



Matt Wrack General Secretary
Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road,
Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE
fbu.org.uk | @fbunational
020 8541 1765 | office@fbu.org.uk

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To: All members

Dear Brother/Sister

Pay offer consultation with members

You should all be aware that all members of our union are being consulted regarding the pay offer for 2017. Some of you, however, may have returned from leave. The documentation can be found by following this link:

<https://www.fbu.org.uk/circular/2017hoc0442ad/fbu-pay-consultation-23-august-13-september-2017>

I have received a number of emails in which I have been asked to clarify certain aspects of the offer and to give an insight into discussions which have taken place at the executive council.

Firstly, it is not for me as your President to pedal a position. It is however right and proper that the concerns that you have raised with me are responded to honestly and where you have sought my opinion on the process, mechanisms and ramifications, to give that opinion.

The role of the executive council is enshrined in our union's rules and during my tenure as President and Vice-President I have emphasised that the EC should always be prepared to put their name to any offer or arrangement that they see as the best way forward for the membership.

It is not a small responsibility but failure to do this in my opinion is neglecting the high office bestowed upon them by you the members. I as president will not tolerate this.

On the subject of pay: The role of the executive council is to pursue the best possible offer for our members. No matter how bad, or good, that offer may be from the employers, the Executive is duty-bound to strive on your behalf to achieve as much as can be achieved. Any improvements need to be teased out if it is possible. The notion that any first offer should be acceptable to them would mean that they were not doing their job on your behalf.

In simple terms, the same principles are at work as with the sale of a house or any other item: the employers will try to pull our price down and we as a union will try our best to get the best price.

It is only when the negotiations have been exhausted and when the offer on the table is known to be the final one to be made, that we should consider it. The executive council believe that the employers' offer is the last one they will make on pay (at this stage of the process) and therefore have recommended it to the membership. This is why it is a different position to that of two months ago, following the EC meeting on 3 July.

At this juncture I would ask you all to put yourselves in the position of the executive council who I have watched push hard trying to secure the best deal possible for our members.

They have achieved an offer which breaks the government pay cap and potentially positions us to achieve an even higher settlement for this year, together with a pay deal for the longer term. They have strenuously sought to improve the offer. Being aware that no further improvement would be offered it would have been lunacy not to take this back to the membership. The EC have done so and as such the membership will now decide.

I would ask you all to reflect on this. In my view, **it would have been entirely improper** for the EC to have rejected the offer on 23 August without providing you, the members, the opportunity to decide upon the final offer however marginal the change from the original one.

Two months ago the national employers made an offer to us which was rejected as I would expect. We embarked on attempts to have them better that offer and although some aspects were clarified we failed to move them. Therefore at the close of play their original offer was the one which has remained.

The offer is two per cent now with a possible further three per cent on this year's pay with the employers' commitment to provide the details of a longer-term pay deal before the union commits to changing the role of the firefighter.

The alternative undoubtedly, would be an offer of one percent with little or no prospect of successfully seeking additional funding or a longer-term pay deal.

The offer in front of us means that the two percent [back-dated to 1 July 2017] would be on the basis of the current trials of EMR and other work being extended while funding was being sought.

During this time the number of NJC trials would not be extended nor would those stations currently not participating in them be required to start doing so.

Members will be concerned that the second stage, i.e. the further three per cent, would only be achieved if funding was secured. But equally, if there is no stage 2 payment and/or there is an unacceptable longer term pay arrangement- then there will be **no agreement on broadening the firefighter's role and the trials will end immediately**. In addition, should funding not be made available the trials will cease immediately.

The executive council has for some time now been aware of the lessening number of fire calls, the subsequent attacks on jobs and the closure of fire stations along with the reduction of appliances. As part of a twin streamed strategy the executive council saw broadening the role, including EMR and MTFA, as a means to secure jobs and further our aims on pay.

On the assumption that one per cent is not acceptable, I believe our options are clear.

Option 1 Receive the two percent and await the outcome of the funding for the remainder. Members will then be able to make a decision as to whether or not the final package is sufficient to deal with the contractual changes required to broaden the firefighter role map.

Option 2 Reject the two percent and embark on a robust pay campaign with full membership buy-in. This is what you will be voting on at your branches. They really are the only options open to us. The Executive are not precious about your decision however they are all of the opinion that you should participate fully in the consultation process and be prepared to stand by your decision no matter what it entails.

This is a debate which should take place at branch meetings and not on the pages of twitter in full view of our employers and the government. Personally I find some of the postings to be unworthy of our members and personal attacks of this nature have no place in this union. Please ensure all voices are heard.

Yours in unity.



Alan McLean
President

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