



Fire Brigades Union Welcomes New Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Boards

The recent elections have heralded a new dawn in Scottish Politics.

Opportunity

In terms of the Fire & Rescue Service, this represents a fresh opportunity to re-establish productive, constructive and positive relationships, both locally and at Parliamentary level.

The Future

The aftermath of the National Fire Service Pay Dispute has seen industrial relations strained and at times difficult. The Fire Brigades Union in Scotland, however, takes the view that time has moved on and that we must all now focus on the future.

The past 12 months has seen very positive developments in terms of joint initiatives and constructive dialogue, both locally and at Scottish Parliament Level. Unfortunately, in some local areas there remains some difficulties. These difficulties, however, are not insurmountable.

Many people have come and gone and there are many new people with fresh ideas and fresh outlooks.

The establishment of new FRS Boards affords an ideal opportunity to reinvigorate local relations and to wipe away the cobwebs of the past.

Good Relations

Industrial Relations in the Fire & Rescue Service in Scotland has historically been the envy of the rest of the UK. It is our pledge to work hard with you to re-establish those high standards through constructive and regular dialogue.



This will undoubtedly be to the benefit of Firefighters, Emergency Fire Control Operators, Employers, and ultimately to the Communities we serve.

Fire (Additional Functions) (Scotland) Order 2005

Parliamentary Debate Discusses Water Rescue in Relation to Statutory Responsibilities & Funding

On Tuesday 6th June 2006, the first Members' Debate of the third Session of the Scottish Parliament took place on the subject of **Moving Water (Rescue Arrangements)**.

The debate took place as a result of a Motion submitted by Roseanna Cunningham MSP.

The Motion raised concerns regarding the inconsistencies across Scotland in relation to procedures & responsibilities for rescues from water and to urge the Minister to urgently review the situation.

In response, the Minister for Community Safety, Fergus Ewing MSP, stated that, in relation to

Water Rescue that "*the primary statutory duty for protecting life rests with the Police*", **not the Fire & Rescue Service**.

He went on to say that whilst the 2005 Order places a responsibility on FRSs to 'make provision for the purpose of rescuing people trapped, or likely to become trapped by water ... in the event of serious flooding in its area', that flooding was "*...areas that would under normal circumstances be classed as dry land*".

This would therefore not include such fixed bodies of water, as rivers, lochs & reservoirs.

Even though this duty is a

Statutory Responsibility of the Police, some FRS Authorities have undertook Water Rescue initiatives, and appear to be funding them through Fire Service Budgets.



Furthermore, the Minister confirmed that "*the Executive has received no request from Chief Fire Officers in respect of funding for training*".

The Minister gave an assurance that he will be considering and reviewing the matter.

WORKING TOGETHER

National Joint Council Agrees Joint Protocol for Good Industrial Relations in the Fire & Rescue Service

AGREEMENT

At a meeting of the National Joint Council, held in London on Friday 15th June 2007, an agreement was reached on a Joint Protocol for Good Industrial Relations in the Fire & Rescue Service.

The Protocol is designed to develop and improve upon industrial relations across the UK. In agreeing the Protocol, all parties are expected to adopt its Principles and Commitments, with a view of working together to ensure efficient & effective industrial relations.

PRINCIPLES

- Joint Commitment to the Success of the Organisation;
- Joint Recognition of each others Legitimate Interests and Responsibilities;
- Joint Focus on the Quality of Working Life;
- Joint Commitment to Operating in a Transparent Manner;
- Joint Commitment to Continuously Improve Industrial Relations;
- Joint Commitment to Reaching Agreement within Appropriate Timescales;
- Joint Commitment to Ongoing Dialogue and Exchange of Views including Face-to-Face Meetings;
- Joint Commitment to a 'No Surprise' Culture.

