

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL'S REPORT 2024

95th CONFERENCE
22 – 24 MAY 2024



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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL'S REPORT

TO THE

95th CONFERENCE

2024

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PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

During 2023, we saw the death throes of 13 years of Tory failure in government at Westminster. Their programme of austerity and deregulation has decimated our public services, devastating communities up and down the UK. They've made working class people pay for the mistakes of the bankers, hedge funders and corporations who fund the Tories and expect a return on their investment.

The highlight of 2023 must be the FBU's pay campaign. Our members showed tremendous resolve and our officials the kind of organising ability that gives the employers sleepless nights. Our strike action ballot result was inspiring. Firefighters voted overwhelmingly for strike action on pay, with 88% voting Yes on a 73% turnout. In Northern Ireland, the result was even stronger, with 94% of members voting in favour of action. That sent ministers and employers a clear signal that the FBU meant business. To move the employers from 2% to 7%, avoiding the trap of the London offer and then getting 5% for the following year, with a commitment to discuss key issues like retained and control pay, CPD and pay progression, showed that collective bargaining and when necessary, collective action makes all the difference.

I was delighted with the 1 November rally in central London, which brought together a thousand of our members in another show of strength at the seat of power. Our new, up and coming speakers showed they understand and will continue the great traditions of the FBU by injecting their youthful enthusiasm into our ranks. To see so many new faces alongside our seasoned officials is a sure sign that the FBU is renewing itself for the battles ahead, which we undoubtedly continue to face.

We've made a really important breakthrough this year in our demand for maternity rights across the fire and rescue service. Our National Women's Committee lobby of the NJC, followed by our hard-hitting report on the postcode lottery of maternity provision, has already forced some chief fire officers to improve maternity pay. The astonishing gap between the best and worst maternity rights only underlines the importance and benefits of national pay and conditions that should be determined by national collective bargaining.

During 2023, we continued to face attacks on many fronts. The cuts have not stopped and we fought some great local campaigns in all four administrations to hold the line. HMICFRS and the NFCC continue with their so-called reform agenda, failing to stand up for the service and taking a 'Yes Sir' approach to central government. Disgracefully, HSE has joined the assault on BA safety, expecting our members to enter burning buildings without starting up their sets in 'known clean air'. Nobody who does the job believes this is safe. FBU members should not put themselves at risk for this ridiculous policy.

The Home Office finally responded to their own White Paper on 'fire reform'. This promises to give chief fire officers more powers and less scrutiny, which means local people who pay for the service will have less chance to challenge the chief when they impose cuts, reduce night cover, or send a van when a fully equipped and crewed fire appliance is needed.

We still face a tough year ahead. The Westminster government is still capable of damaging our industry. The FBU are the only ones to stand up and fight for the fire service, for its employees and the communities we serve. We are the only genuine professional voice of our service and unless we do it, no one else will. No other organisation has the nous and capability to defend firefighters' pay, pensions and conditions. Let's hope we see the back of this hapless Tory government at Westminster and get some politicians elected who will listen to the FBU.

SECTION A

PAY AND CONDITIONS

A1 INTRODUCTION

During 2023, firefighters' pay was the biggest priority for FBU members in the context of the cost of living crisis. Inflation measured by the consumer prices index (CPI) was just above 10% at the beginning of the year, before dropping to 4% by the end of 2023.

The FBU balloted members for strike action during December 2022 and January 2023. The employers' offer made on 8 February 2023 included a 7% increase for 2022-23 and a 5% increase for 2023-24, along with commitments to discuss retained, control, pay progression, new roles and Continual Professional Development (CPD). This was accepted by FBU members in a consultative ballot and backdated to 1 July 2022.

The FBU continued to work through the collective bargaining structures within the fire sector. The FBU negotiates on firefighters' pay and conditions through the National Joint Council (NJC) and the Middle Managers Negotiating Body (MMNB). During the year, Professor Lynette Harris from Nottingham Trent University chaired the NJC and MMNB. The union supports UK-wide pay and conditions bargaining and the 'Grey Book' as the best means to achieve improvements for all firefighters, regardless of role or duty system.

NJC business is also recorded in other parts of the annual report. This includes marauding terrorist attacks (MTA) in Section D, the Inclusive Fire Service Group in Section H and ballots in Section K.

A2 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NJC INDEPENDENT CHAIR 2022-23

Background

The National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (NJC), including the Middle Managers Negotiating Body (MMNB), is the body responsible for the supervision, from a national point of view, of all questions affecting the conditions of service of employees (other than those in Brigade Management roles) of fire and rescue services established under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (for England and Wales), Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

The NJC handles issues that affect all employees from firefighter to area manager. The MMNB has plenary powers to deal with issues which affect employees solely in the roles of station manager to area manager.

The principal purpose is to reach agreement on a national framework of pay and conditions for local application throughout the fire and rescue service in the United Kingdom. The NJC and MMNB are committed to the local democratic control of fire and rescue services to the community.

The parties to the negotiation are the Employers' Side comprising representatives of the Local Government Association, Welsh Local Government Association, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board. The Employees' Side comprises representatives of the Fire Brigades Union and, for the MMNB, the Fire Brigades Union and the Fire Officers Association.

An Independent Chair oversees the work of the National Joint Council and the Middle Managers Negotiating Body and is supported by two Vice-Chairs. Vice-Chair appointments alternate between the Sides on an annual basis.

For this year Ian Murray served as Vice Chair of the NJC and Cllr Nick Chard as Vice Chair of the Middle Managers Negotiating Body.

The Independent Chair works closely with the Joint Secretariat, which is currently provided by the Local Government Association and the Fire Brigades Union.

The membership of the National Joint Council and the Middle Managers Negotiating Body during 2022-23 is attached to this report.

Introduction

- 1. It has been another exceptionally busy year for Members and Joint Secretaries within the LAFRS NJC. There has been much positioning and debating, but also huge amounts of listening, and consensus. On all sides, a commitment to good industrial relations practice has always been apparent. The main issues of the year are outlined in this Annual Report, which covers the period from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023.*

What do we do?

- 2. The National Joint Council provides:*
 - The national negotiating machinery for the pay and conditions of service of uniformed fire service employees in the United Kingdom.*
 - The services of the respective side Secretariats in assisting parties at local level to resolve areas of disagreement.*
 - The services of the respective side Secretariats in assisting parties at local level in the interpretation of the national scheme of conditions of employment and the flexibilities contained therein.*

Meeting dates in 2022-2023

- 3. The National Joint Council met on three occasions: 4 October 2022, 8 February 2023 and 6 June 2023. The Middle Managers Negotiating Body met on those dates too although it did not meet formally on the 8 February due to the nature of the pay negotiations. A number of issues were considered and reports from the Independent Chair were approved. The Treasurer's Report for the year to 31 March 2023 is due for presentation and approval at the NJC was approved at the meeting on 5 October 2023.*

Key issues under consideration during 2022-2023

4. *Key issues under consideration by the National Joint Council and, as appropriate, the Middle Managers Negotiating Body, on which there were written and oral reports from the Joint Secretaries, included:*

Pay

5. *Pay negotiations were protracted and considered in significant detail during 2022/23. An initial offer of a 2.0% uplift in pay had been rejected by the employees side by the time of my last annual report. Following further consultation, on 4th October 2022 the National Employers made a revised offer of 5.0%. This was also rejected by the employees side, with the FBU writing to the Employers side secretary indicating their members had voted to reject by some 79%. The FBU also announced the result of formal industrial action ballots, which closed during January 2023 giving the union a mandate for strike action (as anticipated). The employers side ran additional consultation meetings taking account of all discussions around the sector as the February 2023 NJC date grew closer. Unfortunately, I as Chair was unable to make this meeting of the NJC (it had been brought forward from an earlier agreed date in light of the very serious circumstances). I was pleased to learn that following that NJC meeting, the National Employers were able to make the following offer, which later formed the basis of agreement with the employees side:*
- *A 7 per cent increase on all basic pay rates and Continual Professional Development payments with effect from 1 July 2022*
 - *A 5 per cent increase on all basic pay rates and Continual Professional Development payments with effect from 1 July 2023*

In addition, the employers' side of the NJC committed to explore some additional issues and suggested establishing joint working groups to adopt a more collegiate approach in discussing the Retained Duty System firefighters pay and rewards package, and to discuss the matter of pay progression. The following two paragraphs are direct quotes from the employer's final offer letter:

Retained Duty System firefighters

6. *Firefighters employed on the retained duty system are an important part of the workforce. It is proposed that both parties commit to a joint working group to include review of the retained duty system pay and rewards package. Membership of the group and a schedule of dates should be agreed as soon as possible once the current pay award negotiations are concluded with the intention of the joint working group concluding its work within 8 months.*

Pay progression

7. *The employers' side of the NJC is content to continue discussions around pay structure and progression. It is proposed that both parties commit to a joint working party commencing as soon as possible once the current pay award negotiations are concluded with the intention of the joint working party concluding its work within 8 months.*
- In addition to these items, the agreement also referred to three further items which it was agreed should be progressed:*

Firefighters (Control)

8. *To inform NJC consideration on the matter of the pay differential it was proposed that a joint job evaluation process be undertaken as soon as possible (following the conclusion of the pay award negotiations). This work has been progressed by the Joint Secretaries, who are inviting four organisations who are well established in job evaluation practice and analysis to submit a bid in support of their selection for this work.*

New roles

9. *As part of the pay agreement, the National Employers reaffirmed their commitment to developing the work of the fire and rescue service. This subject has remained high on the agenda through joint secretarial work and has also emerged as a theme during many of the joint working group discussions.*

Continuous Professional Development

10. *Discussions around CPD have been incorporated into the pay progression working party.*

Home Office White Paper on Fire Service Reform

11. *The anticipated response to the White Paper on Fire Service Reform has not yet been published but there is some expectation that the questions raised about reviewing pay negotiating machinery may*

emerge. While remaining open to reflection and improvement, both sides of the NJC have expressed pride in the success of the JNC pay negotiations cycle in 2023, which saw agreement reached without Industrial Action, which was notably not the case in all other UK sectors (including those with Independent Pay Review Bodies).

Major incidents agreement

12. In the run up to Christmas 2022, the NJC worked at pace to agree a strategic framework agreement to facilitate and assist detailed discussion at local level to manage a potential situation in respect of a major incident taking place should strike action be taken. The NJC felt this agreement would assist fire and rescue authorities and services with their own planning, while establishing a positive industrial relations framework to deal with a potentially complex situation. The Major incidents agreement was then launched via joint circular on 23 December 2022.

Inclusive Fire Service Group

13. In response to a growing number of press reports relating to culture within the Fire Service, the Independent Culture Review in the London Fire Brigade, and the Spotlight report produced by HMICFRS in England articulated, it was felt the Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) should be reconvened.

14. This UK-wide group is unique in the fire service in that it is comprised of employer and employee interests on the NJC, senior managers (NFCC) and employee representative bodies (FBU, FOA, FRSA). It is therefore well-placed to hear all voices, taking on board all views to maximise buy-in at all levels and drive improvement.

15. The group met on 20 June 2023 to discuss the issues and to explore how to take forward the work this group had previously undertaken. The group agreed to create a statement of intent, and to review/update the improvement strategies. The statement was discussed at the next meeting of the IFSG on 18 July 2023. Following complications of annual leave and some ill health which meant the group could not then get a third date into diaries before October, the statement was then published in September with an anticipation that the updated improvement strategies would be published again in due course.

General Joint Secretariat Activity

16. Issues under negotiation within the NJC are in the main progressed through the Joint Secretariat acting within the remit of its respective Sides.

17. On occasion lead members from each Side of the NJC/MMNB may meet outside of the usual round of larger meetings.

18. The Joint Secretariat usually formally meets every four to six weeks to exchange information and to progress negotiations. These meetings are also an opportunity for either side to identify potential local industrial relations flashpoints and subsequently to raise those concerns with the local management or union side as appropriate.

19. The Joint Secretariat leads discussion in National Joint Council working parties which informs negotiations and respective Side positions, as appropriate.

20. The Joint Secretariat also leads discussion in the sub-Committee on changes to rolemaps and national occupational standards.

21. When jointly requested to do so, the Joint Secretariat also works with parties at local level who wish to explore their current industrial relations relationship with a view to seeking improvement. This involves a full day session working with key local management and union representatives.

22. The Joint Secretariat has handled a considerable number of requests from local parties seeking interpretation or clarification of Scheme of Conditions of Service issues or early informal assistance where a matter is likely to prove difficult to resolve at local level.

23. In addition to the above, the Joint Secretariat has a formal conciliation role when requested by both parties at local level to assist in resolution of local disagreements.

Joint Secretariat – Local Conciliation

24. *In circumstances where discussion has been exhausted without agreement on an issue, or issues, at local level the Joint Secretariat when requested by both parties to do so can provide a confidential conciliation process in order to assist the parties in identifying a mutually agreeable outcome.*
25. *The Joint Secretariat has a very good record of assisting the parties to either reach agreement at the time of conciliation or to develop the basis of an agreement which leads to a resolution following further discussion shortly afterwards at local level.*

Resolution Advisory Panel

26. *The Scheme of Conditions of Service Negotiation Procedure contains a number of options that local parties can explore to facilitate resolution to local issues where negotiation at local level has been exhausted. One of those options is the NJC's Resolution Advisory Panel whose remit is to endeavour to facilitate an agreement between the parties but where that is not possible the Independent Chair will make a recommendation based upon the positions presented and discussed during the course of the meeting and which he believes can form the basis of an agreement.*

Technical Advisory Panel

27. *The NJC also operates a Technical Advisory Panel which can consider whether or not a new duty system proposed at local level reflects the principles contained in Section 4 of the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book) where it has not been possible to reach an agreement on its introduction.*
28. *As with RAP, the Technical Advisory Panel endeavours to facilitate an agreement between the parties, but where that is not possible the Independent Chair can, in addition to commenting on the extent of compliance with the principles, recommend a proposal that he believes may form the basis of an agreement.*
29. *The NJC's Technical Advisory Panel, which is comprised of an Independent Chair and the Joint Secretaries, did not receive any requests for assistance during 2022/23 and therefore did not meet.*

Circulars

Five circulars have been issued since the last report of the Independent Chair:

- *NJC/2/22 – Response to major incidents*
- *NJC/3/22 – Additional bank holiday – 8 May 2023*
- *NJC 1/23 – Pay award 2022*
- *NJC 2/23 – CPD increase 2022*
- *NJC 3/23 – Pay award 2023*
- *NJC 4/23 – CPD increase 2023*
- *NJC/5/23 – IFSG Statement of Intent*

Conclusion

There are several aspects of the role of the Independent Chair. As in previous years, in the past 12 months this has involved:

- *chairing NJC and MMNB meetings,*
- *consideration, with the Joint Secretaries, of items due for discussion through the NJC and/or MMNB at those meetings,*
- *ensuring the NJC and MMNB are each aware of the work of the other and that an opportunity for comment is provided,*
- *raising issues relating to how the formal business of NJC/MMNB meetings is handled with Joint Secretaries as appropriate,*
- *provision of this annual report.*

Following the lifting of the COVID-19 restrictions it has been possible for meetings of the NJC and MMNB to be attended again in person. The benefit of doing so was very evident at the February meeting that resulted in a negotiated pay settlement.

In common with other UK public service and organisations, pay negotiations were, as already identified, protracted, and detailed in the past year. Very significant efforts were made by all those involved to reach the negotiated settlement set out in para 5. of this report. Reaching a jointly agreed settlement in difficult circumstances illustrates the value of the NJC and its commitment to continuing dialogue and

negotiation which ultimately led to the basis of a pay agreement at its specially reorganised meeting on 8 February 2023.

Following the reconvening of the Inclusive Fire Service Group this summer, it is hoped that the group's work gains momentum in the coming year in the light of recent reports on culture in the Service and it is noted that IFSG is due to meet again on 13 October 2023.

It is recognised that the Joint Secretariat, other colleagues, and members of joint working groups continue to undertake a great deal of work behind the scenes. Much of this work underpins those matters formally reported at NJC and MMNB meetings but it also involves assisting parties at local level and the provision of a local, confidential, conciliation process. I should like to take this opportunity to formally recognise these contributions and thank all those involved.

Professor Lynette Harris, Independent Chair

A3 PAY RATES AND CPD PAYMENTS 2023-24

New pay rates were published in the FBU's all members circular (2023HOC0137MW) and are included in this report for the record (circular NJC/03/23).

FIREFIGHTING ROLES – PAY RATES FROM 1 JULY 2023

	Basic annual £	Basic hourly rate £	Overtime rate £
Firefighter			
Trainee	27,178	12.41	18.62
Development	28,310	12.93	19.40
Competent	36,226	16.54	24.81
Crew Manager			
Development	38,501	17.58	26.37
Competent	40,161	18.34	27.51
Watch Manager			
Development	41,031	18.74	28.11
Competent A	42,170	19.26	28.89
Competent B	44,911	20.51	30.77
Station Manager			
Development	46,712	21.33	32.00
Competent A	48,116	21.97	32.96
Competent B	51,525	23.53	35.30
Group Manager			
Development	53,801	24.57	Not applicable
Competent A	55,415	25.30	Not applicable
Competent B	59,642	27.23	Not applicable
Area Manager			
Development	63,163	28.84	Not applicable
Competent A	65,056	29.71	Not applicable
Competent B	69,283	31.64	Not applicable

FIREFIGHTING ROLES – PAY RATES FROM 1 JULY 2023 (RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM)

	(1) £ per annum	(2) £ per annum	(3) £ per hour	(4) £ per occasion
Firefighter				
Trainee	2,718	1,359	12.41	4.77
Development	2,831	1,416	12.93	4.77
Competent	3,623	1,811	16.54	4.77
Crew Manager				
Development	3,850	1,925	17.58	4.77
Competent	4,016	2,008	18.34	4.77
Watch Manager				
Development	4,103	2,052	18.74	4.77
Competent A	4,217	2,109	19.26	4.77
Competent B	4,491	2,246	20.51	4.77
Station Manager				
Development	4,671	2,336	21.33	4.77
Competent A	4,812	2,406	21.97	4.77
Competent B	5,153	2,576	23.53	4.77
Group Manager				
Development	5,380	2,690	24.57	4.77
Competent A	5,542	2,771	25.30	4.77
Competent B	5,964	2,982	27.23	4.77
Area Manager				
Development	6,316	3,158	28.84	4.77
Competent A	6,506	3,253	29.71	4.77
Competent B	6,928	3,464	31.64	4.77

Column 1 shows the full annual retainer (10% of the full-time basic annual salary).

Column 2 shows the retainer for employees on the day crewing duty system (5% of the full-time basic annual salary).

Column 3 shows the hourly rate for work undertaken.

Column 4 shows the disturbance payment per call-out.

CONTROL SPECIFIC ROLES – PAY RATES FROM 1 JULY 2023

	Basic annual* £	Basic hourly rate £	Overtime rate £
Firefighter (Control)			
Trainee	25,819	11.79	17.69
Development	26,895	12.28	18.42
Competent	34,415	15.71	23.57
Crew Manager (Control)			
Development	36,576	16.70	25.05
Competent	38,153	17.42	26.13
Watch Manager (Control)			
Development	38,979	17.80	26.70
Competent A	40,062	18.29	27.44
Competent B	42,665	19.48	29.22
Station Manager (Control)			
Development	44,376	20.26	30.39
Competent A	45,710	20.87	31.31
Competent B	48,949	22.35	33.53
Group Manager (Control)			
Development	51,111	23.34	Not applicable
Competent A	52,644	24.04	Not applicable
Competent B	56,660	25.87	Not applicable

*(95% of the respective firefighting role basic annual salary, as set out earlier)

NON-OPERATIONAL STAFF – PAY RATES FROM 1 JULY 2023

	£ per annum
Fire Control Operator equivalent	
During first six months	23,147
After six months and during 2nd year	24,174
During 3rd year	25,321
During 4th year	26,566
During 5th year	28,936
Leading Fire Control Operator equivalent	30,988
Senior Fire Control Operator equivalent	
During 1st year in rank	31,780
During 2nd year in rank	32,986

JUNIOR FIREFIGHTERS – PAY RATES FROM 1 JULY 2023

	£ per annum
Aged 16	12,573
Aged 17	13,510
Aged 18	27,178

CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) PAYMENTS FROM 1 JULY 2023

Fire authority	CPD (£)	Fire authority	CPD (£)
Avon	886	London	1100
Bedfordshire and Luton	780	Merseyside	838
Buckinghamshire	675	Mid and West Wales	738
Cambridgeshire	691	Norfolk	728
Cheshire	894	Northern Ireland	755
Cleveland	1139	Northamptonshire	791
Cornwall	359	Northumberland	966
Cumbria	621	North Wales	746
Derbyshire	922	North Yorkshire	549
Devon and Somerset	657	Nottinghamshire	1105
Dorset and Wiltshire	831	Oxfordshire	821
Durham and Darlington	1007	Royal Berkshire	824
East Sussex	652	Scotland	962
Essex	710	Shropshire	813
Gloucestershire	685	South Wales	774
Greater Manchester	1080	South Yorkshire	1209
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	770	Staffordshire	832
Hereford and Worcester	810	Suffolk	473
Hertfordshire	862	Surrey	852
Humberside	844	Tyne and Wear	1164
Kent	758	Warwickshire	696
Lancashire	845	West Midlands	1124
Leicestershire	788	West Sussex	614
Lincolnshire	462	West Yorkshire	1027

CPD payments were published in circular NJC/04/23 and in the FBU's all members circular (2023HOC0137MW), after negotiations at the NJC.

A4 BALLOT FOR STRIKE ACTION

On 30 January 2023, the FBU announced the results of its ballot of members for strike action (2023HOC060MW). This is reported in Section K2 of this annual report.

A5 FIRE EMPLOYERS' THIRD PAY OFFER

On 8 February 2023, fire employers made the following offer through the NJC (2023HOC077MW).

Following the joint discussions earlier today, the National Employers have agreed to make the following offer:

- A 7 per cent increase on all basic pay rates and Continual Professional Development payments with effect from 1 July 2022
- A 5 per cent increase on all basic pay rates and Continual Professional Development payments with effect from 1 July 2023

In addition, the employers' side of the NJC is committed to explore the additional points which were raised in your pay claim. Given the complexity of the issues, the following approaches are proposed:

- *Retained Duty System firefighters: Firefighters employed on the retained duty system are an important part of the workforce. It is proposed that both parties commit to a joint working group to include review of the retained duty system pay and rewards package. Membership of the group and a schedule of dates should be agreed as soon as possible once the current pay award negotiations are concluded with the intention of the joint working group concluding its work within 8 months.*
- *Firefighters (Control): The employers' side of the NJC recognises the important contribution of emergency fire and rescue control employees. To inform NJC consideration on the matter of the pay differential it is proposed that a joint job evaluation process be undertaken as soon as possible once the current pay award negotiations are concluded.*
- *Pay progression: The employers' side of the NJC is content to continue discussions around pay structure and progression. It is proposed that both parties commit to a joint working party commencing as soon as possible once the current pay award negotiations are concluded with the intention of the joint working party concluding its work within 8 months.*
- *New roles: The employers' side of the NJC also remains committed to developing the work of the fire and rescue service and to do so by agreement. It also recognises the need for this to be supported by appropriate investment as well as employee reward.*
- *Continual Professional Development: The employers' side notes the issues raised in the claim and is open to exploring further. Given the overlap with the pay progression point, it is proposed that consideration be incorporated into that proposed working party.*

Progress reports would be made on each point above to the June meeting of the NJC.

During our lengthy discussions throughout this process, we have explained that this offer reaches the very limit of what we can do, and it is made with the hope that it forms the basis of an agreement between the two sides.

A6 PAY AWARD WORKING GROUPS

As a result of the pay agreement, the NJC established working groups to progress discussions on the outstanding issues raised by the FBU. These included the general secretary and assistant general secretary. The working groups were:

- Retained pay
- Pay progression and CPD.

To assist with this work, the executive council established task and finish groups, which met during 2023.

A7 ADDITIONAL BANK HOLIDAY – 8 MAY 2023

The Westminster government declared 8 May 2023 a national bank holiday in respect of the coronation of King Charles III. On 23 December 2022, agreement was reached on FBU claim for the additional public holiday for the King's coronation. NJC circular (3/2022) reported the agreement (2022HOC0638AD).

A8 MATERNITY CLAIM

On 2 May 2023, the FBU submitted a maternity claim to the fire employers via the NJC. The union sought to extend current arrangements for maternity leave to 12 months on full pay following the date of birth. Pre-birth provisions were also raised, to protect expectant mothers from the industry's related exposures (2023HOC0205MW).

A9 PAY CLAIM 2024

On 6 December 2023, the FBU wrote to the fire service employers giving early notification to start talks on pay for 2024 as quickly as possible. This was in order to attempt to reach an early settlement, delivering the pay increase for 1 July. The letter sought to build on the two-year settlement achieved for 2022 and 2023.

