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Secretary, Simon Pannell

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FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES National Employers

To: Chief Fire Officers
Chief Executives/Clerks to Fire Authorities
Chairs of Fire Authorities
Directors of Human Resources

CC: Members of the Employers' Side of the NJC

15th August 2017

CIRCULAR EMP/8/17

Dear Sir/Madam,

PAY OFFER 2017 - UPDATE

Background

1. Circular [EMP/7/17](#) advised that the Employees' Side of the NJC had decided to reject the pay offer 'in its current form'. Furthermore, the Fire Brigades Union intended to instruct its members to withdraw from involvement in the work being undertaken through the trials set up under the auspices of the NJC, with effect from 24h August 2017.

Current position

2. Since then, discussion has continued and as a consequence the attached letter was provided to the Employees' Side on 14th August to provide further clarification and to once again ask that the Employees' Side reconsider its decisions in respect of continuance of the trials and acceptance of the pay offer (**Appendix A**). The letter did not alter the terms of the offer but rather provided further information.
3. Attached is a copy of a circular issued by the FBU to its members earlier today (**Appendix B**). The circular suggests there may be '*...the potential to adopt a revised position*'. However as part of that consideration it will be writing to the Employers' Side '*...in order to assess whether its (the FBU) understanding of the information provided is correct*'.
4. We await that letter and will keep you updated as matters progress.

Yours faithfully,



Gill Gittins
Principal Negotiating Officer

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Employers' Secretary, Simon Pannell

APPENDIX A

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 cursive script, appearing to read "Simon Pannell".

Simon Pannell
Employers' Side Secretary



Matt Wrack General Secretary
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Circular: 2017HOC0425AD

Date: 15 August 2017

To: All Members

Dear Brother / Sister

UPDATE ON PAY – EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING - 14 AUGUST 2017

The Executive Council met yesterday and discussed information and clarifications received from the national employers' side.

The Executive Council felt that the information was such that there was a real potential for the Union to adopt a revised position on the pay offer and the suspension of the trials, which would be consistent with the outcomes of the recent round of membership consultation.

We are very mindful that an agreement on broadening the work performed by firefighters will not be settled on the basis of 2%, or the 5% for 2017, but must be in the wider context of a known pay arrangement for future years. We have notified the employer's side previously that we welcome their acknowledgement of this fact.

The Executive Council resolved that the national union will write to the employers' side in order to be able to assess whether our understanding of the information was correct and in order to ascertain whether the potential for an agreement can be realised.

The Executive Council was firm in its commitment to find a mutually agreeable solution with the employers. The Executive Council is clear on the objectives demanded by the membership, which are premised on securing an acceptable increase for firefighters in respect of a pay settlement for 2017, but also, importantly, for future years.

Head Office will be writing to the employers' side shortly and if a satisfactory response is secured will then take the necessary steps. However, for the avoidance of doubt:

Until and unless we have received a satisfactory response from the employers' side, the position remains unchanged i.e. the suspension of the EMR trials and the wider work will commence on 24 August 2017.

The Executive Council will ensure that members are kept fully informed of all developments and is committed to consulting members at all the key stages.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Dark', with a horizontal line above it.

ANDY DARK
Assistant General Secretary

AD/jh