

APPENDIX A

AGM OF REPRESENTATIVES OF

WOMEN MEMBERS 2004

MONDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2004

FINAL AGENDA

1. FLEXIBLE WORKING

Mothers working in the Fire Service repeatedly state that they enjoy the 2 2 4 shift system which they find family friendly. However, they do feel that some flexibility may be required at some stages of their children's lives. According to the Department of Trade and Industry, the Government is committed to helping working parents and as such all have a right to apply to work flexibly and their employers have a statutory duty to consider those requests seriously.

This Annual General Meeting calls upon the Executive Council to provide guidance to Brigade Officials to better enable them to assist women members when they make such applications and in any subsequent appeals where appropriate.

**REGION 5
CARRIED**

Amendment 1

RESOLUTION 1

In line 2 **delete** number '4' and **replace** it with number '3'.

**REGION 9
WITHDRAWN**

RESOLUTION CARRIED UNAMENDED

2. WORK PLACE FACILITIES

Good work place facilities are essential to the health and safety of women members.

Whilst there have been improvements for some women in their work place, there is still a long way to go before all women have adequate facilities which are at the very least equivalent to the 'National Women's Committee Minimum Facilities Policy'.

This Committee calls upon the Executive Council to:

1. Negotiate at the National Joint Council, the National Women's Committee Minimum Facilities Policy.
2. Circulate to all Brigade Officials and their Brigades the Facilities Policy for local negotiation.
3. Put in place a mechanism to monitor the results of those negotiations.
4. Report these findings back to the National Women's Committee.

**REGION 6
CARRIED**

3. FACILITIES

This Annual General Meeting calls on the National Women's Committee to develop a minimum standard of facilities to address issues of comfort, personal hygiene and welfare of female firefighters deployed at protracted operational incidents. It is intended that this policy will be circulated to Brigade Committees for negotiation and implementation in individual Brigades.

REGION 2

Amendment 1

RESOLUTION 3

In the second line, **delete** the words "develop a minimum standard of facilities" and **insert** "extend the minimum standard facilities policy".
In the third line, **delete** the word "female" and insert the word "women".

REGION 10

**BOTH AMENDMENT AND RESOLUTION FELL, DUE TO NO DELEGATES
FROM REGION 2**

4. WORK RIG UNIFORM

Well fitting work rig uniform is essential to ensure women members feel not only comfortable at work, but also to meet proper health and safety standards.

This Committee calls upon the Executive Council to:

1. Investigate how many Brigades still neglect women in their provision of properly fitting work rig.
2. Seek out Brigades with good provision and circulate to Brigade Officials, these examples as best practice to assist with negotiation locally.
3. Seek to implement nationally through the relevant safety forums, acceptable standards of work rig, including the provision of maternity wear covering three trimesters of pregnancy.

**REGION 6
CARRIED**

5. DIVERSITY IN RECRUITMENT

This Women's Annual General Meeting notes that Positive Action is a successful tool for the recruitment of women into the British Fire Service. This Women's AGM also notes that Positive Action is not always used by Brigades and where it is used it is not always consistent in its approach. This AGM demands that the Executive Council produces a set of best practice guidelines on Positive Action. These guidelines would be used to aid brigade officials in ensuring positive action is being carried out within their brigades and where it is already being carried out, that it is being carried out correctly. This would help to achieve a diverse workforce that is a true reflection of the society that we live in today.

**REGION 3
CARRIED**

6. MATERNITY PROVISIONS

This Women's Annual General Meeting notes that the current FBU model Maternity Policy, written by the National Women's Committee, was used as a tool during the negotiations on maternity provisions for the proposed revised Grey Book Scheme of Conditions of Service. This AGM acknowledges that whilst the new proposed maternity provisions under the heading 'Maternity, Childcare and Dependency Provisions' are an improvement, the section on maternity pay does not go far enough to improve the working lives of new and expectant mothers working in the Fire Service, under the Grey Book Scheme of Conditions of Service.

