

FBU

FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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TO: ALL MEMBERS (REGION 1)

Dear Brother/Sister,

RESTRUCTURING OF FBU IN SCOTLAND; ELECTIONS AND STANDARDS OF DISCUSSION AND DEBATE - AN APPEAL FOR UNITY

Following the move to a single service within Scotland, the union faces various challenges. One of these is how we alter our organisation and structure to take account of the single service and the single employer.

Work on this has been underway for some time with discussion and debate involving the eight former Brigade Committees, the Scottish Regional Committee and the Executive Council. Following these discussions, seven new district committees are being created and elections for the new posts are under way, completed or scheduled.

Inevitably, new structures will create concerns among members and officials of the union and in elections there are often disagreements and debate. That is all part of democracy. However, all such discussion should be conducted while respecting the views and opinions of other members. Debate, disagreement and discussion within our union should not prevent people from working and campaigning together. As long as the normal rules of debate are followed, any democratic organisation should be able to cope with disagreement and discussion.

There is no place in a democratic organisation for anonymous abuse. Unfortunately, there have been a number of examples of this relating to the Scottish region of the FBU in recent months. The Executive Council discussed this at its meeting on 15 May and wished to remind all members of the need to avoid such abusive methods within our union. I hope that no members of the FBU are involved in such methods, but would need to remind all members of the seriousness of such behaviour. While each case would be considered on its merits, such behaviour is likely to contravene the rules of the union in several ways.

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On behalf of the Executive Council, I would urge all members to conduct their discussion and debate within the structures of the union. Everyone is entitled to an opinion and is entitled to express differences, including criticism of officials of the union. That does not entitle anybody to engage in anonymous abuse on social media or elsewhere. Such methods are dishonest, disrespectful, cowardly and undemocratic.

Current elections

Some of this recent abuse appears to relate to the current elections for District positions within the FBU in Scotland. The Executive Council has a clear role in overseeing these elections. As a result of the recent discussion at the Executive Council and the concerns raised, the President and I will be working with the Scottish Regional Secretary and other officials so as to assure members that correct procedures have been followed and the democratic rights of all members protected.

The need for unity

Our service and our union are facing the most challenging of times and there has never been a greater need for unity. We face cuts and job losses; the closure of emergency fire controls; changes to crewing arrangements; and a host of other challenges. We face an ongoing battle to defend pension rights. We need to campaign to win decent and secure pay for the future. None of these will be delivered without a well organised and campaigning union. Our task is to unite to defend the fire service and our members against these various attacks. Please pay your part in that united campaign.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally,

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

**MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY**

MW/jh