with austerity-driven restrictions on meaningful pay rise is seriously exaggerated in the case of our retained members. This situation is made worse by the fact that many of our RDS members have seen their take home pay reduced by figures that are in excess of 40% or 50%. Picture for a moment opening your next pay packet and realising that the actual amount you receive is half that received when you opened your pay packet nearly ten years ago. This is the reality for a great number of retained firefighters.

There are many factors that have influenced the savage cuts to our pay: reductions in fire calls is probably the first that springs to most people's minds. This has been driven by the Fire & Rescue Service community fire safety agendas that most of our members have not only engaged in but embraced. They accepted that undertaking this work would drive down the calls as a result. At the end of the day no-one wants to see friends, families, members of our communities suffer the trauma and losses of having to deal with the after effects of a house fire. But as this drive for ever-deeper cuts has reached further into our Fire & Rescue Services we have seen examples of this work

being removed from retained fire stations, along with the scaling back of training days, the removals of special appliances and second pumps. The list goes on, but none of this is new to any of us here at conference today. For many RDS members these cuts have resulted in huge reductions in take home pay. Unsurprisingly, this has had a significant impact on the Fire & Rescue Service ability to retain the RDS firefighters. The significant decline in our own RDS membership figures is a stark indicator of this. As members leave stations, we face increasing pressures and difficulties maintaining cover and this no doubt results in pumps being off the run, which in turn results in even further reductions in earnings for those affected. I could go on but I think you're getting the picture regarding the severity of the situation.

This resolution is of huge importance to our retained members. The current retaining fee for a firefighter giving 120 hours full cover equates to 47p an hour. It is for these that the RDS members must see a very significant increase in the size of their retaining fee, and why this must be given utmost priority with Matt and our Executive Council. I move. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* I now call Resolution 14 Pay Strategy moved by Norfolk.

Resolution 14 PAY STRATEGY

Conference notes the following:

i) The Executive Council Policy Statement on 'Firefighters Pay' 2017, in particular the part which states:

"2. The union will launch a campaign, lobbying MPs and the employers, to explain how firefighters' pay has fallen behind in recent years

3. The FBU will consult members via brigade committees and other channels in order to determine how to develop wider campaigning on pay

4. The FBU will continue to work with the other unions and the TUC/STUC/ICTU on a campaign to 'break the pay limit'."

ii) The absence of a significant 2017 pay offer to address the years of pay restraint faced by FBU Members.

iii) The absence of any agreeable pay offer to consider the expansion of NJC rolemaps in line with the wider workstreams.

Therefore Conference demands that the Executive Council immediately begin to formulate a wider strategy/campaign on pay as per the 2017 Conference position, via membership consultation, and in doing so consider all political and industrial avenues available to us, including industrial action.

NORFOLK

BRO ALAN JAYE (Norfolk):

We note and acknowledge the EC policy statement on pay in the Fire & Rescue Service. However, we believe our resolution offers greater clarity and direction to the union. It's been ten years since the infamous bank crash and eight years since the start of the unnecessary austerity programme by the then coalition government. Since then members have faced derisory 1% capped pay offers which, aligned with higher living costs and stealth national insurance increases, ultimately led to a pay cut. Members now have to find second or even third jobs to live. If we are not careful it won't be long before the living wage catches up with the basic wage of a firefighter.

In July 2017 we were offered a pay deal of 5% with strings attached. 3% of this was subject to government funding. Rightly, members voted against this as the agreement wasn't clear and was therefore of concern to members. Following on from that rejection there has been very little communication or updates on pay as our members would have expected.

Now is the time to act. We must, as a union, move forward with a pay campaign to correct the years of pay cuts and recompense our members for the role we do now. I urge the EC to start a pay campaign and explore all the options available to us as a union.

Just one thought: in 1977 my uncle stood on a picket line for nine weeks, relying on handouts from our family to survive. What those firefighters won for us will never be forgotten. Let us be the next generation to gain what can't be forgotten. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* I now call Resolution 15 Pay moved by GMC.

Resolution 15 PAY

Conference notes the negotiations undertaken to date in relation to pay. Conference also notes Conference policy in relation to the work undertaken to explore broadening the role of a firefighter.

Conference acknowledges the real anger felt from our Members towards a Government that they view as wholly ambivalent to the work undertaken by our Members during the workstream trials.

Conference also acknowledges the anger felt by our Members due to Government policies forcing a £2500 real term pay cut on them over recent years.

Conference instructs the Executive Council that in the absence of a negotiated pay settlement acceptable to our Members for 2017/18 that a ballot for industrial action is commenced.

GMC

BRO GARY KEARY (GMC):

President, Conference, for ten years now firefighter pay has stagnated following successive years of pay freezes and measly 1% increases. Since the election of a Tory led government in 2010 we have witnessed the dismantling of our service through vicious budget cuts and the decimation of our members' living standards as pay has increasingly fallen behind the cost of living. Conference, we have been patient, we have for over three years engaged fully in the development of workstreams and, in many brigades, firefighters entered in good faith into an EMR pilot with a view to agreeing the broadening of a firefighter role in return for a fair, centrally funded pay rise. Firefighters feel that all they received in return for their good faith and hard work is a smack in the face.

The issue of tackling firefighter pay cannot be delayed any longer. Firefighters waited with baited breath at the end of March to hear how pay negotiations for the 2017 settlement had concluded. They have since been left disappointed having received no official update.

Conference, this union has a proud history of protecting our members' health & safety. You will have noted over recent conferences the increasing number of resolutions raising concerns about the mental health of firefighters and the rapidly growing numbers of our members who are suffering the effects of mental ill health. This devastating effect on our members' well-being is no great mystery, nor is it a coincidence that cases of mental ill health have rocketed whilst our pay in real terms has plummeted. Conference, firefighters have been left feeling increasingly under-valued, demoralised and frustrated in their roles at work. But worse than this, they have in many cases found themselves being unable to support their families fully and adequately. This is a situation whereby our members struggle to feed, clothe and house their families and it cannot be tolerated. Financial hardship impacts significantly on mental health. We cannot stand aside any longer.

Conference, this resolution calls for the finalising of a pay settlement for 2017 and for the commencement of a ballot for industrial action should this settlement not be acceptable. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Secunder?

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we are seconding Manchester's Resolution 15 on pay. Grumpy and cynical – that's not new names for Adam and Steve, but it's names that I've been accused of before. I'm comfortable with that, I'm comfortable with grumpy. I'm not grumpy just because it's Ramadan and I'm fasting; I'm grumpy because for the last 12 months we've lacked direction and we've lacked any real evidence to say what's happening regarding pay.

Last year there were 19 All Members Circulars – I've counted them this morning so you don't need to do it right now. There were 19 in an eight month period. The majority of them were centred around the 1%/2% argument, and there were frequently asked questions all members circulars. But nothing of any substance at all regarding the wider detail.

Gary's just touched on it now. In the six months so far this year we have had one all members circular on pay and that was in January. The first all members circular since the end of conference last year was on 18 May. Matt wrote: "Regarding discussions, these are reaching a crucial time and the next few weeks will be important in assessing whether any progress can be made." You've just heard him now saying in the next two months it's going to be crucial. So what is it? Is it two weeks back in May, or is it two weeks from now? Again, no clarity. The last all members circular on 19 January Matt wrote: "Meeting of the NJC at the end of February and it is hoped that more detail will be available then." So we're running a strategy on hope. That's what it seems like; that's what our members believe, it's hope. Between those times we also had an all members circular around October stating that actually there's an opportunity for the government to give us money in the upcoming budget. Is this what our strategy has come down to: hope, and hope that the government will give us something? The strategy has gone badly wrong and it needs to be put back in the hands of the membership.

I forgot to bring the paper up with me! Again, from recollection and you might not want to quote me on this, the EC policy statement says that the strategy has not moved central government, but then in the three bullet points it's asking conference to continue with the same strategy. Ask yourselves, Conference, when are we going to say enough's enough? Can anybody actually remember what the strategy was? I think it was something to do with EMR. I'm sure Matt will correct me if I'm wrong. We agreed to extend the trial at the end of 2016 until February 2017. That got extended again to allow a bizarre recall of conference in March, where it was agreed to extend it again. We then discussed it in conference 2017. Then there was an NJC circular saying that the trials will come to an end on 7 July or shortly afterwards. It got extended again on 24 August. It finally finished on 18 September.

If this GMC motion is agreed, Matt will try to tell you that we want to pull the trigger straight away. It doesn't say that. It says (I should have brought my glasses) that should an acceptable offer for 2017 not be available for members then we will consider it. Let's build on the strength of our members in West Midlands. We know what we can do if we educate, agitate and organise. We can do it again. Support GMC. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now Scotland to move Emergency Resolution 4.

Emergency Resolution – 4 PAY

On Thursday 31 May 2018, the Auditor General for Scotland released her report into the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). The report included the following recommendations to:

- ***"increase its pace of reform and implement its plans for transformation."***
- ***"agree as soon as possible, the revised terms and conditions for its uniform staff that reflect the changes to the role planned as part of the programme for transformation."***

On 30 January 2018, the SFRS wrote to firefighters in Scotland and offered them a pay rise in return for broadening their role.

Conference remains committed to negotiate a pay rise through the NJC and acknowledges the work carried out to secure funding in order to progress the campaign for a pay rise as part of the FBU national strategy.

Conference acknowledges that fire and rescue is devolved to the Scottish parliament. As a consequence, they reserve the ability to increase funding for pay in return for broadening the role of firefighters.

The Executive Council policy statement on pay highlights the NJC work streams discussions in identifying potential areas of new work, including emergency medical response and MTFA. These are two areas that the SFRS have indicated that they are now in a position to progress as a result of the £15.5 million additional funding from the Scottish government in December 2017.

Conference now instructs the Executive Council to immediately commence negotiations on the pay offer that was delivered to firefighters in Scotland on 30 January 2018, the negotiations for which we believe can be accommodated within the existing NJC mechanisms.

SCOTLAND

BRO JOHN McKENZIE (Scotland):

President, Conference, we have chosen to remit this resolution in the interests of unity and due to the timing of the debate. We understand the reasons that the EC would have opposed our emergency resolution and we have no wish to damage national negotiations in regard to pay or any other matter. However, we feel we must use this opportunity to update conference on events in Scotland, to impress upon the Executive Council the position our members find themselves in and to leave this resolution on the table.

Last year the Assistant General Secretary took a position advising Scotland to enter into negotiations with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service on MTFA. Although we subsequently withdrew from these negotiations following the rejection of the employers' pay offer, we received written confirmation from the service that MTFA clearly sits outside a firefighter's rolemap – a position the employers' side on the National Joint Council would do well to take heed of.

Last November the General Secretary spoke at our lobby of the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood where hundreds of members in Scotland attended. This followed months of direct lobbying by those same members of both MPs and MSPs in an effort to secure additional funding for our service. The direct result of this was an additional £15.5 million of combined funding from the Westminster and Holyrood governments.

Following this additional investment the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service wrote directly to all of our members in Scotland on 30 January with a transformation proposal – their words, not ours – spelling out proposed pay increases over the next four years in exchange for our members accepting rolemap expansions to include some of the workstreams. This was final core salary of £35,800 for a firefighter. In doing this, our service bypassed nationally agreed collective bargaining processes, displayed contempt for our members by attempting to circumnavigate their elected regional officials, and showed complete disregard for the role of the National Joint Council and the national structures of our trade union. Conference, this is unacceptable.

In reaction, our members have been a credit to themselves and this union. In the days that followed, officials in Scotland were sent images and videos of unopened letters being posted directly back to the service --

THE PRESIDENT:

John, could you just stop. Are you videoing this? Can you delete it please? We don't do videoing. Carry on.

BRO JOHN McKENZIE (Scotland):

In the days that followed officials in Scotland were sent images and videos of unopened letters being posted directly back to the service, opened letters being fed through paper shredders, and copied into email replies directly to the chief fire officer and the chair of the board, berating their attempts to undermine the strength and unity that exists amongst them. *(Applause)*

In the best traditions of our union, a resolution from our branch passed through our structures and resulted in a vote of no confidence in the chief fire officer and the senior leadership team of the service. The first time in the history of our brigade that this has taken place.

Conference, our members took these actions because of their continued belief that the National Joint Council is the body responsible for the supervision of their conditions of service and the negotiation of their pay. It can never be acceptable for a Fire & Rescue Service to attempt to bypass this. However, we must be honest about the situation we find ourselves in. We have a devolved government with a devolved fire budget who have provided additional funding to provide a pay settlement in line with this union's national strategy on the expansion of the firefighters' rolemap. These are our union's five workstreams. It is the dedicated work of the Executive Council and the commitment, tolerance and professionalism of members throughout the country in engaging with these trials which have evidenced this work.

Conference, what is being proposed in Scotland, however we contest its delivery, is a national strategy: increased pay for expansion of the rolemap in line with the five workstreams. The Executive Council has to have considered what our response would be should one of the three devolved governments, the Westminster government or a local fire authority offer additional funding for broadening the role of the firefighter. We cannot realistically expect all four national governments – no two currently with the same political party in power – to be on the same page at the same time.

Conference, our region believes that there is an opportunity to create leverage for other regions and brigades from this. It is not the intention of any member in Scotland to undermine the national strategy, nor negotiate away jobs or shift changes in exchange for pay. That is not the business of this union. However, we need guidance on the national pay strategy and seek conference to debate on how we now move forward. Effectively, in Scotland we are approaching the natural end game of this union's national pay strategy. Our members need clear and decisive leadership on the way ahead.

Conference, it is for these reasons and in a spirit of unity that we remit this emergency resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Can I just remind conference what the Chair of Standing Orders said about phones and IT equipment. Thank you. That's now open for debate. Nobody?

SIS LUCY MASOUD (London):

I am talking in support of the EC policy statement. As Frances O'Grady said previously today, the public sector has had to endure seven years of pay cuts and pay freeze. We applaud this union's attempt to secure a decent pay offer for our members. We further applaud the membership for taking the brave decision to reject the pitiful offer that was placed on the table last year. Our members in London fully understand the challenges facing the union in regard to pay and we welcome any strategy that will assist in achieving a pay rise for our members. We caution, however, that we will not sell ourselves short, and we will not be bumped into extra work without our agreement first.

Lastly, we've spoken a lot about Grenfell today, but please don't forget that the day after Grenfell it was the Prime Minister and her crony politicians who was quick to come out and hail those firefighters as heroes yet less than ten days later it was that same Prime Minister and her rotten government who sat on the front benches of the House of Commons and cheered as they voted to maintain the public sector pay cap. This shows the absolute contempt that this government holds its public sector workers in, and its firefighters. It is for these reasons that we support. *(Applause)*

BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (Cheshire):

President, we've just heard the General Secretary say in moving the policy statement that discussions on pay have not concluded. Members in Cheshire were of the understanding that a deal on pay for 2017 would be either agreed or not prior to 1 April. As has been said, we've had no update on pay since 19 January – six months. So I ask the General Secretary for clarification on the pay award for 2017 because I don't feel we've had that clarification. Where are we?

Further, given the General Secretary's statement, in opposing the resolution on the regional secretaries meetings yesterday, that the answer to progressing discussions is not more committees and not more meetings, the Cheshire brigade committee are expecting that we'll soon be walking in the absence of talking. It's for that reason that we support the GMC resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):

President, Conference, I've just got three quick points to make. The first one is I acknowledge and thank Matt Wrack, General Secretary, for stating that Telecare is completely inappropriate work for firefighters. He didn't actually say that but it's already on the minutes. I thank him for that.

The second point is listening to Scotland was very interesting and well put across. We have not had it to that extent in the West Midlands but a lot of you may not know that our members have been given pay offers to do wider work and our position is quite clear that that is done at the NJC and it won't be done at a local level.

The third point, the most pertinent point to all this is that I'm only speaking on behalf of the West Midlands because that's the only authority I have. When we vote we will be considering whether we can deliver a mandate, because if we don't deliver a mandate for what's being asked for today then we would be in serious trouble. *(Applause)*

BRO IAN HIBBERT (Merseyside):

Conference, I am speaking in support of Resolution 15. Comrades, I'll keep this brief as previous speakers seem to have covered everything comprehensively and grumpily. Sorry! I mean, passionately. What I will say is this. If you think a Tory government is going to give us an extra penny, quite frankly we may have to check what's in our water in this room! This government hates us, it hates working people, and they know if they pay out it will open the floodgates. The only way we will ever get a decent pay rise is by doing what Matt has suggested we do, and replicating what has just occurred in the West Midlands. Conference, I say let's get cracking. Support Resolution 15. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Any more? General Secretary right of reply.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President, Conference, a number of resolutions taken in the one debate. I will try to take them in order. In relation to Resolution 2 being remitted by Dorset & Wiltshire, if I can. We've had a number of debates here at conference on the question of the pay of our control members, and we do take it very seriously. We are in dialogue with the CSNC about finalising that developing strategy specifically around control pay. I do say, Hamish, it's entirely unnecessary and somewhat insulting to suggest that I wouldn't meet with the Control Staff National Committee. I've made that commitment; we've got a dialogue going on and that meeting will take place.

I think some of the points that were made, we do need to remind ourselves. The campaigning around the role and the contribution of our control members has been central to what this union does for many years. Those of you who have been to the exhibition across the road will have seen that we have built it very much to aim it at the public, as we did in relation to the support for the Operator film, which I think fantastically shows the remarkable work undertaken by FBU control members. In the aftermath of Grenfell, where we are working very hard to defend and protect control members against what appears to be unfair criticism in the media and elsewhere, then clearly that area of our work will come to the fore and to the centre in terms of some of the points raised in the resolution about raising political awareness. I have to say, in relation to Grenfell, if the London Fire Brigade control was overwhelmed, as it was in relation to that incident, we can only imagine what would happen in every other emergency fire control across the UK who have been dealing with the scale of cuts that they have. We welcome that being remitted, and those discussions will take place.

In relation to the resolution from the NRC on the retaining fee, again I think it's well-known across the service that we have huge problems in the Fire & Rescue Service with retained recruitment and retention. It's clear that a key factor in that must be the question of pay, including the retaining fee. The inability to recruit people, a difficulty in retaining people, and huge problems across the country are in terms of the non-availability of retained pumps throughout much of the day. Once again, we're keen to try to progress that point as well.

In relation to the amendments to the Executive Council's policy statement, there is qualified support for the London amendment. That's because I think there is some slight contradiction between that and the Norfolk resolution which we are urging conference to support. The London amendment states that if no acceptable pay rise, a full report

back would be given to conference 2019. We are being clear that we have no intention of waiting until conference 2019 to seek to resolve this issue. Clearly, the next period (I will be more precise with the use of language) will be absolutely crucial to those discussions.

In relation to the Norfolk resolution, we fully support the points that were made in the contribution and are made in the resolution. I think the resolution helpfully sets out how we would develop an alternative strategy and understands that that means engaging with our members, it means engaging with political lobbying and campaigning. I think the point was very well made reminding people of the levels of struggle that people have had to undertake in the past in order to achieve improvements in pay. This is not about scaring people, but in 1977 our members took a nine week all out strike. I think the sort of level of struggle that we need to be talking about, if we embark on that road, we need to at least discuss that. I'm not saying that's what we would propose, but we need to at least discuss that level of struggle. I suppose the Executive Council's concern at that point is that we don't think that at this stage we are ready for that. Nor do we think, at this stage, it is necessary.

I will deal with the Scotland issue. In relation to the position in Scotland, we welcome the fact that that has been remitted. Let us remind ourselves of some of the difficulties that we've had since the introduction of the single service. It's all very well for the Scottish Fire Service employer to make that proposal earlier this year. That's the same employer that has taken over four years to harmonise terms and conditions. Indeed, it took the intervention of the National Joint Council to resolve that issue. We welcome the fact that the Scottish regional committee has remitted this, and is supportive of the national strategy and the national approach to this.

Let us remind ourselves that there are two problems in relation to the so-called offer that was made. First of all, it is whether or not it takes account of the costs arising out of the now agreed harmonisation process. Secondly, and more significantly, is the issue that it did clearly link pay rises to further cuts in the service. It was linked to job cuts, to new technology, to new duty systems and a whole range of other issues. This union has never engaged in negotiations where the employer, at the start of those discussions, has said: "we might be able to give you a pay rise if you agree to cut these jobs". That's not what this union is interested in. I know that's not what the Scottish delegation is interested in. That's one of the problems with how the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service has approached this whole issue. We welcome that being remitted.

In relation to the GMC resolution, a number of points were made. The resolution in the final paragraph states: "In the absence of a negotiated pay settlement acceptable to our members for 2017/18 that a ballot for industrial action is commenced." Let's be clear, Conference, let's stop talking about industrial action. If we're talking about fighting over pay there's only one word that will fit a resolution and that's strike action. I have to say, it's potentially misleading to people and misleading to brigade memberships if we come to conference saying we're calling for industrial action and we are not clear to them that we're going to conference to talk about strike action. If anyone thinks that an overtime ban or some other action short of strike is going to shift anyone, then they are living in cloud cuckoo land. It would take strike action at the very least to shift them. So let's be clear what we are talking about. The resolution therefore is not clear what it's about because some people are talking about strike action; Gary, when he spoke and moved the resolution, referred to industrial action. So what is it we're talking about?

In terms of the timing, it says "in the absence of a negotiated pay settlement acceptable to our members for 2017/18". Let's be clear, Conference, the National Joint Council meets next week. It says if there is not an acceptable settlement for 2017. It does strike me that some people have not read the resolution. It's not that we then commence the process or consult with people, it says "a ballot for industrial action is commenced." That is an issue that may arise next week. I don't know what will happen next week, but it is possible that the employers come to us next week and say: "we haven't got any proposal to make to you on pay and actually you've got what you're getting". I don't know. I'm not saying that is the most likely outcome, but it is possible. This resolution would commit us at that point to commence a ballot for strike action. The point that Steve just made is the key point. Let's not get up to the rostrum, comrades, and talk about launching that strike ballot when we are not ready or indeed when we haven't even thought through what that strike strategy would be, etc. This is not a game we're playing.

In terms of the timings, yes, I was quite clear in moving the Executive Council statement that things haven't gone cleanly or smoothly or speedily. I hate to say it, comrades, that's the world we live in. We're living in a world with a

Tory government, with devolution, with different governments. I have to say, the Welsh Labour government haven't been particularly helpful on this issue either. We are trying to maintain UK-wide bargaining through the last National Joint Council that exists in the public sector. We're the only people with one of those left. We're trying to maintain that when fire policy, and therefore the funding of the fire service, has been devolved to devolved governments. That adds a further complication in a period where actually we have a whole number of people who don't particularly want to see that National Joint Council continue, including in my opinion a number of chief fire officers who would prefer to see local bargaining around the whole issue of pay and whether we broaden the role or not. So yes, it is difficult. That's the life that we are leading.

Nevertheless, we do have, jointly with the employers, work underway currently which is to present evidence to the Tory fire minister. I suppose, Conference, we can't predict how these discussions will go. This has been reported to the Executive Council. At one of the meetings with Nick Hurd, the Tory fire minister, he made certain demands of the employers and certain demands of the National Joint Council. We're seeking to resolve that and provide the information that he requested.

We have meetings scheduled with the Scottish fire minister, with the Welsh fire minister and I think now with the English fire minister. There isn't a fire minister currently in Northern Ireland. We're seeking a discussion with the Permanent Secretary in Northern Ireland. So meetings have been scheduled with the key political players who may or may not be the mechanism by which additional funding is provided. Secondly, we are meeting with our employers next week. So the simple fact is that that process has not concluded. I have to say, I don't think many of our members would thank us for pre-empting those discussions. That discussion may end in failure. I will not remotely try to avoid that possibility. Our members would not thank us for not seeing through to the end a process that this conference started. That is the logic of the Executive Council's position.

Just finally on a couple of points that Dave raised. He asked about the timing. I have attempted to address that. He asked what is the strategy. The strategy is about broadening the role. I set that out in introducing the Executive Council policy statement. I've said very clearly that it was not simply about pay; that's about the future of the Fire & Rescue Service in a position where we've seen the devastation of Fire & Rescue Services across the country. I suppose one of the key points in this debate over the past few years is that at no point has anybody got up to explain a viable alternative to that. Strike action may be a viable alternative, but it did strike me from what Ian said, there were some difficulties because he said the Tory government won't give us a penny; the Tory government will not give us a penny but we should nevertheless embark on strike action. So if the Tory government will not give a penny on the basis of argument, we may have to think about what the alternative is. I think Ian was setting out the difficulties of taking on a Tory government, even if we embark on major strike action.

Conference, it is difficult; it is complex and it has taken time. I can assure you it doesn't give me any pleasure that the thing takes so much time and you have to travel the country meeting these people who we don't particularly like meeting in the first place. But unfortunately that's the job that you have given us to do to try to resolve the issue of pay.

We would urge you to support the Executive Council with the amendments as set out, and to support the resolution on the retaining fee and on pay strategy, and I would still, even at this stage, urge Greater Manchester to withdraw their resolution, if not Conference, we urge you to oppose it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

NRC right to reply. *Waived* Norfolk right to reply. *Waived* GMC.

BRO GARY KEARY (GMC):

President, Conference, in replying to Matt, it was certainly not my intention to mislead conference regarding the use of the words industrial action. I think we in this room all understand what would be required to overturn this government and achieve a pay settlement for firefighters. I will say, though, in relation to the Executive Council statement on pay page 4 final paragraph point 3: "Instruct the Executive Council to campaign on firefighters pay using every avenue as appropriate and necessary including political lobbying and industrial action." I leave that there. *(Applause)*

Conference, this resolution doesn't prevent the meeting with the NJC going ahead in the coming weeks. However, what it means is following that NJC meeting, if there is no offer on pay then that needs clearly communicating to our membership and they should then be able to decide if that is acceptable prior to moving to ballot.

It wasn't my intention also in moving this resolution to play games. This matter is of the most serious nature, as is our intent. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put amendment 1 from London to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put amendment 2 from Oxfordshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put amendment 3 from Oxfordshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Executive Council policy statement as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 11 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 14 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 10 Grey Book Rates of Pay moved by Nottinghamshire. The Executive Council are supporting.

Resolution 10 GREY BOOK RATES OF PAY

Conference condemns the prolonged and sustained financial attacks from successive governments on the UK Fire and Rescue Services. Chief Fire Officers and Fire Authorities consistently 'fall into line' with the budgetary settlements being forced on them by the current Westminster Government without any attempt to fight back.

These 'cuts' are regularly being made to frontline firefighter posts through the changing of duty systems. A reluctance to recruit has led to many Fire and Rescue Services reducing their establishment levels through retirements.

To compensate for these reductions in staffing levels, Chief Fire Officers are now introducing policies to cover shortfalls in crewing through the use of firefighters working in excess of their Grey Book contractual hours for flat rate pay.

Conference calls upon all Members at all levels of the Fire Brigades Union to refuse to work additional hours for rates of pay that are not in accordance with the Grey Book conditions of service.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

BRO JOHN MUGGLETON (Nottinghamshire):

President, Conference, a really simple resolution, easy speech. Yesterday we had a debate around stopping overtime. This is a step towards stopping the overtime. It's basically stopping flat rate pay. Throughout the country we are seeing sustained attacks on our duty shift systems and ridership figures, with a reduction in fire cover and changing of our terms and conditions. To compensate, senior managers and chief fire officers are asking our members to work additional hours beyond that of that contractual 42 hours a week. However, these hours are being paid at a flat rate and not at overtime rate as per the Grey Book.

Many Fire & Rescue Services are or have been operating in this way through the use of systems such as bank shifts, voluntary arrangements or contracts, and voluntary additional hours. It's not the duty of the Fire Brigades Union to

crew appliances. That responsibility falls to the fire service managers. If appliances go off the run, they simply need to employ more firefighters.

Conference, I suggest we stop working for flat rate of pay and working for less than Grey Book terms and conditions. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO KARL WAGER (Cleveland):

Conference, President, after yesterday I'm sure you all realise where I'm at with overtime. When looking at the resolution from Notts, it's very similar to ours, apart from we think that ours was a little bit better, and gets the right result. This is a step in the right direction though. Like I said yesterday, I would urge us to go back and do some work in the brigades and fly the kite to see if next year we can get that one step further. But definitely for now support this. If our members are going to work overtime they should do it for the right rates of pay in the Grey Book. As I said, hopefully it's a step in the right direction and we'll come again next year. Thank you. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. No?

BRO MARTYN BAIRSTOW (West Yorkshire):

Just a point of clarification really. Is this minimum Grey Book rates of pay, because we're getting offered rates of pay higher than Grey Book for certain overtime duties?

BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):

President, Conference, sorry I've been up here a lot, but I'm sure this will be my last time because I'm going home in a minute. *(Laughter)* Back to the chateau of despair. *(Laughter)* *(Applause)*

Now on a personal level, everything that Nottinghamshire have brought to the table is absolutely right, but I want to just talk about the history in the West Midlands. I will let you know that personally I've never worked an overtime shift in my life and I don't intend to. In the West Midlands, throughout its history and as long as I can remember (and that's going back quite a long time) and speaking to my predecessors, there was no overtime. Unfortunately, our current regime at the chateau decided that they were going to introduce it. We did ballot, we did take industrial action short of strike and it was fairly successful because they wanted flat rate overtime. We negotiated a settlement. I hang my head in shame here today that that is not Grey Book compliant. It's a lot better than what was on the table. Industrial action had some effect. Unfortunately, in the West Midlands now we do have a collective agreement in place which is non-Grey Book compliant. We signed that agreement and our members now, after many decades of not doing it, do work overtime. I'm just pointing out and being open and honest with conference floor that it is difficult when you sign collective agreements. I'll leave it there. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Matt.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes, a couple of points, Conference. I don't know whether it might be a qualification possibly. In relation to the question from West Yorkshire (this probably is a qualification) it should be referred to the Executive Council if you're unsure as to whether it complies with the policy. We'd have to look at what actually was being offered or had been agreed. I think the second qualification is the one that Steve has just said. I think the truth is that because of the period that we have been through with an onslaught at local level on conditions of service, brigade officials at local level have been dealing with a relentless series of attacks. That has not always left us in the best position because we can only fight what we can fight and that depends on our strength on the branches; it depends on the views and strength of the membership. So that is no reflection on the officials concerned. I'm sure people would not take that view in relation to the West Midlands, considering what they've just achieved in terms of industrial action. But this

conference and this Executive Council will have to take account of previous histories or how we've got into possibly collective agreements or possible other arrangements.

The final qualification relates to the final paragraph. Conference will be aware of the huge difficulties we have in relation to anti-trade union legislation and you may be aware of the ASLEF case whereby a text message simply saying that something hadn't been agreed was deemed to be a call for collective action and the union ended up in court over that. So we need to be careful, and we will need to take care legally in relation to how we apply and implement this policy if you pass it. With those qualifications we do support it, and clearly our aim is that we negotiate rates of pay, including overtime, through the NJC and those are the rates of pay that should be applied across the board to people who are working extra hours. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now put Resolution 10 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I'm on para A4, para A5, para A6. I now ask conference to turn to page 8 in the Programme of Business and we will pick up from where we stopped when Frances O'Grady came. We're on to para D5 Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack. I now call Emergency Resolution 1 Manchester Arena Attack moved by GMC.

Emergency Resolution 1 – MANCHESTER ARENA ATTACK

Conference remembers the twenty two people murdered at the Manchester Arena on 22nd May 2017, and also the many people injured and affected by the events of that night. Conference welcomes The Kerslake Report into the Emergency Services response to the attack which was published on 27th March 2018.

This report raised concerns in relation to some of the multi-agency responses to the Arena incident.

The Report States that 'Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service did not arrive at the scene and therefore played no meaningful role in the response to the attack for nearly two hours' and that the effect of this delay was that '....a valuable resource was not available to assist on the scene'.

Also that:

'The Fire Service was effectively 'outside the loop' having no presence at the rendezvous point established by the police, little awareness of what was happening at the Arena and only a very limited and belated presence at Strategic Gold Command'.

The report goes on to state that the reasons for the failure of GMFRS to respond adequately to the attack were due to:

'A combination of poor communication and poor procedures' and that 'GMFRS will need to reflect on the wider issues it raises for their operational culture and approach to multi agency working'.

Conference notes the open letter to firefighters 30th March 2018 written by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Mayor Andy Burnham when he stated:

"I know you were desperate to help but were prevented from doing so by decisions taken above you" and that "The failure is not yours but one of process, leadership and culture."

Conference therefore calls upon local officials to meet urgently with service managers and decision makers, to raise and discuss the Kerslake Report (into the issues arising from the Manchester Arena incident) to make sure that their local Brigades are prepared for any such future attack and that the failings as identified within the report never occur again.

GMC

BRO GARY KEARY (GMC):

President, Conference, you will need no reminding of the terrible events of 22 May last year in Manchester. I'm sure you will also know that the response of Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service to that incident was far from what it should have been. This limited response has had a massive effect on many of our members. More than a year on, feelings of anger, frustration and guilt remain. Let us be clear though, firefighters were in no way to blame. They were ready to be mobilised immediately following the blast. In fact, they were sat on the appliance ready to go. But no command to commit them came. Instead, they were eventually mobilised to an RV point further away from the incident. The service also failed to mobilise their MTFA capability.

The Kerslake report also makes clear firefighters were not responsible. I urge you to read this report. There was undoubtedly on that night a systematic failure of many procedures. One of these which cannot be ignored was comms. There was a catastrophic breakdown in the passing of crucial information from Greater Manchester police to the fire service, and an incredible amount of pressure placed upon our firefighter control members in a critically understaffed northwest fire control.

Conference, this resolution calls on you as officials to be aware of the Kerslake report and its findings, and to raise these matters and any associated procedures locally with service managers to ensure that such failings are never repeated. GMC will remit this resolution. We understand the EC's concerns around it but this resolution was never about local officials negotiating on MTFA response. We ask the Executive Council to review the Kerslake report and highlight to local officials areas of concern which can be discussed with service managers to make sure such a situation never arises again. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Gary. AGS.

ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, we're glad that the Arena has been raised at this conference. It was only appropriate that it should be raised by GMC. Equally, we are glad that it's been remitted because of the wording. We thank GMC for bringing it and for remitting it.

I think it was raised and explained quite well, but I do think we need to emphasise it because it's one of the biggest problems that we've had, those of us on the Executive Council and at head office who have been trying to discuss the question of procedures. That is that if communications fail then MTFA, if it had been MTFA but actually any response to a terrorist incident, fails. In this instance it was a situation whereby police communications to fire omitted to inform fire that there was an all-clear. The biggest problem for us is when those communications fail when the reverse is true, and they aren't able to or don't bother to tell us that. If our people were committed to an MTFA incident, or to a bomb incident, and actually the all clear previously given had been compromised; a warm zone has now become hot our people are left there in limbo.

So the lessons of Kerslake. We know it caused an awful lot of problems for our members, what happened on that night. We know how embarrassed our members have been because of the press and the media response. We get that. But I think what it does highlight to us is in GMC, across this conference, at head office, the gold command leads for each of the services haven't got their act together. They haven't got their act together in a metropolitan authority where they have had the necessary exercises and training. They still haven't got their act together to ensure the primary safety measure for emergency services, which is intelligence communicated by the police. A major failure on that control measure clearly does show why we are right to be reticent in terms of agreeing to MTFA or warm working in regard to bomb incidents or any other kind of MTFA attack. We're right to be reticent and hesitant about rushing into that.

I will just say it's unfortunate that that whole scenario was exacerbated by the chief officer who felt it appropriate to apologise on behalf of the FRS and apologise on behalf of the firefighters. The FRS managers, certainly at tactical level, had nothing to apologise for; the firefighters had nothing to apologise for. It is disappointing that a chief officer with let's just say limited operational experience chose to make the situation worse. I've got to say thanks to Andy Burnham up there who did give the proper lead to say that the firefighters and the service had nothing to apologise for.

Thanks for bringing it. Important that it was brought, important that again, and again, and again, we keep looking at Kerslake and reminding ourselves of what it says. Again, thanks to GMC for bringing it and also for remitting it for the reasons that you know. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I'm now moving on to para D6, para D7, para D8, para D9, para D10, para D11, para D12, para D13, para D14, para D15. I now move on to Section G Education para G1. I now call Resolution 71 FBU Education – Inclusive moved by B&EMM. Executive Council are giving qualified support.

Resolution 71 FBU EDUCATION – INCLUSION

Conference notes with some concern that one of the least attended courses on our national education programme are the Fairness at Work and Equality courses. This has led to one of those courses being cancelled in 2017, resulting in no equality education or information for FBU Reps and Officials.

While we understand that trade union leave is problematic to access, making attendance on courses difficult, it is also important that our Reps and Officials are aware of current equality legislation, practices and issues.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to:

- ***Ensure that inclusion and equality matters are included in other appropriate FBU courses including the Branch Reps course***
- ***That there is always an inclusion and equality session at the FBU National School***
- ***Ensure that the equality sections are fully consulted on inclusion and equality education within our education programme.***

B&EMM NATIONAL COMMITTEE

BRO JOSEPH MENDE (B&EMM):

President, Conference, you will agree with me that diminishing trade union leave has made attendance of FBU education courses ever more difficult. This has caused some courses to be cancelled due to lack of applicants. Education on inclusion, equality and diversity is vitally important in demanding a more inclusive Fire & Rescue Service. When inclusion education is cancelled there leaves a gaping hole in the knowledge our reps need to be able to understand equality issues which can be complex. Our reps need to be updated on the changes to equality legislation. Our education programme needs to ensure that any gaps in inclusion equality knowledge or understanding needs to be delivered in other courses where appropriate.

Our national school is the flagship of FBU education and must ensure that there is always an equality inclusion session at the school. Our equality structures should always be consulted on the content of all FBU equality inclusion education.

I just want to give you a brief story about my experience when I was at the Scottish Fire Training College. Prior to the amalgamation of the Scottish Fire & Rescue Services Scotland used to have eight different brigades and we had a national college that we all went to. When I was there, every other brigade had advised their recruits there were going to be two B&EMM members and they should be careful in dealing with us. What that did was, it was as if I was untouchable and there was nothing I could do that was wrong. It was like everyone was careful what to say to me, how to talk to me. And I was the same because I was thinking: "are these people accepting me as them?" So there was a line between us until one night when we went to a pub and I was chatting with one of the guys and all of a sudden they kept on coming to me one by one thinking we need to listen to this guy. Eventually, they said: "Joe, we never knew that you were this cool; you are a nice guy to talk to" and whatever. I said: "what do you mean?" and they explained to me why they had been treating me that way. Since then everything changed.

The B&EMM section at the time were wanting to make a recruitment video and they wanted to use some of the B&EMM members. I just came out from BA training and I was grabbed by this camera and they were interviewing me. Then after they asked me what was that all about, I explained to them. Then they said to me: "Now they are the

ones trying to portray you to be different from us. We have now seen you as one of us and they are now pretending that you are different from us in the way that they have just taken you out to do this programme with you.”

So it is vital for equality stuff to be taught in education to all employees. I’m not saying it’s the case, but the service cannot use that as an excuse not to recruit people from B&EMM, women and so on because they can’t deal with their issues. So it would be a good thing to educate the services and all our members so that we are able to deal with issues of equality in a good way. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have a seconder?

SIS DIANE CRITCHLOW (NWC):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 71 FBU Education inclusion. It appears that equality schools are the main avenue for equality education which excludes the vast majority of our membership. We feel it is imperative that inclusion, equality and diversity are entwined in all education. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That’s open for debate.

BRO CAMERON MATTHEWS (Cambridgeshire):

Good afternoon, President, Conference, we are supporting the resolution from the B&EMM committee. Conference, I want to start with a quick story. The night before last I did have a particularly concerning conversation, a conversation that made me as a working class black firefighter re-evaluate my role, and, furthermore, whether out of principle I should even speak at this conference this week. I won’t go into the details of that conversation, but it was something which, when I saw the resolution I thought I’m going to speak on this because it’s quite important to me.

The resolution is important because in society and indeed in small pockets in our union, in my belief, there’s been a rise in divisive, poisonous and vitriolic rhetoric from the right wing, rhetoric that undermines the brilliant work that our union has done in equalities over the last 100 years.

Across our union so many other people have brought to my attention behaviours that they believe are racist, homophobic, transphobic and bigoted. People are really concerned the length and breadth of this country. If we don’t implement an education strategy to tackle tiny, rotten little apples, then they can turn the whole barrel rotten. We could, heaven knows, end up with people starting to punt Tommy Robinson books around the EC, or all manner of strange situations could start happening.

So we need to act, Conference. Do you believe for one moment that previous inspirational leaders such as Ken Cameron, such as Ronnie Scott, would have hesitated for one moment to tackle certain types of behaviours? I don’t. I think they would have stood up and would have taken a stand straight away. This little narrative may get some people’s pants in a twist; it may even provoke some retaliation and some interesting contributions from the floor possibly. It would even end up in an IUD. If it does end up in an IUD, all I would say, Conference, is that I would receive it with less fear than it would be issued. But we can’t have a lackadaisical approach to supporting equality issues.

Conference has made it very clear that we, as a union, are in one of the busiest and most difficult periods in our hundred year history. Unfortunately, it’s when people are distracted and struggling that these ideas and behaviours are allowed to creep in.

THE PRESIDENT:

Cameron, can you keep on topic.

BRO CAMERON MATTHEWS (Cambridgeshire):

So, Conference, let’s enter our next hundred years as a proud trade union, proud of our equalities work and let’s support the resolution and reintroduce a full union education programme which includes equalities at every level. I support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. The Executive Council gives qualified support. The qualification is that all of the measures set out in the resolution are largely in place. I will explain that in a moment. Clearly, it is essential that this union continues to tackle some of the issues that are set out as in speaking this morning on equality and diversity. I think Joe in moving raised some important points about the responsibilities of Fire & Rescue Services in tackling inequality and tackling issues around inclusiveness and so on, although the resolution specifically talks about FBU education.

Just to go through the three points. Inclusion and equality matters are built into every element of FBU education and have been for a very long time. Anyone who attends FBU education will know that that is the case. In terms of national school, that fits into a wider education programme, but again the question of issues relating to inclusion and equality are always considered and built into national school programmes. It might be through a historical discussion or whatever, but they are always part of national school.

In terms of consultation with the equality sections, I think yesterday I set out one of the mechanisms by which that is undertaken, that there is a regular meeting between myself and the equality section officials. In those discussions have been included education matters. But separately, in terms of how this is addressed more widely, conference will be aware that we have made some alterations in relation to education, primarily because we've recruited Lindsey McDowell who is at the back of the hall and who many of you know, I think. Lindsey is very aware of the need to address the issues in this resolution, the need to ensure that equality diversity issues are addressed throughout the union's education programme. Indeed, Lindsey has also met with each of the equality sections, and I believe all of the sectional committees or is in the process of doing so. So that process is well in hand, Conference. On that basis we're happy to support the resolution on the understanding that the bulk of what is set out there is either in hand or is already in place. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now put Resolution 71 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Tea break.

Break for tea

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, can you take your seats. I now call Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders to give his report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thanks, President. Very briefly. Delegates list, please: West Midlands – delete Aaron Pell, replace with Sasha Hitchins; NRC – delete Mark Neville, replace with Phil Williams. Thanks, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

I now call Resolution 72 Social Media Training moved by North Yorkshire. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

Resolution 72 SOCIAL MEDIA TRAINING

Conference recognises that this Union has adopted social media as a tool for campaigning at a national level.

