



Matt Wrack General Secretary

Fire Brigades Union

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TO: All Members

Dear Brother/Sister

Pay and conditions: National Joint Council (NJC) discussions continue

You will recall that in relation to pay for 2017/18, a 1% increase to NJC pay rates has currently been applied. In line with the policy decisions of the union, talks with the national employers on the scope of the work of the fire and rescue service have continued. These continue to attempt to address pay, including pay for 2017/18.

These discussions are broad in nature and arose from the concern of our conference to ensure that our service is able to adapt to the changing risks we face so as to protect a publicly owned and accountable fire and rescue service and the professional jobs which should go with it. There are clear links between these considerations and the pay which is appropriate for those delivering the service. The employers have always been aware of this aspect of our position.

In relation to potential 'new' areas of fire and rescue service work, there is not always agreement between the union and employers about what is currently contractual work and what areas are potentially new. So the union has considered:

- Activities which can be considered contractual but which have expanded in recent years and for which addition funding might be sought.
- Activities which are clearly non-contractual.
- Activities which are new or have developed in recent years around which there might be disagreement. In some cases this includes activities which members have taken on voluntarily or have in some way been unilaterally introduced by local FRSs.

It has broadly been accepted by both sides that to make our service sustainable and for any long-term viable broadening of the role of the service, sustainable funding is required. This is a key feature of this process and these discussions. This involves discussion with central government and devolved administrations and there are obviously no guarantees.

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Whilst the work carried out between the NJC joint secretaries has not yet been finalised to a point where a report of the work undertaken can be provided to the respective sides, there has been progress albeit with some issues still needing to be resolved.

The talks have focused on the areas of activity considered by the NJC work-streams with the experiences and lessons from the NJC trials in respect of EMR informing the joint secretaries' considerations.

Making the case to ministers

The issue of funding is central to any sustainable broadening of the role due to the need to address the issues of pay and wider resourcing any new work (equipment, training, procedures etc.) So central governments funding remains a key issue. The union, with the employers, has already made presentations to MPs at Westminster on these issues. It is our intention to approach ministers in each part of the UK in the coming weeks and to support this with the lobbying of MPs, MSPs and assembly members. I am sure FBU members will appreciate that in the current political climate this process is extremely difficult and there are no guarantees

There is a meeting of the NJC at the end of February and it is hoped that more detail will be available by then in relation to any progress made in talks between the employers and the FBU and in our dialogue with government ministers.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally

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

Matt Wrack
General Secretary