A10 NJC – FBU AND EMPLOYERS' REPS

Employees' side		Employers' side	
<i>Fire Brigades Union</i>		<i>Local Government Association</i>	
Colin Brown	Lynda Rowan-O'Neill	Keith Aspden	Michael Payne
Andy Dark	Ben Selby	Greg Brackenridge	Roger Phillips
Cerith Griffiths	David Shek	Nick Chard	Frank Biederman
Val Hampshire	Les Skarratts	Roger Hirst	Sian Goding
Ian Murray	Pete Smith	Rebecca Knox	Fiona Twycross
Shaun Pickles	Peter Trayner		
Jim Quinn	Matt Wrack	<i>Scottish FRS</i>	<i>Welsh LGA</i>
		Kirsty Darwent	Jane Gebbie
		Fiona Thorburn	
		<i>Northern Ireland FRS</i>	
		Carmel McKinney	

A11 MIDDLE MANAGERS NEGOTIATING BODY (MMNB)

Employees' side		Employers' side	
<i>Fire Brigades Union</i>		<i>Local Government Association</i>	
Greg Ashman	Ian Murray	Keith Aspden	Michael Payne
Colin Brown	Jim Quinn	Greg Brackenridge	Roger Phillips
Nick Bourke	Lynda Rowan-O'Neill	Nick Chard	Frank Biederman
Andy Dark	Ben Selby	Roger Hirst	Sian Goding
Richie Green	Peter Trayner	Rebecca Knox	Fiona Twycross
Cerith Griffiths	Matt Wrack		
Val Hampshire		<i>Scottish FRS</i>	<i>Welsh LGA</i>
		Kirsty Darwent	Jane Gebbie
		Fiona Thorburn	
<i>Fire Officers Association</i>		<i>Northern Ireland FRS</i>	
Ade Robinson		Carmel McKinney	

SECTION B

PENSIONS

B1 INTRODUCTION

During 2023, the FBU took up a range of pensions matters on behalf of members. FBU representatives sit on the Scheme Advisory Boards (SABs) or equivalents in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

There are four pension schemes relevant to firefighters: the 1992 Firefighters Pension Scheme (FPS), the 2006 New Firefighters Pension Scheme (NFPS), the 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme and the Retained Firefighters Modified Scheme. The devolved governments' pension schemes broadly follow the four pension schemes above with local variations.

Emergency control staff are not permitted to join those pension schemes, despite FBU campaigning to include all firefighters in them. Instead, control staff are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

During 2023, the FBU continued to pursue the consequential matters arising from the union's successful legal challenges on firefighter pensions in previous years. These included:

- injury to feelings claims
- immediate detriment claims
- retained to wholetime transfer.

B2 INJURY TO FEELINGS

On 27 March, the FBU updated members on injury to feelings claims. The outline agreement reached applied to claimants who filed in 2015 and were firefighters employed by fire and rescue services in England and Wales. The FBU also filed a second round of claims for those members who registered when the online survey was reopened in 2020 (known as tapered claimants). Cases in Scotland and Northern Ireland were stayed, due to inter-governmental financing. There are more than 5,000 claimants, with a complex administrative process to navigate (2023HOC0170MR).

On 9 June, the FBU informed members that our longstanding pensions solicitor Ivan Walker was retiring. This meant that claims would need to be transferred to Thompsons solicitors. Members affected were asked to transfer their details, so that claims could progress (2023HOC0297MR).

On 18 July, the FBU provided officials with a chronology and guide to the key pensions circulars since 2015, to assist members with making their claims (2023HOC0353MR).

On 24 August, the FBU informed members that the logistical and legal issues preventing the union gaining access to the list of 2015 claimants had been resolved. Members who registered a claim in 2015 (first wave claimants) were invited to email solicitors in order to progress their claims (2023HOC0396MR).

On 4 December, the FBU informed members that the third tranche of claims had been lodged on behalf of members in 2021 who had completed a survey in 2020. All three tranches of cases were transferred to Thompsons, but this was a large-scale exercise and took considerable time to complete. Discussions continued on behalf of claimants in Scotland and Northern Ireland, but those remained stayed (2023HOC0548MR).

B3 AGE DISCRIMINATION CONSULTATIONS

During 2023, the FBU responded to a wide range of consultations on pensions, instigated by the Westminster government and the devolved administrations.

On 23 May, the FBU made a submission to the Home Office consultation, *Public service pensions: Firefighters' Pensions (Amendment) Regulations 2023 – McCloud/Sargeant remedy: phase two (retrospective)* (2023HOC0309MR).

On 21 June, the FBU made a submission to the Department of Health Northern Ireland consultation, *Amendments to the Northern Ireland Firefighters' Pension Schemes: McCloud/Sargeant Remedy: Phase Two (Retrospective)* (2023HOC0339MR).

On 22 June, the FBU made a submission to the Scottish Government consultation, *Implementing the 2015 remedy for the firefighters' pension schemes* (2023HOC0367MR).

On 23 June, the FBU made a submission to the Welsh Government consultation, *Remedying Age Discrimination in Firefighters' Pensions in Wales 2023* (2023HOC0338MR).

B4 FIREFIGHTERS' PENSIONS (REMEDIABLE SERVICE) REGULATIONS 2023

On 20 July, the Home Office published the government's formal response to the consultation on the draft Firefighters' Pensions (Remediable Service) Regulations 2023 and policy intent to implement the retrospective phase of the McCloud/Sargeant remedy.

This consultation was of huge significance to the many thousands of firefighters affected by remedy. The FBU informed members that other organisations and associations who purport to represent firefighters failed to submit any response (2023HOC0357MR).

The Firefighters' Pensions (Remediable Service) Regulations 2023 came into force from 1 October 2023. On 28 September, the FBU updated members on the new legislation (2023HOC0455MR).

B5 IMMEDIATE DETRIMENT

On 27 March, the FBU updated members on immediate detriment (2023HOC0170MR). Immediate detriment refers to members who are suffering a financial loss because they were treated as members of the 2015 Scheme when they left the service, and should have been treated as members of the FPS. They have suffered a loss because they should be receiving a pension, or a higher pension, under the rules of the FPS. It is clear, following the Sargeant litigation, that they were in fact still members of the FPS when they left, or were certainly entitled to be treated as such. A Tribunal declaration has been made to that effect.

The update explained why progress had stalled with the memorandum of understanding, which the FBU negotiated with the Local Government Association (LGA). Guidance issued by the Treasury had scared most fire and rescue authorities, mayors and PFCCs from giving effect to the memorandum, due to tax complexities.

B6 RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS' PENSIONS

On 27 March, the FBU updated members on those firefighters who transferred from retained to wholetime employment (2023HOC0170MR). The FBU's legal team continued to lodge claims to protect the position of members who transferred from the retained duty system to wholetime and who may benefit from a successful conclusion to the so-called 'aggregation issues'.

On 9 June, the FBU made a submission to the Home Office consultation, *Retained Firefighters' Pensions: Proposed Changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) 2006*. This is often referred to as 'Matthews' or the second options exercise (2023HOC0310MR).

On 3 October, the FBU informed members about several aspects of the second options exercise, including the historical background, timeline and aggregation (2023HOC0466MR).

On 6 October, the FBU made a submission to the Welsh Government consultation, *Pension Entitlements for Retained Firefighters 2023* (2023HOC0493MR).

On 8 November, the FBU made a submission to the Scottish Government consultation, *Retained Firefighters' Pensions: Proposed Changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Scotland) Order 2007*.

B7 COMMUTATION

On 5 April, the FBU updated members on the Government Actuaries Department's review of commutation factors in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992. The union circulated guidance. Pension board chairs and scheme managers were asked to liaise with pension managers to ensure factors were applied with immediate effect (2023HOC0183MR).

B8 JUDICIAL REVIEW INTO THE COST-CAP 2015 SCHEME

On 31 January - 3 February 2023, judicial review proceedings by six trade unions were heard, relating to changes made by the government to public sector pensions. The FBU, GMB, PCS, POA, RCN and Unite brought the case. The government's estimate of the amount at stake is £17bn.

The case concerns the government's botched reforms of the pension schemes in 2015. In 2018, the FBU's challenge was upheld by the Court of Appeal as unlawful, because the way they were implemented discriminated against younger members. The government accepted that they had to be reversed.

The government wants to avoid this result by imposing the cost of its own discriminatory conduct on the schemes, effectively making members of the new schemes pay.

The FBU maintained that this treatment is unlawful because:

- adding the cost of the discrimination into the cost control mechanism flouts the purposes that parliament intended when the cost control mechanism was set up – the government has tried to make this change by 'directions' issued by the Treasury without parliamentary control or consultation with members
- it also flouts promises made to scheme members when the schemes were reformed in 2015, in an attempt to defuse a bitter dispute
- it is once again discriminatory – only younger members will have to pay (2023HOC0146MR).

On 10 March, the judgment was handed down and unfortunately the FBU was unsuccessful on this occasion. The FBU was subsequently granted the right to appeal by the Court of Appeal, with the case due to be heard in 2024.

B9 SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

The FBU is represented on the following boards:

Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board: Mark Rowe, Pete Smith, Andrew Scattergood and Tony Curry.

Firefighters Pension Scheme Advisory Board (Wales): Mark Rowe and Cerith Griffiths.

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Pension Board: Mark Rowe and Jim Quinn.

Scottish Firefighters' Pension Scheme Advisory Board: Mark Rowe, Colin Brown and John McKenzie.

SECTION C

OPERATIONS, HEALTH AND SAFETY

C1 INTRODUCTION

During 2023, the FBU continued to fight for health and safety on behalf of members. The FBU's decontamination (DECON) project, based on independent commissioned research by the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), published new research.

The FBU continued to resist efforts by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to impose unsafe breathing apparatus policies and procedures, which breach health and safety law and longstanding best practice. The FBU health and safety committee worked on safety standards and other matters raised by members. FBU safety reps continued to tackle a wide range of issues.

C2 DECON RESEARCH

On 10 January 2023, several new peer-reviewed studies, commissioned by the FBU and carried out by UCLan, were published in renowned international peer-reviewed scientific journals. They were also reported in the *Lancet Oncology* (2023HOC010MW).

- Stec et al, Scottish Firefighters Occupational Cancer and Disease Mortality Rates: 2000-2020, *Occupational Medicine*. 2023 Jan 10, 138.
- Wolffe, Robinson, Dickens et al. Cancer incidence amongst UK firefighters. *Sci Rep* 12, 22072 (2022)
- Wolffe, Clinton, Robinson et al. Contamination of UK firefighters' personal protective equipment and workplaces. *Sci Rep* 13, 65 (2023)
- Wolffe, Robinson, Clinton et al. Mental health of UK firefighters. *Sci Rep* 13, 62 (2023)
- Wolffe, Turrell, Robinson et al. Culture and awareness of occupational health risks amongst UK firefighters. *Sci Rep* 13, 97 (2023).

C3 DECON IN SCOTLAND

On 19 January 2023, FBU officials briefed members of the Scottish Parliament on the importance of tackling contaminants and firefighters' cancers. This was ahead of a debate in the chamber, recorded in the official report. The motion to the Scottish Parliament on the FBU's DECON campaign garnered 32 signatures during the year.

On 15 June, the FBU supported the launch of the Scottish Employment Injuries Advisory Council (SEIAC) Bill, to establish a devolved body to assess occupational diseases and compensation.

On 7 September, the FBU made a submission to the Social Justice and Social Security Committee consultation on Scottish Employment Injuries Advisory Council Bill, supporting proposals to establish the body.

On 23 November, the Scottish Regional Secretary gave evidence to the Social Justice and Social Security Committee on Scottish Employment Injuries Advisory Council Bill as part of the Stage 1 process.

C4 APPG BRIEFING ON DECON

On 29 January 2023, the FBU made a DECON presentation to the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Fire Safety and Rescue at Westminster. The APPG on Fire Safety is an influential cross-party group of MPs, with a strong track record of warnings and advice to ministers. The FBU emphasised all three points in its campaign: to prevent, monitor and legislate for presumptive legislation on firefighter cancers.

C5 IARC PUBLICATION ON FIREFIGHTING

On 3 August 2023, the FBU circulated the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) monograph, *Occupational Exposure as a Firefighter*, volume 132 of its authoritative series of publications (2023HOC0372RLT). This followed an IARC working group evaluation, which found occupational exposure as a firefighter was carcinogenic to humans.

C6 POLY – AND PERFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS)

During 2023, the FBU undertook some important work on poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), a family of 10,000 compounds, none of which break down in the environment, may be toxic and build up in the body.

On 11 April, the union circulated an HSE report, *Analysis of the most appropriate regulatory management options (RMOA)*, which examined the risks. The report noted evidence that firefighters can be “significantly exposed” to PFAS from firefighting foam via various occupational mechanisms. It also notes firefighter personal protective equipment (PPE) is an additional pathway for exposure to PFAS, but stopped short of any serious or prioritised action (2023HOC0185RLT).

On 23 June, the FBU publicly criticised HSE’s PFAS management. The union argued that PFAS are an occupational risk to firefighters, due to their known use in the production of firefighting foams and structural firefighting PPE. The FBU concluded that the HSE report was another example of how the UK was out of step with many other parts of the world on diseases causing occupational exposures to firefighters (2023HOC0315RLT).

C7 BA SAFETY CAMPAIGN

On 19 July 2023, the FBU updated members on the union’s BA campaign to defend public and firefighter safety. In 2021, the FBU successfully fought off unsafe working procedures, initially promoted by the London Fire Brigade, which proposed deploying firefighters beyond the entry control point without first completing safety procedures to go under air. The FBU had some success in halting similar unsafe procedures, but a small number of chief fire officers supported by the NFCC continued to propose unsafe working practices.

In 2022, the FBU wrote to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) about these unsafe BA procedures, introduced without consultation, breaching safety legislation and against best guidance. The FBU wrote to

the HSE on four separate occasions – but received no reply. The FBU later learned that following ‘behind closed doors’ discussions with principal managers, HSE had written to the offending chief fire officers with an outcome. HSE’s correspondence tore up decades of BA safety measures. HSE did not respond to the FBU’s safety concerns. HSE refused to act on or investigate ‘operational/firefighting practices’, claiming they were not within their remit.

The FBU made its position clear: professional firefighters and BA wearers should not put themselves in a position of danger above the bridgehead with non-activated breathing apparatus (2023HOC0355MW).

On 11 August, the FBU reported that HSE had met with the union’s senior officials and conceded that their investigation, engagement and outcome were unacceptable. They apologised to the FBU both at the meeting and in writing. HSE committed to a full and proper investigation into the matter. (2023HOC0389MW).

On 25 November, the FBU reported that HSE had ignored the union’s substantial arguments, siding with chief fire officers and the NFCC. The FBU circulated the correspondence with HSE (2023HOC0536RLT).

C8 BA SAFETY ALERT

On 18 October 2023, the FBU alerted members to oxidation and corrosion on specific couplings of the MSA M1 SCBA set pneumatics. After a visual inspection, corrosion was confirmed by way of X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) and electron spectroscopy for chemical analysis (ESCA). The FBU asked local officials to conduct an immediate audit to identify any hazards (2023HOC0497RLT).

C9 SUNSCREEN GUIDANCE

On 8 September 2023, the FBU circulated TUC guidance on sun protection factor (SPF) sunscreen guidance, to support members working outside for extended periods of time. SPF sunscreen should be considered a form of PPE that employers must provide for outdoor workers. The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 are the relevant health and safety legislation (2023HOC0404RLT).

C10 FBU HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

During 2023, the FBU’s regional health and safety representatives committee held the following meetings:

- 29 March
- 30 March
- 3 December
- 4 December.

Health and safety committee meetings discussed important matters such as firefighter cancers, mental health, breathing apparatus safety, serious accident investigations and other local matters. Members of the committee and other officials organised attended DECON stalls at the Hazards conference, LGA fire conference and Emergency Services Show. DECON received an award from the Hazards campaign.

C11 MEMORIAL DAYS

On 28 April 2023, FBU members across the UK took part in International Workers' Memorial Day, a trade union event that highlights workplace safety under the banner, *Remember the Dead, Fight for the Living*.

On 4 May, FBU members across the UK marked Firefighters Memorial Day. The union encouraged all on duty members to participate in a minute's silence at midday where possible at their workplaces (2023HOC0201MW). The day was marked and recorded on social media.

SECTION D

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE POLICY

D1 INTRODUCTION

During 2023, the FBU made important interventions on fire and rescue service policy. This included responses to the Westminster government, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The FBU continued to speak for the profession on fire safety and related matters.

D2 FIRE REFORM WHITE PAPER

On 12 December 2023, fire minister Chris Philp announced the Westminster government's response to their own White Paper, *Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service*, published in May 2022. Ministers decided not to take many of their original proposals forward, such as the oath, and imposing police and crime commissioners.

However, the Westminster government intends to proceed with plans to impose operational independence, which would give chief fire officers more scope to avoid scrutiny for cuts, crewing, shift patterns, night cover and other retrograde measures. Ministers also intend to bring forward plans for a College of Fire and Rescue. The FBU said many of the proposals were "still dangerous and ill-conceived, and come alongside an authoritarian attempt to ban strike action in our sector". The union criticised ministers for failing to listen to the voice of firefighters and instead put all their faith in the NFCC, which is partly responsible for causing the problems within fire and rescue.

D3 HMICFRS ATTACKS ON FIREFIGHTERS

On 20 January 2023, Andy Cooke, chief fire inspector in England, published his first *State of Fire and Rescue* report. The report claimed there was "a compelling case for reform of our fire and rescue services" and recommitted HMICFRS to the same six national recommendations promoted by the hapless previous chief inspector, Thomas Winsor. These include expanding firefighters' roles without an associated increase in pay, undermining collective bargaining on pay and conditions and giving chief fire officers more powers. The FBU argued that none of those attacks would improve either the service to the public nor the morale of those who do the work in our communities.

D4 FBU LETTER TO HMICFRS

On 30 November 2023, the FBU responded to an HMICFRS request for comments ahead of its next first *State of Fire and Rescue* report. The FBU submission expressed the union's disappointment with HMICFRS, including its lack of independence from the Westminster government's political agenda. The inspectorate seems to believe its job is to blame the FBU for any shortcomings, while bolstering the machinations of chief fire officers who are actually responsible for the state of the service. The FBU reminded the inspectorate that it was re-established to hold principal managers to account, not to attack the professionalism of FBU members.

D5 HMICFRS INSPECTIONS

On 19 January 2023, HMICFRS published the third tranche of inspection reports of 15 fire and rescue services in England. This completed HMICFRS's second full round of inspections. The FBU argued that inspections have ignored important matters such as austerity cuts and slower response times.

D6 FURNITURE REGULATIONS

On 20 October 2023, the FBU made a submission to the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) consultation, *Smarter Regulation: Fire safety of domestic upholstered furniture*. The proposals would scrap the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 and replace them with a far looser regime. The FBU opposes this watering down of legislation, which puts lives and safety at risk.

The existing domestic furniture safety regulations include mandatory cigarette, match and crib tests. These have been in place since 1988. They were introduced after serious fires involving furniture. The FBU campaigned for these regulations for decades.

Ministers say there are new risks, such as lithium-ion batteries used in laptops, mobile phones, e-cigarettes and similar devices, which are not captured by these tests. The simplest answer is to retain existing tests and to develop new tests capable of assessing newly-emerging risks before products are placed on the market and sold to consumers. Yet the DBT make no proposals for such tests. Instead, they simply denounce the old cigarette and match tests as "outdated" and then propose to scrap them in favour of voluntary guidance.

The Westminster government's preferred choice is to "revoke and replace" the regulations. This would repeal the existing regulations and their mandatory requirements for testing and other provisions. The proposals replace safety tests mandated by law with "essential safety requirements". Although the latter would be set in statute, the testing arrangements are not laid down in law. Instead, tests would be voluntary under non-statutory British Standards Institution (BSI) guidance, at the whim of manufacturers.

Ministers claim that a reason for introducing their new regime was to reduce the use of chemical flame retardants used in furniture. There is longstanding evidence that flame retardants give off toxic fumes when burned, which can harm or kill residents and the firefighters sent to rescue them. The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 did not stipulate the use of flame retardants. Rather, flame retardants were used by furniture manufacturers as the most cost-effective means (for them) to meet the requirements of the regulations.

However, the DBT proposals do not guarantee the elimination of toxic flame retardants. The proposals do not lay down a new toxicity test, which could determine whether the substances used in furniture pass or fail on this criteria. In fact, the draft regulations (Clause 14) actually license the use of flame retardants, if the manufacturer deems it is not "practicable" to remove them (2023HOC0530BS).

D7 MARAUDING TERRORIST ATTACK (MTA)

On 16 November 2023, the FBU warned members that some fire and rescue services have begun, without consultation with the union, to implement Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) – Joint Operational Procedures (JOPs) 3. The FBU does not accept that responding to declared MTA incidents, participating in MTA training (other than awareness) and managing MTA operations is within the role of a firefighter (firefighter to area manager).

In the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS), collective agreements have been reached between the employer and the FBU. These agreements extend the role of a firefighter to the roles and responsibilities associated with an MTA response. These agreements have seen an uplift in pay as well as setting out conditions for training, a concept of operations, and protections for the financial rights of those who are killed or seriously injured whilst attending an MTA incident.

The guiding principles of the concept of operations within the LFB and GMFRS collective agreements are built on the JOPs 2 model. Therefore, in only those two services has the FBU agreed to the implementation of JOPs 2. The FBU has not agreed to the implementation of JOPs 3 – nor will the FBU accept that firefighters should be put at an increased risk. The FBU has not been consulted with, prior to the implementation of JOPs 3.

The FBU remains committed to developing the role of firefighters by agreement. The union continues to make representation at national employers and governmental level to see the role of a firefighter include a response to MTA. However, until agreement is made, no FBU members can be required to undertake training relating to, or in response to, an MTA incident. Those services where an agreement has been reached should not seek to impose concepts of operations that are not in keeping with those already established (2023HOC0529BS).

D8 COVID-19 INQUIRY

In January 2023, the FBU provided the TUC with a briefing note ahead of the Covid-19 public inquiry, *Module 2: Core UK decision-making, political governance*. The TUC is a core participant in the inquiry and with Thompsons solicitors is coordinating the union response. Module 2 dealt with the Westminster government's responses to the pandemic from March 2020 until 2022.

The FBU highlighted that the fire and rescue service response to the Covid-19 pandemic was managed through a unique UK-wide tripartite agreement between the FBU, fire employers and chief fire officers. The union argued that this agreement was successful in protecting the health and safety of firefighters, while securing a robust emergency response to the pandemic. Sadly, some chief fire officers, the NFCC and then fire employers walked away from the agreement during the second and third lockdowns, at the height of the pandemic.

During the Covid-19 inquiry hearings during the year, ministers also came under the spotlight for their wider failures with testing, personal protective equipment and failure to learn lessons. This arose from central government's hankering for deregulation and austerity, which a range of unions evidenced for the inquiry.

D9 EMERGENCY EVACUATION RESEARCH

In July 2023, the FBU was contacted by consultants carrying out research on emergency evacuation of high-rise buildings, part of the Westminster government's response to the Grenfell Tower fire. The FBU has serious concerns about the lack of research, planning, procedures and risk assessments on evacuating high-rise buildings. The union continues to raise matters of building safety with ministers, politicians and other fire safety professionals.

D10 FBU WILDFIRE REPORT

On 28 September 2023, the FBU published *Scorched: Firefighters and Resilience to Wildfire*, which revealed that the UK is woefully underprepared to face the increasing threat of wildfires. The report showed the extent of fragmentation and under-resourcing of fire and rescue services. Along with a lack of national standards, this has already resulted in firefighters stretched beyond limits at incidents according to reports between 2011 and 2022.

None of England's Fire and Rescue National Frameworks have referred explicitly to the risk of wildfires, despite wildfire listed as a threat to national security on the National Risk Register since 2013. Research has found that wildfire preparation remains a 'postcode lottery', with no statutory obligation for including the risk in local strategies.

The FBU argued that devastating wildfires across Europe this summer must be taken as a warning to prepare for rising temperatures over the coming years. The union called for a UK-wide strategy and standards to prepare for wildfires, a statutory duty on the government and fire and rescue authorities to prepare, central government investment in the fire and rescue service and funding for necessary wildfire training and PPE.

D11 SICKNESS ABSENCE

On 7 March 2023, the FBU circulated revised ACAS guidance on sickness absence. The union warned members that the new guidance may trigger local fire and rescue principal managers to seek changes to their sickness absence policies. Simply because ACAS issues new guidance doesn't mean that fire and rescue services have to (or can) change their policies. ACAS guidance applies to all sectors – private and public – and is used most widely in those businesses where there is no collective bargaining. The FBU advised that existing national and local collective agreements negotiated with the FBU are the basis of any sickness absence policies across the service (2023HOC0139AD).