Conference applauds a number of local FBU Brigade Committees that have adopted the use of social media as an effective campaigning tool at a local level. Conference acknowledges this takes place on an ad hoc basis.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to design and deliver appropriate training for Brigade Committees to effectively campaign using social media, via accounts set up and administered at Brigade Committee level. This training is to be developed and in place by Conference 2019.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

BRO ADAM LEE (North Yorkshire):

President, Conference, I'm honoured to address you today regarding North Yorkshire's resolution 72 on social media training. I would like to start out with what I consider to be good news. As of March this year The Sun is no longer the most read tabloid newspaper in Britain. *(Applause)*

The readership of all print based media has been in decline for a decade or more. In 2016 the readership of The Sun dropped by 10%. In short, Conference, during my lifetime there's never been a time when it mattered less what they printed on the front of The Sun. Fantastic news, in my opinion. No friend of this union and no friend of those who we represent. Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, a long time supporter of the FBU goaded the Daily Mail in the wake of the General Election: Print 18 pages next time.

Conference, social media is important. Nationally I applaud the union for its work on social media. The technology was adopted early, the messages are clean, professional, and the national union's message is regularly spread to its audience. I would also like to applaud the national union's work promoting the work at a local level. In North Yorkshire, during our battle to end the use of tactical response vehicles, we press released through head office numerous times. These releases were put out on the website, Facebook, Twitter, fantastic! However, it's important to remember who your audience is. Those who follow the national union's Facebook page may well have little interest in what goes on in sleepy North Yorkshire.

Some of our greatest achievements in North Yorkshire have been aided by good local social media use from the 98% against All Cuts vote in a public consultation to cuts to six stations in the county. These cuts were explained on Youtube, advertised on social media, linking to the electronic consultation provided by North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service. The flipside, as I'm sure we've all experienced, is what happens when it goes wrong? I'm sure we've all had officials and members who've been disciplined or worse for their use of social media. What can you as an official safely say about your employer on social media? What can our members say? Can they like, retweet and share the FBU's content? What are we able to publish under the guise of the FBU? These are questions which have largely been addressed at a local level with a shrug of the shoulders and "can we get away with that?".

Conference, I believe the FBU can do much better with its social media strategy. Many of us will be competent users of social media, but not all of us. Often the workload for local use of social media falls to one or two individuals. We need training for those amongst us who have no idea about social media and would like to use it. We need training about how to campaign effectively on social media, training on what a good message is, and what makes it a good post. We need training on how to stay safe and keep our members safe on social media. Conference, support Resolution 72 which calls for this training to be implemented. Thank you. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

SIS AMY RATCLIFFE (Cambridgeshire):

President, Conference, first conference and first time speaking. *(Applause)*

On that note, I might need a little bit more practice to speak as eloquently as my brother from Cambridgeshire but I'm going to give it my best shot. I'd like to speak in support of Resolution 72 that my brother from North Yorkshire has put forward.

Social media is everywhere and whether or not we want to engage with it, it is there and people are using it. We have seen that it has been very beneficial for the FBU, in particular the Twitter use of the hashtag Fired Up in support of West Midlands. So we know that using it can be to our benefit. The point that I understand my brother was making is that we need this support and we need this education at a brigade level so we can understand.

The three main points that I want to make in support of this are: first, somebody mentioned yesterday (sorry, I forget who) about looking out across and seeing maybe not that many young faces in here. We do have young members in the FBU but they're not necessarily immediately engaging with the FBU even if they are joining as members. Social media and our brigade committees having training on how to use social media is going to be a brilliant tool to help engage younger members. The younger members coming in have grown up using social media and understanding this platform. The next point I'd like to make, which my brother from North Yorkshire touched on, is that other people are using social media, other people that don't necessarily support our agendas – the government, our employers are using social media and they're potentially using it against us. So we need to be able to fight back against that and hopefully beat them at their own game.

The third and final point I'd like to make is education is power. We are a stronger force to be reckoned with when we have knowledge of how to use the platforms that are available to us. Conference, I encourage you to support this resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Nobody. General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

We thank North Yorkshire for bringing the issue to the attention of conference. Adam made some important points about social media. It's a fast-changing technology and we have to try to keep up with it. I think some of the comments about the national approach with Twitter and Facebook and so on were very welcome. I think we do need to acknowledge that we have a very small team at head office who undertake that work. I'm sure conference appreciates the commitment that those members of staff have. So we don't have the resources that bigger unions do, but in terms of take-up I think we punch well above our weight in terms of engagement with social media.

We know that in relation to Fire & Rescue Services, we have cases of members who have got themselves into trouble, are facing discipline and so on, because of things they may have said on social media. So I think there are a number of elements of training that might be needed. One is guidance to members about the use of social media in their personal lives and in situations where they may be identified as employees of a particular Fire & Rescue Service, which employers may take an interest in. Considering the cuts we've got, they seem to employ huge teams of people who are able to scroll through and monitor. They close fire stations and employ loads of people monitoring people's Twitter feeds and so on. So we need guidance on that.

Then secondly, as was said, the question of training on how we might use social media, how we develop it, what are the most effective ways of campaigning, and how we should and shouldn't use social media as well. I think that is welcome.

The qualification is that obviously we have significant demands in terms of our own training and education. We will feed this into that process. There are possibilities that that might be done externally, for example. We'll look at all of those.

Just in finishing, from my own point of view, I think social media can be a powerful tool. I have to say that sometimes I wish some people would engage in a lengthy period of silence on social media. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I put Resolution 72 Social Media Training to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 73 Political Engagement Strategy moved by North Yorkshire. Executive Council are seeking remit or they will oppose.

Resolution 73 POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Conference recognises the importance of political campaigning and the need for this Union to be as active as possible within the Labour Party.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to create a future candidates' political education programme, with the objective of increasing the number of FBU Members selected as prospective candidates for elected offices. This education programme is to be developed and in place by Conference 2019.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

BRO STEVE HOWLEY (North Yorkshire):

President, Conference, currently there is a real gap within the FBU's political engagement strategy. Most likely it is a result of years of disaffiliation from the Labour Party. We applaud the efforts made to become more involved within the structures of the Labour Party. We now have a seat on the NEC. We acknowledge we need to be more active at local CLP level, ensuring our service is protected and our socialist values upheld by influencing decisions and directions taken at a local CLP level of the Labour Party.

We believe the next phase of our political development within the Labour Party is to model what other unions such as GMB and Unite are very successful at: ensuring their reps, officials and members are elected into political office, whether that is within local council structures as councillors, PCCs, Mayors, or within Parliament as MPs, enabling them to have direct links to ensure their agenda and the voice of their unions are heard.

Conference, we cannot get away from the fact that our profession is becoming more and more politicised than ever before. With PCCs taking over governance the FBU needs to further develop in order to remain on the front foot. We need to utilise our unique brand and the public trust we hold to ensure more Labour councillors and MPs are elected, FBU Labour councillors and MPs, councillors and MPs who will defend our service, who have experience of working on the front line in our cash-strapped emergency services, true working class individuals who have real life experience of how the current political system and politicians on all sides are failing to represent the ordinary, hardworking and disadvantaged within our society. As we know, Conference, our union has been under constant attack from politicians over the last 15 years. There is no better way to help stop those attacks than to ensure our voices are heard at every political level. Elected FBU Labour councillors, PCCs and MPs influencing ending the austerity agenda, fighting cuts, defending our pay, protecting our pensions, promoting equality and protecting our communities by ensuring investment within our service.

Yesterday our comrade from America commented on the lack of understanding of our profession by elected politicians. Conference, we have worked hard to try to give MPs that understanding with our Parliamentary group. But more needs to be done. That's what this resolution is calling for: to move to the next step by helping you, our activists, be selected and then elected into political office – individuals we can trust and rely on to represent the best interests of our union. Jeremy talked about the need for education to ensure we have bold, active trade unions taking the Labour movement back to its roots. Conference, this is what we are asking for here.

I am totally dismayed by the EC's opposition to this resolution. The EC have got this wrong, Conference, and their opposition is regressive. As we celebrate 100 years, let's do what we do best and lead from the front. Let's show the Labour movement the FBU are back within the Labour Party with a vengeance. Our President commented yesterday that this is the best opportunity in a decade to take working people's issues forward. But let's be aware, Conference, there are still a number within the Labour Party who seek to undermine and prevent Jeremy's socialist movement and prevent that opportunity. This we must challenge. What better way to do that, Conference, than to educate ourselves then use our expertise and experience to ensure we are an integral of a Corbyn-led Socialist Labour government defending our service and workers' rights. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Seconder?

SIS NICKY BROWN (South Yorkshire):

Conference, President, we are seconding Resolution 73 moved by North Yorkshire. Conference, whilst ever we have a Tory government in power the future of the fire service and the FBU will be under continual threat. Protecting jobs, pay, pensions, contracts will be a constant uphill battle. We not only need a Corbyn-led Labour government in power, but we also need a Corbyn-led Labour government where the elected members support his vision and will vote in favour of investing in public services, providing more firefighter roles, repealing the Tory trade union laws, reversing the Tory pensions changes.

What an advantage it would be to have FBU supporters as Members of Parliament. If anyone from among our ranks has the determination, ability and work ethic to put themselves forward as potential candidates in opposition to Tories, or even Labour candidates who undermine the potential success of the party, we should be wholeheartedly supporting these individuals and giving them all the assistance possible to make a success of what is a huge challenge.

Of course, the prospect of running for Parliament is far too daunting for most of our members. But there are plenty of other elected positions where FBU members could use their influence for good. Because the union was disaffiliated from Labour for so many years most members haven't a clue that they can affiliate their station as a branch of the FBU to their local CLP. As affiliated members they can become delegates and have voting rights. This can be used to put pressure on existing Labour MPs to vote in a particular way, or to be used to select new candidates, or to vote through motions.

If our members become involved in their local Labour wards they can be voted in as delegates to local campaign forums and they can apply to become councillors. Our retired brigade secretary, John Gilliver, God bless him, recently became a Labour councillor and has since become invaluable in putting pressure on other Labour councillors including fire authority members. He has put motions through Doncaster Council regarding the staffing of fire appliances, and he has encouraged fellow councillors to attend FBU events to raise awareness of our issues. Let's not forget that the FBU has now been given a seat on Labour's NEC, which has got to be a massive advantage.

Our members need to be educated in the workings of the Labour Party and how they can become better involved, get elected and use their influence. I would guess that nationwide there are very few branches, or regions for that matter, that are affiliated at present. This is more than likely due to a lack of knowledge and education on the subject. If all our members who have a political interest get involved we could have some real influence. It doesn't have to be reps that undertake all this work. We should be encouraging members to get active and education is the best way to accomplish this. Please support the resolution. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Nicky. That's open for debate.

BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

President, comrades, I'll keep it brief. In Region 9 our regional secretary has done a fantastic amount of work with the Labour Party. We've been to the last two East of England Labour Conferences, passing two resolutions, having them both accepted, so now every single Labour councillor, every single county councillor will have no cuts to the fire service in their manifesto. This has been done because one person drove it in our region. We've got a PCC election coming up in Essex. One person is going to be elected. Why can't that person be an FBU official, a former FBU official, pushing the agenda of the FBU in Essex County Fire & Rescue Service from the top? That could be replicated across the country. This may not gain loads and loads of success in the short-term, but in the long-term there will be massive benefits to the FBU. We've had lots of emails coming through from CLPs, trying to get us to support their candidates so they can have FBU branding on their leaflets. Most of these candidates we've been supporting have been from Unite or GMB. What I want to see is those emails going across to other unions asking if they will support an FBU candidate to stand for Parliament, to stand for local councils, to stand for PCC. Support the motion. *(Applause)*

BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (*Cheshire*):

President, we're supporting this resolution today. The purpose of the Labour Party being founded, the founding principles, was about getting working class people into every element of government at local level and at national level, to give people a voice. As has been said, other unions: Unite, GMB, Unison, all have this future candidates programme that this resolution calls for. They have huge influence over the Labour Party into Parliamentary selections, getting the people that we want on to that floor and into that Parliamentary group. This resolution doesn't mean that we're calling to create an FBU conveyor belt of our members and our officials into Parliament. It's about getting our people trained into elected office through education.

We've got a Labour authority with a huge majority in Cheshire. In 2013 they voted through a raft of cuts which included two appliances being downgraded and 40 posts. Last year we went to the chair of the authority and said you need to reverse these cuts. We tried to do it through dialogue but they refused. So then we went to them and said: "you're either with us or against us and if you don't reverse these cuts we'll sweep you aside". We then built the biggest political campaign that we've seen and that was done in part not through education through the FBU; it was in part because I myself am a local Labour Party Executive member and councillor. The political campaign that we ran was we put our ROOT members up for selection, we helped them out in local selection processes, we got them to challenge sitting incumbents, we got the MPs, we got the PCC, we went into CLPs, we put motions forward. That resulted this year in February in the fire authority capitulating and crumbling. It's also resulted in our chief fire officer subsequently retiring.

So this work can be done. As has been said throughout this conference, we need to tell the Labour Party at local government level "you are with us or you're against us and if you're against us we need a mechanism to get our people into place to work for the FBU". Support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, since North Yorkshire are not remitting the Executive Council is asking you to oppose this resolution. I understand many of the things that have been set out by the speakers supporting the resolution, but we would alert people to some concerns that we have.

The resolution is entitled Political Engagement Strategy, but the strategy that's set out in the resolution is only about one thing: it's about an education programme to increase the people who might be selected as prospective candidates for elected office. I have to say, a political engagement strategy is not simply about people becoming MPs or councillors, important as those might be. It's about building a political movement that can change society. That's what the Labour movement is about. Part and parcel of that is that we need councillors and we need MPs as well. But the emphasis in the resolution is one-sided and therefore wrong.

Yes, we need training, yes, we need to understand how the Labour Party works, yes we need to encourage our branches to affiliate to local constituency Labour Parties. Yes, I agree with Nicky entirely that actually we need to be part of a campaign to get rid of the Tories. We need a Corbyn Labour government. That's absolutely essential. I think this union has played a role we can be extremely proud of in terms of firstly winning Corbyn's election and then defending him against the coup. I will come on to that because I think it's relevant to this point.

Our approach is not simply that we want more Labour MPs or we want more Labour councillors because as has been said, and as has been said in other debates, we don't want certain types of Labour MPs and we don't want certain types of Labour councillors. I will come on to those again in a moment.

But that is a huge task. We have a task of democratising the Labour Party and that is a massive task. The people who run the Labour Party, if I'm talking frankly, the people who run regional Labour Party offices have been there for 25 years when the Left has been completely excluded from everything. They are not committed to Corbyn's politics or the politics of this union. So that needs a huge transformation and we need to be aware of the scale of the struggle that we face in that regard. It's perhaps summed up the problem by the coup that took place in Parliament

against Jeremy Corbyn following the Brexit referendum. 170-odd MPs, members of the Parliamentary Labour Party – who may, by the way, have a reasonable dialogue with us, some of them, on fire service issues – when it came to politics were desperate to destroy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party. My own personal view (that's one we'll discuss later or tomorrow) is that is why this union needs to be fighting for the right to democratic deselection and reselection of MPs. If you don't want to stand as a Labour MP and if you want to undermine our politics then frankly you should go and you should be replaced with people who are willing to fight.

But the emphasis in the resolution simply on training people to go for elected positions I think ignores that wider need to transform the Labour Party. Yes, other unions do have such courses. I have to say, and I don't want to personalise any of this, some of the people who go through those courses are precisely some of the people who end up as the problem. I'll just highlight a couple of them. Again, I don't want to personalise this because I try to get on reasonably with all people I come across in politics, but let's remember the former deputy prime minister, John Prescott. He made a great deal of his working class background and his role as a trade union activist. Remember the battles that this union had with him in 2002/2003. So the idea that you once worked on the shop floor and the idea that you were once a shop steward does not guarantee that your politics are right in order to stand up for the changes that we need. Closer to home, and I've never personally fallen out with the guy, Jim Fitzpatrick was on this Executive Council. He became a fire minister under the Blair government. He came through the FBU education programme, yet we had huge battles with him as the Labour fire minister. So even the fact that you've been through the FBU does not guarantee that you have the right politics. It comes down to politics, whether you're a socialist or not, and whether you're willing to put that on the line in order to achieve change for working class people.

Again, more recently, we've just given a standing ovation to the West Midlands strike ballot. The fire authority in the West Midlands is led by a councillor called John Edwards. John Edwards is a retired member of the Fire Brigades Union. So he knows this union well. He came through the fire service. So again, the idea that someone comes from the shop floor at some point and ends up as a councillor is not the remotest guarantee that their politics are right. It comes down, comrades, to having the right politics.

So yes, we do need to develop a strategy. By the way, I'm not saying people shouldn't be standing and seeking selection as MPs. We should encourage that, and we should encourage people to stand and seek selection as council candidates. If you think about the problems we've had with Labour in local government, the truth is, in my personal view (and perhaps we should debate it further) there are hundreds and hundreds of Labour councillors who should be deselected and should be replaced by people who are willing to stand up and fight back on behalf of their communities. Ultimately, that means that when Central Government cuts your funding endlessly, you have to be prepared to take that government on in local government. That is a huge, massive political challenge. It's one the Left in the movement hasn't grappled with. We went through some of these debates in the 1980s and we suffered major defeats. That is the truth of the matter.

I will just finish on this. As I say, I'm not remotely saying people shouldn't stand for Parliament. One of the people who inspired me as a youngster was someone else who had sat on this Executive Council and that is comrade Terry Fields. Terry Fields was the former Executive Council member for Merseyside and Cheshire, who ended up as a Labour MP. But Terry Fields also as an MP went to prison as part of the campaign to destroy the poll tax. Those are the sort of fighters we need to become Labour MPs. I have to say, comrades, the strategy set out by North Yorkshire is not the way to achieve that. It needs to be much broader than that. Please oppose the resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

North Yorkshire right to reply.

BRO STEVE HOWLEY (North Yorkshire):

Conference, I'm even more confused after listening to Matt there. First of all he condemns ex-FBU members who have become politicians. I'm asking for a training programme which would ensure that we got the right people with the right socialist values that the FBU felt that they could support, the people who want to stand up and defend this service in Parliament and defend this service on councils. So to tar us all with the same brush is, quite frankly, insulting. Is Matt saying he doesn't trust any of us in this room to go and do the right thing in Parliament? That's what it sounded like to me.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Sorry, as a point of order, I was not remotely saying anything of the sort, Steve, about any individual in this room at all.

BRO STEVE HOWLEY (North Yorkshire):

Matt, if I may – can I finish President? That is what it sounded like, Conference. If Matt is saying that, that's fine. You know, we accept that.

But this seems to be about a title, a political engagement strategy. That is the title of the resolution. We know that the political engagement strategy is much bigger than just a future candidates programme. This is about an addition to the political engagement strategy that we've already got in place currently. That is what I said when I was moving this motion, Conference.

Conference, I didn't hear Matt giving qualified support when he backed Jeremy yesterday in his quest to win in a socialist Labour government. I heard unwavering support with the comment "we will do whatever we can to ensure we have a Corbyn-led socialist Labour government". However, we hear this is only if it doesn't involve the FBU developing and actively pushing forward its own candidates for political positions. Is it just me or is there a real contradiction here?

Today, we have listened to the stories around the disgraceful behaviour of Labour councillors in West Midlands; we have also heard how our members in Scotland are having to apply pressure constantly within the Scottish Parliament regarding unacceptable cuts which are impacting on our appliance availability. In fact, the General Secretary stated, when moving the EC Stop the Rot policy statement, that if these politicians aren't willing to fight then they need to stand aside and let those who will fight take those positions. What better way to take them on than to kick them out at elections. Nothing focuses the mind of a self-indulgent politician more than the threat of losing their job.

This isn't about careerism. This is about adding another weapon to our armoury, something which will help us in the wider Labour movement massively in our continued fights, Conference. Please look next door at the GMB and other unions such as Unite who have been mentioned. Between them they hold around 80% of current elected Labour MPs who are former members, reps. There is a real fall in manual workers representing us in Parliament. This needs to change. We were informed yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition that we don't know when the next General Election will be but we must be ready to fight and deliver true Labour socialist government that represents the working people of this country. Matt has just endorsed that in part of what he said when he challenged our position. He's actually supported what we're asking for in this.

Conference, all we're asking for is to create a better education programme which enables our members to be in a better position should they wish to go for elected positions. That can be done through the pathways. The mechanisms are there to ensure that we get the right people. Quite frankly, I think every one of us in this room wants to take out this current Tory government. If we're willing to put ourselves forward then we should get the support of our own union, as well as the other unions such as Unite and GMB, as was touched on earlier.

Conference, please oppose the EC's position and support this resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I'm going to call this one now, Steve. Conference, I put Resolution 73 Political Engagement from North Yorkshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now move on to para G2, para G3, para G4, para G5.

BRO PHIL McDONALD (ONC):

Conference, with your indulgence, I'm speaking on paragraph GA. There should be a paragraph in this section on the ONC seminar as alluded to in paragraph K6 in the Executive Council report to conference. It's not there so I'm just blagging it. *(Laughter) (Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

You sound like it!

BRO PHIL McDONALD (ONC):

All I wanted to say is, a little bit of rhetoric from what I said before, ONC had a successful school in March 2017. I've put a flyer on your tables. We've got another seminar in October this year. We need your support to increase the membership of officer members in the FBU. We are getting there. Officer membership in the FBU is on the increase. We don't have reps on the ONC in regions 3, 5, 9, 11 and 12. We need your help to get those reps. I'd like to request somebody from head office to come to our seminar. It would be nice. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Para G6, para G7, para G8.

SIS CLARE HUDSON (NWC):

President, Conference, speaking on para G8 Women's School. The National Women's Committee want to take this opportunity to thank the EC for agreeing to increase the budget for this year's Women's School. It enabled us to celebrate a hundred years of the FBU with 74 women members, which is the highest number for quite a few years.

During the school we had a number of women wanting to become more active in our union, wanting to attend further courses and wanting to become reps. Some of these are sat in this room with us now. One of them has just spoken from the rostrum: first conference, first time speaker and she absolutely smashed it. Well done, Amy! *(Applause)*

The feedback received from women attendees in the subsequent steps these women have taken to become more active goes to show just how invaluable our equality schools are. As Matt said earlier, 7% of FBU membership are women yet 22% of FBU courses are undertaken by women. A good percentage of these women came to women's school so when they return to work following these schools please make contact, please support them, and please encourage them to attend further courses, be active and become reps. Thanks again. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Clare. Para G9, para G10, para G11.

BRO MIKE ALEXANDER (South Wales):

President, Conference, first time speaker at conference. *(Applause)*

I just want to make a couple of points on the Union Learning Fund. The Union Learning Fund has been excellent for us in South Wales from experience. It's important really that this valuable resource is not overlooked and more importantly, promoted to our members and staff in the Fire & Rescue Services. In Wales members have benefited greatly from courses that include so importantly issues surrounding mental health in this day and age and have been able to gain valuable and recognised qualifications through the distance learning programmes on a very wide range of subjects.

I'd just like conference to join me in saying a massive thank you to all our Union Learning Fund coordinators across the country for the work they do.

THE PRESIDENT:

Just stop it. Can you put your mobile phones away. We've made it clear, the previous President made a ruling about recording. Please, we've said mobile phones away.

BRO MIKE ALEXANDER (South Wales):

A massive thank you to all the Union Learning Fund coordinators for the work they are doing in putting members through the courses, and the education they facilitate. The dyslexia screening tests have been a blessing and are an example of how our members have been assisted in both their day to day work and disciplines that our managers quite often use against them. Please do all you can to promote and support the Union Learning Fund. Thank you for letting me speak. *(Applause)*

BRO MARK McCARTAN (NIFB):

President, Conference, I would just like to reiterate what our brother said over there. We had a gap of a number of years through lack of funding in Northern Ireland and there was no union learning. Fortunately, it was got up and going around this time last year. We would just like to thank those in the National Learning Centre for all the help they've given to us. Our friends, family and staff at NIFRS are taking full advantage and it's a wonderful asset. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS AMY RATCLIFFE (Cambridgeshire):

President, Conference, I'd just like to reiterate the points that both my brothers from the union have made. It will probably come as no surprise, based on what Clare said, but I think education is really important. Based on some of the discussion that we've already had today we can see how important education is and that sometimes it's a question of funding and there often aren't many things that we get free. The Union Learning Fund is something that is at no additional cost to the union, and it's something that all members can access but a lot of people don't realise that also friends and family can access as well. I used to work in education with young people and often we'd have mature students coming back to the college who maybe hadn't concentrated when they had been at school. They were coming back and having to pay for some of these qualifications that we now have access to as members of the union for free. So don't underestimate how wonderful it is to have that access to free courses. I've personally benefited from doing the Level 3 personal training qualification. It's something that, if you were to do it outside of the union, could cost you £4,500. It's an invaluable qualification to have. As both my brothers have already said, I would emphasise access these courses. We don't get many things for free. Encourage your friends and family to do so as well. *(Applause)*

BRO IAN BRYDEN (Scotland):

President, Conference, I'm taking the opportunity to speak on para G11 Union Learning Fund, and in particular about the FBU's Learning Centre. We've heard earlier how devolution can be problematic. I can speak only for Scotland. As you are aware I'm quite sure, education is a devolved matter and this at times can be perceived, particularly in Scotland, as a debar to access to the FBU Learning Centre courses. However, because of the creativity of staff at the Learning Centre it is not necessarily the case that people are debarred. People in the Learning Centre can be extremely creative in allowing opportunities to develop to allow access to Region 1. Can I take this opportunity, on behalf of those members in Region 1 who have availed themselves of these courses, to thank the Learning Centre staff very much. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now move on to Section C Operations – Health & Safety, para C1. I now call Resolution 29 Infectious Diseases – Protecting our Members moved by the LGBT section. Executive Council are supporting.

Resolution 29 INFECTIOUS DISEASES, PROTECTING OUR MEMBERS

Over a decade ago a policy was developed by the LGBT Committee for use by our Members and Officials when dealing with issues around potential infection from HIV and other infectious diseases.

Since the policy was released, advances have been made in the prevention and treatment of such diseases and Conference believes that it is time for the policy to be reviewed.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to liaise with the LGBT Committee, with a view to updating the policy.

LGBT COMMITTEE

BRO PAT CARBERRY (LGBT):

Good afternoon, Conference, President, this resolution that we have submitted to conference this year, I will give a little bit of background about where it came from. At an incident that occurred last year a crew attended what I believe was a road traffic collision where there was a casualty who was HIV positive. For the crew that were there there was significant exposure to blood and bodily fluids. As a consequence of that there was some concern by people on the ground as to what the consequences of that would be. An email was sent out to the health & safety

committee asking if anyone had any policies on HIV prevention. I happened to pick up on that correspondence. I could determine from the nature of the conversation that was going on that there was considerable concern for our members' well-being. I wouldn't for one moment decry anyone being concerned, because when you don't understand a disease and you watch a movie like *Philadelphia* you see the consequences of what it is for someone with HIV to then move on to AIDS and then to finally die. We've seen many celebrities go through that. If you feel that you've been exposed to that level of risk you're going to be extremely frightened.

I immediately sent an email just basically giving immediate advice. Also, I highlighted that we have got a policy within the union – this one here which is HIV and AIDS – a workplace policy – which we developed. But it's approximately ten years out of date. In that ten year span there has been a number of major gamechangers when it comes to the treatment and the prevention of HIV. PEPs, post-exposure prophylaxis. If someone gets blood on blood contamination from someone who is HIV positive and you know that to be the case, a month of PEP can be given to that individual and it's extremely effective at eradicating the virus from the system. It is mainly used by medical practitioners but also available to emergency workers such as ourselves.

Another gamechanger is PREP, pre-exposure prophylaxis. This is a drug that's given to people who are considered at high risk of infection of HIV. They take the drug regularly and it prevents HIV from being able to take within their body. Once again, another significant step forward in prevention of HIV.

In terms of treatment, for those who are diagnosed now with HIV the NHS, up until only two years ago, had a policy where they wouldn't start drug treatment immediately. They would wait approximately two years for your body to adjust to the virus. The thought pattern at the time was that your body would develop resistance to the virus. During that two year period the virus remains infectious to anyone else. They've changed that policy so that from the point of diagnosis you now start immediate anti-viral treatment. Within weeks of starting the anti-viral treatment the virus becomes undetectable and is classed as non-infectious. These combined effects mean that we are now starting to see a reduction in the amount of infections of HIV.

It's not all good news. It's still a deadly virus and it's still out there. What we need to do, and what we need to send back to our members, is the message that HIV is not the only disease that's out there. There's hepatitis, there's all those other ones. So when we are responding to incidents basic common sense about how to prevent infection is the route to preventing that exposure. But we also need to update this policy. I know that the health & safety committee have already made a start on that and there has been some information sent out to all health & safety practitioners. But what we now need to do, with the assistance of our committee, is update this policy and ensure the policy is available to all of the members at that moment in time whenever you are facing that most frightening of situations that you think you may have had a blood on blood potential contamination. And also have it available online.

Conference I call on you to support the resolution. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Pat. Does that have a seconder?

BRO KARL WAGER (Cleveland):

Conference, President, two things really. First of all, obviously, we are seconding it and extending my thanks to Pat. It was myself that sent the email. It was a Friday evening at about 5.30. I had a phone call off a service manager. I thought: 5.30 on a Friday, what's someone done! The service manager told me that they had massive concerns about an RTC that eight of our members had been to. The members were frightened, they were concerned, my phone was ringing so I put the email out. It was Friday night, going into the weekend, Pat must have spent a lot of time putting the response back to me. I sent that straight to the members and it just basically stopped the worry. I spoke to them days after that. I know it probably took you a couple of hours, Pat, and I do thank you for that. That was a couple of hours work on the information that was available to me. It probably saved eight people's weekends and probably gave them a lot less concern, and their families a lot less concern.

Definitely I'm here to second and extend the Cleveland members' thanks to Pat and the LGBT committee. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? I now put Resolution 29 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show.
That is CARRIED

I now call Resolution 30 Fire Appliances Used as Ambulances moved by West Yorkshire. Executive Council are seeking they withdraw, or they are opposing.

Resolution 30 FIRE APPLIANCES USED AS AMBULANCES

This Conference is angered by the lack of real investment by Central Government into the NHS generally and the Ambulance Service specifically and will stand side by side with our sisters and brothers in their respective Unions' campaigns to raise investment into those vital public health sectors.

However this Conference is outraged by the fact Fire Appliances have been used to transport victims of incidents to hospital.

It should be noted that no blame is put on FBU Members on making such a difficult moral decision.

Therefore this Conference calls on the FBU to enter into talks with our Employers National representatives regarding the ending of this draconian and dangerous but well-meaning act, with an aim of producing guidance issued to local FRs which would discourage such use of appliances.

WEST YORKSHIRE

BRO MARTYN BAIRSTOW (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, apologies for it being disjointed. I'm a last-minute stand in on this one. The reasoning behind bringing this resolution was a couple of occurrences in West Yorkshire where crews have been at sea at an incident with a casualty. Because they are there, the ambulance service has downgraded their response time because they've got a crew there with a defibrillator. We're talking about a couple of hours response. So the crew have had to make a call to either sit there with the casualty for a period of time or transport him to hospital in the back of the fire appliance. That is obviously not an ideal scenario to find themselves in. So what we are asking for is that the EC speak to the national employers and put out some form of guidance like an NJC circular to clarify where fire brigades stand with regard to incidents like this. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? Seconder? *Formally* Thank you. Debate is open. Anybody? Sean Starbuck.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The EC opposition on this is quite simple really. This is not the way we'd choose to do this. It is about the wording really. We don't need to enter into talks with employers to know that this is not what we do and we know this is wrong. To be honest, we don't want to give it air time with the employers. If we open discussion with the employers about something which is as draconian and as dangerous as this is, then we're just giving it air time; that's exactly what we are doing. We've never needed the employers to put out guidance to our members to raise issues with their chief fire officers if things are going wrong. So we ask West Yorkshire to withdraw this because what we'd rather do with this is we'd rather send out guidance to our officials, let them raise it with the chief fire officer, and let's challenge it where it's going on.

So just because we're opposing it, we're not saying it's OK because it's definitely not OK. It's just not the way we do business.

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put Resolution 30 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show.
That FALLS

I now call Resolution 37 Women's-Fit Personal Protective Equipment and Workwear moved by the NWC. The EC are supporting.

Resolution 37 WOMEN'S-FIT PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND WORKWEAR

Conference is concerned at the ongoing issue around the total lack of proper women's-fit Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and workwear uniform. Complaints from our women Members centre on gloves that are too big, shirts that are too long, no women's fit shoes and completely inadequate PPE. This is a health and safety issue but it also puts our women Member's in a difficult position by having to complain. Positive Action is high on the agenda nationally yet services up and down the country are not showing the duty of care, its legal obligation to women by providing them with correct fitting PPE and workwear uniform.

Our uniform and PPE is the first line of defence and protection that should be afforded to us as a given. A one size fits all attitude is not acceptable and the health and safety of all our Members is paramount, yet our Members' safety is being compromised.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to put immediate pressure on services to resolve this issue as a matter of priority and make sure all forms of uniform and PPE provided comes in correct fitting sizes for women and all our Members.

NATIONAL WOMENS COMMITTEE

SIS CLARE HUDSON (NWC):

President, Conference, the PPE at Work regs 1992 state that "every employer shall ensure that suitable PPE is provided to his employees who may be exposed to a risk to their health or safety while at work". Suitable is defined as "right or appropriate for a particular person, purpose or situation". It goes on to say that "PPE shall not be suitable unless, among other things, it is capable of fitting the wearer correctly, if necessary after adjustments within the range for which it is designed". Employers also have to ensure that if you need to wear or use simultaneously more than one item of PPE, it is compatible.

Gloves aren't suitable if there's an excess of material at the end of someone's fingers, restricting their dexterity and grip. Fireboots aren't suitable if they're so tight they cause blisters and pain. Helmets and BA sets aren't compatible if the BA set backplates and cylinder interferes with the helmet of the firefighter meaning they can't look up. Firekit isn't suitable if it's designed and cut to fit and protect a male firefighter yet is being worn by a female firefighter, and vice versa. These are all issues which we, as women's committee, have dealt with.

I'm not sure if everyone is aware of who Sophie and Ralph are? No, blank faces. 12 years ago the HSE, amongst others, funded a female form manikin called Sophie, as previous to this, all testing of fire protection afforded by PPE had been carried out on Ralph who is a male form manikin. Based on the results of the tests carried out it appears that significant differences in burn injuries do occur between male and female manikins wearing the same clothing designed to protect against heat and flame.

We welcome the move by Scotland FBU to insist that women wear women's fit firekit, but this isn't happening everywhere. It should be happening everywhere. Every single firefighter must be provided with suitable PPE and workwear which conforms to the PPE regs. In 2018 this cannot depend on whether the firefighter's build is average, or what their gender is, or what Fire & Rescue Service they are in. It shouldn't be a battle. We shouldn't have to complain to receive suitable PPE; it should be a given.

We welcome the recent survey sent to women members to ascertain the level of gender-specific PPE and workwear in their Fire & Rescue Services. We ask the EC to build on this work and immediately put pressure on Fire & Rescue Services to ensure that they are providing every single firefighter in their care with suitable PPE and workwear which protects them regardless of their gender. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Seconder?

BRO DAVE HART (Scotland):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 37 from the Women's Committee on Women's Fit PPE and Workwear. I'd just like to thank Clare for stealing most of my speech. We probably should have conferred. Firefighters come in a remarkable range of shapes and sizes. This is reflective of the modern day adult population in general. Various legislation which Clare mentioned covers the supply of PPE for firefighting. It includes the Health & Safety at Work Act, PUWER regs and the PPE regs.

If PPE fits correctly, it is more comfortable, it allows you to perform your job to your ability, but the most important factor is it protects you. When it comes to the fit of PPE women really do have different needs from men. Just as there is no normal size man, there's no normal size woman. Everybody is different and they all have differing needs. As Clare said, this was recognised by the HSE when they commissioned the female fit manikin, Sophie.

The conclusions of that report were that there were significant differences in burn injury between the male and female form if they wear the same PPE. The female form clearly had more damage to the manikin. So why, in a modern day fire service, do our members still get issued with unisex PPE? Why do fire services ask women to wear male PPE? Why do pool stocks when your kit's dirty, never have female fit PPE in stock? This is neither suitable nor sufficient. If PPE is not fitted to body shape and gender it will not perform as expected with potentially catastrophic results.

We probably all joined the FBU for different reasons, but one common fact must be that we never accept second best. So why are any of our members expected to accept second best when they are issued with the very PPE which is designed to keep them safe and allow them to return home safely at the end of their shifts? Comrades, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Anybody else?

BRO GARY SPINDLER (Avon):

President, Conference, speaking in support of Resolution 37. Our service has undergone a lot of self-reflection over the last 12 months. This has highlighted areas where employees are being let down, members are being failed. PPE and uniform was one of these areas. This has been addressed within Avon under a Uniform Working Group with our women's section an integral part of that group. It's changing the way we purchase our PPE and uniform to better fit females and indeed all members within the organisation. It's not acceptable that any member has ill-fitting PPE or uniform. Female fit PPE is made to enable members to carry out their role safely. It's cut to match their body shape, it has enhanced protection in key areas to further protect them from specific risks to them as females.

I'm glad to say, Avon Fire & Rescue Service are working to address this, but it's also about daily work uniform. There's no excuse for ill-fitting shirts or shoes, and it's not acceptable that we have members forced to have their underwear on display through their uniform. Suitable PPE and uniform shouldn't need to be won under a fight or through a complaint; it just should be issued. I support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Sean.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National officer):

The EC support this. Just for a bit of information, we've just finished the survey of women's workwear and PPE. We finished it on 21 May. We are just now gathering the information which will give us the evidence we need to take this forward. We will work with the NWC to take this forward.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. I now put Resolution 37 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I'm on para C2, para C3.

BRO IAN BRYDEN (Scotland):

President, Conference, may I crave your indulgence for a couple of minutes. This is an update from a conference situation of three or four years ago. Region 1's then health & safety rep spoke on an emergency resolution on hydraulic rescue equipment. That came about on the back of an incident involving a member in region 1 who had suffered a high pressure oil injection injury. That member was skilled as a joiner and a cabinet maker, and his youngest child currently is a toddler, and that child loves a cuddle. Over the years since the injury that member has undergone 30-35 operations. He has lost his pinkie, his ring finger, he has nerve damage, and at the start of this week it was brought to my attention that he has now had his hand amputated. That, unfortunately, still does not guarantee that the member will survive that injury.

Local area reps have and will continue to help and support this member as long as he should need it. I hope, looking at the time, that this is not the last thing that's spoken about today. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 41 Line Rescue – Standards moved by Cleveland. The Executive Council are supporting.

Resolution 41 LINE RESCUE STANDARDS

Conference is concerned that there is a difference in standard operating procedures, and therefore safety, across different Fire and Rescue Services in the UK regarding the provision of line rescue services. Consequently, this Conference is also concerned that some Members are being put at more risk of accident and injury whilst carrying out line rescue duties than others.

Conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to carry out a survey of all UK Fire and Rescue Services via FBU structures on Line Rescue Policies and Procedures in order to compare all and produce an FBU best guidance document on Line Rescue Procedures and Safety by FBU Conference 2020.

CLEVELAND

BRO DAVY HOWE (Cleveland):

President, Conference, I wasn't expecting to be up here today. This isn't my speech, but let's give it a go. Conference, line rescue is a proven safe method for working at height. It's evolving and its techniques are being used in other roles including vertical access and egress, for confined space entry, in the removal of bariatric people from properties. Conference, unfortunately firefighters in Cleveland now believe that we have line rescue systems employed within the UK Fire & Rescue Service that differ immensely between brigades – certainly in our brigade. Imagine the wearing and use of BA where individual brigades would decide their own guidance and policy – managers deciding BA guidance and policy. Would we be confident that those policies would be made in the best interests of firefighters? Or would we more than likely come to the conclusion that it was more on the financial cost to the service?

In Cleveland we've witnessed the length of initial training on line rescue courses halved, the frequency of the training reduced, team sizes reduced (coincidentally with the reduction of station staffing at our line rescue station), a temporary introduction of partially trained operators, training carried out without a recognised supervisor or instructor, line rescue available without a supervisor, or the line rescue facility on the run without a supervisor, and finally the use of untrained firefighters at an operational incident operating devices that they weren't trained to use that hold and control the lines that our line rescue members are hanging from.

Conference, it's plain to see that this is all wrong. We've fought it when it happens in Cleveland, but in order to improve we are proposing a simple survey of all UK Fire & Rescue Services via the structures of the FBU on line rescue policies and procedures because I'm sure there will be better ones than Cleveland's at the moment. This will allow us to produce an FBU best practice guidance document on line rescue procedures and safety by conference 2020. So plenty of time.

Conference, let's join up our thinking, remove fragmentation, standardise and improve. Let's deliver a service which our members can operate within safely. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Davy. Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That's open for debate. No. Go to the vote. I now put Resolution 41 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 42 moved by Lincolnshire with an amendment from Merseyside. The EC are supporting.

Resolution 42 BA GUIDELINES

Conference notes that across the country Fire and Rescue Authorities have mbeen considering the removal of BA Guidelines and in some cases have already removed them from frontline appliances.

Thermal Imaging Cameras (TICs) have become important tools to firefighters and Junior Officers, but they do not fulfil the critical role a guideline fulfils for access and egress into complex premises. Therefore TICs cannot be suggested as a control measure for the removal of guidelines.

Conference instructs all Officials of this Union to oppose the removal of these safety critical pieces of equipment.

LINCOLNSHIRE

AMENDMENT

Third Paragraph after 'this Union to oppose' insert 'and where necessary reverse'

MERSEYSIDE

BRO KARL McKEE (Lincolnshire):

President, Conference, every firefighter will be aware of the potential for confusion and entanglement when using BA guidelines. More often in a training environment but also, on occasion, and when the pressure is really on, at operational incidents. Sadly, as we know only too well, the consequences can and have been disastrous, ultimately with our comrades losing their lives. Even the most experienced, calm and measured firefighters know things can go quickly awry when using guidelines, sometimes through no fault of their own. I personally will never forget the haunting images from the video we all watched as recruits at training school whilst carrying out our BA training. That video was of the Gillender Street incident. Those harrowing scenes are still etched in my mind to this day.

However, despite the well-known difficulties of using BA guidelines and the associated risks they still remain, in our opinion, the only tried and tested means of traversing from the entry point to scene of operations in heavily smoke-logged and complex buildings and subsequently returning back to the entry point. The introduction of new equipment and associated procedures over the years has undoubtedly assisted us in our work. We've got PPE fans, Cobra or thermal imaging cameras. My service, Lincolnshire, now asserts – following some 20 years or so in the case of imaging cameras – that essentially there is an opportunity that allows for the safe removal of guidelines due to the introduction of this new equipment. In our opinion that doesn't stand up to scrutiny. It is almost to forget the lessons of history yet again – very painful lessons and for which our comrades paid the ultimate price.

