



DEFEND CONTROL JOBS
AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

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FIRE BRIGADES UNION
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TO: ALL MEMBERS

Dear Brother/Sister

SAFER FIREFIGHTER: SAFER COMMUNITIES - PROGRESS SO FAR

You will recall the rally and lobby of Parliament on 12 November 2008. This event took place to launch our report on Firefighter fatalities, "In the Line of Duty" and to highlight the growing concerns among Firefighters around a range of related issues.

Following the lobby various aspects of this work have progressed.

- Recording of fatal and other serious incidents

In response to the Union's report, CLG Minister Sadiq Khan has agreed to review the current arrangements for the recording of fatalities. This will include dialogue with all stakeholders and with the Authorities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Union will also be raising this matter at the next meeting of the CLG advisory body, the Practitioners Forum.

- Investigation of fatalities and other serious incidents

The Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor (CFRA) in England has been asked by the Minister to consider this issue and we are currently awaiting an initial response and proposals.

- Improvements to the process for issuing Operational Guidance

In response to the lobbying by the FBU, proposals have now been developed for a new Operational Guidance Framework. This would ensure the development of key guidance on all operational matters as a result of incidents, new risks or as a result of updated technical knowledge. The Union would be involved in this process throughout. The FBU has raised concerns about the application of such guidance in different parts of the UK in the light of the fact that Firefighters have frequently been required to work across borders. As a result of this discussion, it has been agreed that this process would produce UK-wide guidance. The FBU has welcomed this very significant step but will monitor the process closely.

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- Improvements in the provision of training

CLG has initiated a review of the processes for the provision of operational training. This work will examine the extent to which IPDS has been implemented within individual Fire and Rescue Services, the impact of IRMP on the provision of training and the processes for the development of training. This is an area on which many FBU members have expressed concern. It is our view, for example, that there are a range of problems related to the implementation of IPDS. This work by CLG will allow the FBU at national and local level to raise these concerns. We have ensured that the views of frontline Firefighters, both Wholetime and RDS, are sought locally by the researchers. This project offers the opportunity to assess the current regimes for training and development and for members to raise concerns about these as appropriate.

In all the areas there has been movement from Government in response to our campaign. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the work which so many of you undertook last year. The proposals outlined do not solve the problems we have identified. However, they do offer us the opportunity at all levels to raise the concerns which have been raised with us by FBU members during this campaign and therefore to identify ways forward which can improve safety for our members and for the public.

Many thanks for all your efforts so far.

I will ensure that further updates are provided as necessary.

Yours fraternally

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack', written in a cursive style.

MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY

MW/sll