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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

3 June 2016

CIRCULAR NJC/2/16

Dear Sir/Madam,

Pay, terms and conditions commitment - update

1. This circular provides an update on the matter of the pay, terms and conditions commitment work currently being undertaken by the NJC.
2. You will recall that the NJC has agreed the following commitment:

'Both Sides commit to work jointly on changes identified by each Side to ensure that there is a pay framework alongside terms and conditions in the fire and rescue service which reflect the responsibilities of, and current and future demands on, the service and the profession.'
3. It was recognised that this will include consideration of how the workforce's skills and commitment can best be utilised, including the type of activities undertaken and the potential to build upon, and expand, this piece of work to encompass a more wide-ranging and strategic look to the future.
4. Substantial work has already been undertaken including meetings at Secretariat and NJC joint lead member level, a survey of fire authorities to ascertain what happens at present and aspirations for the future, and formation of a number of workstreams, all of which formed phase 1 of joint discussion.
5. In order to foster full and open discussion, the workstreams were charged with developing potential areas of work for introduction at national level on a 'without commitment' basis under the following headings:
 - i. Environmental challenges – e.g. flooding, inland water safety, snow, wild fires
 - ii. Emergency medical response – e.g. co-responding, falls, on-site trauma care, provision of community training
 - iii. Multi agency emergency response – e.g. MTFA, joint working, any issues falling out of JESIP
 - iv. Youth and other social engagement work – e.g. arson reduction, working with risk of offending youth groups
 - v. Inspections and enforcement – e.g. schools, illegal homes, crown properties, expansion of unregulated business use, related fire safety advice

Current position

6. Discussion at Joint Secretariat level continues on meshing together of the outcomes from the workstreams, and the viability of any potential funding streams.
7. At meetings yesterday, members of the National Joint Council and the Middle Managers Negotiating Body welcomed the update below and the progress made.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE WORKSTREAM

8. NJC members agreed as part of this second phase work that FRAs would be able to submit expressions of interest to the Joint Secretaries to carry out trials arising from the work of the Emergency Medical Response workstream which could focus on co-responding and/or wider work.
9. The concept of trials was further developed at Joint Secretary level and details issued to FRAs. This included reference to broad consensus across all of the workstreams that a set of over-arching assurances would need to put in place in order to facilitate rolling out the proposed activities - for example provision of appropriate training and equipment (where relevant) and assurances around personal liability and pension issues. The principle of control staff involvement in mobilisation was also a factor. In order to facilitate such trials it was 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. Authorities were advised of the position in circular NJC/13/15.
10. A substantial number of FRAs are now operating trials approved by the NJC, giving a current total of 31:

Bedfordshire	Mid & West Wales
Berkshire	Norfolk
Cambridgeshire	North Wales
Cleveland	Northumberland
Derbyshire	Nottinghamshire
Dorset and Wiltshire	Oxfordshire
Durham and Darlington	Scotland
Essex	South Wales
Gloucestershire	South Yorkshire
Greater Manchester	Staffordshire
Hertfordshire	Surrey
Humberside	Suffolk
Lancashire	Tyne and Wear
Leicestershire	West Midlands
London	West Yorkshire
Merseyside	

11. They range from co-responding only (either in specific areas or across a service) including wholetime and/or retained personnel, to trials that include much wider work such as detailed below:
 - Slips, trips and falls assessments and offering preventative measures to reduce the risk of injury.
 - Winter warmth assessments including offering fire and flu advice to reduce the number of excess winter deaths.
 - Improving community response to cardiac arrest patients by offering Heartstart advice, which teaches CPR and other emergency life-saving skills and allowing the British Heart Foundation the opportunity to use FRS premises to carry out courses for the general public.
 - Offering assistance to health partners by supporting bariatric people in terms of lifting those that have fallen.

- Training of staff in Dementia Awareness becoming a Dementia Friendly organisation. Offering advice and referral opportunities to members of the community that it is felt would benefit from assistance.
 - Offering alcohol harm and reduction advice as well as signposting individuals that it is felt would benefit from help in this area.
 - Offering smoking cessation advice as well as signposting individuals it is felt would benefit from help in this area.
 - Providing advice and promoting local activities to residents in order to reduce loneliness and isolation.
12. The first data capture exercise was undertaken in May 2016. 20 out of the 31 FRAs involved in the trials were asked to provide the pre-specified data they agreed to provide when initially seeking approval for the trial.
 13. Data was requested from the start of each trial up to the end of March 2016. This excluded 11 FRAs whose trials would not have started during that period or had recently started and therefore insufficient data would be available.
 14. All 20 FRAs submitted their responses to the online survey on time and some of the key findings are highlighted below:
 - 17 out of the 20 FRA trials were providing assistance to the most serious cardiac and respiratory arrest incidents (Red 1 calls)
 - 422 wholetime (WT) fire stations and 459 retained duty system (RDS) stations are involved in the trials
 - 16,700 WT, 6203 RDS and 748 control staff have been involved in the trials
 - Out of the 39,625 incidents recorded by the 20 respondent trial areas over this period 9,543 of them have been co-responding incidents (5979 WT, 3562 RDS)
 - Firefighters attended 3300 serious incidents involving; Chest pain/ heart condition/ cardiac arrest) and a further 1320 incidents involving breathing difficulties / impairment / respiratory arrest
 - Firefighters were on the scene first in 49% of the incidents reports, whilst the ambulance service was first on the scene at 40% of recorded incidents (11% were 'unknown')
 - Trial FRAs were asked the number of times they perceived that firefighters had "potentially made a life-saving difference by delivering co-responding" – the interim findings suggest this happened on 2264 occasions.
 - Of the wider work, firefighters were involved in 72,510 separate 'incidences', the highest percentages being involved in winter warmth assessments; fitting risk reduction equipment; loneliness and isolation visits; home safety visits; safety and wellbeing checks and slips, trips and falls.

Extension of trial period

15. Individual trials have various end dates but the original over-arching NJC trial period was set up with a view to finishing on 30th June 2016.
16. 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
17. The potential to extend the trial period remains under discussion.

External trial evaluation

18. Contact has also been made with a number of potential external providers in order to identify an appropriate person or person to undertake both the interim and main evaluation reports. This work will include setting out a detailed business case.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES WORKSTREAM

19. This workstream is currently progressing the work on national guidance on welfare arrangements when working at major incidents outside of the individual's home service. This work is being undertaken together with the Multi-Agency Response workstream.

MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE WORKSTREAM

20. This workstream has met twice recently to assess where the work on MTF operational guidance (that is taking place elsewhere) is up to. The group will meet again shortly to resume consideration of that issue. In addition the workstream is working together with the Environmental Challenges workstream on the drafting of national guidance on welfare arrangements.

CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENTS

21. You will recall earlier communications with government ministers with responsibility for fire matters in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Whilst initial responses were not as supportive as the NJC would wish, further contact has been made in England with the Home Secretary (given the transfer of fire policy matters from DCLG to the Home Office). Further letters will also be sent to ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Yours faithfully
SIMON PANNELL
MATT WRACK
Joint Secretaries