Coincidentally, or not as the case may be, we were also informed that the amount of time required to train with BA guidelines was too great. Ah well, that's OK, we'll just remove it and fudge the procedures, and justify the reason for the change with the use of shiny new kit. That appears to be their position. Naturally, we vehemently opposed this ill-considered and dangerous plan, pulling apart the arguments they were using to justify it. To that end and for now, BA guidelines remain on Lincolnshire appliances. Although they are not perfect they still remain, in our belief, the only tried and tested piece of kit for complex layouts, smoke-logged buildings etc. Until a suitable improved solution is found to replace guidelines, conference instructs all officials of this union to oppose their removal and to accept Merseyside's amendment and, where necessary, reverse the removal of these safety-critical pieces of equipment. Conference, please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? Seconder? *Formally* Merseyside to move their amendment. *Formally* Seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. I now put the amendment from Merseyside to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

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I now put Resolution 42 as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show.
That is CARRIED

Conference, that's it for today. Thank you very much.

Conference adjourned

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, come to order. I now call Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders Committee to give his report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Good morning Conference. *Good morning*

Can you turn to your Programmes of Business please, page 10: Resolution 36 from Northumberland has been withdrawn to support Resolution 43; Resolution 35 from Northumberland is remit with the right to speak.

I've just got to inform conference of quite a few delegates changes. Essex: delete Alan Chinn-Shaw; replace with Mav Langdon; Northamptonshire: delete Ben Muddle; replace with Nick Ferrison; West Midlands: delete Steve Price-Hunt; replace with Aaron Pell; Nottinghamshire: delete John Muggleton; replace with Nick Hardy; Humberside: delete Rob Vaux; replace with Adam Hayton; Lincolnshire: delete Rick Wright; replace with Chris Hides; Cleveland: delete Dave Howe; replace with Darren Fawcett; Warwickshire: delete Stephen Rule; replace with Kevin Matthews; Surrey: delete Asif Aziz; replace with Lee Belsten; South Wales: delete Steve Saunders; replace with Gareth Brown; Scotland: delete David Strachan; replace with Stephen Gall. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

Conference, we're now resuming on Section L para L13 FBU Centenary. General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Conference, we thought it appropriate to take a few minutes of conference time to report on and raise some issues relating to our centenary. We've discussed this week the challenges that we face. I've said many times that this generation of FBU officials and activists and members is facing some of the most challenging times in our entire history, some of which, if things went certain ways, perhaps raised questions about the whole future of our industry and the whole future of our union.

But you're also the generation which happens to be here at the time when we celebrate a hundred years of the Fire Brigades Union. That's a significant moment, certainly it's a significant moment for us, but it's a significant moment for the Labour Movement as well. To have lasted a hundred years as an industry-specific organisation is quite some achievement, especially when you look at the history of union mergers in the British Labour Movement.

We have much in our past and present that we can learn from; we also have mistakes that we can reflect on. The Executive Council spent a considerable amount of time and some resources preparing for our centenary year. We concluded that it should be marked and celebrated, but not simply with a view to looking at the past but learning and discussing how we organise for the future, to reassert the case for the sort of Fire & Rescue Service we want to see, and for the sort of Labour Movement that we want to see.

On your tables this morning you will see a book *Fighting Fire*. I did notice that everyone immediately looks to the index to see who's in it. So if you want to pause and read the index for a moment. On behalf of conference and on behalf of the Fire Brigades Union I would like to thank the authors: Sian Moore, Tessa Wright and Phil Taylor. Sian is in the hall today if anybody wants to speak to her in the tea break. They interviewed more than 100 past and present officials and trawled through countless stacks of documents. They capture much of the spirit and culture of our union. There are different voices heard in the book. It takes a departure from some traditions of trade union history where everything evolves in a straight line, nobody ever makes any mistakes, everything's always perfect, and everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. This book approaches it differently. It acknowledges there are differences, there are different points of views. Some parts of the book may make uncomfortable reading sometimes. The recollections of people about similar events are different. We won't necessarily all agree with the conclusions that people reach. But a commitment to open discussion and debate is essential if we're going to make progress.

The centenary will hopefully give FBU members, past and present, an opportunity to discuss the needs of building a union fit for the 21st century, a Labour Movement fit for the 21st century. It gives us an opportunity also to take a step back from the day to day struggles that we're involved in and think a bit sometimes about the bigger picture: what is it we're trying to achieve as a union? What are we trying to achieve as part of the Labour Movement? Some themes emerge from that discussion, I think.

The Fire Brigades Union may not be the largest union in the UK, but we are a union with one of the highest levels of membership density in a British industry anywhere in the British Labour Movement. For me that's largely because we've remained an industrially based union. The key to our organisation is organising in the workplace. We aim for workers in emergency fire controls, in fire stations, in other fire service workplaces to organise and represent themselves and to speak for themselves. That's a key strategy of how this union has been built and how we continue to build. In that context the workplace branch is absolutely essential to building and rebuilding that structure. The strategy of the union has to be constantly about rebuilding that activist base, rebuilding and identifying the new people who will come along and become officials and leaders for the future.

We've produced a number of materials in preparation for the centenary. You'll see the book yourselves. Further publications are in place, the exhibition and the film that will be shown this evening. That political aim of reinvigorating the organisation runs through many of those things. So these are not necessarily aimed at people who know this stuff already; they are not aimed at people who are already political; they are aimed at trying to convince people of the case for a decent fire service, and they are aimed at trying to convince our own members to become involved and active in the Fire Brigades Union. That political aim runs through many of the things that we decided to do in preparation for the centenary.

Our centenary highlights the role that this union has played in building and shaping the modern Fire & Rescue Service. I don't know enough about how people are trained today, but I joined the London Fire Brigade in 1983 and as trainee recruit firefighters we were taught the history of the fire service, we were taught how the fire service had evolved, we were taught the structures of the fire service and we were taught about the National Joint Council, for example, and the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council. I suspect nowadays that sort of stuff has been got rid of as they have shrunk the training courses that are provided. But this union has played a key role in those turning points from the role that we played in arguing for standards around the Blitz and the need for standardisation of equipment and procedures to shaping the 1947 Fire Services Act, to subsequently arguing in a debate that I suppose in some ways echoes debates that we're having today, to changing the role of the Fire Service where we argued that instead of staying in fire stations in the 1960s we should be out inspecting workplaces and making workplaces safer. Later in the 1980s and 1990s we were arguing that we should be out making homes safer from fire. So this union has played that central role in developing and shaping our profession and our service. We should remind those people in positions of chief officers today that actually we have a unique history when it comes to developing the modern fire service. Over the decades we've argued, changed and shaped that service and that profession.

One central theme of the book that you have in front of you is about efforts of this union to tackle discrimination, bullying and harassment. The truth is, as we discussed this week, the fire service remains a male dominated industry, and the workforce and therefore the union to a large degree reflects this. The service also remains overwhelmingly white and male, even in communities where our populations are far more diverse. That is a challenge that this union has debated for many years, and it's a challenge we haven't yet succeeded in addressing.

I remember from my earliest days coming into the fire service, as someone who had been involved in anti-racist and anti-fascist activity as a teenager, actually being shocked at some of the things that I heard about or, on some occasions, even witnessed. Those issues pose sharp challenges to us as a union. The starting point for me, I suppose, in answering that is to remind ourselves what we are for as a union. Actually, we remind ourselves that individual workers have no power against their employers. It's only when we stand collectively that we can make change; it's only when we stand collectively that we can stick up for each other. Therefore, unity is a huge and important principle for us, as this trade union and as for the entire Labour Movement. Therefore, anything that undermines unity – allowing discrimination against one group of our members, allowing bullying against one group of our members – undermines the entire purpose for which we exist, for building unity in action. So that's a key theme of this book.

The book sets out some of the issues that we've discussed politically over many years. The truth is that the system in which we operate, the legal, political framework in which we operate, requires unions to engage politically. This union, as most other unions do, operates in terms of political lobbying, political campaigning. But this union also has some different traditions from some others. It's also timely to reflect on whether those remain relevant. It's a long time ago since Jim Bradley played a key role in founding this union. Bradley himself was a socialist. John Horner, who shaped the union and the fire service during the war and in the post-war period, was also a committed socialist. If you read the foreword to our rule book there is an important section of preamble that sets out the case for political trade unionism. It is relevant and right to discuss whether you think those are relevant arguments and relevant ideas for today. I believe that they are. It sets out the case for political trade unionism, it sets out the case for socialism. Many unions over the past 20 or 30 years may have had similar clauses in their rule books, and in a process of so-called modernisation they got rid of them. We've never decided to remove that clause from our rule book.

But we need to think what do we mean by socialism in the 21st century? It's a phrase that Jeremy Corbyn has used. I think one of the great achievements of the Corbyn victory is to allow us to put on the political agenda again the idea that you can do things differently, the idea that we don't have to have a world that is simply dominated by the needs of big corporations, and we can actually discuss among ourselves as ordinary people how we might change things and how we might shape the world for the future. For me, socialism means an end to a system of production for private profit dominated by a tiny handful of multi-nationals who rule the world in reality. We should be discussing in this period what the aims of this union are.

I think it is appropriate, on behalf of the Executive Council and hopefully on behalf of yourselves, to thank some of the people who have played a role in developing the work around our centenary. That does include some fire services. We asked for material, for photographs and so on, and you will have seen some of the appeals about that. Some of our Fire & Rescue Services have been very helpful in providing us with historical artefacts, equipment and photographs. I'd like to thank particularly the staff at head office who've played such a key role in bringing that stuff together. You can see the display outside the hall that Amy has put together.

I think we have to thank particularly an organisation that we almost stumbled across, a firm called People People who designed the exhibition trailer that you've seen across the road. I hope many people have been to see it. I think it's worth saying that that organisation have devoted their time for free to this organisation. That's quite a remarkable donation. The cost of that if we had done that commercially would have been immense and simply would not have been remotely possible without those people. They do other things like selling cars and stuff like that in their day jobs, and who said, because of a dialogue with one of our officials and because they had an interest in the fire service, an interest in trade unionism, an interest in politics: we're going to put some effort into this. I think we owe them a big thank you.

It's fascinating to hear some of the stories that people have, or people's dads or mums or whoever who were in the fire service in the past, and some of the photographs that they've identified from strikes, from lobbies, from demonstrations, or just from training school and incidents, that they've provided to us as part of this process.

I do want to particularly mention Keith Handscomb who is in the hall. Keith, as you know, is a retired Executive Council member and has put a huge amount of effort into this. The truth is this: without Keith's effort we would not have been able to put together the centenary thing. So I think conference should thank Keith for that. *(Applause)*

Comrades, as we enter our second century we face new and different challenges: economic, political, technical change continues, and the union still believes that the public is best served by a separate, independent, publicly owned and publicly accountable Fire & Rescue Service. We believe that those who work within that service, within that profession are best served and best represented by an industry-specific trade union. The history of the Fire Brigades Union provides some remarkable stories of struggle and heroism. We need to remember the people. You will hear a bit about it in the film this evening. The first industrial action, the spit and polish strikes that people took part in in the 1950s where people in huge numbers faced discipline and dismissal simply for taking part in that first industrial action. We stand on the shoulders of those people. It's the story of the men and women who built this organisation against all the odds. We owe it to those previous generations, but above all, we owe it to the current generation and those yet to come to think, to debate, to discuss and to organise for the decades ahead.

We operate in circumstances we don't choose. We didn't make this world, but we understand the world and we have the power to change it. We change it every day of our lives by being trade union activists. Our West Midlands comrades are changing the world today by standing up and fighting back. That's the way working people can shape the future. That's what this centenary is about. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now call Resolution 92 One Hundred Years of the Fire Brigades Union moved by Gloucestershire.

Resolution 92 100 YEARS OF THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

Conference notes with pride that the 1st October 2018 represents the formal centenary of the Fire Brigades Union. Conference applauds every Member of the Fire Brigades Union in our 100 year history who has stood by the aims and values of our Union and, in so doing, built a safer, fairer and more professional Fire and Rescue Service.

Conference recognises the debt we owe to previous generations of FBU Members who fought and sacrificed in order to defeat exploitation and unfair working practices in our industry. Conference takes pride in the legacy left to us by these previous generations and recognises that, through their struggle, current generations of firefighters have a profession which is highly valued by society and protected through national collective bargaining on conditions of service and pay.

Conference recognises our duty, as the current generation of FBU Members, to defend what our predecessors fought so hard to pass to us and reaffirms our commitment to do so. In this, the centenary year of the Fire Brigades Union, Conference calls on all Members to recognise and celebrate the legacy left to us through a continued commitment to build our Union as a stand-alone Fire and Rescue Service Trade Union, to never sell out conditions which have been passed on to us by previous generations and to continue the proud tradition of acting as custodians of our service by passing on safe, fair and professional working practices to the next generation of FBU Members.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

BRO SCOTT TURNER (Gloucestershire):

President, Conference, I'm proud to be stood before you today, this year, to celebrate our hundred year anniversary. Everybody in this room should be proud and honoured to be present and carrying forward our great legacy. We all have a debt to pay to those that went before us and sacrifices that FBU members have made over a hundred years. We have fought against exploitation, unfair working practices, discrimination, chief fire officers with their own agendas and politicians quick to praise but slow to reward. We as the Fire Brigades Union must continue to protect our profession for future generations. We are only custodians. It's our duty to continue to stand up and, if needed, fight against attacks on our valued and proud occupation.

Whilst we celebrate the centenary now, it is the future we hold in our hands. FBU members, Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO GARY SPINDLER (Avon):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 92. This resolution says it all in relation to where we've come from as a union and where we're going in our future, following on from Scott's and Matt's comments earlier. I'm certainly proud to second it. But I really also want to take the liberty and opportunity for conference to join me in thanking Brother Scott Turner and Dave Huggins from Gloucestershire at what will be their last conference. On behalf of Region 12, thank you brothers. I second. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

It's open for debate. Anybody? No. I move straight to the vote. I now put Resolution 92 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I'm on para L14. I now call Resolution 93 Firefighters One Hundred Lottery moved by Gloucestershire. The EC are supporting.

Resolution 93 FIREFIGHTERS 100 LOTTERY

Conference recognises the outstanding contribution to good causes made by the Firefighters 100 Lottery and applauds every supporter who has participated. In the first 12 months after its launch the Firefighters 100 Lottery raised more than £120,000 for good causes and gave significant support to injured FBU Members as well as giving vital funding to ensure that firefighters who have fallen in the line of duty are properly commemorated and remembered.

Conference fully supports the Firefighters 100 Lottery and calls on all Members to assist in building the number of supporters who sign up to it. Conference believes that the Firefighters 100 Lottery should be a feature of as many FBU activities as possible and calls for an ongoing campaign to ensure that the lottery and its contributions to good causes be well publicised across all FBU communication platforms.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to ensure the materials which outline the work of the lottery and encourage participation are made available to Officials and distributed at meetings and workplaces. Conference also calls for regular features on the positive work of the lottery to be published in 'Firefighter' and for the lottery to be a feature of FBU stands at the TUC and Labour Party Conferences.

Conference calls on all Members and Officials to be ambitious for the Firefighters 100 Lottery and work to enhance its supporter base and therefore its ability to help commemorate the bravery and sacrifice of firefighters killed and injured in the line of duty.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

BRO DAVE HUGGINS (Gloucestershire):

President, Conference, the Firefighters One Hundred lottery has made outstanding contributions to good causes, and conference applauds supporters who have participated. In the first 12 months £120,000 was raised for good causes and has given support to injured FBU members whilst also ensuring firefighters that have fallen in the line of duty are properly commemorated and remembered. Every one of us needs to build on the number of supporters signing up to the lottery, and we need to both locally and nationally ensure that the good work that has been done with the lottery is published across all FBU communication platforms. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Open for debate.

BRO NEIL GILLESPIE (Scotland):

President, National Conference, comrades, first time at conference, first time speaker. *(Applause)*

Thank you for the opportunity to talk in support of Gloucestershire's resolution 93 the Hundred Lottery, to be a feature in many FBU activities and to promote the good causes to injured and fallen comrades. I've personally witnessed the difference the Hundred lottery can make to one of our brothers and sisters. On 25 August 2016 a close friend of mine, Watch Manager Andrew Adams, sustained life changing injuries as a result of being buried under a wall collapse. After a prolonged period of rehabilitation and when Andy was ready and able to attend, FBU Scotland held a fund raiser on his behalf. It was announced that night that Andy would be the first recipient of the Hundred Lottery to the sum of £20,000. This money helped Andy and his family get much needed equipment and help in his ongoing rehabilitation.

To summarise, Andy in his speech that night summed it up for me and all of us in the room. To quote him: "I only thought I needed to be in the FBU in case I ever faced a discipline issue. Now I face the biggest challenge of my life and the FBU and this money will help me and my family get there."

This event could happen to any one of us. It could be the person to your left or the person to your right, it could be you. With the passing of this resolution all the firefighters in the length and breadth of the UK will know that when it's their time of need the FBU is there for them, as it always has been, to support them. By promoting the Hundred Lottery at every available opportunity, Conference, we can achieve this. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council supports the Gloucestershire resolution. Just, if I can take a couple of minutes to make some comments on the resolution and the lottery itself. Again, it's something of a departure for the union to have launched the Firefighters One Hundred Lottery. Clearly it links with our centenary. It was planned because we knew the centenary was approaching, and it is named because the centenary was approaching. It was aimed out of some strategic discussions in reality about where we wanted the union to be in terms of positioning in the Fire & Rescue Service and other things. It also came out of discussions in this conference about the need to identify other sources of funding and so on. In the space of time since it was launched we have built a respectable lottery operation, currently raising £148,000 a year towards the five good causes that we've identified. That has allowed us to do work that we wouldn't otherwise have been able to do. So we've launched the Red Plaque scheme that you'll have seen. I don't know if anyone has seen one of the plaques. The London members will have seen the first one we did which was at Bethnal Green. It is, I think, a beautiful plaque which properly commemorates comrades who have been lost in the line of duty. That opportunity exists for all of our branches, all of our brigade committees, to identify sites where you think a red plaque should be operated. Again, I have to say without Keith Handscomb I don't think we would have been able to put any of this in place. He's done a remarkable amount of research and preparation to support us in doing that.

It allows us to engage in commemoration events and I think this has caused some debate. For some of us as political activists it's not perhaps normal sort of activity. One thing that struck us when we discussed this is if you go to St Paul's and look at the firefighters' national memorial there and you look at the names on there, certainly since 1918 and then particularly since 1939 the vast majority of those names on that memorial were members of the Fire Brigades Union. Yet the commemoration events are all run by people who aren't members of the Fire Brigades Union. We thought there was something wrong there. They are run by chief fire officers. We get invited. We thought actually it's time for us to assert this a little bit. These are our members and we want to commemorate our members. So that's why we've organised some of the events. The one in October is about us commemorating our fallen comrades where we will invite other people to our event. That happened at Bethnal Green, it's happened at Smithfield and so on. That is about asserting our role in this service, our role as a union in this profession. It's about family support. The Andy Adams case was just mentioned. I also had the privilege of attending a firefighters memorial day event in Northern Ireland at the headquarters there, and later on met the family of one of our members who had died while in service. We discussed the support that we might be able to provide for a family there. One thing that struck us is that we have an Accident & Injury Fund and we make payments in those circumstances. Then, to be frank, apart sometimes from the local watch we as an organisation may well forget those cases. We thought actually we should be doing more not to forget and think about what happens to children in those circumstances as they grow up. So we will be able to provide greater support there.

Research. People are mentioning some of the issues around mental health and cancer. This provides some of the resources that we might want to put into researching those issues. Then humanitarian support. We've always had, I think, a fine tradition of providing humanitarian support both at home and around the world. One of the biggest things to affect our profession over the past year was the Grenfell Tower disaster. We said from the start that this is clearly about looking after firefighters, but also there's a community that has been utterly devastated by that incident. So we've used our funds raised through the lottery to support charities and other organisations working particularly with young people in the Grenfell Tower community and local area.

So that's the sort of initiative that that lottery is about. I hope everyone will build it into your activities, build it into station open days and other things, build it into using the exhibition trailer so that we can build that. It's raising £148,000 a year currently. Imagine if it was raising £300,000 or half a million pounds, or a million pounds, and

imagine what we would be able to do in those circumstances. So let's build it into our activities and structures. Identify people in your brigade committees and your branches who would be particularly interested in doing that sort of work. I think it can go from strength to strength. Thanks, Conference. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now put Resolution 93 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Conference, in my own introduction I mentioned that we had some international guests. I am pleased to introduce Peter Marshall who is the national secretary of the United Firefighters Union of Australia, and Danny Ward who is their vice president, who made the long journey to join us at our conference and to celebrate our centenary. *(Applause)*

The UFUA represents more than 13,000 firefighters across Australia. The union has made some outstanding gains for firefighters in recent years under their leadership. They've managed to secure presumptive legislation on firefighter cancer across Australia after a brilliant union-led campaign. They've also used the issue of climate change and the new risks of extreme weather to secure jobs and better conditions for their members. The FBU has a longstanding relationship with the UFUA as part of the global firefighters alliance. So we're proud to have Peter and Danny take time out of their busy schedules to attend our conference. So please give a warm welcome. *(Applause)*

BRO PETER MARSHALL (UFUA):

Thank you very much, Ian, thank you Matt and thank you Andy, Executive Council and Conference for the hospitality and the invitation. I was going to start off on a light note. It's no place for a light note, but I just shared this with Alan McLean the other night. He said; "Look, welcome back" and I didn't understand quite what he meant but apparently ten decades ago they sent my grandfather to a little island over in Tasmania, and then he had the cheek to say "Did you bring the bread back?" I had to say: I did, but Customs took it off me, so what was that all about!

Anyway, on a more important note can I say that on behalf of the New Zealand Professional Firefighters, the UFUA, and indeed following on from Harold the IAFF, we're very proud to be here today. We actually look on with admiration regarding the attacks that your union has prevented. There are no geographical boundaries in relation to the attacks on firefighters. What has happened over here in the UK is probably some of the worst attacks that we've seen. Indeed, over in America we've seen attacks on pensions, staffing; we've seen it in Australia, and even in New Zealand we've seen it where they actually sacked all the firefighters at one point in time.

Can I say, we have a very close relationship and that relationship goes back a long way. But we are here in admiration. In some ways it's probably a little bit gratuitous because we look at your struggles here, the fights that you have actually taken on, and defeated. It's a bit self-serving for us and somewhat embarrassing because your struggle has prevented that from going into our countries. So when you have that fight I want you to understand very clearly that globally firefighters are watching your union. We're proud to be part of a network with your union.

On top of that I can say very clearly the Grenfell Tower – it's coming up to 12 months. I've been a firefighter for 34 years and Danny's been longer. I can say within Australia we watched in admiration, pride and indeed at the horror of that tragedy. But under such adverse conditions. But that's who we are and what defines us as being firefighters. But I have to ask the question: who protects the protectors? It was clear that leading out front was the FBU against all the political interference, against the cuts, against the media. The FBU were protecting the protectors.

Then I have a look at the struggles that you've fought – pensions, shift systems, staffing, pay, equality, diversity. And you've won most of them if not all of them. It was breathtaking to learn of the Kerr decision just recently. I guarantee you, at the moment in Australia we have some of your former leaders perpetrating those ill industrial relation concepts back at home. That decision alone will prevent it going further.

Can I say, comrades, it is a pleasure to be here today. The words that we speak are not hollow because your struggle has been our struggle, but indeed your struggle has prevented it transposing over to Australia and other places. We are proud to be part of a global network, we are proud to be here today. I can talk about cancer laws.

The global line is cancer laws to protect firefighters. We have been liaising with your national executive. I can tell you clearly, you are no different from where we were in 2011 and you will get those laws. It's a matter of what is right.

Thank you very much for allowing me to address conference, thank you very much for allowing us to be part of this historic occasion. Ten decades, a hundred years of struggle. My God, you have achieved a lot. Future generations of firefighters will be indebted for many years to come because of the sacrifices that you and previous generations of this proud union have made. We are proud to have known you. Thank you very much. *(Applause) (Presentation made)*

What it actually says is "Presented to the Fire Brigades Union UK FBU on your centenary 1918 to 2018 on behalf of your global alliance partner United Firefighters Union of Australia, June 2018. Solidarity, Strength, Unity" and it's got a handshake which defines who we are. Presented to you, Matt. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

BRO DANNY WARD (UFUA):

Thanks, Matt. I haven't got no speech to make, except just to say a couple of things if I may. Thanks, Mr President, General Secretary and Conference for allowing us to come. I am over here on long service leave for 12 months – 12 months, I wish – for a month. That is how I have the opportunity to be able to come and attend this conference. I'm stoked. We have been through similar problems and are still going through, as Peter said. You've sent us one of your finest over to take charge. It's going to be very, very interesting when we get home. He's already calling me someone different!

Can I just say a couple of things. Yesterday, I was watching the news after the conference and it comes on the news and Jeremy Corbyn was being interviewed. The news said he was here just for the conference next door of the GMB union and made no mention of the FBU. We've been going through this at home for a long time. The Herald Sun, which is a Murdoch paper, about 36 front pages in 18 months, 36 front pages with all the shit that's going on in the world, and the Collingwood football club, we kicked them all off the front page just for us, as well as four or five page spreads inside the paper attacking Peter and our union and what we do. The right wing radio stations attack us relentlessly. We don't ring them up, we don't talk to them. We just know because someone says: you better get on the radio; someone is talking about you. We don't bother, we don't do that because to give it ear is to give it strength. So we just wipe them. We don't listen to them any more. But it just reminded me yesterday of what happens. It sounds like it might be happening here as well. But Jeremy, to his credit, when he was interviewed he said: "I'm also here for the conference next door for the FBU."

The other thing I just want to say is we've been doing EMR for about 25 years. If and when you take it on can I just ask that you have the proper peer support in place. It's been a major mental health concern for some of our members. We have a wonderful peer support programme in place, one that's just been upgraded to a higher level as we speak. I think it went to our consulting committee yesterday and it was passed. It has been a Godsend for us. We get about 6,000 calls a year for EMR related calls. Our fires have dropped, and as I've heard everyone talk about it they just relate back to fire calls. We all know that we don't just do fire calls. It's been to people's detriment. People have had to pass away for us to be able to use figures to relay why we need to be there and have 24/7 coverage and not shut stations or put trucks out of commission for a day when it's cold or it's raining or we don't need that truck in.

Can I just say in finalising, if any of you are ever in Melbourne, Richmond fire station is where I'm at. I've got a couple more years to go catching the trucks. I wish I could do it forever. I love the job, I love what all of you do. It's something that once you start doing it, it just makes you so proud to be a firefighter. A couple more years. You're welcome at our station and we'll show you all the great camaraderie that I've been shown here as well. I'm a little bit nervous because I didn't expect to be doing this this morning. I would have had a couple of beers before I came in! *(Laughter) (Applause)*

Can I just say that we are watching everything that happens here. We're behind you 100% and good luck with all your struggles not just now but into the future. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Don't go yet, Peter. Conference, Peter and Danny, you're very, very welcome here at our conference. Peter

mentioned some of the dialogue we've had over the past 12 years when we've been discussing some of these issues. How do we build an international alliance of firefighter unions? Across the globe we are a relatively small part of public services, in the UK and elsewhere. The biggest organisation, as you've heard, is the IAFF in the United States and Canada. Nevertheless, and Peter's touched on it, many of the issues that we face, whether it's changing risk, climate change, floods, extreme weather events, they are common internationally and likewise many of the challenges that we face, industrial relations issues. Some of the things that happened in New Zealand in the past, we've seen attempted to be introduced here. The other side is learn from each other, and pass on lessons and advice to each other. So we need to do the same here, particularly on some of the health and safety issues, mental health and cancers. Peter, as you've heard, has done a huge amount of work around that.

We will continue that dialogue. Danny, we always have a drink before we start conference so you just missed it. We have ours in the Executive Council room! I think this lot do as well. You're very welcome. I hope you enjoy the rest of your time here and we hope to return the opportunity at some point in the future. We've got a couple of gifts for you here and we hope you are here for the events tonight. I'm not mentioning it! *(Laughter)* It's his idea.

BRO DANNY WARD (UFUA):

Can I say that that was mine when I first started!

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Peter and Danny, thanks very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, stop the giggling. We now resume in Section C, we are now on para C4, para C5, para C6, para C7, para C8, para C9, para C10.

SIS KATE SCOTT (CSNC):

President, Conference, I'm speaking to para C10 about mental health. In 2010 fire control regionalisation was stopped. So yet another government project failure. Since that date, however, fire controls all around this country have been subjected to regionalisation by the back door. This has massively increased stress, anxiety and depression levels in control staff. New systems have been implemented wholly unfit for purpose. Mergers of control rooms resulting in staff being woefully under-trained, not aware of local PDAs, lacking in local knowledge, all of this foisted upon them, and asked to make crucial decisions without having the knowledge to back it up.

There may be a reduction in incident numbers on the ground. There's a reduction in the level of trucks going out the door. But the number of calls received into control has actually increased. The number of calls being challenged by control staff has increased. We are constantly told (not in all control rooms but in the majority) call challenge, do we really need to be attending that? That's quite a level of pressure to be putting on someone, especially when the level of training has decreased.

There is less supervision currently. Only yesterday I was talking to someone who is in a buddy control room with another organisation. They said to me: "My OIC has been on the phone. Next week we only have three firefighters on duty; we do not have any supervisory staff. We can't get overtime. What the management have decided to do is just run with three firefighters on duty. If we need to make any managerial decisions one of us has got to get on the phone, ring our partnership control and ask their manager to make the decision". What is going on? That is not the way to be doing business. Needless to say, that's not happening now.

Increased fire survival guidance is having to go on due to the increased attendance times. We're having to stay on the phone longer to talk to people who are trapped in buildings. You can imagine how stressful that is. Controls are subject to additional duties such as out of hours calls for councils, falls response, all mixed in with our regular emergency duties. There are fewer of us doing more work.

CCTV monitoring has been brought in in some areas. They have a set up where one of them sits and monitors CCTV all night. I've had someone say to me genuinely that they were instructed by a senior manager to let their fire calls roll over to their buddy system, so going into another brigade, let the fire calls roll over, keep monitoring the

CCTV because that's what brings in the money. How can that possibly be acceptable? I don't know what these people think they're doing. This is something we don't want to see coming in.

Can you imagine sitting there watching CCTV – you've probably been sitting there for eight hours. It isn't like we get massive sleep breaks any more. Those days are long gone. You might get a couple of hours out of the room to have a rest but you're primarily in that room the whole time. So you're talking about 14 hours. You might have to spend ten of those hours staring at a CCTV screen, watching people go about their business in town. Can you imagine sitting there, being instructed to watch that while at the same time you've got a fire alarm going, telling you that there's calls coming in, but you've got to let those roll over to another organisation which is also woefully understaffed? That is incredibly disheartening and incredibly stressful.

Staff turnover has massively increased. Again, it used to be like dead men's shoes. Getting a job in fire control was an honour, it was something that people really wanted to do. That's no longer the case. It was incredibly difficult to get into. That's not the case any more. Only this week I spoke to somebody else about staff turnover and about the fact that a particular organisation had gone through about 20 staff members in control in the last 18 months. This had been raised with management yet the response that came back was: "No, it's not a negative; you need to see this as a positive. It's actually a sign of a healthy marketplace." I don't actually know where these people get these ideas from. It's like some people get rank markings on their shoulders (no offence to my colleagues who are officers), and they seem to forget where they've come from. I honestly think on occasion we could probably just get a chicken and it would make a better decision. *(Laughter) (Applause)*

I've just been reading the One Hundred Years book, and in it it says about the Goldfish reaction, which is how it's been described in the past, working in fire controls. You go round and round and round a busy environment. It is incredibly pressured. I do get it, I understand the difference. My husband is a wholetime firefighter, my boyfriend is retained! *(Laughter) (Applause)*

I do understand the difference. I know that it is difficult when you're working on the frontline and you're operational. It is difficult to understand what sometimes seems a bit like a gripe: here's control moaning again. We do understand that is sometimes how it appears. We have different jobs. We're aware of that. But it is a different job, it's no less undervalued. We are all important. We are also the front frontline. However, if you talk to some of my colleagues who work on fire stations, they equally dislike some of their watch members. We all have watch members we dislike on occasion, unless you're incredibly lucky. However, we cannot go and clean a BA set for a couple of hours and get away from them. We have to sit in that room for ten hours, 14 hours with the same people we dislike, all night. That can also be very difficult.

So all of these culminate in this incredible pressure cooker which is not great. It's not great for our mental health and it's not great for what we give to the public. It doesn't help us do a good job. Although we strive towards a future where there is no stigma attached to mental health, we are still in the early stages of promoting this and adopting good policies. It's positive to see on the agenda for this conference that there is a number that talk about mental health issues, particularly in supporting FBU colleagues and having that peer support for mental health. I think we are moving in the right direction. There does seem to be less of "I've got a stomach ache; I think I'm going to take a day off". It's better just to say: "Do you know what, I'm not feeling great". That way, someone can come to you and say: "Is there anything I can do to help?" Either that or they'll probably go: "Could you just pull yourself together a bit."

However, I think we need to still push on. We're only in the early stages of this and we need to continue pushing forward because if we don't do this as an organisation and look towards strengthening mental health how can we possibly expect FRSs to do it? Unless they do it, we're going to continue on a downward spiral of people going sick, having long-term sick, having long-term back ache, and it's just going to all go into a massive decline.

It all leads to presentee-ism. Sorry, someone else wrote this speech. I wouldn't have used that word. This all leads to people staying at work when they should be sick or using other reasons to book sick. We all know someone who has said "I've got a back ache" and then they're off for six months when you know full well that the problem lies with their mental health and stress. If people don't come forward and say: "I'm stressed, I'm having a bad time" we're not going to improve working conditions.

We've all seen the Blue Light MIND mental health charity and they talk about and encourage time to talk. But along with that, I think it's definitely time for us to take care. When you go on a flight they say to you you need to put your own oxygen mask on before you put someone else's on. So in closing I'd say we must look after ourselves. We need to be able to look after ourselves in order to properly look after others. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think on behalf of conference and the Executive Council I thank Kate for that contribution. It is something we will take on, we will work with the CSNC. Some of the stories that are recounted, some of the stories that we hear from around the country of the experiences of control members in the current situation need addressing. Some of us watched the film Operator. It was interesting that the firefighter members from stations who watched that film, I think had a widespread feeling of shock that "we didn't realise that was what people dealt with". We've already had feedback from the exhibition over the road that when people listen to that on the phone that's in there it has quite a major impact. Yet, despite that, we still have control members being frankly insulted by chief fire officers and by fire service politicians in how they are referred to and the sort of work that they are being asked to undertake. That is one of the key parts of our dispute in the West Midlands as well, the treatment of our control members. I give the assurance to the CSNC we will work closely with you over the coming months to identify how we take up the issues that Kate has just referred to and that were identified in the relevant resolutions as well. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now call the following resolutions that will all be taken in the same debate: Resolution 27 National Standards for Work-related Mental Health Issues moved by Northern Ireland; Resolution 31 Mental Health – National Policy and Guidance, Cumbria; Resolution 43 Mental Health related to the Workplace moved by Scotland; Resolution 45 Welfare Provision moved by Durham & Darlington. They can all stand together. So, first off Resolution 27 moved by Northern Ireland. The Executive are giving qualified support.

Resolution 27 NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR WORK-RELATED MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Conference recognises the stressful circumstances that FBU Members can be exposed to at work and the detrimental impact to their mental health such exposure can have.

Conference also notes that there is no national standard relating to how UK Fire and Rescue Services should respond to work-related mental health issues.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to lobby employers to secure national standards to deal with Members who suffer with work-related mental health issues.

NORTHERN IRELAND

BRO DERMOT McPOLAND (NIFB):

President, Conference, we are all too aware of the increasing impact that work-related stress has on our members. Conference, without a national standard dealing with work-related stress it will only become a bigger issue. All our members are entitled to the best care and support, no matter where they are from. That's why we need a national standard. Now is the time to demand and secure the national standard so we can ensure the employers deliver the appropriate help and care, and live up to their duty of care. Like me, I'm sure you've all known friends and colleagues who have suffered poor mental health due to work-related stress. MIND, the mental health charity, has produced research that identifies 85% of fire & rescue personnel have experienced stress or poor mental health. 85%, and that's in England and Wales only. There are no figures for Northern Ireland.

Conference, our members work hard and we as union officials work hard to support them through mental health issues. For both our members and for our officials this work can come at a great personal cost impacting on relationships and physical health. Now is the time to demand the employers agree a national standard. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO STEVE WHITE (London):

President, Conference, comrades, I did promise myself I wasn't going to bang on at length about my own personal experiences with PTSD, but suffice to say it was a long time ago. I did what was customary in those days, which was to turn down the one offer of help I get, to just get on with it, I was big enough and ugly enough to look after myself. My permanent bad mood around family and friends was just "Steve's obviously grumpy, let's be honest" and "Yes, I'll have another drink and another one after that one". I think we are moving to a more enlightened time about mental health and mental health at work. It's far different now than it was then, but we've still got lessons to learn. A London rep can't get up here and talk about exposure to potentially traumatic events without discussing the fire at Grenfell Tower. I think we've got quite a lot to learn from the way the London Fire Brigade responded to the fire at Grenfell, recognising the fact that under Brian Coleman and under Boris Johnson's regimes they had cut the advisory and counselling service too far and too fast. Nonetheless, with a lot of support from around the country they managed to gain access to counsellors for the majority of the firefighters that attended that fire. Before they even returned to station they had put strategies in place for repeated contact and follow-up appointments for a lot of people.

I'm not suggesting for one moment that that response was perfect, but I think in the final analysis we're going to find a lot of things in there that we can then take on and inform a national standard, and make sure that wherever that event happens around the country the members are adequately supported in that environment.

That's not to say that everything in the garden is rosy. Advocating for members associated with Grenfell and the health & safety committee I have asked some very difficult questions and not necessarily got the answers that I wanted. Those questions specifically were around those people, like me then, who fall through the net. It's well and good putting structures into place for members who turn up at work with a diagnosis of PTSD or work-related stress; it's something else to put strategies in place to catch those people who have fallen through the net, those members who aren't admitting to anything but whose short-term sickness is starting to get worse, members who have stopped being able to manage money, aren't managing their leave particularly well, aren't managing their relationships particularly well, are a bit grumpier than they normally are, perhaps are drinking too much. The national standard needs to be able to answer those questions on how we support those people as well.

We need to look at the very good peer support programmes out there and we need to compare and contrast those, and we need to put it all together, so members across the UK are protected in similar ways by the structures that managers are putting in place.

We also need to be clear, when we are lobbying our employers to protect our members' mental health, both before that incident happens and after it has happened, we make sure that whatever that national standard says, it supports all of our members, no matter what their background and no matter what their workplace, whether they are wholetime firefighters, whether they are retained firefighters, or whether they are working in control. It is all well and good bringing something into place for firefighters on the ground but we need to look after everybody.

Comrades, theoretically it's the eyes of the law. Our members' mental health at work is protected in exactly the same way as their physical health is. In practice we know often that's not the case. We're still learning; we're catching up really fast on mental health in the fire service. There's a lot of good stuff happening out there. We're certainly far more enlightened than we were. Now is the time for a national standard to make sure that all our members are protected and are all protected equally. Conference, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. I now call Resolution 31 Mental Health – National Policy and Guidance moved by Cumbria.

Resolution 31 MENTAL HEALTH, NATIONAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

With the dramatic rise in mental health issues and the better recognition of signs and symptoms within some Fire and Rescue Services, Conference is concerned that this issue is not being addressed with the same seriousness across all services in the UK.

Therefore Conference demands that the inclusion of the recognition of mental health issues in the Fire and Rescue Service be included within the Grey Book. A national policy and guidance be produced and circulated to all services in the UK. This should include the minimum training that should be provided.

CUMBRIA

BRO ED BURROWS (Cumbria):

President, Conference, cracking speech! I'm not retained! *(Laughter) (Applause)*

Too much! We're all aware of the mental health issues affecting our services due to overworked personnel, the effects of operational incidents, pressures we are exposed to in work and out of work, the austerity cuts contributing to this also. This has left us with fewer staff doing more work and the increase of PTSD which is growing year on year. Our largest concern is employers, instead of reducing mental health, are accepting it as an issue and, in the case of a lot of services, paying it lip service. Mental health awareness training is only a sticking plaster. The majority of the time mental health issues have been caused by the employers. Their disregard for how it affects staff is appalling. It is a testament to the FBU that our momentum in this area is growing. It is often up to individuals to say "no more" to their employers, either coming to us or hitting breaking point. It is time for national recognition of this occupational disease and to have it contained within our national conditions. It is also paramount to address this in every service by having the right training year on year, not just the usual flash in the pan gesture due to HMI CFRS visits and then forgotten about. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* I now call Resolution 43 Mental Health Related to the Workplace moved by Scotland. The EC are supporting.

Resolution 43 MENTAL HEALTH RELATED TO THE WORKPLACE

Conference is concerned that mental health related to the work place is on the increase and is affecting our Members' health and wellbeing. The Health and Safety Executive figures show that stress is more prevalent in public service industries which includes the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Grey Book recognises that an employee on authorised sick leave as a result of an illness or injury arising out of authorised duty shall be entitled to full pay for twelve months. However, it is increasingly difficult for any mental health illnesses or injuries to be recognised within this.

In order to support Officials representing Members with work related mental health, we request that the Executive Council, at negotiations within the National Joint Council, seek to expand the definition to specifically include "mental health" as an injury or illness. This should be placed on the agenda at an appropriate National Joint Council meeting and progress reported back to FBU Conference in 2019.

SCOTLAND

SIS SIANA HUGHES (Scotland):

First time speaker at conference. *(Applause)*

Mental health related to work can have a devastating effect on a member's home, family, worklife. I've unfortunately been party to an incident where a member's mental health issues culminated in a suicide attempt. During that harrowing recovery period, despite anecdotal evidence from physicians, from the service's occupational health itself, the service saw fit to send the member and their family a letter to tell them their pay would be cut by half at the six month period. That caused a major setback in the member's recovery. It showed an incredible lack of sensitivity, humanity and understanding of mental health issues related to work. I think we can all agree it's completely unacceptable.

Therefore, I call upon the EC and the NJC to expand the definition of injury or illness in the Grey Book specifically to include mental health. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO JOSEPH MENDE (B&EMM):

President, Conference, mental health. We've all heard about how mental health can affect our members at work. Peter has rightly asked who protects the protector? It's the FBU. Conference, I'm appealing to instruct the EC through the Union Learning to include mental health education in mostly all of the education that is happening so that we are able to help our members in the first instance. Not to diagnose mental health because a one or two-day course can't qualify you to be able to deal with it. No offence to our GP's, even though they have all the training, when you go to them because of the cuts, as soon as you enter your time begins. In 10 minutes you are done. What they are going to do for you is "take this pill and you will be all right". We know the consequences mostly of those anti-depressant pills. It exacerbates it and it can sometimes lead to suicidal thoughts and stuff.

I just want to say I was watching a programme called The Ambulances. I don't know if anyone here has seen it. There was an episode where a man contacted the paramedics and said he wanted to commit suicide. Then the police and the paramedics got to him before he actually did it. The paramedic lady was asking him why he was thinking like that and he said he had voices in his head saying that he needs to take his life. He said that voice was his friend, and that friend knew all his secrets, and his life was worthless that he needed to take his life.