This AGM calls on the Executive Council to demand that the National Joint Council adopts 'Best Practice' and upgrades the maternity pay to at least that which is laid out in the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority personnel note entitled "Maternity, Maternity Support and Adoption Provisions."

REGION 7

Amendment 1

RESOLUTION 6

In line 5 **delete** the word "proposed".

REGION 9

RESOLUTION WITHDRAWN

7. MATERNITY

This Women's Annual General Meeting notes that the National Women's Committee model maternity policy was used as a tool during the negotiations for maternity provisions on the Grey Book. This AGM also notes that whilst some improvements have been made for new and expectant mothers working under these Conditions of Service, there is still room for improvement. This Women's AGM believes that if the British Fire Service is serious in its intentions to improve the recruitment and retention of women, then good maternity policies is one area that would positively reflect these intentions. This Women's AGM demands that the Executive Council resubmits the National Women's Committee model maternity policy to the NJC for national negotiation and re-launches the policy with Brigade Officials for local negotiation.

REGION 3

CARRIED

8. CHILDCARE

This Women's Annual General Meeting notes that childcare is a barrier to the involvement of women in the Fire Brigades Union due to the majority of women members being the primary carer. Following the "Childcare Policy Review" carried out by the National Treasurer and agreed at the Executive Council as laid out in circular 2004HOC0315DW, this Women's AGM notes that whilst this is a progressive move, it still falls short of the FBU assuming financial responsibility for all costs incurred by Officials due to childcare. The current ceiling imposed is restrictive and does not take into account the costs for overnight care for children. This Women's AGM calls on the Executive Council to remove the maximum limit imposed and to commit the FBU to full reimbursement of all reasonable costs incurred by Officials in regard to childcare provided by a registered childminder.

REGION 7

Amendment 1

RESOLUTION 8

In line 13, after the word "Officials" **insert** ", Reps and members,"

REGION 7

AMMENDMENT WITHDRAWN

Amendment 2

In line 13, after the word "Officials" **insert** ", Reps and members whilst undertaking FBU business and activities".

REGION 9

CARRIED

RESOLUTION CARRIED WITH AMMENDMENT 2

9. REGIONAL CONTROL ROOMS

This Women's Annual General Meeting reaffirms its position of opposition to the regionalisation of control rooms as agreed at Annual Conference 2004. Most of the staff employed in our Control Rooms are women and it is those women whose jobs are being threatened. Nowhere in the regionalisation proposals is there any mention of an improved service to the public or safer working practices for our firefighters. We are already the best performing public service and we demand that the FBU fight against these proposals with action up to and including strike action.

**REGION 9
CARRIED**

10. SUPPORTING WOMEN MEMBERS AT EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL

This Annual General Meeting demands that the national Education Committee includes provision to immediately develop and implement training for FBU women members to assist and advise other women FBU members at employment tribunals, or before the decision is taken to pursue an employment tribunal.

This is to include appropriate training and support for women members and will complement the role that the FBU Solicitors currently take by assisting them in their workload.

This service does not exist at present and will ensure a better service to women FBU members with the potential for more positive outcomes in cases.

**REGION 10
CARRIED**

11. NETWORKING WOMEN IN THE FIRE SERVICE

This Women's Annual General Meeting notes the involvement of Networking Women in the Fire Service (NWFS) on the Fire Service Practitioners forums and in particular takes note of the NWFS response given to the 'Task and Finish' group for regional control centres. This response states that 'The Networking women in the Fire Service Representative accepts the proposals with some regret given the potential for less jobs for women in the Fire Service and requests early involvement in the detailed negotiations about pay, conditions of service etc, etc.' To date, this comment still stands and the NWFS Chair clearly stated, as laid out in an e-mail to the Secretary of the NWC, 'that the NWFS do not intend to withdraw our position from any of the forums that we have been asked to sit on.'

This Women's AGM believes that NWFS are undermining the work carried out by the FBU, in particular the NWC and are working against FBU policy.

