

Firefighter

The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union

In memory of

Firefighter
Barry Martin

February/March 2023



www.fbu.org.uk

The period since the publication of the last *Firefighter* has been eventful.

BARRY MARTIN

The most sobering development is the death of Bro. Barry Martin who died on Friday 27 January following injuries he sustained on 23 January while attending a large fire in the Jenners building in Edinburgh.

Firefighters and control staff across the UK observed a minute's silence on 13 February, and along with a number of FBU officials, I attended his funeral at St Giles Cathedral. It was a very powerful and moving day of tribute and commemoration, including from the hundreds of firefighters who lined the streets in a guard of honour.

Barry was a dedicated firefighter, and a well-liked member of the community. We are proud that he was a member of our union. His death is, above all, a tragedy for his family and for all those who knew him well. It is also a sobering reminder of the dangers of the job our members do. The FBU continues to support Barry's family. An investigation into the incident is under way.

PAY

The results of our strike ballot on pay, which landed on Monday 30 January, were a testament to the level of



anger and determination in the service.

In England, Scotland and Wales, 88% of members voted for strike action on a 73% turnout; in Northern Ireland, 94% voted for action. This resounding mandate for action moved our employers yet again.

On 8 February, the National Joint Council (NJC) met and negotiations went on long into the evening. The revised offer, 7% backdated to July 2022 and 5% from July 2023, is clearly a step forward, but does not solve our long-term problems with pay. It is still a real terms pay cut for the first year.

Nevertheless, our executive

council has recommended that members vote to accept. It was honest and sober in its discussions, but it was also unanimous.

The advances we have made in this campaign are a victory for unity and democracy. Our members led this campaign at every stage, and we refused to allow ourselves to be divided by region or rank. Skilled negotiators can only get you so far; it's the people outside the room that make the difference.

Whatever the outcome of the consultation on the offer, our campaign will continue. As we report in this issue of *Firefighter*, the fight for



Did you know ...?

Combined profits of \$219bn (£181.9bn) allowed energy companies BP, Chevron, Equinor, Exxon Mobil, Shell and TotalEnergie to pay shareholders \$110bn (£91.3bn) after doubling their profits following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
Source: bit.ly/reuters-oil-profits

decent pay is going on across the economy – and I would strongly encourage you to show your solidarity with other workers taking action.

EARTHQUAKE

Since 6 February, the residents of south east Turkey and north west Syria have been living through hell.

At the time of writing, at least 46,000 people have been declared dead – and that number is likely to rise significantly.

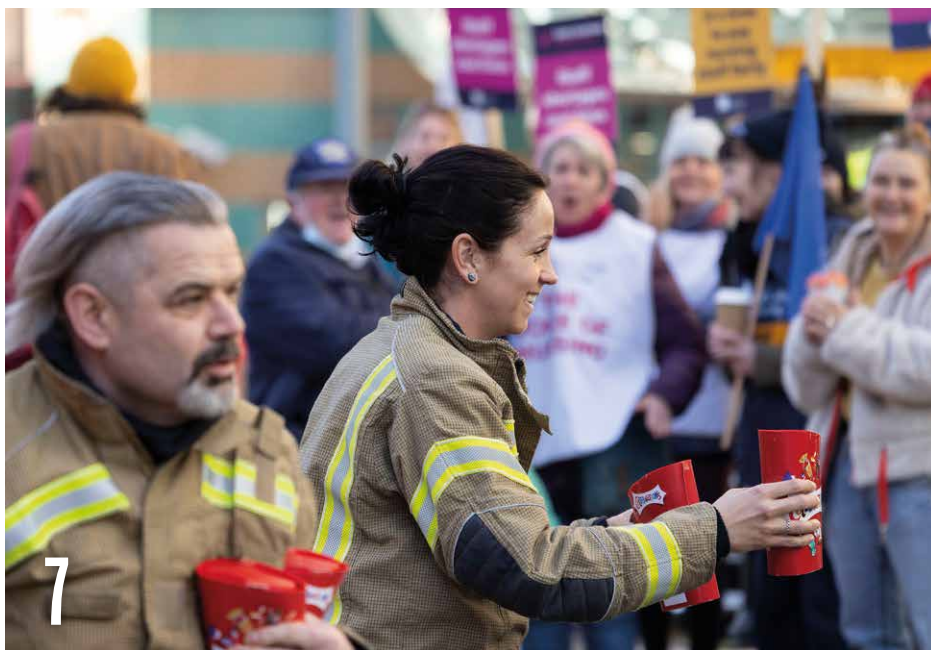
Dozens of UK firefighters have gone to the affected area with UKISAR, many of them FBU members. Their efforts have been heroic and have saved lives.

RIGHT TO STRIKE

The government "Minimum Services Bill" is an attack on our democracy, and on our right to organise and fight back. The FBU is fighting it, and we will need to assess how to combat this legislation if it becomes law.

We have received support from trade unions in Lithuania, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Poland and Luxembourg amongst others, which are published on our website.

Please support this vital campaign to defend workers' rights.



PAUL BOX/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



In this issue

February/March 2023

NEWS

- 4** New chief inspector committed to white paper attack on firefighters' rights
- 5** Death of Bro. Barry Martin
Merseyside overtime ban
- 6** UK firefighters help earthquake rescues
New court hearing on pensions

FEATURES

- 8** Pay campaign
- 12** New research means there must be urgent action on firefighters and cancer
- 14** Who is to blame for the Grenfell disaster?
- 16** Contempt for democracy – the government's anti-strike Bill
- 18** Quite a journey – firefighter represents GB in duathlon championship

REGULARS

- 5 Sounding off**
Anti-union legislation
- 7 News focus**
Strikes spread as workers fight for decent pay
- 20 Equalities**
FBU LGBT+ school
- 21 Meet the rep**
Maria Buck, LGBT national sectional chair
- 21 Legal Beagle**
What anti-strike Bill means for members
- 22 Noticeboard**
International solidarity
- 23 Station Cat**
Mystery of an MP's low-paid work
- 24 Long service badges**



MARK THOMAS

Firefighter

Published by the Fire Brigades Union
Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road
Kingston upon Thames KT2 7AE
www.fbu.org.uk

Firefighter production team:
Michael Chessum, Anna Zych,
Lisa Irving and Alan Slingsby
Cover image: SST/Alamy

Print: Walstead Roche, Victoria Business
Park, Roche, Victoria, Saint Austell PL26 8LX
Firefighter is mailed in a 100% compostable wrapper.
Please do not recycle the wrapper but dispose of it
in your home compost heap, your garden waste or
food waste bin.



NEWS

STRIKES SPREADING

More workers join fight for decent pay **P7**



EARTHQUAKE AID

UK firefighters join rescue effort after earthquake devastation in Turkey and Syria **P6**



FBU assistant general secretary elect Ben Selby and executive member elect for the East Midlands region Adam Taylor march with FBU members on TUC demonstration

New inspector remains wedded to flawed white paper 'reforms'

The FBU has expressed disappointment with the most recent *State of Fire and Rescue* annual report, which, it said, continues an “ill-judged commitment” to the white paper *Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service*, published by the Home Office in May last year.

The report by the new chief inspector of His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) former senior police officer Andy Cooke, endorsed the attack on firefighters’ right to organise in the white paper.

The union said it had hoped that the new leadership would abandon the white paper “that seeks to give chief fire officers a free hand to instruct the workforce, ignoring their contracts of

employment and conditions of service”.

These “reforms” are aimed at undermining the FBU, despite the vast majority of firefighters choosing to be members, the union said.

“HMICFRS has chosen not to listen to rank and file firefighters. The FBU urges Mr. Cooke to map his own course to achieve what we all want: a properly funded fire service that includes decent resources and fair pay for firefighters.”

The FBU said Cooke did not recognise that fire services are falling short of response standards they themselves had set and that the speed of response times is a “postcode lottery”.