What I'm trying to say is we need to be able to be that point of anyone feeling in that way to vent out and us listening. Sometimes that is all it needs: someone to just listen. When we do that maybe we can save someone's life. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 45 Welfare Provision moved by Durham & Darlington.

Resolution 45 WELFARE PROVISION

Conference notes the heroic actions of both firefighting and control Members at recent traumatic incidents including the tragic Grenfell Tower fire. These traumatic incidents can have a detrimental impact on our Members' welfare and mental health.

Conference also notes the FBU education provided in the form of the excellent Mental Health Awareness course given to Union Officials.

The welfare response from UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs), following these traumatic incidents can be varied, often reactive, and given by untrained members of staff, if there is any response at all.

Therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to:

- ***survey all UK FRSs to understand the response to mentally traumatic incidents, discover how timely that response is***
- ***ask what training is given to those responders***
- ***survey all UK FRSs to understand what training and education is given to individuals to recognise stress and develop coping mechanisms***
- ***ask what level of training those educators have***
- ***seek to produce a NJC Mental Health best practice guidance with a view to encouraging all UK FRSs to adopt this best practice.***

DURHAM AND DARLINGTON

BRO JIM BITTLESTONE (Durham & Darlington):

President, Conference, in the President's opening speech this week he said the FBU is the conscience of the UK Fire & Rescue Service and he's right. What that means is shy bairns get nowt. We're the drivers of change in the Fire & Rescue Service and we should be proud of that. It was with that in mind that I met with our chief in Durham and asked him to employ a welfare officer because we had a massive mental health black hole in our service. He didn't

say no. He recognised what it was costing the service, and even from that point of view he realised it was a good thing to do. That was on the back of a £400,000 deficit. I was given permission to have some kind of control and shape that and that's what I've done.

Recently, members in the UK have suffered much mental trauma: house fires, RTCs, terrorist incidents, and about a year ago the tragic Grenfell Tower fire. We pay tribute to all our London members who attended that fire and control members throughout the UK who were involved in that particular incident.

I want to take a moment to talk about control. Kate's spoken very eloquently about that. They have particular issues to combat, some of which she mentioned there. They don't have images that firefighters have when they turn out to fires. They don't have the full picture. They can't physically do something, carry somebody out of there. They have some very difficult decisions to make. I don't think all firefighters realise that. Both firefighters and control members alike suffer the same and that's closure. We need to work on that.

At the Grenfell Tower fire some members were asked and advised to put their service numbers on the backs of their helmets in case they didn't make it out. It's an incredible thing still to go in and do their jobs. That's what they did and fortunately they all came out. Despite their best efforts, courage and bravery in there, some lives were still lost.

In all our services we need mental health education on identifying stresses, triggers, and developing coping mechanisms. We need a response to trauma following incidents with fatalities and other incidents. We need access to counsellors. That needs to be timely. Education is the basis of all understanding. It gets a conversation going, it gets rid of the stigma of mental health. If we understand the body's response to stress we can look out for that and start to develop coping mechanisms.

In Tyne & Wear, our neighbouring brigade, they've had a programme of mental health and well-being education going on delivered jointly between the Fire Brigades Union and their welfare officer who is also a trained counsellor, Laura Lawrence, for some 15 years. That's how far we are behind. They've been doing it for that long. In Durham & Darlington we've started on the same programme in collaboration with Laura Lawrence and myself. Sometimes education isn't enough, sometimes we need more. It's important that we take that step further. We need that response. Again, in Tyne & Wear Laura Lawrence has put together a trauma support team to respond to incidents involving fatalities, which is triggered by a message from control. The trauma support team deliver in pairs to watches and sections who need it a facilitated discussion on how members felt during that period of trauma. The aims are to normalise, to education and to signpost.

Normalising just makes people aware that they're feeling the same as you. That really does help, just by speaking about that, and then you can continue the conversation. Education is what's happening to your body, what's happening to your mind and how you can cope with that. Signposting is for further health. That can't be a GP. It takes too long. It's between six months and two years in our particular area. Our brigade has a private counselling service, the employee assistance programme, and that's generally available within a few days. All the service gets is a bill with nobody's name on it, just to say that it's been triggered. So it's a confidential service for our members. We believe this is the best way forward.

This resolution calls for NJC Mental Health Best Practice guidance with a view to all Fire & Rescue Services getting decent education on mental health delivered by suitably trained and experienced people. That's important. It also calls for a national standard in response, again delivered by suitably trained and experienced people. Please look out for this survey. A survey is only as good as you officials and members who fill it in. I asked for help and got it. Shy bairns get nowt. Please support the resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Jim. Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's now open for debate.

BRO KARL WAGER (Cleveland):

Conference, President, just quickly, some of that needs mentioning within this debate. We speak so well about looking after our members' mental health, we take on a lot of strain as reps, but as I stand and look at this room

I look at some of the most under worked – sorry, overworked, undervalued – some of you are underworked!
(Applause) (Laughter)

Sorry, as I said, I look around this room at some of the most overworked, undervalued people that I've ever met. We do what we do out of absolute pride for what we do. I'm proud of each and every one of you for doing it. But we do need to look after each other as well. It's great that we're out there looking after our members and taking on their strains and their pressures, but we have to agree that we must have strains and pressures ourselves.

Keep an eye on each other as reps. We work as a team and we do fantastic work. Keep an eye on each other. If you see people behaving differently, do something about it, speak to them, give them some help. We are as important as the people out there. Thank you very much. I support. (Applause)

BRO JAMIE DEVEY (Surrey):

President, Conference, I'm supporting Resolution 27 today as it's a subject I feel very passionate about and also a subject of importance across all Fire & Rescue Services across the country. In Surrey in recent times as a brigade we have fallen victim to mental health in the worst possible way: suicide. Two well-respected and very much liked comrades took the harrowing decision to end their lives. This shook the whole of the service and will continue to affect the friends, family, watch members, colleagues for some time.

What is mental health? This next statement is taken directly from the government website on mental health. "Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress and make choices." I find it very hard to comprehend that the only choice left in the minds of two of my Surrey comrades was to end their lives. (Applause)

A broken arm, a broken leg is hard to disguise. A broken mind or mental state can be hidden behind a laugh, a smile or a lie. Mental health has never been so important in all UK Fire & Rescue Services. How can we be expected to go to work, get treated like shit (as we all do), see the things that we see day in and day out and just deal with it? We can't. I would bet everything I own (which isn't that much) on asking every single person, every firefighter in this room, are you OK, and I can guarantee the response would be "Yeah, I'm fine, mate". We're not. We're not OK. We need the help and support of each other and most importantly our employers and our peers, and the EC. I'm in full agreement with Northern Ireland's Resolution 21. More should be done by our Fire & Rescue Services to combat mental health in the workplace.

I'm going to finish on quite a recent example of how we're treated in Surrey and why this needs to change. I took promotion three years ago to Staines upon Thames, sunny Staines. When I got there, they'd been trying to close the station for 30 years. Still not closed it. That's down to the FBU officials. (Applause)

When I got there it was quite apparent that the mental health of the whole station was rock bottom, absolute rock bottom. The service decided that as part of their occupational health plans they would print off a load of posters and stick them all around every station in the county with an elephant on them. It was to address the elephant in the room. I thought it was quite good. The idea behind it was to write your honest thoughts on a post-it note and stick it on the elephant. Then as a watch or as a station you talk about what issues you put on the pieces of paper.

One member, who was already on my radar because I was the area rep for that section, was struggling and I already knew he was struggling. This person wrote on a post-it note (and this all came out following what happened) "I want to kill myself". Literally, black and white "I want to kill myself". Did the service look after him, take him to one side, try to find out who it was because everything was anonymous? No, they didn't. I was present. The exact words of the station officer and group commander were "We're going to find out who's put that and we're going to run them for this". That was what they said.

Two weeks later that very firefighter rang me. I live up north, as you can tell by my Brummie accent. I'm three hours away from Staines. It was two o'clock in the morning and he was sat on a train track at Chertsey. Two weeks before, a manager had said that he was going to run that man for writing what he wrote on that post-it note. If that doesn't give you an example of why we've really got to get to grips with this, I don't know what will. The EC should be pushing this, and pushing this hard, across the country. Thank you. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. National Officer. Sorry, Clare.

SIS CLARE HUDSON (NWC):

President, Conference, I'm speaking on Resolution 45 Welfare Provision. This resolution talks about "traumatic incidents". I've been trained in peer support through my service and offered it to a number of colleagues. Through my training we were told that there's no such thing as a traumatic incident; it's a traumatic reaction to an incident. Everybody reacts completely differently to incidents. Some people may have gone to Grenfell, which has been quite a focus, and had a traumatic reaction, some may have come home with no reaction at all. So we need to be mindful that everybody reacts differently. I've seen the difference peer support schemes can have on an individual and we need to push this agenda forward as quickly as we can because it is affecting people right here right now. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Clare. Anybody else? Sean.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The Executive Council do fully understand why this is a huge issue for FBU members and FBU officials, and it's something that we have got to really up our game on. Anybody who thinks it's not going to affect them needs to have a good hard look at themselves because it will. It will affect you and half the time you don't even know it's affected you.

What we've got to understand, though, as well is that there is a massive responsibility for the employers. It is their responsibility. We do what we can. We help our officials, we've put out education courses, we've put out information to officials. But we can't let the employers just get away with this.

We're fully supporting this. The only qualification we're giving is on Resolution 27 and that's not because we're not going to do it, or because we don't support it fully, it's just on how we achieve it. Getting a national standard on anything, as you can imagine, is not the easiest thing we have to do. So we are going to think about how we approach it. The only national standard we've got at this moment in time I'm aware of is on fitness, and we achieved that through a best practice document. So I think the best way of approaching this is to put out a best practice document in line with the other resolution which covers the issues, covers the legislation, covers the employers' responsibilities, and then approach the employers and say "Look, this is the best practice position; this is what you should be doing; the only way we don't accept you doing this is if you're doing something better". So with that qualification we fully support these resolutions. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. I now put Resolution 27 from Northern Ireland to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 31 from Cumbria to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 43 from Scotland to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 45 from Durham & Darlington to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Conference, we are going to break in a minute, but two seconds. In the hall where the tea and coffee is being served there are T-shirts provided Justice4Grenfell. Could you all collect a T-shirt and could you all wear it this afternoon in the Grenfell debate. Thank you very much. Tea break.

Break for tea

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, take your seats. Stewards, can you get all the delegates back in here. Conference, I now call Steve Shelton, the Chair of Standing Orders, to give his report. Conference, quiet.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Delegates list: Dorset & Wiltshire: delete Karen Adams; replace with Andy Thompson; Northamptonshire: delete Mark Jones; replace with Ben Muddle; Leicestershire delete Graham Vaux; replace with Peter Trainor. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

I now call Resolution 28 Mental Health – Working Whilst Unwell moved by the LGBT Committee. The EC give qualified support.

Resolution 28 MENTAL HEALTH, WORKING WHILST UNWELL

Research has indicated that LGBT people are up to three times more likely to suffer from a mental health condition than the rest of society.

Conference suspects that the actual impact of mental health illness is unseen for reasons such as stigma around mental wellbeing and draconian workplace sickness and absence policies that seek to persecute employees for being ill.

As a consequence of further stigma around sexuality and gender identity the impact on LGBT members is likely to be disproportionately higher.

Whilst conference acknowledges that the impact of mental illness on LGBT members may be higher, research on the overall impact on all our Members is needed.

Conference calls on the Executive Council in conjunction with the Health and Safety Committee to develop a membership survey to primarily establish evidence around the following questions:

- 1. How many Members are suffering or have suffered a mental health related illness?***
- 2. Is the illness work related?***
- 3. Have they ever gone to work whilst they have felt sufficiently unwell to perform their duties?***

Conference acknowledges that whilst conducting such a survey it may be an opportunity to ask the membership other health related questions and would leave these to the discretion of the Executive Council and Health and Safety Committee.

LGBT COMMITTEE

BRO PAT CARBERRY (LGBT):

President, Conference, the last series of debates that we've just had spoke largely about mental health and the impact on our members. What this resolution is about is pinning down those who are responsible for taking care of us. Whenever we go to our employers and tell them about these problems, unless you can actually qualify and quantify and provide accurate data very little will get done. So what the proposal here calls for primarily is three questions. The first question is a difficult one and one which many people may feel uncomfortable answering, that being if you've ever suffered from a mental health illness. The second question is whether or not that mental health illness is related to the work activity that you do and how that has played a part in making you unwell. The third question, which is really the important one, is have you ever gone to work and tried to perform your duties when you have been unfit to do so?

In various different brigades around the country we have sickness and absence monitoring policies, and people go to work when they're unwell purely because they've hit trigger points. You've got to think about the impact of that and what that really means for us all. People who are at work who shouldn't be there are not in the right place. With

the nature of work that we do they pose a risk to themselves, they pose a risk to their colleagues, and they pose a risk to the people that they are trying to serve.

I've given flexibility with this resolution to allow the health & safety committee to ask other health-related questions. I think it would be pertinent, if we are going to ask our membership questions relating to health. For example, I've been on pumps before many times and I've been sat there and guy next to me has been bubbling snot out of his nose, coughing away and I've said: "what the hell are you doing at work?" It's hit a trigger point. I think to myself: you shouldn't be here because you could be going into a house fire at any moment now, your lungs aren't functioning correctly, you're not in the right place. Then there's the other aspect: the next day I'm going to wake up with a sore throat and a bubbling nose as well. This is all down to our employers putting these pressures on people that they are coming to work when they are unwell.

So we all have a role to play if we are to do this exercise and get this monitoring going on, and get this survey out there. Unless the members fill in the information when we conduct the survey, the survey is of little value. It's not just the members who are ill, it's the members who are well. It's got to be a reflective response of all of the workers throughout our union.

So, Conference, I call on you to support this resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Pat. Does that have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. Nobody? National Officer.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The EC support this with a qualification and it's only a minor qualification really. Pat has given us a lot of flexibility on this. One thing we've got to be aware of, though, this is going to be a huge challenge because for half the people who are at work unwell, the big challenge is encouraging them to fill in the survey. Half of them are at work because they don't want to admit they've got a problem anyway. We've got to think really long and hard about what we put in a survey like this.

The qualification really is that we might have to outsource this because we have got capacity issues and also we might want to take some advice from people on how we ask these sorts of questions. So that's nothing to be worried about. We've outsourced surveys before. We had a real successful Yougov survey during the pension campaign. With that qualification we support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. I now put Resolution 28 move by the LGBT to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 33 Mental Health moved by Hereford & Worcester. The EC are asking Hereford & Worcester to remit or they oppose.

Resolution 33 MENTAL HEALTH

Conference commends the Executive Council on the production of the Mental Health guidance document and recognises the importance of its content, but feels much more can be done. There is too much expectation still put upon the individual to recognise the condition of their own mental health. With 1 in 4 predicted to suffer from a mental illness at some point in their lives, Conference instructs the Executive Council to allocate funding for FBU mental health services, specifically reinstating the confidential call line, and to investigate further ways in which support can be provided to our Members.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

BRO RUSSELL BROADBENT (Hereford & Worcester):

Morning President, morning Conference. When I received this resolution to talk about a few weeks ago (and this is my first time at conference so it's kind of a bit of a "oh my God, you're going to speak to people about something

you know not a great deal about”) I wrote a little speech which I’m probably going to do in a minute. But listening to you guys this morning talking about your experiences and your friends reminded me (I think about it every single day) of my friend Paul Reid who some of you might know. Six years ago Paul put something on Facebook. I had just come back off holiday. He’d been going through some problems with his girlfriend, he had been out and got smashed, driven his car, lost his licence. I wasn’t working with him at the time. One of the guys on the watch had assured him, and the group commander had assured him that he wasn’t going to lose his job, he didn’t need to drive, blah, blah, blah. He put on Facebook “That’s all, Folks” and he hanged himself.

I was devastated and still am. Two weeks ago I’m in the pub, I’ve just taken this job on and one of the lads from Malvern put on Facebook a similar comment. We’re in the pub and one of the lads is on Facebook and he said: “Jesus Christ, look at this!” I thought “Not again”. So I phoned his watch commander. It was about half past 11 so his watch commander got up and went round to see him. But we haven’t got a massive amount of support in those circumstances. The reason this guy has put this on Facebook, by the way, is because he has got relationship problems similar to what Paul was struggling with, and he was going to be arrested the next day for something that’s incredibly minor. But I can’t ring the group commander up and tell him that, tell him one of his firefighters is suffering because he’s going to be arrested. I wouldn’t do that. But who else am I going to call? Fortunately, it was all right. It’s not resolved but he’s getting the support he needs, I think, both from the service and from us. That’s my story. I had nobody else to call.

So I’m going to go to my little speech. It’s a bit hollow now. Obviously, mental health is massively on the agenda at this conference. We recognise that one in four of us is likely to suffer with mental health problems at some point in our lives. Mine is now, I think! It’s on the rise, particularly in the fire service because I’ve been doing this for 31 years and it seems a hell of a lot more common now than it was even ten years ago. Two commanders on my station were off with issues. The management keep coming, they keep threatening our members. Even the work that we do to prevent that kind of heightens the tensions for the blokes. I’ve been talking to guys, people come and ask me questions and other people walk away because they just don’t want to hear it, because they are constantly under this pressure.

The Executive Council will argue that it’s the fire service’s to deal with and provide mental health services and they are right, it is. In varying degrees they do. I think my service is quite good, but listening to other experiences that’s not necessarily the case. But not all our members want to tell the fire service about their mental health problems. People are frightened that they’re going to get sacked on competency because of this. We’ve got guys and girls who won’t go to their doctors. Who else are you going to call? And us as well, we’re vulnerable as officials. I’ve had officials in my service, and I know most of you have probably experienced this, we’re being targeted by the management. They trump up ridiculous charges about Purdah and all this malarkey. I wouldn’t want to go to my group commander and let them know that I’m suffering, if I were.

In this centenary year we should uphold our proud traditions by reinstating the confidential call line, giving a much-needed resource to officials and members. Please support Resolution 33. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That’s open for debate.

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we are supporting the motion. We’ve heard some pretty harrowing stories. We’ve also heard other international speakers about the benefits of open support mechanisms that they’ve got in place. We’ve also heard this morning of the fantastic work done by the 100 Lottery. I would ask the EC, if it’s going to be used as an argument about affordability, that we consider using the 100 Lottery money as well. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? National Officer.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Conference, it’s very hard to speak in opposition to a resolution like this, especially when we have a passionate

speech like that and telling people about personal experience. It's not easy. The EC do recognise the importance of supporting people. We've just supported a resolution saying that we will be working hard to look at surveying members and doing a best practice document. We're trying to get members the support they need through the education programme, through the union learning programme. We've put out an initial guidance document. All this has been designed to raise the awareness of our members and our officials.

We've got to make it clear is that we're not trained counsellors and our role is to support members, not to step in when the employers don't support members. We should be signposting people. We've got to remember here that we work for the Fire & Rescue Service – well, most people here work for the Fire & Rescue Service, that's their employer. As Steve White said earlier on, they've got a duty of care and that duty of care extends to mental health. They've also got a duty of care to risk assess. They put our people in positions like this so they should be risk assessing some of the outcomes. Our role is not to do it for them, it's to make sure they do it.

Our opposition is not on affordability. It is who should pay? If there's some funding for a confidential helpline they should pay. I think everybody agrees that we work for the fire service, they put us in the position, they should pay. We should be challenging the employers where it is not there. Where we've got it, great. Let's not let the ones who don't do it off the hook.

I attended the National Fire Chiefs Convention Health & Safety meeting last week in Avon and on any other business I put my mitt up in the air and said: look, we've been pressed for confidential helplines, why are we being asked to provide confidential helplines; surely that's your responsibility. Everybody around the room agreed "yes, that's our responsibility". Then they came back and said: "But we all provide confidential helplines." So what I'm saying is, remit this, let me take it back, let me get this list from the Chair, find out where they've got confidential helplines, where they haven't and we'll help people challenge.

We're trying to move the issue of mental health up the agenda. We're not perfect; we're not doing everything we need to do. We've got to pick our fights and one of our fights is to raise awareness, and one of our fights is to get the best practice. Let's not do their job for them and spend money doing their job for them.

1200 people went through our mental health awareness union learning courses over the last few years. We are raising awareness. We are raising awareness with members and officials but part of the awareness is to show people who is responsible. What we're asking is: remit this, we don't want to oppose it, we'd rather you remit it because this is not our responsibility. We believe that working with you we can put together a challenge so that if we need confidential helplines let's get them in brigades. But let them pay for it and not us. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Hereford & Worcester right to reply.

BRO RUSSELL BROADBENT (Hereford & Worcester):

I agree with what you're saying about they should pay. If we can make them pay for this, then let's make them pay for this. But again, I don't want to be phoning a confidential helpline provided by the people that I don't want to tell about this. A few minutes ago Sean Starbuck said we need to up our game on this. So how is upping our game removing one of the things that we used to do? I'm sorry, I'm not going to remit. Please vote for Resolution 33. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 33 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now call Resolution 40 Mental Ill Health – FBU Officials and Reps moved by Lancashire.

Resolution 40 MENTAL ILL HEALTH FBU OFFICIALS AND REPS

Conference notes that 1 in 4 people will be affected by mental ill health at some point in their life. Mental ill health can affect a person's ability to cope with the demands of everyday life. Work can be the catalyst for fire service personnel where mental ill health can be directly attributed to

repeated exposure to traumatic incidents and events, the impact of physical injuries and work load pressures. Fire and Rescue Services throughout the country are recognising the effects of mental ill health on their employees, many are pledging to support their employees by signing up to the Mind Blue Light campaign and similar mental health support services.

FBU Reps and Officials are not excluded from this 1 in 4 count. The very nature of an FBU Rep role is to represent, support and advise our Members with FBU Reps holding these duties in the highest regard. The FBU Rep is the active listener to Members' concerns, issues and hardships. Discipline and capability cases are often complex and require a high degree of research, planning and preparation where Reps will work around the clock to provide the strongest defence. The pressure to achieve acceptable negotiations between FBU Reps and Employers within the current political climate are virtually impossible. Failed or unacceptable negotiations still have to be communicated to Members and the messenger (the Rep) is often in the firing line from frustrated Members following poor Employer decisions or decisions that the employee disagrees with. There have been cases where Reps have had no option but to resign from their duties, some have had duties removed from them for failing to perform. Reps have been isolated/victimised/bullied by Employers just for carrying out official duties. Reps will often turn to their Branch Secretary or another Rep for advice when dealing with these complex issues. While this unofficial route serves a purpose for the short term or quick wins and advice it is recognised that there is no such qualified network available to our Reps currently that aims to monitor and support our Reps for the long term. With this in mind it is vitally important that we take into consideration the mental wellbeing of our FBU Reps and Officials, to provide a qualified support network.

Conference asks the Executive Council to explore the feasibility of adopting an official mentoring programme that will be issued to all Reps in a bid to support them throughout their role. Supporting such a programme will show its dedicated Reps that the Executive Council are serious in supporting mental health within the Union structures.

LANCASHIRE

BRO KEV WILKIE (Lancashire):

President, Conference, as firefighters we have seen things that others will never see. As firefighters we have support through MIND and support of our brothers and sisters on our stations. We cope with the demands because this is our vocation. We attend the next call, then when we need to, reach out for help. Often the person they contact for support is their FBU official. The contact is clearly confidential and, as officials, we are here to help lift the burden of these problems and we try our hardest to resolve the issues that our members bring to us in order that they can continue to serve the people in their communities.

But who is there to support the FBU official? We cannot discuss these matters to get them off our chests with our colleagues; we cannot seek support to help us deal with others. We are trusted with our members' deepest thoughts, and as empathic people we take them on as our deepest thoughts. We, as time served firefighters, all have our demons, the calls that we have never forgotten. We have personal issues, we lose loved ones, we go through divorces, we have financial worries. As FBU officials we have all these ourselves plus often all of these issues from some of our members. And we have to cope with them.

Something has to give. Each of us has the welfare of hundreds of colleagues and none of us wants to be one of those who let them down. So it is inevitable that we will do as our vocation has always taught us: we will put them first and neglect ourselves. Conference, we need protection from breakdown, we need support amongst us. Blessed as we are to be part of this amazing union, we cannot and will not walk away from our brothers and sisters on stations when we step up to represent them. In order that we can be the best representatives possible for our members we need support. We are not machines, this is not a process or algorithm for dealing with people's lives. Conference, I urge you to support this resolution. Otherwise, this will only get worse. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Kev. Does that have a seconder?

BRO IAN HIBBERT (Merseyside):

We are seconding Resolution 40. Conference, President, as Kev has quite rightly said, life as an FBU official can often be an incredibly tough one. Despite what our members often assume, it isn't all afternoons in the pub, Beansos to seaside resorts, or an immediate uplift to a DO's pension. It's an incredibly difficult life for anyone who has not been an FBU official to understand just what a demand it places not only on the lives of us but on the lives of our friends and families. Ever-increasing workloads, attacks from employers, disciplines, grievances, consultations, negotiations, political engagement, counselling members, and, on a daily basis, trying to gee up an often frustrated and occasionally beleaguered membership, just to mention a few of the things we do on a daily basis.

Comrades, I say this to every FBU official from the bottom to the top or the top to the bottom, depending on your view of this union: we are not supermen or women. Just because you've taken a position as an officer of this union it does not mean you can't take a breather if you need one. Comrades, we all go above and beyond for our members, but it's never been more important to keep a bit back for yourselves. To everyone in this room I say this; it's OK not to be OK. Conference, I move. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Open for debate.

SIS AMY RATCLIFFE (Cambridgeshire):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Resolution 40. We've been discussing mental health this morning and how important it is, but to reiterate what some people have said already, the mental health of ourselves and everybody in this room is incredibly important. As somebody that's fairly new to the service and to being a rep, I can see how important this is. I see throughout the room hardworking people. Everybody here works so hard to push issues and to support their members. My concern, particularly as a new rep, and particularly for anybody new coming into the union, is we should encourage people. We should be encouraging new people to take part and to get involved. But they need support with that as well. That's not to say that my comrades around me are not supporting me in my new role, but they have their own burdens as well. They are busy supporting other people. I will continue to go forward and support members. My concern is as a new rep, and, is if I fall who is there to support me? That's why I support Resolution 40. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? Sean to give the qualification.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The EC qualification. While recognising that sometimes as an official it is a thankless task, and supporting the idea of a feasibility study, we need to look at what sort of mentoring programme we've already got out there. People might think we haven't got one, but we've already got one in place, so let's not rip up what we're doing. Let's think about it and think about what we want the mentoring procedure to look like. We already run, for our size, a huge education programme, absolutely huge, where the primary design of it really is to support an official from the initial branch courses on to courses with serious accident investigation and everything in between. We run a pathway and we're pretty strict about our pathway. You can only do this when you've done that, and actually you shouldn't be doing any job that you're not trained to do. We ask our more senior officials in the regions only to nominate people you think are up to this, and when they've done it, make sure you keep a record of who's done the training.

So the idea is that anybody takes on a task; it is only for people who understand it. That is a big plus point because if you understand the size of the task then you can see some of the pressures that come with it.

The regional team and the EC member has a role to play in this. They have a role to make sure that people's workloads aren't growing. We know workloads are growing. So we do support a system of mentoring. What we're saying is when we look at it, let's have a look at it in the round and let's not rip up what we've already got and reinvent the wheel.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Sean. I now put Resolution 40 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I am now on to para C11. I now call Resolution 32 moved by Cumbria with amendment from Merseyside: Cancer Screening of Firefighters. The EC are asking Cumbria to remit or oppose. The amendment from Merseyside the EC are opposing.

Resolution 32 CANCER SCREENING OF FIREFIGHTERS

With the rise of cancers within the Fire and Rescue Service which is above the national average for other workers, Conference believes it is time that recognition of this should be within the Grey Book and free testing be offered to staff.

Therefore Conference demands that the Executive Council negotiates at the NJC (to include within the Grey Book) the right to free cancer screening and treatment, and also exemption from sickness monitoring and capability procedures of all cancers. This will be made available for firefighters who are regularly exposed to hot fire conditions and also for those who have been exposed within their career to these hot fire conditions.

CUMBRIA

AMENDMENT

First Paragraph after 'recognition of this should be' insert 'contained'

MERSEYSIDE

BRO ED BURROWS (Cumbria):

Conference, President, with the previous research conducted in America linking cancers to the occupation of firefighters and confirming there is a greater risk and occurrence over the general population, this has now been backed up by recent UK research by Professor Stec of the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). In the first UK study researchers have confirmed that firefighters' risk of developing cancer is increased by dangerously high levels of harmful chemicals that remain on their protective gear following exposure to carbonaceous products. We now have to increase our calls for the employers to regulate firefighters' exposure to toxic gases and offer them free, routine cancer screening in order to protect them from developing cancer as a result of their occupation.

Blood tests can give early warning signs of cancers, allowing for further specific testing. With developmental tests like CancerSEEK announced in January, a simple blood test that can test for eight different cancers, we are at a turning point in cancer diagnosis. We call for the employers to maximise their responsibility to protect us by offering and paying for routine screening tests before we start finding the symptoms, which is often late in the development of the disease. This also benefits the service. With early diagnosis comes greater chance of recovery, reducing sickness time, and keeping a trained workforce employed.

When we mention treatment in this resolution we want the service to support the treatment of staff, with occupational health support. They can take the blood tests. The exemption of sickness monitoring and capability procedures. This is not about private healthcare.

I call on all of conference to support this resolution. This is important to us all. It is as serious as mental health. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (Cheshire):

Thank you, President, Conference. We felt compelled to speak about cancers at this conference. I will come on to why, but we have seen this as a motion that we can get behind. This year already we've become aware of four recently retired members that have been diagnosed suddenly and have passed away from terminal cancers – four already this year – all aged between 50 and 55. It really is a ticking timebomb, the issue of cancer.

Employment has long been established as a fundamental detriment to health, yet the last report in the UK was published in the 1970s. It's also widely accepted that mortality rates differ greatly by occupation. In the UK, detailed assessments of mortality by occupation are quite scarce. The ones that have been done lump professions together.

This conference is well aware, as we've heard, that in other countries, if a firefighter is diagnosed with a prescribed cancer and meets the employment duration then the disease is presumed to be an occupational disease due to the nature of that employment, unless the contrary is proven. Successive governments in the UK, however, have shown no appetite to support the Fire & Rescue Service workers by adopting that presumptive legislation.

So we need to screen fully all current firefighters and contact our retired firefighters to ascertain the actual extent of this issue. That can be done from bodies such as, but not limited to, the Office of National Statistics, the Institute of Actuaries, Public Health England, the Home Office, DCLG and Fire & Rescue Services themselves to support the case for presumptive legislation. Obviously, this is a huge, huge undertaking of work. I know that Sean has worked very hard on it. But we think this resolution is an important step towards addressing the issue of cancers by proactive routine screening of our members. So I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Merseyside to move the amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. Nobody? Sean.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

I bet people are a bit surprised that we're opposing this. I'll tell you why we're opposing it: because we've taken a blanket approach at this conference with people who've put in resolutions on cancers and said: will you remit them or we'll have to oppose them simply because we're doing so much work on this, we really are. The work we're doing is going to cover everything you're asking anyway.

So we're asking people to remit, we're asking for this one to be remitted. Not because we don't agree totally with what you've said, or that we don't want to do the work. It's quite the opposite. We want to make sure we've got the right information because information is key on this, it really is key. I know Peter's already stood up here and promised you presumptive legislation. Nice one, Pete, no pressure there! *(Laughter)*

Over the last year we've been meeting important people, people who are absolute experts in this, including Peter and his team, including the Americans and the Canadians who are far in front of us on this. Me and Paul Hampton have probably read every academic report on firefighter cancers. We're approaching this with a twin track approach looking at firefighter contamination. People will talk to us when we talk about contaminants; they won't talk to us about cancers. So we approach this as contamination rather than talk about cancers. I've got to be honest, our main goal on this is to prevent cancers. I've never met a firefighter who's got cancer yet who said "Great, I'm going to get some compensation". That's not what we're trying to do. We're trying to prevent it. By trying to prevent it we realise that some people are going to get it anyway, so yes the compensation through presumptive legislation is important. We're also doing a lot of work on rehydration and we've got the right people involved in that. We'll be putting information out soon on rehydration. What you don't realise about that is going into a hot environment your body temperature rises, you become a sponge really. So if you're in dirty firekit or you're going to absorb these toxins, then you're going to absorb them a lot more if your body temperature rises. So we're looking at that.

We're trying to look at the common practices out there, looking at better ways to minimise firefighters contracting cancer, and also to try to look at getting compensation for firefighters when they unfortunately get it. I've got to say, after reading all the documents and speaking to people, there are two parts of information that jump out straight away. We're not doing enough to prevent ourselves getting cancer, we're really not. That is one of the easiest things we can do. We can start today. When I've looked at the way that firefighters potentially get cancer, I look at what I did for 21 years riding pumps and think "I did everything wrong" and I know our people are still doing it wrong. I know they're improving and we're taking steps to try to show them how to improve, but they still do it wrong.

The second part is that we haven't got enough information yet to press for presumptive legislation. Me and Paul couldn't even convince the union side at the department which looks at presumptive legislation, based on the information we've got. Peter sent me some great information on the way that they got presumptive legislation in Australia and we'll have a chat about it. But we are trying to provide some really good quality information for firefighters to show them how they can better look after themselves, and also to put forward a good case for presumptive legislation. We might not follow the same track that we've followed before. We may look at some sneaky ways that they did it in America and Australia as well. I'll be speaking to Peter about that afterwards.

What I will say, and the reason we're asking people to remit it is, we're just about to start on a massive piece of work, we really are. You spoke about Professor Anna Stec. I've met Anna on two or three occasions. We're going to be working with Anna. Some of the things she showed us have been incredible. It will probably be very controversial with some people. We will be supporting that. We're going to do it on our own. Well, when I say we're going to do it on our own, we're not going to do it with CFOA or NFCC. We want to do it in a way that we can control what we're trying to get for firefighters and it's going to take us a while. I'm not going to be standing up here at conference next year saying: "we've cured that; what next?". It's going to be a long project and it's going to be a project that we've got to do properly.

The way that some cancers are being recorded is not right. We're looking at ways of doing that. We're going to have a major campaign on this later on in the year. We've already started to look, with one university, on rehydration like I said, and that will be a quick turnaround hopefully. We'll have some good information on how people are rehydrated by the end of the year, maybe the beginning of next year. One of the areas we will look at is screening. I do completely agree that screening is so important. It's all right catching somebody who's got cancer late on. We want to catch it as early as we can. Some of the ways that Anna is telling us we can screen people are eye opening. So this is why we're saying remit this and let us get on with the work. Not that we're not going to do it because we're totally committed to doing it. But just remit it.

I will give you one example. In the resolution it talks about firefighters, it should be made available for firefighters who are regularly exposed to hot conditions. Some of the information we've got is that even the firefighters who aren't exposed to hot conditions can contract cancers. A lot of the cancers you can get are when you're not working in hot conditions but when it's finished, and it's transferred between your kit. We think this limits it a little bit. Remit it, let us have a look at it and let us do it properly. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Cumbria, right to reply.

BRO ED BURROWS (Cumbria):

I've taken on board what you said. We believe that cancer screening is a step towards presumptive law. We're not asking for presumptive law on this one. It was passed at conference last year. Also cancer as an occupational injury was passed last year. I don't think we need presumptive law to start introducing that screening. I think it's something that is very important and we should push for.

In regard to the prevention, I think you're absolutely right and I think we need to re-issue the PPE guidance on prevention of cancers. We should still do that, but we must also emphasise how much that screening is important to catch it at the early stage. It's the only way to increase survival.

That being said, I just want to remind you that cancer doesn't wait so why should we. Let's get that screening forward. Cumbria will remit. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Ed. I now call Resolution 35 Toxins in the Workplace moved by Northumberland who have agreed to remit with the right to speak.

Resolution 35 TOXINS IN THE WORKPLACE

Conference recognises the lack of movement nationally in the drive to tackle toxins in the workplace.

Research internationally has shown that toxins are a link to many workplace cancers and in those countries steps have been taken to overcome these issues. The current research is not recognised by UK Fire and Rescue Service employers, this should be questioned and acted upon.

Conference urges the Executive Council to work with Employers to recognise this research and act upon it in the same way that other international Fire and Rescue Services already have.

NORTHUMBERLAND

BRO STEVE WALKER (Northumberland):

President, Conference, I'm not going to go through what I was going to say. I had four pages, but people have already spoken very well on toxins so far and also we've had other regions who have spoken on toxins and cancers which we're trying to push very hard as a brigade. Can I just touch on one thing that Sean did say. We're not doing enough. It's for us as FBU reps to go out there and try to educate our members. I'm a BA trainer myself and it is us as FBU reps who are trying to educate our members. We bang on, and bang on, and bang on about the little things they can do. It's only us that's doing it; it's not the managers; it's not the employers; it's the FBU reps. If we don't do it presently, nobody else will. If we can get out there and we can educate our members, so be it, that would be great.

As for the rest of the work that I had done, and I've spoken to Sean previously on this, Northumberland will be remitting our resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. I'm now on para C12, para C13. I now call Resolution 34 Firefighter Fitness Training Time moved by the NRC. The EC give qualified support.

Resolution 34 FIREFIGHTER FITNESS TRAINING TIME

Conference notes the content of the Firefighter Fitness Best Practice Guide produced by the NJC. Conference is alarmed at the lack of provision of fitness training equipment or fitness training time available to Retained Duty System firefighters across the UK. Conference agrees that Retained Duty System firefighters have the same requirements as wholetime firefighters on the issue of firefighter fitness and that the same safety standards should apply to both equally.

Therefore this Conference instructs the Executive Council, at the earliest opportunity to try to negotiate a number of paid hours per week for Retained Duty System firefighters to carry out fitness training in order to maintain their fitness to the required standard, these hours must be in addition to the already agreed hours for training, development and maintenance duties.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

BRO PHIL WILLIAMS (NRC):

President, Conference, first time speaker at conference. *(Applause)*

I am moving resolution 34 Firefighters Fitness Training Time. Conference, the resolution is self-explanatory. NJC best practice guidelines are clear. There can be no excuse for failure to provide adequate time and facilities for training for retained firefighters while at the same time making provision for full-time colleagues. The standards of fitness have been agreed for safety reasons. The standards are the same for all duty systems because the job is the same. You wouldn't need to be half as fit if you only did half the hours. You may think that cost is a driving factor for the reluctance to provide at the very least adequate fitness training time. This argument is, at its best, weak, but also dangerous. Do not accept it. As you will be aware from our resolution on pay, calls to retained stations have tumbled over the past few years, and with this fall so have wages. But this is not just about the money. It's about basic health & safety requirements. We cannot accept that services turn a blind eye to the fitness of their retained firefighters to save a few pounds. Support the resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO STEVE WALKER (Northumberland):

Here we go again. *(Applause) (Laughter)*

President, Conference, just speaking in regard to the previous comments. Last year we had an unfortunate and very distressing event for everyone in our brigade when one of our retained members sadly passed away on a breathing apparatus course. One of the things that's been highlighted is training time especially for retained members. A lot of retained members don't get any time at all to train. Our brigade affords wholetime firefighters an hour a day to be

able to train. What they don't do is afford any training time to our retained members. Northumberland agrees with previous statements. We second it. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Sean to give the qualification.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Our qualification on this is achievability. It's achievability because this has been our position all the way through the discussions we've had on fitness. We recognise that every firefighter has got to work hard to maintain their fitness, irrespective of the duty system they work. So we will revisit all the points made and we'll raise this. We fully support this position.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 34 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 38 Fitness Testing moved by NWC. The EC give qualified support.

Resolution 38 FITNESS TESTING

Following on from the Firefit Conference and a notable increase in social media activity around the drill ground assessment and recommended strength test we recognise those who carried out the original research have a vast knowledge but the research has failed to take into account an ageing workforce and a more diverse subject base should have been utilised for the original research.

Firefit have recently asked Fire and Rescue Services to support further research and Conference asks that the Executive Council immediately:

- ***engages in this research through Brigade, Regional and National Officials***
- ***engages with the NWC***
- ***publicly supports this research.***

This further research is to ensure a full and diverse subject base is used in the future.

NATIONAL WOMENS COMMITTEE

SIS CLARE HUDSON (NWC):

President, Conference, drill ground assessments – as many as 50% of firefighters undertake FireFit drill ground assessments are failing to achieve it within 11 minutes and 11 seconds. This number is higher for women. We're hearing reports that women endurance athletes and high class boxers fail to complete the assessment in the prescribed time, yet their VO₂ Max is nearer to 62.3 than 42.3. Their fitness or strength has never been questioned before yet these assessments are resulting in excellent firefighters feeling demoralised and inadequate.

Strength tests. FireFit took a sample of just 51 young people – 26 men, 25 women – to decide their position on the recommended strength requirements for firefighters. They based these on using a 13.5 metre ladder. Women across the country who have been using 13.5 metre ladders for 20 plus years were all of a sudden being told they weren't strong enough to use those ladders any more as they can't sit in the gym and shoulder press 35 kgs, or they can't do pull down of a weight heavier than they are. You don't see them on the drill ground or on the incident ground dangling off the ladder trying to release the pulls on the ladder. It is just not a true representation.

We've received concerns from women firefighters who are being asked to undertake the strength test at work as a trial. Even though they've never had problems with strength on the incident ground or in training, they were being labelled by peers and managers as being too weak to be firefighters and made to feel inadequate, occasionally with little support from brigade officials.

We feel that the research is flawed. Using data from 50 or 60 young firefighters doesn't represent the workforce. According to the fire stats for 2015/16 there were around 34,400 firefighters in the UK. Therefore the numbers tested are hardly representative of the workforce. It's not even one per cent of the workforce, in fact nearer to 0.1%

of the workforce. We need to engage. We need a structured, consistent approach to further research alongside FireFit and within our Fire & Rescue Services to ascertain realistic, suitable fitness and strength requirements for firefighters based on statistics from a full and diverse selection of people – young, old, men and women. We need to ensure our members are encouraged and supported to maintain safe standards of strength and fitness to enable them to continue as firefighters to retirement.

At the National Health & Safety Committee meeting in March this year the National Women's Committee offered to engage fully with further research, including taking an active role in all liaisons with FireFit alongside of other FBU officials. That was an offer which Sean Starbuck seemed happy to accept.

We therefore call on the EC to work alongside the National Women's Committee to support publicly further research into strength and fitness testing, and to engage with Fire & Rescue Services to ensure that this research is carried out consistently, thoroughly, and to make sure that the mechanisms are in place to ensure that all members are fully supported by other members, FBU officials, and fire service management throughout the process. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Clare. Does that have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate.

BRO MARK WOODWORTH (Bedfordshire):

We are supporting Resolution 38. Bedfordshire FBU believes that the sampling group used to calculate the DGA was not reflective of the UK Fire & Rescue Service. The sampling group should not reflect the makeup of the current Fire & Rescue Service but be closer to that of the wider society. Having our workforce be reflective of the wider society is the aim of the FBU and every Fire & Rescue Service. The sampling group for a fitness test should reflect that of the communities we serve and that of the societies we serve. Bedfordshire FBU also believes that there is a possibility of an inbuilt gender bias within the DGA that was not fully explored by FireFit or the Fire Brigades Union. Was an equality impact assessment carried out?

