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NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

**To: Chief Fire Officers
Chief Executives/Clerks to Fire Authorities
Chairs of Fire Authorities
Directors of HR (Fire Authorities)**

Members of the National Joint Council

21 February 2017

CIRCULAR NJC/03/17

Dear Sir/Madam,

APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES

County Durham and Darlington FRS

1. There is a clear employer/employee shared interest in the success of the introduction of apprenticeships and the potential for them to assist the service in recruiting a younger, more diverse workforce.
2. At the recent meeting of the NJC, it considered a proposal from County Durham and Darlington FRS to work in partnership with the NJC on the introduction of the Business Fire Safety Apprenticeship scheme in that service and to communicate with other FRSs on the potential for its use more widely should individual FRSs wish to do so.
3. Members of the NJC were supportive of the proposal which will see the appointment of apprentices on an employee basis with CDDFRS from the point of recruitment and on the path to jobs as firefighters.
4. The NJC will now progress working in partnership with the CDDFRS both in terms of a level of external input as part of its own evaluation and in sharing information on the scheme more widely with other FRSs. Further information will follow.

Advanced Level Apprenticeship (Exercise and Fitness) – level 3

5. Members of the National Joint Council (NJC) and the Middle Managers Negotiating Body also welcomed an update on this apprenticeship scheme.
6. You will recall from circular NJC/4/16 that this scheme was developed by the FBU and rolled out to FRSs in partnership through the NJC. It provides existing employees with the opportunity to become fitness advisers, which supports the approach taken in the Best Practice Guide on Fitness (NJC/1/16). Students do not have to be FBU members or have already studied at level 2.

7. At present 21 FRS's in England are participating in the scheme with 418 people undertaking such apprenticeships. It is intended to increase both the number of FRSs and participants by July 17 (up to a further 250 people).
8. Due to the funding position unfortunately this opportunity can only be offered to FRAs in England at the present time. We continue to explore with the FBU whether it would be able to secure funding to provide something similar in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Yours faithfully

SIMON PANNELL
MATT WRACK
Joint Secretaries