Despite a correct diagnosis, the chief inspector had not prescribed the correct course of treatment – national standards.

“Neither does the report address more than a decade of central funding cuts, 11,500 firefighter posts lost and years of pay cuts,” the FBU said.

HMICFRS also released its “tranche 3” report that covers 16 services. Each inspection assesses how effective and efficient the service is, how it protects the public against fires and other emergencies and how it responds to them.

The inspections also assess how well services look after the people who work in them.

The FBU is studying these and has recommended local officials and members do the same for reports on their services. They are available at bit.ly/FRS-tranche3

Death of Barry Martin shocks the firefighting community

FBU member Barry Martin died on Friday 27 January from injuries he sustained while attending a major fire at the former department store Jenners in Edinburgh.

His death shocked and saddened the firefighting community. A minute's silence was held for him at 11am on Monday 13 February across the UK, with firefighters lining up outside fire stations to mark the moment.

His funeral took place in St Giles Cathedral on Friday 17 February, the route along Edinburgh's Royal Mile was lined with firefighters paying final respects to a fallen brother.

Barry was based at the McDonald Road fire station in Edinburgh, and was the first Scottish firefighter to die while on duty since Ewan Williamson, who died after being injured at the Balmoral Bar in Edinburgh in 2009.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "Our hearts go out to Barry's family, colleagues and friends, and to all

those who mourn his loss.

"Barry was a dedicated firefighter and a well-loved member of the firefighting community. We are very proud that he was a member of our union. Like so many firefighters, he put himself at risk to save the lives of others."

He was just 38 years old and leaves behind his wife Shelley and twin boys Oliver and Daniel, aged 8.

The FBU has set up a DONATE fund to assist Barry's family:

To donate £1, text BROBM to 70201

To donate £3, text BROBM to 70331

To donate £5, text BROBM to 70970

To donate £10, text BROBM to 70191

■ bit.ly/FBU-donate-Barry-Martin



Firefighters pay their final respects to Bro. Barry Martin at his funeral in Edinburgh

MERSEYSIDE

FBU members combat unagreed changes with overtime ban

Merseyside FBU members are taking action short of strike in response to staffing issues. They are refusing to undertake pre-arranged overtime for up to six months; 88% of members voted for the action on an 82% turnout.

It is in response to a reduction in night-time staffing numbers in control, new shift systems, introduced without negotiation, which breach overtime rates of pay, and a non-agreed expansion of the firefighter role in contracts for new

entrants. Since December, there have been 1,500 hours of station closures and fire appliance unavailability across Merseyside.

FBU members remain determined to protect nationally and locally agreed terms and conditions of service and to ensure that all firefighters are treated equitably. They have received overwhelming support from the public, as well as the backing of local Labour MPs and councillors.



Sounding off

Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill

*Zarah Sultana MP,
Coventry South and FBU
parliamentary group chair, on
why she will oppose attacks
on the right to strike and
workers' living standards*

After proposing below-inflation pay rises, the Tories are proposing mandatory minimum service levels (MSLs) in fire and rescue, as well as in other key sectors. In essence, this is a ban on key workers taking effective strike action.

I will fight to defend your democratic right to withdraw your labour.

This latest attack on your rights comes after more than a decade of Tory assaults on fire and rescue services: Central government funding is down 30%; one in five firefighter jobs have been lost; nearly 50 fire stations have been closed; and more than 200 fire appliances in England have been removed. It is no surprise that fire response times are now significantly slower than they were a decade ago.

After running down our fire and rescue service, it seems a cruel joke for the Tories to say they care about "minimum service levels".

The Strike (Minimum Service Levels) Bill, would undermine the right of firefighters and other workers to take strike action in defence of their living standards.

The Tories' Commons majority means it could be in force as early as this summer.

I will be your voice in Parliament, but as a labour movement we must take to the streets to oppose this authoritarian legislation. It will be challenged in the courts, but it cannot be defeated there alone.

TURKEY EARTHQUAKE

UK firefighters help earthquake rescue ops in Turkey and Syria

Firefighters from across the UK, many of them FBU members, were deployed to assist rescue operations as part of UK International Search and Rescue (UKISAR) after a devastating earthquake struck southern and central Turkey, as well as northern and western Syria on 6 February.

Tracy Doyle, FBU LGBT+ rep for the South East, was part of the UKISAR team in Hatay, Antakya:

“The catastrophic devastation of a whole city being razed to the ground is very hard to take in. Every road and all buildings were damaged.

“It was heart-breaking seeing families waiting on the pavements outside what would have been their family homes, waiting for news on a relative or loved ones that may still be alive.”

Eight people were rescued alive by UKISAR, and three further live rescues were conducted by partner teams following identification by search dogs. Volunteer interpreters from Hatay were of “enormous help” to the team.

The death toll in Turkey and Syria stood at 46,000 as *Firefighter* went to press, with many more thousands injured.



UKISAR rescuers search for people in buildings in Hatay in the Antakya region of Turkey

PENSIONS

Government in court again

The FBU, with other public service unions as interested parties, recently took the government to court yet again over its 2013 public service pensions changes.

Part of the judicial review case was that the government has, without parliamentary oversight, attempted to shift to members of pension schemes the cost of putting right the discrimination in the changes.

The “McCloud remedy” – named after a court of appeal judgement, *McCloud v Ministry of Justice* – is designed to put right the effects of discrimination in the changes of 2013.

However, the government included the costs of this remedy in the “cost control mechanism”, established by the Public Services Pensions Act 2013, which allows it to take steps to control

the costs of public sector pension schemes. A 2016 valuation showed public sector pensions were cheaper than expected and should have led to improved benefits for members. But, by including the full cost of the McCloud remedy in control mechanism calculations, these benefits disappear.

Younger members of the new pension schemes will be 4.9% worse off if the government succeeds in this approach.

The union told the court to consider that the government’s actions breach commitments made in legislation and contravene the purpose of the cost control mechanism, and so discriminate against younger members.

A ruling is expected within two or three months.

■ bit.ly/FBU-McCloud-JR

In brief

FBU saves 99 firefighter posts

Prompt action by Dorset and Wiltshire FBU members saw a proposal to cut 99 frontline firefighters rejected by the fire authority in December. The brigade committee wrote a formal letter to fire service bosses and to fire authority members – who had not been aware of the proposal and were invited to talk to FBU members at fire stations. A fire authority meeting agreed the cuts were not acceptable and told fire service managers to review other options for savings. Val Hampshire, FBU executive council member for the South West, said: “The rapid response from the brigade committee and the unity of our members has resolved the situation for now, but we are ready for a fight if more cuts proposals come.”

NHS funding demonstration

END THE NHS CRISIS SUPPORT THE STRIKES!

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION SATURDAY 11 MARCH

12pm Central London, Tottenham Court Rd NW1 3AA
(North end opposite Warren Street Underground)



SOS NHS, a coalition of campaign groups and trade unions which is demanding emergency funding for the NHS to support services and staff and not the private sector, is organising a demonstration in London on Saturday 11 March.