We would like to instruct the EC to investigate these points further to ensure that we as a union have endorsed a fitness policy which is fair and just for all our members and linked to pensionable age that is fit for purpose. Please support this resolution. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? Sean to give the qualification.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The EC do support this with qualification. What I will say straight away is that we have wrestled fitness from the chief fire officers because when I first started looking at this as part of the pension campaign you wouldn't believe what people were doing out there to prove their fitness. We had some brigades that were out there doing it to people, not doing it with people; some people were doing it never; some people were doing it to certain parts of the workforce; some people were doing it at different levels; and some people were doing it every year, every three months and every ten years! I've collected all the fitness policies and we used this to be part of the FireFit team.

When the initial FireFit kicked off me and Matt found out about it in a meeting with the employers when we were talking about pensions. We suddenly realised that a chief fire officer who we didn't particularly see eye to eye with at the time told us about this FireFit project. So straight away we kept it at arm's length. There's a new person who is sharing it now who we've got a lot better working relationship with: Justin Johnson. I don't know Justin like the members in Lancashire, but he's not the worst deputy chief I've ever met, and he's somebody who will work with us. So we have got some clarification on this.

First of all, the resolution talks about not taking into account an ageing workforce. Believe me, we did because every single meeting we raised the fact that you've got an ageing workforce, and the fact that the increase in pension age had a detrimental effect on women firefighters proportionately. What we've got to realise is that we have been pushing for an objective test in line with the 2015 conference resolution. We have had an equality impact

assessment. I got that when Bedfordshire sent a document in criticising the drill ground assessment. What I will say about that is thanks for sending that in. I've been asking people to give me evidence. Bedfordshire is the only brigade which sent in a document which shows what their problems are. I picked that up and used that to press the employers and FireFit to put out a frequently asked questions which covers a lot of the things. So a lot of the issues around the fitness test and the DGA is how it's been misused. It's not that there's much wrong with it, but that it's been misused.

It has been brought to our attention, London brought a real issue to our attention. Me and Gareth Beaton went down one day and we saw the female firefighters trying to do the drill ground assessment test and it was obvious that they weren't going to pass because the tests they were using were not appropriate to the job they do. So we've sat down and we've worked out a way of changing it. It was about the way that firefighters' roles in London are different.

What we are saying is we will continue the research, and we welcome the opportunity to continue the research. The drill ground assessment isn't the be-all and end-all for testing. It's one way of testing; it's an option. We've been asked to provide an option for firefighters. There's a surrogate test like the Chester step; this is another option. We want to keep this option open for firefighters because some firefighters like to be tested this way. If we've got firefighters with a VO_2 of 62 and they can't pass the drill ground assessment test, why are they trying to take it? Why not take the test which gives them the option to pass a test which is designed around VO_2 ? What we're saying here is we are pushing for a safe standard for firefighters of 42.3. We're pushing this alone in a lot of places, because a lot of chief fire officers would keep you on the run till you dropped. We've got this position. We want to do some more research. There are some issues with it. I'm not going to say it's perfect. There are some issues with it. We welcome the fact that we need to do some more research. Also, Clare, we welcome the fact that the National Women's committee will help because it probably will affect female firefighters disproportionately and will continue to do so. But what you've got to remember is we can't have an age-related test; we can't have a gender specific test because we don't have gender specific fires, and we don't have age-related fires. People can be expected to do the same job on the first day they join and the last day they work. That's the objective justification which means that it's not discrimination. You've got an objective justification.

Work with us on this one because this is us keeping control of our fitness. It's not us giving it back to chief fire officers who will work you till you drop. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. I now put Resolution 38 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 39 Firefighter Fitness moved by Merseyside. Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 39 FIREFIGHTER FITNESS

Conference is concerned regarding the introduction of the 'Drill Ground Assessment' test and its apparent correlation to the cardio-respiratory fitness standards (VO_2 max).

Conference recognises that firefighters should have sufficient levels of cardiorespiratory fitness, strength and muscular endurance to enable them to carry out their tasks safely and effectively. Conference further recognises that fitness levels decline with age though this may be mitigated by fitness training and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The introduction of VO_2 max as a firefighter aerobic fitness measure is welcomed particularly in light of the research published by Edinburgh University in 2017 and the direct link to potential cardiac arrest which has also been identified by other prominent academics in the field of fitness.

However, the manner in which Fire and Rescue Service's test firefighters VO_2 max remains a concern and it appears that there is a plethora of different fitness testing occurring throughout UKFRSs.

The FBU issued advice to Brigade Secretaries through a Head Office circular in December 2016 in which it was stated;

As part of the development work on the drill ground assessment, firefighters were taking part in trials designed to provide evidence to show what pass mark time equated to an individual having a VO₂ of 42.3. These trials involved a range of firefighters of all ages and gender undertaking the drill ground assessment. After a considerable amount of work, evidence has demonstrated that the pass time for the drill ground assessment is 11 minutes 11 seconds.

The concern is that despite the evidence mentioned within the circular firefighters are reporting that they are unable to complete the test within the specified time despite having a VO₂ max far exceeding 42.3.

This becomes particularly difficult when Officials are attempting to achieve the FBU stated position that any firefighter who cannot achieve a VO₂ max of 42.3 be removed from operational duties until such time as they can pass the drill ground assessment as indicated within the flow chart attached to the circular.

Conference recognises that functional testing should run alongside the current surrogate tests designed to ascertain VO₂ max but they should not form the basis of a hybrid functional fitness/ VO₂ max test where practice and technique can be the difference between a pass and a fail.

Conference calls for the link between functional testing and cardio-respiratory (VO₂ max) testing to be removed and further instructs the Executive Council to carry out a review into both functional and cardio-respiratory testing around the country to ensure that national standards are developed and adhered to.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO IAN HIBBERT (Merseyside):

Conference, President, I'd like to start by stating Merseyside is in no way opposed to establishing a national standard of fitness. Nor are we seeking to remove options from our members to prove that they are safe and able to carry out their role as operational firefighters. In fact, we welcome any and all tests and measures that seek to ensure the safety of our members.

That being said, we've watched closely and with some trepidation the roll-out of the drill ground assessment and its apparent correlation to VO₂ cardio-respiratory fitness. Conference, we're all aware of the findings borne out of the University studies which clearly state that firefighters with VO₂ Max of 42.3 or less are at risk of cardiac arrest when committed to a compartment fire, and furthermore, firefighters with a respiratory score of 35.6 or less are at imminent risk of suffering a cardiac episode.

Conference, I'd like to take you back to the initial trials of the drill ground assessment which Merseyside were part of. At the time Merseyside officials and a large portion of our female members undertook the DGA. I'm happy to report all those who participated completed the test. Those members who undertook the test had previously completed medicals and proved their cardio-respiratory fitness utilising one of the agreed surrogate testing methods. With this in mind I'm sure it will be as much of a shock to conference as it was to those members that all those who took part in the trials had in fact failed to reach the time of 11.11. Amongst those members that took part in the trial, as was spoken about before, were a competing swimmer, triathlete and a boxer, all of whom had VO₂ Max's far in excess of 42.3. It was at this point, Conference, that alarm bells started ringing. How could it be possible that members who had recorded a cardio-respiratory fitness level well in excess of 42.3 were failing to meet the time of 11.11 on the DGA, a time which we were assured by the academics was a direct correlation to 42.3 VO₂ Max?

As instructed, we continued to attempt to negotiate our fitness policy, taking into account the national best practice guidance. Whilst doing so, several serious issues raised their heads fairly quickly. Firstly, it appeared to show the

drill ground assessment was and is a potentially maximal test for some of our members. It was expected to be carried out without any heart rate monitoring. It is our belief that utilising the DGA without monitoring, without first ascertaining a member's cardio-respiratory fitness and under the threat of being removed from operational duty, could potentially bring about the cardiac episode we're seeking to avoid in our members.

Following several meetings with the service, they agreed it might be prudent to carry out one of the agreed sub-maximal surrogate tests to establish a safe baseline before completing the potential maximal DGA. Obviously, this seemed a bit strange. You'd already proved your VO_2 so why would you once again be required to prove that VO_2 using the DGA? This is some of the misapplication that the national officer was talking about before.

As we continued to encourage our members to take part in the fitness pilot, more and more members who had demonstrated 42.3 VO_2 using the agreed surrogate tests were unable to meet the time of 11.11 on the DGA. Comrades, I'll be entirely honest with you, we found this to be completely paradoxical. Why are members able to prove a cardio-respiratory score of 42.3 on the surrogate tests and not on the DGA?

Conference, as is often the case, this then went from the sublime to the ridiculous when we were told that members could shave as much as a minute off their time on the DGA, not through embarking on a rigorous exercise and diet regime but by familiarising themselves with the DGA, rolling up a hose a bit tighter, maybe popping the BA set on a chair to assist when donning it. Conference, surely questions must be asked around the correlation: you can improve your score, not through increasing your fitness but by improving your technique. Comrades, we understand some members have requested the introduction of an operational fitness test such as the DGA to prove their fitness as an alternative to surrogate tests, but if I'm entirely honest, I've still yet to meet one.

Conference, we're now an ageing workforce, as has already been said. Changes to pension and retirement ages mean we are being expected to work for longer and maintain our fitness standards potentially all the way to 60, or risk falling foul of capability policies which could ultimately lead to dismissal. Conference, with this in mind we're seeking the following assurances from the EC. DGA will always and only form part of an agreed suite of cardio-respiratory testing; members will always have a choice of how they demonstrate this. Furthermore, no member who has proven their VO_2 through one of the agreed surrogate tests will be required to prove it once again using the DGA. Finally, we're seeking assurance that where services are misapplying the DGA the national officer will raise the issue as a matter of urgency with FireFit and offer any assistance required to local officials. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO MARK LEE (Bedfordshire):

President, Conference, this conference has previously acknowledged the necessity of VO_2 of 42.3 to maintain a safe level of fitness to carry out our roles as firefighters and Bedfordshire completely supports that position. We'd like to speak in support of Resolution 39 from Merseyside and we'd like to instruct the EC to review the methodology behind the link between a VO_2 of 42.3 and the time limit of 11 minutes 11 seconds for the drill ground assessment. We believe that this figure was arrived at in a subjective manner and has little or no basis in empirical evidence.

We would also like to highlight, as has already been said, that individual Fire & Rescue Services are applying the drill ground assessment as best practice guidance within their fitness policies. The problem we've got practically is that it appears to be an off-the-shelf policy that can just be put in and brigades are applying it in a draconian way. For example, for us if you fail your surrogate test, treadmill test, you immediately are taken off the run – rightly so because you don't have a VO_2 of 42.3, but within two weeks you have to complete the drill ground assessment which, practically speaking, is a far harder test. Should you not pass it within the two weeks you're then put on a nine day fortnight in order to try to build your fitness up within three months in order to pass the DGA. When you pass the DGA you then have to carry out the treadmill test again! That is ridiculous. So we would like some assurances from the EC that we can issue some guidance to Fire & Rescue Services to avoid that.

Failure to pass the test will ultimately force members down the performance policy route which will ultimately lead to their dismissal and deferred pension. I would argue that our endorsement of a fitness test in which members

can prove their VO₂ via other avenues is preferable. I am concerned that in endorsing the DGA and having it as 11 minutes 11 seconds it will be seen by our members as an FBU-endorsed fitness test which could potentially cost them their pensions.

So we're not asking to get rid of the DGA. I think that as a suite of tests, having a job-related fitness test is an excellent idea. But Bedfordshire believe that we need to do more investigations into the link between 11 minutes 11 seconds and the DGA and explore whether the sampling group was large enough and to see if we can have more empirical evidence into what time limit actually constitutes a 42.3. Conference, I support the resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

BRO SIMON AMOS (ONC):

Conference, just a quick one on fitness standards. They need to be fit for purpose and we agree with the resolution that there are different tests out there to achieve that standard. Please, in your brigades, at your health & safety committees, however, make sure the same standard applies to all roles and isn't just restricted to people who ride fire appliances. It's already been alluded to that in many brigades flexi-duty officers and principal managers will have a slightly lower standard than firefighters and staff at stations. As Sean alluded to, that is discriminatory. I can't see for my own credibility how I can lead people at operational incidents and have a lesser standard than them. To coin an old-fashioned phrase: don't ask people to do what you wouldn't be prepared to do yourself, or leadership. Please don't let your senior officers get away with having different fitness standards from yourselves. Last time at conference, last time speaker. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Simon. Anybody else? Sean to give the opposition.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

I spoke to Ian quite a few times about this. He even stopped me in the supermarket one time and badgered me about it. Sorry? OK, that's opinion again yes? I wanted to discuss this outside here, but in a way I'm glad that it's come up because it allows me to give the clarifications you want and to give people more information. I think a lot of the problem is the misinformation and the fact that you get brigades like Merseyside who are so punitive and they just want to use anything we're bringing in for the good against us. I would rather have sorted this out outside, very similar to the way we sorted out the one in Bedfordshire. Like I say, I do thank the Bedfordshire officials because they put in a pretty significant document. I'm sure some people have seen it. It has outlined some of the issues with the DGA.

One of their main issues was that their brigade were using it as a return to work after sickness and maternity, even though everybody had said that's not what it's there for. So I will say thank you because it gave me a little kick I needed to raise some of the issues with the Chair of FireFit. I raised all your issues and the issues from Merseyside which I knew about with the Chair of FireFit and we asked about any improvements we need, any chances of getting a review which the last resolution has committed us to. I'm pleased with that. What I also did, I got them to look at some of the issues out there and turn them into a frequently asked questions. What I did with the frequently asked questions, as nicely as I could, was put Justin Johnson on the spot and put the employers' secretary on the spot by saying: "This is what we're going to say to our members; will you have a look at it, and if you've got any problems with it, highlight the differences."

So we put that out to officials in May 2018. I also sent out the updated flow chart from the FireFit conference which showed everybody. We're now saying, that people in the amber section, the 36.5 to 42.2 should be taken off the run for their own safety. I do hope that was helpful. That is what it was designed for, it was designed to be helpful.

Back to this resolution. The crux of the resolution and the crux of some of the concerns which were brought up at the resolution before was the fact that Merseyside have got some members who have got this high VO₂ but can't pass the drill ground assessment. I'm not saying I don't believe you because I wouldn't say that. But I've asked for

evidence. I've asked for evidence from the women's committee, I've asked for evidence from Merseyside saying "can you give me this because this is the sort of thing I need", in a very similar way to the way Bedfordshire brought their evidence which allowed me to put something on the table and say: "Look, they're the real problems; let's go away and look at it".

They're asking, quite rightly, how can we push to take these people off the run if they've got a VO_2 above 42 but can't do the 11.11? So the resolution says let's get rid of the link between the VO_2 and the DGA, the drill ground assessment. That is a massive backward step for us. And, I've got to say this, it would potentially undermine a lot of the work we've done around the pension campaign. The pension campaign is not designed to illustrate that people can work. It's designed to take the fitness off the chiefs and say: "Look, there's a real problem with people working beyond 55". We're going to put in as many options as we can, and support people as much as we can, but there are real options.

If you remember before this, like I said in the previous resolution, it was so inconsistently applied before. We had people on the run, in places, with a VO_2 of 31. Some people were not tested, some sections of our workforce weren't tested, and there's been an issue around the country with different levels of testing for officers. Our position is 42.3 for everybody. I've got to be careful how I put this, but if we allowed a lower VO_2 for officers, firstly we don't agree with it, secondly you'd probably get somebody in a few years from now saying "if you can work at 36 VO_2 instead of 42, you can work to 68". So we're not stupid; we know what we're doing on this one. What we're trying to do is make sure we have got checks and balances in. I think this is what Ian is asking for: some checks and balances.

Firstly, the frequently asked questions explained that if all you want to do is measure VO_2 don't use the drill ground assessment; use one which is tighter on VO_2 , because the drill ground assessment measures firefighter fitness because it's based on the role of a firefighter; it's based on drill ground assessment which is the clue in the name really. The Chester step just measures VO_2 . If that's all your brigade wants to measure, that's fine and we support that. What we're supporting is the options for people because Ian said that he hadn't met any firefighters who liked the drill ground assessment. I've found quite a few. I spoke at Region 6 and one official there said: "Do you know, it was great when we got the drill ground assessment because I hated doing the Chester step; it knocked hell out of my knees; I didn't like doing this; the drill ground assessment suited me. Yes, it was hard but I passed it."

In a similar way, we're talking about getting rid of a VO_2 and a functional test. Yesterday we agreed that every brigade should use the national firefighter selection test, which is a functional test, timed. It might not be quite as hard but it's a functional test timed, linked to VO_2 . So it's all right to use that to get people in, but we don't want it to test current members, or an option for firefighters. So what we're saying is we really do need to think about that. I think I've just explained why a firefighter with a VO_2 above 42.3 can fail the drill ground assessment test: because it doesn't just measure that; it measures other things as well.

Our position, and I tell you what, I'll defend this anywhere, is that we should be pressing people to take people off the run if they've got a VO_2 below 42.3. That is a position we've got to defend because it is a position based on safety. It's a position which a lot of researchers have come back and said: "That's it". It's unchallenged. If we've got brigades, and I know we have, who said we'll keep them on the run below that, then what are they saying? We will keep people on the run? The experts are saying to us: "keep people on the run below that, we can't guarantee their safety and on the amber section they're potentially unfit and they could have a major cardiac issue". So that's why we got that position on that.

We haven't got the same position on strength because we know that there are issues around some people and the strength tests. So we can work on that. You can't work on the fact that if you're got a VO_2 below 42.3 you may have a heart attack. So we are keen on that. We're not actually pushing people to take swathes and swathes of people off the run. What we're saying is that we want people to have a suite of options to prove their VO_2 . That was covered in the frequently asked questions.

This seems to be accepted by most brigades except Merseyside. No, I'm not just pointing at Merseyside, there are others as well. The simplistic approach is if you've got a VO_2 above 42.3 but you're worried about the drill ground

assessment test, take your VO₂ test another way, because you should have options available to suit you. I've got to say, looking at Merseyside, Merseyside have already proved these people have got a VO₂ above 42.3 because they've just been tested by the occupational health. So why the hell would they make them go and do a drill ground assessment test which isn't as accurately measuring VO₂? It's just another case of them being punitive.

We were pushed in 2015, we had a debate on it but we were pushed for a standard fitness test of 42.3 and I think everybody realises why we've gone for that. We were also told that if we were looking at any different test other than the surrogate ones, it should be objectively justified and reflect the role we do, and, through the back door, we've got a national standard on fitness. We never had a national standard on fitness before. We've got one now. It's about us bringing these people into line to make sure that they comply with it.

What we have suggested is that the drill ground assessment test should be used as a during career test. It shouldn't be used as a return to work test; it shouldn't be used as an after maternity test; and it shouldn't be used as an introductory test to the fire service. But it should be used as a career test as part of an option and only as part of an option.

The point about it being a maximal test, I completely agree. That is why, in the frequently asked questions, we put out: "please be aware that if you are going to use the drill ground assessment test it is a potential maximal test". So you shouldn't just push people into it. You should make sure that the people who take the test can deal with high physical endurance. But then again, you think to yourself surely everybody should, because it's based on jobs that people are doing every day. So we're not putting the cart before the horse on this one.

Not the officials, but Merseyside brigade seem to have understood the fitness assessment in a few areas. Kev Hughes sent me their draft policy (which they haven't agreed, by the way, so I don't want you to think Merseyside have agreed this; they haven't). The FRS recognise all the way through the document that 42.3 is the safe standard. They don't challenge it. But then they suggest let's keep people on the run at 35.6. So they're ignoring the recommendations. They also suggest that they use the drill ground assessment for a return to work, despite being told it's not for that. They are wrong and it's that simple: they are wrong. And, as an assurance, I will give people any help they need on this. We proved it in Bedfordshire. I've already spoken to Ian and Kev in Merseyside. What I will say is that if we support that resolution, even if you remit the resolution (and we want you to withdraw it with the assurances that we are giving you) then it ties our hands, it undermines a lot of the stuff we're doing on fitness, and in my opinion, it hands all the control of fitness back to the employers.

You will get all the help you need to fight it locally. It should only be an option. It is only an option. Look at the frequently asked questions, look at what we're saying around it. We've already agreed with the last resolution to have a review, which we will involve people in. What I will say to Merseyside is: please withdraw that resolution because really we don't want it remitted, just withdraw it and work with me. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Merseyside right to reply.

BRO IAN HIBBERT (Merseyside):

Conference, thanks very much for that. Sean, thank you for the assurances you've been able to give there. I thought it was a little bit much offering to settle it outside, but if you want to see me in the car park after dinner ... *(Laughter)*

With that in mind Merseyside are happy to withdraw the resolution. Thank you, Conference. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, we're going to break for lunch. Can we have you back in here at 1400 on the dot, wearing your T-shirts. Thank you very much.

Break for lunch

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now call Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders to give the Standing orders report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you very much, President. Good afternoon, Conference. *Good afternoon*

Delegates list, please. West Midlands: delete Sasha Hitchins, replace with Andrew Scattergood; Shropshire: delete Louise Fletcher, replace with Kent Hallaghan; North Wales: delete Mike Edwards, replace with Blythe Roberts; Leicestershire: delete Peter Trainor, replace with Graham Vaux; ONC: delete Simon Amos; replace with Peter Trainor.

Conference, I need to bring you up to speed with arrangements for this evening. The Standing Orders Committee would ask that you agree to suspend Standing Order 16 so as the hotel can prepare this room for this evening's showing of the film "*The Firefighters Story – One Hundred Years of the Fire Brigade Union*". To accommodate these arrangements your evening meal will be available from 5.30 until 7 pm for all. It will be available in the hotel restaurant where you've already eaten. Can you make sure that you take all your paperwork and belongings with you when conference adjourns this evening. Anything left will be disposed of by the hotel.

Conference, we propose conference adjourns at approximately 1645 hours this evening to give you time to get yourselves ready for this celebratory event. Can I ask everyone to assemble in the room behind you at 7 pm in preparation for the screening. I can assure conference that these arrangements will not impact on conference business and we are, at the moment, looking at a finish time for conference tomorrow of lunchtime. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

Conference, we are now going to turn to page 12 on the Programme of Business, still on Section E and the first thing we're going to do is watch a short, three-minute film that the FBU have produced on Grenfell. Thank you. Can we start the film.

Film shown

Conference, I now call Executive Council policy statement Grenfell Tower seconded by London, Resolution 61 from CSNC Involvement in the FBU's Recommendations Following Grenfell, to be taken all in the same debate. Both can carry. General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, 14 June 2017 will be marked in history – a date of nightmares, of death and of destruction. Everyone attending this conference and every member of our union will have shared the sense of horror at the appalling loss of life at Grenfell Tower. That this happened in one of the richest boroughs in the capital city of one of the richest countries in the world is utterly shocking. A country which cannot keep people safe in their own homes. Firefighters and other public sector workers were on the frontline that night and afterwards. Firefighters were sent to a fire that should never have happened. The central question in all of this is how can this even happen in 2017? How is it even possible that they can clad high rise buildings in flammable cladding?

Our normal procedures for dealing professionally and effectively with a fire in a tower block could not be put into action. The truth is this (and we need to remind people of it consistently) that firefighters very deliberately and very consciously put their own lives at risk.

There is now much comment in the media and elsewhere, and we've already seen some attempts to denigrate the intervention of the London Fire Brigade and of its firefighters. I ask those doing that, but mainly I ask the community

and the wider public, to think of that simple truth: that firefighters deliberately and consciously put their own safety at risk in order to do whatever they could to save the lives of others. That's what our service and our profession is all about.

Conference, we have delegates on the London delegation and we have observers in the hall today who were at Grenfell, and you are very welcome. They are at the back of the hall. *(Applause)*

We say to them and to the hundreds of other Fire Brigades Union members who attended that fire that we in the Fire Brigades Union, and indeed as you've heard this week, firefighters across the world are extremely proud of what you did that night. It will never be forgotten. They did that, Conference, in order to try to save the lives of others, and they did save many lives, often in truly remarkable circumstances. Firefighters worked wonders but they didn't save everyone and that weighs heavily on all those involved. I would ask all those who rush to print at every opportunity to remember that truth, and to remember the impact this horror will have had on those who turned out that night on fire engines.

Jeremy Corbyn mentioned the other day a speech I gave in Durham just two weeks after the fire. I will repeat one of the points I made in that speech because I am very proud to say that almost to a person, the people who went into that tower, the people fighting that fire are members of the Fire Brigades Union. The next time when journalists are covering other debates at this conference about pay and pensions, and when they describe us as militants, we need to remind them of the people outside that tower queueing up in breathing apparatus to be sent in, and remind them that's what trade unionists look like, that's what the Fire Brigades Union looks like.

We should also pay tribute to that community. We saw a remarkable response from the community of self-organisation to assist, to feed and to clothe people. I want to say here very clearly that this union, representing firefighters across the UK, stands side by side with the community of Grenfell and the surrounding area. We stand with the bereaved, the survivors and the residents. We also say "Justice4Grenfell".

We don't see a contradiction between that and the role we have to play in this Inquiry and what follows. There are questions which need to be addressed and we should not shy away from them. The London Fire Brigade should not shy away from them. It will be a long and difficult process for all concerned. I want conference to be aware of the scale of the task we face. There are literally hundreds of statements to be examined, there are thousands of documents to be read. Let's be clear, there are very powerful corporate interests which will seek to ensure that they do not take any blame in this process. Perhaps, if they can pass blame on to a public servant facing an impossible situation, then they will.

I am alarmed that the press had reported immediately that the London Fire Brigade is to be probed around the issue of Stay Put. It's clear to us that the issue of Stay Put needs to be addressed. We have a unique record of examining what has happened at other fires and the recommendations that have emerged from those. So we're well aware of the issues. The truth is, at this stage we haven't heard all the evidence in that inquiry.

I do want to remind conference of another case that we dealt with following the fire at Atherstone-on-Stour in Warwickshire. In that process I met senior police officers who assured us there was nothing to worry about and then three firefighters – middle managers, members of the Fire Brigades Union – were prosecuted for gross negligence manslaughter. In that process their defence was provided by this organisation: by the Fire Brigades Union. In one case the judge dismissed the case very early on in the proceedings, and in the other two cases those members were acquitted by the jury. The truth is, having followed that case very closely, that should never have happened, and that prosecution should never have been brought.

I want to address a suggestion made by one counsel regarding possible institutional racism in the London Fire Brigade. Again, we are not afraid of any line of questioning. If there are failings in the fire service, then those failings need to be addressed. We should not shy away from that. Everyone in that process has the right to ask the questions they want to ask. But in terms of our own record on these issues, we have been part of a 35 year debate around improving diversity in the Fire & Rescue Service. Indeed, this organisation has been at the forefront of pioneering improvements to equality and diversity in the Fire & Rescue Service. The truth is the Fire & Rescue Service doesn't always have a great record, but the most diverse Fire & Rescue Service in the UK is the London Fire Brigade.

The point is missed here – and it's an important point to me – that actually we have members of this union, including members who attended that fire, who grew up in that community. The idea that they, or indeed any other firefighter, treated people differently because of their race or background is not based on any reality I'm aware of, and in my opinion, is a slur upon people who were simply trying to save lives. *(Applause)*

We see political points are being made. I remember very early on in this process we were told we shouldn't politicise this. But the truth is this: that it was political decisions made by government ministers, made by local politicians, often following advice from so-called experts which created the situation, the background to this terrible fire. When we examine these issues carefully we will find that the regulatory regime that has been created over 35 or 40 years has allowed this to happen. Questions need to be asked about the deregulation and privatisation of building control, about the privatisation and deregulation of fire risk assessments, about the halving of the number of fire inspecting officers, about the elimination of publicly-funded fire research in the UK. How the hell is it that we don't even know what's being put on the buildings that we ask people to live in? And we're not even testing properly what happens if there is a fire in those situations. Magically, after the fire, they did lots of tests on cladding that has been put on buildings. Why the hell wasn't that done before the fire?

When all national standards are scrapped in the fire service and when housing is simply treated as a commodity to deliver as much profit as possible for developers, when local authority funding is cut as never before, when regeneration of our estates means that working class people are forced out of London and other cities, and when the fire service is cut on an historic scale, when all those things come together then you have the ingredients that create the situation that leads to the devastation at Grenfell Tower.

Conference will know that the Hackitt review has been published and head office is making a detailed assessment of that final report and its recommendations. It does contain some useful points about the failings of the system and the importance of regulation. However, Hackitt completely missed the boat by failing to call for a ban on the type of flammable cladding that was applied at Grenfell Tower. So let's be clear what we call for in the Fire Brigades Union. We do support a ban on flammable cladding on buildings, but we go further. We say that in every building where that has been applied it should be removed as quickly as possible. That removal should be paid for either by Central Government or by those who are responsible for putting it on in the first place. Residents and tenants should not be asked to bear the cost of that.

The truth is that this union, some twenty years ago, warned about the application of flammable cladding. I read this quote to a public meeting in the Grenfell meeting some weeks ago. We will shortly be publishing a document for public consumption about the background to the fire. When I read the quote from the Fire Brigades Union to a House of Commons Select Committee in 1999 the shock and anger was immense, understandably. We warned: if you apply flammable material outside a building then there is a risk that the fire will leave the building and re-enter above the floor of origin. We made those warnings then.

Hackitt is too soft on business in our opinion in her report. She acknowledges that part-privatising building control has caused problems, but she doesn't reach the conclusion that it should therefore be brought back under public ownership and public control. She registers the failed test regime, but again doesn't call for it to be brought back in-house. She says the industry should own fire safety guidance, but in our view the setting of guidance on fire safety is a job for public authorities. It's a job for Central Government and local government, not for industry to self-regulate. She describes CFA and now the National Fire Chiefs Council as the so-called professional voice of the Fire & Rescue Service. We work closely with some of those people, but I have to say that the record is not good. Those bodies have overseen the period during which this deregulation has taken place. Those people and those organisations need to be held to account as part of this process as well. It was fire chiefs, chief officers, who presided over deregulation, who imposed cuts, who have overseen the decimation of our fire safety departments, and who failed to stand up to government. They can't be given sole responsibility for setting standards when they've been in charge throughout this terrible period. Firefighters' voices need to be heard and that means, in our opinion, the voice of the Fire Brigades Union.

I have to report to conference our concerns about the public inquiry and the process around it. The Westminster government and the judge in charge of the inquiry decided not to investigate the broader deregulation agenda

that lies behind this fire. They have ignored calls to examine the part played by Central Government in the lead up to the fire. They've decided not to look at the role of the Fire & Rescue Service as a whole but to focus simply on the London Fire Brigade. Every firefighter in the country knows this: that the London Fire Brigade is probably the best resourced fire service in the UK. The question arises – I'm sure it has arisen in the minds of chief officers and certainly of firefighters – what the hell would have happened if this had happened in any other part of the country! The devastation truly would have been worse.

They promised that no stone would be left unturned yet for us they are already allowing ministers and senior government officials off the hook by not focusing on decision-making at the very top. We cannot allow those at the very top, the big decision-makers, to get away with not answering the questions that arise out of this fire. We need and we want a complete change of direction from Central Government where the real blame lies. It is policies on social housing and on deregulation that created the conditions behind the fire at Grenfell Tower. It is their policies against regulation and pushing deregulation that created the conditions behind this fire.

We are participating in the public inquiry. Already, something like a thousand firefighter witness statements are being taken. I want to thank those members for their candour in responding to those requests for interviews and for statements from the Metropolitan Police. I want to thank the officials in London, but also from other brigades because the scale of what we had to do was so huge, to provide a rep in every interview, that we needed to seek support from across the country. I thank everyone who assisted in that process.

In a few weeks some of our members will have to give testimony to the inquiry. We will be doing whatever we can to support them, not just on the day, but before and afterwards. We want the truth. But we don't accept the idea of firefighters getting the blame for what happened that night. The Grenfell Tower fire was a crime. If there are prosecutions to be made, then so be it. For us it's those people at the top of government and the system that they have created that should be held to account. It can't just be some subcontractor screwing a bit of cladding on to the side of a building that can be held responsible for this. It's the whole regime that allows that to happen in the first place. That needs to be exposed, not to let those at the very top, the decision-makers, off the hook.

They have created a system of neglect, and frankly, of criminal complacency about the risk of fire, despite warnings from ourselves, the professionals on the frontline, despite in this case warnings from the residents, and despite warnings from many others over many, many years.

I urge people to visit Grenfell. I know many of you have. We have the anniversary approaching. I would urge people to take part in the silent walks that take place every month, and particularly on the anniversary. It's one of the most powerful and moving things I've ever been on. To see a whole community fall silent is truly remarkable. I would urge people to attend that, and I would urge people to attend the national demonstration called by ourselves and Justice4Grenfell on the following Saturday. We need to send a message that firefighters stand side by side with that community. We want truth, we want answers and we want justice.

As I say, if you go to that community you will see and you will feel anger. I have to say, it's entirely justified anger that exists in that community. People are crying out for answers and crying out for justice. This union, and firefighters, stand with them in that. We in the FBU, and I'm sure alongside others here, will leave no stone unturned to achieve this. I move. Justice4Grenfell. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

London to second.

BRO STEVE WHITE (London):

President, Conference, we again extend our deepest condolences to the bereaved, the survivors and the residents of Grenfell Tower. We continue to stand in solidarity with the Grenfell community. It's only right that we pay tribute to the bravery of the firefighters, FBU members, who attended that fire on 14 June last year. They've asked me to make it very clear that should that fire have occurred anywhere else in the UK we're confident in the professionalism and bravery of FBU members throughout this union, who would have behaved in exactly the same way as the firefighters who attended Grenfell Tower that night. *(Applause)*

My role, since then, has been to lead the safety investigation in the London region. What that has meant is best part of a thousand FBU members attended the fire over the course of several days. Several hundred of them have given statements to the police as part of the police criminal investigation which is subsequently informing the public inquiry. My job, in response to all of that, has been to make sure that every FBU member who has been interviewed by the police has had an FBU rep in the room with them, and has had the support of this trade union. That has required the resources of the whole union. We have had reps from all around the country coming into London, helping and supporting us with this process. A number of you I've seen over the course of conference. I extend my thanks personally for all the help that you've offered to the investigation so far. Rest assured, there's some more work coming your way. *(Applause)*

What that's achieved is a weight of information that now goes into the public inquiry. Our members are actively assisting that inquiry in uncovering the truth and in making recommendations that may some way go towards justice for the people of Grenfell.

I want to pick up on a couple of points that are made in the EC policy statement. In point 3 it talks about advice from various bodies. We know all about the running down and the eventual disbanding of the CFBAC, the national oversight body that included this trade union, that gave advice to the fire service nationally. When we look at fires in buildings where the fire has spread through external cladding, as the General Secretary says, that goes back to 1991, the fire at Knowsley Heights, Merseyside. The first fatal fire involving fire spread in external cladding in this country was in 1999 at Garnock Court. Obviously, nothing on the scale of the fire at Grenfell Tower, but in more recent times we've seen footage of extensive fires on external cladding from Dubai, from Australia, from France. In the absence of the kind of oversight that this union was able to provide to the CFBAC, national guidance on cladding on high rise residential buildings is completely silent. It is no wonder that our members were in an impossible situation that night.

On point 1, a turning point. Yes, this absolutely needs to be a turning point for the fire rescue, but it also needs to be a returning point. A return to the national standards of fire cover. In response to the fire at Grenfell Tower the London Fire Brigade increased the pre-determined attendance to all fires in high rise residential buildings to five pumping appliances and an aerial appliance. That's the outcome of a risk assessment. They've weighed up the risks and their control measure is to send that many fire appliances, that many firefighters initially to that incident. How can you conduct that risk assessment elsewhere in the UK and not come up with the same control measures? I put it to you, Conference, that that is an assessment based on budget, not an assessment based on risk. We really need to focus on a return to the fact that our lives are the same in our homes wherever in the country we live. *(Applause)*

On point 8 solidarity with the community we echo the words of Jeremy Corbyn when he spoke to us earlier this week, and we register our disgust that over half of the tenants of Grenfell Tower have yet to be rehoused in permanent accommodation a year after the fire.

Finally, I will leave you with this. We've called for a turning point. Comrades, it's our job to get out there and make sure this genuinely is a turning point in the fire service and in society. Justice4Grenfell. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now call Resolution 61, CSNC Involvement in FBU's recommendations following Grenfell moved by the CSNC section. Executive Council support.

Resolution 61 CSNC INVOLVEMENT IN FBU'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING GRENFELL
Conference notes that following the tragic Grenfell Tower incident a number of concerns have been raised by Emergency Fire Control Members. These concerns include:

- ***Fire Survival Guidance***
- ***Adequate levels of supervision***
- ***Staffing in Emergency Fire Controls, particularly at night***
- ***Resilience in Emergency Fire Controls***
- ***Staffing numbers being determined by call number not work load***
- ***"Buddy" arrangements***

- **Counselling and support for Members**
- **Unsafe working practices.**

Conference demands that the concerns of our Emergency Fire Control Members are taken into account during any Fire Brigades Union discussions regarding Grenfell and with the assistance of the Control Staff National Committee are raised at local and national management level.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

SIS SHERRI KITSON (CSNC):

President, Conference, cast your mind back to 14 June last year. It was all over the news, the fire at Grenfell. Jeremy Corbyn said in here on Tuesday that the firefighters will never forget what they saw, and they won't. We must remain aware that those in control will never forget what they heard. Nothing compared to what's happened in London, but as part of my role in the union I sat in on the police interviews with two members of control. I had to listen and write down everything they said. I had to -- *(Applause)*

Thank you. I had to sit there and watch my colleagues break down as they answered questions from police. While I'm on the subject of the police, at lunchtime I've just seen on the news that London Fire Brigade are being investigated over the Stay Put policy. The police are looking at potential criminal offences.

The majority of members in the union are firefighters. The majority in this room are firefighters. All of your concerns are valid and the FBU support them. We hope that control's concerns will not be lost. We don't want fire controls used for the Stay Put policy to be used as a scapegoat by the government as an excuse for their poor practices.

Has anybody got a tissue? Sorry. Thank you. Is it vodka?

Comrades, I will never know what it's like to walk into a burning building. I work in control, and as Kate said earlier, the jobs are very different. Equally, the majority of you in this room will never know what it's like to take a fire call, in particular a persons reported call where you have to provide fire survival guidance. I listened to some of those from Grenfell and in my nine years of service I have never heard anything worse.

Lessons will be learned, and we must ensure that the concerns and thoughts of our control members are taken into account to ensure that in future we have fully robust practices and systems to be able to cope with such incidents. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Well done, Sherri. Does that have a seconder? Seconder? Yes.

BRO KARL WAGER (Cleveland):

Conference, President, sorry, I can't let that go formally seconded. That needs to be seconded properly. A firefighter is a firefighter, regardless of being in control or going into buildings. I absolutely am proud of my colleagues going in and out of burning buildings as much as I am of my sisters and brothers in control. What you do I could not do. Thank you. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's now open for debate.

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Scotland):

President, Conference, we are fully supporting this motion. I just want to take this opportunity to inform conference of the situation that's been happening in Scotland. Scottish firefighters stand in solidarity behind the Justice4Grenfell campaign. We attended the Scottish Trade Union Congress this year, and we moved a motion supporting the Justice4Grenfell campaign that was passed unanimously. We've also been lobbying the Scottish government and all political parties in Scotland. From that we've seen motions in the Scottish Parliament supporting the Justice4Grenfell campaign.

After Grenfell the Scottish government set up a ministerial working group looking at the impact of Grenfell because all the construction and fire is devolved within Scotland. At the start we asked for a seat on that, the FBU, we demanded a seat on that. They refused, they refused time and time and time again. But our officials and our members never gave up. We lobbied hard, we went to the media, we went to the papers and finally after nine months of hard lobbying we have got a seat on that ministerial working group.

Finally, next week is the anniversary of Grenfell and the movement in Scotland is standing in solidarity. Next week we are having a memorial event outside the firefighter statue at Glasgow Central station with the People's Assembly and Unite, and that evening on the mound overlooking Edinburgh Castle we're also having a memorial event. So Scotland stands in solidarity on Justice4Grenfell. *(Applause)*

BRO DAVE ROBERTS (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference, we are supporting the EC policy statement on the Grenfell Tower fire. Dame Judith Hackitt, that is now synonymous with the Grenfell scandal. Her report looking at deregulation's darkest hour, the 2004 Housing Act, opened with a personal view. This included terms like "ignorance, indifference, lack of clarity" and "inadequate, regulatory and enforcement tools". Looking at my colleagues in Region 10, whom I hold in the highest regard for their selfless actions when they were called to arms on that fatal night, I'm sure they would give a more expansive if somewhat blunt view on that shameful tragedy with regard to causal factors.

I'd like to pick up on Hackitt's last point: inadequate regulatory and enforcement tools. In simple terms, a light touch and self-regulation. Surely the deregulated Fire Safety Order 2005 that we all use now shares this trait, but it hasn't been found out as of yet. While we may furnish the protection managers and auditors with pleasing numbers of inspections, this light touch approach has no substance and as yet no way of proving its effectiveness. How long before we pay the price of deregulation again?

A key point of any IRMP is to identify all known and any foreseeable risks. The Housing Act 2004 has shown itself to be a known risk with regard to HMOs. The Fire Safety Order 2005 – another watered down, limp excuse for regulation – is therefore surely a foreseeable risk. We are regarded as the fire protection experts, but have had the necessary tools taken away from us. It is time for chief fire officers across the UK to stop worrying about their follower numbers on Twitter and to focus more on overturning deregulation to ensure the safety of firefighters and the public.

We demand a more proactive approach with appropriate funding to cover inspection, audit and enforcement for us now and for the safety of generations to come. Conference, please support. *(Applause)*

BRO ANDREW SCATTERGOOD (West Midlands):

President, Conference, I just want to say that those speeches that were made earlier were truly emotional and I want to thank you for that. Working with control members, how much we appreciate you. You are the backbone of the fire service. That is what we call you. I think you did very well.

I just wanted to add a little bit to this debate and some of what happened in the aftermath of Grenfell, because this has massive implications across the country, we all know that. In the weeks after Grenfell we had a high rise incident in Birmingham where we nearly lost three firefighters. It was so close I can't even begin to tell you how close we were to losing at least one firefighter and potentially all three. After that incident where we nearly lost those three firefighters (and this is indicative of the work we have to do) instead of looking at the safety implications, instead of looking at exactly what went wrong and whether we needed to interject in safety matters, our brigade management went immediately for disciplinary action against those three members. That resulted in disciplinary penalties on them. It took a month before they started the health & safety investigation as to what went wrong in that incident.

We went to our brigade management after Grenfell and after London did their risk assessment to say that it wasn't adequate. Our brigade management refused to even look at that. They said that their risk assessment was sound and there was no need to review that, even with the pictures that we had seen a few weeks before.

Conference, we have a lot of work to do. I just wanted to come up here and highlight some of work we will

have to do. This will be ongoing for many years. The West Midlands stand fully behind both these resolutions. Justice4Grenfell. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO DEAN POUNDER (B&EMM):

Good afternoon, Conference. I thought I would get up here and say a few words. I've never spoken publicly about this before. I've spoken to close friends of mine and family. Being a former resident of the Lancaster West estate of 24 years, the very same estate that Grenfell is the heart of, this is all too close to home. I've lost friends, friends that I've known since I was a child, friends of my mum's generation, of my mum's age, the very same friends that, though we don't share the same blood, the same DNA, they're still family, the same friends that would drag me, kicking and screaming to my mum after I'd been caught playing Knock Down Ginger across the lower walkways of Hurstway Walk, Barandon and Testerton Walk. They all sit at the base of Grenfell Tower.

