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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

10 June 2016

CIRCULAR NJC/5/16

Dear Sir/Madam,

Co-responding and wider work trials

1. Individual trials have various end dates but the original over-arching trial period was intended to conclude on 30th June 2016.
2. Whilst substantial work has already taken place it is clear that there is still work to do before all pieces of the jigsaw can be in place. Continuing discussion has included:
 - the changing of government departments in England and the impact that has had on progressing funding issues
 - the need for a formal, more detailed, external evaluation of the trials and whether the technical author/s of that report would require further information/data
 - any impact or implications of the above or other considerations on the duration of the trials
3. Accordingly, consideration has been given to extending the NJC trial period.
4. As such, the NJC has agreed to extend the trial period for existing trials up to the end of February 2017 and to receive a further update at the meeting of the NJC that month.
5. The process of identifying an external party or parties to undertake a detailed evaluation is in hand.
6. The relevant workstream will reconvene to consider lessons learned so far and to explore what a potential permanent arrangement might look like in terms of identified best practice. It may also issue information before the end of the trial period if appropriate to do so e.g. on the matter of support for co-responding employees in handling difficult situations post the incident (potential mental health awareness and support). Feedback on the trials has suggested that the

environment co-responding takes place in is very different to attendance at more regular fire service incidents. The workstream will also consider issues relating specifically to control staff and the impact of handling a wider range of calls.

7. The NJC would remind FRAs of the importance of local on-going discussion between management and union representatives in order to learn from each other how well a trial is progressing, lessons learned etc.
8. Employer and employee representatives will work together to inform and lobby wider audiences on the work of the NJC and its workstreams.

Yours faithfully
SIMON PANNELL
MATT WRACK
Joint Secretaries