



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

CONFERENCE 2018

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT

GRENFELL TOWER FIRE

Conference is appalled by the Grenfell tower fire on 14 June 2017 and stands in solidarity with the victims, survivors and residents affected by it. Conference resolves to fight to ensure such a tragedy can never happen again.

Conference applauds the response of emergency fire control staff and firefighters whose heroic efforts that fateful night went above and beyond any reasonable expectation and undoubtedly saved many lives that would otherwise have been added to those lost in the tragedy. We also applaud all of the other emergency services, local government workers and other public service workers who attended the fire and its aftermath to provide assistance to those in greatest need.

Conference commends the immediate response by the local community to assist those affected by the fire and the continuing support being made available by the community and others, particularly in the absence of adequate support from local or national government.

Conference notes the scale of cuts to the fire and rescue service, to local government and other sectors, which contributed to the scale and severity of this fire and its aftermath. Conference notes that over 11,000 firefighter jobs (19%) have been cut since 2010, including specialist fire safety inspectors.

Conference notes that fire safety inspections have fallen by 25% since 2010 and the number of fire safety inspecting officers have been cut by 40% since the turn of the century. Conference notes the unheeded warnings given by the FBU nearly 20 years ago to MPs and the government of the day concerning the dangers of external cladding and other alterations to buildings which may have compromised the original fire protection of buildings.

Conference condemns the long term drive from central government towards deregulation and privatisation, particularly in relation to public housing and local government.

Conference resolves to build on the work undertaken to date:

1. To represent our members in every forum, to ensure that the Grenfell Tower fire becomes a turning point for firefighters, for the fire and rescue service and for public safety.
2. To ensure that the public inquiry addresses the concerns of residents, survivors and those workers who responded to the fire and to work as closely as possible with the local community.
3. To undertake a detailed analysis of the policy background to the Grenfell Tower fire, including the decisions taken by central government at key turning points and the advice given by various agencies, including those from within the fire and rescue service.
4. To examine and to highlight as appropriate the impact of privatisation, casualisation and deregulation on public safety.
5. To end and reverse the cuts to fire and rescue services and to local government.
6. To ensure high quality mandatory building standards; high quality construction practice and the maintenance and achievement of appropriate building standards in the event of refurbishment/ renovation or change of the use of buildings and for a new system of inspection to ensure the compliance with such standards.

7. To ensure an improvement in the number and capacity of fire and rescue service fire safety inspecting officers across the UK in order to deliver a new fire safety regime.
8. To support the building of a movement of tenants in the public and private sector and of owner occupiers and to campaign with such organisations for the provision of decent and safe housing for all.