That fateful morning, to wake up at 6 a.m. as I do, and to turn on my phone and to see it basically blowing up. I had lots of messages. There were at least a dozen. Automatically, I'm thinking this can't be good. My first thoughts go to my mother. My mother lives in the area still. Thankfully it wasn't to do with my mum. However, it still hit me just as hard. I think it was my best friend Nathan in fact who sent me a few messages because he lives in Ladbroke Grove within sight of the tower. He showed me the videos and he said Grenfell. I thought: "That can't be Grenfell. I know Grenfell". As a child I witnessed, not personally, fires in the past. As a child you play around on the estate, it might have been the second or the third floor. That tower, before the cladding, is solid concrete and it contained that fire. So it's not the first fire that they've experienced.

For me to then walk downstairs to the living room, to turn on the TV, to witness what everyone else in this room witnessed, my jaw hit the floor. It was a horrible day for everyone, as we all experienced it in our hearts, but it was a hard one for me because I transferred out of the London Fire Brigade two years ago, I now live 270 miles away from London. On that day I was due to have a back operation (which I did have), but my first thought was "I've got to get down to Ladbroke Grove because I know that people are going to need help". There were people homeless and people losing their lives. By the time that I watched it people had lost their lives. I phoned my mum. I said "Mum", she said "Yes, Dean, I know". I said "I'm coming down." She said to me "Dean, don't be stupid, you've got your back surgery today. You stay there, look after yourself. You've been waiting for this for almost a year now." I listened to my mum's advice and I stayed, but throughout the entire day at the hospital I couldn't focus on anything else. Again, just like everyone here in this room knows, it was a horrible ordeal.

One of my friends who got rescued from the tower, her name is Natasha, she lived on one of the upper floors, the 10th or the 11th floor. In fact, we are old primary school friends. It was a few days after the fire that she sent me a message on Facebook saying "Dean, that cover photograph on your Facebook profile, that guy, fourth one from the right or left". I said "Yes, I know who you're talking about." She said "Send him my thanks." He was one of the crew that rescued Natasha, her boyfriend and their daughter. You may have read about Natasha. She was the one that filled up her bath, let the bath overflow to keep their feet cool while they were waiting to be rescued. I'm not surprised because Natasha was always smart in primary school. Furthermore, I would often sit down behind Natasha just to copy those answers! That was a relief to me that she was safe. I passed on a message to my former colleague. She actually bumped into him at the hospital where he was undergoing treatment for burns.

I'm sure every single one of us on that morning had a thought of wanting to be there to support our fellow firefighters on that night. I thought that and then afterwards I thought "I'm glad I wasn't there; I'm glad I did transfer out" because being a former resident of the Lancaster West estate and losing friends, on approach to that tower would I have been able to take up my duties professionally without the emotion hitting me? I'm sure that every single firefighter there would have felt the emotion, especially one particular colleague of mine who, like me, was brought up on that estate and we all worked at Kensington Leisure Centre which lies at the foot of the tower, as lifeguards. So again, it's very close to home. I'm glad I wasn't there because I think I would have broken down. As big a lump as I am, I think I would have hit the ground on my knees and cried.

It is unbelievable in 2017 that we all bore witness to what we did on that morning. It is unacceptable what happened, and it is unacceptable that the London Fire Brigade now is receiving criticism and blame. That pisses me off big time, it does! I know it pisses you all off too. We've got to fight it, we've got to get justice. Justice for those

who lost their lives, their families, their friends, their community. I'm proud that Moyra has been a vocal part of this fight. Much respect to you, Moyra. *(Applause)*

My heart goes out to all the firefighters on that night, my heart goes out to all the control staff that night. What they would have heard down the other end of the line would have been too much to deal with. But they did professionally, so my heart goes out to the control staff too. My heart also goes out to every single resident of all the neighbouring flats and homes surrounding Grenfell who came out in the days, weeks and months afterwards to lend support to those who had lost everything. They are all heroes in my eyes. Justice4Grenfell. Let's keep the fight strong. I support them. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anybody else? Conference, it now gives me great pleasure – sorry, I'd best take the vote. I think it's going to pass. I now put Executive Council policy statement to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 61 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Conference, it now gives me great pleasure to introduce Moyra Samuels and Tasha Brade from the Justice4Grenfell campaign. *(Applause)*

SIS MOYRA SAMUELS (Justice4Grenfell):

Wow! Thank you very much for that warm welcome. I'm honoured, humbled, privileged to be here today. Without your fantastic support neither Tasha nor I would be able to continue the work that we've been able to do for the campaign. It's a year on. I just want to talk a little bit about how we're feeling as a community and how we are feeling as a campaign.

A year on and the community are holding on to our emotions because our screens have been flooded with images of that night. I think a lot of us are kind of holding down some of the pain and trauma we experienced a year ago. We are also quite battle hardened. You know, this has been a tough year and we've had to fight for everything that we've achieved so far. But that battle weariness and that battle hardenedness actually is surrounded by an enormous core of steely anger. This community will get Justice4Grenfell, and that anger is driving us along.

At the same time our community has actually come together. We've always been quite a close community but we've come together in quite wonderful and unexpected ways. We are much more loving, we are much more caring. We look out for each other, we come together in unity over projects. When we see each other we hug each other, we say "how are you". We have a vision now in our community about how you can actually live together in harmony, where we look out for each other.

The public inquiry has begun. You can see the blame game already starting. Days after the fire, maybe a week after the fire, the community started reflecting on what happened at Grenfell. I will tell you, people, this is something we've said again and again; it's not just me but lots of members of our community have said exactly the same thing: "why did Grenfell happen?" Grenfell happened because of austerity; Grenfell happened because of cuts, cuts to the fire service being one of them. Grenfell happened because there's been a consistent emphasis over the last decades that public is bad and private is good, and there has been a drain of resources from the public services and sector into the private sector. Grenfell happened because we had a council (they are still there) who treated people in social housing with what's now become known as "institutional indifference". They treated us with disdain. That is what we've been saying and what we continue to say.

In addition to that, it took a few weeks for us to stop and think: "is there any other factor that may have led to Grenfell?" We all knew about the cladding after it was revealed, so of course the cladding is hugely implicated and I don't think I need to speak about the cladding. Everybody has talked about it. We are absolutely baffled. I was at the inquiry on Monday and I was really shocked at how much combustible materials there were both internally in the flat and externally. I'm sorry to say – and you folk probably know better than I do – that Grenfell was just a deathtrap. How could you put that level of combustible material in somebody's home? I'm baffled, I'm really baffled.

Going back to the weeks that followed the fire we recognised that actually what happened at Grenfell was an attack on our class, it was an attack on working class communities, in particular communities in social housing. We had already as a community been fighting the local council about social cleansing, closing down of resources, our library, the college, the nurseries. We had been fighting all of those campaigns already. So we were quite aware of the fact that Grenfell was in some way the final straw, especially given that actually Ed Daffarn and the Grenfell Action Group had warned about the risks within Grenfell.

We then sat back and thought “Hang on, there’s something else: racism.” Racism has played a role. I know it’s allegedly the firefighters who were racist, but I tell you what we thought. We thought “Hang on a second, how has racism played a role?” Racism played a role because previous to Grenfell we had what I consider one of the most racist Home Secretaries, now Prime Minister. *(Applause)*

Not far from Grenfell, in Southall, they were Go Home Fans. I think some people may remember them, people from London: “If you are not here legally, go home” were the banners going up and down in Southall. We also knew as a community, we were very much aware of the previous decade of anti-immigration emanating from the government. That anti-immigration rhetoric had seeped into mainstream media and had also led to an enormous amount of Islamophobia. Grenfell was known as the Moroccan Tower – 50 out of the 72 people who died in that fire were from a Muslim background. So they were impacted. Their concerns were probably ignored because of their backgrounds, because of the rhetoric that had seeped into the local authority, to the TMO.

We also know that Theresa May stood by and was quite happy to let refugees drown at sea and spend money on building a fence, just to create a hostile environment for refugees and migrants. If we have any doubt where the racism was coming from, look at Windrush. Our North Kensington actually is the home of some of the original Windrush communities. We are the home of the Notting Hill Carnival. So we know the racist environment that the Grenfell community and residents in the tower faced. As far as we’re concerned, that’s where the racism comes from: the tenants management organisation, the local authority and the government.

Justice4Grenfell has four general key demands. Our demands are for truth, our demands are for accountability, our demands are for change because without change we’re not going to have any justice. I think we owe it to the bereaved families, we owe it to the survivors and the community of Grenfell that at that inquiry actually the truth is told. How much confidence we have as to whether that’s going to happen, as they say, the jury is still out. But we demand the truth. We also demand that those people who made those decisions – again, I think everybody’s talked about it – corporate companies, the TMO, the local authority are prosecuted. I’m sorry, for us as a community without any prosecutions we will not have justice. *(Applause)*

But there will be no legacy from Grenfell if we don’t have any change. That’s a really important thing that the campaign is fighting for. We need a change, we need a change in attitudes to social housing. Social housing is not there just for the undeserving poor. Some of us, like myself, choose to live that way. I want to live communally, I want to live with people from different backgrounds, whether that’s economic backgrounds or social backgrounds. We need to value social housing, but we need a change in building regulations; we need a change in fire safety regulations; we need a change that means that ordinary people do not fear that when they go to bed at night they may possibly burn in their beds. So that’s what the campaign is working on. We need to continue, as the inquiry progresses, for the voices of those who are not able to articulate their demands, for their voices to continue to be heard. That means that we’ve tried to promote the silent marches in solidarity so that at the moment on 14 June Tasha will announce all the silent marches that will be happening across the country and there are quite a few. I think that’s really important because without solidarity from the rest of the country, without solidarity from the unions our campaign will not survive. Also, our community will be worn down, ground down, spun a load of nonsense, divided up. We need your support, we need the support of the rest of the country, and we need to go together in unity.

I think Grenfell has held a mirror up to our society. I think all of us have had to look in that mirror. This is not a time to avert our gaze. I think it is important that we realise that our communities, our society, is incredibly unequal. Therefore, how are we going to go forward to demand that that changes? With those kinds of changes, if we go together in unity, both unions and communities, if we demand that, we can have a more just and a more equal society in the future. Justice4Grenfell. *(Applause)*

SIS TASHA BRADE (Justice4Grenfell):

Hi Everyone, I'm Tasha. First of all, thank you for having us here. Thank you for such a warm welcome. I didn't take the standing ovation too well because personally you're all my heroes.

I feel truly honoured to be here. As Moyra said, neither of us would be able to do the work that we're doing without the support of the Fire Brigades Union. So thank you.

Matt mentioned the silent walk in London on 14 June, but I know not all of you are from London so I wanted to share some other locations for you if you wish to attend and reflect. There will be vigils or silent walks in Aberdeen, Glasgow, York, Bristol, Gloucester, Birmingham, Ramsgate, Liverpool, Bradford, Bolton, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Leeds, Dundee and London. On 16 June we, along with the Fire Brigades Union, are having our national demo outside Downing Street. There will also be a solidarity demo here in Brighton.

Once again, thank you for having us here. Thank you for supporting us and thank you for all you do every single day. Let's stay united. Justice4Grenfell. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Moyra and Tasha. We will circulate those amongst our officials.

Conference, we now move on to the next segment, if John could make his way down. *(Applause)*

Conference, it is my great pleasure to welcome John McDonnell. As we all know, John is a great friend of this union and he has spoken at conference many times – too many times than we care to remember. John has been Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington since 1997 and he has been central to the FBU's Parliamentary Group since it was formed more than a decade ago. John has stood by this union through thick and thin, through the good times and the bad, and at a time when politicians were avoiding our picket lines John and Jeremy Corbyn stood alongside us in solidarity. I'm proud to say that John is currently a central leader of the Labour Party and the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer. I hope, and I'm sure that we all hope, that there will be a Labour Government soon and that John will be the Chancellor in that government. Conference, John McDonnell. *(Applause)*

BRO JOHN McDONNELL (Labour Party):

Thanks. I just want to thank you. I thank you for the privilege of being able to attend this debate and listen to the debate which, to be frank, was emotional and at times harrowing to hear. I want to say this as well. I feel proud to stand alongside the Justice4Grenfell campaigners. I went on the silent march last month. As Matt said, it's one of the moving things I've ever been on. One of the most moving elements of it is halfway along, lining the streets are FBU members, many of those FBU members that went into the tower that day. I tell you what I'm also proud of as well. Jeremy Corbyn visited within hours and the first thing he did (some of you may remember) was not make a speech or make any comment, it was just to hug someone, just to express that emotion of solidarity. That's what we'll be doing all the way along.

I hope the inquiry will come to a just decision on the responsibilities of individuals, corporations, politicians and others. I agree with what has been said by Tasha and Moyra as well. Yes, people do need to be prosecuted for what they have done and for not undertaking their responsibilities. I want real justice for Grenfell for all that went on. What happened here was a government and a council and others who were more interested in saving money than they were in saving lives. It isn't just Grenfell, and that's the important thing about the discussions that we now have. It isn't just about Grenfell. This is about what's happening to our community right the way across the last four decades. All political discussion on political economy, economic policy-making has been dominated (we've discussed it as a union) by neo-Liberalism.

What does neo-Liberalism mean? It's our job now to make sure people are fully aware of it. Way back in the late 1970s when Mrs Thatcher was elected it was called Monetarism. Now we call it neo-Liberalism. What does it mean? Well, one of the points of neo-Liberalism is exactly what Moyra said: that concept of private sector good; public sector bad. The element that the market is always right so you deregulate. The concept of trickle down economics where you cut the taxes to the corporations and the rich and somehow that will trickle down and make

the rest of society wealthy. Underlying it all, is the commitment that they have to this unfettered market, and part of that is to undermine trade union rights that they believe fetters the operation of the market.

What has it produced? It hasn't just produced Grenfell. It's produced 3 million of our children now living in poverty. Two-thirds of them are in households where someone's at work. So what does that mean? It means wages are low. Wages are lower now after eight years of austerity than they were in 2010. You work alongside paramedics. It's meant a winter crisis is now a permanent crisis in our NHS. 100,000 people treated in ambulances this winter because they couldn't get into A&E. It means a million of our elderly and others can't get the social care that they need. It means a million and a half of our people are on housing waiting lists. To be frank, most of them will never see a council house; they will have to wait so long. In my constituency tonight we'll have people sleeping by the canal, in the parks, and yes in beds in sheds and in garages rented out to them because of the housing crisis that we've got.

Then in education, the first cuts in our schools since the 1980s. Kids who have done everything asked of them, stayed on at school, done their A levels, got the results, gone to university, come out of university with a £57,000 debt. That's what neo-Liberalism has meant in our society. It's dominated for 40 years, but this last eight years of austerity has been neo-Liberalism turbo charged in terms of the cuts that have taken place. It's a scandal.

Matt said we're the fifth richest country in the world and yet a few months ago we had someone homeless die, feet away from the entrance to Parliament. That's what neo-Liberalism has done.

You've seen what it's done to the fire service as well. Thousands of jobs gone. Our members' lives put at risk as a result. Fire stations closed. Yes, some fantasies going on as well about potential for further privatisation even of our own service. That's what neo-Liberalism has done in terms of the dominance of our thinking in politics and policy-making for the past 40 years, but intensively over the last eight years.

So today a number of you said this is a turning point; Grenfell is a turning point. It's more than just a turning point for how we deal with fires or how we house people; it's a turning point for politics in this country. Grenfell wakes us up. It is the mirror on our society, exactly as has been said. It's a society where, to be frank, in the fifth richest country in the world if we can't keep our people safe it is a bloody disgrace, isn't it! *(Applause)*

We cannot tolerate this to continue any further where lives are lost, life chances are destroyed and at the same time we've seen our public services undermined on a scale we've not seen since the establishment of the Welfare State after the Second World War.

What's the solution? I'll tell you what the solution is, and your members made a decision a few months ago what that decision was last year. The decision is to get a Labour Government elected, the decision is to get Jeremy Corbyn into Number 10. A few years ago I would come along, do the speech here, and I'd be a backbencher. To be honest, Matt knows I had a heart attack a few years ago. I thought I would drift into quiet retirement, sit at the back of the hall grumbling that no-one ever listened to me and that's why it's all gone wrong. *(Laughter)*

Then Jeremy Corbyn decides he wants to run for leader. In fact, he didn't want to run, we told him he had to run for leader. Now there's an opportunity that we have a Socialist going into Number 10. And if he appoints the right person, a Socialist going into Number 11. *(Laughter) (Applause)*

That was a job application.

We just stand on the edge of being able to put an end to all that neo-Liberal dominance that we've had for 40 years and transforming our society. For some of us this is a dream becoming a reality: a Socialist in Number 10, bringing forward a Socialist programme to transform our society. I will tell you what it means, what that will be. Mention has been made of inequality. We have inequality in our society largely because of this concept of trickle down economics: cut the taxes to the corporations and the wealthy and this money will trickle down. No, it never does! What the Tories have done is cut the taxes to the corporations and the rich. In the life of this Parliament if they get their way there will be another £70 billion given to the corporations and the rich in tax cuts. So we've said when

we go into government – I don't say "if", I say "when" – we'll introduce a fair taxation system. Yes, there will be an increase on the top 5% of income, not a great one but a top 5% increase. It's literally asking the wealthiest who have been getting the most over the last few years to pay a little bit more. We're going to reverse many of the corporation tax cuts that have gone on. But also we're going to introduce something this union has debated in the past: a Tobin tax, a tax on speculation in the City of London. Then also we're bringing forward, and we've announced it months ago, a tax enforcement and transparency programme so the rich and the corporations are going to pay their taxes for the first time in our society in a long period of time. *(Applause)*

We're not willing to watch the City of London being used to launder money like some funnel that then channels it out to overseas territories and tax havens abroad. We will ensure they pay their taxes. We will invest that money, we will invest those resources in rebuilding our economy, making sure we're a productive economy. At the moment what's happening is the manufacturing, the productive side of our economy, is making and creating the wealth and that wealth is being put into property speculation. We'll ensure we invest in our economy, in the skills, the infrastructure that we need and grow the economy that way.

But also a fair taxation system means that we'll be able to invest in our public services. We've said very clearly, and you saw it in our manifesto, we will not only reverse the cuts that happened in the fire service, we'll make sure it's invested in the future. But it will be invested on the basis of the knowledge of those people who know best: you, the frontline workers. That's why when we go into government, you'll come into government with us, to make sure the correct decisions are made. But it will be right the way across the piece.

We're going to make sure that education is properly funded. We're going to make sure there's a national education service from cradle to grave, like the NHS. I've said to Angie Rayner, our Shadow Secretary of State, in the Attlee government they introduced the NHS and it made Aneurin Bevan famous for it. I said "You're going to be the Aneurin Bevan of our government. You're going to introduce a national education service where education is free, free child care, free from cradle to grave." That means when those youngsters go off to training or higher education, go to university, go to college they will not be burdened by debt because we're going to scrap tuition fees. For us education is a gift from one generation to another; it is not a commodity to be bought and sold.

We'll ensure as well that when people need a roof over their heads they will get it and it will be a decent one. We've said we'll build a million new homes. Do you know something? Half of them I will be proud to call council homes once again. *(Applause)*

In the NHS, let's make it absolutely clear, it isn't just about funding. When we do the meetings around the country, we've been meeting nurses, doctors and ancillary workers. It's interesting the commitment that they've shown, like you, to their service. The first thing they say to us is "Yes, we need the resources put in, yes we need decent pay, we need respect, but you know there's no use putting the money in if it goes out the back door into the pockets of Branson and all the other privatisers". So we've made this absolutely clear. In our public services, whether it's the fire service, the NHS, education or anywhere else, there will be no privatisation, and we will bring services back in-house. We will end the PFIs and we'll bring them back. Why? Because they're rip-offs, they always were rip-offs, to exploit not just the workers themselves but also to exploit the taxpayers too. We believe in that way we can actually restore the fabric of society that's been undermined by 40 years of neo-Liberalism and also the last eight years of austerity.

But, you know, we have to tackle poverty. I said about inequality in our society. If you're a chair or a director of a FTSE 100 company you're earning now 160 times the average worker in that company itself. That can't be right. The reason that's happening is because for decades now – and I regret too, unfortunately under a Labour government too – we've allowed trade union rights in this country to be undermined. We're not asking for the earth; we just want a government that will abide by the law, the International Labour Organisation Conventions about what trade union rights should be – the right to organise, the right to withdraw your labour, the right to representation. So we've said we'll set up a department of employment that will be responsible. First of all, the first act, within 100 days of a Labour government, we will scrap the Trade Union Act that the Tories introduced to undermine trade unions. *(Applause)*

We will ensure that John Smith's promise, our Labour leader in the 1990s who tragically died, that when people start work from day one they will have employment and trade union rights. That's what we'll ensure happens. We'll ensure the right of representation. We'll ensure the right to trade union access to sites. In addition to that, we'll restore collective bargaining, national and sectoral, so that people can be properly represented and effectively represented as well.

Let me say just as an aside, I hear there's a problem in the West Midlands. Let me make this absolutely clear. It is not the role of any council, especially Labour councils, to be tearing up people's contracts, full stop. *(Applause)*

We believe we can have a fair taxation system, we can invest in growing the economy, we can invest in our public services, we can ensure that people have rights, that we can democratise our economy. Part of that democracy is about making sure that we have control over certain basics that we need in life. So that's why we have said we will bring back into public ownership and control water, energy, rail, Royal Mail. We're not going to be ripped off by the privatisers any more. We want an economy that is managed on behalf of the many not the few. If we can bring all those things together, including the restoration of trade union rights, we will be able to create a society – I will describe it in these terms – radically more fair, radically more equal, radically more democratic, yes, a prosperous economy but that prosperity based on an economy that's economically and environmentally sustainable, where that prosperity is shared by everyone. What do you call that? I call it a word that wasn't used in the Labour Party for a period. I call it Socialism. That's the society that we want to create.

I'm proud that this union reaffiliated to the Labour Party, because it was a fundamental gain for Jeremy and myself. It demonstrated, just as we had maintained solidarity with yourselves, your solidarity too. More importantly, you gave us your commitment and your experience and also your ability to demonstrate that we can actually transform people's lives.

I don't know when this General Election is going to come. What we have at the moment is a Conservative Party under Theresa May that's in office, not in government. In Parliament at the moment, to be frank, apart from the Brexit legislation, we're on one line or two line whips and the only votes that come are when we force them on our own backbench business, our own debates that we have. It's because we don't know who's in charge of government from one hour to the next. There's rows within Cabinet from different coalitions. If you go into Parliament in every darkened corner there's a group of Tory MPs plotting. On her backbenches she can't convince them on a whole range of policies they want to bring forward. Then above all else, the DUP has a veto on every policy that comes forward. I don't think that's sustainable. I think they're going to implode but I'm not sure when. At the moment, we're gearing up for a potential election in the Autumn, but whenever it comes we'll be ready.

What we're doing now is we're taking the old manifesto from 2017, we're radicalising it and you will be part of that debate and discussion of how we do that, taking those individual policies, working them up into implementation manuals and then even drafting the legislation. I want to be in a position, by the end of the recess, the end of July when we have our own draft Queen's Speech, we've already got our draft budget prepared, so that if the election comes we go into it and then we come out of that and hit the deck running in government. That's where we're at. That's the seriousness of it. It does mean yes, we come to terms with implementation of the referendum decision with regard to the EU, respect it by getting the best deal we can in terms of protecting the economy and jobs.

For me, despite the enormity of that challenge, actually it's the most exciting thing I think that most of us have faced over the last generation. For the first time we now have hope, hope of change, but transformative change that can transform all our lives, the services that you work in, that you provide, the communities that we live in, society overall. That's the hope that we bring. As I say, you'll be with us all the way along, just as we've been with you all the way through as the President said, even in some of the darkest times as well. We value your solidarity. You'll be coming into government with us. I've said it time and time again at these conferences, what do you need? You need absolute determination that this is going to happen. It is going to happen. It's not if, it's when. You need courage sometimes. You've shown it, not just in your service but also you've shown it in disputes as well. When you stand up sometimes, no matter what the media throw against you and you're swimming against the stream, you have to, you know it's right so you stand up courageously on principle. But above all else, I say it again, the most important thing is the thing this union has displayed time and time again, we put it on our banners: Unity is Strength; an Injury to One is an Injury to All. It's that quality of solidarity that will see us through. Solidarity. *(Applause)*

GENERAL SECRETARY:

John, you mentioned the debate we've just sat through. I'm glad you were here for that debate. It was indeed an amazing period of hearing from different voices, including many voices within our own organisation. I'm sure you will take that back.

You mentioned the Jeremy Corbyn Labour leadership and the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn. When Jeremy visited the Grenfell Tower fire I was there. Myself and Gareth were there. I think we'd been talking to the London Fire Brigade Commissioner. I think she was a bit worried because Theresa May was just about to arrive and she thought maybe we were going to cause some trouble or something. We said "No, we'll just sit on this wall", and we sat on this wall. To her credit, the first thing she did was to introduce Theresa May to us and said "These are the Fire Brigades Union, they've been brilliant in the past two days!" The Prime Minister was a bit taken aback. But the thing that struck me about it was the contrast between a very highly stage managed visit of someone in the Prime Minister's office and what happened a couple of hours later when Jeremy Corbyn turned up. It had an impact on FBU members, but it had an impact even on senior officers who were not members of this union. The warmth that you've talked about was tangible almost, this attitude. Members of ours coming up and asking if they could get a photograph with Jeremy and stuff. That was just within the cordon of the firefighting operations. Obviously, the same was much bigger outside in the community.

I think that's the hope that we want to see. We're very pleased that we've had a long relationship of comradeship and solidarity both with yourself and Jeremy, as Ian said, through good times and bad. You know that we stand shoulder to shoulder with you against challenges that you've already faced and no doubt will face in the future. This union will stand very firmly alongside you. It's been great to have you here. I thought of a new phrase this time. It's our centenary year and John's house is probably cluttered with tat that we have given him over the years. This one was Tam McFarlane's idea. It's a pictorial centenary poster about firefighters' personal protective equipment. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. We certainly hope we do see you as Jeremy's neighbour in Number 11. What I would say is we thank you for your commitment to invest in the fire service and public services, but we will hold you to account. We have a habit of protesting in that neighbourhood and we'll be there again on Saturday with Justice4Grenfell.

Right, we're now going to move on and this is going to be very technical. Everybody, all take your ID lanyards off. Have you all done that bit? Don't lose it because you won't get back in without it. Right, now everybody stand up. It's going well, it's going well. On my left all shuffle to the right, to the middle of the aisle. Stop. On my right, shuffle to the left. To my left, that's brilliant. Now we're all coming down there to have our photograph taken. When you're released from that it is tea break.

A photograph was taken

Break for tea

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now call Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders to give his report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Conference, first of all, just so that we have the endorsement of the Executive Council's Annual Report which, as you know, is at the very end of conference business, I need to bring to your attention that that report has to be completed so that you can endorse it. The Grenfell Tower debate, we were working right on the last minute of that debate because of visitors that we had. We were making sure that we'd got everything in place. Unfortunately, we missed something out which should have been done through the President. I apologise for that. The person responsible has been severely dealt with! It wasn't me.

Para E10 Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry, we needed conference to agree that paragraph so that the verbatim report is correct and so that the endorsement will be correct. I would like to ask conference if you agree my report that we agree that we have done para E10. Thank you.

Delegates list: South Wales: delete Mike Alexander, replace with Steve Saunders; Derbyshire: delete Chris Tapp, replace with Tony Dempsey.

Conference, the Standing Orders Committee have received a request from West Yorkshire for a bucket collection when conference adjourns this evening. The Standing Orders Committee have agreed to a bucket collection for the Freedom Flotilla Coalition. The Freedom Flotilla Coalition is sailing in 2018 with three basic goals. The first to restore the right of freedom of movement to the people of Occupied Palestine. The second to end the illegal and inhumane Israeli blockade of Gaza. The third, the right to a just future for Palestine, political solidarity. That's a charity. Please give generously. I hope you can support the bucket collection. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

We now move on to Section H page 10 of the Programme, Equality and Fairness at Work, para H1. I now call Resolution 75 Sexual Harassment in the Workplace moved by London. The Executive Council are asking London to withdraw or they will oppose.

Resolution 75 SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

The impact of sexual harassment in the workplace can have a damaging effect on the recipient's mental and physical health, often resulting in poor performance and attendance at work. The cost to an organisation can also be considerable. It is therefore a major issue.

This Union is committed to representing women, however, any Member may experience sexual harassment. The FBU and the Fire Service should encourage victims to refer the case to the Police for investigation immediately. In all cases the wishes of the victim must remain paramount.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to educate and inform Reps to ensure that they support and encourage victims to contact the Police and report any form of sexual harassment in the workplace.

LONDON

SIS LEONI MUNSLOW (London):

President, Conference, first conference, first time speaker. *(Applause)*

Conference, the first representation case I was responsible for was to support a female firefighter who was off long-term sick with PTSD. Her PTSD was not caused by traumatic incidents attended, graphic injuries witnessed on duty, or at a fatal fire, as you may expect. Her PTSD was caused by a systematic campaign of sexual harassment conducted by her watch manager, assisted by her watch. At no point during this process did the brigade or the union encourage her to report this to the police. This was kept in-house and ultimately she suffered and continues to suffer from the lack of support she received.

The harasser was dismissed but faced no criminal charges for his actions. Worryingly, across the country this is not a one-off, a rarity, or an extreme example. Women and men are sexually harassed in offices and businesses across the country in both the private and public sector. A ComRes survey of 2,000 people carried out for the BBC found that 53% of women and 20% of men have been sexually harassed. 63% of the female victims and 79% of the male victims did not report the harassment to anyone. These figures show that despite improvement the problem of sexual harassment remains prevalent.

A study on the economic and career effects of sexual harassment on working women by Heather McLaughlin states that: "Women quit work to avoid harassers, others quit because of dissatisfaction or frustration with their employers' response. In both cases harassment targets often reported that leaving their positions felt like the only way to escape the toxic workplace climate."

This study notes many unseen consequences of sexual harassment in the workplace. Disturbingly, people do not have to be victims of sexual harassment to be affected by it. The study comments that workers in environments where sexual harassment persists were: “ostracised by co-workers for challenging misogyny in the workplace, even though they were not direct targets of harassment themselves”.

Conference, it is our role as equality advocates to make sure sexual harassment is challenged. We have the confidence and the respect of our members to stand up. We need to say that sexual harassment will not be accepted on our fire stations, in our control rooms, or at our headquarters. We, as union officials, will work to stamp out harassment at every level. We need to lead, not follow, and encourage those affected to speak up, and support them when they do.

The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease in December 2017 published a study on women firefighters and workplace harassment. The conclusion comments that: “Overall, this study revealed that women firefighters who have experienced sexual harassment while on the job might be at increased risk for suicidal thoughts and other attendant mental health conditions. These include, but are not limited to, increased likelihood of depression and PTSD in those who experience sexual harassment on the job.”

Our motion puts the choices of the member at the centre of the decision. It is clear from all of these studies that there are pressures, both seen and unseen on people to allow the horrific behaviours to go unreported. To challenge properly and tackle these subversive pressures on victims we need a fresh and proactive approach. While always respecting the wishes of our members we feel it's vital to eradicate the hostile environment and counter the trivialisation of such behaviours. We must encourage, where members are willing, that the offence be properly and thoroughly dealt with by the correct authorities. Make no mistake, Conference, this motion does not call for officials to act as proxy police officers; it does not call for union officials to force any member to act against their will. What it does call for is to help, support and encourage when assisting members in breaking through this wall of silence.

The FBU is firmly committed to opposing all forms of discrimination. We are proud to express that we treat all of our members and our communities with dignity and respect. Will you, Conference, today make a statement showing that our union will not trivialise sexual harassment? Every hard step made in the fight against subjugation has taken brave people to make brave choices. We in London stand shoulder to shoulder to make meaningful change that will fight against this oppression. I ask conference today, will you? Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Leoni. Does that have a seconder?

BRO CAMERON MATTHEWS (Cambridgeshire):

President, Conference we are seconding London region's Resolution 75. Firstly, I want to applaud London region for debating this serious issue and bringing this resolution to conference. Secondly, I'm not going to be verbose in my contribution. I think our Sister Leoni has spoken very eloquently and clearly about the absolute need to pass this resolution here today.

Passing this resolution is about demonstrating our solidarity in the workplace with members who are facing sexual harassment. It's about being very clear on our support for comrades in a situation which undoubtedly feels isolating. The issue of sexual harassment in the workplace has more recently had its profile raised in horrific cases such as the Harvey Weinstein case, and has been highlighted in the #MeToo campaign. So I feel it's a really pertinent time that we as a union make our position very clear.

I will give you an example why. In Cambridgeshire some years back a member was subjected to repeated sexual harassment in the workplace. The FBU represented the member, but regrettably, due to the protracted nature of this incident the member felt that there was no way that she could remain in the workplace and her position in the service had become untenable. As a result, she was forced into having to leave the service. This is obviously completely unacceptable and we need to make a statement here today, Conference.

Everybody deserves to be able to come to their workplace free from harassment. By passing this resolution what we do is we demonstrably show that if it does occur in the workplace, the FBU will be forthright in its support

for members. So let's be bold again, Conference. Let's remember our strong history on equalities, and pass this resolution and implement into union policy our commitment on tackling sexual harassment in the workplace. I second Resolution 75. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

SIS CLARE HUDSON (NWC):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Resolution 75. Sexual harassment comes under the Harassment Act 1997. This covers a wide range of behaviour, including behaviour which alarms or distresses the victim. This Act gives both criminal and civil remedies. If someone's house is broken into, or if their car is stolen, we would encourage the victim to contact the police. Why should a victim of sexual harassment be advised differently? We support. *(Applause)*

BRO BARRIE DAVIES (Mid & West Wales):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Resolution 75. Last year I had the very upsetting duty of representing a very young FBU member in a very serious case of sexual harassment at one of our stations. Sadly, she's no longer with the service, her career cut short under horrific circumstances, nothing we could do to support and encourage her to remain in the service. I visited the family home and saw the effect it had on her family, her partner, and other people on the station as well. I think it's time that we brought this up on the radar. It is an opportune time, as Cameron has said. It's in the forefront after the Weinstein debacle. Please support. *(Applause)*

BRO DEAN POUNDER (B&EMM):

Good afternoon, Conference. I am speaking in support of Resolution 75. In 2018 in the workplace sexual harassment should be unheard of. Unfortunately it isn't. All too often it's commonly known that these scumbag perpetrators of blatant and aggressive sexual harassment stem from a position of power, abusing their authority with their bullying tactics, thus forcing a work life of misery to the recipient, violating their dignity, creating a hostile and offensive environment to somebody they are supposed to respect and protect. According to the official analysis of violent crime figures one in five women in England and Wales have experienced some type of sexual assault. As stated on the #MeToo website, since 1998 17 million women have reported sexual assaults.

Just because you may not witness it in person, just because the female firefighter on your station seems polite and happy however quiet in nature, does not necessarily mean everything is OK. Don't get it twisted. Sexual harassment is real and it's a lot closer to home than you would actually like to believe. Open your eyes, be observant, spot the signs. Not all sexual harassment behaviour is of the aggressive and invasive type. What may seem nothing to some – like making lewd comments, inappropriate touching, sharing sexual anecdotes – means a life of misery for the person on the receiving end. Even the most subtle comments could be deemed harassment, which is why members throughout the UK Fire & Rescue Service should be made aware of such behaviours. We're brothers and sisters. Are we supposed to treat each other accordingly? Should we not expect to work alongside colleagues we trust implicitly? When we run into burning buildings isn't it natural for us to look out for the well-being of our crew? Therefore, shouldn't it be natural for us to protect each other on the fireground, back on the station, in the drill yard? There's no place for sexual harassment in the UK Fire & Rescue Service. There's no place for harassment period. We're brothers and sisters, approximately 35,000 strong. Respect our unique bond. I second and I support. *(Applause)*

BRO ADAM TAYLOR (Leicestershire):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Resolution 75. As a trade union we have long been promoters of a more inclusive, more equal fire service. We have the most vibrant equality sections of which we should be exceptionally proud. The fire service is clearly underrepresented by women firefighters, and as a movement we should look at the reasons why this may be. I think it's fair that we accept that still to this day some of the public believe the fire service to be a role for men. We must continue to challenge this. Sexual harassment, though, as identified in London's resolution doesn't only bring about female victims, but all members, anyone here, could be subject to sexual harassment. We do not feel that this resolution is requesting a great deal. It is only making a

request that the EC inform, and through that communication educate our officials and members that if they are subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace they should contact the police and report the incident. We don't feel this is too much to ask, and therefore we support. I support. *(Applause)*

BRO STEVE HOWLEY (North Yorkshire):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Resolution 75. I just thought I'd like to share with you a little story that I've got of dealing with a case of sexual harassment, which turned into bullying harassment, which then turned into physical harassment which went unnoticed, so to speak, on the watch for a number of years and led to a young female firefighter leaving the job on ill health. Serious mental ill health. I've got a pensions medical appeal next month to try to get the individual a higher tier pension.

This individual has been left with suicidal tendencies, she's under constant medical care through Mental Health Crisis teams and this is as a result of potentially a watch maybe turning a blind eye or not recognising, not picking up because they were frightened to get involved or what? The perpetrator went unnoticed, so they say. Now, that has led to a situation where this individual has got serious PTSD through this action and the Fire & Rescue Service are refusing to accept that it's workplace related, even though every medical specialist says in their reports it is workplace related. Through that they've covered up this process. The perpetrator left the job, got a job somewhere else and can probably carry on doing whatever he did in other industry. Because of that it's seen that it's fine. The individual is no longer in the brigade, everything is happy, everything is fine. Probably the individuals on the watch who maybe didn't speak up at the time don't want to speak up now because they're actually feeling guilty because now it's all come out they maybe should have done something.

What this resolution is asking for in my opinion is to give the individuals a little bit more support where it takes it out of the brigade's hands and into a different arena where perpetrators, if they leave the brigade, can still be brought to justice. Conference, I support. Please support this resolution. *(Applause)*

BRO MICK CAMBERS (West Sussex):

President, Conference, I'm going to ask the EC whether they would like to change their decision on remitting or opposing this because I am speaking in support of this and I think the EC should change their minds. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Any more? General Secretary, are you going to change your mind?

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Change my mind? Pause. The Executive Council magically have listened to the debate of conference. Yes, we will adjust our position. *(Applause)*

It is qualified support. I do need to raise a couple of the concerns that the Executive Council had. The first one is about our process. Issues relating to bullying and harassment are, of course, covered in a longstanding policy document of the union which is All Different All Equal. All Different All Equal has been through several reviews, including consultation with brigade, regional and section committees and this issue has not been raised during the course of those reviews. So it would have to be written into that policy. We're quite happy to do that. Clearly, conference needs to be alerted to the fact that that will revise your document All Different All Equal.

The second one is about precisely how this would operate. The approach that we broadly would take is that clearly any form of harassment, including sexual harassment, needs to be challenged and taken up in the workplace. There are responsibilities on FBU officials and members; there are also responsibilities on employers. We need to ensure that employers have in place adequate policies and processes which they then implement in terms of investigation of concerns and complaints, support for employees who are affected by that, and of course taking action. That's the failing in many cases. I think Steve referred to one such case. So the priority for us is in relation to putting into place those measures in terms of the employment relationship: the worker's rights, the role of us as a trade union trying to represent those members affected; and then our dialogue with the employer about what we expect an employer to do to deal with such circumstances.

I think Dean touched on this very well. That actually sexual harassment is not always the most obvious, aggressive, or violent example. It may take many forms, some of which (as was said) may be extremely subtle. I think that's where we may enter into problems in terms of what attitude the police may take to such reports. That might mean us seeking legal advice in individual cases. We had a number of occasions throughout the past decade where we have supported members through a legal process relating to sexual or other forms of harassment. That will continue to be the case. Within that it may well be that there is a police matter that should properly be brought to the attention of the police. I understand that where this resolution originated applies to one case in the London Fire Brigade where we believe the LFB didn't take appropriate action. Clearly, we shall be taking that up.

With those two provisos and qualifications the Executive Council does adjust its position and support the resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 75 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now move on to para H2, para H3, para H4, para H5, para H6. Section F Trade Union and Labour Movement para F1.

SIS KATE SCOTT (CSNC):

Conference, President, on an FBU course last year (the mental health so I highly recommend everyone go on it; it was excellent) the tutor asked us to define the difference between management and leadership. You can imagine the responses. The tutor's definition was that management is done to you; leadership is done with you. We would ask the EC to lead from the front and work with the CSNC in raising political awareness of the demands of working in an emergency fire control. One of the key aims of the FBU is to ensure the expertise and experience of our members is heard within government and beyond.

On Tuesday we had Jeremy Corbyn here one of the FBU's biggest supporters. But he failed to mention control staff at all, yet he mentioned virtually all other sections. This to me shows a continuing need for political awareness. We commend the work that's been done already, particularly by National Officer Tam McFarlane who has done some excellent work in raising the profile of control staff around the country through social media and initiatives like the t-shirts and the tote bags (they're only £1.80 from the shop). Actually, due to the fact that we get paid less I think they are 5% cheaper than the ones with firefighters on them! *(Laughter) (Applause)*

However, we can still do more. Through increased awareness and political raising of the life-saving work of fire control operators we may just stave off some of the issues on the horizon. You've seen today through my excellent colleague Sherri's sterling speech how important control staff are. So I would ask the EC to work with us and push our agenda forward. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

We're now on para F2, para F3, para F4, para F5, para F6, para F7, para F8, para F9, para F10, para F11. I now call Resolution 69 Mandatory Re-selection moved by West Midlands. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 69 MANDATORY RESELECTION

As the FBU is again affiliated to the Labour Party, it is essential that the FBUs position on Labour Party policy is made clear.

Conference condemns any Labour Party Member of Parliament who attempts to de-stabilise the Labour Party and who seeks to return the Party to a proausterity position.

Conference notes that under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour Party is being returned to a Labour Party that truly represents the working class.

Therefore, Conference agrees that MPs should not assume that their elected position is a 'job for life'. They represent their constituency but ultimately they are selected by and accountable to their Constituency Labour Party.

To ensure democratic accountability and the rights of party members to select candidates that reflect their views, Conference supports the need for mandatory reselection of Labour Party MPs in each Parliament as essential.

WEST MIDLANDS

BRO ANDREW SCATTERGOOD (West Midlands):

President, Conference, Tony Benn once told us that we should ask five questions if one were to meet a powerful person: what power have you got; where did you get it from; in whose interests do you exercise it; to whom are you accountable; how can we get rid of you? He went on to say if you cannot get rid of the people who govern you, you do not live in a democratic system. These questions are vital to maintain democracy in whatever form they may take, whether for a country, a trade union or a political party. However, as things currently stand within the Labour Party it is very difficult to answer any of those questions, but particularly the last one of how do we get rid of you.