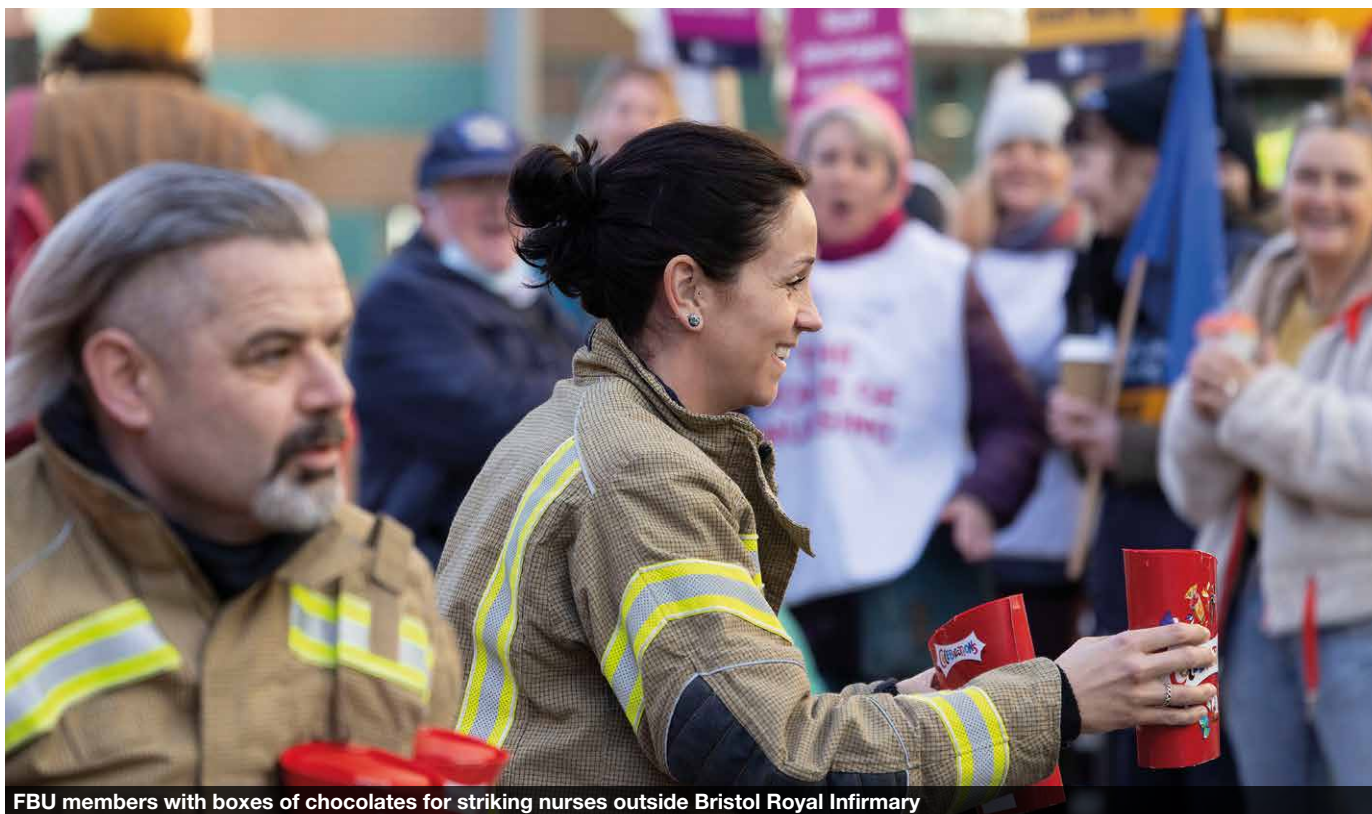
■ sosnhs.org/events

Global racism protest

#Resistracism demonstrations are taking place on 18 March in London, Glasgow and Cardiff, part of a “World Against Racism and Fascism” global day of protest. In Britain, the demonstrations are backed by the TUC.

■ standuptoracism.org.uk





FBU members with boxes of chocolates for striking nurses outside Bristol Royal Infirmary

While the FBU's own strike action has been put on hold pending the outcome of a ballot on the revised pay offer, disputes in other sectors have been escalating.

National disputes are currently live in rail, mail, health, schools, higher education and the civil service. There is also a proliferation of local and private sector disputes, including among precarious and previously un-unionised workforces such as Amazon employees.

The RMT transport union has had the longest running national dispute, and successfully reballoted in October 2022.

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) resolved its dispute with BT last year, but strike action by CWU postal workers continues after the union achieved a record mandate in a reballot in February.

The Royal College of Nursing's (RCN) successful strike ballots in November fired the starting pistol on the biggest NHS strike action in decades.



News Focus

Strikes escalate as workers fight for decent pay

Unison, Unite, GMB and the RCN have called strikes by paramedics. Now, following a British Medical Association (BMA) ballot, junior doctors are set to join the dispute.

In education, the University and College Union (UCU) won its ballot in autumn and called multiple consecutive days of action before pausing for negotiations in mid-February.

The National Education Union (NEU) and the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) have called

a number of strikes since January, shutting more than half of schools on each occasion.

The Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) has multiple sets of strike dates involving members in the civil service, museums, Border Force and the DVLA.

We are living through the biggest wave of strikes for more than a decade. These disputes are largely over pay – in the context of high inflation, long-term decline in wages and the

legacy of austerity. They are also the product of government belligerence, and structural issues with how pay is negotiated (or rather imposed) in many sectors.

In the fire and rescue service, we get to negotiate directly with our employers; in many sectors, pay is recommended by so-called "independent" pay review bodies. This system of pay review bodies has not worked as a mechanism for avoiding disputes.

On 1 February, the TUC called a coordinated day of strike action which saw hundreds of thousands of workers take action at the same time.

The mobilisation was also a political intervention against the government's new anti-union laws.

More action is planned around the budget in mid-March.

The FBU stands in solidarity with all workers fighting for decent pay. Our members have shown their solidarity on picket lines all over the country, and will continue to do so.



Pay campaign

As a result of the continuing show of strength and unity from firefighters, determined to secure a better pay deal, employers upped the pay offer for 2022 to 7% (backdated to July 2022) with 5% from July 2023.



More than 2,000 firefighters and control staff from across the UK assembled in Westminster on 6 December, as part of the FBU's pay campaign against low pay

PICTURE: MARK THOMAS

WE WERE UNITED SO

How a solid vote for strike action won an improved offer – and the FBU executive’s recommendation

The weeks leading up to the publication of this issue of *Firefighter* have been dramatic. On 30 January, FBU members delivered a historic mandate for strike action over pay. With a 73% turnout, 88% voted for strike. In Northern Ireland, the mandate was even stronger, with 94% voting Yes.

The FBU was always clear: we wanted to avoid strike action if at all possible, and we held off from naming strike dates in the immediate aftermath of the ballot. Instead, we gave our employers 10 days in which to come forward with an improved offer. It was widely assumed by much of the media that the delay was symbolic, and industrial action inevitable. The union began to ready itself for a strike – the first nationwide industrial action on pay since 2003.

On Wednesday 8 February, we met our employers at a meeting of the National Joint Council in Westminster Central Hall. Without any central organisation, dozens of FBU activists travelled from all over the country – from as far away as Inverness – to stand outside the meeting and wait for news.

Negotiations dragged on late into the evening, and the result was only announced the following morning.

THE OFFER AND THE RECOMMENDATION

The improved offer is for 7% on NJC-negotiated wage rates and continual professional development (CPD) payments backdated to July 2022, and a further 5% from July 2023. There are no “strings” attached to the offer. The only additional content in the offer letter is positive: our employers have, for the first time, formally recognised the importance of key FBU demands around retained members, control members, pay progression and CPD.

After extensive discussion, the FBU executive council unanimously recommended that members accept the offer. The ballot is taking place now both online and by post, and will close on 6 March.

The union leadership is clear that it does not want to “sugar-coat” this offer. It is still a real terms pay cut for 2022, though may amount to a real terms increase in the following year as inflation falls. But it is a significant improvement on previous offers, and a real achievement for the union.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The government has shown that it will do everything in its power to make working people pay the price of the cost of living crisis, while the rich get richer.

On 27 June 2022, fire service employers wrote to the FBU with an insulting 2% pay offer which we rejected. When a revised offer of 5% was made in October, FBU members overwhelmingly rejected that too via a consultative ballot.

A ballot for strike action was launched on 5 December and ran until 30 January – a longer ballot period than usual to give more time for ballot papers to be delivered around postal strikes.

Members rallied round – literally, with thousands of members travelling from all over the UK to a rally and lobby of MPs at Westminster – and delivered that historic yes vote.

The solid vote for strike action was the crucial factor in getting the offer: we were serious and united, and the employers moved as a result.



