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**FIRE BRIGADES UNION**  
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**TO: ALL MEMBERS**

Dear Brother/Sister

**BUDGET 2009: BAD NEWS FOR THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

FBU members will have followed the press reports and discussion following the budget this week. The measures taken following the credit crunch and economic crisis offer little hope to working people in the UK and nothing whatsoever to public sector workers. The worsening state of the economy has left a huge gap in public finances, estimated to be as high as £45billion. This gap will be filled by a combination of tax increases and cuts in public services. The scale of the cuts under discussion means that our essential public services are likely to face the worst attacks since the 1970s.

The Fire and Rescue Service, although a small element in overall public spending, will not be exempt. The Treasury document for the budget (*Budget 2009: Building Britain's Future* - available at:

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/Budget2009/bud09\\_completereport\\_2591.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/Budget2009/bud09_completereport_2591.pdf)

includes the following section on savings which can be achieved within our Service:

*£110 million from continuing modernisation of the Fire and Rescue Service Authorities through revision of shift patterns, crewing arrangements and Human Resource savings.*

Central Government has clearly set out an agenda of further attacks on the Service we provide and on the jobs and conditions of service of Firefighters. We have consistently warned that this endless cost-cutting agenda can only undermine the safety of the public and of Firefighters. We will raise this issue as a matter of urgency with the Government Ministers concerned and will work with colleagues in other Unions to provide an alternative to this savage cuts agenda.

As a result of our concerns about this agenda and the threat to jobs, homes and services arising from the crisis in the economy the Executive Council recently endorsed the campaign around the Peoples' Charter. The Charter seeks to provide an alternative to this cuts agenda and to provide a voice for people across the UK in the face of growing unemployment and attacks on wages. A copy of the Charter leaflet is enclosed.

Yours fraternally

**MATT WRACK**  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**

*MW/sll*