SECTION E

GOVERNMENT POLICY AND LEGISLATION

E1 INTRODUCTION

The Westminster government and the devolved administrations make the major decisions about policy and funding for fire and rescue services across the UK. Therefore the FBU allocates significant resources to political work.

During 2023, the FBU made submissions to governments at Westminster and the devolved administrations, organised lobbies attended by FBU members, held meetings with ministers and civil servants, produced briefings and bulletins, as well as joining wider campaigns.

E2 GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – ENGLAND

The Home Office is responsible for the fire and rescue service in England. Suella Braverman was home secretary until she resigned in November 2023. James Cleverly was appointed new home secretary. Chris Philp was the fire minister. FBU officials held several meetings with ministers and government officials during the year.

E3 GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – NORTHERN IRELAND

The fire and rescue service in Northern Ireland is a devolved matter and the responsibility of the Department of Health. After the 2022 Assembly elections, no agreement on power-sharing was reached. Therefore since October 2022, Northern Ireland has been governed by civil servants. FBU officials held a number of meetings with politicians and officials during the year.

E4 GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – SCOTLAND

The fire and rescue service in Scotland is a devolved matter and the responsibility of the Scottish Government. During early 2023, Keith Brown was the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans. In March 2023, he was replaced by Angela Constance, who was appointed to the newly-titled Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs role.

Elena Whitham MSP was initially the Minister for Community Safety, responsible for the fire and rescue service in Scotland. In March 2023, she was replaced by Siobhian Brown, appointed to the newly titled Minister for Victims and Community Safety role. FBU officials held meetings with cabinet secretaries, ministers and numerous Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) during the year.

E5 GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – WALES

The fire and rescue service in Wales is a devolved matter and the responsibility of the Welsh Government. During 2023 Hannah Blythyn served as deputy minister for social partnership with responsibility for community safety and fire and rescue services. FBU officials held meetings with ministers, Senedd members and Welsh government fire branch civil servants during the year.

E6 POLITICAL INTERVENTION AT WESTMINSTER

During 2023, the FBU briefed MPs on important legislation. The FBU produced five issues of the *Fire and Rescue Service Matters* bulletin, aimed at ministers and elected representatives at Westminster and in the devolved administrations. These were on firefighter cancers, firefighters' pay, central funding, maternity rights and furniture regulations.

On 6 February, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published its final local government finance settlement for 2023-24. Although Westminster spending on fire and rescue increased by almost 6%, the level of central funding remains below the level reached a decade ago and took no account of inflation.

On 1 November, the FBU organised a successful rally at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. The events launched the FBU's *Firefighters' Manifesto*, a comprehensive assessment of the state of the fire and rescue service and the union's demands to improve the service. These included: immediate investment in the fire and rescue service, national standards on response times and crewing, a new statutory advisory body to set policy and standards, with the FBU included, safe housing for all, climate action, with resources and coordination to safeguard against flooding and extreme weather events, progress on equalities, fire contaminants and democratic accountability. The rally welcomed a range of speakers from the FBU, Labour Party MPs and other trade unionists. Around a thousand firefighters attended from across the UK.

E7 POLITICAL INTERVENTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Northern Ireland Assembly was suspended in February 2022. Elections were held in May 2022 for Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). The impasse was not resolved during 2023. During the year FBU officials and members engaged with politicians from all parties in Northern Ireland: the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Sinn Féin, Ulster Unionists, Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and the Alliance Party. FBU officials also held regular meetings with Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) principal officers.

E8 POLITICAL INTERVENTION IN SCOTLAND

During the year Scottish FBU regional officials engaged regularly with Cabinet Secretaries, Ministers, MSPs and the leaders of all parties at Holyrood and Scottish MPs in Westminster. FBU officials also held regular meetings with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) principal managers. On 29 August 2023, the FBU launched a petition directed at the Scottish Government, demanding an end to cuts (2023HOC0397MW).

On 12 September, the FBU made a submission to the Scottish Criminal Justice Committee, *Pre-budget scrutiny consultation 2024-2025*. The union repeated its legitimate concerns regarding the Scottish Government's resource-based spending review proposal for continued, significant, real term cuts in funding to the SFRS.

On 24 October, the FBU launched its report, *Firestorm: A Report into the Future of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service*, with a briefing session to MSPs in the Scottish Parliament. The report makes the comprehensive case for investment in the SFRS and was based on detailed research, including a survey of FBU members in Scotland. Members in Scotland lobbied politicians on 24 August and 26 October.

E9 POLITICAL INTERVENTION IN WALES

In January 2023, the Wales Fire and Rescue Consultative Forum was reconstituted as the Social Partnership Forum for Fire and Rescue Services (SPF). The FBU represents firefighters on the new forum, which includes senior civil servants, chief fire officers and employers' representatives. During the year it met quarterly and discussed a range of issues, including the FBU's DECON campaign. The forum revised its terms of reference. FBU officials also held regular meetings with fire and rescue service principal managers across Wales.

During 2023, firefighters in North Wales embarked on a concerted campaign against cuts, holding a number of rallies and engaging with local politicians. In December, at a meeting of the North Wales Fire Authority, a proposal to downgrade two wholetime stations and the closure of five retained stations was rejected by fire authority members.

E10 STRIKES (MINIMUM SERVICE LEVELS) ACT

On 10 January 2023, the Westminster government introduced new anti-union laws designed to undermine the right of firefighters and other workers from taking legal, legitimate strike action in defence of our living standards. The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill imposed minimum service requirements on certain sectors, restricting trade union members' right to strike and limiting effective strikes (2023HOC030MW).

The FBU took part in a range of demonstrations, lobbies and rallies to oppose the Bill (2023HOC020RLT, 2023HOC054RLT, 2023HOC0222RLT). The FBU wrote to the devolved administrations seeking their support never to impose work notices under the new law (2023HOC0204MW).

On 20 July, the Strikes (Minimum Service Level) Act received royal assent and went onto the statute book. On 29 September, the FBU made a submission to the Department for Business and Trade's *Minimum service levels: issuing work notices guidance* consultation (2023HOC0459MW). On 5 October, made a submission to the Department for Business and Trade consultation, *Minimum service levels: Code of Practice on reasonable steps* (2023HOC0490MW).

E11 MINIMUM SERVICE LEVELS – FIRE

On 2 May 2023, the FBU made a submission to the Westminster government's consultation, *Minimum Service Levels for Fire and Rescue Services: A consultation on implementing minimum service levels for fire and rescue services during periods of strike action – Home Office*.

The Home Office proposals included options imposing minimum service arrangements that would effectively ban strike action from taking place in the fire and rescue service. Under option 2, the minimum service levels would be set as high as 90% of staff – with a central estimate of 77%. Option 5 stated: “At high risk times or dates... would essentially prevent FRS undertaking strike action at certain times”.

The proposed options would mean a crew of five operational firefighters riding a fire appliance might all vote for strike action, but only one or two would be permitted to do so. Similarly, most operational control staff would be forced into work. This would be an effective strike ban.

The regulations on minimum service levels for the fire and rescue service had not been laid by the end of 2023.

E12 GRENFELL TOWER FIRE AND PUBLIC INQUIRY

On 14 June 2023, local residents, campaigners and firefighters marked the sixth anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire with another silent walk. The FBU mobilised members and had a strong presence from across the UK (2023HOC0226TM).

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) held no further hearings during 2023. Much of its time was consumed drafting its report. This was initially planned to be ready by January 2024, but then was put back to at least summer 2024. The FBU continued to receive correspondence from the inquiry, including expert recommendations that will inform the final report.

The FBU wrote to members regarding the report, which includes the legal ‘Maxwellisation’ process, known as a Rule 13 letter (2023HOC0492MR). If an individual is to be criticised by a public inquiry report, the inquiry has to write to that person with the criticisms and give them the opportunity to respond. The FBU asked any members who received a Rule 13 letter to inform the union for legal advice. No cases were recorded by head office.

E13 NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PFCC CRISIS

On 29 November 2023, Northamptonshire firefighters travelled to Westminster to raise serious concerns over fire and rescue service “chaos” caused by combining police force and fire service governance. Firefighters raised the alarm following the conduct of Northamptonshire’s police, fire and crime commissioner (PFCC), Stephen Mold. The PFCC twice selected a chief fire officer with no operational firefighting experience to lead the service, despite public outcry. FBU representatives held a meeting in Westminster, attended by shadow fire minister Alex Norris. Fire minister Chris Philp did not respond to the invitation to meet.

E14 APPG ON FIRE SAFETY AND RESCUE

During 2023, the FBU attended meetings of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Fire Safety and Rescue at Westminster. The FBU helped to found the group two decades ago. It has been an authoritative

voice, warning on fire safety over many years. The APPG frequently has ministers and other speakers attend its proceedings. The FBU has raised issues such as DECON, school safety and Grenfell-related matters with other attendees.

E15 FBU PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The FBU organises a parliamentary group to advance firefighters' interests at Westminster, where many key decisions are made that affect the fire and rescue service. The group, drawn exclusively from Labour MPs, was chaired by Zarah Sultana MP.

The aim of the group is to inform MPs of firefighter issues and influence the direction of government policy. The FBU parliamentary group is a campaigning group. It is not comprised of MPs who have any financial relationship with the union because of their membership, rather those who wish to work with the union and in the interests of FBU members.

The group normally meets regularly while the House of Commons is sitting, so the union can brief MPs on its current campaigns. The union provides a written report to all group meetings. During the year, a wide range of issues were raised, including firefighters' pay and conditions, the impact of cuts on the service and the Grenfell Tower fire.

Region	Member of Parliament	Constituency
3	Alex Cunningham	Stockton North
	Mary Kelly Foy	City of Durham
	Mary Glendon	North Tyneside
	Ian Lavery	Wansbeck
	Andy McDonald	Middlesbrough
	Ian Mearns	Gateshead
	Grahame Morris	Easington
	Kate Osborne	Jarrow
	Liz Twist	Blaydon
4	Olivia Blake	Sheffield Hallam
	Richard Burgon	Leeds East
	Gill Furniss	Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough
	Louise Haigh	Sheffield Heeley
	Imran Hussain	Bradford East
	Rachael Maskell	York Central
	Karl Turner	Hull East
5	Mike Amesbury	Weaver Vale
	Paula Barker	Liverpool Wavertree
	Ian Byrne	Liverpool West Derby
	Dan Carden	Liverpool Walton
	Peter Dowd	Bootle
	Kim Johnson	Liverpool Riverside
	Rebecca Long Bailey	Salford and Eccles
	Conor McGinn	St Helens North
	Jim McMahon	Oldham West and Royton

	Nav Mishra	Stockport
	Angela Rayner	Ashton-Under-Lyne
	Cat Smith	Lancaster and Fleetwood
	Mick Whitley	Birkenhead
6	Nadia Whittome	Nottingham East
7	Tahir Ali	Birmingham Hall Green
	Zarah Sultana (chair)	Coventry South
8	Nia Griffith	Llanelli
	Jo Stevens	Cardiff Central
	Beth Winter	Cynon Valley
9	Clive Lewis	Norwich South
	Mohammad Yasin	Bedford
	Sarah Owen	Luton North
	Rachel Hopkins	Luton South
10	Apsana Begum	Poplar and Limehouse
	Jeremy Corbyn	Islington North
	Jon Cruddas	Dagenham and Rainham
	John Cryer	Leyton and Wanstead
	John McDonnell	Hayes and Harlington
	Abena Oppong-Asare	Erith and Thamesmead
11	Lloyd Russell-Moyle	Brighton Kemptown
12	Kerry McCarthy	Bristol East

E16 TRADE UNION CO-ORDINATING GROUP (TUCG)

The FBU is a member of the Trade Union Co-ordinating Group (TUCG), which co-ordinates campaigning activities at Westminster on issues of common concern between member unions. The TUCG currently comprises 10 trade unions: Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU), FBU, Napo – the probation and family court staff union, National Union of Journalists (NUJ), National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), National Education Union (NEU), Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), Prison Officers Association (POA), United Road Transport Union (URTU) and University and College Union (UCU). The TUCG executive council met every two months during the year and organised events at TUC congress and at Westminster.

SECTION F

TRADE UNION AND LABOUR MOVEMENT

F1 INTRODUCTION

During 2023, FBU delegates attended some significant gatherings, including the TUC and STUC. The FBU participated in campaigns, conferences and within the Labour Party to ensure firefighters' voices were heard. The FBU maintained its affiliations to a wide range of labour movement-backed campaigns.

F2 TUC CONGRESS

The annual Trades Union Congress (TUC) took place in Liverpool on 10-13 September 2023. The FBU's delegation was Matt Wrack, Ian Murray, Steve Wright, Maria Buck, Jamie Newell, Adam Taylor and Riccardo la Torre.

The delegation moved two resolutions at the conference, on pay and the cost of living crisis and on the fire White Paper. Both were carried. They also amended motions on renewing the fire and rescue service and on the Minimum Service Levels Act. The FBU supported a range of fringe meetings. Matt Wrack was elected to the TUC general council and executive committee. Wrack became TUC president for the following year.

F3 TUC SPECIAL CONGRESS

On 9 December 2023, the TUC held a special congress on its ongoing campaign against minimum service levels (MSLs). The FBU's delegation was Ian Murray, Steve Wright, Isabella Goodwin and Corneil Power. The congress carried a TUC general council statement and agreed to carry on the campaign. The FBU wrote to the TUC about the lack of an amendments process for the statement at the congress itself. Delegates contributed to the panel and the main debate, raising demands for more action against the anti-union laws.

F4 TUC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

TUC women's conference took place in London on 8-9 March 2023. The theme was *Women Demand Better*. The FBU delegates were Georgina Fielding, Kerry McCrone and Leoni Munslow. The FBU submitted resolutions on the London Fire Brigade's culture review. Delegates also spoke on sexual harassment, discrimination, misogyny and bullying, the misuse of non-disclosure agreements, female fire kit and maternity rights.

F5 TUC LGBT+ CONFERENCE

The TUC LGBT+ conference took place at Congress House, London on 29-30 June 2023. The FBU delegates were Maria Buck, Gemma Betts, Shelley Morgan and Pat Carberry. The theme of the conference was *Allyship, unity and solidarity*. The FBU moved a composite on trans rights. Delegates discussed challenging far-right narratives, international LGBT+ rights, the cost-of-living crisis, healthcare and community services, trans and non-binary equality, banning conversion therapy, and workplace equality. There were panels on LGBT+ poverty and the cost-of-living crisis, and solidarity in the face of the far right. Pat Carberry was re-elected to the TUC LGBT+ committee.

F6 TUC BLACK WORKERS' CONFERENCE

TUC black workers' conference took place on 26-28 May 2023. The FBU delegates were Joe Doherty, Kasey LeGall, Jamie Newell and Corneil Power. The theme was *Organising for racial justice*. The FBU submitted a resolution on the union's DECON campaign. Delegates discussed tackling institutional racism, building an anti-racist trade union movement, the cost-of-living crisis, race pay disparity, international solidarity and challenging the hostile environment. Workshops and fringes also covered how to win a £15 minimum wage industrially and politically, black workers' experiences of flexible working, and building a trade union response to the far right.

F7 ICTU BIENNIAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) held its biennial delegate conference in Kilkenny on 4-6 July 2023. The theme of the conference was *Making Work Pay – Unions Transforming Work and Workplaces*. The FBU submitted a resolution on the union's DECON campaign, which was carried unanimously. The FBU attendees comprised Ian Murray, Jim Quinn, Dermot Rooney and Phil Millar.

F8 STUC CONGRESS

The Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) took place in Dundee on 17-19 April 2023. The theme was *Scotland's workers demand better*. The FBU delegates were Matt Wrack, Colin Brown, Gus Sproul, Simon Leroux and Iain Ballantyne. The FBU submitted motions on the union's DECON campaign and solidarity with Palestine. Delegates discussed public services, trade union freedom, the national care service and public ownership, tackling the energy crisis, safe travel for workers and buffer zones. Gus Sproul was elected to the STUC general council.

F9 LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

Labour Party conference was held in Liverpool on 8-11 October 2023. The FBU is affiliated to the Labour Party in England and Wales and sent four delegates: Matt Wrack, Amanda Mills, Adam Taylor and Steve Wright. The FBU submitted a motion on *Implementation of a New Deal for Working People in full*.

F10 LABOUR PARTY WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Labour Party annual women's conference was held in Liverpool on 8-11 October 2023. The FBU delegate was Val Hampshire. The FBU submitted a resolution on the FBU's maternity rights campaign, the *Fight for 52*.

F11 LABOUR PARTY LEADERSHIP

During 2022, the FBU maintained strong links with the Labour Party leadership at various levels. FBU officials had regular communication with shadow ministers. Yvette Cooper remained shadow home secretary. Sarah Jones was shadow fire minister until the autumn reshuffle, when Alex Norris took on the role. In addition, officials briefed MPs in the FBU parliamentary group at Westminster.

FBU officials participated in meetings of the Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Organisation (TULO), alongside the 11 other trade unions affiliated to the party. Ian Murray was elected to serve on the Labour Party's National Executive Committee (NEC).

F12 NATIONAL POLICY FORUM

The Labour Party's National Policy Forum (NPF) met in Nottingham on 22-23 July 2023. FBU delegates were Matt Wrack, Ian Murray and Val Hampshire. The FBU made submissions on each section of the agenda, securing commitments on fire and rescue, the anti-union laws, climate change and building safety.

F13 PARTY CONFERENCES

During the year, FBU officials maintained links with a range of political parties to influence their fire and rescue service policies. This generally involved attending online and virtual meetings and events.

FBU members in Northern Ireland engaged with the five major political parties represented in the Northern Ireland Assembly: the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Sinn Féin, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and the Alliance Party.

FBU officials also engaged with the Scottish Labour Party, Scottish National Party (SNP) and Scottish Green Party conferences to lobby politicians about matters concerning the Scottish government.

F14 INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The FBU has a longstanding tradition of international solidarity, with strong links with firefighters across the globe and support for global labour movement campaigns. The FBU has regular correspondence with firefighter unions around the world. The union's international committee oversees these relations. The FBU participates in the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) firefighters' network, which includes most firefighter unions across Europe.

F15 AFFILIATIONS

During the year the FBU was affiliated to the following organisations:

LABOUR MOVEMENT ORGANISATIONS

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD)	Momentum
Don't Leave, Organise (DLO)	Public Services International (PSI)
European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)	Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)	Trade Union and Labour Party Organisation (TULO)
Labour Party	Trade Union Co-ordinating Group (TUCG)
Labour Representation Committee (LRC)	Trades Union Congress (TUC)
Labour Research Department (LRD)	Wales Trades Union Congress (WTUC)

FIRE ORGANISATIONS

Fire Protection Association (FPA)	The Firefighters Memorial Trust
Fire Sector Federation (FSF)	National Fire Sprinkler Network

NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

Abortion Rights	Maternity Action
British Pensioners and Trade Union Action Association	Marx Memorial Library
Campaign against Climate Change	National Assembly of Women
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)	National Pensioners Convention
Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom	National Shop Stewards Network
Campaign for Trade Union Freedom	People's Assembly
Comprehensive Future	Protect our NHS
Defend Council Housing	Shrewsbury 24 campaign
End Child Poverty	Stand Up to Racism
Enough is Enough	Stop the War Coalition
Fuel Poverty Action	Strike Map
Institute of Employment Rights (IER)	Trade Union Friends of Searchlight
International Brigade Memorial Trust	Truth About Zane (TAZ) campaign
Justice for Grenfell	Unite Against Fascism
Liberty	Woodcraft Folk
Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)	Working Class Movement Library

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA)	International Centre for Trade Union Rights (ICTUR)
Amnesty International	Justice for Colombia
Burma Campaign UK	Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign
Campaign for Human Rights in the Philippines	Palestine Solidarity Campaign
Committee for the Defence of Iranian People's Rights (CODIR)	Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED)
Cuba Solidarity Campaign	Trade Union Friends of Bhopal
Greece Solidarity Campaign	Venezuela Solidarity Campaign
Hands off Venezuela	War on Want

SECTION G

EDUCATION

61 INTRODUCTION

The executive council recognises the importance of trade union education. In 2023 the FBU supported a comprehensive and vibrant offer, reflecting the rise in activism and engagement generated by the pay dispute.

62 FBU TRADE UNION EDUCATION STRATEGY AND PROGRAMME

The ambition of the FBU trade union education programme is to enable every official at all levels to:

- develop the strength and capacity of the FBU to make a difference to the lived reality of members, and
- support the union's work in the context of the wider trade union movement and in defence of the fire and rescue service.

The purpose of the education programme is to ensure that every official can access the learning, development and confidence required to effectively deliver their elected role.

The FBU pathway approach to learning continued to develop in 2023, featuring the introductory offer, the progression programme, and health, safety and welfare education, as well as bespoke and specialist events.

63 PARTICIPATION IN FBU TRADE UNION EDUCATION IN 2023

A total of 635 places were filled on the trade union education programme in 2023:

- 416 individual members/officials participated in the programme, representing a 48% increase from 2022
- Of these 416 individuals, 17% were women
- Of these 416 individuals, 47% were under 40 years old.

These figures include 33 residential courses. They exclude one-day events such as the reps' days held in the summer, online events such as All Different All Equal (ADAE) awareness days, strike schools, and the equality section schools.

64 INTRODUCTORY OFFER FOR BRANCH, SECTION AND NEW BRIGADE OFFICIALS

The *Introductory Branch Officials* course ran ten times in the year and was well attended throughout by a total of 193 participants, an increase of 53% compared to 2022. The course took place in Liverpool, Eastbourne, Wortley Hall, Hertfordshire, Durham and Cardiff, and ran twice in the year in both Leicestershire and Glasgow. All courses were oversubscribed. Many branch and section officials who attended reported that they had been motivated to become more involved in the union as a result of the pay dispute and wider campaigning work of the union. The course continues to be rooted in trade union values and principles, giving all new officials a rounded introduction to their role, the union and the wider movement.

The *Representing Members* course was attended by 113 participants across six courses. Demand for this course also increased this year.

65 EQUALITY SECTION SCHOOLS

FBU education supported the planning, design and delivery of annual schools for all three equality sections. Each school was well attended, had a varied programme, and was welcomed by members of the section.

66 FAIRNESS AT WORK EDUCATION

As well as support for the three equality section schools, fairness at work education was offered in the form of full courses and awareness days.

The *All Different All Equal* course took place twice in the year, with a total of 36 officials attending. The course encourages participants to be champions of the policy, and equality and fairness at work more generally. The additional assessment element was continued this year, requiring participants to prepare an investigation report and recommendations as a supplementary individual task, instead of as a group task during the residential programme, making the course more rigorous. As a result, regions are able to ascertain whether accredited officials have completed the three-day course, and whether they have also submitted the written associated report within the timescale specified and received comprehensive feedback from the course tutor. This is intended to support regional secretaries in their identification of appropriate investigators as the need arises.

The All Different All Equal policy has been consistently introduced to all members and officials attending *Introductory Branch Officials* courses, so that they are aware of their responsibilities in supporting members who may be complainants. The policy also explains the required course of action if officials are approached by a member who may be the subject of allegations of discrimination, harassment or bullying.

One-day online awareness sessions also took place in 2023, exploring All Different All Equal, and showed how officials can hold employers to account using equality impact assessments.

67 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE EDUCATION

Introduction to Health, Safety and Welfare at Work courses took place quarterly in 2023, ensuring that new safety reps understand their rights and entitlements, the responsibilities on employers in regard to health and safety, and how to conduct inspections of the workplace.

The pathway was extended through the *Health, Safety and Welfare – Development* course, and the continued rollout of the *Health, Safety and Welfare – Accident Investigation* course. Both courses ran

successfully during the year: the latter will be required prior to the *Serious Accident Investigation* course, which has been reworked and revised, and will be reintroduced into the programme in 2024.

A *Mental Health for Trade Unionists* course took place early in the year, with an increased emphasis on the wellbeing of elected reps and officials.

68 DYSLEXIA AND NEURODIVERSITY

The education programme continued to offer knowledge and skills development opportunities for members and officials interested and engaged in issues related to neurodiversity.

A new course to the programme this year was *Dyslexia and Neurodiversity in the Workplace*, which ran as a residential course in both Newcastle and Eastbourne. The course was designed to develop the capacity of reps and officials to represent and advocate for neurodivergent members. The content focused on neurodiversity as an industrial issue, giving participants the tools with which to challenge their employers to remove the barriers faced by neurodivergent firefighters and control staff. Both a health and safety and an equalities issue, sessions covered how to use the law to win for members, as well as how to confidently advise on related issues such as disclosure, screening, diagnosis, and securing reasonable adjustments. The two courses were attended by a total of 40 participants from ten regions.

The union has maintained its focus on accessibility by updating and improving education resources according to the learning needs of participants. FBU education continued to administer and provide guidance on the QuickScan screening tool, which remains available to all members, as well as offering bespoke advice and support to reps and officials on an ad hoc basis.

69 PROGRESSION EDUCATION FOR BRIGADE, AREA, SECTION, AND REGIONAL OFFICIALS

Progression education was offered through FBU courses and longer courses offered by the TUC.