EMPLOYERS MOVED

THIS IS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE SERVICE

This pay dispute is the result of years of political choices that have undervalued, under-resourced and overworked our service. Brutal cuts have been made alongside increasing pressures and workload. While we are needed more than ever, responding to increasing flooding incidents, heatwaves and wildfires, we are paid substantially less than we were 10 years ago in real terms.

Fire and rescue services across the UK are funded through a combination of Westminster government grants and locally raised revenue by fire authorities and boards (excluding Northern Ireland). Since 2010, central funding provided to local fire and rescue services has been cut. In England, the fire service now gets less than £1bn a year from Westminster. None of the UK governments have provided funding to address the issue of falling pay.

The FBU has lobbied for increased funding for the fire service ahead of this pay round, and to an extent we have been successful. The offer we have been given – 7% for 2022 and 5% from July 2023 – can be funded by a mixture of central government funding, increases to local taxation and using reserves.

However, these funding settlements do not undo the years of damage done by Tory rule.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We have fought hard to get this far.

For now, the most important thing is make sure you vote in the ballot. The executive recommends acceptance of the new offer, but we are a union that values debate and discussion. Whatever your opinion, make sure you attend branch meetings and other forums and discuss the options with fellow members.

If we reject the offer, we will be striking – and there will be a huge campaign of action. If we accept it, we won't – but you should still make sure to be on picket lines in support of nurses, teachers, rail workers, posties, university staff and many other workers who are on strike: show your solidarity with them where you can.

FBU members rally in Westminster in December

PICTURE: MARK THOMAS

UPDATED PAY OFFER

7% backdated to July 2022
5% from July 2023

RDS AND CONTROL

The employers' letter includes commitments to discuss other issues which are important for the FBU – the pay of control and retained firefighters; pay progression; and CPD payments. This includes, in some cases, establishing a working group to explore, through the NJC, issues the FBU has raised.

This has kept alive two vital elements of the union's pay claim that address these issues for FBU members, issues the union negotiators refused to allow to be left behind. An opportunity of this kind has not previously been available to us.



Grim, but there is hope

FBU national officer **Riccardo la Torre** discusses the latest findings from FBU sponsored research on firefighting and cancer – and the need for an urgent response



Discoveries in the University of Central Lancashire's (UCLan) latest research into firefighting and cancer, commissioned by the FBU, are alarming. We need a swift response and urgent measures from those in power to stop firefighters falling ill and dying needlessly.

When we started working with UCLan on researching the links between firefighting, cancer and other diseases, we knew anecdotally that firefighters all over the UK were suffering and dying from debilitating illnesses.

Just over a year and a half after we published our first set of reports, a World Health Organisation body, the International Agency for Research into Cancer (IARC), ruled firefighting as a carcinogenic occupation.

Yet some in the sector still claimed that there was not enough evidence to point towards UK firefighters' exposure

Many fire stations across the UK lack the facilities and contracts for proper PPE and workwear cleaning

It is clear that firefighters' exposures at work are having an impact on physical and mental wellbeing

to toxic contaminants at work as the likely cause of their illnesses.

Faced with these most recent reports, they can no longer make those claims. This research is clear evidence substantiating our concerns, and backing IARC's ruling, that firefighters are falling ill because of their work.

The research, based on a survey of more than 10,000 UK firefighters and looking at Scottish firefighters' death certificates, found that firefighters are being diagnosed with and dying from cancer at a higher rate than the general population.

They are more likely to develop cancer at younger ages and die from certain cancers, including prostate cancer, leukaemia and oesophageal cancer.

It is clear that it is their exposures at work that are having an impact on firefighters' physical and mental wellbeing. Firefighters who have served longer are at a greater risk of developing

Key findings

4.1%

of firefighters surveyed found to have a cancer diagnosis

1.6x

The mortality rate for all cancers is 1.6 times higher than the general population

1.7x

Firefighters who have served at least 15 years are 1.7 times as likely to develop cancer

2x

Firefighters twice as likely to develop cancer if they noticed soot in their nose/throat or remained in their PPE for more than four hours

323%

Incidences of cancer 323% higher among firefighters after 35-39

3x

Firefighters almost three times more likely to suffer with depression and twice as likely to suffer with anxiety

cancer than those who have served less time. The research also found they were twice as likely to be diagnosed with cancer if they reported soot in their nose/throat or remained in their personal protective equipment (PPE) for more than four hours after a fire.

It isn't just cancer; it's other diseases too. Firefighters are dying from heart attacks at five times the rate of the general public and at three times the rate from strokes.

DEPRESSION

Their exposure to contaminants is linked to mental health problems, with firefighters almost three times as likely to suffer from depression and twice as likely to have anxiety.

While the FBU's DECON campaign has made fire bosses rethink decontamination practices and start to make changes in their services, there are areas where we are sorely



The FBU's DECON campaign has made fire bosses rethink decontamination practices and start to make changes

lacking. We need health surveillance for firefighters throughout their career and beyond into retirement. Fire services need to introduce monitoring of their workforce's exposures to toxic contaminants.

Many fire stations across the UK lack the facilities and contracts for proper PPE and workwear cleaning and this needs to change.

The ruling by IARC shows that the UK is miles behind other countries and we need legislation that will ensure that affected firefighters are given the compensation they deserve.

These are all things that the FBU is pushing for.

ADMIRATION

Ministers are starting to sit up and take notice. At a debate in the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood on DECON in January this year, MSPs from across all parties expressed their admiration for the work firefighters do, their horror at the findings, and declared that more needs to be done to stop firefighters dying needlessly.

We are proud that our work with UCLan is on their radar and raising questions about what needs to be done, but we need more than platitudes to make real change.

The findings paint a pretty grim picture. But there is hope. None of these illnesses are inevitable and there are clear steps that ministers and fire bosses can take to make things better.

As always, the FBU is fighting your corner and demanding better protections for our members' health and safety – and we will not rest until we win them.

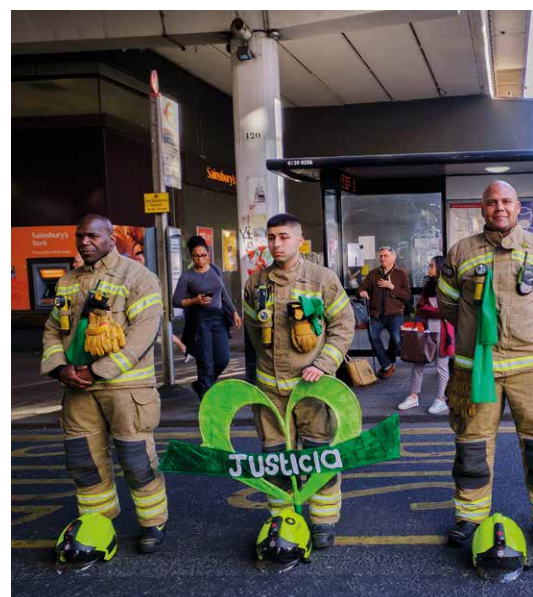
Grenfell silent walk
PICTURE: JESS HURD

THIS MUCH
EVIDENCE
STILL NO
CHARGES
#DEMANDCHARGES

THIS MUCH
EVIDENCE
STILL NO
CHARGES
#DEMANDCHARGES

Who is to blame for the Grenfell Tower fire?

Mark Rowe, FBU national officer explains how the public inquiry hearings concluded and what happens next



The Grenfell United Silent Walk on the fifth anniversary of the fire

The Grenfell Tower fire was the worst domestic fire in living memory, when 72 people died and a whole community lost their homes. This year, 14 June will mark the sixth anniversary since the atrocity, yet nobody has yet taken responsibility for the fire nor been held to account by the courts.

On 10 November 2022, the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) held its last hearings, more than five years since it was established. After more than 300 days of hearings, the inquiry finally finished taking evidence on what caused the fire.