Bringing real democracy into the Labour Party is essential. Allowing members to have a real say over who represents them and how they can hold them to account is vital if we are to have any chance of achieving our main goal which is to bring about a society which has the working class' best interests at its core under a Socialist system and style of governance.

Conference, this resolution is about stating that this union believes in democracy and that if the Labour Party is unable to ingrain democracy into its structure and give Labour Party members the ability to answer those five questions that Tony Benn set, then we will ensure that we are part of making sure that they do. Jeremy Corbyn, since first elected as leader, established himself as by far the best leader of recent times, who represents the aims and values of the vast majority of the party's membership. So his enemies' only hope is to hamstring him through undermining him in Parliament and in the press at every opportunity. But they are able to fight dirty, and he should be able to respond. If MPs find themselves far off the membership's wavelength it is not unfair to provide a CLP with effective tools to aid in that removal. If MPs really believe they have the support of their own CLPs then they would willingly have no problem with mandatory reselection. Labour MPs should not fear mandatory reselection. Those MPs who work hard, who represent their members' and their constituents' best interests have nothing to fear.

FBU officials and members will know the frustration when dealing with some of these Labour MPs – their refusal to engage with us or assist us, or even to understand or accept the gravity of the situations we are facing are common themes many of you will recognise. It is wholly unacceptable. The Labour Party is a Parliamentary arm of the Labour Movement, the voice of trade unions, and the working class in Westminster. If they are not working hard enough towards improving the lives of working class, or are not working with the trade unions, then they are against us and need to be held accountable, and if necessary, held accountable with their seats.

Conference, this is why this resolution is important for our members. It is important to build support for mandatory reselection in the Labour Party for the party members and trade unions so it can be re-established, and our members can then be represented in Parliament properly and robustly, and end this common theme of our members' issues and concerns being ignored or not understood by those who are supposed to represent them in Parliament.

The current process for holding sitting MPs to account by their CLP membership stinks of entitlement, entitlement that they truly believe that being a representative in a democratic country is a job for life, a job where you cannot even be questioned on your activities of representation, let alone be held accountable. A lifetime's entitlement to a Parliamentary seat is utterly undemocratic and risks in many cases creating and retaining an MP who just doesn't represent the Labour Party or the working class. For many members who knock on doors week in, week out, some of you in this room, we know that entitlement in the Labour Party is a barrier we have to destroy.

There are those in the Labour Party that will condemn this resolution, who will say that it is the Militant Left trying to take control of the party. This couldn't be more wrong. Mandatory reselection can be used to hold every Labour MP to account, regardless of what political wing they come from. As I said before, those who are true Labour MPs have nothing to fear. It is understandable, though, why some Labour MPs would fear a process which made them directly accountable to the party membership. But their opposition is hypocritical. Many of these MPs who oppose

reselection supported the coup against Jeremy Corbyn, the democratically elected leader of the Labour Party. They remain quiet about membership purges of socialists from the Labour Party, and some even supported reselection themselves when it was used to further their own agenda.

Today I want us to send a message to those MPs who ride on the coat-tails of the Labour Party, the very Labour Party formed for and by the working class and trade unions, those MPs who rely on the Labour Party badge to get elected in every General Election. This conference sends the message that to serve as a Labour MP is an honour, not a right. If you forget that, then it will be us and our members that hold you to account over this. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. No? I will go straight to the vote. The EC are supporting this one. There is no debate and no opposition. Resolution 69 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

Conference, we are going to adjourn for today. However, remember, we need you in the back room at 1900 hours for your refreshments for the film starting at half past 7 on the dot. Thank you very much.

Conference adjourned

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference come to order. I now call Steve Shelton, the Chair of Standing Orders to give his report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Good morning Conference. Good morning

Thank you. Can I just check, because we had all the changes going on last night, we're well aware now that all the cards are back in for each brigade and section. I'm not expecting you are going to use them (I hope not anyway). Can I just make sure you've all got voting cards? Those have all come back, OK. We will give you a reminder about the regional officials taking the voting cards back to Standing Orders when conference finishes. Thank you.

Delegates list: Northumberland delete Ash Fox, replace with Caroline Saunderson; Essex: delete Mav Langdon, replace with Alan Chinn-Shaw; Oxfordshire: delete Mark Ames, replace with Michael Brooker; West Midlands: delete Aaron Pell, replace with Sasha Hitchins; Norfolk: delete Alan Jaye; Surrey: delete Jamie Devey, replace with Asif Aziz; Cambridgeshire delete Amy Ratcliffe, replace with James Pearce. Still with Cambridgeshire: delete Cameron Matthews, replace with Martin Harding.

Conference, on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee I would firstly like to thank all of our head office staff for their efforts this week. Thank you very much. Thanks to our conference stewards for their hard work and support to the Standing Orders this week. Another great job. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Thanks to Steve Cole, who unfortunately isn't here today, and the Mascol team for their hard work and efforts in setting our conference up, the top table, all the banners, everything that they do behind the scenes, AV stuff and everything. Thank you very much, cheers. *(Applause)*

Thank you from the Standing Orders Committee to Charlotte and all her staff at the Grand Hotel for their help and assistance this week. We've had lots of room changes and lots of business that we've had to get done at short notice, so thank you very much for that.

Personally, Conference, I would like to thank all members of the Standing Orders Committee – even the EC members actually – for their hard work and efforts. The amount of business that we've had to co-ordinate this week has been a massive challenge for the Standing Orders Committee with a lot of pressure and late nights. So well done and many, many thanks from me. *(Applause)*

Conference, may I wish you all a safe journey home once conference is over. President, that concludes my final report for this conference. Conference, thank you and thank you, President. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? *AGREED*

Conference, did you all enjoy the film? The famous blue shirt is back! He had several allegedly.

We're on the last run-in so what I'd like to do I'd like to thank you. Yesterday was probably the most emotive, intense and electrified debates I've ever been involved in in all my years coming to conference. It was fantastic and I thank you all for your contributions in that. It just goes to show that we may have our differences out there on the floor, but when it really does matter this union comes together and is rock solid. Unity is our strength. I thank you for that. Let's hope that carries on for the last morning. Here we go.

Turn to page 11 of your Programme of Business para F12, para F13. I now call Resolution 66 Far Right Extremism moved by GMC. The Executive Council are supporting.

Resolution 66 FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM

Conference notes with concern the rise of far-right extremist groups and individuals who openly promote division and hatred within our communities. Lessons of the past must be learned and the FBU must stand alongside comrades within the wider Trade Union movement to challenge this divisive scourge.

Conference encourages FBU Officials and Reps to mobilise Members locally to join official protests against extremist groups and individuals wherever and whenever they demonstrate. This would highlight once again that the FBU stands in solidarity with other organisations in openly challenging racism, division and the scapegoating of minorities within society.

GMC

BRO DAVID YEARLY (GMC):

Thank you, President. Good morning, Conference. Conference, the rise of far right within our communities is clear. As one far right group descends into in-fighting and splits into factions and then disappears, another rises to take its place. We must be vigilant; we must be ready to mobilise our members, sometimes at very short notice. Within this room there are all levels of the leaders of the Fire Brigades Union. Conference, be honest with yourselves. How many have attended and spoken on behalf of the FBU at anti-racist or anti-fascist mobilisations? The far right are upping their game. We need to up ours. We see mass mobilisations of organisations on our streets of far right groups such as the Football Lads Alliance and the Democratic Football Lads Alliance who are billing themselves as a new movement.

Conference, there is nothing new about them. This is plain old-fashioned racism. Racism is the cornerstone of far right extremist beliefs. The DFLA and the FLA use Islamophobia to whip up support. Far right extremists have openly stated that they are preparing for what they believe is a war against Islam. The attack at Finsbury Park on Muslims and the neo-Nazi murder of Labour MP Jo Cox show how dangerous and real this threat is. Far right extremists are using the combination of civil war rhetoric and growing online hatred. The police have warned that we must be prepared for more terrorist plots and the use of extreme violence from the far right.

Conference, we have all seen people we consider sensible suddenly pop up on social media repeating the nonsense spouted by the likes of the EDL and the BNP. Some people are buying into the rhetoric that the only way to stop a takeover of our country is by people like themselves doing something about it because they falsely believe that the State has allowed this fictitious takeover to happen through multiculturalism and integration.

Conference, the DFLA are growing in number and when they are more on the streets they become emboldened. We cannot allow them to outnumber us. We need to educate people about the threat. We need to talk about this in our workplaces, with our friends and relatives, and most importantly, Conference, when the call goes out to mobilise against the threat, we need to turn out en masse to oppose, all of us. Support the resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO HAMISH DAYA (Dorset & Wiltshire):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 66. I just want to say a few words. I want to extend the hand of comradeship to my Greater Manchester comrades as well. Thank you to my brother there who has pretty much made all the points I wanted to make. A word of caution really. It is absolutely right that we should fight fascism. People talk about their culture and heritage. My grandparents fought in World War II against fascism. Fighting fascism is my cultural heritage. I am proud of it.

But just shouting loud at them doesn't really make them go away. They just pop up again. We've seen it with the BNP, the EDL, now the Football Lads Alliance, Tommy Robinsoners. They pop up again in a new form. At some point we have to actually engage them on the right and try to win hearts and minds. I see it as a form of radicalisation. Their leaders tell them that right wing extremism is the only voice for the white working class. Well, really, we all know working class only have an answer in the trade union movement. That is what I wanted to say.

The resolution does ask us to join official protests. Anyone who is in London this weekend there is one at 2 o'clock in Whitehall. Fight fascism, no pasaran. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO ADAM LEE (North Yorkshire):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Resolution 66. We've heard from Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell this week about the complex problems of the system that we live in: a complex economic system which funnels money upwards and leaves millions without enough to live; complicated systems and complicated politics are difficult to explain. In contrast, the far right's message is simple: look over there, all your problems are because of XY or Z. Pockets of scapegoating were allowed to go unchallenged in the 1930s and every one of us knows where that eventually led. Those who do not learn from history are destined to repeat it. Oppose the far right. Support Resolution 66.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Adam. Lucy.

SIS LUCY MASOUD (London):

Conference, we have made so much progress as a movement in tackling far right extremism and we can be proud of ourselves. However, we must always be alive to the fact that the far right will never go away, and we should always be on our guard. Racism is a true evil and we have an obligation in this movement to be at the forefront of the fight against it. I am proud of the fact that I come from a region which has been at the forefront of that fight. London was the place where some of our equality sections first blossomed. We have the highest number of minority members and we have regularly turned out members on anti-racist demonstrations. We have, in the past, sent delegations to the Auschwitz concentration camp so people can see for themselves the horrors of racism and where it can eventually end.

Conference, that work must continue. When it comes to tackling racism and bigotry we cannot switch off. That said, Conference, it's important never to devalue the words such as "racist" or "bigot" by throwing them around too casually, or by using them to describe opinions that we don't like or we just don't agree with. This does seem to be happening more and more in our trade union movement. As a black gay woman I can say the only people who benefit from that type of simplistic, unthinking approach are the real racists and bigots.

It's easy to stand at a trade union conference and shout about the need to challenge racism and bigotry. We can all do that. But if we are only directing it at people and opinions which are not in fact racist or bigoted, all we are doing is playing to the gallery and seeking a cheap, easy round of applause. Instead, what we should be doing is identifying real racism and real bigotry and fighting it on the streets. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO ANDREW SCATTERGOOD (West Midlands):

President, Conference, it's 50 years since Enoch Powell made his infamous "Rivers of Blood" speech. That happened to be in Birmingham City Centre, in a hotel there. Enoch Powell was an MP in Wolverhampton. He created such division and hate amongst the community that it is still felt to this day. We are supporting this resolution wholeheartedly and I urge all members and I urge all delegates here to go back to your brigades and make sure that you take part in these anti-racism demonstrations. The presence of firefighters in opposition to this sends solidarity through that community and gives them confidence to continue. I've stood there myself and sometimes it's just been one or two of us, but just the presence of one or two firefighters goes a long way.

So I urge you to stand up to these people because we need to be at the forefront of that. We can do that, we have the ability to do that. We have the arguments to do that. Just on a final note, it is a great pleasure that the Enoch Powell seat now has been taken by the first black female MP in the West Midlands, Eleanor Smith. All I would want to say to Enoch Powell is "How do you like them apples!" Cheers. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. A question was asked by the mover about what we do. For myself, as a 15 year old on the streets of Manchester I took my first steps against what was then the National Front and occasionally got a right-hander for doing so. Subsequently as a London firefighter, we've organised turn-outs against the BNP. On one occasion I think three of us on this platform have ended up on the Red Watch website: myself, the AGS and Paul Embury, as a result of turning out to oppose the BNP.

I think one thing that we need to note is that the forms of the far right change. The overtly fascist organisations that we had in the 1970s and 1980s have suffered major setbacks and we have new forms of right wing organisations, and networks emerging like the EDL. Myself, I've turned out as a resident of East London, in both Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

I think Hamish raised a good point that we need to think about is that, as well as confronting fascism and the far right, we also need to present an alternative. That means providing a real alternative as well as taking up the ideas of racism and fascism, but to say the Labour movement offers a way towards a better world. I think that's a way we can also cut ground away from people who drift towards those sorts of ideas and those sorts of organisations. That goes through one of the themes that we've addressed several times through this week in terms of engaging with politics, in terms of our role in the Labour movement and in the Labour Party, setting out that we don't want to simply say to people "vote Labour because they're not the Tories", we want to say to people "vote for a real alternative" and I think that's what we are fighting for and what is reflected in our debates this week.

So yes, support the resolution and let's keep organising on every front. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Matt. I now put Resolution 66 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 67 Condemnation of the Treatment of the Rohingya people moved by Cheshire. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 67 CONDEMNATION OF THE TREATMENT OF THE ROHINGYA PEOPLE

Conference is appalled at the alleged state sponsored violence, oppression and human rights breaches against the Rohingya people in Myanmar. The treatment of the Rohingya people is described by the United Nations as textbook ethnic cleansing.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to join the growing number within the international community in condemning the atrocities being carried out against the Rohingya people and to support the Rohingya Solidarity Campaign.

CHESHIRE

BRO JOHN WEST (Cheshire):

Thank you, President, Conference, first time speaker. *(Applause)*

The Rohingya people in Myanmar are currently trapped in a dehumanising system of state-sponsored discrimination and racial segregation. This is apartheid, a crime against humanity as defined by international law. The United Nations has described the situation across Burma as state-sponsored ethnic cleansing. The Rohingya number around one million yet the Myanmar government refuses to recognise them as a people. Since August 2017 reports of killings, rape and massacres have flooded in, and satellite images show entire villages being razed by the security forces. Over 700,000 have fled the destruction of their homes.

Our union has a long and proud history of being an international union, which stands up for working people and those who do not have a voice from anywhere where injustice and persecution presents itself. Please support this resolution. Stand with the Rohingya people. Thank you. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. No. I now move Resolution 67 – sorry, I put it to the vote. It is getting late in the day! I now put Resolution 67 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 68 Cuba Blockade moved by Lancashire.

Resolution 68 CUBA BLOCKADE

Conference notes with concern the renewed vigour which the Trump administration has put to the illegal and racist blockade of Cuba.

Conference further notes that in October 2016, the United Nations General Assembly voted for the 25th consecutive year on a resolution calling for an end to the illegal blockade of Cuba, in that vote 191 countries – the largest amount in the vote's history – voted for an end to the blockade, and historically, zero countries voted against – just the US and Israel abstained. In October 2017, following the election of Donald Trump and his 'new' Cuba policy, the US and Israel returned to voting against Cuba's resolution; 191 countries voted in favour of ending the blockade, 2 against and zero abstentions.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to redouble all efforts to support the abolition of the illegal blockade working with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, TUC and sister Trade Unions with a Head Office Circular explaining the campaign to be circulated to all Branches in a timely manner.

LANCASHIRE

BRO ANDY HEWITSON (Lancashire):

President, Conference. "Conference notes with concern the renewed vigour which the Trump administration has put to the illegal and racist blockade of Cuba. Conference further notes that in October 2016, the United Nations."

In October 2017 the United Nations General Assembly, 191 countries, voted in favour of a resolution calling for an end to the illegal blockade of Cuba. Two countries, the US and Israel, voted against it. The blockade has been in effect since 1962. There is a necessity to end the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the USA against Cuba. The hardline stance is a step backward and hampers Cuba's sustainable development. Children's Hospitals face obstacles in accessing specialist materials suitable for small children, most of which comes from the US. Cuba leads the way in education, health, equality, trade unions, and has made great strides in LGBTI rights. The country is important, and one of the most responsible in the international community, sending aid and medical personnel to countries such as West Africa, Pakistan, Haiti, Nepal for disasters such as Ebola and earthquakes. Four million people have had their sight saved or restored with free eye surgery, and, as a result of Chernobyl, 20,000 children have been treated for radiation-related illnesses. 80,000 medical scholarships have been provided to students from developing countries.

The impact of the blockade, according to the US Chamber of Commerce, costs the US \$1.2 billion per year, and the Cuban Policy Foundation estimates that figure to be \$4.84 billion per year. The cost to Cuba is said to be circa \$700 million per year.

The Cubans have a right to dignity and peace, and the US is increasingly isolating itself on the international stage. Conference instructs the Executive Council to make every necessary effort to support the abolition of the illegal blockade, working with campaign groups such as the Cuba Solidarity Campaign (to which we are affiliated), and sister Trade Unions inside the UK, inside Cuba and internationally. A head office circular explaining the campaign should be circulated to all Branches in a timely manner. Please support. Long live Cuba. Long live solidarity. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Cheers, Andy. Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. No. I now put Resolution 68 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Emergency Resolution 3 Stop Israel's Repression of Gaza moved by the Executive Council, seconded by Devon & Somerset.

Emergency Resolution 3 – STOP ISRAEL'S REPRESSION OF GAZA

Conference condemns the killing and wounding of hundreds of Palestinians in Gaza by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in recent months, culminating in the terrible slaughter during May. The union agrees with the Labour leadership in condemning the Israeli government for its brutal, murderous and entirely unjustified actions on the Gazan border.

Conference believes these actions were far worse than a disproportionate over-reaction. They were the culmination of weeks of a systematic and deliberate policy of killing and maiming unarmed protestors and bystanders, some shot in the back and many of them children who posed no threat to the border, nor to those who fired the deadly shots.

Conference demands the immediate end to IDF attacks and the immediate lifting of the blockade of Gaza.

Conference believes that the Israeli government must be held to account for its flagrant disregard of international law. The union notes Jeremy Corbyn's call for a review of UK arms sales to Israel. We call for an immediate end to this trade.

Conference reaffirms the longstanding FBU policy of support for the self-determination of the Palestinian people and the right of the Palestinian people to protest in support of their rights. The union supports the trade union policy of boycotting Israeli goods produced in the occupied territories.

Conference condemns Donald Trump's inflammatory decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem, which jeopardises the possibility of a peaceful solution acceptable to the majority of Palestinians and Israelis who live in the region.

We call for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Occupied Territories. We support the immediate establishment of a viable Palestinian state, to be recognised by the UK government and other governments, and international bodies.

Conference supports the Palestinian firefighters, trade unions, civil society organisations and campaigners fighting for Palestinian rights. The union is proud of our longstanding record of practical solidarity with the Palestinian people in general and Palestinian firefighters in particular, including visits, convoys, supplies and training organised by various FBU international, regional and brigade committees.

Conference agrees to a delegation, organised by the Executive Council, to visit Palestine and Israel at the earliest opportunity in order to meet trade unions and political organisations campaigning for justice. This will also facilitate a wider review of the current situation, including a review of the various FBU policies in this regard.

Conference recognises the (currently) small minority of Israeli citizens who support Palestinian rights, fighting against a tide of chauvinism within Israel. The FBU maintains our direct relations with Israeli firefighters in the Histadrut. The union also reaffirms our links with organisations such as WAC-MAAN, Peace Now and other Israeli based campaigns for peace and equality, who stand on the side of workers and who support Palestinian rights and a peaceful and democratic solution, in very difficult circumstances.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, the Executive Council is proud to be bringing this emergency resolution to conference because international solidarity is one of the founding principles of our union. What we've seen in recent weeks in Gaza cannot be allowed to go unanswered.

On 14 May tens of thousands of Palestinians gathered in Gaza to demonstrate about the 70th anniversary of the Nakba. This was one of the Great Return marches, designed to raise the issue of the lost Palestinian land. These were unarmed demonstrators that were no threat to the border with Israel or to ordinary Israelis. Yet what followed was the worst massacre in Gaza since 2014. The Israeli Defence Force killed 60 people and wounded more than 2,700 according to Gaza's health ministry. Since March this year over 100 Palestinians have been killed at these protests and 12,000 injured. Many of those being killed are children. For example, eight month old Leila al-Ghandour suffered from tear gas inhalation and died during the protests, or the paramedic Razan al-Najjar who was killed on Friday, 21 years old. Conference, we should express our condolences and sympathies with all those who have lost loved ones during these protests. Our task is to show solidarity with the Palestinians and to condemn the Israeli government for its actions.

We reiterate our support for self-determination for the Palestinian people and the right of the Palestinian people to protest in support of their own rights. We're clear, we demand an immediate end to the blockade of Gaza, and an immediate end to the IDF attacks on civilians. We call for an immediate end to UK arms sales to Israel. We support the trade union policy of boycotting goods from the Occupied Territories.

Conference, Israel may have formally left Gaza in 2005, but it is still deeply involved in the territory. The border is only open for a few weeks a year, the IDF decide how far Palestinian trawlers can fish off the coast. They even control the air space, even control the Wi-Fi service on mobile phones. The Israeli government registers every Gazan child born. Gaza indeed is not a society; it is a huge prison with more than two million people crammed into 140 square miles. 50% of the population is unemployed.

They need hope and they solidarity. Most of all, they need their own State. We call for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Occupied Territories. We support immediate establishment of a viable Palestinian State to be recognised by governments and international bodies.

Conference, in light of our centenary it's worth reflecting on our union's longstanding support for Palestinian rights. It was Ken Cameron, our then General Secretary, who moved the first resolution at the TUC condemning the actions of the Israeli government in Lebanon in 1982. It was the FBU who moved the resolution at the TUC against Israel's attack on Gaza in 2008/2009. In 1992 and again in 2001 this conference passed a consistent policy calling for a Palestinian State. The FBU has been proud to build direct links with Palestinian organisations, and indeed organisations within Israel. The FBU first sent a delegation to the region in 1988. We have organised solidarity convoys and reciprocal visits. Great work has been done by many of our regions. In particular, we've sought to provide support to Palestinian firefighters with training and equipment. This is practical solidarity, comrades, as well as the political work that we do alongside.

The Executive Council has agreed to organise a fact-finding and solidarity visit to the region. We will meet again with Palestinian trade unions and other Palestinian organisations, including representatives of Palestinian firefighters. We will meet with those campaigning for justice and a just solution to the issues in Palestine and Israel. We will seek the truth over what has happened in recent months at these demonstrations, as well as current prospects for a solution to the conflict. Yes, we will meet with Israelis and Israeli firefighters in Histadrut and we'll raise the issue of Palestinian national rights. We will meet with Israeli peace campaigners. We acknowledge that there are people, Israeli Jews, who campaign, sometimes in the most difficult of circumstances, against the policies of their own government and against the actions of their own armed forces. These are people who have supported and stood up for Palestinian rights in the most difficult of circumstances.

We say, in moving this resolution, stop the slaughter, end the occupation, stand up for justice. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Devon & Somerset.

BRO SCOTT YOUNG (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference, Devon & Somerset have been asked by the EC to withdraw our Resolution 65 to second this emergency resolution. We agreed to this in order to assist conference. The events of the last eight weeks or so have been an horrific case in point. As the EC's resolution states, the Israeli Army's response to protests throughout Palestine and especially in Gaza were not simply disproportionate but part of a systematic and deliberate policy to kill and maim unarmed protesters. Just look at the casualty figures. As of 21 May 2018, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza, 112 killed of whom 13 were children, 13,190 injured with more than 3,600 struck by live ammunition, 332 critically injured, 32 requiring amputations. As Matt said, one paramedic killed, and 223 medics injured by live fire or tear gas. 37 ambulances damaged, two journalists killed and 175 injured. One Israeli soldier was reported slightly injured though the cause of injury has not been revealed.

The casualties reveal this to be a grotesque massacre, and they have risen even further since 21 May as Palestinians have continued to protest, including this week, the 51st anniversary of Israel's 1967 Occupation of West Bank and East Jerusalem. Chillingly, Israeli forces also seem once again to have used Palestinians as a laboratory to try out arms they then explain to market as "battle tested". For example, they use a type of bullet not seen before, dubbed the "butterfly bullet". It explodes upon impact, pulverising tissue, arteries and bone, while causing severe internal injuries.

Gaza's Health Ministry spokesman, Dr Ashraf al-Qidra, said "The bullets are the deadliest the Israeli Army has ever used. Normally, a regular bullet breaks a leg upon impact but these bullets create massive wounds, indicating an explosion happened inside the body."

Conference, what has been taking place in Gaza recently are crimes against humanity yet no-one should really be surprised at the degree of violence unleashed by Israel because it is simply the latest example of a policy pursued with varying degrees of violence ever since Israel was founded. Indeed, some Israel strategists have been completely open about this. The architect of the current isolation of Gaza was Israel geographer, Arnon Soffer, who in 2004 advised the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, to withdraw Israeli forces from within Gaza, seal the territory off from the outside world and simply shoot anyone who tries to break out. Soffer told an interviewer at the Jerusalem Post on 11 November 2004 "When 2.5 million people live in a closed off Gaza it's going to be a human catastrophe." He added: "Those people will become even bigger animals than they are today. With the aid of an insane fundamentalist Islam the pressure of the border will be awful. It's going to be a terrible war so if we want to remain alive we will have to kill, kill and kill, all day and every day."

Israel claims it is merely protecting its borders and has even tried to claim the protests were an act of war. But the Gaza fence is not a border. Israel is one of the few countries whose border has never been fixed, and apart from the Palestinian Territories, to this day it also illegally occupies parts of Syria and Lebanon. The people in Gaza are currently suffering the effects of an 11 year Israeli blockade with 95% of the water unfit to drink, the sewage system collapsing, more than two-thirds of the population unemployed, 80% reliant on food and other aid, and just a few hours of electricity a day. That's just the daily diet the Israelis have the people of Gaza on. Every few years they also inflict massive destruction, most recently in 2014 when they killed over 2,000 and destroyed or damaged over 20,000 buildings.

Conference, please support the EC's emergency resolution. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we are supporting the emergency motion. West Yorkshire tend not to get up on motions of this nature where it seems it will be hopefully unilaterally accepted by conference. But on this particular occasion we can't let this one slip without saying a few words. West Yorkshire have got a longstanding relationship with our sisters and brothers in Palestine. We've got a beautiful FBU banner hand-embroidered by the women in Hebron. Matt talked a little bit about Razan. Razan wasn't a terrorist; Razan was a 21 year old nurse that was running to the aid of her sisters and brothers that were on the ground who had been shot as well, hands up in the air, wearing

a white lab coat and a white surcoat as well. She was shot in the chest by a sniper. This is a deliberately targeted attack. I take offence about the words Israeli Defence Force. They are not defence. It makes them sound like they're heroes. These are oppressors and occupiers and they should be called that. Why was she killed? She was killed aiding her sisters and brothers. They were going to cut a fence, that was it, cutting a fence. Those individuals were shot as well.

Jeremy Corbyn's call for an independent inquiry is great, but do you think Razan's family will get justice? Absolutely not, sisters and brothers, not a cat in hell's chance. There was another campaigner called Abdul Fattah al-Sharif. He was a bit of a rogue actually. He stabbed a soldier. He didn't kill the soldier but stabbed him and he got shot. As he was laying there on the ground bleeding to death, waiting for a paramedic to come, another IDF soldier from five metres shot him in the head. That soldier got 18 months in prison. You may have heard of a young activist called Ahed Tamimi. She slapped a soldier and got eight months in prison. She was 16 years old, comrades.

The UN Declaration of Human Rights states that you've got freedom of assembly and association, freedom of opinion, everyone has the right to seek and enjoy another country's asylum from persecution, everyone has a right to leave any country, including their own, and return, and everyone has the right to life. Clearly not available to the Gazans. No State can deny these rights.

War crimes are defined in statute by the International Criminal Court. These include wilfully killing or causing great suffering or serious injury, directing attacks against civilians. We all remember what happened when President Assad attacked his civilians in Syria, and the outcry from the British government to them about that. Settlements of Occupied Territories, directing attacks against humanitarian workers. Finally, firing on a combat medic with clear insignia. War crimes, these, and nobody has been held to account. It's wrong. We need to do something about this.

Matt's talked about the Great Return March on 30 March. I just want to take you back to 2008 Operation Cast Lead, a war on civilians that are entrapped by Israel. 333 children killed, including four that were playing football on a beach! This is by their claims, they claim to be the most technologically advanced army in the world and four children playing football on the beach were killed by a shell from a warship.

I'll just finish. I'm going to ask you to go a little bit further than the motion does. I want you, I implore you, comrades, to encourage your members to write to their MPs about the Early Day Motion and ban the arms trade to Israel. I support. (*Applause*)

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Scotland):

President, Conference, we are fully supporting this emergency motion. I wanted to touch on the second last paragraph of the emergency motion when it talks about the practical support. We're really proud in Scotland that we've kept on with that practical support, as Matt mentioned earlier on, from the legacy of Ken Cameron. In 2010 we delivered two fire engines from Dundee to Nablus – well, we tried to deliver two; only one made it! Those fire engines were full of firefighting kit and PPE and practical solidarity. One of those fire engines is still running today, as you will be able to see in the film *Firefighters under Occupation*. If you've not seen that film, that's an FBU film made when we go across to Palestine and talk about the practical solidarity.

Most recently, we had eight Palestinian firefighters coming across to Scotland in January. That was thanks to the support from the Scottish government and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. Those eight Palestinian firefighters were trained in breathing apparatus. So they learned practical, vital skills to go back to their own country and keep themselves and their communities safe. Even more importantly, in March we had our breathing apparatus instructors course and another eight Palestinian firefighters came across to Glasgow and worked with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. They gained vital skills to go back and instruct brilliant BA skills to the Palestinian firefighters.

So the second last paragraphs calls for the delegation to go across to Palestine. I would ask that as part of that delegation, could we have some consideration for some practical support going across there. Whether it's looking at the Palestinian firefighters and maybe giving them some more training or doing an exercise or taking over extra equipment. Support the motion. I support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Denise. Lucy.

SIS LUCY MASOUD (London):

As an FBU member I am proud of this union's continued support for the Palestinian people and the fight for a Palestinian State. The EC resolution talks about the killing and wounding of hundreds of Palestinians in Gaza by Israeli forces. Conference, let there be no confusion, what took place in Gaza last month was nothing short of a massacre, a massacre of protesters by an illegal occupying force, all done right under the nose of the media and the international community. By this act of indiscriminate slaughter of men, women and children the Israeli government have once again shown their absolute contempt for the plight of the Palestinian people.

Of course, we will be told by the politicians that Israel has the right to defend itself. Conference, the shooting of unarmed men, women and children is not a right, and it is not done in defence. It is done to suppress and oppress a people. The displacement of the Palestinian people that began in 1948 and continues to this day is a stain on the history books of humanity. Rather than try to correct this wrong, this country has, for 70 years instead chosen to prop up an illegal occupation of the Palestinians by arming and funding the Israeli regime and ignoring the repression of the Palestinian people.

If there is ever to be peace in the Middle East then there must be a fair and just settlement for the Palestinian people. This includes a full withdrawal of the illegal occupying forces from Gaza and the West Bank, an immediate end to the apartheid system imposed on the Palestinians by the Israelis, and the recognition of a Palestinian State. Conference, support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? I now put Emergency Resolution 3 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I am now on para F14, para F15. General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, thank you. I just wanted to come in on paragraph 15 Blacklisting and Police Spying on Unions. Conference will be aware that we've reported previously that the union is a core participant in the Grenfell Public Inquiry. There is another public inquiry that's been underway for quite some considerable time. It's into undercover policing and spying on political activists. Unfortunately, it's a public inquiry which has run into the ground somewhat. Those people who are described as non-State core participants have expressed considerable frustration over that. Let's be clear what that means, in relation to the trade unions it means that trade union activists and officials were spied on by undercover police officers over a considerable time, including the Fire Brigades Union and including officials and activists of the Fire Brigades Union. That's why we put a case forward to that inquiry that we should be a core participant within that. I have to say that I'm one of those people. In relation to the earlier debate, as well as trade union activism I think that one of the things that prompted people to become targets for undercover police spies was being involved in anti-racist and anti-fascist activities. So standing up against fascists causes the police to send people secretly to spy on you and your political activities.

Let's remember what some of this activity included. It included engaging in long-term close relations, sometimes for example with female political activists, including sexual relationships and including fathering children. This is nothing short of state-sponsored sexual abuse of political activists. It should be a national disgrace. Recently, this has become a source of some controversy because of a campaign by the Lush chain of shops who have produced some advertising around this and have had quite a hostile reaction. I signed a letter, along with a number of other people in the Trade Union and Labour Movement, condemning the attacks on Lush. I don't believe the Lush campaign is anti-police; it is anti-spying. I think that's something we should stand up for.

It's alarming to then hear that apparently uniform police officers have had so-called friendly discussions with people in these shops. That should raise alarm with people on two grounds. First of all, the fundamental principle of freedom of speech. People have the right to express their views and if they want to criticise the police, or if

they want to criticise the fire service for that matter, they have the right to do so and we have the right to answer. But secondly the facts, and people seem to be unaware of the facts. I want to just draw people's attention to one individual who I consider to be a particularly brave individual called Peter Francis. He is a former member of the Special Demonstration Squad and was one of the people who was (in his words) paid to tell lies to people. He went from being a uniformed police officer to being an undercover spy on political activists. In response to the campaign against Lush Peter Francis has tweeted out: "Just to clarify, before being selected for undercover police deployment all former SDS spy cops including myself were former uniformed police officers. So no matter how much it upsets some people, Lush Limited did not make this fact up for the hard-hitting campaign poster." And he has expressed his support for that. That is someone who was involved in this activity saying that it is not dishonest; it's telling the truth about some things that have happened. It is alarming, therefore, for example that I've seen recently the deputy chief fire officer of West Yorkshire tweeting out his condemnation of Lush. He clearly knows nothing about the facts of the case.

As I say, this is not an anti-police campaign, but it is against abuse, sometimes pretty appalling abuse, for which the State should be held to account. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I'm on para F16. Yes.

BRO ANDREW SCATTERGOOD (West Midlands):

President, Conference, I just wanted to borrow conference time for one minute on this point. Everybody knows in this room, we got ourselves into a little scrap in the West Midlands. As part of that the wider trade union movement has helped us enormously. I wanted to urge those at conference, if you haven't already, to get involved in the wider Labour movement because it will come in very handy at some point, especially with regard to your Trade Union Councils. Make sure that you go and visit them because they have been very supportive, so have Momentum. Momentum get a bit of a bad reputation sometimes but they've welcomed us with open arms and helped us on many fronts. I wanted to make special mention of Erdington Labour Trade Union Group who have helped us enormously with our campaigns. They've held street stalls on our behalf, even though FBU members weren't even there. They've held meetings, they wrote letters, they've held their MP to account, their councillors to account. They've been a massive help to us. I wanted to put on record our thanks to them.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to speak on our emergency debate. I was out of conference for a couple of days, but I just wanted to thank the National Officers and the EC for their support as well in this. I want to thank yourselves and your members because this hasn't been easy. A lot of you have sent us emails or text messages and things like that. Sometimes when it does feel like it's getting a bit much, just to have a little text message from you guys or a phone call just to check everything is OK has gone a long way.

We appreciate how important this issue is to everybody in this room. We assure conference that we won't waiver in our resolve to defeat the West Midlands in their attacks on us. Thank you for your support and thank you to the wider trade union movement for their support as well. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. We're now on Section E para E1.

BRO STEVE WHITE (London):

President, Conference, conference noted last year and actually we note regularly the ferocity of the government's cuts to the Fire & Rescue Service since 2010. On that note, Conference, you might wish to know that the day before yesterday there was a 20 pump fire in Central London at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. The Mandarin Oriental Hotel is round the corner from Knightsbridge fire station, or it's round the corner from where Knightsbridge fire station used to be until it was closed by the Tory Mayor of London, Boris Johnson in 2014. Yes, that one. The next two nearest fire stations – Kensington lost a pumping appliance which was moved out of Central London into the suburbs in 2009; and in 2016 Chelsea had a pumping appliance cut by – you've guessed it – Tory Mayor Boris Johnson. So that was just to echo the comments from our comrade from the West Midlands. John McDonnell and Jeremy Corbyn have both addressed conference this year with their commitment to reverse this trend in cuts to our industry.

Our commitment to conference last year was to work towards a Socialist Labour government, and the work we need to go back and do the work, particularly around the hints of an autumn General Election. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. I now call Resolution 56 Government Proposals on the Gender Recognition Act moved by LGBT Section. The EC are supporting.

Resolution 56 GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS ON GENDER RECOGNITION ACT

In the run up to the 2017 General Election the Conservatives made a pledge if elected to government to reform the Gender Recognition Act making it easier for Trans people to legally register in their gender.

Progressive politics like this from a Conservative Government are unusual and campaigners should be wary of the true agenda. As a result of the proposal there has been some disagreement from campaign groups normally associated with the promotion of equality. Division amongst equality campaigners is good news for the Conservatives and campaigners should be mindful of this potential agenda.

Conference notes that the current Gender Recognition Act does not meet the needs of those it was introduced to afford rights to. Conference welcomes the opportunity to amend the Gender Recognition Act but also that Trans is a complex issue.

The Government has stated their intent to enter a consultation phase around the reform of the Act and there will be opportunity for the Trade Unions to make submissions. Conference calls on the Executive Council to ensure that the LGBT Committee in their advisory capacity are at the core of any recommended submission from the FBU.

LGBT COMMITTEE

SIS KAREN McDOWELL (LGBT):

Conference, President, it's a privilege to be standing before conference today as a member of this union for nearly 25 and as an openly transgender woman. In 1993 when I joined this wouldn't have been conceivable. What I do know is that I'm certainly not the first trans member to address this conference. As the President, Matt and many others during this conference have stated, this union has a proud tradition of fighting for equality, and it is thanks to the section members before me and all of yourselves for supporting these sections. They have then gone on to influence policies and procedures, as well as government legislation in the advancement of equality for people within these minority sections.

As my B&EMM brother said earlier in this conference, have we come a long way? Yes, we have, but we've much further to go. In 2004 the then Labour government introduced legislation which was groundbreaking at this time and provided legitimacy to trans people, enabling them to require a revised birth certificate. However, it is very intrusive. It's cumbersome and it has presented many obstacles and therefore not taken up by all, or indeed most, trans people. Obstacles would include: you must be over 18 years of age, you need to live in your acquired gender for over two years, you need to submit two medical reports – one of which has to be from a psychotherapist. Indeed, you could wait two years to get on the waiting list before you even get a medical appointment, and then go through that process. Once that process is complete you then have to complete a very long and complex application and send this to a panel who you will never meet. There is also a cost, and many in this community are unemployed. In England and Wales there is a spousal veto. In Northern Ireland, if married you are required to divorce with all the emotional and financial implications that this will entail including lesser partner pension rights.

The fact is the GRC doesn't impact on every part of daily life, so many people will not take up this opportunity because you can already change your passport, your driving licence and many other documents by a statutory declaration. But it is for these reasons and the detrimental impact that they have. The medical process itself can be very degrading and very often provides legitimacy to those who are opposed to trans people. It will often be used, and we've talked about it at this conference, the stigma around mental illness even though many would say that

gender dysphoria is not an illness and it shouldn't be called gender dysphoria. This weapon will be used, whether it be colleagues, whether it be family members or neighbours.

In March 2018 President Trump issued an order to ban transgender troops or personnel. That's approximately 4,000+ personnel, all of which for being transgender, and there were limited circumstances. Those limited circumstances were if they didn't have a gender dysphoria diagnosis.

So the current process is needlessly degrading and burdensome, and many other countries including Ireland, Denmark and Norway have adopted much more simplistic processes. The Equalities Act in 2010, which applies to England, Scotland and Wales, has further progressed trans equality and doesn't apply to Northern Ireland. These bestow additional protections but it did not address the gender recognition certificate. These new proposals are aimed at simplifying the process of trans people obtaining their gender recognition certificates and therefore a revised birth certificate.

Conference, it's saddening to note that there has already been much toxic debate on many forums, including social media, prior to the consultation on these proposals, which go way beyond a difference of opinion. We acknowledge these new proposals may also impact on other groups and recognise that it is important that all concerned should be able to have a rational debate on these issues and to ensure, importantly, that we continue to advance equality for all. We look forward to the consultation document being released, and all groups and interested parties should rightfully have their legitimate concerns heard and addressed. However, no group of people will be more impacted by these proposals than trans people. This is why I urge you to support this resolution to ensure that the LGBT committee in their advisory capacity are at the core of any submission from the FBU. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

SIS DIANE CRITCHLOW (NWC):

President, Conference, I am seconding Resolution 56. The National Women's Committee fully support the consultation on the gender recognition act. This consultation is a great opportunity for us to educate ourselves and our members on the issues around gender recognition. We appreciate that it is often difficult to understand something we don't know a lot about. It's OK to find it hard to understand and it's OK to question, but it's not OK to be cruel or mean. We have an excellent source of advice from within our union from our LGBT committee. We're hearing and seeing inappropriate conversations taking place, mainly through a lack of education, but sometimes just rude and disrespectful. The FBU champions equality and we all have a responsibility to encourage educated discussion between our members. We must not, however, let services use this as a tool to take away women's facilities and safe spaces. We need to protect these hard fought for facilities.

Let us as officials and reps lead the way and not allow a lack of understanding to divide us. After all, we're all human and we all deserve respect and to be treated fairly. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

BRO ROD O'HARE (NIFB):

President, Conference, we are supporting Resolution 56. I thought it was particularly pertinent that we spoke today because, as my colleague from LGBT has already said, they are particularly under protected in Region 2 Northern Ireland. Conference, this year we have celebrated the progress that we have made over the last 100 years relating to ourselves within the trade union movement, and the work done by those who came before us. When John McDonnell mentioned Aneurin Bevan and his part in Attlee's government it reminded me of something he said: "We have been the dreamers, we have been the sufferers and now we are the builders". That really struck a chord with me in relation to what is going on here.

Whilst we have come a considerable way, as my colleague has already said, the early days of the Labour Movement, and with regard to equality and acceptance, the journey continues. We do have a way still to go. As such, we must continue to support our members who strive for their legitimate right to self-determination. Please support. *(Applause)*

SIS LUCY MASOUD (London):

Conference, London welcomes and supports this resolution from the LGBT section. We thank you for bringing it. We thank you and welcome the opportunity to debate the GRA. London agrees that the GRA is in urgent need of reform as it currently does not meet the needs of those it was introduced to help. Currently, the process of transitioning is both long and can often be humiliating. As the resolution states, trans is a complex issue and it is not enough that those individuals on the left and the right push through these reforms without first proper consultation with those whom it will affect the most, as well as addressing those genuine concerns raised by many.