An *Organisers' School* took place in September in Birmingham with 30 participants. As with previous seminars run for organisers, the aim of the event was to ensure that FBU organisers are enthused, prepared and equipped to make the best use of their time. The programme explored the latest and best practice in organising, including theories of change, mapping, organising conversations, and activist development. Support with the Phoenix membership system was provided by Anna Hernes of the membership team throughout the event, and the school was co-tutored by Matt Partridge, full-time union organiser. The school also welcomed guest speakers who had been central to the organising initiative and subsequent industrial action at Amazon in Coventry.

The progression pathway in 2023 also included Conference Matters, *Collective Bargaining and Negotiation*, and *Pensions – Supporting Members with Ill-Health Retirement* courses.

610 NATIONAL SCHOOL

National School took place in November with a cohort of 32 activists from across the regions and sections of the union. Programme highlights included:

- A formal address and welcome from the general secretary
- A series of debates in which participants challenged each other on key strategic questions relating to the future of the fire and rescue service
- A showing of the Ken Loach film *The Old Oak* celebrating working class solidarity across boundaries of experience and culture, accompanied by a discussion session with Dave Turner, retired FBU official and lead actor in the film

- An exploration of participants' ambitions and expectations of a potential future Labour government and a meeting with Alex Norris MP, shadow minister for fire
- In the context of the war on Gaza, speakers from the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Na'amod: British Jews against Israeli Occupation helped participants to understand both the background to and the significance of the developing crisis
- A session with Corporate Watch, researching private interest and corporate connections in the public sector.

These plenary sessions were intertwined with classroom discussions and the Making Change project which gives participants opportunity in small groups to advocate for change on an issue that is important to them.

National School remains the key development opportunity for reps and activists in the union. It is the culmination of the annual education calendar, and will be rewritten for 2024 to address the contemporary industrial and political context.

611 OTHER EDUCATION SUPPORT

In addition to the events and activities described above, and the ongoing maintenance of the FBU trade union education programme, education support has also been provided on the following issues: the pay dispute, the organising days for reps held in the summer, the equality campaigning initiative, collaborative strategic working sessions, the rally for investment in the fire and rescue service, neurodiversity awareness, anti-fascism, the roll-out of the Phoenix system, and other head office activity.

612 TUC EDUCATION AND PUBLIC FUNDING FOR TRADE UNION EDUCATION

The TUC education programme in England continued to be under significant pressure in 2023. TUC education is delivered by trade union education tutors via TUC education centres in further education colleges. Courses are externally accredited, allowing the colleges to draw down limited public funding in recognition of the public good that trained and educated reps in all unions do. Due to escalating cuts to the funding available, and increasingly prohibitive restrictions on learners who can be funded, there are now far fewer colleges offering trade union education than at any point since this system first began.

The FBU continues to rely on this structure for tutors, and external accreditation of some courses, through our very successful partnership with the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (CONEL). In late August, members of the EC education sub-committee visited the college and met with both the trade union studies department and senior college managers to learn more about the situation. The TUC has been conducting a review of its education offer throughout 2023.

This year the FBU education programme was supported by tutors Janine Booth, Mike Kidd, Helen Nolan, Dave Smith and Steve White, as well as the FBU head of education.

613 UNION LEARNING FUND SCOTLAND

With funding from Scottish Government, region 1 continued to offer lifelong union learning opportunities. Now on the third project, participating learner numbers have exceeded 800 to date, including accredited qualifications.

Being part of this project has allowed access to various sources of additional funding. The Flexible Working Development Fund has funded four FBU reps to undertake NEBOSH qualifications. The Fair Work, Equality and Leadership Programme funded a *Sexual Harassment in the Workplace/Union – Support, Challenge*

and Train course, where women members in Scotland, together with some members of the FBU anti-sexual harassment group, worked with an independent trainer. They identified and discussed the issues still facing FBU members within their workplaces, and made plans to address this.

614 REGIONAL EDUCATION AND LEARNING ORGANISERS (RELOS)

Once again, the national team of RELOs has been key to the success of the FBU trade union education programme. RELOs have been central to organising and supporting the significant increase in education participation in 2023. They have sought to make sure that the programme meets the needs of the union as a whole, and have made suggestions and contributions that have improved the education offer. They have also encouraged brigades and areas to appoint education and learning organisers. This has enriched the team, ensuring the ongoing support, learning and development of FBU officials.

SECTION H

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS AT WORK

H1 INTRODUCTION

During 2023, the FBU's equality sections and officials stepped up activity to tackle discrimination, harassment and other unacceptable behaviours. They also took part in wider labour movement and other campaigns to fight for equality.

H2 INCLUSIVE FIRE SERVICE GROUP (IFSG)

On 29 September 2023, the NJC's Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) issued a statement, which was issued as NJC circular NJC/5/23. The statement was signed by the FBU, fire employers, NFCC, FOA and FRSA (2023HOC0462BS).

INCLUSIVE FIRE SERVICE GROUP STATEMENT

The Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG), an NJC led sector wide body for the UK fire and rescue service has reaffirmed its commitment to its original terms of reference, alongside a renewed focus and determination to support and promote the development of positive culture and inclusive behaviours in the service.

Each of the signatory organisations remains totally committed to a programme of activity that actively improves culture, understanding, behaviour, and inclusivity. Together, the organisations within the IFSG are clear that actual change has been too long coming, and that this moment in time provides an opportunity to make definitive and sustainable improvements.

On reviewing the Improvement Strategies established previously, the group identified that beyond some shifts in emphasis, all the same issues and headlines remain – we all agreed the pace of improvement has simply not been good enough.

Therefore, with a renewed sense of purpose the IFSG will:

- 1) continue to develop and provide advice and guidance, supporting our sector in navigating ideas and advice without further duplication.*
- 2) approach relevant organisations to work together and with the IFSG – to collaborate and drive faster delivery of improvements.*
- 3) evaluate whether change is genuinely being delivered, for example re-running surveys and focus groups.*

Inclusion is about everyone. This is not simply about the law. It's about a positive working environment, free from judgement, stereotypes and patterns of behaviour that point to bullying, harassment, and lack of diversity.

- Dignity and respect should be afforded to every member of the workforce, and the public, at all times.*
- The sector must recognise privileges exist and understand their impact on inclusion.*
- The IFSG encourages managers at all levels to ensure they use and manage procedures fairly and consistently.*

- *The IFSG encourages all staff to use those procedures, with confidence and determination. At its heart, the IFSG will continue to promote a simple message that we are all human beings worthy of dignity and respect. This means we consciously communicate and behave in such a way that recognises the value we all bring among teams and with colleagues – at all levels. The IFSG is proud to bring the fire and rescue service together in a single determination to deliver on this commitment.*

H3 B&EMM SECTION REPORT

The FBU's black and ethnic minority members' (B&EMM) section had a busy year with events. The section was represented at the Black Unity Bike Ride, Notting Hill Carnival, and the charity drive for the African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust (ACLT).

In October, an open day at Islington fire station welcomed Black History Month, which continued to be a major focal point for members and the section. Region 6 reps launched a campaign for flags from countries of black origin.

In June, B&EMM had a strong presence at the Grenfell silent march. The section attended an open day at North Kensington fire station, attended by local residents and the Mayor of London. The section was heavily involved in the FBU's response to the LFB *Independent Culture Review* report. B&EMM chair Karen Bell gave a presentation at the LFB's Live conference.

B&EMM School returned to Wortley Hall in early October. The B&EMM committee met on three occasions during the year:

- 2 March – Birmingham
- 6 September – London
- 5-6 December – London.

A list of B&EMM regional reps is found in Section L. Reports of the B&EMM participation at labour movement conferences is in Section F.

H4 LGBT+ SECTION REPORT

The FBU's LGBT+ committee met throughout the year since conference 2023. The committee sent a delegation to the TUC LGBT+ conference and were also able to attend a number of Pride events.

The FBU's LGBT+ committee held a number of meetings, a mix of online and in-person:

- 26 May – Birmingham
- 4 October – online
- 7 December - Nottingham

In addition to the meetings held by the LGBT+ committee, officials also participated in the executive council's equalities sub-committee and at the NJC's Inclusive Fire Service Group. Participation and input from these officials were vital in response to the releases of the various cultural reviews.

The LGBT+ School 2023 was held in Newcastle 18-20 October, with all vacancies for attendance filled. The LGBT+ committee took the decision to move the school to a February date in future in order to coincide with LGBT+ History Month.

A list of LGBT+ regional reps is found in Section L. Reports of LGBT+ participation at labour movement conferences is in Section F.

H5 WOMEN'S SECTION REPORT

The FBU's National Women's Committee (NWC) continued to represent women members during the year. Officials have seen a notable increase in advice and support required by our women members. The main recurring issues affecting women within the fire and rescue service are sexual harassment, bullying, sexual assault, maternity discrimination, menopause, PPE and inadequate facilities.

In June, the NWC were central to the launch of the FBU's maternity campaign 'Fight for 52', striving to improve maternity pay across the UK fire and rescue service. The NWC held a demonstration at the NJC meeting where it was discussed. While national negotiations continue, local negotiations have taken place with several brigades increasing their maternity provision to 52 weeks' full pay.

This year saw a change to the NWC executive, with Robyn Richardson elected as secretary and Katie Holloway as chair. The NWC executive assisted head office with the anti-sexual harassment research project conducted by Laura Harrison and Robert Wishart.

The FBU sent a delegation to TUC women's conference on 8-10 March. The FBU delegates were Georgina Fielding, Kerry McCrone and Leoni Munslow. Delegates highlighted the findings of the LFB *Independent Culture Review* report and the work required to address the issues that members face within the fire and rescue service.

National Women's School took place on 28-30 April at Wortley Hall. The school included sessions delivered by Care for Calais, Sarah Woolley from the Baker's Union, Kerry Baigent and the DECON campaign. The Helen Harrison memorial plenary was also introduced.

The NWC met on four occasions during the year:

- 26 January – Glasgow
- 6 June – London
- 21 September – Bristol
- 29 and 30 November – Belfast.

A list of NWC regional reps is found in Section L. Reports of the NWC participation at labour movement conferences is in Section F.

H6 DISABLED AND NEURODIVERSE MEMBERS

During 2023, the executive council formed a task and finish group to consider how the FBU can better support disabled and neurodiverse members. The group began to review other union structures and seek understanding from the TUC. The task and finish group was made up of senior elected officials and staff. It will report to the executive council in due course.

H7 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL EQUALITIES SUB-COMMITTEE

During 2023, the executive council established an equalities sub-committee to consider the FBU approach to all equalities matters. The committee was given wider terms of reference, including: design sector-wide best practice standards to consider how the union inspects fire and rescue services; review FBU fairness at work representation and consider how the union can strengthen its equality structures; seek to create a more diverse union structure, including measures to increase the size of conference; and review regional and brigade structures to consider how they can be more inclusive. The equalities sub-committee was made up of the assistant general secretary, three executive council members, regional and sectional secretaries and staff. It continues to report to the executive council.

H8 FIGHT FOR 52 CAMPAIGN

During 2023, the FBU launched a high-profile campaign, the 'Fight for 52'. On 2 May, the FBU made a formal claim for improved maternity provision to fire employers at the NJC – see Section A (2023HOC0205MW).

On 14 September, the FBU published its report, the 'Fight for 52'. It found that women firefighters were "systematically undervalued" by the current arrangements. The FBU used Freedom of Information requests to uncover vast inequalities in maternity pay. The union revealed that a firefighter in Cornwall receives £15,000 less than their counterpart in Staffordshire in maternity pay. The report made the case for twelve months of maternity leave on full pay for all UK firefighters.

H9 SEXUAL HARASSMENT SURVEY

In September 2023, the FBU commissioned Laura Harrison and Robert Wishart to carry out a sexual harassment survey. This involved the entire female membership of the union, as well as a representative sample of male members in order to capture a range of opinions.

H10 LFB INDEPENDENT CULTURE REVIEW

During 2023, the FBU carefully considered the *Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade* report, written by Nazir Afzal, which catalogued a range of discrimination, harassment and bullying. The executive council established a working group, which included senior officials from across the union, with strong representation from the equality sections, to examine the findings and recommendations of the report. In particular, the working group collected data on the arrangements for body-worn cameras from every fire and rescue service (2023HOC0203BS).

On 23 June, the FBU issued detailed guidance on body-worn cameras (2023HOC0314BS). The working group drafted a comprehensive report, scheduled for publication in 2024.

H11 HMICFRS VALUES AND CULTURE REPORT

On 30 March 2023, HMICFRS published its report, *Values and culture in fire and rescue services*. The report recorded widespread discrimination, harassment and bullying across fire and rescue services in England. It corroborated experiences raised by FBU members, including members of our equality sections. The report detailed how allegations of racism, homophobia, sexual harassment and misogyny are often ignored, or how such behaviour is even instigated by people at the very top of the fire and rescue services.

On 4 April, the FBU made its initial response to the HMICFRS report (2023HOC0176MW). The union welcomed that the inspectorate had begun to highlight these issues, finally acknowledging the scale of the problem. However, the report had several shortcomings. It ignored that the coalition government in 2010 scrapped equality standards across the fire and rescue service. Such political decisions undermined steps to promote or assist in building a more inclusive fire and rescue service.

The FBU also highlighted failures by principal managers to tackle discrimination. Despite support for the Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) from across the sector, some services ignored the strategies produced by the IFSG. The HMICFRS declined to engage with the IFSG improvement strategies. Chief fire officers had presided over problems, yet HMICFRS still gave them the main licence to deal with them. The FBU emphasised the importance of listening to members and our equality sections.

H12 ADAE REPRESENTATION REQUESTS

The table shows the number of ADAE requests for representation received by regional secretaries.

2023	Requests for Representation	Granted	Not Granted	Appeals	Appeals Rejected	Appeals Upheld	Appeals Upheld
Region 1	5	2					3
Region 2	0						
Region 3*	10		2				3
Region 4	10	3					7
Region 5**	21	1	1	1	1		3
Region 6	15	11	1	2	2		3
Region 7***	15	9	3	1			****
Region 8	3	1					2
Region 9	5	1	2	1	*****		
Region 10	8		2	2	2		6
Region 11	0						
Region 12	8	4	3	*****			
Region 13	4	2	1				1

* During investigation 4 did not fall under ADAE, 1 resigned from FRS prior to hearing.

** 2 legal involvement, 11 cases resolved before ADAE completed, 3 left service or FBU.

*** 3 requests not concluded due to dismissal/resignation prior to completion of investigation.

**** One appeal awaiting outcome of Representation Appeals Committee.

***** Awaiting decision.

***** Appeal pending.

SECTION I

ACCIDENT AND INJURY FUND (AIF)

11 INTRODUCTION

The management committee of the Accident and Injury Fund (AIF) is chaired by the vice-president and administered by a national officer.

In 2023, executive council members on the committee were:

Steve Wright

Tony Curry

Val Hampshire

Jim Quinn

David Shek

Mark Rowe was secretary.

On joining the union, all members should be urged by brigade and branch officials to become a member of the AIF, enabling them to access the potential benefits of the fund. Members of the fund should also be encouraged to keep their nominations for benefits up to date.

Officials at brigade and branch level should also ensure that members adhere to the rules of the fund, with particular attention to the time limits required for submitting claims.

Accident and injury fund									
Summary for the year ended 31 December 2023									
Region		Temporary disablement		Permanent disablement	Death of member	Ex-gratia	Death of dependant	Total number of payments	Total amount
		On duty	Off duty						
1	No. of payments	2	1		5		8	16	£178,389.16
	Amount paid	£10,452.86	£8,569.76	£105,281.48		54,085.06			
2	No. of payments	23	7		2			32	£212,933.23
	Amount paid	£119,587.55	£48,872.04	£44,473.64					
3	No. of payments				1		3	4	£25,142.45
	Amount paid			£5,000.00		£20,142.45			
4	No. of payments	2			4			6	£120,617.04
	Amount paid	£2,120.00		£118,497.04					
5	No. of payments	3			5		2	10	£135,863.36
	Amount paid	£8,857.06		£113,657.54		£13,348.76			
6	No. of payments	1			1		2	4	£54,257.10
	Amount paid	£1,219.00		£40,140.74		£12,897.36			
7	No. of payments	2					1	3	£12,353.73
	Amount paid	£5,108.64				£7,245.09			
8	No. of payments	2	9		2		2	15	£90,632.16
	Amount paid	£3,520.03	£41,651.48		£31,766.88		£13,693.77		
9	No. of payments	2		2	5		1	10	£193,596.79
	Amount paid	£8,465.62		£35,362.93	£143,319.56		£6,448.68		
10	No. of payments	7	1	2	4	1		15	£182,564.85
	Amount paid	£35,553.25	£1,725.57	£34,234.41	£108,051.62	£3,000.00			
11	No. of payments	1			1		1	3	£14,257.25
	Amount paid	£2,808.57			£5,000.00		£6,448.68		
12	No. of payments	2			1			3	£43,510.88
	Amount paid	£4,818.82			£38,692.06				
13	No. of payments	1			2				£35,398.82
	Amount paid	£3,631.94			£31,766.88				
TOTAL NO. OF PAYMENTS		48	18	4	33	1	20	124	
Total amount		£206,143.34	£100,818.85	£69,597.34	£785,647.44	£3,000.00	£134,309.85		£1,299,516.82

SECTION J

LEGAL REPORT

J1 INTRODUCTION

The FBU legal scheme and Thompsons Solicitors continued to provide workplace and personal injury legal support to FBU members and their families in a year when trade unions and workers' rights were under relentless attack by the Conservative government. In 2023, FBU members and their family members were awarded £7.42 million in compensation.

With all of the cases in this report, where someone has suffered a personal injury on the roads, at work or in a public place in the UK, by accessing Thompsons' legal services via the FBU, the member retained 100% of their compensation. Had they sought representation from another law firm, they likely would have incurred legal costs of up to 25% of their compensation.

J2 GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

During 2023, Thompsons Solicitors remained committed to representing the FBU in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) before Sir Martin Moore-Bick. Although hearings concluded in 2022, the GTI continued to issue correspondence, including Rule 13 letters (known as Maxwellisation) and expert recommendations. The Inquiry's final report and recommendations are expected in 2024.

The FBU instructed Thompsons Solicitors to bring claims on behalf of firefighters who attended the Grenfell Tower fire in West London on 14 June 2017. Court Proceedings were issued in the High Court against 11 defendants, including Arconic Architectural Products, Celotex and Rydon Maintenance Limited, who were the companies that made the combustible cladding and designed and built the refurbishment to the exterior of the building, which contributed to the fire's spread. Other defendants included the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the London Fire Commissioner. After the process of alternative dispute resolution, significant compensation was secured for 108 firefighters.

J3 BREATHING APPARATUS PROCEDURES

Thompsons continued to work with FBU officials to challenge employers and chief fire officers who seek to introduce unsafe breathing apparatus procedures at high-rise incidents.

Thompsons assisted the FBU to challenge the HSE's failure to ensure these unsafe practices are not imposed in the UK fire and rescue service.

J4 INJURIES AT WORK

MESOTHELIOMA

A firefighter developed mesothelioma in 2021 due to regular exposure to asbestos dust and fibres during his service. He was provided with anti-flash equipment, which incorporated an asbestos hood and visor and a pair of asbestos gloves. These were used in various emergency calls, during which the dust and fibre were dislodged and he could not avoid inhaling it. He sadly passed away in May 2022.

Expert medical evidence confirmed that his mesothelioma was caused by work exposure to asbestos, leading to legal proceedings against the London Fire Commissioner. After negotiations, a settlement of £200,000 was reached for his family.

ANKLE INJURY

While responding to a grassland fire during the night, a firefighter was instructed to survey a dwelling house. Uneven terrain caused the member to sustain an avulsion fracture and a longitudinal tear of the peroneus brevis tendon in his left ankle, ultimately leading to his medical retirement from the service.

This case presented unique challenges, as liability was uncertain. The defendants could not be blamed for assigning the member the task, due to the risk to the elderly person's life. The primary argument against the defendant centred on providing the member with a stronger torch model. Despite these hurdles, a settlement of £185,000 was secured just days before the scheduled hearing.

WATER TRAINING

Three claims emerged from water training exercises in 2018, involving both West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Tees Active, the owners of the Tees White Water Centre. The firefighters affected suffered gastric illness, which resolved within a week or two.

The claims against Tees Active were settled for £1,500 each. West Yorkshire initially refused to settle, leading to a trial. The court ultimately found in favour of the member in the lead case, awarding a little over £650 (with interest). Following the trial, West Yorkshire settled the remaining claims for £1,500, with a 50/50 liability split with Tees Active.

WATER RESCUE

A firefighter and specialist water rescue team member found herself in a perilous situation during an urgent rescue mission to save an individual clinging desperately to a lamppost during extensive flooding. As the crew ventured deeper into the treacherous waters, they soon realised the situation was more dire than they imagined and decided to return for a powered boat. Finally, they reached the casualty, who was now trapped against a fence and hanging onto a lamppost.

The boat engine failed as the member and her team attempted to rescue the man. Another boat was called to assist, but the rescue boat collided with the member's boat when attempting to carry out the rescue. Both boats were at risk of being submerged or flipping due to the speed of the water. In mounting danger, some crew members had to brave the water. The member found herself in a life-threatening predicament, unable to swim to safety and in danger of being swept away by the current. Moreover, the casualty needed immediate extraction from the water. Using a JCB nearby, it was decided to tether a line. Some crew members were to use it as a line to undertake a tethered swim and pull the boat to safety.

Thompsons alleged multiple failings on behalf of the member, including inadequate training, a lack of comprehensive safety briefings, insufficient communication with command, concerns over the suitability of the boats deployed, and a deficiency in providing a comprehensive rescue plan. The member, who played a central role in this rescue, ultimately developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), rendering her unable to continue as a firefighter. Legal proceedings were initiated and a settlement was reached through negotiation before formal court proceedings were required.

WAREHOUSE FACTORY FIRE

A firefighter was injured while responding to a warehouse factory fire. He suffered a fractured ankle in two places due to uneven ground. The defendants denied liability throughout the case and sought a split trial, citing restricted access to the area. Refusing the split trial, the FBU proceeded with the case, ultimately prevailing in court. The judge awarded compensation with a 20% deduction for contributory negligence.

TRAINING INJURY

An FBU member, employed as a retained firefighter, suffered an injury during a training drill involving a 13.5 metre ladder. The incident occurred when a taller colleague turned the ladder too soon, resulting in the member bearing excessive weight and injuring their back.

Thompsons alleged that the drill lacked proper risk assessment, emphasising that a pairing of individuals of similar height should have been conducted to mitigate risks. Furthermore, the member's colleague failed to turn the ladder appropriately.

The injuries sustained forced the member out of employment with the fire and rescue service, and medical evidence revealed degenerative changes within the spine. The settlement was reached during pre-hearing negotiations, totalling £20,000. Despite no admission of liability, a confidentiality clause was signed.

J5 ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

INJURY ON THE ROAD

The FBU member was injured in a road traffic collision in September 2020 while riding his bicycle home from York fire station. The collision occurred when the other party opened her car door, causing the member to collide with it, resulting in injuries. Although he was off work for a month, he recovered, returning to full operational duties five months post-accident. Despite the denial of liability, court proceedings were initiated, leading to a settlement of £35,000.

INJURY ON THE ROAD

A member faced soft tissue injuries to their neck, shoulders, and upper back following a collision with a motorist. The injuries forced them off work for six months, leading to early retirement due to persistent neck pain. Medical evidence highlighted that, without the injury, the member could have continued working for an additional two years. After initiating court proceedings, a settlement of £36,349.36 was reached.

J6 MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE

CANCER MISDIAGNOSIS

The wife of an FBU member received £400,000 in compensation due to a misdiagnosis of triple-negative breast cancer and unnecessary chemotherapy in 2016. This misdiagnosis had severe health and employment impacts, including surgery and a lengthy chemotherapy course. Thompsons pursued a compensation claim for physical and psychological pain, financial losses and the negative impact on her life, supported by independent medical evidence. Thanks to her husband's FBU membership, she could access specialist clinical negligence services from Thompsons.

BIRTH INJURY

An FBU member's wife received an interim payment for damages amounting to £50,000 following numerous pre-action admissions. The defendant admitted various breaches of duty related to a laparoscopy, failing to identify and advise the claimant of abnormal ovaries and wrongly reporting them as normal.

Despite these admissions, the contentious issue in this claim revolves around wrongful birth. The family member asserts that, with proper diagnosis and treatment, her pregnancy would have been without complications. Thompsons continues to support the family in seeking justice.

J7 EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

DISCRIMINATION

The member in this case brought discrimination claims arising from disability and failure to make reasonable adjustments. Judicial mediation proved successful, resulting in terms agreed upon via a COT3.

In October 2020, the member had an accident unrelated to work, injuring her right ankle. Despite being deemed unfit for firefighter operational duties, she was declared fit for non-operational duties. Subsequently, the employer insisted on her returning to her normal contractual role, leading to her retirement on ill health grounds in 2023.