In order to support the above Principles Employers / Managers will:

Engage Trade Union Representatives early in Negotiation / Consultation on Issues which have Workforce Implications;

Share Full, Appropriate & Timely Information, ie: on Finance & Employment matters to Trade Union Reps, in order to enable Effective Negotiation & Consultation to take place;

Take on board Trade Union views, providing Full & Frank Feedback on how that Process has Influenced their Subsequent Position;

Put in place Reasonable Trade Union facilities in accordance with Statutory Requirements and ACAS Good Practice Guidance in order to Support this Inclusive Approach.

In order to support the above Principles Trade Union Representatives will:

Take an Active & Constructive part in Discussion at an Early Stage to facilitate Reaching Agreement within the Appropriate Timescales;

Provide a Considered Response to Proposals, including Alternative Options, in accordance with a Locally Developed Timescale or those contained in the National Model Procedures, as appropriate;

Share with Managers, Relevant & Appropriate Information to Assist Discussions.

All Parties will Recognise their Common Interests and Joint Purpose in Furthering the Aims & Objectives of the Organisation and in Achieving Reasonable Solutions.

Negotiation / Consultation

Over the past few years, there has been marked differences as to which matters constitute Negotiation & which constitute Consultation. The Agreed Protocol states that "Anything

which is contractual & therefore needs agreement ... is Negotiation. Everything else is Consultation". "Basically this covers Remuneration, Hours of Work, Leave Entitlements & Other Conditions of Service. It may also cover Local Policies & Procedures not specified within the

Grey Book or NJC Circulars, where they are within the individual's Contract". "It may also include Local Practices that are not contained within a Contract ... but may be implied Contractual Terms. Everything else is Consultation."

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NO₂ Fire Deaths

ZERO TOLERANCE for ALL Fire Deaths!

A ZERO TOLERANCE Policy for ALL Fire Deaths MUST now Form Part of All Scottish Fire & Rescue Board's Integrated Risk Management Plan

For far too long, Scotland has had the highest number of casualties & fatalities in fires per capita, in the UK.

According to the Scottish Executive Statistical Bulletin, published in March 2007, this trend is continuing. Figures in Scotland for 2005 show **13 Fatal Casualties per million population** and **334 Non-Fatal Casualties per million population**.



This equates to **65 Fatal Casualties** and **1,667 Non-Fatal Casualties**. This is during a period when the number of Fires has slightly risen from the previous year.

UK Figures

This compares extremely badly to other UK Countries.

Equivalent figures in England show **8 Fatal Casualties per million population**, with Northern Ireland showing **5** and Wales showing **10**.

English figures show **217 non-fatal casualties per million population**, with the figures in Northern Ireland & Wales **224** & **250** respectfully.

In Scotland, Dumfries & Galloway, Tayside, Strathclyde and Grampian show the highest levels, with **20, 18, 15** & **15 Fatal Casualties per million population** respectfully.

Response Times

This is no coincidence, as these Fire & Rescue Services cover large and sometimes remote areas, which means longer response times to incidents.

Coupled with the fact that **1,667** people were rescued from Fires, **these figures also show a direct correlation between response times and casualty rates.**

The LONGER the Response Times, the HIGHER the Casualty & Fatality Rates.

Safety

Not only do longer response times compromise the safety of the Public, the safety of Firefighters is also compromised as they will have to deal with more developed fires and subsequently, more complex incidents.

Performance Indicators

In 2005, the Scottish Executive, on the advice of the HMI Chief

Inspector of the Fire Service in Scotland, Jeff Ord, abolished Response Times as a Performance Indicator. He stated that they were **"no longer relevant"**.

Professional Firefighters & Emergency Fire Control Operators find this viewpoint to not only be totally erroneous, but offensive and morally corrupt.

The figures show the need to re-establish a Response Times Indicator for all Fire Authorities in Scotland, through a SCOTTISH RESPONSE STANDARD MECHANISM, in order to ensure a consistent & safe approach for ALL our Communities.

"These statistics show in the clearest of terms that the quickest possible response times are essential in ensuring that members of the public have the best possible chance of rescue from Fire with little or no injury": Ken Ross, FBU Scottish Regional Secretary.

