

Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill St
London, EC1M 5LG
Telephone 020 7187 7335
Employers' Secretary, Simon Pannell

FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES National Employers

Matt Wrack
General Secretary
Fire Brigades Union
Bradley House
68 Coombe Rd
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey, KT2 7AE

14th August 2017

Dear Matt,

Since we last wrote to you on 26th July we have continued as a Joint Secretariat to explore a number of issues relating to the pay offer. Both parties felt it would be helpful for the employers' side to set out in writing its position on a number of the points discussed.

On the matter of commitment, we reiterated that the National Employers are firmly committed to delivering a significant increase in salary levels in the context of the broadening the role negotiation. As a firm indication of that intent we committed to immediate application of a first stage increase of 2.0% (effective from 1st July), which is double the approach expected by all the UK governments and given the financial position of fire and rescue authorities would be difficult for them to manage. Nonetheless it was clear when we consulted all Fire Authority Chairs and Chief Fire Officers from across the UK that they fully supported such an early commitment. In making that determination the employers' side has also been mindful of the point made by the employees' side that a number of your members have now been involved in the trials approved by the NJC for up to two years.

As I set out in my letter of 17th July, focus will then need to be on UK governments to provide additional funding. This will be affected by employee commitment to the trials as well as perception of the fire service as a trusted partner with other organisations. Inevitably anything that diminishes either can only impact negatively upon our ability to secure additional funding and therefore why the first stage of the pay offer was also linked to continuation of the trials while negotiations continue to identify and reach an agreement on this broadening the role negotiation and to secure funding such that the employers' could pay the second stage (3.0%) in April.

We believe it is important to present the best possible case to governments both in writing and in person. So, for example:

- The employees' and employers' sides of the NJC have previously written jointly to the government representatives in England, in Scotland, in Wales and in Northern Ireland
- The LGA has raised the matter with the Minister for Policing and the Fire Service at the Home Office both through its National Employer representatives and through its Fire Commission. It will also will draw attention to it in its submission to the Treasury on financial pressures, in advance of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

- Mindful of government processes in respect of funding requests, we have already jointly commissioned research specialists *New Economy* to build upon the work undertaken by the *University of Hertfordshire*, developing the financial case further to clearly evidence that work such as that undertaken through the trials is of value. That work has already commenced. To date *New Economy* has
 - reviewed the *University of Hertfordshire* report;
 - undertaken conversations with a number of key people;
 - started to develop its analysis of the complex data available, and
 - is giving consideration to whether a further data collection exercise will be required.

But as we are all aware this will be a complex piece of work and we must allow them time to develop a robust case in order for it to be useful. *New Economy* are aware of the urgency and realistically expect that to be available at the end of October. We have a number of points jointly scheduled with them along the way so all parties can be assured that the work is on track and touch base on any issues that arise along the way which will require resolution quickly.

- We propose that we jointly put in place arrangements for an event, or events, after the Westminster recess to lobby MPs directly. It is clearly important that we ensure we have the best case we can ready by then.
- In a similar vein, to explore with you how this might be replicated in respect of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Turning to the second and subsequent stages set out in the pay offer. We share the view that clarity is important and are happy to put in place all that we can to ensure that clarity can be provided at the earliest point possible. Setting aside for a moment the position above in respect funding, we will also need to reach an agreement to conclude this broadening the role negotiation. This is within the control of the NJC and we expect that by November we can jointly have identified the scope of activities which would form the basis of the deal and any areas that would consequently need to be revised within the rolemaps, allowing the substantive revisions to be drafted shortly thereafter.

The above matters address the issues in respect of this year's pay settlement and our offer of an immediate 2% back-dated to 1 July 2017 and our ambition for an overall 5% pay award within the current pay settlement year (2017/18). Whilst the employers' side appreciates and shares your desire for greater clarity around the level of pay increases in 2018, 2019 and potentially 2020, as indicated in my letter of 17th July, it is impossible to set those figures at this time. We can only do so when the position in respect of funding is clear. We can however confirm our expectation that, as with 2017, the increases will be in excess of the 1.0% figure applied in recent years.

Clearly, if sufficient funding arrangements by governments are not in place, each side of the NJC will need to consider its respective position. We are clear that would include the employees' side reviewing the continuation of its support for the trials.

In the light of the above further information; the content of my letter of 17th July; and the progress being made within the joint Technical Working Group, we would ask the Fire Brigades Union to reconsider its decision to withdraw support for the trials from the 24th August and to also reconsider its position in respect of the pay offer.

As I said in my last letter we sincerely hope this can happen as given the significant implications for seeking additional funding it would unfortunately leave us with little choice but to revert for 2017 to an offer of 1.0% and that is definitely not where the employers' side would want to be.

For the avoidance of doubt, the contractual position in relation to the existing trials continuing would remain as set out in the national trials agreement – *'In order to facilitate such trials it is jointly recognised that such work will be regarded as part of the core job for the duration of the trial in each of the respective trial fire authorities'*.

Yours sincerely,

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

Simon Pannell
Employers' Side Secretary