In London the LGBT section has recently consulted on the proposed changes to the GRA and the response was overwhelmingly to agree that there was urgent need for reform, but also that there were concerns regarding how the changes may impact on women and single sex exemptions. Of course, London welcomes any changes in the law that will ensure that the trans community receive better and fairer rights. We genuinely want these reforms in whatever shape they take, to be a success. We want the GRA to ensure that it does give fair and proper rights and protections to our trans brothers and sisters. But for this to happen there needs to be proper consultation with our trans community, with the LGBT community and with women. We need a proper, open and honest debate. Conference, we support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, we welcome the resolution from the LGBT committee. I think it's a very timely resolution and raises exactly the right issues in exactly the right tone. It's been said several times that we've come a long way but we have further to go. I think we can be proud of much of the work we have done on this issue. We've taken the issue head-on. For example, some of you will recall the article in Firefighter addressing one of our trans member's experiences in the fire service.

But we still have a long way to go. I think the first point to make is that despite what the government has said, they haven't started a consultation and I do wonder whether they actually will or not. I think the starting point for any trade union approach to this has to be that we oppose all forms of oppression. If we start from that point of view, and we start from the point that we need to build unity, then I think that can assist us in how we have the debate and how we address the issues.

I think the resolution correctly says it's a complex issue. I'm sure many of us have struggled to read and discuss some of the issues that are under discussion as a result of this debate in the movement and beyond. It does touch on different aspects of debates around equality, particularly around women in the trade union movement. Just as one example, at this year's Women's School I was approached outside of one of the sessions by two women who had very different views on some of the issues raised, particularly in relation to facilities. So the issue is complex. I think there are issues where people are confused and don't understand. We need to address those.

What the Executive Council is keen to do is that we do this and we conduct this debate in a calm, comradely and rational manner, respectful of different people's views and respectful of different people's experiences. I think if we take that approach we can develop a sensible position which will unify this union around progressive changes.

On the TUC General Council, for example, it has caused some discussion and debate, and there are clearly differences of opinion. I think there are differences of opinion or emphasis within different strands of some of the sections within the trade union movement, and particularly there are some debates among women trade unionists about some of the issues raised. For us, we've had something like a 30 year debate and struggle over the issue of facilities on fire stations and facilities for women on fire stations. We need to build that into our discussion as well.

The approach that we are taking is we have our research and policy team – small as it is – tasked with looking at the issues. That work is underway, identifying what are the likely proposals that the consultation will address, what are the experiences in the trade union movement here and abroad, what are the different strands of debate within the Labour movement and elsewhere, what are the specific issues that might affect us in the Fire & Rescue

Service? We're approaching it from an all-embracing and a thorough approach. We will do that calmly and rationally. We will involve our equality sections fully, our LGBT section and our women's section in that. With that approach, Conference, we can see this discussion through and produce a viable policy that we can unite around and we can bring to conference at the earliest opportunity. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now put Resolution 56 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 59 Reserves Held By Fire & Rescue Authorities moved by Cheshire, seconded by Hereford & Worcester. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

Resolution 59 RESERVES HELD BY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES

Conference notes with some alarm the increase in reserves that some Fire and Rescue Services appear to be amassing. It is a cause for greater alarm that of those Fire and Rescue Services that have the largest amount of reserves held it appears that these are generated by large annual underspends achieved by cuts to the frontline firefighter jobs.

The Minister responsible for fire has, in January 2018 stated, in response to a question in the House of Commons regarding the impact of reduced funding for the Fire and Rescue Service, that funding will continue to flatline due to the millions held in reserves by the Single Authority Model, as in the Government's view this demonstrates that Fire Services have adequate funding.

Whilst a modest reserve is financially prudent this should be limited to less than 10% of the total annual budget and Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to urgently meet with the Employers and call for an end to this practice of cutting the frontline in order to generate reserves of up to 90% in some cases, of total annual budgets.

CHESHIRE

BRO JOHN WEST (Cheshire):

Thank you, President. Conference, Cheshire has, as I imagine all brigades represented here today have, seen huge cuts to its full-time workforce over the last ten years and is without doubt a poorer Fire & Rescue Service now due to those cuts. Throughout this period it has seen its cash reserves grow exponentially. At one point recently the cash reserves were equivalent to 95% of its total budget with money in the bank of £40 million against an annual budget of £42 million. During this time, whilst our employer continued to propose more job losses, more station downgrades, slower attendance times, they complained that they were forced to do so due to tight financial constraints. This was fundamental to our successful anti-cuts campaign in Cheshire. Our response was simple and clear: you cannot put budget underspends each year, moving money into capital revenue reserves to fund senior management vanity projects while continuing to come for our members' jobs and conditions of service. We will not accept this any more.

The current Fire Minister has cottoned on to this financial sleight of hand by local employers and in responding to a question on the Fire & Rescue finances by a Cheshire MP, Mike Amesbury, the Fire Minister stated that funding for Fire & Rescue Services will continue to flatline whilst fire authorities continue to hold such large reserves.

We want to see Fire & Rescue Services start to draw down those reserves by either mitigating against the drop in Central Government grants or to reinvest in frontline services, therefore coming into line with the previously accepted limit of 5% reserves for cover against major incidents.

This resolution calls for a 10% reserve to allow those Fire & Rescue Services with a particularly high risk to have extra resilience but the intent is to move to the 5% cap as reserves held. Let's stop carving up our service. Thank you. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO TREVOR CONNOLLY (Hereford & Worcester):

President, comrades, we are seconding Cheshire's Resolution 59. In his opening speech the President mentioned that our chief fire officer threatened our members in Hereford & Worcester with section 188 notices. I'd like to thank him on behalf of our members for his support throughout this time, and for taking time out of his busy schedule to visit the brigade committee. I would also like to extend that thanks to all of you for your messages of unity and solidarity during that time.

Our members in Hereford & Worcester faced the threat of section 188 notices so the brigade could impose a change of shift patterns in order to save £300,000 per year. This is despite the fire authority having reserves of over £13 million. Between the five services in region 7 they hold over £100 million in reserve. When we question why they are holding such vast sums of money we are told that it's for a rainy day. Comrades, I don't need to tell you that it's been pouring down for the last ten years! *(Applause)*

We know it's been pouring down because every year we attend flooding incidents which the media refer to as "unprecedented". Whilst our employers sit on vast reserves, our members respond to these incidents having been issued with ill-fitting PPE and with inadequate equipment. Conference has already heard the debate around the Executive Council policy statement Stop the Rot. Our industry desperately needs to stop the government strangle on our funding, but whilst brigades sit on huge reserves the government has an argument to withhold an increase in funding. Our employers are undermining our campaign and therefore I urge you to support Resolution 59. Conference, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

It's open for debate. Yes.

BRO GARY JACKSON (Hampshire):

President, Conference, I've come up here with some observations really. We come from one of those brigades that are flush with reserves. You up North, we have to keep a little bit of money back because it's £5 a pint! It's good financial management by our brigade that has made my job easier since about 2008 because the pressures from a fire authority that is controlled by Tories can be staved off by management and spread out over four or five years. Also, those reserves that are back there are there for firefighter facilities. They are earmarked for stations, they are earmarked for equipment, they are earmarked for appliances.

I have quite a lot of discussions with finance. I have discussions with the bean counters, if you like. It's that good financial management which has allowed us to negotiate things like pensionable salary on certain allowances that in another environment would never been condoned. It's just observations. On behalf of Hampshire I don't want to oppose but I just want to register caution at setting rigid limits. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Delegate, can you just say your name and brigade from the rostrum for the record.

BRO GARY JACKSON (Hampshire):

Sorry, Gary Jackson, Hampshire.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Anybody else?

BRO STEVE HOWLEY (North Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we are supporting this resolution. A couple of months back we raised a question through the House of Commons to our local MP Rachael Maskell on the severe cuts to our control room and how that was impacting on the service. Following that, we managed to get a meeting with Nick Hurd. We went down to meet with Nick Hurd and beg for money for the Fire & Rescue Service. Yes, we shouldn't be doing that, that should be the chief's job, but we all know how they go about that. Nick Hurd was very clear to us in that meeting that we ain't getting no money until fire authorities spend their reserves. He showed us a detailed graph with all the reserves of fire authorities right across the country.

While it pains me to say it, it was very difficult to disagree with him. Why are government going to invest more money into the service when chief fire officers are squirrelling it away into a reserve pot? So we went back to North Yorkshire and threw our challenges on the TRVs where we've managed to get them back to crewed to fours from threes, and we've got proper appliances, albeit that they're no use to man nor beast but that's the next part of the campaign. For our control members we've managed to get an increase in control staff. They've just recruited four new control members, taking it back to just one below when they cut the control room. To the dismay of the fire authority and the chief, they're having to use their reserves to utilise that growth in the service. All we get harped on about at every fire authority meeting and by the chief is "these reserves are going to run out, these reserves are going to run out and when these reserves run out we're going to shut fire stations." To that we said: "Great, bring that on. We'll have that fight as well." But Nick Hurd made it clear to us that once the reserves are to a manageable level, then they will have to look at it as a government. So please support this resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President, Conference. We've got a slight qualification on a couple of points I suppose. One qualification is it's already underway, the points that are raised in there. This issue has been raised with the national employers, this issue has been raised with the NJC Joint Secretaries, this issue has been raised in meetings between ourselves, the fire service employers and the English Fire Minister, Nick Hurd. So that side of it is already underway.

We've also raised it with the Labour Party Front Bench in terms of many of these are Labour controlled authorities who are cutting fire engines and cutting jobs at the same time as increasing their reserves. I think the issue is about increasing their reserves at the same time as making cuts rather than an absolute position about the absolute level of cuts. I think Gary made a good point that it depends upon the circumstances and whether there is a viable plan that's been discussed with us that we can understand. I think in most cases there is no such dialogue whatsoever with the Fire Brigades Union. What you then get is a picture of reserves which are at a high level and are growing, which then hands ammunition to the Tory Fire Minister to say "actually, it's nothing to do with me; it's all down to this lot building their reserves". He obviously made that point to us as he made it to Steve.

However, let's not let Nick Hurd off the hook on this whatsoever. The point is Central Government funding to Fire & Rescue authorities has been slashed for eight years and they take the key responsibility for the state of the Fire & Rescue Service and those cuts have been passed on. So we need to fight them on both levels.

In our meeting we didn't think the employers made a very good case for themselves in responding to the minister but the truth is that buying a police car, for example, is a bit different from buying a fleet of fire engines which, in terms of capital investment, is significantly different.

Fundamentally the problem, and this is where we have to get to, is Central Government funding has been slashed and the truth is nobody else within the fire sector has done any serious lobbying. Chief fire officers don't do it, fire & rescue authorities don't do it. They claim that they're doing it behind the scenes. It's all a waste of time because what they do behind the scenes seems to have had no impact. So it can be deemed to be a complete failure. They need to be starting to speak out publicly. We don't see chief fire officers speaking out publicly about the state of funding for the Fire & Rescue Service; we don't see fire authority political leaderships speaking out publicly to take on the government and challenge them.

So it is an important issue. We are also doing research into the level of reserves across the country and whether we can identify whether those reserves are allocated or not, and the trends within them. So a lot of work is going on and that will continue.

Stretching things a bit, President, I'm going to take the opportunity under this resolution to talk about cuts which is the link. We've heard several references to the West Midlands dispute during conference. In dialogue with the West Midlands officials we want to announce today that we are organising a demonstration in West Midlands on 29 June

at one o'clock in Birmingham. Since you are all here we are taking the opportunity to report that to you today. You will want to get on with making arrangements for that demonstration. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 59 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 60 Emergency Fire Controls moved by the CSNC. The EC are supporting.

Resolution 60 EMERGENCY FIRE CONTROLS

Conference notes that the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that a Fire and Rescue Authority must make provision for the purpose of:

- (a) extinguishing fires in its area, and***
- (b) protecting life and property in the event of fire in its area***

It also states that in making this provision a Fire and Rescue Authority must make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel.

Our Emergency Fire Control Rooms are the first point of contact for the public in a fire service related emergency, their primary function being to ensure that Fire and Rescue Authorities fulfil their statutory duties to respond to emergencies and administer humanitarian assistance.

Emergency Fire Control Rooms should not be run as businesses or to make a profit.

Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to commence discussions with all relevant parties to:

- Ensure Fire and Rescue Services, through the use of Emergency Fire Control Rooms continue to meet their statutory responsibilities***
- Ensure that Emergency Fire Control Rooms remain under local Fire Authority Control***
- Return North West Fire Control back under Fire Authority Control.***

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

SIS KATE SCOTT (CSNC):

President, permission to use an electronic device.

THE PRESIDENT:

Granted.

SIS KATE SCOTT (CSNC):

Thank you. President, Conference, Sherri's unavoidably detained so I'm going to read a speech written by her. Let me just take out all the Effing and Jeffing, that should probably bring it down to 30 seconds! *(Laughter)* I won't do the accent because that is a short route to discipline.

Sherri Kitson, CSNC, moving Resolution 60 Emergency Fire Controls. Conference, I am the branch secretary in Northwest fire control and the Region 5 CSNC rep. I'm formerly firefighter control from Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service but in May 2014 our control room was closed and we were privatised. I'm now control room operator in Northwest Fire Control, the private company set up to handle 999 calls and mobilise for Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, and Cheshire Fire & Rescue Services. I'm speaking today to highlight the recent worrying trend for collaborations between different fire service control rooms. To date, NWFC is the only collaboration that is run as a business, a supposedly not for profit company that is making a profit. Like any business that is run for profit it is run with the absolute minimum of staff and resources. There are two to three fewer staff in the control room at Northwest Fire Control compared to when we had our separate control rooms.

Conference, to put that in context, Greater Manchester control had 12 on a watch with a minimum eight on duty. At NFC we have 12 on a team during a 24 hour period. The maximum number of people on duty is 11. However,

overnight the minimum drops to seven. That is seven people handling calls and mobilising for four Fire & Rescue Services. Conference, NWFC rarely operates above minimum. Again, if you consider all of that, seven people is not acceptable and is dangerous and unfair to the public, unfair to control room operators, and unfair to firefighters.

Since our privatisation members in Northwest Fire Control have seen an increase in call handling times, high staff turnover, loss of experience, our job being deskilled, increase in mental health issues, increased scrutiny and increased sickness levels. Mistakes have been made, mobilising mistakes with varying degrees of severity. Members that transferred from the Fire & Rescue Services to Northwest Fire Control recognise the difficulties the union faced but feel the Executive Council could have done more to resist.

I'm speaking as Sherri here, so "when your backs were turned we were privatised". Who's to say it won't happen again? Who's to say it won't be your control room next? Who's to say it won't happen to you. We cannot let this happen again, to you or your control rooms. We need to put right what has happened at NWFC.

Now I'm going to stop talking as Sherri and I'll just talk as myself so I can add something about this. Recently, the partnership that Dorset and Wiltshire, Devon, Somerset and Hampshire are in had a review of their control room. Currently we've got three control rooms and a planned review was done by a group manager. The number one option that came out after alleged high level research was for us to be privatised. The option was going to be that we would close two of the control rooms, be privatised into a Northwest Fire Control situation. We've managed to get, through really hard work, great negotiation by our region 12 officials, all of that off the table. Our chiefs, all three chiefs of those three brigades have all worked with us and we've taken that off the table. But it does remain a real threat. So let's try not to have that happen.

Conference, please support the resolution and help us to get NWFC back under fire authority control. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (Cheshire):

Thank you, President. Conference, in 2014, as has been said, we saw the privatisation and merger of four control rooms across our region in the northwest into a single, combined regional control room. It was felt by those forced to trip across to this limited company or lose their jobs that nationally more could and should have been done. We have seen the recent Kerslake report into the Manchester Arena incident and the findings of that highlighted issues with Greater Manchester not having their own control room. Our members are very disappointed that Paul Hancock, the chief fire officer and northwest regional fire control champion who fought to resurrect from the ashes the deal following the collapse of the then government's regional control project, has now put in his notice of retirement just as his fire service and northwest fire control are subject to Her Majesty's Inspectorate and those findings are made public. I think that's very telling.

Officials have worked very hard over the past two years in building membership back up in Northwest Fire Control and representing those members who are the first line of our service. But let's be very clear, whilst our workers in Northwest Fire Control now feel proud and inclusive in this union, they do not always feel part of a national fire service family. So I ask you to support us as officials in doing everything we can to get Northwest Fire Control back under local authority where it belongs. Thank you. I second. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. No. General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council supports the resolution, very happy to do that and to take up the issues that are raised in the bullet points at the end. I suppose there's a couple of practical things to consider. We've discussed Grenfell several times this week, and obviously one of the issues in relation to that is what are the implications for emergency fire controls arising out of the Grenfell Tower fire? We've alerted the CSNC that we need a dialogue with them about the

lessons there in terms of what is the impact of calls that went elsewhere other than London control, what are the implications of similar types of incidents being received in other emergency fire controls? If it's going to be a turning point we need to make it into a turning point in relation to the treatment of emergency fire controls as well.

I suppose the only other point I would make is in relation to the point made about Northwest Fire Control. Clearly, we are very happy and keen to support a campaign to bring that back under fire authority control. I think we need to be clear that's a political campaign, and it's a political campaign where national support can be key to it, but we do need that campaign to be led and initiated locally and within the region. These are local politicians who would have to make that decision. That is a responsibility for the brigade committees concerned and the regional committee concerned, although they will have the full support of the Executive Council and of head office. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 60 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now call Resolution 62 Universal Basic Income moved by West Midlands. They've agreed to remit with the right to speak.

Resolution 62 UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

Conference notes the need for a rebuilding of a modern social security system for men and women as part of tackling poverty, inequality and the threat to labour from automation.

Conference believes that, until all Employers pay a real living wage, welfare payments will play a necessary role in ensuring that workers are able to make ends meet.

Conference expresses its concerns over the Conservative Government's cuts and attitude to the welfare system, especially under the draconian Universal Credit system. These cuts and system will cause increased levels of deprivation for many working families. The current system has been made increasingly punitive and has effectively been used to stigmatise benefit claimants. The operation of sanctions pushes people into destitution for trivial reasons.

Conference notes the growing popularity of the idea of a 'Universal Basic Income' with a variety of models being discussed here and around the world.

Conference believes that a basic unconditional and non-withdrawable income paid to everyone, has the potential to offer genuine social security to all.

Conference agrees that the FBU will campaign to defend in-work benefits to ensure that workers have access to a proper welfare system that ensures those on low pay are free from poverty.

Conference believes that the FBU should acknowledge Universal Basic Income and argue for a progressive system that would be easier to administer, easier for people to navigate, paid individually and that is complementary to comprehensive public services and childcare provision.

WEST MIDLANDS

BRO BILLY HOLLAND (West Midlands):

President, Conference, we are remitting this resolution on the basis that we appreciate that this is a wide-ranging topic which requires more debate and research than can be achieved in four days by the seaside. We wanted to share our views on the principle of universal basic income. We don't advocate any specific form of it, merely the principle. Modern political grouping is based on neo-Liberal economic theories which are treated as though they are scientific fact rather than what they really are: deliberately designed policies to concentrate wealth into fewer and fewer homes. This has led to a widely accepted view that the welfare state needs to be shrunk or completely dismantled leading to a dog eat dog society where the poorest areas are left to decay, and the most vulnerable people are left to suffer.

So it is incumbent upon decent people such as ourselves to rail against this current trend and make the case for a proper safety net, a safety net which protects the sort of people who don't have the opportunity and privilege to stand here like we do and have their voices heard. So we should destroy the ability of employers and government to starve and sanction people into precarious and low-paid work, we should unlock leisure time for working class families and individuals to improve their physical and emotional health. We hope that we can return to this discussion and that our union can support the principle of guaranteed income and be at the forefront of change as we so often are. We remit. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, do you agree to suspend your own Standing Orders so that we can work through and get this last bit of business out of the way, agreed? *AGREED*

I am now on to para E2, para E3, para E4, para E5, para E6, para E7, para E8, para E9, para E11, para E12. Yes.

BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

President, Conference, I just want to give a brief update on the situation of the PCC in Essex. As you know, Essex was the first authority to hand over the reins to one individual, giving him the collective responsibility on his own to run the fire service. It's something that we never supported; it's something that we campaigned against, but you should be aware now that we have in writing that the PCC is going to abide by the Grey Book NJC circulars and national agreements. I don't want to stand here like it's peace in our time because quite clearly it's not but I think conference should be aware. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 63 moved by Cleveland with amendment from Shropshire. The Executive Council are supporting the resolution and the amendment.

Resolution 63 POLICE COLLABORATION

Conference is extremely concerned at the Conservative Party policy of allowing Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to run Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs).

This policy is an attack on democracy at the corporate level of local Fire and Rescue Services and links the FRS with the Police far too closely which can cause real issues for firefighters on the frontline of our humanitarian service.

Therefore Conference demands that the Executive Council take all necessary steps to resist PCC takeovers and influence the Labour Party to produce a clear manifesto and work in Parliament to reverse the decision to allow PCCs to run FRSs whilst they are in opposition and if they were to become the Government in the future.

CLEVELAND

AMENDMENT

In last paragraph insert full stop after 'FRSs', delete rest of sentence.

SHROPSHIRE

BRO KARL WAGER (Cleveland):

Conference, President, believe it or not, this week I was only supposed to get up and speak twice but this stage keeps pulling me back every time. So I won't take much of your time with it being the last resolution to do and I'll try not to cry again.

Our members are concerned about both PCCs and wider police collaboration. All this resolution is asking for basically is to ask the EC to continue to support the Labour Party and support local officials in fighting the takeover of the PCCs.

Quickly on PCCs, we believe and our members believe that PCCs are an attack on democracy. Like them or not, fire authorities are democratic. We in Cleveland probably don't have the best Labour led fire authority who probably

don't stick up for the fire service as much as they should or stick up for our members as much as they should. However, you can't argue that they are democratic and they will democratically hold the chief fire officer to account.

My comrade from Essex just got up and spoke about the PCC in Essex. I get what he's saying, I understand that and it's great that the PCC in Essex at the minute has taken the stance of supporting Essex and working with them. However, what I would say is what happens when the next one comes along and he's not held to account by anybody apart from himself? By taking the democracy of fire authorities away, what we're doing is putting it in the hands of one person and we lose our chance of lobbying all the members of the fire authority, we lose our chance of pushing our agenda on the fire authority. As I said before, I'm not saying it works every time, but it is better than one person making his own decision, surely.

Just quickly on the increased collaboration as well because it's important. The public hold the fire service in the absolute highest regard. We're a humanitarian service, they rely on us, they trust us. Cleveland members believe that closer links to the police would damage those links. Jeremy Corbyn stole our thunder a little bit on Tuesday by assuring us that Labour would abolish PCCs. This resolution makes it even easier for me to stand up here and ask for support. All we're asking for is exactly the same thing that he said the other day. Let's fight against PCCs. We're asking the EC to support local officials and to encourage people to fight the takeover of PCCs with everything that we've got. Thank you very much. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? Yes.

BRO ANDY HEWITSON (Lancashire):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 63. The PCC in Lancashire has produced an option for governance of the Fire & Rescue Service and is currently producing a business case for the governance of the Fire & Rescue Service. He has been asking for additional funds for the police and he has been told he will not receive any. The only way he can sustain the current police standards is to takeover the fire service, releasing tens of millions in reserves and making cuts. Our members are rightly worried that reserves cannot be used to resist or reverse current cuts in the service, and the cuts will be deeper and faster once taken over by the police & crime commissioner to shore up an underfunded police force.

Our police & crime commissioner is a Labour Party member. Conference demands that the Executive Council take all steps necessary to influence the Labour Party to instruct the Police & Crime Commissioner to stop the takeover and take any actions necessary, including sanctions and deselection, to prevent any Labour members from doing so. Please support Resolution 63. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Shropshire to move the amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate.

BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

President, Conference, I'm about to get a kicking on the motion, no doubt. Conference, comrades, it's with a great deal of reluctance that I stand here and oppose resolution 63. Our reason for opposing this resolution isn't that we don't agree with its essence, it isn't that we don't agree that we should fight against the takeovers from the Police & Crime Commissioners, it isn't that we think that we shouldn't influence the Labour Party because we've already done it and Essex are supportive of that. It is just that little bit in there that says that the Executive Council take all necessary steps to resist PCC takeovers. What it doesn't do is it doesn't talk about what we do, how we behave, how we react once we've got a PCC in place.

The reason we're against this resolution is because we fully supported the EC policy statement at last year's conference. That was quite clear. We maintained our principled opposition to PCCs taking over, we will campaign against the single employer model, we will ensure neutrality of the Fire & Rescue Service, negotiate locally and nationally with PCCs to ensure the best arrangements for our members. We will keep the matter under review and monitor as necessary. For Essex, Conference, that ship has gone. There's nothing we can do. We can't reverse that. To campaign actively against someone whilst trying to do business with them is incredibly difficult.

I reiterate, Essex are fully behind the EC policy statement of last year but what we would say is, Conference, we urge you to vote against this resolution just because it's not clear and it doesn't give us an option to work with them once they're in. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, sorry sisters and brothers in region 3, West Yorkshire are opposing you again. Before your time it was all about reaffiliation to New Labour, but we are back opposing you, I'm afraid. Alan's pretty much said everything I wanted to say roundabout the EC policy statement, but I will go a little bit further. Karl said they were an attack on democracy. Unfortunately for us in West Yorkshire we had a Labour led fire authority in 2010 when I first became brigade secretary and that's when we had our first lot of cuts and we ended up losing 500 firefighters in the first two years. Unfortunately for us again, democracy being what it was, that leader of that fire authority, that chair of the fire authority then left the fire authority and got a better job working with the LJ. So he created havoc and destruction in West Yorkshire and went away and nobody saw him again, although I do understand he's a mutual friend of a friend so I've got to be careful.

We don't get the democracy argument. If there's one candidate standing and that candidate stands on a platform of cuts, then we will campaign against that individual and that candidate hopefully won't get elected to Police & Crime Commissioner. It's a lot more difficult if you've got 24 locally elected councillors that perhaps stay for a year and then decide that actually they want to do something different.

Because of the middle paragraph, Cleveland suggest that it links the FRS with the police far too closely. Unfortunately, in West Yorkshire that's not the case. What links us with the police in West Yorkshire is the fact that we've just changed our uniform. We're now wearing combat trousers and boots. Firefighters wearing combat trousers and boots! We're absolutely going back to a militaristic style of firefighting. That's what links us to the police force. The other thing that links us is collaboration that was touched on. The police share our fire stations. One particular fire station in a particularly socially deprived area, the police car got fire bombed. Fortunately, it wasn't parked next to any of our members' personal cars, but that's what links us to the police. Attacks on firefighters – again, argument about uniform and about that collaboration. West Yorkshire are talking now about wearing body cameras which is another thing that brings us closer to that authoritarian sort of regime.

So unfortunately, region 3 and Cleveland, we are opposing. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? General Secretary.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. The Executive Council are supporting the resolution without qualification. I will take up some of the issues that were raised. In relation to the issue of democracy, which I think was challenged by Dave and Alan, I think we do see it as an attack on democracy. We've also expressed opposition to the new mayoral systems that are coming into major cities, largely because they increasingly concentrate more and more power in fewer and fewer hands. In our view, that is an undemocratic approach and a more traditional system of councils is more democratic. So placing the policy in relation to the local police force and in relation to the local Fire & Rescue Service in the hands of one person effectively, with very little powers of oversight or scrutiny, we think is undemocratic.

In relation to the point in paragraph 2 about links between the police and the Fire & Rescue Service, I think this is an extremely important issue that we need to start to discuss in far more detail and with far more vigour. Hopefully everybody watched the film last night. If you watched the section in relation to Northern Ireland, I think it makes this point extremely well. In the most appalling of situations we managed to deliver a Fire & Rescue Service to different communities throughout the troubles. The Fire & Rescue Service was able to do that largely under the influence of the Fire Brigades Union because we emphasised the neutrality of the Fire & Rescue Service and because we emphasised that the fire service was not the security forces or the police. That hugely important lesson for the fire service goes back further. You go to the American Civil Rights movement where, in Birmingham Alabama they turned fire hoses on protesting black school students, these lessons seem to be lost on today's generation of chief fire officers. Or more recently, elsewhere in our own union, the experiences of the riots at Strangways, or the experiences of the inner city riots in the early 1980s,

which all were debated at this conference and all led us to confirm the need to maintain an independence from the police. We are not the police. And an independence from security forces, and the need for the Fire & Rescue Service to engage with all parts of the community. Everyone knows that. You talk to senior police officers, by the way, and they will say firefighters can get through doors and into areas where we can't get because you're not us. That's a valuable resource that we should seek to maintain. If we want to improve people's safety in their communities and in their homes, we have to maintain that. So this pressure from Central Government to endlessly collaborate actually does threaten that.

I have to say, building joint police and fire stations completely and utterly undermines that. We can hardly say we're a neutral organisation with nothing to do with the police when we're mobilising out of the same bloody stations. Local people will find that hard to believe. I think we need to be clear, when those plans come forward, and we should be seeking to oppose. I'm not saying we can win it all the time but that should be the position of this union, that we don't support joint location and we don't support joint controls or all the other things that go along with it. As I say, this generation of chief fire officers – some of them were around at the time – have completely forgotten the lessons of our own history in the Fire & Rescue Service, here and internationally. I think it is an important point. We will think about what further work we can do on it because it is a policy point that we need to raise.

In relation to one of the points that was raised by Lancashire, we have consistently raised with the Labour Party our opposition to this. Jeremy Corbyn was very clearly setting out his position in relation to the future, if a future Labour government is in office. But actually, in the run up to previous PCC elections, we won the position with Labour PCCs that they would not be putting in bids to take over the running of Fire & Rescue Service. But I have to say, a lot of that rests on campaigning at local level. We need constituency Labour Parties to be saying "no, we're not doing this", otherwise the threat is you won't be our PCC candidate next time. That's the simplest solution to that.

In relation to the principled opposition, Alan made this point that it is difficult if we have opposition in principle but then a PCC takes over, what do we do then? We set out last year that in that situation we need to engage because we need to try to protect the Fire & Rescue Service, and we need to try to protect the conditions of service of our members. I will be frank with conference, one of the problems is that we have, from a number of sources, been subject to some criticism at national level. First of all by people within the LGA, local Fire & Rescue authority politicians who have suggested that the Fire Brigades Union is not wholehearted in its opposition to PCC takeovers because of what they have heard at local level. We've also had Labour MPs who have come to us and said: "It seems to us that actually you are not opposed to the PCC takeover in my part of the world." I have to say, Conference, if it's a conference policy then we expect everyone to apply that conference policy. If we're saying we're opposing the PCC takeover, then everyone has to apply that policy and campaign against the PCC takeover. Otherwise there's no point passing this or any other resolution. So there is an obligation on local officials to actually implement this policy, both the policy that's existing and this one if you agree it today.

In terms of the position at a national level I think the situation may have slightly changed with the current Tory fire minister, just slight signals that he may be less keen on the policy than his predecessor, although the person who drove this legislation is now the Prime Minister. Signals have been sent that there will be no huge pressure for PCC takeovers. Whether that's the reality or not we can't judge, but we're just picking up signals of that. In addition, we are aware that there is now a judicial review underway in at least one fire authority against the process by which the PCC takeover is being organised.

The situation is bleak on all fronts and I completely understand it. If we've been battered for ten years by a fire authority who've never listened to us, never engaged with us and do all sorts of things we don't like, I can see why local members and local officials may say "can it be any worse than dealing with this bunch?" I completely get that. Nevertheless, we've made a policy decision that actually the whole PCC takeover process is one we do not support and we should oppose. Let's remember, these people are smiling assassins. They will promise the earth before they get the takeover if they can convince our people not to campaign against them rigorously during that consultation process. Once they're in office, I have to say, is anyone seriously going to trust a Tory PCC to be fair to our people?

So it is complex. I think we need to stick with our position, we need to oppose the PCC takeovers, campaign locally, and if, however, a takeover does take place then we deal with that on a case by case basis. We have systems in place to provide support to local officials in those circumstances. Thank you.

BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

Thank you, President. It's just a minor point of order. Matt, you alluded to the democracy argument that was put forward by the comrade from West Yorkshire. I didn't mention that at all. We absolutely fundamentally agree with the policy statement that was submitted to conference last year and agreed unanimously at conference last year. We fundamentally don't think that there is a democratic argument for having a PCC, but our argument was the fact that we've got to get on with it and deal with it. Incidentally, I understand you'll be faced with the same thing soon because our PCC is apparently getting a seat on the NJC. Thank you. *(Applause)*

GENERAL SECRETARY:

If I mentioned you in that regard, Alan, I apologise.

THE PRESIDENT:

Cleveland, right to reply.

BRO KARL WAGER (Cleveland):

Conference, President, sorry I'm here again! A couple of points to my comrade from West Yorkshire first of all. The comment on the attack on democracy. We get what you were saying, comrade, about it is democratic to get them into position. What we're saying is you lose the democracy once they are in there. There's no-one to hold them to account democratically.

Secondly, all the things that you mentioned about combat trousers, boots, etc, they are the exact reasons why we want to oppose PCCs. So you've sort of done my speech for me, to be honest.

Just on my comrade from Essex, working with people and it being very difficult to work with people while campaigning against them, do we not do that every single day – working with chief fire officers and campaigning against the cuts that chief fire officers are imposing? That's something that we just do and we just get on with it and we do it.

The very last point, just because the PCCs are in is exactly the same argument that we use with our comrades from control. Privatisation of the control room, just because it's here doesn't mean that we don't fight against it. It might be here but we still need to fight it in the same way as PCCs might be here in some brigades. We still need to fight against it. Please support the resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put the amendment from Shropshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I now put Resolution 63 as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That is CARRIED*

I am now on para E13, para E14, para E15, para E16, para E17.

Now, Conference, I'm seeking the endorsement of the Executive Council report. Is that agreed? *AGREED*

Conference, firstly I'd like to thank you for all your hard work this week. You've done a brilliant job representing your members, each and every one of you. As I said in my opening today, we had one of the most emotive and important debates yesterday afternoon on Grenfell. We had two of the Justice4Grenfell campaigners here, Moyra Samuels and Tasha Brade. I hope that we can now leave conference and get in the organised Justice4Grenfell marches. It would be great if we could get a big turnout at all of those that were listed. We are going to circulate them, but especially the one in London. Also, on the same day, straight after we could also get over to the Labour Live event. As Matt said, another date for the diary is the national demo in Birmingham on 29 June. We really do need a big turnout at that one.

Conference, you've seen the film, the FBU trailer, the lottery promotion, the books celebrating our centenary so what you need to do now is go back to your brigades and use them, use them as tools. You've been given them to

promote the union, promote what we do and promote our relevance. Importantly, promote the Firefighter 100 lottery. You've seen the good causes it supports, the red plaque scheme, assisting injured firefighters, supporting their bereaved families, etc. So please go back from here and get our members signed up to it.

You all heard Keith Handscomb last night telling us that we've got approximately 3,000 supporters signed up. Not every one of them are our members. It raises £148,000 for those good causes. Can you imagine what we could do if we got every member signed up to that?

Conference, as usual, every year we have a list of officials who will be retiring. It seems to be growing year on year. We've got Nicky Brown region 4, Chris Hides region 6, Steve Morris region 7, Pete Goulden region 7, Ian Buckley region 8, Peter Greaves region 9, Scott Tanner region 12, Dave Huggins region 12. We're thinking after last night's performance of adding Maggie to that list! Sorry, Maggie, I'm only kidding!

What I would like to do is to thank them for all that they have done for this union over the years. Nobody knows until they actually do the job what it involves, the commitment. You don't get great financial reward. It's a thankless task most of the time. We do thank those officials for all their hard work over the years. *(Applause)*

To all of you on that list, have a long, happy, and most importantly, healthy retirement. I've got some other thanks. Obviously to all of you in the room, the Executive Council, the stewards, the head office staff, Mascols, hotel staff. I've just been given one not on the list. Simon Amos, it's his last conference. *(Applause)*

After three years of trying, he finally got that resolution through!

Other thanks are stewards, head office staff, Mascols, the hotel staff, Keith Handscomb for all that he's doing for us, the Standing Orders Committee who keep the conference machine running behind the scenes. You don't realise how much hard work goes into that – not just during the week of conference but the planning and run-up to it. I really do thank them for all their efforts. We'll give them a few weeks off and then they can start again for next year.

Conference, to finish, your voting cards, can you all make sure that they get handed back into Standing Orders. Check that you have all checked out, handed your keys in. There are packed lunches available in the room behind. Just for information £290.20 was raised in yesterday's bucket collection so thank you for that.

Last point: have a safe journey home and especially our comrades from Australia, Peter and Danny. Thank you for attending our conference. *(Applause)*

Conference is adjourned. Thank you.

Conference adjourned



Established 1 October 1918

OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS OF THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION ALONG WITH LIST OF DELEGATES

JUNE 2018

FIREFIGHTERS



FIRE BRIGADES UNION CENTENARY 1918-2018

OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS OF THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

PRESIDENT – Ian Murray

VICE-PRESIDENT – Andy Noble

NATIONAL TREASURER – Jim Quinn

GENERAL SECRETARY – Matt Wrack

ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY – Andy Dark

NATIONAL OFFICER – Dave Green

NATIONAL OFFICER – Sean Starbuck

TEMPORARY NATIONAL OFFICER – Tam McFarlane

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

REGION 1	Chris McGlone
REGION 2	Jim Quinn
REGION 3	Andy Noble
REGION 4	Pete Smith
REGION 5	Les Skarratts
REGION 6	Phil Coates
REGION 7	Matt Lamb
REGION 8	Grant Mayos
REGION 9	Brian Hooper
REGION 10	Paul Embery
REGION 11	Richard Jones
REGION 12	Tam McFarlane

REGIONAL SECRETARIES

REGION 1	Denise Christie
REGION 2	Stephen Boyd
REGION 3	Tony Curry
REGION 4	Vacant
REGION 5	Mark Rowe
REGION 6	Ben Selby
REGION 7	Pete Goulden
REGION 8	Cerith Griffiths
REGION 9	Riccardo La Torre
REGION 10	Dave Shek
REGION 11	Joe Weir
REGION 12	Trevor French
B&EMM	Micky Nicholas
CSNC	Lynda Rowen-O'Neil
LGBT	Pat Carberry
ONC	Simon Amos
NRC	Peter Preston
NWC	Samantha Rye

REGIONAL CHAIRS

REGION 1	Brian Cameron
REGION 2	Dermot Rooney
REGION 3	Russ King
REGION 4	David Williams
REGION 5	Gary Keary
REGION 6	Marc Redford
REGION 7	Richard Williams
REGION 8	Alex Psaila
REGION 9	Vacant
REGION 10	Gareth Beeton
REGION 11	Mark Simmons
REGION 12	Brent Thorley
B&EMM	Vacant
CSNC	Sandra Brown
LGBT	Yannick Dubois
ONC	Mark Ames
NRC	Paul Revill
NWC	Sarah Gartland

REGIONAL TREASURERS

REGION 1	Vacant
REGION 2	David Nichol
REGION 3	Dave Howe
REGION 4	Neil Carbutt
REGION 5	Steve Shelton
REGION 6	Chris Hides
REGION 7	Sasha Hitchins
REGION 8	Arwel Roberts
REGION 9	Mav Langdon
REGION 10	Lucy Masoud
REGION 11	Andy Petch
REGION 12	Val Hampshire

LIST OF DELEGATES

REGION 1	Scotland	John Malcolm Colin Brown David Hart David Strachen Ian Bryden Jamie McCallum John McKenzie Siana Hughes Wallid Thabet
REGION 2	NIFB	Dermot McPoland Barry Mitchell Mark McCartan Rod O'Hare
REGION 3	Cleveland	Darren Fawcett
	Durham	Karl Wager Jim Bittlestone
	Northumberland	Steve Hagar Ash Fox
	Tyne & Wear	Steven Walker Brian Harris Brian Waugh
REGION 4	Humberside	Gavin Marshall Rob Vaux
	North Yorkshire	Adam Lee
	South Yorkshire	Steve Howley Nicola Brown
	West Yorkshire	Michael Thompson Martyn Bairstow Maggie Meszaros
REGION 5	Merseyside	Ian Hibbert
	Cumbria	Kevin Hughes Edward Burrows
	GMC	Sam Taylforth Dave Yearly
	Lancashire	Karl Sorfleet Gary Keary
	Cheshire	Kevin Wilkie Andrew Hewitson
		Andrew Fox-Hewitt John West

LIST OF DELEGATES

REGION 6

Derbyshire	Tony Dempsey
Leicestershire	Chris Tapp
Lincolnshire	Graham Vaux
Northamptonshire	Adam Taylor
Nottinghamshire	Karl McKee
	Rick Wright
	Ben Muddle
	Mark Jones
	John Muggleton
	Mark Stilwell

REGION 7

Hereford & Worcester	Trevor Connolly
Staffordshire	Neil Bevan
Shropshire	Mark Tattum
Warwickshire	Michael Mosley
West Midlands	Stephen Morris
	Louise Fletcher
	Stephen Rule
	Neil Stuart
	Andrew Scattergood
	Steven Price-Hunt
	Billy Holland

REGION 8

Mid & West Wales	Andrew Hearne
North Wales	Barrie Davies
South Wales	Parry Davies
	Blythe Roberts
	Mike Alexander
	Ian Buckley
	Steve Saunders

REGION 9

Bedfordshire	Mark Lee
Cambridgeshire	Mark Woodworth
Essex	Martin Harding
Hertfordshire	Cameron Matthews
Norfolk	Alan Chinn-Shaw
Suffolk	Martyn Wager
	Daren Scotchford
	Tim Deegan
	Peter Greeves
	Alan Jaye
	Phil Johnston
	Roy Humphries

LIST OF DELEGATES

REGION 10

London

Nathan Crane
Steve White
Daniel Lawrie
Jon Lambe
Chris Cheeseman
Jason Hunter
Dave Young
Leoni Munslow
Jon Wharnsby

REGION 11

Berkshire

Paul Mortimer
Stephen Collins
Christopher Wycherley
Greg O'Neill

Buckinghamshire

East Sussex

Hampshire

Mark Chapman
Gary Jackson

Isle of Wight

Dave Hunt
Spence Cave
Tom Richardson
Rob Sherwood

Kent

Oxfordshire

Josie Fullerton
Mark Ames

Surrey

Asif Aziz
Lee Belsten
Mick Cambers
Murray Walker

West Sussex

REGION 12

Avon

Steve McGreavy
Gary Spindler
Guy Herrington
John Castleden

Cornwall

Dorset & Wiltshire

Karen Adams
Hamish Daya

Devon & Somerset

Scott Young
Dave Roberts

Gloucestershire

David Huggins
Scott Turner

LIST OF DELEGATES

B&EMM

B&EMM

Dean Pounder
Joe Mendy

CSNC

CSNC

Kate Scott
Sherri Kitson

LGBT

LGBT

Karen McDowell

NRC

NRC

Paul Farman
Seamus McMahon

NWC

NWC

Diane Critchlow
Clare Hudson

ONC

ONC

Phil McDonald
Peter Traynor



Established 1 October 1918

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FIREFIGHTERS



FIRE BRIGADES UNION CENTENARY 1918-2018

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Bradley House
68 Coombe Road
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey KT2 7AE
twitter: @fbunational
website: www.fbu.org.uk