A SCOTTISH RESPONSE STANDARD MECHANISM is urgently required to set MAXIMUM RESPONSE TIMES & MINIMUM WEIGHTS OF RESPONSE in each Fire & Rescue Authority, incorporating a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY, for ALL Fire Deaths in order to make true **"improvements to community safety"**

E-Mail Updates for All FRS Board Members

All FRS Board Members are urged to register their E-Mail Addresses on the FBU Scotland Website. This way Board Members will get automatic notification of all new information on the site as and when it is made available.

FBU Circulars, Press Releases, Information Bulletins, & Newsletters are all available on the site. The Union is happy to afford Board Members this facility in a gesture of openness and transparency.

The Website also contains links to the **FBU Online Resource Library**. The Library contains all information in relation to the Union & the Fire Service in general, with a multitude of links to relevant sites.

Register Online

NOW

www.fbucotland.co.uk

FRS Board Presentations

Scottish FBU Officials have requested to give a presentation to all 8 New Fire & Rescue Service Boards.

Roddy Robertson, EC Member for Scotland, has written to all FRS Board Clerks & Conveners, suggesting that as part of the new Board Members' induction training process, that a contribution from the Fire Brigades Union would be both appropriate & helpful.

Industrial Relations

The Presentation will inform Board Members of the Structure and Role of the Union and will extol the virtues of Constructive and Meaningful Dialogue & Co-operative Industrial Relations.

It will also afford an opportunity for Board Members to meet with Scottish & local Brigade Officials

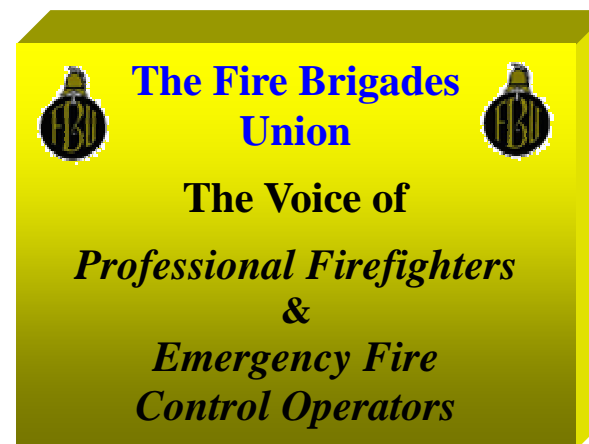
and establish the beginnings of what will hopefully be a new positive era in Scottish Fire Service Industrial Relations.

Issues for the Future

Officials will also take this opportunity to inform Board Members of the key priorities for FBU Members in Scotland over the next 4 years and will lay out our hopes as well as our concerns in relation to the Service we provide to local Communities.

Conveners

Roddy has also requested meetings with all 8 FRS Board Conveners. A constructive working relationship with the key politicians is vital in ensuring we deliver the best for Fire & Rescue Service and our local Communities.



Log onto www.fbucotland.co.uk and Register NOW for Regular Updates and Information

Profile



Roddy Robertson
Executive Council Member
Scotland

On 20th March 2007, Roddy was elected unopposed to the position of FBU Executive Council Member for Scotland.

Background

He joined Grampian Fire Brigade in 1982, where he became a Leading Firefighter and the FBU Brigade Chair. After 10 years he transferred to Strathclyde, being based at Paisley Fire Station ever since.

It wasn't long before he was elected as the Scottish Regional Organiser then Scottish Regional Chair in 2001. In fact, until his recent election to the Executive Council, Roddy was the longest serving Regional Official in the UK, working at that level in Scotland for 18 years.

This has afforded him a wealth of knowledge and experience that is unique and invaluable.

The Future

Roddy's election comes on the threshold of a new era for the Fire & Rescue Service in Scotland. He now heads a new team in Scotland that is forward looking and is keen to work in partnership with Employers in order to benefit Firefighters, Emergency Fire Control Operators and the Communities we serve.