UNFAIR TREATMENT OVER SAFETY CONCERNS

An FBU health and safety representative, working for Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, raised safety concerns regarding the Vision 4 control system after receiving feedback from members. After a total communications failure, the rep issued a Safety Critical Notice and consulted with the FBU regional health and safety representative, sharing relevant documents.

Hertfordshire accused the representative of unauthorised sharing of sensitive commercial information and breaching data protection, resulting in a first written warning. The representative filed a tribunal claim for experiencing detriment as a health and safety representative and for trade union discrimination.

The tribunal concluded that the disciplinary action and the warning were primarily in response to his criticism of the Vision 4 system and issuing safety critical notices. Consequently, the tribunal awarded the member £6,000 as compensation for injury to feelings.

AWARD FOR INJURED MEMBER IN PAY CLAIM

An FBU member was injured on duty, which meant under Grey Book terms, he should have received 12 months' full pay. However at six months, he was reduced to half pay. The employer at the time was challenging any claim for full pay. They alleged that the member had not cooperated with occupational health.

The FBU provided evidence, captured on CCTV, that the member was injured, as well as medical records. The employer was warned that the member faced hardship and may leave the service due to the pay reduction. As they refused to reinstate full pay, Thompsons brought tribunal proceedings. The employer finally decided to negotiate and the claim was settled before a listed hearing. The terms of the settlement remain confidential.

SECTION K

ORGANISING AND MEMBERSHIP

K1 INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 2023, firefighters' pay dominated the FBU's organising and membership agenda. The union held industrial action ballots. Although strike action was considered, it was not required before disputes were resolved. The FBU's trade sections continued to raise the pressing matters affecting key sections of the membership, in control, retained and officers.

K2 INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

PAY

On 5 December 2022, the FBU commenced a national ballot for strike action of Grey Book FBU members and North West Fire Control FBU members, which concluded on 30 January 2023 (2022HOC0606MW).

The question put to members was: *Are you prepared to take part in industrial action consisting of strike action?* The executive council recommended members vote 'Yes' to the question on the ballot paper.

On 30 January 2023, the FBU announced the ballot results (2023HOC060MW).

- For members in England, Scotland and Wales, 88% voted Yes on a 73% turnout.
- In Northern Ireland, 94% of members voted Yes on a 68% turnout.
- In North West Fire Control, 80% voted Yes on a 64% turnout.

MERSEYSIDE

On 24 July 2023, FBU fire control members in Merseyside were balloted for strike action, in response to the imposed reduction in night-time staffing numbers and a shift system that was never subject to negotiation. At the same time, Merseyside members (with the exception of fire control) were balloted for action short of strike, consisting of not undertaking pre-arranged overtime. Balloting concluded on 21 August.

On 21 August, the FBU announced the fire control members' ballot results (2023HOC0392MW). The percentage of those voting who voted Yes was 100%. The number of votes cast in the ballot was at least 50% of the number of individuals entitled to vote. The number of individuals answering "Yes" to the question was at least 40% of the number of individuals entitled to vote.

On 21 August, the FBU also announced the ballot results for other Merseyside members (2023HOC0393MW). The percentage of those voting who voted Yes was 82%. The number of votes cast in the ballot was at least 50% of the number of individuals entitled to vote. The number of individuals answering “Yes” to the question was at least 40% of the number of individuals entitled to vote.

On 11 December, the FBU issued notice of action to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority. Strike action in Merseyside fire control was due to commence at 7pm on 27 December 2023. The strike action was to be discontinuous and conclude at 7pm on 3 January 2024, a period of eight days (2023HOC0560MW).

The issues in dispute were:

- The imposed reduction in night-time staffing numbers in fire control from 6 to 5
- The introduction of the wholetime on call (WOC) duty shift system in fire control, on an offer and acceptance basis at point of entry that was never subject to negotiation with the FBU.

On 22 December, the FBU announced that after detailed negotiations between local officials and the local management team, a draft settlement document was presented to FBU members in the emergency fire control. The improvements identified resulted in a vote to agree the revised terms. Therefore, the strike scheduled from 27 December did not proceed and the dispute between the FBU and the employer was settled (2023HOC0575MW).

K3 CSNC SECTION REPORT

During 2023, the FBU’s Control Staff National Committee (CSNC) continued to offer support to members involved in discipline cases and provide information for brigade reps regarding mobilising system issues.

The CSNC were heavily involved in briefings around the pay dispute. CSNC officials took part in NJC discussions on control pay. They also participated in the executive council’s task and finish group on control issues. CSNC officials represented members in discipline and ADAE cases.

This year the CSNC has been in transition, with the retirement of former secretary Lynda Rowan-O’Neill. The committee continued to hold online meetings to fit in with work-life balance, ease of time management and travel.

The CSNC held two meetings in 2023:

- 22 February
- 29 March.

A list of CSNC regional reps is found in Section L.

K4 RETAINED SECTION REPORT

During 2023, the FBU’s National Retained Committee (NRC) raised the major issues that affect retained members. These included the decline in calls, take-home pay and job satisfaction, resulting in an increasing number of retained members quitting the service. Retained units are understaffed, with fire and rescue services failing to spend money on recruitment, leading to more pressure on members to keep the pump on the run. Dangerous practices continue, such as the officer in charge driving the appliance and turning out pumps with three or even two crew members. Some frontline fire engines have been downgraded to vans, further reducing morale. There are now proposals to close retained fire stations across the UK.

During the year, NRC officials took part in the NJC review group on retained pay in the aftermath of the pay settlement. NRC officials also participated in the executive council’s task and finish group, which ran alongside the review.

The NRC are positive about the second options exercise, which will allow retained members to buy back pension from the start of their employment. The FBU's campaigns to secure the correct payment of CPD and allocation of public holiday leave have started to achieve positive results for members, with some fire and rescue services making the required changes.

NRC delegates put resolutions to FBU conference on payments, ridership and DECON. NRC officials attended some executive council meetings, health and safety committee meetings, and have a seat on the uniformed operations committee. NRC officials also attended the meetings of the NFCC's On-Call Practitioners Group.

During 2023, the NRC held four meetings:

- 24-25 February – Derby
- 16-17 June – Kingston
- 1-2 September – Belfast
- 24-25 November – Glasgow (AGM).

The NRC is appealing for more regional representatives to come forward, so that the section is represented at all levels.

A list of the NRC Officials and Regional Reps for 2023 is found in Section L.

K5 OFFICERS' SECTION REPORT

During 2023, the Officers' National Committee (ONC) provided valuable advice to inform the structures of the union, primarily the executive council. In February, the ONC supported FBU joint secretaries with the pay negotiations. ONC officials provided support and advice to Scotland on the flexible duty system collective agreement and worked closely with West Midlands to resist the imposition of this duty system.

The ONC reported on the new marauding terrorism joint operational procedure, which resulted in a head office position statement. The ONC continued to oppose the introduction of the NFCC direct entry scheme, where brand new recruits don three impellers.

The ONC attended the MMNB/NJC on 22 February, 6 June and 5 October. The ONC secretary participated in the NJC pay progression working group and uniformed operations committee. All three ONC resolutions received FBU conference approval, with an executive council report on responding to incidents at members' own cost, scheduled to be tabled at the NJC. The ONC also supported the 'protect the right to strike' demonstration and the launch of the *Firefighters' Manifesto*.

During 2023, the ONC held the following meetings:

- 21 February – London
- 18 April – online
- 26 April – online
- 5 June – London
- 3 July – online
- 1 August – online
- 4 October – London
- 26 October – online
- 5-6 December in Stratford-upon-Avon (including AGM).

During 2023, ONC retirements and resignations due to ever-increasing workload have led to regional vacancies. The ONC is working with regional secretaries to fill these positions.

A list of officers' regional representatives can be found in Section L.

K6 MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

The FBU has negotiated some exclusive benefits for its members. These include:

- legal protection from Thompsons Solicitors
- home, travel, car and pet insurance from UIA Mutual
- cycle insurance 15% discount from Velosure
- a health cash plan from BHSF
- up to 30% off brand new cars
- union Prepaid Plus card
- unionRewards.com for online shopping
- financial planning advice from Lighthouse
- 15% off Brook Hotels room bookings
- discounts on entertainment and more from Rewards for Rescue.

Membership services continue to develop. Members indicate a high level of satisfaction with the products. The union advertised these to members through *Roll Call*, *Firefighter* magazine and on our website. These services provide a small commission to the FBU, which is invested in the wider campaigning work.

K7 MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

STATISTICS AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

Region	Brigade name	Wholetime	Retained	Control	Non-Grey Book	Total	Political levy	Political levy no affiliation	No political levy	Total	AIF – Yes	AIF – No	Total	Male	Female	Gender unknown	Other	Total
Head office	National official	3	–	–	–	3	3	–	–	3	3	–	3	3	–	–	–	3
Total		3	–	–	–	3	3	–	–	3	3	–	3	3	–	–	–	3
1	Scottish	3,166	1,056	108	9	4,339	2,653	474	1,212	4,339	3,946	393	4,339	3,906	346	87	–	4,339
Total		3,166	1,056	108	9	4,339	2,653	474	1,212	4,339	3,946	393	4,339	3,906	346	87	–	4,339
2	Northern Ireland	822	676	49	–	1,547	217	759	571	1,547	1,511	36	1,547	1,320	122	105	–	1,547
Total		822	676	49	–	1,547	217	759	571	1,547	1,511	36	1,547	1,320	122	105	–	1,547
3	Cleveland	315	49	12	5	381	105	200	76	381	343	38	381	342	39	–	–	381
3	Durham	267	63	18	1	349	150	112	87	349	286	63	349	302	47	–	–	349
3	Northumberland	122	63	12	3	200	82	97	21	200	188	12	200	169	31	–	–	200
3	Tyne and Wear	536	5	18	12	571	168	251	152	571	532	39	571	504	67	–	–	571
Total		1,240	180	60	21	1,501	505	660	336	1,501	1,349	152	1,501	1,317	184	–	–	1,501
4	Humberside	413	113	28	6	560	288	170	102	560	489	71	560	496	64	–	–	560
4	North Yorkshire	242	95	4	16	357	142	70	145	357	303	54	357	313	44	–	–	357
4	South Yorkshire	556	57	21	22	656	148	333	175	656	591	65	656	572	78	6	–	656
4	West Yorkshire	826	25	30	14	895	262	252	381	895	789	106	895	791	100	4	–	895
Total		2,037	290	83	58	2,468	840	825	803	2,468	2,172	296	2,468	2,172	286	10	–	2,468
5	Cheshire	406	89	35	20	550	367	55	128	550	486	64	550	434	100	16	–	550
5	Cumbria	196	126	–	4	326	153	75	98	326	282	44	326	277	48	–	1	326
5	Greater Manchester	1,313	–	–	17	1,330	798	339	193	1,330	1,253	77	1,330	1,211	114	5	–	1,330
5	Isle of Man	28	64	2	–	94	37	2	55	94	81	13	94	86	6	2	–	94
5	Lancashire	581	178	–	4	763	370	204	189	763	676	87	763	691	72	–	–	763
5	Merseyside	522	1	30	32	585	331	157	97	585	505	80	585	472	103	10	–	585
Total		3,046	458	67	77	3,648	2,056	832	760	3,648	3,283	365	3,648	3,171	443	33	1	3,648
6	Derbyshire	341	217	33	7	598	274	189	135	598	560	38	598	492	105	–	1	598
6	Leicestershire	312	70	18	5	405	190	108	107	405	371	34	405	361	44	–	–	405
6	Lincolnshire	171	227	13	8	419	258	90	71	419	388	31	419	372	46	–	–	419
6	Northamptonshire	234	78	7	1	320	75	154	91	320	301	19	320	276	43	1	–	320
6	Nottinghamshire	382	131	–	18	531	176	232	123	531	509	22	531	478	51	2	–	531
Total		1,440	723	71	39	2,273	973	773	527	2,273	2,129	144	2,273	1,979	289	3	1	2,273
7	Hereford and Worcester	191	91	17	1	300	159	54	87	300	271	29	300	260	40	–	–	300
7	Shropshire	150	61	6	3	220	83	56	81	220	188	32	220	194	22	4	–	220
7	Staffordshire	244	138	–	7	389	161	138	90	389	354	35	389	345	41	3	–	389
7	Warwickshire	222	34	17	9	282	72	66	144	282	227	55	282	240	40	2	–	282
7	West Midlands	1,161	–	58	9	1,228	463	427	338	1,228	1,050	178	1,228	1,022	192	14	–	1,228
Total		1,968	324	98	29	2,419	938	741	673	2,419	2,090	329	2,419	2,061	335	23	–	2,419
8	Mid and West Wales	384	195	28	5	612	276	217	119	612	568	44	612	550	62	–	–	612
8	North Wales	261	300	25	6	592	294	174	124	592	557	35	592	496	95	1	–	592
8	South Wales	799	274	29	–	1,102	488	390	224	1,102	1,015	87	1,102	1,019	80	3	–	1,102
Total		1,444	769	82	11	2,306	1,058	781	467	2,306	2,140	166	2,306	2,065	237	4	–	2,306
9	Bedfordshire	234	49	20	7	310	137	106	67	310	278	32	310	266	43	1	–	310
9	Cambridgeshire	229	65	17	1	312	140	60	112	312	283	29	312	269	39	4	–	312
9	Essex	577	170	22	1	770	377	217	176	770	710	60	770	696	69	5	–	770
9	Hertfordshire	397	60	17	8	482	203	153	126	482	409	73	482	416	49	17	–	482
9	Norfolk	241	125	8	1	375	185	136	54	375	353	22	375	345	29	1	–	375
9	Suffolk	176	94	–	–	270	145	76	49	270	246	24	270	240	21	9	–	270
Total		1,854	563	84	18	2,519	1,187	748	584	2,519	2,279	240	2,519	2,232	250	37	–	2,519
10	London	4,543	–	21	8	4,572	2,575	1,481	516	4,572	4,288	284	4,572	4,075	488	7	2	4,572
Total		4,543	–	21	8	4,572	2,575	1,481	516	4,572	4,288	284	4,572	4,075	488	7	2	4,572

STATISTICS AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

Region	Brigade name	Wholetime	Retained	Control	Non-Grey Book	Total	Political levy	Political levy no affiliation	No political levy	Total	AIF – Yes	AIF – No	Total	Male	Female	Gender unknown	Other	Total
11	East Sussex	308	68	2	10	388	129	64	195	388	341	47	388	342	41	5	–	388
11	Kent	645	169	18	12	844	343	180	321	844	805	39	844	755	71	18	–	844
11	Surrey	394	17	31	–	442	235	96	111	442	403	39	442	395	44	3	–	442
11	West Sussex	303	93	–	7	403	194	73	136	403	369	34	403	368	34	1	–	403
Total		1,650	347	51	29	2,077	901	413	763	2,077	1,918	159	2,077	1,860	190	27	–	2,077
12	Berkshire	336	20	34	10	400	206	102	92	400	361	39	400	343	57	–	–	400
12	Buckinghamshire	278	30	–	1	309	164	36	109	309	275	34	309	289	19	–	1	309
12	Hampshire and Isle of Wight	502	113	23	4	642	194	188	260	642	577	65	642	571	65	6	–	642
12	Oxfordshire	204	175	–	6	385	203	67	115	385	350	35	385	344	40	1	–	385
Total		1,320	338	57	21	1,736	767	393	576	1,736	1,563	173	1,736	1,547	181	7	1	1,736
13	Avon	443	86	35	3	567	231	204	132	567	485	82	567	492	70	5	–	567
13	Cornwall	175	168	15	1	359	127	121	111	359	330	29	359	319	33	6	1	359
13	Devon and Somerset	487	306	19	2	814	298	148	368	814	700	114	814	730	75	9	–	814
13	Dorset and Wiltshire	372	228	15	1	616	228	220	168	616	556	60	616	566	49	1	–	616
13	Gloucestershire	137	35	3	–	175	68	42	65	175	161	14	175	129	39	7	–	175
Total		1,614	823	87	7	2,531	952	735	844	2,531	2,232	299	2,531	2,236	266	28	1	2,531
Grand Total		26,147	6,547	918	327	33,939	15,625	9,615	8,699	33,939	30,903	3,036	33,939	29,944	3,617	371	7	33,939

SECTION L

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION

L1

INTRODUCTION

During 2023, the FBU held a number of elections. The executive council recorded its thanks to those who have served, and welcomed those elected to represent our members.

The executive council met 33 times during the year. The finance and administration committee (FAC) monitored the union’s finances.

L2

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS

13 January	6 March	14 June	4 October
24 January	28 March	15 June	5 October
30 January	24 April	7 July	13 November
31 January	25 April	13 July	15 November
8 February	9 May	26 July	6 December
9 February	10 May	11 August	7 December
10 February	11 May	18 September	
22 February	6 June	21 September	
1 March	8 June	3 October	

L3 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD

	POSSIBLE	ACTUAL	REASONS FOR NON-ATTENDANCE
Ian Murray (President)	33	31	1 – Compassionate Leave 1 – Sick Leave
Matt Wrack (General secretary)	33	31	1 – Annual Leave 1 – Other Union Business
Andy Dark (Assistant general secretary)	11	11	
Ben Selby (Assistant general secretary)	22	22	
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS			
Colin Brown	33	32	1 – Annual Leave
Phil Millar (Acting)	4	4	
Jim Quinn	29	28	1 – Annual Leave
Tony Curry	33	32	1 – Annual Leave
Pete Smith	33	33	
Les Skarratts	33	33	
Ben Selby	11	11	
Adam Taylor	22	22	
Andrew Scattergood	33	30	3 – Annual Leave
Cerith Griffiths	33	33	
Jamie Newell	33	31	1 – Trade Union Leave Difficulties 1 – Annual Leave
David Shek	33	10	20 – Sick Leave 1 – Other Union Business 2 – Annual Leave
Jon Lambe (Acting)	15	15	
Joe Weir	33	33	
Steve Wright	33	32	1 – Annual Leave
Val Hampshire	33	30	3 – Annual Leave
NATIONAL OFFICERS			
Tam McFarlane	33	28	5 – Sick Leave
Mark Rowe	33	30	3 – Other Union Business
Riccardo la Torre	33	22	3 – Other Union Business 2 – Sick Leave 3 – Annual Leave 3 – Family Leave

* Some EC meetings took place on the same day or on consecutive days (See Section L2), inflating some non-attendance figures.

L4 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The finance and administration committee (FAC) continued to review all current structures and practices of the union, including education, resources, finances, research, publications and other communications, while ensuring the structures of the organisation are adequate to provide sufficient support to officials and service to members.

In 2023, the FAC met on the following occasions:

26 January	28 March	7 July	5 December
21 March	13 June	15 November	

Membership of the FAC comprised the following officials in 2023:

Matt Wrack	Cerith Griffiths
Andy Dark	Jim Quinn
Ian Murray	Les Skarratts
Ben Selby	Steve Wright
Colin Brown	Tam McFarlane

L5 ELECTIONS

ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT

Steve Wright elected to office 8 September 2023
Term of office commenced 8 September 2023

ELECTIONS OF NATIONAL OFFICERS

Tam McFarlane elected to office 15 March 2023
Term of office commenced 15 March 2023

Mark Rowe elected to office 24 April 2023
Term of office commenced 24 April 2023

ELECTIONS OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Election of executive council member Northern Ireland (region 2)
Jim Quinn re-elected to office 7 February 2023
Term of office commenced 7 February 2023

Election of executive council member Wales (region 8)
Cerith Griffiths re-elected to office 13 July 2023
Term of office commenced 13 July 2023

ELECTIONS OF REGIONAL AND SECTIONAL SECRETARIES

Election of regional secretary Northern Ireland (region 2)

Phil Millar re-elected to office 13 July 2023

Term of office commenced 13 July 2023

Election of regional secretary Yorkshire and Humberside (region 4)

Number of voting papers returned783

Number of voting papers found to be invalid (blank/spoilt)0

Gavin Marshall494

David Williams289

Certified by Popularis Ltd 20 February 2023

Gavin Marshall elected to office 20 February 2023

Term of office commenced 20 February 2023

Election of regional secretary North West (region 5)

Andrew Fox-Hewitt elected to office 9 November 2023

Term of office to commence on the retirement of Ed Burrows

Election of regional secretary East Midlands (region 6)

Number of voting papers returned553

Number of voting papers found to be invalid (blank/spoilt)0

Dan Carter217

Mark Stilwell336

Certified by Popularis Ltd 14 September 2023

Mark Stilwell elected to office 14 September 2023

Term of office commenced 14 September 2023

Election of regional secretary South East (region 11)

Edward Fox elected to office 3 August 2023

Term of office commenced 3 August 2023

Election of regional secretary South West (region 13)

Number of voting papers returned485

Number of voting papers found to be invalid (blank/spoilt)0

James Leslie168

Dave Roberts317

Certified by Popularis Ltd 14 September 2023

Dave Roberts elected to office 14 September 2023

Term of office commenced 14 September 2023

Election of Control Staff National Committee secretary

Caroline Sanderson elected to office 13 July 2023

Term of office commenced 13 July 2023

Election of National Women's Committee secretary

Robyn Richardson elected to office 13 July 2023

Term of office commenced 13 July 2023

Election of National Retained Committee secretary

Paul Revill elected to office 13 July 2023

Term of office commenced 13 July 2023

ELECTIONS OF REGIONAL AND SECTIONAL CHAIRS

Election of regional chair West Midlands (region 7)

Martin Starkey elected to office 13 July 2023

Term of office to commence 13 July 2023

Election of regional chair Eastern (region 9)

Kevin Driver elected to office 13 July 2023

Term of office commenced 13 July 2023

Election of Black and Ethnic Minority Members chair

Karen Bell elected to office 13 July 2023

Term of office commenced 13 July 2023

Election of Officers' National Committee chair

Tony Walker elected to office 13 July 2023

Term of office commenced 13 July 2023

Election of National Women's Committee chair

Katie Holloway elected to office 9 November 2023

Term of office commenced 9 November 2023

Election of National Retained Committee chair

Paul Farman elected to office 9 November 2023

Term of office commenced 9 November 2023

Election of Control Staff National Committee chair

Sherri Kitson elected to office 9 November 2023

Term of office commenced 9 November 2023

ELECTIONS OF REGIONAL TREASURERS

Election of regional treasurer Scotland (region 1)

Seona Hart elected to office 13 July 2023

Term of office commenced 13 July 2023

Election of regional treasurer Yorkshire and Humberside (region 4)

Matt Nicholls elected to office 13 July 2023

Term of office commenced 13 July 2023

Election of regional treasurer North West (region 5)

Andrew Fox-Hewitt elected to office 13 July 2023

Term of office commenced 13 July 2023

Election of regional treasurer West Midlands (region 7)

Sasha Hitchins elected to office 9 November 2023

Term of office commenced 9 November 2023

Election of regional treasurer Wales (region 8)

Gemma Thomas elected to office 9 November 2023

Term of office commenced 9 November 2023

Election of regional treasurer Eastern (region 9)

Harry Powell elected to office 9 November 2023

Term of office commenced 9 November 2023

Election of regional treasurer London (region 10)

Adam Shaw elected to office 3 August 2023

Term of office commenced 3 August 2023

Election of regional treasurer South East (region 11)

Dave Turner elected to office 9 November 2023

Term of office commenced 9 November 2023

Election of regional treasurer Southern (region 12)

Lee Newport elected to office 9 November 2023

Term of office commenced 9 November 2023

L6 REGIONAL OFFICES AND OFFICIALS

REGION 1 – SCOTLAND

FBU Regional Office

4th Floor
52 St Enoch Square
Glasgow
G1 4AA
0141 221 2309

Executive council member

Colin Brown

Regional secretary

John McKenzie

Regional chair

Gus Sproul

Regional treasurer

Seona Hart

REGION 2 – NORTHERN IRELAND

FBU Regional Office

14 Bachelors Walk
Lisburn
County Antrim
BT28 1XJ
028 9266 4622

Executive council member

Jim Quinn

Regional secretary

Phil Millar

Regional chair

Dermot Rooney

Regional treasurer

Chris Blayney

REGION 3 – NORTH EAST

FBU Regional Office

1 Carlton Court
5th Avenue
Team Valley
Gateshead
NE11 0AZ
0191 487 4142

Executive council member

Tony Curry

Regional secretary

Brian Harris

Regional chair

Karl Wager

Regional treasurer

Dave Howe

Brigades

Cleveland
Durham
Northumberland
Tyne and Wear

Brigade secretary

Dave Howe
Andy Murray
Mark Dowthwaite
Wayne Anderson

Brigade chair

Karl Wager
Dave Welsh
Ash Fox
Chris Cook

REGION 4 – YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE

FBU Regional Office

9 Marsh Street
Rothwell
Leeds
LS26 0AG
0113 288 7000

Executive council member

Pete Smith
Regional secretary
Dave Williams
Gavin Marshall
Regional chair
Steve Howley
Regional treasurer
Gavin Marshall
Matt Nicholls

