

Membership and Recruitment

FBU members are the FBU. They are central to everything we do as a union and we get all our strength and our legitimacy from them. Recruiting and retaining members is an organising priority for all FBU officials and existing members.

Recruiting New Members.

The aim of the Union is to achieve, as close as possible, 100% FBU membership in all Grey Book roles. The Brigade Committee should ensure that there is an ongoing programme to achieve early access to new trainee firefighters and recruit them to the Union as early as possible.

However, there will be occasions when this has not occurred and there will therefore be groups of workers who are in workplaces but have not yet joined the FBU. The mapping process will identify who these workers are and where they are based. Officials should ensure there is an ongoing programme of contacting these workers and encouraging them to join the FBU.

A tried and tested FBU membership presentation is available for officials to use at. The full presentation takes time to go through and requires IT in order to show the videos it contains. It is therefore most effective if you can arrange a meeting with groups of potential members, for instance at an RDS station which has not previously had RDS members. For individual potential members, it is best to meet them in the workplace, give them information on why it is in their interests to be in the FBU, ensure they have the electronic link necessary to join the FBU and encourage them to do so.

A range of posters encouraging FBU membership are also available and these should be permanently displayed in all FRS workplaces.

Former members who have left the Union.

Although the aim of the Union is to achieve, as close as possible, 100% FBU membership in all Grey Book roles, there are also strict rules regarding how former members can re-join the Union.

Before approaching former members and requesting them to re-join, Officials should acquaint themselves with these rules and ensure they are fully conversant with them.

Officials should make sure they report any progress on recruitment to the Brigade Committee during the Organising agenda item.

Membership contributions

The contribution rates for members are explained in the FBU rule book and set out annually on the FBU website.

As contributions are based on pay, they are amended whenever the pay of firefighters increases. This means, in normal times, that the contribution rates only increase when pay rises are achieved for members. This ensures that FBU contribution rates are fair, transparent, and connected to the pay of members.

Three Months Free Membership

The FBU offer 3 months free membership to all first-time joiners who are at the trainee stage of their employment. This was introduced following feedback from Brigade Organisers and in recognition of the FBU Rule Book: “Where members are paid less than the Firefighter (competent) weekly rate of pay the Executive Council shall publish each year the relevant contribution rates for each pay band”.

This means that applicants who join at the trainee stage, (defined as being the point at which an employee is in full-time training and not yet performing the role in its appropriate context), shall receive an initial three full months free from contributions whilst still being eligible for membership benefits. This will be applied automatically and be subject to the member completing the application form in its entirety. Following this period, the member shall contribute the full-time rate applicable to their role.

5.3 Direct Debit

The policy of the FBU is union is that all members should pay their contributions by direct debit and that we continue to switch members from 'check-off' onto direct debit. This policy was introduced as following a threatened change of legislation by the Government as part of their 'anti Trade -Union' legislation.

Non-Grey book membership

In recognition that members in the Northwest Fire Control no longer worked for a local authority FRS, and were therefore not in the Grey Book, and also that some areas of training provision, such as the FireService College, had been privatised, the Executive Council published contribution rates for members who are not paid in accordance with Grey Book rates. These are available on the FBU website.

However, it is important to note that this change came with a strict caveat that: "Regional and Brigade committees must not launch campaigns or recruit new non-grey book groups of workers into membership without discussing the issue with Head Office and receiving the prior approval of the Executive Council".

ROOT membership

Leaving the Fire & Rescue Service does not mean that a person has to give up their FBU membership. The FBU values our Retired and Out of Trade (ROOT) members and it is an important of organising to ensure that every person who leaves the service is encouraged to change their FBU membership to ROOT.

Being a ROOT member provides a person with advice and assistance on matters relating to their former FRS employment (including pensions) and a wide range of additional benefits and services.

The rules relating to ROOT membership are contained in the FBU Rule Book and the contribution for a ROOT member is just £2 per month by direct debit – that is less than 6p per day!

Organisers should map out members who are planning to leave the service and make sure they are approached and encouraged to continue their membership as a ROOT member.