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Employers' Secretary, Simon Pannell

## FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES National Employers

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**To: Chief Fire Officers  
Chief Executives/Clerks to Fire Authorities  
Chairs of Fire Authorities  
Directors of Human Resources**

**CC: Members of the Employers' Side of the NJC**

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3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017

### CIRCULAR EMP/5/17

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### **PAY CLAIM 2017**

1. Circular NJC/7/17 advised you of the NJC employees' side pay claim. A copy of the claim is attached for ease of reference ([Appendix A](#)).
2. Since then the opportunity has been taken to discuss the claim with Chairs and Chief Fire Officers from services across the UK at a number of regional meetings. The meetings were very well attended.
3. Following a number of employer and joint secretariat meetings, we write to advise you that over the weekend the employers made the attached offer in response to the claim ([Appendix B](#)), in the context of the work being undertaken through the NJC 'trials' continuing whilst negotiations are taking place. We are aware that this is being considered by the Executive Council of the Fire Brigades Union today.
4. For those who remember discussion at the regional meetings around the possibility of part of the stage one payment being on a non-consolidated basis, it became very clear early on in negotiations that such an approach would be met with immediate rejection and seen as indicative of a lack of real commitment.
5. You will note that any further increases will be dependent firstly upon reaching an agreement which builds upon the current broadening the role of the firefighter negotiation and the provision of additional funding from governments to meet the cost.
6. We will update you on the employees' side response in due course.
7. In the interim, should there be any media interest a copy of the employer press release is attached as too are a number of key messages ([Appendix C](#)). Both have been developed by the cross-organisation communications group and a copy of this circular has been provided to local fire and rescue service media team contacts, where known. Frequently Asked Questions will follow once the employees' side response is clear.

Yours faithfully,



**Gill Gittins**  
Principal Negotiating Officer

PAY CLAIM



Matt Wrack General Secretary  
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Our reference: MW/jh

**Letter sent by email to [Simon.Pannell@local.gov.uk](mailto:Simon.Pannell@local.gov.uk) and by first class post**

Mr S Pannell – Principal Adviser (Employment & Negotiations)  
Workforce Team  
Local Government Association  
Layden House  
76-86 Turnmill Street  
London  
EC1M 5LG

24 May 2017

Dear Simon

**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE PAY AND CONDITIONS: FBU CLAIM**

The NJC is due to meet in York on 1 June. This is the meeting at which we have normally discussed pay, and you will be aware that our pay settlement date is 1 July.

This year, this meeting follows a long discussion around the five workstreams which the NJC agreed to establish. We have found much of this dialogue very constructive, as both sides have sought to address the changing shape of our service and the direction it could take for the future.

As part of this work, the NJC agreed to the EMR trials and employees in the relevant fire and rescue services have been undertaking this work for a considerable time. As you will be aware, the discussions around MTF and emergency medical response (EMR) have been some of the more difficult.

In relation to EMR, in addition to the issues identified in the University of Hertfordshire's "*Broadening Responsibilities...*" report, we have set out in considerable detail our various safety and operational concerns, and these have started to be addressed through the technical working group. We have also set out our position that engagement in such new activity must be on a sustainable basis, including by means of addressing the issue of pay. We are now at the stage where this issue needs to be addressed at the NJC.

As you will be aware, the EMR trials have been extended on an ad hoc basis, but there is no formal agreement on this. If the employers' side intends to seek

any extension beyond 1 June, we would expect that case to be made to us at the NJC, with the supporting arguments, including how the various concerns of the employees' side will be met.

We draw your attention to the following:

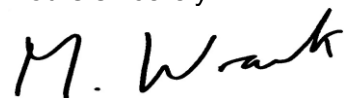
- Firefighters' pay has fallen significantly behind inflation, cutting real living standards.
- This has been exacerbated by increases to pension contributions and national insurance which have also hit the take-home pay of FBU members.
- There has already been a significant widening of the role, skills and expertise in our profession in all roles: wholetime, retained and control members, and including middle manager roles.
- There are other new skills and wider roles emerging such as EMR and MTFA.

In light of the above, the FBU seeks a response from the employers on the issue of pay and conditions which addresses the following claim:

1. NJC pay scales need to address the loss of real earnings since the imposition of the pay cap/freeze in 2010.
2. NJC pay scales need to take account of the additional work undertaken by employees since 2003.
3. NJC pay scales need to address any broadening of the role maps or broadening of the work required of FBU members by their employer, which may include emerging potential new areas of work such as EMR and MTFA.
4. There is an urgent need to improve reward mechanisms for retained firefighters, including an increase in the retaining fee.
5. In order to ensure that NJC rates of pay do not fall behind in real and/or relative terms in the future and to provide stability in the sector alongside security for Grey Book personnel, there should be a pay formula.

