

Why I'm coming to the lobby of parliament

"Suddenly, across the country we are seeing drastic cutbacks in the service. It would appear that risk management planning no longer applies because there is a shortage of funding. If this is the case, I want chiefs and politicians to be honest with both the workforce and the public. I want to challenge them to admit that these cuts will cost lives and inform them that any politician or chief who doesn't put public and firefighter safety first does not deserve to be in public service. As an organisation the FBU will campaign against these dangerous cuts if necessary."

**Gavin Barrie, firefighter,
Newcraighall fire station, Lothian
and Borders**

"I'll be heading to the national rally because if we don't stick up for our service, then who will? We understand what these cuts will mean. It is our responsibility to ensure that our voices are heard loud and clear: that cuts in the fire service will have a massive impact on the lives and homes of the communities we serve. The very same communities we live in when our shift finishes. We're a team and teams stick together. If you're not working on the 17 November, then you should be there!"

**Sasha Farley, crew commander
(control), West Midlands**

"I'm going on the lobby because our union and its members must show the public our opposition to the impending fire service cuts that will put our communities at great risk. We have endured pay and likely pension cuts while bank executives continue to enjoy massive salary hikes and bonuses. We must oppose that and make sure those in power understand our opposition. We must fight with all that we've got."

**Michael Nicholas, FBU
executive council member for
B&EMM**

Our fire and rescue service



AN OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICE – DON'T LET THEM WRECK IT

The FBU is organising a national rally and lobby of parliament on Wednesday 17 November.

**Come to the FBU lobby
of parliament on
Wednesday 17 November**



**Come and tell MPs –
"Public safety first – No cuts in the fire
and rescue service"**

Please make sure your branch is represented

An outstanding public service

The government claims it needs to make huge cuts to public services. Our fire and rescue service is now in the firing line.

- ◆ Cuts will threaten jobs, pay, pensions and conditions of service.
- ◆ Cuts in our service will endanger the safety of the public and of firefighters.

The polling organisation YouGov recently conducted a survey about what the public thinks of the fire service – and about the threat of cuts. The results could not be clearer:

- 93% of the public believe the fire and rescue service is providing a good or very good service
- 82% are satisfied or very satisfied with their local fire and rescue service
- 85% oppose plans to cut funding for fire and rescue services
- 95% oppose any reduction in the number of firefighters

The government has no mandate for cuts in our service.

The politicians do not speak for the public in relation to the fire and rescue service. This opinion poll

demonstrates very clearly that it is the FBU – the voice of firefighters – which also speaks for the public on this issue.

The conclusion is clear: the public do not support cuts in our fire and rescue service

A life saving service – seven thousand rescues a year!

Recent research carried out on behalf of the FBU has once again highlighted the vital role firefighters play in protecting our communities.

In the year to March 2010 a total of 7,098 people were rescued from fires in the UK. This is more rescues than were carried out a decade ago. This is so, despite the reduction in the number of fires and fire deaths.



Don't let them wreck our service

The cuts agenda threatens our service. We have already faced cuts. We have seen over three thousand wholetime jobs go since 1997. These cuts have been exacerbated by misguided policies, which have attempted to reduce the importance of emergency intervention.

FBU members will recall how senior civil servant Chris Wormold claimed to MPs that slower attendance by firefighters to fires “does not equate to a worse service”. Claims like this appear at first sight to be just a case of crass ignorance. But they represent a very serious attack on emergency intervention at government level.

It is no accident that response times to dwelling fires slowed by 18% between 1996 and 2006. So much for ‘modernisation’!

The public clearly recognise the vital importance of the emergency intervention role of the fire and rescue service. The YouGov poll found that:

- 95% agree that a rapid response to fires should be a high priority for the fire and rescue service

There is no public support for undermining the emergency intervention aspect of our role.

Slower response times will also increase fire losses, damaging the economy and destroying jobs. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) states that the cost of fire claims has more than doubled between 2002 and 2008. The first six months of 2009 saw the most expensive losses ever.

Further cuts will make this situation worse

- ◆ Further cuts will lead to ever slower response times to emergency incidents.
- ◆ Further cuts will put the safety of the public at risk.
- ◆ Further cuts will increase risk to firefighters.
- ◆ Further cuts will lead to increasing fire losses – destroying jobs and damaging the economy.

It's time to stand up for firefighters and defend our fire and rescue service.

www.fbu.org.uk