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To: All Members

Pay Offer Accepted – Work Begins on Pay Reform and Progression Structure Across the Fire and Rescue Service

Dear Members,

At our 2025 FBU Conference, delegates unanimously agreed an Executive Council emergency resolution on pay, setting out the union's position on the 2025 pay offer and the vital next steps in relation to reforming the national pay structure. This resolution now forms official union policy, and its implementation is the top industrial priority of the union.

The policy is attached to this circular and we urge all members to read and discuss its content. Below, we provide the key context and explain the work now underway to deliver on its objectives.

The 2025 Pay Offer and What Comes Next

Following protracted discussions and pressure from our union, the National Employers made a formal pay offer to the NJC on 23 April 2025. This offer included a headline pay award which, following a consultative ballot of members, was accepted by 82% on a turnout of 59%.

Crucially, the offer went beyond just an annual increase. It acknowledged a longstanding concern of the FBU, that the flat pay structure introduced in 2003 provides limited opportunity for pay progression, other than by recognition of skills within role. This structure has failed to keep pace with the complexity and demands of the modern firefighter role.

Conference formally recognised that the majority of members – whether wholetime, retained or control – are paid at competent firefighter/firefighter control rates, with very few routes to increase their earnings. Conference condemned all forms of pay inequality including disparities between Firefighter and Firefighter Control, the structure of CPD payments, and the ongoing problems relating to maternity and paternity pay, retained duty system pay, and officer terms and conditions.

In accepting the 2025 offer, the national employers made a commitment to jointly work on negotiating improvements to the pay structure. Conference welcomed this commitment and confirmed that future negotiations must address both structural reform and the real-terms erosion of pay since 2010. To deliver this, significant new investment in the service will be required.

Summary of the Emergency Pay Resolution

Conference instructed the Executive Council to:

- Begin intensive negotiations on pay structure reform following the close of Conference 2025.
- Ensure this work is the main negotiating priority over the coming year.
- Report progress to members following each NJC/MMNB meeting — in June, October and February.
- Progress wider outstanding issues including retained pay, control pay, CPD, maternity/paternity provisions, officer pay and apprenticeships.
- Ensure any final proposals on the pay structure or national Rolemaps are put to members for agreement.
- Demand that the pay uplift for 2025 be implemented in full by all fire and rescue services from 1 July 2025.

Finally, Conference was clear: if sufficient progress is not made by Conference 2026 or sooner if required, then the union will reconvene Conference to debate and determine the next steps, including consideration of all forms of industrial action to achieve our objectives.

Negotiations Begin - NJC and Executive Council meetings

Following the close of Conference, the General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary have already held meetings with the national employers to begin this critical work.

The NJC met formally on 5 June 2025, where the FBU set out the union's expectations, as agreed by Conference. A number of priority areas were agreed by both sides, with a shared commitment to progress the work at pace, with the ambition of delivering a reformed pay structure by 1 July 2026.

In parallel, the Executive Council has met several times to oversee and direct this work. At its June business meeting, the EC agreed the framework and strategy for advancing pay structure reform. That paper, now adopted as the union's initial strategy, outlines the following areas for development.

Pay Structure Negotiations - Programme and Priority Areas

Following the acceptance of the 2025 offer, the EC and Conference agreed that discussions on reforming the pay structure must move forward urgently and comprehensively. The key areas of work now include:

1. Mapping the current national picture
 - a. Skills
 - b. Pay variance
2. Journey from development to competent
 - a. Timeframes
 - b. Progressional points
3. Pay Spine
 - a. Contractual pay spine
 - b. Specific roles – including managers/officers

4. Role maps
 - a. Broadening of the current nationally agreed role maps
 - b. Competency
5. Terminology
 - a. Re-frame language to enable clarity and understanding
6. Leadership
 - a. Development
 - b. Progression
 - c. Conduct and culture
7. Control
 - a. Rolemaps
 - b. Pay
8. Continual Progressional Development (CPD)
 - a. Difference across sector
 - b. Nationally agreed transition to pay structure reform
9. Driving change
 - a. Making the case to the sector
 - b. Making the case to government(s)
 - c. Investment

In parallel, the EC is also reviewing how best to consult and involve our wider union structures as this work advances.

Future Activity and Member Involvement

To maintain momentum and ensure union-wide involvement, a programme of activity has been established:

- 19 June 2025: A full-day meeting of the Joint Secretaries to advance technical aspects of pay structure reform.
- 22 July 2025: EC Strategy Day - dedicated to Pay Structure Reform and the Role of the Firefighter.
- 20 August 2025: All-Officials Meeting (in person, Central London) — to review EC strategy and provide updates on progress.
- 7 October 2025: National Joint Council (NJC) and Middle Managers Negotiating Body (MMNB) meeting in Cardiff.
- 8 October 2025: Second EC Strategy Day - reviewing progress and preparing sector engagement.
- Autumn/Winter 2025: Anticipated further All-Officials meetings and national briefings.

In addition:

- EC members will report directly to Regional Committees on progress.
- Head Office officials will also attend regional meetings to brief officials, answer questions and gather input.
- The General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary will look to visit all regional committees before February 2026 to ensure full engagement with members and representatives.

This Is the Union's Number One Industrial Priority

Improving the national pay structure is not a side project, it is the central industrial priority of the FBU for the next 12 months. It is about securing meaningful recognition for the skill, commitment and professionalism of our members. It is about fairness. It is about the future of the job.

This will not be easy. It will require hard negotiation, political lobbying, and – above all – unity. The Executive Council and senior officials are committed to keeping all officials and members fully informed and engaged as this work develops.

We thank members for your continued support and solidarity as we move forward with this vital work.

In unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Steve Wright', written in a cursive style.

Steve Wright
General Secretary