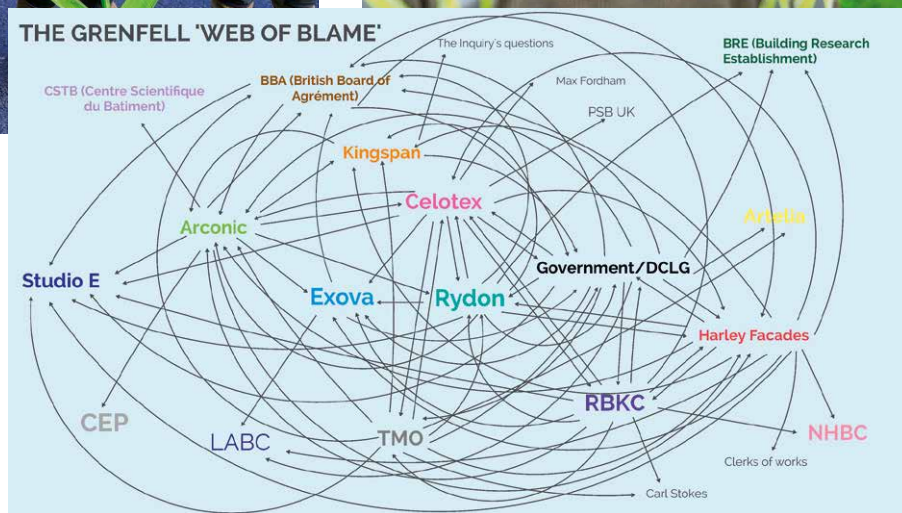
MANUFACTURERS

Richard Millett KC, lead counsel to the inquiry, concentrated on the behaviour of the various manufacturers, sub-contractors and other local politicians involved in the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower. In particular, he pointed the finger at those who made, sold, recommended and installed the flammable cladding.

Millett opened the inquiry hoping that it would not be a “merry-go-round of buck passing”. He closed it by accusing manufacturers Arconic, Celotex and Kingspan, contractors Harley Facades, Rydon and Exova, and architects Studio E of deflecting blame to others.

He displayed a “web of blame” diagram to show how firms involved in the refurbishment had not admitted their own roles in the fire.

“If everything that has been said is correct,” he argued, “then nobody was to blame for the Grenfell Tower fire. Can



'The web of blame' – a diagram to show how organisations involved in the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower had not admitted their own roles in the fire (image courtesy of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry)

that really be right?"

Millett did not spare the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, which owned the building, nor the tenant management organisation which ran it, from criticism. Culpable too was the privatised Building Research Establishment (BRE), which knew the risks of cladding materials but failed to warn users about them.

Central government, responsible for the building regulations and approved document guidance, came in for some rebuke.

DEREGULATION

Martin Seaward, the FBU counsel for the inquiry, used his closing statement to emphasise the responsibility of central government ministers for their deregulation policies.

He said: "The disaster was a direct consequence of a generation of government policies which combined to create a death trap for the residents of Grenfell Tower.

"The private sector companies involved in the refurbishment bear a heavy responsibility; however, it would be wholly wrong and provide no justice to victims to leave the blame there ...

"They were encouraged to act as they did by 40 years of political decisions in the service of an ideology based on the prioritisation of commercial interests and profit above all else, including public safety ...

"Deregulation serves the interests of a social system based on profit and greed, has led to gross inequality in society, and has failed the vast mass of the UK's population, including the residents of Grenfell Tower.

"The culture of health and safety has been deliberately and irresponsibly undermined by ministers pursuing their deregulatory agenda ...

'Deregulation informed government policy since 1979 and has remained the mantra of the current government, despite Grenfell'

"Deregulation informed government policy since 1979 and has remained the mantra of the current government, despite Grenfell."

EVACUATION

Two weeks after the close of the hearings and three years since the inquiry recommended it, the Home Office finally published its research, *Evacuation from fire in high-rise residential buildings: a rapid evidence review*.

Quietly, it admitted that simultaneous evacuation of high rise buildings is extremely difficult, with few safe procedures and little international guidance.

This is further proof – if it were needed – that firefighters and control staff were not to blame for the fire or the deaths on the night.

THE FIGHT CONTINUES

The FBU has been a core participant in the inquiry from the beginning. Last year the union made several detailed submissions, thousands of words long, to demand justice for the victims of the fire, to defend our members and to hold ministers and the construction industry to account.

Later this year, the inquiry is expected to publish its final report. The FBU will evaluate it and produce its own response.

The inquiry's report is likely to reverberate through the fire and rescue service for many years to come.

The FBU will accept sensible recommendations and work to improve our service. But the union will never concede to private sector takeovers or blaming firefighters for the mistakes made by ministers and chief fire officers.



Public sector workers, including FBU member Kasey LeGall (left), and TUC general secretary Paul Nowak, with a petition for the prime minister on Defend the Right to Strike day, 1 February 2023

JESS HURD

Contemptuous of democracy

Government's legislation to stop public sector workers taking effective strike action is unprecedented since wartime, says the Institute of Employment Rights

The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill has only six pages and, if and when it becomes law, would replace the Transport (Minimum Service Levels) Bill which ran to 19 pages, despite applying only to a single sector.

As well as transport, the new Bill covers health, fire and rescue, education, nuclear decommissioning, and border security.

It is so short because it proposes to

delegate all powers to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy "to determine the levels of service in relation to strikes as respects minimum services".

LONE MINISTER

One person, not Parliament, gets to define what is meant by "health services", "education services", "transport," and more. The scope of restrictions can be as wide as they decide. Equally critically, the lone minister

would also define the circumstances in which the right to strike can be exercised in sectors whose boundaries they – not Parliament – define.

The services to be provided, the number of people who are to provide them, the time at which they are to be provided, and the manner in which they are to be provided during a strike are to be determined by the minister – not Parliament.

This form of legislation – in which the content of the law is not in "primary



The Enough is Enough protest against the anti-strike Bill on 30 January outside Downing Street

legislation” subject to parliamentary scrutiny, but left to ministers – has long been condemned by jurists.

Two House of Lords committees made excoriating criticisms in reports the titles of which speak for themselves: *Democracy Denied* and *Government by Diktat*.

Nevertheless, the Bill is proposing that a minister should have the power to “amend, repeal or revoke provision made by or under primary legislation”.

Primary legislation for this purpose is defined to include an Act of the Senedd or the Scottish Parliament as well as the Westminster parliament, giving one minister in Whitehall the power to override, with minimal scrutiny, laws passed by the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Senedd.

This raises serious constitutional issues and is surely designed to provoke outrage.

It is not only the legal powers the minister would take that causes so much concern. Despite protestations about respecting the right to strike, the powers

for a single minister would make “the right to strike” no more than the right to make an ineffective protest.

In the framework proposed by Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy when the Bill was drafted, an employer could issue a “work notice” to a union listing individuals who are required to work and the services they are required to provide.

For the first time since the Second World War, Parliament is being asked to

The Bill gives one minister in Whitehall the power to override laws passed by the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Senedd

authorise the requisitioning of workers.

A worker who fails to comply with the work order would lose legal protection against unfair dismissal.

Once a work notice is issued, a union is required to take “reasonable steps” to ensure that all members covered comply with it.

A big question is what a union would have to do to show it had taken “reasonable” steps?

Instruct members that they must not strike? Will unions be required to discipline or expel members who refuse to cross a picket line?

Failure by a union to take “reasonable steps” would render the strike unlawful. This, crucially, would remove unfair dismissal protection from every employee on strike.

Yet these employees could in no way be culpable for the supposed failure of the union to take “reasonable steps” to ensure that the requisitioned workers comply with instructions from their bosses.

AFFRONT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

Little wonder that trade unions are enraged. We should all be enraged. The Bill is contemptuous of parliamentary democracy and is an affront to human rights. It affects us all.