We trust you will give our views the necessary attention and we look forward to a positive response from you on 1 June.

Yours sincerely



**MATT WRACK**  
General Secretary

cc: Gill Gittins - Principal Negotiating Officer

MW/jh

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National Employers**

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Employers' Secretary, Simon Pannell

Matt Wrack  
General Secretary  
Fire Brigades Union  
Bradley House  
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Kingston upon Thames  
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1 July 2017

Dear Matt,

The Employers' Side of the NJC has now had the opportunity to undertake three regional consultation meetings and to consider its response to your claim made at the start of June.

We should state from the outset that the Employers' Side shares your view that firefighters deserve to be paid more.

Developing a longer term deal which builds upon the current position under the joint broadening the role of the firefighter commitment and delivers both greater flexibility within roles and increased pay levels will inevitably take time. It is important that both sides of the NJC remain fully engaged in that discussion and that work currently being undertaken through the trials continue.

In order to support this, the Employers' Side is making the following offer:

- (i) **Stage 1** – to immediately apply a 2.0% increase on basic pay across the board with effect from 1st July 2017. This includes CPD payments. This will allow time to reach a permanent agreement that can meet both parties' aspirations.
- (ii) We expect to be able to reach a deal through the NJC which would: build upon the current broadening the role of firefighters negotiations; agree a permanent position; and include how the arrangements for the pay awards for 2018, 2019, and possibly 2020 will be staged fitting into an overall pay framework (including that relating to Retained Duty System firefighters).
- (iii) **Stage 2** - Assuming the deal referred to in (ii) above is reached, we will apply a further 3% increase with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 as part of the 2017 settlement.
- (iv) However as you are aware fire and rescue services have had to deal with significantly reduced finances over recent years. Therefore, to be absolutely clear, in order to be able to apply the stage 2 increase it will also have to be subject to governments across the UK providing funding to enable us to do so.

- (v) We would want to urgently discuss with all four UK governments as soon as possible, both jointly and where appropriate separately, how the service can be put on a firm financial footing to enable change to be achieved. The role of the service has evolved and needs to continue to evolve.
- (vi) In the interim, the current positions in respect of work being undertaken by employees through the trials and that related to MTFA would need to be maintained throughout the negotiation.

Yours sincerely,



**Simon Pannell**

**NJC Employers' Side Secretary**

## NATIONAL EMPLOYERS MEDIA STATEMENT

### **ClIr Nick Chard, Spokesman for the NJC Employers Group, said;**

“In recent weeks, firefighters have responded to some of the most challenging calls imaginable – from terrorist incidents to the tragedy at Grenfell Tower. Their bravery inspires us all, as does their determination to rescue those in danger.”

“We share the view of firefighters, and the unions, that they deserve to be paid more.”

“At the start of this journey, we have offered a figure which is double that originally planned for in budgets. This will be very challenging for fire and rescue authorities who will need to consider how to fund this additional expenditure. But it is a clear sign of our commitment. “

"However, fire and rescue services have had to deal with significantly reduced finances over recent years. Therefore, in order to be able to apply further increases, we will need to urgently call upon governments across the UK, to provide funding which will enable us to do so and deliver change."

"We are firmly committed to ensuring higher levels of pay for firefighters as soon as possible, in the context of agreeing a deal on a new pay framework, which recognises fire authority and community needs around greater flexibility, and our shared aspirations in terms of increased pay for firefighters. We are happy to work with the FBU in doing so."

### Notes for Editors

The National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services is the joint body that sets the pay, terms and conditions framework for uniformed employees in the fire service across the UK. The Fire Brigades Union represents employee interests.

### KEY MESSAGES

- Firefighters have responded to some of the most challenging calls imaginable in recent weeks. Whether it's responding to terrorist incidents or the tragedy of Grenfell Tower, their bravery inspires all of us, as does their determination to rescue those in danger.
- We share the view of firefighters, and the union, that they deserve to be paid more.
- At the start of this journey, we've offered a figure which at 2.0% is double what was originally planned for in budgets. This will be incredibly challenging for fire and rescue authorities to fund, and they will need to consider how to fund this additional expenditure which may mean difficult decisions about resources. However, what it does signal is our firm commitment to increase reward for firefighters. Subject to additional government funding and an agreement on the breadth of the role for the future, we've also offered a further three per cent increase on 1<sup>st</sup> April next year. Discussion would also take place on how increases in pay could be staged over the following 2/3 years.
- We are firmly committed to ensuring higher levels of pay for firefighters, as part of broadening the role they do. What needs to happen now is that Central Governments across the UK need to provide funding which will enable us to provide increases in pay, deliver change, put our fire and rescue services on a firm financial footing, and create a fair framework for future pay. We're happy to work with the FBU in doing so.