Brigades

Humberside

North Yorkshire
South Yorkshire
West Yorkshire

Brigade secretary

Gavin Marshall
Sam Miller-Hodges
Steve Howley
Matt Nicholls
Martyn Bairstow

Brigade chair

Sam Miller-Hodges
Janet Hayton
Paul James
Stuart Smith
Mathew Herrin

REGION 5 – NORTH WEST

FBU Regional Office

The Lighthouse
Lower Mersey Street
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire
CH65 2AL
0151 357 4400

Executive council member

Les Skarratts
Regional secretary
Edward Burrows
Andrew Fox-Hewitt
Regional chair
Daniel Giblin
Regional treasurer
Andrew Fox-Hewitt

Brigades

Cheshire
Cumbria

Greater Manchester
Isle of Man
Lancashire

Merseyside

Brigade secretary

Andrew Fox-Hewitt
Oliver Burrow

David Pike
Nicholas Hays
Kevin Wilkie

Ian Hibbert

Brigade chair

Jack Fellows
Hal Fell
Steven Mattinson
Ross Strother
Blake Kelly
Tom Cogley
David Shaw
Lee Hunter

REGION 6 – EAST MIDLANDS

FBU Regional Office

The Waterside Offices
Pavilion Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 5FA

Executive council member

Ben Selby
Adam Taylor

Regional secretary

Adam Taylor
Mark Stilwell

Regional chair

Mark Stilwell
Richard Wright

Regional treasurer

Clare Hudson

Brigades

Derbyshire
Leicestershire

Lincolnshire

Northamptonshire

Nottinghamshire

Brigade secretary

Chris Tapp
Mark Drinkwater

Richard Wright
Karl Keuneke
Chris Kemp

Mark Stilwell
Stephen Tucker

Brigade chair

Tony Dempsey
Daniel Fathers
Harry Brant
Simon Thomas
Karl Keuneke
John Wadsworth
Dan Taylor
Stephen Tucker
Brendan Woodhouse

REGION 7 – WEST MIDLANDS

FBU Regional Office

195-197 Halesowen Road
Old Hill
West Midlands
B64 6HE
0138 441 3633

Executive council member

Andrew Scattergood

Regional secretary

Billy Holland

Regional chair

Steve Price-Hunt
Martin Starkey

Regional treasurer

Sasha Hitchins

Brigades

Hereford and Worcester
Shropshire

Staffordshire
Warwickshire
West Midlands

Brigade secretary

Neil Bevan
Simon Morris
Rob Cartwright
Martin Starkey
Stephen Rule
Steve Price-Hunt
Sasha Hitchins

Brigade chair

Trevor Connolly
Rob Cartwright
Tristan Orr-Berwick
Jack Lee
Neil Stuart
Sasha Hitchins
Carl Goode

REGION 8 – WALES

FBU Regional Office

2nd Floor
Hastings House
Fitzalan Court
Cardiff
CF24 0BL
02920 496474

Executive council member

Cerith Griffiths
Regional secretary
Duncan Stewart-Ball
Regional chair
Steve Saunders
Ruth Bateman
Regional treasurer
Gemma Thomas

Brigades

Mid and West Wales
North Wales
South Wales

Brigade secretary

Dan Bartley
Matthew Ryan
Mike Alexander
Paul Davies

Brigade chair

Deiniol Lloyd
Stuart Stanley
Gareth Tovey

REGION 9 – EASTERN

FBU Regional Office

28 Atlantic Square
Station Road
Witham
Essex
CM8 2TL
01376 521521

Executive council member

Jamie Newell
Regional secretary
Rebecca Lewington
Regional chair
Kevin Driver
Regional treasurer
Harry Powell

Brigades

Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Essex

Brigade secretary

Craig Carter
Mark Harriss
Andy Knowles
Richard Maddams
Rob Fortune
Ryan Hastings
Kevin Driver

Brigade chair

Mark Cook
Vacant
Martyn Wager

Tony Smith
Kevin Game
Phil Johnston

REGION 10 – LONDON

FBU Regional Office

Alpha House
100 Borough High Street
London
SE1 1LB

Executive council member

David Shek
Regional secretary
Jon Lambe
Regional chair
Gareth Beeton
Regional treasurer
Adam Shaw

REGION 11 – SOUTH EAST

FBU Regional Office

Unit 11
Hunns Mere Way
Woodingdean
Brighton
BN2 6AH
01273 309762

Executive council member

Joe Weir

Regional secretary

Andy Petch
Edward Fox

Regional chair

Tim Green

Regional treasurer

Andy Petch

Brigades

East Sussex
Kent

Surrey
West Sussex

Brigade secretary

Simon Herbert
Danny Barrett

Karl Jones
Antony Walker

Brigade chair

Ben Ashton
Rob Parkin
Tim Green
Graham Kitchen
Edward Fox
Pascal Volant

REGION 12 – SOUTHERN

FBU Regional Office

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

Executive council member

Steve Wright

Regional secretary

Mark Chapman

Regional chair

Greg O'Neill

Regional treasurer

Robyn Richardson
Lee Newport

Brigades

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Hampshire and Isle of Wight
Oxfordshire

Brigade secretary

Steve Collins
Chris Wycherley
Jamie Kelly
Nick Bourke

Brigade chair

Paul Mortimer
Tony Brandon
Dave Hunt
Jonathan Shuker

REGION 13 – SOUTH WEST

FBU Regional Office

158 Muller Road
Horfield
Bristol
BS7 9RE
0117 935 5132

Executive council member

Val Hampshire

Regional secretary

Guy Herrington
Dave Roberts

Regional chair

Scott Young

Regional treasurer

Amanda Mills

Brigades

Avon

Cornwall
Devon and Somerset
Dorset and Wiltshire
Gloucestershire

Brigade secretary

Amanda Mills

Gary Cotton
James Leslie
Andy Corben
Ben Gwyer

Brigade chair

Steve McGreavy
Matthew Senior
Martin Murt
Dan Gillard
Leah Smith
Richard Champ

EQUALITY SECTION REPRESENTATIVES

	B&EMM	LGBT+	NWC
Secretary	Amit Malde	Pat Carberry	Robyn Richardson
Chair	Karen Bell	Maria Buck	Katie Holloway
Region 1	Vacant	Graeme Hopkins	Rachel Rogers
Region 2	Vacant	Karen McDowell	Jess Doran
Region 3	Dean Pounder	Linzi Blake	Holly Ferguson
Region 4	Vacant	Rebecca Savin	Vacant
Region 5	Robert Lewis	Vacant	Maccyla Turner
Region 6	Kasey LeGall	Nicole Marvin	Georgina Fielding
Region 7	Vacant	Isabella Goodwin	Vacant
Region 8	Alex Szekely	Vacant	Becci Newton
Region 9	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
Region 10	Karen Bell	Maria Buck	Katie Holloway
Region 11	Vacant	Jake Kaye	Vikki Mayne
Region 12	Richard Brown	Sam Underwood	Leigh-Marie Rand
Region 13	Lionel McCrea	Vacant	Kate Yhnell

TRADE SECTION REPRESENTATIVES

	CSNC	NRC	ONC
Secretary	Caroline Saunderson	Paul Revill	Peter Trayner
Chair	Sherri Kitson	Paul Farman	Tony Walker
Region 1	Vacant	Gordon Nimmo	Vacant
Region 2	Vacant	Seamus McMahon Johnny McKinstry	Vacant
Region 3	Vacant	Mark Thexton	Vacant
Region 4	Rob Rutter	Vacant	Tony Walker
Region 5	Sherri Kitson	Sam Paul	Chris Evans
Region 6	Hayleigh Marks	Thomas Marchant	Vacant
Region 7	Jane Gummery	Philip Williams Thomas Marchant	Vacant
Region 8	Gemma Thomas	Gareth Jianikos	Vacant
Region 9	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
Region 10	Stephanie Winter	n/a	Gareth Cook
Region 11	Vacant	Rob Hewitt Steve Martin	Danny Barrett
Region 12	Wayne Box	Luke Fowler	Nick Bourke
Region 13	Vacant	Darren Halpin	Andy Corben

OTHER REPRESENTATIVES

	Education and learning	Fairness at work	Health and safety
Region 1	Kim Ferguson	Vacant	Barry Johnstone
Region 2	James Patterson	Karen McDowell	Barry Mitchell
Region 3	Andy Murray	Dean Pounder	Chris Cook
Region 4	Rebecca Savin	Vacant	Greg Tucker
Region 5	James Collier	Emily Hollands	Samuel Merriott
Region 6	Stephen Tucker	Sarah Turner Helen Durman	Dan Cresswell
Region 7	Jane Gummery	Vacant	Louise Fletcher
Region 8	Hannah Lodder	Vacant	Richard Davies
Region 9	Vacant	Vacant	Jamie Newell
Region 10	Gareth Cook	Vacant	Gareth Beeton
Region 11	Dave Turner	Sam Sellick	Simon Herbert
Region 12	Greg O'Neill	James Harris	Matt Nind
Region 13	Dave Roberts	Vacant	Dave Roberts
B&EMM	Vacant	Vacant	Corneil Power
CSNC	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
LGBT+	Vacant	Vacant	Pat Carberry
NRC	Vacant	Vacant	Paul Revill
NWC	Vacant	Vacant	Jess Doran
ONC	Nick Bourke	Chris Evans	Nick Bourke

L7 RETIRED OFFICIALS

Andy Dark	Assistant general secretary
Ed Burrows	Regional secretary region 5
Guy Herrington	Regional secretary region 13
Lynda Rowan-O'Neill	CSNC secretary
Steve Price-Hunt	Regional chair region 7
Steve Saunders	Regional chair region 8
Richard Wright	Brigade secretary Lincolnshire
Roy Humphreys	Brigade secretary Suffolk
Ash Fox	Brigade chair Northumberland
Richard Green	ONC region 9

L8 FINAL APPEALS COMMITTEE

Region/Section	Name
1	John McKenzie
2	Phil Millar
3	Brian Harris
4	Gavin Marshall
5	Ed Burrows
6	Mark Stilwell
7	Sasha Hitchins
8	Duncan Stewart-Ball
9	Rebecca Lewington
10	Jon Lambe
11	Andy Petch
12	Mark Chapman
13	Guy Herrington
BEMM	Amit Malde
LGBT	Pat Carberry
NWC	Robyn Richardson
CSNC	Caroline Saunderson
NRC	Paul Revill
ONC	Peter Trayner

L9 UNION TRUSTEES

The executive council wishes to place on record its appreciation to Alan McLean and Keith Handscomb for serving as trustees of the union in accordance with the provision of the rule book.

L10 POLITICAL FUND

The FBU's political fund continues to be used to support campaigning political work, as well as some of the union's political education and international campaigning. The financial resources in the political fund are used in all areas of political work to benefit members by campaigning on their behalf at a local and national level.

L11 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The communications department is responsible for all external communications and campaigning. We run the national communications channels of the FBU, including the website, social media, *Firefighter* magazine, media relations, and campaign resources.

The pay campaign was the focus of our work during the first two months of the year. The department kept members informed during the final stage of the dispute. This was also a period of prolific media exposure, which the department planned and managed.

At annual conference 2023, the FBU launched Equality Matters, our pro-active campaign for equality in the service. The department developed new materials and videos for Equality Matters towards the end of the year. The union also gained media attention on the Fight for 52 campaign on maternity pay.

The communications department worked to amplify the experiences of firefighters and to draw attention to the escalating effects of climate change, with an emphasis on winning additional resources and highlighting a lack of UK-wide coordination. Staff responded to the LFB's review of the summer 2022 wildfires, and did publicity for *Scorched*, the FBU's report on wildfire preparedness.

The department assisted officials in campaigning around breathing apparatus policy, following the various failures of the Health and Safety Executive on the issue. The DECON campaign continues to be a significant part of the union's output, with a fair amount of publicity focusing on our health monitoring programme.

The fight against the Minimum Service Levels Act mobilised members on multiple occasions. The FBU gained widespread media attention for its strategy of mass resistance and call on Labour to repeal the new laws. At the end of the year, staff assisted with the response to the White Paper.

On 1 November, the FBU launched *The Firefighters' Manifesto*. The department helped organise the national rally and communicated the manifesto's demands. Staff also worked with elected officials to push a lobbying effort – both digital and in person – for the manifesto.

The communications department worked to support a large proliferation of campaigns in local areas and devolved nations: on cuts to jobs, cuts to equipment, fire station closures, crewing levels, PFCCs, equalities, direct entry, shift systems, and more.

2023 was a record year for media for the FBU. The total number of 'news hits' in 2023 was 27,000. This compares to 19,000 in 2022, and 9,000 in 2021. The increase in broadcast coverage was even starker, with 8,700 hits in 2023; 2,800 in 2022; and 941 in 2021. Two months in particular were extraordinary: January with the release of our pay ballot results, and August over the Bibby Stockholm.

L12 RESEARCH REPORT

The research and policy department works to the priorities of annual conference and the executive council, under the direction of the general secretary and national officers.

At the beginning of 2023, research and policy staff assisted elected officials with the pay campaign. This included providing updated figures on pay trends, inflation and other data to assist negotiators after the revised offer was made by employers. The department also took part in the executive council's debriefs and lessons learned from the dispute.

Research and policy staff assisted elected officials with interventions at Westminster. This included providing the secretariat for the union's parliamentary group, attending all-party parliamentary groups on fire matters, the TUCG, the production of the *Fire and Rescue Service Matters* bulletin, and assisting with lobbies of MPs. The department also assisted officials with establishing relations with ministers, Labour's shadow team and other politicians.

The department assisted elected officials with drafting submissions to Westminster government consultations and Westminster legislation, including those on the furniture regulations, the White Paper, Covid-19 inquiry, minimum service levels, HMICFRS and other submissions (see Section D). The department also assisted FBU officials with submissions to devolved administrations (see Section E).

The department assisted national and sectional officials with a range of equalities matters, including conferences, schools, the London Culture Review, Fight for 52, domestic violence guidance, and the anti-sexual harassment working group. Staff also helped with the DECON campaign, evaluating new research, and assisting with the next phases of the work.

During 2023, the department monitored correspondence from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI), including expert recommendations, progress with the report, coordination with the FBU's legal team and assistance with briefing MPs (see Section E). Staff assisted with drafting the *Firefighters' Manifesto* and organising the 1 November rally in London. The research and policy department supported elected FBU officials with interventions into the TUC Congress, the Labour Party and other major events (see Section F).

L13 FIREFIGHTERS 100 LOTTERY

The Firefighters 100 Lottery was set up to support firefighters, bereaved families and the firefighting profession. The FBU commissioned an external lottery company, Gatherwell Ltd, to independently manage the sales of tickets, weekly draws and paying out prizes. Each lottery ticket has remained at £1, with at least 50% going to support good causes, 20% for the weekly prize draw winner, 2% for second prize and a further 7% used to distribute multiple winners of £5. This year the lottery maintained 5,000 average weekly ticket sales throughout the year.

In 2023 the Lottery Distribution Panel agreed the following payments in accordance with the good causes criteria of the lottery fund:

• Direct financial support (good cause number 1):	£56,545
• Red Plaques and events (good cause number 2):	£31,147
• Research including DECON (good cause number 4):	£105,392
Total:	£193,084

L14 RED PLAQUE SCHEME

The second good cause of the Firefighters100 lottery states:

“Memorials and remembrance: to support, establish and maintain memorials and/or memorial events in remembrance of firefighters killed in the line of duty.”

To achieve this, the FBU initiated the Red Plaque scheme, which aims to place a unique plaque near the scene of an incident where a firefighter lost their life. Begun in 2017, each plaque bears a similar inscription which honours “the bravery and sacrifice” of the firefighter whose name appears on the plaque.

The Red Plaque scheme is funded entirely by the proceeds from the Firefighters100 lottery. Fourteen Red Plaques were unveiled in 2023. These were:

- Joseph Calderwood, Scotland
- Stanley McIntosh, Scotland
- Brian Henry Douglas, Northern Ireland
- William Carnegie, Scotland
- John Jamieson Buist, Scotland
- Michael Hill, London
- Tommy John Black, Northern Ireland

- Neville Sydney Newman Stocker, Kent
- John Wesley Hughes, North Wales
- Jack Michell, Cornwall
- Alan Bannon, Hampshire
- James Shears, Hampshire
- Norman Nolan, Greater Manchester
- Cyril Dutton, Chester
- Alec Elwell, Staffordshire
- Brian Dean, West Midlands.

To date, 59 Red Plaques commemorating 89 named firefighters and a generic plaque to Northern Ireland firefighters have been laid.

There are 38 Red Plaques which have been formally commissioned, but not yet laid. These commemorate the names of 108 firefighters (48 of whom are named on a single plaque covering the Plymouth blitz). There are a number of applications currently under consideration but not yet commissioned. These will continue to be processed in accordance with the second good cause of the lottery.

The Red Plaque website has become the primary source for applications and storing information on plaques. This can be found at www.redplaque.org.uk

L15 FBU ONLINE SHOP

The FBU's official shop is available online at <https://shop.fbu.org.uk>

The stated aim of the shop is "to make available high-quality value for money official FBU merchandise to our members and supporters all year round".

The official FBU shop is run by ex-firefighter and FBU member Kym Napier and overseen by head office. During 2023, the shop continued to attract interest and sales. The FBU profit was £4,910.55 (after taking away costs). All FBU profit goes to the good causes fund supported by the Firefighters100 fund.

SECTION M

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

M1 INTRODUCTION

GENERAL SECRETARY'S AND NATIONAL TREASURER'S INTRODUCTION

2023 ACCOUNTS

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

We aim to:

- Provide the leading, democratic voice of fire & rescue professionals that protects FBU members, enhances safety and improves fire and rescue services
- Ensure the expertise, experience and views of FBU members are heard locally, nationally, and internationally within government and beyond
- Protect the safety and interests of the public and our members, enabling them to enjoy a good quality of life, including by preventing cuts or damaging changes to fire and rescue services
- Improve the pay and working conditions of our members and protect them from discrimination and unfair or illegal treatment by representing them in the workplace
- Help our members develop professionally by developing their new and existing skills

TOTAL FUNDS

The union's total funds as at 31 December 2023 were £14.49m (2022 – £12.48m). This represents a significant increase of £2.01m. The main factor in the increase of our funds was a £2.25m increase in general reserves, owing to a positive re-valuation of our pension scheme.

As at 31 December 2023 our Accident and Injury Fund was £5.03m (2022 – £5.29m), Political Fund was £0.89m (2022 – £0.81m) and Lottery Fund was £0.09m (2022 – £0.15m).

The Accident and Injury Fund is held in a mixture of cash and investments and is a restricted fund which can only be used for claims as set out in the FBU Rule Book. The Political Fund and Lottery Fund are managed to ensure that there is always a small operating surplus to cover forthcoming demands and annual rates of inflation.

GENERAL FUND

At 31 December 2023, the General Fund before the defined benefit pension liability was £6.62m (2022 – £6.5m). This increase of £0.12m is due to a decreased operating deficit in the year as compared to 2022 (excluding pension movements).

The pension fund surplus at 31 December 2023 stood at £1.86m (2022 – £271k deficit). This increase of £2.13m is due to the merger of the scheme during 2023. The bulk transfer of £2.14m assets from the RDBS scheme to the FBU pension scheme completed on 15 March 2023.

The general fund at 31 December 2023 was £8.48m (2022 – £6.23m). This means that after recognising the surplus position of the pension scheme, we hold general reserves in the region of £8.5m.

There has been a 8% increase in the value of investments, from £6.84m to £7.36m. The increase in the valuation of investments has occurred due to the markets having stabilised as compared to 2022. Reduced equities exposure by our investors, with an increased investment in bonds, cash and equivalents where yields are at more attractive levels has also played a role in this increase.

RESERVES POLICY

The executive council is keenly aware of the need to secure the union's future beyond the immediate day-to-day requirements. To continue to honour our commitments to our members the union needs to have sufficient funds to be able to absorb periodic setbacks in our ability to raise funds and to take advantage of opportunities as situations arise. It is prudent that reserves should be maintained to finance working capital requirements.

The union has also looked at timing the cash outflows to match the timing of cash inflows. Where this is not possible, reserves needed to fund expenditure in advance of income receipts, or expenditure delayed, are estimated.

FUTURE PLANS AND KEY PRIORITIES

The Finance Department are currently producing training videos for treasurers, we have also set up a dedicated Teams group for treasurers to contact the team as needed and to enable set up of video meetings for any ongoing ad hoc training needs. We are also working with our accounting software provider to initialise the PO system, and will produce a further training video on the use of this system once it is finalised and in place. This will enable cashflow to be monitored more easily and help with planning future spending. We feel this will greatly benefit the treasurers now and in the future in their finance related work.

The FBU holds property assets with a net book value of £1.9m as at 31 December 2023 (2022 – £1.9m). An assessment regarding rebuild valuation costs was completed for the union's insurers in Nov 2023, covering the full union property portfolio.

FINANCIAL REVIEW OF 2023

The key themes of this year's financials has been the settlement of the pay dispute and the FBU Manifesto rally, which took place on 1 November, 2023. We have also increased our educational activities in 2023, which has been of great benefit to our members. In addition, we have provided support through legal representation and Accident and Injury Claims. Consequentially, costs for those areas are higher than last year and our total operating expenditure increased from £12.4m in 2022 to £13.2m in 2023. Our non-operating gains from the disposal of our London office and the revaluation of our investments was £1.3m, whereas in 2022 we showed a loss of £0.64m. Also of note this year was the merger of our pension

schemes that completed in March 2023, our FBU scheme now shows a surplus of £1.86m. Given that the Bank of England base rates have continued increasing in 2023, this has meant that the future pension liabilities have reduced further. The merger has also resulted in significant savings on our monthly pension contributions and associated professional fees.

In 2023 our total income was £11.93m (2022 – £10.65m) and our total expenditure £13.21m (2022 – £12.37m). This gave us a total surplus of £27k (2022 – deficit £2.36m) before actuarial pension adjustments. The surplus after actuarial pension adjustments was £2.01m (2022 – £1.16m) and our general fund surplus has increased to £8.48m (2022 – £6.23m).

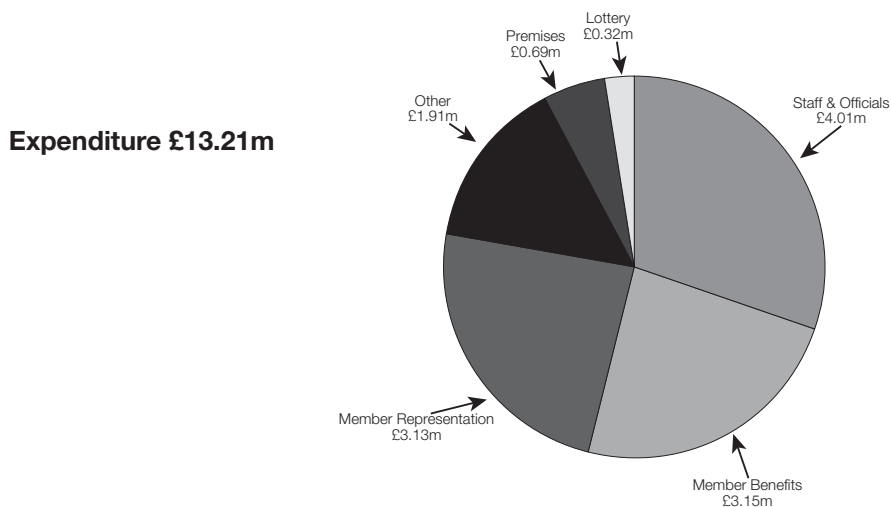
Positive pension scheme actuarial adjustments of £1.99m (2022 – £3.52m) further contributed to the surplus for the year. These adjustments are calculated using external factors completely out of our control and therefore cannot be forecast with any accuracy and do vary significantly from year to year.

During 2023 our ordinary membership levels rose by 1,243, 3.80% (2022 – 195, 0.60%) to 33,939 (2022 – 32,696). Membership income from contributions increased to £11.3m (2022 – £10.2m) due mainly to the increase in the contribution rates in 2023.

Our expenditure increased by £836k (2022 – increased £2.81m) during 2023, predominantly as a result of the increased cost of member benefits and representation, professional fees and salary increments.

