

THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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UNION ANNOUNCES TWO FOUR-DAY BLOCKS OF STRIKE ACTION

Merseyside fire crews will be taking two four-day blocks of strike action. The first four days will start at 10.00 on 20 September and finish on 10.00 on 24 September and the second set of four days will start at 10.00 on 24 September and finish at 10.00 on 28 September.

The strike is in opposition to proposed cuts which include:

Cutting 120 firefighter posts – one in ten of the workforce –in addition to the 68 posts cut last year;

Introducing a 96 hour week at some fire stations;

Cutting 15 emergency fire control operator posts –one in four of the workforce

Axing four fire engines at night time;

There will be fewer rescue appliances, fewer firefighters on fire engines and a longer wait for crews to arrive at all 999 emergencies.

Les Skarratts, Merseyside FBU brigade secretary said: “The fire authority plans to press ahead with massive cuts to our fire service. Merseyside fire crews are equally determined to take whatever strike action we need to take to stop these cuts.

“These cuts are fundamentally wrong and will impact on our safety and public safety. The impact of these cuts will be felt across Merseyside’s 999 emergency response fire service.

“The loss of one in ten full time posts – on top of the 68 lost last year – will have a major impact. Emergency response fire crews will be much more thinly spread and will have to wait longer for support crews to arrive at incidents.

“Fire crews could be left in the impossible position of standing back and doing nothing at incidents until the necessary resources arrive and risking the public, or ignoring basic safety procedures and risking themselves. Councillors and senior managers won’t have to make those choices, but frontline fire crews will and that is a disgraceful position to place rescue teams in.

“No one should be in any doubt about the strength of our resolve to stop these cuts. We can do that by striking or by negotiating, but we will not sit back and do nothing about a service we feel passionately about.”

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