In time, no doubt other concerns will be revealed. The Bill goes well beyond the government’s 2019 election manifesto commitments and so lacks any electoral mandate.

This should embolden parliamentarians of all parties to do their constitutional duty: deny ministers the authoritarian powers they crave, and defend the liberties of the people.

■ Source ier.org.uk

HESTHER NG/SOPA/ ZUMA/ALAMY

Lorna at work at Halifax fire station, West Yorkshire

Curiosity killed the cat, but an enquiring mind – and a dose of fabled Yorkshire grit – have been the making of Lorna Dodd. In March, the Halifax firefighter will represent Great Britain in the European duathlon championships in Venice. She will be contesting the duathlon – five and 2.5 kilometre runs split by a 20 kilometre bike ride.

In the lead-up to September's qualifiers in Bilbao, she spent three months unable to train, then suffered an Achilles tendon injury. So Lorna's fifth place finish, in a time of 1 hour 20 minutes and 51 seconds, was impressive.

"Just two weeks before the race," she recalls, "every step, I could feel it pulling – but the event went really well – I was actually a little disappointed by my performance – there's room for improvement!"

The story is of a piece with the 30-year-old's battling, can-do approach. She peppers her conversation with laughter that reflects a winning personality. It's no great surprise to discover that, as a child, Lorna dreamed of being a lorry driver.

She has also enjoyed stints as a cinema projectionist, sports-hall assistant and instructor for Bikeability, the government's national cycle training programme.

It was in the last of these, teaching cycling proficiency to primary pupils at Halifax fire station, that her path to becoming a firefighter began.

It was a stop-start process – having initially moved back into the area to pursue the retained route, she had to move out again after her home was flooded. "I always wanted to have an active job," she says. "I didn't like the idea of sitting behind a desk."

STERN TEST

The March event in Venice – initially slated for September – will be a stern test of her fitness.

As she spoke to *Firefighter*, Lorna was recuperating from an operation to relieve her injury woes. Inactivity for the active can be frustrating, but the backing of her fire station family and that cheerful outlook will alleviate that grind.

Lorna competing in Bilbao in September last year

Quite a journey

Firefighter Lorna Dodd represents Great Britain in the duathlon. She spoke to Steven Morgan



And Lorna knows from personal experience that you get out what you put in.

As a teenager who "struggled a bit with my weight" at 16 she took a friend's advice and joined a local running club, which worked wonders for her mindset. From running with her dog for fun, she started competitive racing at a national level. "It made me focus a bit more on what's important, rather than what I look like," she says.

Her interest in the duathlon – an event she first heard about while studying for a sports science degree – was piqued by a Queensbury running club member just after Lorna joined the club in 2020 – shortly before lockdown.

"We were all sat outside, shivering, and this lady had a big Dryrobe on (weather-proof change triathlon wear). I asked: 'What's that?' and she said: 'I do



all these duathlons and triathlons, and I get really cold.' I had a look online for one [duathlon] – and went up to Carlisle. It was miles away, but it was quite a good one for beginners – and my sister lives up there, so that was handy."

FAST FORWARD

It also had the advantage of being flatter terrain – Queensbury prides itself as being one of the highest running clubs in the land. Fast forward a couple of years and Lorna will now compete for her nation in the 30-34 age-group category.

"I think we've sorted the time off work," she laughs. It has been quite a journey, and one which has been a personal boon. While modest about her efforts, Lorna is keen to encourage others to back themselves.

"I guess you don't really know what you're capable of until you try it, do

you?" she says. "My mental health hasn't always been the best, but I find if you are sticking to a training plan, or regularly exercising, it always seems to help – providing focus, I guess."

Right now, that focus is on getting back to fighting fires, while dreaming of lopping crucial seconds off that critical first 5k.

"At my fittest last year, I was doing that in about 20 minutes – it was 22:03 in Bilbao – I was a little disappointed in that," she says.

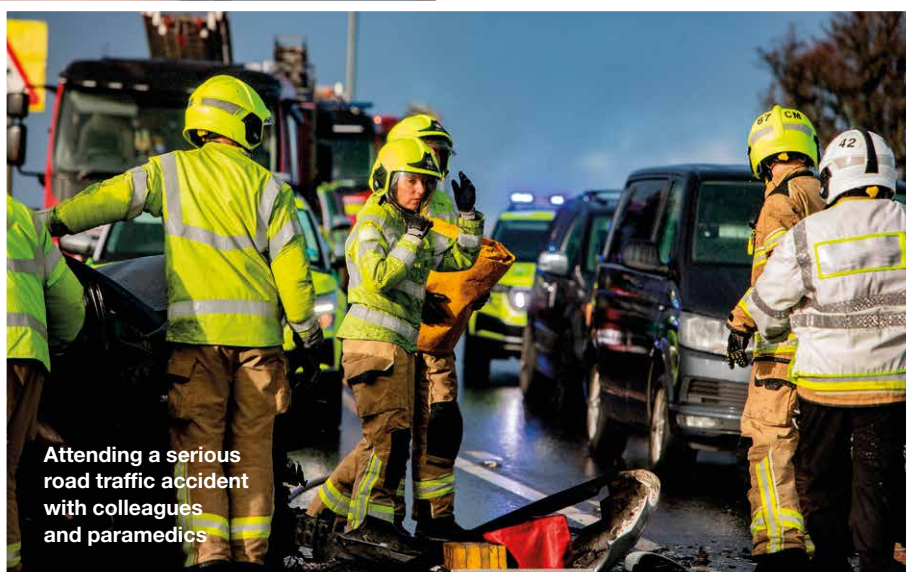
FURTHER BACK

As a result, she commenced the bike stage of qualification a good deal further back in the field.

"Towards the end, I managed to catch up with the people who I would have been with – the descent was really nice – there was nobody in front of me, so I could take each corner whichever way I wanted," she says.

Fingers crossed, March will find Lorna fighting fires, fighting fit and firmly on the path to success with a GB flag proudly on her back.

That childhood lorry-driving dream may have receded, but she hasn't ruled out driving a fire engine. "I don't drive ours," she laughs. "Not just yet – but maybe next year!"



Attending a serious road traffic accident with colleagues and paramedics

'You don't really know what you're capable of until you try it, do you?'



Insightful and empowering

More than 30 union members from all around the UK attended the FBU LGBT+ school in Brighton. **Graeme Hopkins** reports

For some, it was a good chance to catch up with old friends after a gap of two years due to Covid and for others, including myself, this was their first school.

The three-day education event was filled with insightful and empowering sessions which encouraged interesting discussions and debates amongst the attendees.

Speakers included Dr Nicolas McGlynn, a lecturer and researcher at Brighton University, who introduced “the geography of LGBT+ communities”. He spoke mainly about the spaces made and used by the LGBTQ community, for example, bars and social groups. From the time homosexuality was illegal in the UK through to more recent times, he explored how the LGBT+ community has adapted to changes through a geographic lens.

FBU archivist Helen Whittle had us look at the section's archives and, in particular, its magazines and publications to see how FBU members reacted to LGBT+ issues through the decades and to explore the achievement of the section

throughout its history. The ‘Letters from a Firefighter’ from Firefighter magazine throughout the years showed the changing attitudes of firefighters towards LGBT+ firefighters and the existence of the section itself and it was fascinating reading previous general secretaries’ responses defending our section.

LGBT+ national secretary Pat Carberry gave us an insight into how the section started up as a “support group” for gay firefighters and how it has grown into a section with a voice for all in the LGBTQ+ firefighter community.

Saorsa-Amatheia Tweedale, a member of the TUC national LGBT+ committee, gave a great insight into how the UK is doing with trans rights compared to the rest of the world and the intersection between defending trans rights and trade union solidarity.

We had a session on the Fair Pay or Fire Strike campaign from the president, and national officer Riccardo la Torre. We also discussed

the section's priorities.

As one of only two out gay serving firefighters in Aberdeen I found the experience very moving.