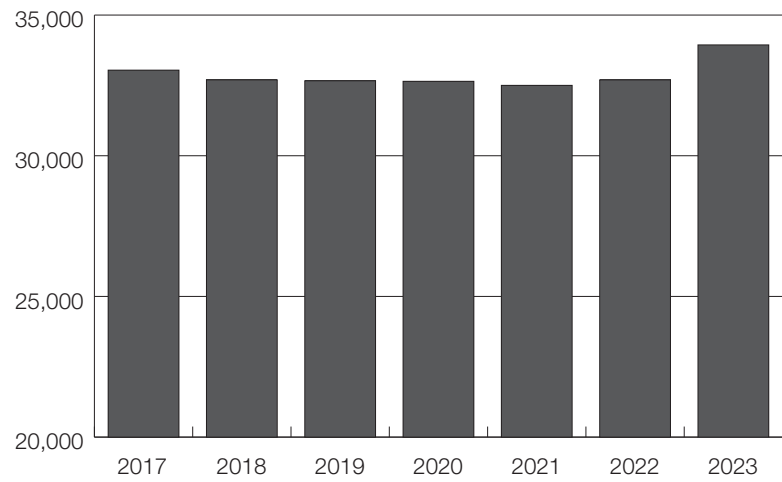
The Annual Conference took place in May 2023 and total costs of running conferences reduced to £380k in 2023 as compared to £471k in 2022.

Set out below is a chart which shows a breakdown of our expenditure for 2023. As you can see the bulk of our expenditure is in three areas, namely: staffing, running costs protecting our members' interests, and member benefits

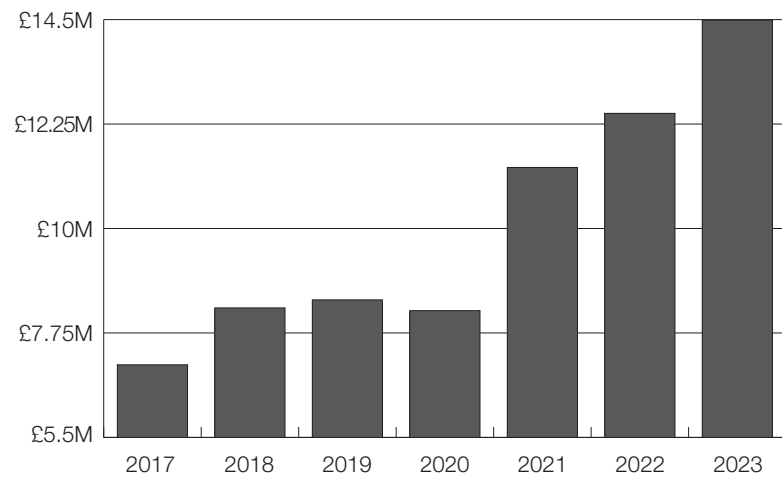


As a result of the overall surplus of £2.01m for 2023, our funds have now increased from £12.48m to £14.49m. This is made up of the accident and injury fund £5.03m, political fund £894k, general fund £8.48m and the lottery fund £89k.

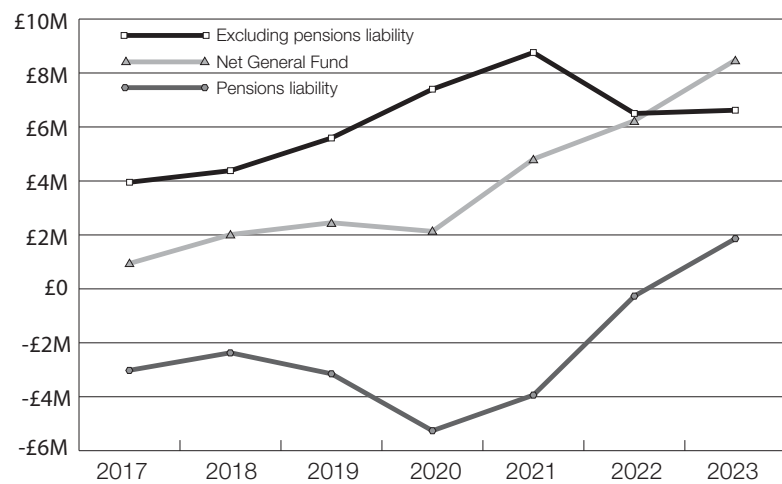
Number of members



Total funds



General Fund



GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2024

We have taken a cautious approach to the preparation of the 2024 budget by producing a break-even budget with a surplus of £20K. Whilst our membership income has increased as a result of the recent pay increases of 7% in 2022 and 5% in 2023, the union have to allow for the ongoing costs of serving our members, in particular with legal representation, hosting of meetings and our upcoming conference in Blackpool in May 2024

The budget for 2024 is summarised below:

	£'000
Income	
Contributions	10,379
Other	242
Total	10,621
Expenditure	
Members benefits and associated (note 1)	1,052
Staff and officials	4,357
Member representation (note 2)	3,714
Premises (note 3)	905
Other (note 4)	573
Total	10,601
Operating surplus	20

CONCLUSION

The 2024 budget represents a prudent approach over the coming year, allowing for additional one-off costs relating to the relocation of our Head Office premises to the new site in Central London. We have factored in reductions in some areas as we anticipate less costs for press and comms education and goods for presentation in 2024. We are also introducing changes to working practices in some areas to reduce costs, such as more use of Teams to enable more remote meetings along with renegotiating new contracts for our overheads.

The senior management team of the union have been tasked with ensuring that the key areas of need and risk are appropriately managed and funded. The increase in membership levels seen as a result of more firefighters wanting union representation during a period of pay disputes with the Fire and Rescue Service has remained steady in spite of the dispute having now been settled and the ongoing rise in cost of living. This is a testament to the value we provide to our members. This has allowed the union to re-embark on a “business as usual” budget and still provide the union with a budgeted general fund surplus of £20,000, thus ensuring that the union has sufficient working capital to enable it to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future, being a period of at least 12 months from the date of signing the financial statements.

Summary of financial results of the last 5 years

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income					
Contributions	11,331	10,151	10,301	10,210	9,762
ULF grants	55	19	198	526	728
Other	540	482	434	415	437
	11,926	10,652	10,933	11,151	10,927
Expenditure					
Members benefits (note 1)	3,151	2,821	1,844	1,924	1,764
Staff and officials	4,008	3,912	3,719	3,956	3,747
Member representation (note 2)	3,128	2,779	1,538	1,404	2,668
Premises	686	696	624	601	588
Lottery (note 3)	321	287	210	322	238
Other (note 4)	1,913	1,876	1,625	1,404	1,765
	13,207	12,371	9,560	9,611	10,770
Operating surplus/(deficit)	(1,281)	(1,719)	1,373	1,540	157
Non-operating	1,308	(641)	663	724	720
Pension adjustments	1,988	3,524	1,048	(2,496)	(704)
Overall result	2,015	1,164	3,084	(232)	173
General fund	8,482	6,230	4,815	2,126	2,448
Accident & injury fund	5,029	5,295	5,581	5,332	5,282
Political fund	894	808	761	681	581
Lottery	89	146	158	92	152
Total funds	14,494	12,479	11,315	8,231	8,463

Notes:

- 1 Includes legal fees, education and accident and Injury costs
- 2 Costs include affiliations, travel, mileage, hotels & subsistence, communications, print, ballots, donations, campaign costs, advertising
- 3 Lottery fund costs include the cost of prizes and external associated administration costs plus grants for good causes
- 4 Includes audit and professional fees, bank charges, depreciation, investment gains/(losses), conference and the cost of 'Fightfighter'.

On behalf of the executive council the General Secretary and National Treasurer approve their report.



Matt Wrack
General Secretary



Les Skarratts
National Treasurer

Date: 27 March 2024

M2 ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The legislation relating to trade unions requires the union to submit a return for each calendar year to the Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations. This return contains accounts, which must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the union at the year end and of its transactions for the year then ended. The accounts set out on the following pages have been prepared on the same basis and are used to complete the return to the Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations.

The requirement to prepare financial statements that give a true and fair view is the responsibility of the executive council. The executive council is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102. In doing so, the executive council is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures being disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to do so.

The executive council is responsible for keeping proper accounting records and establishing and maintaining a satisfactory system of control over its records and transactions in order to comply with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (Amended). It is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the union and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The union is also responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the union's website. Legislation in the UK governing the preparation and dissemination of accounts may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

OPINION

We have audited the financial statements of the Fire Brigades Union for the year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Changes in Equity, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Union's affairs as at 31 December 2023 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

BASIS FOR OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the

Union in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

CONCLUSIONS RELATING TO GOING CONCERN

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Executive Council's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Union's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Executive Council with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

OTHER INFORMATION

The Executive Council are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Auditors' report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

MATTERS ON WHICH WE ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT BY EXCEPTION

Arising solely from the limitation on the scope of our work relating to the valuation of investment property referred to above, we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the regulations require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- proper accounting records have not been maintained by the Union; or
- a satisfactory system of financial control has not been maintained by Union; or
- the Union's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNION'S EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND AUDITORS

As described on page 105 the Executive Council are responsible for the preparation of financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard for Auditors.

AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Based on our understanding of the Union and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to Trade Union legislation, data protection regulations and employment law, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and corporation tax regulations.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to inappropriate journal entries in respect of revenue recognition. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- Inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;
- Discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- Evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- Identifying and testing journals, in particular journal entries with unusual descriptions; and
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their critical accounting estimates.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

USE OF OUR REPORT

This report is made solely to the members of the Union, as a body, in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (amended). Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members of the Union those matters we are required to state to them in an independent auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Union and the members of the Union as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinion we have formed.



Haysmacintyre LLP

Chartered Accountants, Registered Auditors
10 Queen Street Place, London EC4R 1AG

Date: 18 April 2024

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 31 December 2023

	Note	General fund £	Accident and injury fund £	Political fund £	Lottery fund £	Union learning fund £	2023 £	2022 £
Income								
Contributions	1(f)	9,637,368	1,449,891	243,774	–	–	11,331,033	10,151,299
Investment Income		239,132	–	–	–	–	239,132	170,022
Grants		–	–	–	–	54,817	54,817	18,687
Other Income	18	–	–	11,000	264,275	–	275,275	286,522
Commission received		16,265	–	–	–	–	16,265	13,926
VAT recoverable		9,581	–	–	–	–	9,581	11,824
		<u>9,902,346</u>	<u>1,449,891</u>	<u>254,774</u>	<u>264,275</u>	<u>54,817</u>	<u>11,926,103</u>	<u>10,652,280</u>
Expenditure								
Benefits	2	1,690,454	1,460,736	–	–	–	3,151,190	2,821,388
Conferences		310,903	–	69,170	–	–	380,073	471,334
Affiliations		170,864	–	51,570	–	–	222,434	214,448
'Firefighter'		264,606	–	–	–	–	264,606	216,765
Commissions		15,237	15,238	7,618	–	–	38,093	4,473
Union learning costs		–	–	–	–	(9,240)	(9,240)	8,060
Staff and officials	3	3,676,970	240,000	27,409	–	64,057	4,008,436	3,912,373
Member representation	4	3,120,959	–	7,394	–	–	3,128,353	2,779,199
Premises	5	685,784	–	–	–	–	685,784	696,158
Other expenditure	6	801,886	–	6,396	–	–	808,282	604,268
Depreciation	1(c)	274,512	–	–	–	–	274,512	288,934
Lottery good causes and prizes	18	–	–	–	320,967	–	320,967	286,772
Defined benefit net interest cost	13	(66,000)	–	–	–	–	(66,000)	67,000
		<u>10,946,175</u>	<u>1,715,974</u>	<u>169,557</u>	<u>320,967</u>	<u>54,817</u>	<u>13,207,490</u>	<u>12,371,172</u>
Operating (deficit)/surplus		(1,043,829)	(266,083)	85,217	(56,692)	–	(1,281,387)	(1,718,892)
Non-operating income and expenditure								
Surplus on disposal of fixed assets		734,512	–	–	–	–	734,512	–
Surplus/(deficit) on disposal of investments	9(a)	38,769	–	–	–	–	38,769	(2,403)
Surplus/(deficit) on revaluation of quoted investments	9(a)	373,236	–	–	–	–	373,236	(772,827)
Surplus on revaluation of unquoted investments	9(b)	161,490	–	–	–	–	161,490	134,235
Total surplus/(deficit) for the year before taxation		264,178	(266,083)	85,217	(56,692)	–	26,620	(2,359,887)
Total surplus/(deficit) for the year after taxation		264,178	(266,083)	85,217	(56,692)	–	26,620	(2,359,887)

The notes on pages 101 to 116 form part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (CONTINUED)

For the year ended 31 December 2023

	Note	General fund £	Accident and injury fund £	Political fund £	Lottery fund £	Union learning fund £	2023 £	2022 £
Other comprehensive income								
Actuarial (losses)/gains on post employment benefit obligations		(1,100,000)	–	–	–	–	(1,100,000)	8,827,000
Return on assets (excluding interest income)		3,013,000	–	–	–	–	3,013,000	(5,408,000)
Experience gains		75,000	–	–	–	–	75,000	105,000
Total other comprehensive income	13	1,988,000	–	–	–	–	1,988,000	3,524,000
Total comprehensive income/(expense) for the year		<u>2,252,178</u>	<u>(266,083)</u>	<u>85,217</u>	<u>(56,692)</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>2,014,620</u>	<u>1,164,113</u>

The notes on pages 101 to 116 form part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed Assets	8	2,295,738	2,404,442
Investments	9	7,358,915	6,840,630
Long-term loans	10	–	–
		9,654,653	9,245,072
Current assets			
Debtors	11	952,432	971,057
Cash at bank		5,768,630	5,678,693
Total current assets		6,721,062	6,649,750
Current liabilities	12	(3,741,998)	(3,144,726)
Net current assets		2,979,064	3,505,024
Total assets before pension liability		12,633,717	12,750,097
Defined benefit pension schemes			
The Fire Brigades Union pension scheme		1,860,000	(306,000)
The Fire Brigades Union retirement and death benefits scheme		–	35,000
Net defined benefit pension liability	13	1,860,000	(271,000)
Total assets after pension liability		14,493,717	12,479,096
Represented by:			
General fund (excluding defined benefit pension schemes)		6,622,347	6,501,168
Defined benefit pension liability		1,860,000	(271,000)
General fund		8,482,347	6,230,168
Accident and injury fund		5,028,716	5,294,799
Political fund		893,692	808,475
Lottery	18	88,962	145,654
Total funds		14,493,717	12,479,096

Movement in the union's funds are shown on page 99.

The Executive Council approved these financial statements on 27 March 2024.



M. Wrack – General Secretary



I. Murray – President

The notes on pages 101 to 116 form part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the year ended 31 December 2023

	General fund £	Accident and Injury fund £	Political fund £	Lottery fund £	Total £
At 31 December 2021	4,814,926	5,581,385	760,769	157,904	11,314,984
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	(2,108,757)	(286,586)	47,706	(12,250)	(2,359,887)
Other comprehensive income/(expense) for the year					
Actuarial gains on post-employment benefit obligations	8,827,000	–	–	–	8,827,000
Return on assets less net interest	(5,408,000)	–	–	–	(5,408,000)
Experience gains	105,000	–	–	–	105,000
	3,524,000	–	–	–	3,524,000
At 31 December 2022	6,230,169	5,294,799	808,475	145,654	12,479,097
Total surplus/(deficit) for the year	264,178	(266,083)	85,217	(56,692)	26,620
Other comprehensive income/(expense) for the year					
Actuarial losses on post-employment benefit obligations	(1,100,000)	–	–	–	(1,100,000)
Return on assets less net interest	3,013,000	–	–	–	3,013,000
Experience gains	75,000	–	–	–	75,000
	1,988,000	–	–	–	1,988,000
At 31 December 2023	8,482,347	5,028,716	893,692	88,962	14,493,717

The notes on pages 101 to 116 form part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows arising from operating activities		
Total deficit on ordinary activities for the year	(1,281,387)	(1,718,892)
Depreciation	274,512	288,934
Change in debtors	18,625	59,808
Change in creditors	597,273	865,983
Non-cash long-term loan movement	–	–
Non-cash pension adjustment	(143,000)	(148,000)
Cash outflow arising from operating activities	(533,977)	(652,167)
Cash flows from investment activities		
Purchase of fixed assets	(202,296)	(261,782)
Proceeds from the sale of fixed assets	771,000	–
Purchase of investments	(701,910)	(1,471,282)
Sale of investments	757,120	1,261,200
Net cash used in investment activities	623,914	(471,864)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	89,937	(1,124,031)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	5,678,693	6,802,724
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	5,768,630	5,678,693

The notes on pages 101 to 116 form part of these financial statements

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

1 Accounting Policies

- (a) These accounts have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 (“FRS 102”). The accounts have been prepared under historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to the financial statements.

Trade Unions are governed by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation Act) 1992 Amended. Under that Act the accounts of Trade Unions are required to give a true and fair view. As a Trade Union is not a company the Regulations that form the basis of disclosures under FRS102 have been adapted as considered necessary to ensure the accounts give a true and fair view to the members of the Trade Union.

The Union is a public benefit entity.

The financial statements have been prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the Union. The monetary amounts of these financial statements are rounded to the nearest pound. Income and expenditure is dealt with in the various fund accounts of the union.

- (b) The obligation to prepare these financial statements on a going concern basis has been considered by reference to budgets, forecasts and projected cash flows, as well as potential opportunities in relation to the controlled realisation of assets owned by the Union if required.

The union operates in a sector whose members are employees of public body funded organisations and, as such, membership levels were not affected by macroeconomic phenomena. In 2023, the pay dispute was settled which meant that subscription income increased by 7% in May 2023 and a further 5% in August 2023. In addition union membership numbers increased which demonstrates the importance of union support in these challenging times. Whilst in 2023 the general fund made a deficit, this was largely offset by the surplus on sale of the London office. In 2024 the union has drafted a breakeven budget, with numerous expenditure savings. The executive council therefore believe that the union has sufficient working capital to enable it to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future, being a period of at least 12 months from the date of signing these accounts.

- (c) Fixed assets are initially recorded at cost. Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, except for freehold land, on a straight line basis, at rates estimated to write off the cost or valuation of each asset over its expected useful life.

The rates used are:	
Buildings	2.50%
Computer equipment	25%
Fixtures or fittings	10% or 20%
Motor vehicles	25%

No depreciation is provided on freehold land. Where no information is available as to the allocation of the original cost or valuation of property between land and buildings, best estimates of that allocation are used.

- (d) Rental payments in respect of operating leases are charged to the general fund income and expenditure account in the period in which they are incurred. Assets held under finance leases and hire purchase contracts are capitalised and depreciated over the shorter period of the lease and the useful economic lives of the assets. The finance charges are allocated over the period of the lease and are charged to the income and expenditure account.

- (e) Investments are stated in the balance sheet on the following basis:
- Quoted investments – at fair value, which is determined by reference to the quoted market price at the year end date.
 - Unquoted investments – at original cost or current value as determined by, either an independent third party or by the net asset value per share as approved by the board of the bank (Unity Trust Bank).

Provision is made against investments where there is a permanent impairment in value. Income from the investments is recognised when the monies are received. Movements in the fair value of investments are included in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

- (f) Contributions include those amounts receivable from members in respect of the year. Amounts due to be received at the balance sheet date, either by direct debit or from fire brigades who offer a payroll deduction scheme on behalf of the union, are included within Trade debtors.

- (g) Members can elect to become a member of the Accident and injury fund (AIF). AIF contributions are recognised on an accrual basis in accordance with union rules. Provisions for expenditure are included in the financial statements when there is certainty that a future payment will be made as at the balance sheet date.
- (h) All union learning fund grant income is recognised as and when the union has entitled to the monies as specified through our grant contracts.
- (i) Lottery income and expenditure are recognised on an accrual basis and the funds carried forward will be spent on good causes as determined by the lottery distribution panel.
- (j) Members' legal expenses are charged in these accounts net of reimbursements obtained in respect of certain cases, on an invoiced basis. No provision is made for outstanding legal costs not invoiced, or for reimbursements not received at the balance sheet date. All other income and expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis.
- (k) Provisions for future expenditure are included in the accounts, only where the union has a present obligation to meet such expenditure.
- (l) Provision is only made for material corporation tax on investment income and capital gains arising in the year after relief given for provident benefits paid.
- (m) Value added tax (VAT) is only partially recoverable. The recoverable element is shown separately in the income statement. All expenditure is shown inclusive of VAT where applicable.
- (n) Corporation tax is payable on the excess of interest income, rental income and chargeable gains arising on the disposal of properties and investments over expenditure on the provident benefits and reinvested chargeable gains for the year.

Provident benefits comprise of payments as set out in the rules of the Union, which relate to death benefit and legal assistance, and a proportion of the costs of administering the Union in relation to those benefits.

Deferred tax liabilities are generally recognised for all timing differences and deferred tax assets are recognised to the extent that it is probable that they will be recovered against the reversal of deferred tax liabilities or other future taxable income. Deferred tax is calculated at the tax rates that are expected to apply in the period where the liability is settled or the asset is realised. Deferred tax is charged or credited in the income and expenditure account.

- (o) Financial assets are recognised in the Union's balance sheet when the Union becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Financial assets are classified into specified categories. The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the financial assets and is determined at the time of recognition.

Basic financial assets, which include trade and other receivables and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest.

Financial assets, other than those held at fair value through the income and expenditure account, are assessed for indicators of impairment at each reporting end date.

- (p) Basic financial liabilities, including trade and other payables, are initially recognised at the transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction.
- (q) The transactions of the regions during the period are included in these accounts as are the net assets held directly by them at the balance sheet date.
- (r) The union's pension schemes are defined benefit schemes.

The amounts charged to the income and expenditure account are the current service costs. Remeasurement comprising of actuarial gains and losses and the return on scheme assets are recognised immediately in other comprehensive income.

The assets of the schemes are held separately from those of the union in separate trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method and a discounted rate equivalent to the current rate of return on high quality corporate bonds of equivalent currency and term to the scheme liabilities.

On 15 March 2023 The Fire Brigade Union Retirement and Death Benefit Scheme (FBURDBS) merged with the FBU Pension Scheme. On this day both the assets and liabilities were transferred to the FBU Pension Scheme.

(s) The preparation of financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the accounting policies selected for use by the union. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the consolidated financial statements are as follows:

- Investments – quoted investments are disclosed at market value at the Statement of Financial Position date. Unquoted investments are disclosed at their original cost or current value as determined by, either an independent third party or the latest external transaction price as approved by the board of the bank (Unity Trust Bank).
- Defined benefit pension scheme - the cost of each of the defined benefit pension schemes is determined using an actuarial valuation. The actuarial valuation involves making assumptions about discount rates, future salary increases, mortality rates and future pension increases. Due to the complexity of the valuation, the underlying assumptions and the long term nature of these plans, such estimates are subject to significant uncertainty. In determining the appropriate discount rate, management considers the interest rates of corporate bonds in the respective currency with at least AA rating, with extrapolated maturities corresponding to the expected duration of the defined benefit obligation. The underlying bonds are further reviewed for quality, and those having excessive credit spreads are removed from the population bonds on which the discount rate is based, on the basis that they do not represent high quality bonds. The mortality rate is based on publicly available mortality tables for the specific country. Future salary increases and pension increases are based on expected future inflation rates. Further details are given in note 12.

Use of available information and application of judgement are inherent in the formation of estimates. Actual outcomes in the future could differ from such estimates. In preparing these financial statements, the union has made the following judgements:

- Under HMRC rules affecting the taxation of trade unions, a corporation tax liability does not arise on chargeable gains arising from the disposal of properties and investments where such gains are reinvested into other chargeable assets in the same accounting period. The Union has adopted a policy whereby such chargeable gains are all reinvested, thereby eliminating any corporation tax liability. Where the proceeds are not fully reinvested, no corporation tax liability is considered likely to arise due to the availability of sufficient excess expenditure on provident benefits. Accordingly, in the opinion of the management, the revaluation of properties and investments does not give rise to a corporation tax liability.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
2 Benefits		
Legal fees	1,256,086	1,164,729
Education	434,368	311,431
Accident and injury claims	1,460,736	1,345,228
	3,151,190	2,821,388
3 Costs of staff and lay officials		
Salaries and national insurance contributions	1,998,391	1,586,334
Pension contributions	397,606	876,105
FRS102 pension scheme adjustment (see note 13)	(77,000)	(215,000)
Officials' allowance	586,994	581,853
PAYE agreement	400	4,944
Trade union leave	1,102,045	1,078,137
	4,008,436	3,912,373
4 Member representation		
Travel	309,345	226,651
Mileage	257,108	183,240
Hotels	390,076	218,896
Subsistence and evening meals	304,582	208,871
Motor expenses	6,577	6,782
Other organising expenses	29,927	11,438
Reports, journals and subscriptions	80,854	84,849
Ballot expenses	139,611	127,932
Donations	51,912	60,939
Goods for presentations and campaigning	213,145	172,602
Communications	389,064	597,435
Computer Support	673,616	689,146
Printing and stationery	217,626	180,383
Advertising	12,689	10,035
National Joint Council Contribution	52,221	–
	3,128,353	2,779,199
5 Premises		
Repairs and Renewals	49,465	76,315
Office expenses	597,540	583,212
Insurance	38,779	36,631
	685,784	696,158
6 Other expenditure		
Bank charges and interest payable	7,166	2,629
Audit, pension audit and accountancy	66,390	96,820
Professional fees	734,726	504,819
	808,282	604,268

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

7 Taxation

Current Tax

The Union is subject to UK corporation tax on its results. In the year to 31 December 2023, there were sufficient provident benefits available to reduce the annual charge to £nil (2022: £nil).

