

Safest People, Safest Places

## COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

27 SEPTEMBER 2017

County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



## NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE TRIAL AND PAY NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

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### REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT

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#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide members with an update on the emergency medical response (EMR) element of the National Joint Council (NJC) trials and national pay negotiations.

#### BACKGROUND

2. The NJC trial covered two areas: EMR in partnership with the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS); and wider health prevention work.
3. EMR commenced at Consett, Seaham and Darlington stations on 11 January 2016, at Stanhope utilising the Community Safety Responders from 7 March 2016 and following an extension of the trial, at Barnard Castle and Middleton-in-Teesdale from 1 December 2016.
4. In October 2016, the Service was successful in securing funding from the Systems Resilience Group (SRG), now known as Local Accident and Emergency Delivery Boards (LADB), to cover the costs of the extension of the trial from July 2016. This funding was fully utilised by August 2017 and the Service has covered the costs of the continuation of EMR since that date; albeit call volumes have significantly reduced. Table 1 below illustrates EMR call volumes.

**Table 1: EMR call volumes for CDDFRS**

Year	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
2016	947	841	647	685
2017	502	441	259 (Jul-Aug)	

5. On 21 March 2017, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) held a recall conference to consider the national consultation it had undertaken with its members regarding broadening the role of a firefighter, which included the continuation, or not, of the NJC EMR trial.

6. As previously reported to the Authority, the Employers side of the NJC issued Circular EMP/3/17 on 24 March 2017 which explained that the FBU had agreed an extension of the trial period until November 2017. This extension was subject to concerns raised by FBU members and issues identified in the recent University of Hertfordshire report being addressed as soon as possible and an 'acceptable' pay award for 2017 being agreed. In addition, the circular noted that increased pay to reflect the broadening role of a firefighter remained a priority for the FBU.

## **UPDATE ON PAY NEGOTIATIONS AND EMR TRIALS**

7. On 1 July 2017, the Employers side of the NJC wrote to the FBU providing detail of a two stage pay offer (Appendix A). The two stages of the offer are summarised below;
  - a. Stage 1 - to immediately apply a 2.0% increase on basic pay across the board with effect from 1st July 2017. This includes CPD payments. This will allow time to reach a permanent agreement that can meet both parties' aspirations;
  - b. They expect to be able to reach a deal through the NJC which would: build upon the current broadening the role of firefighters negotiations; agree a permanent position; and include how the arrangements for the pay awards for 2018, 2019, and possibly 2020 will be staged fitting into an overall pay framework (including that relating to Retained Duty System firefighters).
  - c. Stage 2 - Assuming the deal referred to in (b) above is reached, a further 3% increase with effect from 1st April 2018 as part of the 2017 settlement. In order to be able to apply the stage 2 increase it will also have to be subject to governments across the UK providing funding to enable the NJC to do so.
8. The 2% pay offer in stage 1 consisted of the 1% already factored into the funding the Authority has received from the government; however, the Authority would need to fund the additional 1% out of its existing budget. It is estimated that this would cost the Authority an additional £170,000 per year that has not been accounted for in the medium term financial plan (MTFP).
9. Circular EMP/6/17 (Appendix B), issued on 4th July 2017, advised authorities that the FBU would consult its members on the offer, albeit in the context that the Executive Council of the FBU felt that in its current form the offer was not acceptable.
10. Circular EMP/7/17 (Appendix C), issued 26 July 2017, advised authorities that the FBU had rejected the offer 'in its current form'. In addition, it noted that the FBU would instruct its members to withdraw from the EMR trials with effect from 24 August 2017. The Employers side of the NJC asked the FBU to revisit its decision in respect of continuance of the trials.
11. Circular EMP/8/17 (Appendix D), issued 15 August 2017, advised authorities that discussions had continued and a letter had been provided to the FBU on 14 August to provide further clarification and to once again ask that the FBU to reconsider its decisions in respect of continuance of the trials and acceptance of the pay offer. The letter did not alter the terms of the offer but did provide further information and clarity.
12. On 24 August 2017, the FBU agreed to extend the trial for three weeks to allow further consultation with their members over the pay offer. The FBU Executive Council were recommending that the offer be accepted.

13. On 13 September 2017, the FBU Executive Council met to discuss the outcome of their member consultation which was to reject the offer. Following this rejection authorities received confirmation from the Employers side of the NJC that the FBU had instructed their members to cease the EMR trial from the commencement of the day shift (07:00 hrs) on Monday 18 September 2017; however, they noted that negotiations will continue.

## **NEXT STEPS**

14. Within this Authority's area the trial clearly demonstrated that responding to medical emergencies in support of the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) was successful as lives have been saved and the safety and wellbeing of local communities has been enhanced. NEAS recognise this and wish to discuss options for continuing to respond to EMR calls in specific locations.

15. The Authority have made it clear that any agreement to continue with EMR calls must not have a detrimental impact on the Service's budget or its ability to carry out its statutory duties; therefore, any continuation of EMR outside of the NJC trial would be subject to Fire Authority approval.

16. It is also important to remember that if there was a desire from NEAS and the Authority to continue with EMR it would require agreement with staff as this function does not form part of their role map.

17. Meetings are to be arranged to fully understand the options NEAS would like to explore, the outcomes of which will be considered by the Service with recommendations being brought to a future Fire Authority meeting.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

18. Members are requested to:

- a. **note** the contents of the report; and
- b. **agree** to receive further reports on the outcomes of local and national negotiations on EMR and pay.

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