As much as I was accepted when I came out, it was still awe-inspiring to be in a room with 32 like-minded individuals and share experiences and discussions.

We also had a closed session where small groups of us could share our own experiences of being in the LGBT+ community.

To listen to others’ experiences in the workplace and to hear some of their issues, and to support them through these, was really powerful.

I enjoyed my first LGBT+ school in October and can't wait to attend the next one. It is open to all serving LGBT+ firefighters and control staff and is a great way to meet, socialise, and keep in contact with other members of the section as well as to explore and discuss issues in the LGBT+ community.





Meet the rep

Maria Buck, LGBT+ national sectional chair

1. What made you want to become a rep?

As a child my family lived through the pit strikes in the 1980s. During my working life I have always been part of a union. The FBU gave me an opportunity to use my voice and fight for equality and justice for our members.

2. What is your proudest moment as a rep?

I've been very lucky in the fact that I've had many proud moments as a rep. From building up the LGBT+ committee from scratch in London, to speaking for the first time at conference to unveiling our new banner at Brighton Pride.

3. Who are your ultimate heroes?

My family unit would be up at the top of the list – we've stuck together and kept each other strong through life's trials. Also the heroes and heroines that paved the way for our community, enabling me and others to be themselves – people such as Marsh P Johnson, Allan Horsfall and Lady Phyll.

4. Describe yourself in three words.

Calm, collected and determined.

5. What was the last conversation you had that made you think differently about something?

As a rep I hope to always have

conversations that challenge me or make me see something differently. Having such conversations enables me to better handle certain situations, especially if it is a topic that not everyone agrees with. Not everyone sees things the same way.

6. What's your favourite band or musician?

Abba. I love any form of music having worked at festivals throughout my years and my play list is an eclectic mix of tunes from jazz to hard metal but Abba will always be in any play list I make.

7. If you weren't a firefighter, what would you be?

Working in a profession where I could fight for real change and for the good of the people.

8. If you could travel back or forward in time, where and when would you travel to and why?

I'd go back to my younger self to reassure her that everything works out in the end and not to worry. I would like to have seen many things in history; the ancient Greeks debate and create their democracy; seeing the Stonewall riots and how the story unfolded for those involved and the impact it still has today.



Legal Beagle

What does the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill mean for members?

The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill would allow employers to serve "work notices" on trade unions organising industrial action in "relevant services" in which the government would be entitled to set minimum service levels.

Work notices would identify which workers would be required to work while industrial action takes place. If a union does not take "all reasonable steps" to ensure that members identified in the work notice comply, it would lose its legal immunity in respect of the industrial action, meaning it could be sued and that non-complying workers would lose their protection from dismissal.

There is no limitation on what minimum service is required. What this means is that the government is giving itself sweeping powers to curtail the activities of unions in relevant services and restrict a vital right of working people.

In our view, there are significant doubts that the Bill currently complies with the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly in the context of the restrictions unions are already subject to and that the minimum service levels can be unilaterally determined without any restrictions. This makes it vulnerable to legal challenge.

Contact

FBU Freephone legal advice:
0808 100 6061

In Scotland: 0800 089 1331

[thompsonstradeunion.law/
trade-unions/fbu](http://thompsonstradeunion.law/trade-unions/fbu)

SOCIAL MEDIA



Jess Hurd
@jesshurdphoto

Thank you to the 70 firefighters who contained a flat fire on the 9th floor of my home in a #Bow tower block last night. Everyone is safe. You are all hero's and should get paid what you deserve!
@LondonFireBrigade @FBUNational #FBU #firefighter #heros #FairPayOrFireStrike #E3



8:55 AM · Jan 15, 2023 · 58.1K Views



PoliticsJOE
@PoliticsJOEUK

"They got rid of 12,000 firefighter jobs. Never mind safety on the days we're on strike, what about safety on every other day of the year?"

FBU chief @mattwrack blasts the government for their bogus concerns about minimum service levels at #RighttoStrike rally

rewards
for rescue

FREE TO JOIN

Have you signed up to our website?

Check out these two amazing offers available now



Discover365

Save 50% off the second cruise guest and save up to £1200 on your next cruise.

Plus get a free cruise guide



Hotelopia

Save a minimum of 10% off all your hotel and accommodation bookings at all times

Includes all holiday periods

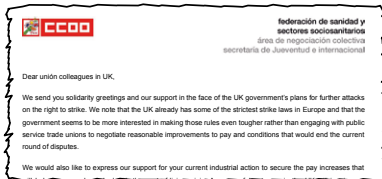
To claim your discounts, register and login to

www.rewardsforrescue.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY



Representatives of Czech Republic public service trade unions taking part in an online meeting of the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) expressed joint support to for public sector workers, including FBU members, in Great Britain at the meeting. Letters of support also came from ...



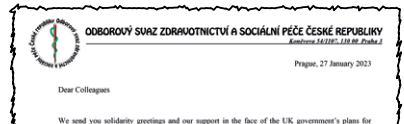
The health and social services section of the Workers' Commissions (CCOO), the largest trade union in Spain



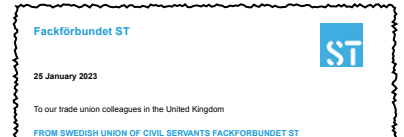
The Spanish General Union of Workers (UGT)



Kommunal, the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union



Odborový svaz zdravotnictví a sociální péče České republiky – the health and social care union of the Czech Republic



Fackförbundet ST, the Swedish civil servants' union



Hungary's Federation of United Trade Unions in the Electric Energy Industry (EVDZ)



Podkrepa – Bulgaria's Confederation of Labour

SHOP.FBU.ORG.UK



■ Send a clear message with our special edition 'FBU member with backbone' t-shirt £14.99 inc p&p



■ FBU 2023 Calendar – for your branch meeting dates – stay organised £9.99 inc p&p



■ Soft padded branded puffer jacket £47.99 inc p&p



Wrack on the Road

■ 10 December Speaker at Arise festival in London on Solidarity, Struggle, Socialism'

■ 13 January Norfolk members' meeting



■ 16 January demonstration against the anti-strike Bill outside Downing Street



■ 22 January Oxford, March Together, Strike Together rally. Firefighters joined NHS, post and rail workers

■ 25 January LBC radio Cross Questions politics show

■ 30 January interviews on strike ballot result: Sky, BBC, ITN, C4, C5 and LBC, and BBC radio 4 and 5

■ 31 January interviews: Good Morning Britain and BBC Breakfast

■ 5 February – Sophy Ridge on Sunday Sky interview

■ 8/9 February – media on result of revised pay offer

COMING UP:

■ Speaker at the NHS SOS demo on 11 March in London

MARK THOMAS

Mystery of an MP's low-paid work

But he claimed £273k expenses, Station Cat reveals

Station cat has been sniffing around Brendan Clarke-Smith, MP for Bassetlaw.

Not because he attacked England's footballers for "taking the knee," nor even because he attacked Marcus Rashford's school meals campaign, but because he's been sneering at firefighters who have to resort to food banks.

"I suggest learning how to budget and prioritise," said the former teacher. He told *Lincolnshire Live* that he earned "a lot less than £32,000 [a fully trained firefighter's salary]" for "95 per cent" of his career.

Which is odd. Mr C-S didn't teach in your local comprehensive, but in expensive international schools in Norway, Sweden and Romania, teaching the children of the jet-setting elite.

So when was this "95 per cent" of his career when he earned less than firefighters, but stayed out of foodbanks due to his superior budgeting skills?

He did have a spell teaching in the UK, thought to be in an international school, but his office hasn't confirmed this. In fact, his office was unable to tell me anything about him at all.

International schools generally boast "competitive" salaries". They are coy about exact figures, but Dwight

International School in north London is currently advertising for a teacher on a scale from £33,981 to £43,369.