Deferred tax

The Union is also aware that additional corporation tax could be due if it were to dispose of all of the assets in its investment portfolio in any one particular year. However, as at 31 December 2023 there were sufficient provident benefits available to mitigate any potential tax due, hence no provision has been made in the year to 31 December 2023 for deferred tax.

	Land & buildings £	Fixtures fittings & equipment £	Motor vehicles £	Total £
8 Fixed assets				
Cost				
At 1 January 2023	3,329,816	1,433,428	163,072	4,926,316
Additions	61,114	141,182	-	202,296
Disposals	(84,347)	-	-	(84,347)
At 31 December 2023	3,306,583	1,574,610	163,072	5,044,265
Depreciation				
At 1 January 2023	1,407,616	976,582	137,676	2,521,874
Charge for the year	71,198	186,528	16,786	274,512
Disposals	(47,859)	-	-	(47,859)
At 31 December 2023	1,430,955	1,163,110	154,462	2,748,527
Net book value				
At 31 December 2023	1,875,628	411,500	8,610	2,295,738
Net book value				
At 31 December 2022	1,922,200	456,846	25,396	2,404,442

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
9 Investments		
Quoted investments and unit trusts (note 9a)	6,155,985	5,799,190
Unquoted equities (note 9b)	1,202,930	1,041,440
Fair value of total investments	7,358,915	6,840,630

a) Quoted equities and unit trusts	2023 £	2022 £
Market value at 1 January 2023	5,799,190	6,364,338
Additions	701,910	1,471,282
Disposal proceeds	(757,120)	(1,261,200)
Change in fair value of investments		
Realised (deficit)/surplus on sale of investments	38,769	(2,403)
(Deficit)/Surplus on revaluation of financial assets to fair value	373,236	(772,827)
Market value at 31 December 2023	6,155,985	5,799,190
Historical cost at 31 December 2023	5,083,936	5,007,775

All investments related to quoted investments on readily accessible markets, primarily the London Stock Exchange. Investment are carried at fair value, being the market value at the year end. Asset sales and purchases are recognised at their transaction value. The main investment risk lies in the combination of uncertain investment markets and volatility in yield. The union manages these risks by retaining expert advisors.

b) Unquoted equities	2023 £	2022 £
Market value at 1 January 2023	1,041,440	907,205
Surplus on revaluation of financial assets to fair value	161,490	134,235
Market value at 31 December 2023	1,202,930	1,041,440
Historical cost at 31 December 2023	240,530	240,530

Unquoted shares held by the union at the year end are broken down as follows:
 235,500 Unity Trust plc "A" ordinary shares
 530 Labour Education, Rec. and Holiday Homes Ltd shares held at cost of £1/share
 No provision for permanent impairment in value of investments is considered necessary.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
10 Long-term loans		
Loans – co-op societies		
CRS London Ltd	35	35
People's Press Printing Society Ltd.	20,000	20,000
Loans		
Scottish TUC	3,000	3,000
Provision	(23,035)	(23,035)
	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>
	2023 £	2022 £
11 Debtors		
Membership debtors	625,160	659,433
Other debtors	19,178	8,893
Prepayments	308,094	302,731
	<u>952,432</u>	<u>971,057</u>
	2023 £	2022 £
12 Current liabilities		
Trade creditors	851,279	839,040
Other creditors	113,322	94,424
Accruals	2,777,397	2,211,261
	<u>3,741,998</u>	<u>3,144,725</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

13 Defined benefit pension fund

The union operates two defined benefit pension schemes in the United Kingdom.

1. FBU Pension Scheme.

2. The Fire Brigades Union Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme.

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
1. FBU Pension Scheme		
Opening balance	(306)	(3,688)
Current service cost	(113)	(351)
Administration expenses	(229)	(154)
Contributions by the union	419	422
Group transfer from The Fire Brigades Union Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme	2,140	–
Total service cost	2,217	(83)
Net interest cost	66	(67)
Actuarial gain	(117)	3,532
Closing balance	1,860	(306)

2. The Fire Brigades Union Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme

Opening balance	35	(255)
Current service cost	–	(115)
Administration expenses	–	(15)
Contributions by the union	–	430
Group transfer to FBU Pension Scheme	(2,140)	–
Total service cost	(2,140)	300
Net interest credit	–	(2)
Actuarial gain/(loss)	2,105	(8)
Closing balance	–	35

Both schemes

Opening balance	(271)	(3,943)
Current service cost	(113)	(466)
Administration expenses	(229)	(169)
Contributions by the union	419	852
Total service cost	77	217
Net interest cost	66	(69)
Actuarial gain	1,988	3,524
Closing balance	1,860	(271)

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

13 Defined benefit pension fund (continued)

1. FBU Pension Scheme

The major assumptions used by the actuary for the FBU Pension Scheme.

		At 31.12.2023	At 31.12.2022
Rate of increase in salaries		2.8%	2.8%
Rate of increase for deferred pensioners		2.8%/2.5%	2.9%/2.5%
Discount rate		4.5%	4.7%
Rate of increase of pensions in payment	RPI increasing	3.1% max 5%	3.2% max 5%
	CPI increasing	2.8%	2.8%

The mortality assumptions are in accordance with the S3PA CMI 2022 (1.25%).

The assets in the scheme and the expected rate of return for the FBU Pension Scheme.

	% of total Scheme assets	Value at 31.12.2023 £'000	% of total Scheme assets	Value at 31.12.2022 £'000
Cash	1%	103	1%	51
Annuities	33%	5,708	33%	2,511
Cash accumulation policy	38%	6,585	10%	774
Funds	28%	4,793	56%	4,307
Total market value of assets		<u>17,189</u>		<u>7,643</u>

2. The Fire Brigades Union Retirement and Death Benefit Scheme

The major assumptions used by the actuary for The Fire Brigades Union Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme.

	At 31.12.2023	At 31.12.2022
Rate of increase in salaries	1.5%	1.5%
Allowance for revaluation of deferred pensions of CPI or 5% p.a. if less	2.5%	2.7%
Allowance for pension in payment increases of RPI or 5% if less	3.1%	3.3%
Allowance for pension in payment increases of CPI or 5% if less	2.4%	2.6%
Discount rate	5.1%	5.0%
Inflation rate (RPI)	3.3%	3.3%
Inflation rate (CPI)	2.5%	2.5%

The mortality assumptions are in accordance with S2PA CMI 2022 (1.25%).

The assets in the scheme and the expected rate of return for The Fire Brigades Union Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

13 Defined benefit pension fund (continued)

	% of total Scheme assets	Value at 31.12.2023 £'000	% of total Scheme assets	Value at 31.12.2022 £'000
With profits fund		–	88%	5,848
Secured annuities		–	12%	3,424
less: changes in asset ceiling		–	–	(2,658)
Total market value of assets		–		6,614

The amounts recognised in the statement of financial position are as follows:

	2023 FBU pension scheme £'000	2023 FBU RDB scheme* £'000	2023 Total £'000	2022 FBU pension scheme £'000	2022 FBU RDB scheme* £'000	2022 Total £'000
Present value of defined benefit obligation	(15,329)	–	(15,329)	(7,949)	(6,579)	(14,528)
Fair value of scheme assets	17,189	–	17,189	7,643	6,614	14,257
Net asset/(liability) recognised	1,860	–	1,860	(306)	35	(271)

The amounts recognised in the income and expenditure account are as follows:

Service costs	113	–	113	351	115	466
Administration expenses	229	–	229	154	15	169
Net interest (credit)/charge	(66)	–	(66)	67	2	69
Total recognised	276	–	276	572	132	704
Actual return on scheme assets	1,120	2,514	3,634	(1,567)	(3,496)	(5,063)

The amounts recognised in other comprehensive income:

Actuarial (losses)/gains	(557)	(543)	(1,100)	5,264	3,563	8,827
Return on assets (excluding net interest income)	440	2,573	3,013	(1,732)	(3,676)	(5,408)
Experience gains arising on the plan liabilities	–	75	75	–	105	105
Total recognised	(117)	2,105	1,988	3,532	(8)	3,524

* The Fire Brigades Union Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

13 Defined benefit pension fund (continued)

Reconciliation of opening and closing balances of the present value of scheme liabilities:

	2023 FBU pension scheme £'000	2023 FBU RDB scheme* £'000	2023 Total £'000	2022 FBU pension scheme £'000	2022 FBU RDB scheme* £'000	2022 Total £'000
Scheme liabilities at 1 January	7,949	6,579	14,528	12,786	10,172	22,958
Current service cost	113	–	113	351	115	466
Interest cost	614	–	614	232	182	414
Contributions by scheme participants	109	4	113	37	23	60
Transfer	6,949	(6,949)	–			–
Actuarial loss/(gain)	557	409	966	(5,264)	(3,668)	(8,932)
Benefits paid	(962)	(43)	(1,005)	(193)	(245)	(438)
Scheme liabilities at 31 December	15,329	–	15,329	7,949	6,579	14,528

Reconciliation of opening and closing balances of the fair value of scheme assets

Fair value of scheme assets at 1 January	7,643	6,614	14,257	9,098	9,917	19,015
Interest income	680	–	680	165	180	345
Expenses	(229)	–	(229)	(154)	(15)	(169)
Actuarial gain/(loss)	440	2,514	2,954	(1,732)	(3,676)	(5,408)
Contributions by employer	419	–	419	422	430	852
Transfer	9,089	(9,089)	–	–	–	–
Contributions by scheme participants	109	4	113	37	23	60
Benefits paid	(962)	(43)	(1,005)	(193)	(245)	(438)
Scheme assets at 31 December	17,189	–	17,189	7,643	6,614	14,257

* The Fire Brigades Union Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

13 Defined benefit pension fund (continued)

FBU Pension Scheme

The most recently completed actuarial valuation of the scheme as at 30 June 2022 showed a scheme funding deficit of £369,000. The union agreed to pay annual contributions of 23% of members' pensionable salaries, less the amount contributed by active members of the scheme each year. In respect of the deficit in the Scheme as at 30 June 2022, the Union has agreed to pay £128,000 to 30th September 2026. In addition, the Union will pay £114,000 per annum to cover administration expenses and premiums for death in service lump sums associated with the Scheme. This excludes the levies payable to the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) which the Union pays directly. The Union therefore expects to pay around £521,000 to the Scheme during the accounting year beginning 1 January 2024.

The Fire Brigades Union Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme

The most recently completed actuarial valuation as at 31 October 2020 showed a scheme funding deficit of £787,0000 and the union had agreed with the trustees that it would pay 77.8% of pensionable earnings in respect of the cost of accruing benefits. This includes an allowance to cover standard administration and management fees that are deducted annually from the scheme's assets. In addition, the union paid amounts into the scheme equal to the levy payments made by the scheme to the Pension Protection Fund. Insurance premiums for death in service benefits and any fees other than standard policy charges are also payable in addition as and when they are due. The member contributions were payable in addition at a rate of 15% of pensionable salary. On 15 March 2023 this scheme merged with The FBU Pension Scheme, the net assets of the scheme of £2,140,000 were transferred on this date and the FBU Pension Scheme assumed the assets and liabilities of this scheme.

14 Taxation

The union is not liable to tax on income from its members. Taxation is payable to the extent that investment income and capital gains exceeded allowable provident benefits.

15 Capital commitments

As at 31 December 2023 the union capital commitments totalling £Nil (2022 – Nil) in relation to office refit costs.

16 Operating leases

As at 31 December 2023 the union has future commitments under non-cancellable operational leases as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Within one year	219,572	199,678
Between two and five years	137,947	285,637
Total	357,519	485,315

Operating leases relating to land and buildings amounted to £76,813 (2022 – £69,120) and operating leases relating to other activities amounted to £280,706 (2022 – £416,195).

17 Key management personnel

Key management and personnel compensation of £424,130 (2022 – £426,059) was paid in the year, comprising salary, benefits in kind, employer national insurance contributions, employer pension contributions and allowances. See analysis of officials' salaries and benefits for a further breakdown of key management personnel compensation.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

18 Lottery

	2023 £	2022 £
Income	264,275	274,522
Expenditure		
Prizes and administration	127,883	133,085
Good causes	193,084	153,687
	320,967	286,772
Deficit for the year	(56,692)	(12,250)
Funds at beginning of the year	145,654	157,904
Funds at the end of the year	88,962	145,654

The surplus carried forward funds are to be spent on good causes.

Good causes	2023 £
University of Central Lancashire Research Firefighters and Cancers – Time for a Change	60,879
University of Central Lancashire Orbitrap Equipment	33,333
Donation Aid to cancer stricken firefighter	10,000
Donation Syrian Earthquake Fund	10,000
Donation Medical Aid for Palestinians	15,000
Donation War On Want Appeal for Palestine	10,000
Donation Antarctic Fire Angels Fundraiser	10,000
Donation Durham Miners Association	200
Red plaque Development of Website and Hosting	7,734
Consultancy Fees Research - Grenfell	12,525
Red plaque Alec Elwell	649
Red plaque Barry Martin	1,083
Red plaque Benjamin Chinnery	1,150
Red plaque Brian Dean	1,083
Red Plaque Brian Henry Douglas	1,806
Red plaque Cyril George Dutton	986
Red plaque David Alan Morris & John Alan Davies	906
Red plaque Ewan Williamson	240
Red plaque Frederick E. Hawkins, Arthur E.J. Batt-Rawden, Charles George Gadd	743
Red plaque Head Office Plaque	611
Memorial Cards George Arthur Roberts	282
Red plaque Hector MacDonald Graham	1,902
Red Plaque Ian Cameron	581
Red plaque Jack Michell	781
Red plaque John James Buist & William Carnegie	200

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

18 Lottery (continued)

Good causes (continued)		2023 £
Red plaque	John Jamieson	581
Red plaque	John Wesley Hughes	822
Red plaque	Joseph Calderwood and Stanley McIntosh	240
Red plaque	L. McCartney & D. Wylie	116
Red plaque	Michael Hill	894
Red plaque	Neville Stocker	1,838
Red plaque	Norman Nolan	1,228
Red plaque	Roderick McLeod	587
Red plaque	Terry Hunt & David Stokoe	502
Red plaque	Thomas John Black	2,666
Red plaque	William Carnegie	936
		193,084

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

19 Statement of Comprehensive Income – 2022

	Note	General fund £	Accident and injury fund £	Political fund £	Lottery fund £	Union learning fund £	2022 £
Income							
Contributions	1(f)	9,637,368	1,449,891	243,774	–	–	10,151,299
Investment Income		239,132	–	–	–	–	170,022
Grants		–	–	–	–	54,817	18,687
Other Income	18	–	–	11,000	264,275	–	286,522
Commission received		16,265	–	–	–	–	13,926
VAT recoverable		9,581	–	–	–	–	11,824
		9,902,346	1,449,891	254,774	264,275	54,817	10,652,280
Expenditure							
Benefits	2	1,690,454	1,460,736	–	–	–	2,821,388
Conferences		310,903	–	69,170	–	–	471,334
Affiliations		170,864	–	51,570	–	–	214,448
'Firefighter'		264,606	–	–	–	–	216,765
Commissions		15,237	15,238	7,618	–	–	4,473
Union learning costs		–	–	–	–	(9,240)	8,060
Staff and officials	3	3,676,970	240,000	27,409	–	64,057	3,912,373
Member representation	4	3,120,959	–	7,394	–	–	2,779,199
Premises	5	685,784	–	–	–	–	696,158
Other expenditure	6	801,886	–	6,396	–	–	604,268
Depreciation	1(c)	274,512	–	–	–	–	288,934
Lottery good causes and prizes	18	–	–	–	320,967	–	286,772
Defined benefit net interest cost	13	(66,000)	–	–	–	–	67,000
		10,946,175	1,715,974	169,557	320,967	54,817	12,371,172
Operating (deficit)/surplus		(1,043,829)	(266,083)	85,217	(56,692)	–	(1,718,892)
Non-operating income and expenditure							
Surplus on disposal of fixed assets		734,512	–	–	–	–	734,512
Surplus on disposal of investments	9(a)	38,769	–	–	–	–	38,769
Surplus on revaluation of quoted investments	9(a)	373,236	–	–	–	–	373,236
Surplus on revaluation of unquoted investments	9(b)	161,490	–	–	–	–	161,490
Total surplus/(deficit) for the year before taxation		264,178	(266,083)	85,217	(56,692)	–	26,620
Total surplus/(deficit) for the year after taxation		264,178	(266,083)	85,217	(56,692)	–	26,620

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

19 Statement of Comprehensive Income – 2022 (continued)

	Note	General fund £	Accident and injury fund £	Political fund £	Lottery fund £	Union learning fund £	2022 £
Other comprehensive income							
Actuarial (losses)/gains on post employment benefit obligations		(1,100,000)	–	–	–	–	8,827,000
Return on assets (excluding interest income)		3,013,000	–	–	–	–	(5,408,000)
Experience gains		75,000	–	–	–	–	105,000
Total other comprehensive income	13	1,988,000	–	–	–	–	3,524,000
Total comprehensive income/(expense) for the year		2,252,178	(266,083)	85,217	(56,692)	–	1,164,113

ANALYSIS OF OFFICIALS' SALARIES AND BENEFITS

For the year ended 31 December 2023

Salaries

Name	Office held	Gross salary £	Other Payment £	Total £	Equivalent rank
Matt Wrack	General secretary	97,857	–	97,857	Area manager Competent "B"
Andy Dark	Assistant general secretary	42,544	–	42,544	Area manager Competent "A"
Ben Selby	Assistant general secretary	59,227	–	59,227	Area manager Competent "A"
Riccardo la Torre	National officer	78,483	–	78,483	Group manager Competent "B"

Note: All national officials' salaries are in line with fire service ranks, endorsed by annual conference. Ben Selby took up office as AGS on 24 April 2023, following the retirement of Andy Dark.

Benefits

Name	Office held	Employer's N.I. cons. £	Employer's pension cons. £	Benefits in kind £
Matt Wrack	General secretary	9,059	12,154	7,576
Andy Dark	Assistant general secretary	3,580	3,881	3,491
Ben Selby	Assistant general secretary	7,016	7,432	–
Riccardo la Torre	National officer	9,601	9,988	5,000

Full-time officials pay 9% of pensionable salary in employee pension contributions.

Allowances

Name	Office held	Allowances £	Equivalent rank
Tam McFarlane	National officer	31,638	Group manager Competent "B"
Mark Rowe	National officer	35,603	Group manager Competent "B"

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

For the year ended 31 December 2023

Benefits

Name	Office held	Officials' allowance rate per annum £	Benefits in kind £
I. Murray	President	14,033	4,890
S. Wright (from 6 July 2023)	Executive council and vice-president	8,017	–
L. Skarratts (from 3 May 2023)	Executive council and national treasurer	8,333	–

The following executive council Members were paid an officials' allowance at the rate of £7,025 per annum. For the year 2023 this included the officials listed below. Individuals may not have received the full annual allowance depending upon whether they took up office, transferred office, resigned, or retired during the year.

C. Brown
T. Curry
C. Griffiths
V. Hampshire
J. Newell
A. Scattergood
D. Shek
P. Smith
J. Weir
A. Taylor (from 24 April 2023)
J. Quinn (from 7 February 2023)
P. Miller (to 6 February 2023)

The Union made reimbursement to local authorities of £1,102,045 (2022 - £1,078,137) in respect of trade union leave in connection with trade union duties by executive council members and regional officials.

OTHER OFFICIAL ALLOWANCES

For the year ended 31 December 2023

The FBU pays an allowance at the rate of £5,344 per annum to regional officials and to secretaries of national sections. For the year 2023 this included the officials listed below. Individuals may not have received the full annual allowance depending upon whether they took up office, transferred office, resigned, or retired during the year.

G. Ashman	DJ. Giblin	J. Lambe	H. Powell	D. Stewart-Ball
R. Bateman	TP. Green	R. Lewington	S. Price-Hunt	M. Stilwell
G. Beeton	B. Harris	A. Malde	J. Quinn	A. Taylor
K. Bell	S. Hart	G. Marshall	P. Revill	G. Thomas
CD. Blayney	G. Herrington	J. McKenzie	R. Richardson	P. Trayner
ML. Buck	S. Hitchins	P. Millar	F. Rooney	K. Wager
E. Burrows	B. Holland	A. Mills	L. Rowan-O'Neill	D. Williams
P. Carberry	K. Holloway	L. Newport	S. Saunders	S. Young
M. Chapman	D. Howe	M. Nicholls	C. Sanderson	
K. Driver	S. Howley	G. O'Neill	A. Shaw	
E. Fox	C. Hudson	A. Petch	A. Sproul	
A. Fox-Hewitt	J. Hunter	S. Pickles	M. Starkey	

The FBU pays an allowance at the rate of £1,500 per annum to brigade officials and to chairs of national sections. For the year 2023 this included the officials listed below. Individuals may not have received the full annual allowance depending upon whether they took up office, transferred office, resigned, or retired during the year.

L. Akers	GE. Cotton	S. Harris	J. Leslie	GD. Sinclair
M. Alexander	R. Cullen	M. Harriss	DR. Lloyd	S. Smith
W. Anderson	A. Davidson	R. Hastings	D. Lock	P. Smith
N. Anderson	PM. Davies	N. Hays	SW. MacRory	AC. Smith
BO. Ashton	A. Dempsey	J. Hayton	R. Maddams	L. Smith
M. Bairstow	MJ. Dowthwaite	AJ. Hemmings	S. Mattinson	SM. Stanley
D. Barrett	MA. Drinkwater	S. Herbert	S. McGreavy	D. Strachan
DP. Barrett	J. Drinkwater	M. Herrin	ME. McKnight	RB. Strother
D. Bartley	E. Duncan	I. Hibbert	R. McLaren	N. Stuart
N. Bevan	S. Eade	A. Hills	K. McMahon	C. Tapp
RJ. Binks	C. Edgely	C. Hodgkin	SL. Miller-Hodges	DG. Taylor
S. Blandford	MW. Edwards	DA. Hull	S. Morris	S. Thomas
NJ. Bourke	C. Elson	D. Hunt	P. Mortimer	KJ. Thomas
A. Bowen	D. Evans	J. Hunt	A. Muir	M. Thompson
T. Brandon	A. Faizey	L. Hunter	C. Murphy	GJ. Tovey
H. Brant	C. Fargher	P. James	A. Murray	S. Tucker
A. Brine	D. Fathers	P. Johnston	MJ. Murt	R. Tully
O. Burrow	HT. Fell	B. Jones	DD. O'Brien	D. Turner
WR. Burt	JD. Fellows	K. Jones	T. Orr-Berwick	J. Tuttle
N. Cane	BA. Flanagan	GT. Jones	DJ. Page	PR. Volant
C. Carter	A. Fletcher	A. Jones	R. Parkin	J. Wadsworth
DL. Carter	AM. Fookes	J. Kaye	KL. Parry	M. Wager
R. Cartwright	R. Fortune	J. Kearns	DR. Pike	A. Walker
R. Champ	A. Fox	JJ. Kelly	I. Poe	S. Weir
C. Cheesman	M. Fryer	BS. Kelly	R. Pollock	J. Wharnsby
LG. Clark	AD. Fulton	C. Kemp	P. Reames	A. Whitehead
T. Cogley	KE. Game	K. Keuneke	P. Reed	K. Wilkie
P. Cole	M. Gardener	GP. Kitchen	GL. Roberts	JA. Wilson
S. Collins	DB. Gillard	A. Knowles	V. Robinson	B. Woodhouse
T. Connolly	CJ. Goode	P. Kosla	S. Rule	R. Wright
GD. Cook	B. Gwyer	GJ. Lawes	AC. Savory	C. Wycherley
MJ. Cook	DM. Habberjam	D. Lawrie	M. Senior	D. Young
CR. Cook	SJ. Harding	J. Lee	VH. Shaw	
AP. Corben	N. Hardy	S. Leroux	J. Shuker	

SECTION N

OBITUARY

The executive council records with deep regret the deaths of the following members in 2023:

Name	Region	Brigade
Sarah Duguid	1	Scotland
Barry Martin	1	Scotland
Jordan Sneddon	1	Scotland
Steven Watson	1	Scotland
Darren O'Neill	2	Northern Ireland
Lindsay Bowling-Mowatt	3	Northumberland
Paul Hogarth	4	North Yorkshire
Steven Fellows	5	Cheshire
Ken Wong	5	Cheshire
Hilmi Say	6	Northamptonshire
Stuart Davies	8	South Wales
Trevor Bryson	9	Suffolk
Michael Matthews	9	Suffolk
Rebecca Connelly	10	London
Danny Hunt O'Brien	10	London
Paul Melville	10	London
Ben Phelps	10	London
Joanna Westerman	11	Surrey
Arron Jepp	12	Hampshire and Isle of Wight
Oliver Hatfield	13	Avon
Mark Hillier	13	Dorset and Wiltshire



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