Therefore this AGM calls upon the Executive Council to send a draft letter to all women members to send to their CFO to withdraw their membership from NWFS.

**REGION 5
CARRIED**

12. INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

This Women's Annual General Meeting supports the campaign instigated by the T&G Women's Committee, to make international Women's Day on the 8th March an additional Bank Holiday, as it is in a number of other countries. International Women's Day is for women in all countries to come together as sisters to commemorate their achievements and to continue to organise for change to improve women's rights.

We note that women in the UK and around the world still face discrimination, injustice or worse in many aspects of their daily lives and are appalled by this ongoing situation.

We also note that the British people have fewer Bank Holidays than the rest of the European Union and they work for longest hours.

This Women's AGM calls on the Executive Council:

- To fully support the campaign for an additional Bank Holiday on International Women's Day that the T&G Women's Committee has initiated.
- To actively campaign using their links inside and outside the Fire Brigades Union, to make International Women's Day a public holiday.

**REGION 6
CARRIED**

13. GLOBAL GAG ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

This Women's Annual General Meeting notes that on George W. Bush's first day in Office, he re-imposed Ronald Reagan's 'Global Gag Rule' on women worldwide. This policy restricts organisations that receive US AID funds for family planning programmes from using their own, non-US funds to provide legal abortion services, lobby their own Governments for abortion law reform, or even provide accurate medical counselling or referrals regarding abortion.

The effect of the Global Gag rule has been devastating on women worldwide. Family planning services have lost all their US funding.

This Women's Annual General Meeting notes that worldwide there are 19 million unsafe abortions every year and 78,000 women die every year from unsafe abortion. We believe that this statistic could be virtually eliminated by reform of law and the appropriate health information and services. Organisations that reject the global gag rule are forced to turn away condoms and other contraceptives from the US, cut reproductive services and raise fees.

This AGM therefore opposes the global gag rule and calls on the Executive Council to campaign vigorously for its removal.

**REGION 5
CARRIED**

EMEGENCY RESOLUTIONS

1. UNITED FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Following the court case at the high court in London on 3rd, 4th and 5th of November 2004, brought about by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner to overturn the verdict on behalf of his 8 police officers who were involved in the unlawful killing of Roger Sylvester, as decided unanimously by the jurors at the inquest in October 2003, we reaffirm our support to United Friends and Family.

This Women's AGM calls upon the Executive Council to increase their support by using their influence to the wider trade union movement and to encourage more widespread financial support to United Friends and Family to assist them in their ongoing struggle for justice.

**REGION 9
CARRIED**

2. PENSIONS

The current Firefighter's Pension Scheme is one of the very few pension schemes available in the UK where women can ensure a decent standard of living in their retirement and not end up in the pension poverty that too many women suffer from today.

This women's AGM states its overwhelming opposition to the Governments proposals, released on the 13th October, to downgrade and dismantle the current and future pension arrangements for Firefighters. We confirm our determination to fight these attacks by any means necessary, up to and including industrial action as in accordance with resolution 38 passed at Annual Conference.

**REGION 5
CARRIED**

3. PALESTINE

This AGM recognises the enormity of the loss of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat last week and the implications on the future of peace in the Middle East.

We demand that the Executive Council works with Trade Unions on both sides of the political and religious divide and ensures that all possible steps are taken on our behalf, to assist in any way necessary towards reaching a peaceful resolve to the current situation.

We especially acknowledge the profound affect the ongoing situation and potential for escalation will have on the lives of women and children living in the West Bank and in Gaza.

**REGION 7
CARRIED**

4. MERSEYSIDE DISPUTE

This Women's AGM vehemently oppose the co-responding pilot scheme which began on 8th November in Merseyside.

We fully support the existing Union policy, which opposes first and co-responder schemes operating in the British Fire Service.

This AGM gives its full support to the current ballot in Merseyside and any action that their Brigade Committee deems necessary.

**REGION 10
CARRIED**