In Romania, where the cost of living is 62% lower than in the UK, Mr C-S worked at the International School of Bucharest, which boasts "competitive salary, health insurance, flights and housing allowances," before becoming principal of the Royal School in Cluj-Nabvocan and writing in its newsletter: "I can confidently state that

Cluj-Nabvocan is a city where we will be settling down for the long term." Eighteen months later he left to become an MP.

Should his salary have been inadequate to his needs, the family

could always fall back on his wife's earnings as a hospital doctor.

Well, foodbanks are safe from the Clarke-Smiths until the next general election. His MP's salary is £84,144, and in the year ending September 2022 he claimed £273,172 in expenses, including £22,245 for accommodation.

His "policy research unit" cost £3,111, so you'd expect better policy ideas than scapegoating firefighters.

His staff cost £204,062, so they should be able to answer simple questions about him.



Budget expert Brendan Clarke-Smith backed Liz Truss as Conservative party leader



... and Brendan Clarke-Smith says *firefighters* should learn how to budget?

25-year badges



Simon Humphries (l), blue watch, Chelmsford, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Martyn Wager



Phil Pennington (r), Marple, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Paul Hardman with colleague Rob Kenworthy



Rob Kenworthy (r), Marple, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Paul Hardman, with colleague Phil Pennington



Class of '97 West Sussex receive their 25-year badges from brigade membership organiser Pawel Kosla (l-r), **Jason Gray**, **Shane Mott**, **James Mackay** and brigade sec **Antony (Murray) Walker**



Mark Cooper (r), green watch, Chichester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Antony Walker with crew members from his watch and the technical rescue unit



Simon Fillery (l), green watch, Eltham, London, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Jon Lambe



Michael Edgar (l), white watch, Workington, Cumbria, receives his 25-year badge from branch colleague Kevin Vannet



Andy Hawtin (r), red watch, Ilford, London, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Owen Gunn



Shane Mott (r), red watch, Crawley, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership organiser Pawel Kosla, with (l-r) John Convey, James Drake, Gareth Peel, Simon Wenham, Terry Tucknott, Mike Boyd and Justin Bomyer



Michael Dunkley (r), Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair and brigade organiser Kieron Thomas



Kev Mercer (r), Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade officers rep Dave Tubs



Paul O'Shea (r), blue watch, Stanmore, London, receives his 25-year badge from London North West area organiser Brian Flanagan



Dave Boucher (r), fire research investigation, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Price-Hunt



John Purcell (l), retained, Wyre Forest, Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Neil Bevan



Matthew Grubb (r), St Austell, Cornwall, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Gary Cotton



Gary Brogan (r), red watch, Tottenham, London, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Christopher Poullais, with (l-r) Brogan Clarke, Djelal Djelal, Lee Webb, James McPartland, Matthew Richardson, Matthew Fulcher, Lee Jay, Caroline Saich-Whitaker and Nicholas Michael



David Horton (r), with colleagues in the BA department, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Philippa Smith



Jason Blakemore (r), with colleagues in the BA department, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Philippa Smith



Nicholas 'Fergie' Ferguson (r), red watch, Chelsea, receives his 25-year badge from SW London area secretary Dave Young and area organiser Adam Shaw



Justin Bomyer (l), red watch, Crawley, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership organiser Pawel Kosla with (l-r) Mike Boyd, James Holden, Terry Tucknott, Shane Mott, John Convey, James Drake and Simon Wenham



Cheshire brigade secretary Andrew Fox-hewitt presented 25-year badges to members **Phil Cunningham** and **Simon Molyneux** under the gaze of Big Ben, taking a few minutes out from the low pay lobby of the Westminster parliament in December 2022



Martin Davey (r), green watch, Lewisham, London, receives his 25-year badge from London regional secretary Jon Lambe



Danny Acquah (r), Kentish Town, London, receives his 25-year badge from London organiser Gareth Cook with white watch looking on



Matthew McGuire (r), Tunbridge Wells, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep James Boyd with branch members from Tunbridge Wells looking on



Matthew Crush (r), Tunbridge Wells, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep James Boyd with branch members looking on



Colin Edgar (l), Newbridge training department, Edinburgh, receives his 25-year badge from Lee Turnock



John Sapsford (r), Mereway, Northamptonshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair John Wadsworth



Bob Petit (l), Margate, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from Stu Morris with other branch members looking on



Matthew Beddard (r), Tunbridge Wells, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep James Boyd with branch members looking on



Carl Pearson (l), green watch, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Davy Howe with colleagues looking on

40-year badge



Steve Wright (centre), Westgate, Kent, receives his 40-year badge from his daughter, Carys Wright, branch rep Herne Bay, and brigade organiser Dave Turner



Bob Thomas (former Oxfordshire and ROOT member), receives his 25-year badge from his son, Buckinghamshire organiser Kieron Thomas



Melody Lam (r), blue watch, fire control, Northamptonshire, retired after 32 years of service, receives her 25-year badge from vice-chair Nick Ferrison



Ken Dodd (centre l) and **David Dodd** (centre r), Upton-on-Severn, Hereford and Worcester, with 36 and 44 years' service respectively, receive their 25-year badges from brigade chair Trevor Connolly (l) and brigade organiser Andrew Faizey

Please send high resolution digital files or prints to: firefighter@fbu.org.uk or Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE

For your image to look its best, we need the original, full-resolution image. One lifted from a website may not do justice to a unique occasion. We do our best with images that are low resolution, taken directly into a bright light or suffer from camera-shake, or have other problems, but cannot perform miracles. Please include details for each image – full names of everyone who is in it; their station/brigade/watch etc; where they are in the picture (eg: left to right); their union posts/branch if relevant; and where/when it was taken.

FBU REGIONAL OFFICES

REGION 1 Scotland
52 St Enoch Square, Glasgow,
Scotland G1 4AA
0141 221 2309, 01rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 2 N Ireland
14 Bachelors Walk, Lisburn,
Co Antrim, BT28 1XJ
02892 664622, 02rs@fbu.org

REGION 3 Cleveland, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear
1 Carlton Court, 5th Avenue, Team Valley, Gateshead, NE11 0AZ
0191 487 4142, 03rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 4 Humberside, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire
9 Marsh Street, Rothwell, Leeds, LS26 0AG
0113 288 7000, 04rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 5 Greater Manchester, Lancs, Isle of Man, Cumbria, Merseyside, Cheshire
The Lighthouse, Lower Mersey St, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 2AL
0151 357 4400, 05rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 6 Derbyshire, Notts, Lincs, Leics, Northants
The Waterside Offices, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 5FA
Region06@fbu.org.uk

REGION 7 West Mids, Staffs, Warks, Hereford & Worcester, Shropshire
195/7 Halesowen Rd, Old Hill, West Midlands, B64 6HE
01384 413633, 07rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 8 Mid and West Wales, North Wales, South Wales
2nd floor, Hastings House, Fitzalan Court, Cardiff, CF24 0BL
029 2049 6474

REGION 9 Herts, Beds, Cambs, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk
28 Atlantic Square, Station Road, Witham, Essex, CM8 2TL
01376 521521, 09rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 10 London
Alpha House, 100 Borough High Street., London SE1 1LB
020 7359 3638, london@fbu.org.uk

REGION 11 East Sussex, Kent, Surrey, West Sussex
Unit 11, Hunns Mere Way, Woodingdean, Brighton, BN2 6AH
11rs@fbu.org.uk

REGION 12 Bucks, Berks, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire
co/Region 13 office

REGION 13 Avon, Cornwall, Devon & Somerset, Dorset & Wiltshire, Gloucestershire
158 Muller Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 9RE
0117 935 5132, 13rs@fbu.org.uk

Change of address or next of kin
Advise your brigade organiser of any change of address and head office of changes to next of kin or nominations for benefits.

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE

England, Wales and N Ireland
0800 100 6061
Scotland 0800 089 1331

The line provides advice for personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues. For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU representative.



THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS

