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Executive Council Policy Statement – Pay Reform

Conference notes the Executive Council (EC) emergency resolution on pay agreed at Conference 2025 subsequent to the membership acceptance of the national employers' pay offer following a consultative ballot.

Conference recognises that the 2025 resolution established pay reform as the union's number one industrial priority and mandated intensive negotiations through the National Joint Council (NJC) and the Middle Managers Negotiating Body (MMNB).

Conference reaffirms that the flat pay structure introduced in 2003 is failing to provide meaningful progression within role, has contributed to inequality across duty systems and roles, and has not kept pace with economic pressures on those working in the UK Fire and Rescue Service (UKFRS), and the complexity, risk and professionalism required of the modern UKFRS.

Conference believes that pay reform is essential to:

- restore fairness following years of real terms pay erosion
- reward professionalism, competence, development and accredited skills within role
- strengthen recruitment and retention
- provide recognised specialist and alternative career pathways, not solely managerial progression
- underpin a nationally agreed, transparent and justifiable framework for pay and conditions
- reinforce national sectoral collective bargaining, following attacks from previous governments.

Conference notes that, since Conference 2025:

- the EC has met regularly to direct and oversee negotiations
- dedicated EC strategy sessions have been held to shape the union's approach
- Joint Secretaries meetings have taken place on a regular basis to progress technical and structural work
- national meetings of brigade and regional officials have been convened
- the Assistant General Secretary and President have undertaken regional briefings across the UK to report progress, gather feedback and answer questions directly from officials and members
- progress reports have been provided following NJC meetings, in line with Conference policy.

Conference recognises that, for the first time in decades, the national employers, the National Fire Chiefs Council, central government and the union are engaged in sustained discussions about reforming the national pay structure. This represents a significant opportunity which must not be squandered.

Conference notes that broad areas of shared discussion now include:

- the journey from development to competence and the potential for progressional pay points
- the future shape of the pay spine, including its application to all Grey Book roles
- the relationship between role maps, competency and pay



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- control roles and pay
 - continual professional development and its transition into a reformed structure
 - leadership development, culture and conduct
 - the need for national consistency, transparency and sustainability.

Conference further notes that regional meetings and officials' briefings have raised important questions and concerns about the detail, pace and implications of reform. Conference affirms that such feedback strengthens our position and must continue to shape the union's negotiating approach.

Conference is clear that:

- any reform must deliver tangible improvements in pay and progression for members
- reform must address existing inequalities, including disparities between roles and duty systems
- reform must not be used to erode nationally agreed terms and conditions
- safety principles and professional standards must remain central
- any final proposals affecting pay structures or nationally agreed role maps will be subject to member agreement.

Conference recognises that pay reform sits alongside the annual pay settlement, each requiring focused negotiation in its own right.

Conference notes that inflationary pressures, ongoing cost-of-living challenges, recruitment and retention issues, and sustained pressure on local authority finances form the backdrop to the 2026 pay round.

Conference therefore notes that, following agreement of a position at the February meeting of the NJC, and in advance of the June meeting, the employees' side has signalled its intention to commence discussions at joint secretariat level on the 2026 pay settlement.

Conference recognises that:

- early engagement is intended to inform discussions on both the 2026 pay award and structural reform, recognising that each must deliver in its own terms
- structured discussions will monitor economic conditions affecting members, funding, investment and progress on pay reform
- the objective is to secure a fair, timely and forward-looking settlement that supports the workforce and strengthens the service.

Conference believes that meaningful pay reform will require additional funding and sustained investment from governments across the UK. The case for reform must therefore be made not only within the NJC, but politically, to ministers and officials in Westminster and the devolved governments.

Conference instructs the Executive Council:

1. Continue intensive negotiations on pay reform, with the ambition of securing agreement on a new pay structure for implementation commencing in 2027.
2. Maintain pay reform as the union's central industrial priority.



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3. Progress discussions on the 2026 pay settlement in parallel, seeking a fair award that reflects economic conditions and members' expectations.
 4. Seek concrete assurances, interim measures and demonstrable progress at each stage of negotiation.
 5. Regularly report to members following NJC meetings and through national, regional and brigade briefings.
 6. Expand consultation and engagement as proposals develop, ensuring that officials and members are fully informed and able to shape the outcome.
 7. Develop and advance the joint case for investment in the fire and rescue service, engaging governments and political representatives at all levels.

Conference affirms that the EC will continue to report back on a regular basis.

Conference further affirms that members will have the final say on any proposed changes to pay structures or nationally agreed role maps.

Should it become apparent that sufficient progress is not being made, Conference will consider all available options to achieve our objectives, including the recall of Conference.

Conference therefore mandates the EC to continue negotiations on pay reform and the 2026 pay settlement in line with this policy, with the clear ambition of delivering a fair, progressive and professional national pay structure in 2027.

Executive Council