

Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill St
London, EC1M 5LG Telephone 020
7187 7335 e-mail:
firequeries@local.gov.uk Employers'
Secretary, Simon Pannell

e-mail: firequeries@local.gov.uk website:
www.local.gov.uk/

Direct Dial
020 7187 7335

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

26th July 2017

CIRCULAR EMP/7/17

Dear Sir/Madam,

PAY CLAIM 2017

Background

1. Circular [EMP/5/17](#), issued on 3rd July, advised you that an offer had been made to the Employees' Side of the NJC and included the detail of the offer.
2. Circular [EMP/6/17](#), issued on 4th July, advised you that the Fire Brigades Union would consult its members on the offer, albeit in the context that the Executive Council felt in its current form 'it is not acceptable'. The circular to its members can be found [here](#).

Current position

3. As you are aware, we have been advised that the Employees' Side of the NJC has decided to reject the offer 'in its current form'. A copy of the formal response is now attached (**Appendix A**).
4. In addition, the Fire Brigades Union will now 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.
5. Whilst we welcome the reference to continuing discussion this is extremely disappointing on both points and the attached letter sets that out to the

Employees' Side Secretary (**Appendix B**). Also attached is our letter of the 17th July which is referred to within this most recent letter (**Appendix C**).

6. We have asked the FBU to revisit its decision in respect of continuance of the trials and will keep you informed of the response.
7. Also attached is the National Employers' media statement (**Appendix D**). Given the importance of consistency at this time a copy has also been provided to media contacts within FRSs alongside key messages and a Frequently Asked Questions document.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Gittins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gill Gittins Principal Negotiating Officer



Matt Wrack General Secretary
Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road,
Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE
fbu.org.uk | @fbunational
020 8541 1765 | office@fbu.org.uk

Our Ref: MW/sll

25 July 2017

Simon Pannell
NJC Employers' Side Secretary
Fire & Rescue Service National Employers
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Dear Simon

Thank you for your letter of 17 July. It is unfortunate that the employers were unable to address the concerns raised by the FBU.

As a result of this and following our consultation with members I can confirm that the FBU finds the employer proposals on pay inadequate in their current form. The union does nevertheless seek to continue discussions on the broadened and broadening role of the FRS, including making the case to government/s for sustainable funding. We remain committed to lobbying around this issue and doing so jointly where appropriate.

We note that in relation to the NJC trials on EMR there remain numerous reports of local trials where employers have failed to address the operational, safety and welfare issues set out very clearly by us at NJC meetings and elsewhere this year. This is in clear breach of the requirements we have set out to you. The employers have also failed to address the concerns of the union on pay and conditions. Therefore there can be no agreement to further extend the NJC trials. We will advise our members that the trials will therefore cease on 24 August.

The union is clear that there will be no local agreements on the issue of EMR and that attempts to bypass this by local employers will only exacerbate an already difficult position. We have therefore advised our officials to alert us to any such attempts through their Executive Council member.

We remain, as always, happy to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely

M. Wrack

Matt Wrack
General Secretary

68 Coombe Rd
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey, KT2 7AE

26 July 2017

Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill St
London, EC1M 5LG
Telephone 020 7187 7335
Employers' Secretary, Simon Pannell

Dear Matt,

Appendix B

Matt Wrack
General Secretary
Fire Brigades Union
Bradley House

FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES National Employers

The National Employers were disappointed to hear that the recent pay offer has been rejected by the Employees' Side of the NJC.

As we have previously explained it is the best position we could offer.

We remain committed to identifying a mutually agreeable way forward. We therefore welcome the reference to the Employees' Side continued engagement in this negotiation and are happy to meet to do so before 24th August.

We are further disappointed by the decision of the FBU to advise its members to no longer undertake work covered by the trials with effect from 24th August. As indicated in my letter of the 17th July (which also explained the employers' position around your points on the offer in general), we believe it to be valuable to communities and a fundamental part in reassuring both governments and the partners that we work with that the fire service is a reliable partner in which to invest and continue to work with; hence why the first stage of the offer at 2.0% was linked to such continuation. We urged the FBU not to do anything which would negatively impact upon discussions with governments and partners. Most importantly to not negatively impact upon the communities for whom such work has proven to be extremely successful, including lives saved. This decision of the FBU will inevitably impact upon our ability to secure future additional funding.

In your letter you say:

We note that in relation to the NJC trials on EMR there remain numerous reports of local trials where employers have failed to address the operational, safety and welfare issues set out very clearly by us at NJC meetings and elsewhere this year. This is in clear breach of the requirements we have set out to you.

It would help if you could share specific details of these reports so that action can be taken.

To be best placed to secure a successful outcome we invite you to revisit the decision to withdraw support for work being undertaken through the trials.

We sincerely hope this can be agreed 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 not where we would want to be.

Yours sincerely,



pp Simon Pannell

NJC Employers' Side Secretary

68 Coombe Rd
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey, KT2 7AE

17th July 2017

Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill St
London, EC1M 5LG
Telephone 020 7187 7335
Employers' Secretary, Simon Pannell

Dear Matt,

Matt Wrack
General Secretary
Fire Brigades Union
Bradley House

Appendix C

**FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES
National Employers**

I write in connection with your recent letter on the Employers' response to the Employees' Side claim.

As far as 2017 is concerned, I welcome your positive acknowledgment of the increases offered. An increase of 2.0% with effect from 1 July, is a figure that is double that set aside in fire authority budgets. This will mean authorities will have to look very hard at what they can do to balance such an increase at this time. As indicated, this is the start of a journey to meet our shared aspiration of increased pay for firefighters.

We thought very carefully about the date suggested for an increase of 3.0% at stage 2, which is also within the current pay settlement year. As is clear in the offer we are committed to applying such an increase, subject to it being fully funded by governments and an agreed NJC deal in place. We need to be realistic about current fire authority budgets and the time it can take to both agree a permanent deal for the future and to secure funding from governments across the UK. We wish to minimise any negative impacts that could immediately follow if an increase is not properly managed.

Turning to further in the future, we share the FBU's desire for certainty around future pay awards in 2018, 2019 and potentially 2020. We are fully committed to working with you and, as appropriate, governments across the UK, to be able to do so as soon as possible. The points above around the content of an agreed deal and government funding currently being unknown equally apply. Both will need to be known in order to be able to make informed decisions. However, as you are aware, the employers' aspiration is for increases to be above the level applied in recent years.

We note the reference to joint initiatives at local level agreed through the NJC potentially ceasing. For the avoidance of doubt, we are fully committed to continuance of such work. We believe it to be valuable to communities and a fundamental part in reassuring both governments and the partners that we work with that the fire service is a reliable partner in which to invest and continue to work with. Hence why our offer is linked to such continuation. We would urge the FBU not to do anything at this time which would negatively impact upon discussions with governments and where necessary other partners. But most importantly not to impact upon the communities for whom such work has proven to be extremely successful, including lives saved.

I have set out above the reasons why we believe the approach in the offer makes sense for both fire authorities and their employees covered by this NJC. We note the FBU Executive Council meets on the 24th July to consider the consultation process and look forward to hearing the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Simon Pannell".

Simon Pannell
Employers' Side Secretary

IMMEDIATE RELEASE (FOLLOWING FBU RESPONSE AND AT APPROPRIATE TIME)
CONTACT: Local Government Association media team, 020 7664 3333

NJC EMPLOYERS RESPOND TO FBU REJECTING PAY OFFER

Cllr Nick Chard, Chair of the National Joint Council Employers' Group (NJC), said:

“From terrorist attacks to the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy, our firefighters have shown courage, compassion, and the best of humanity in recent weeks as they carry out their role. We repeat our earlier sentiments here – they deserve a pay rise, as we work to broaden the work we do for the communities we serve. That is why we committed to call upon all governments across the UK, to provide funding to enable us to do this.

“Our offer of a 2 per cent pay rise at this stage, which was double what could be expected under current government approaches to public sector pay, was dependent upon the continuation of current wider work trials, which includes assisting people experiencing cardiac arrests. This was the best offer we could make, especially given the serious funding challenges fire authorities find themselves facing. It is also essential that our fire and rescue services continue to be developed to serve our communities in as comprehensive a way as possible.

“Whilst the FBU commitment to engaging in further discussion on broadening the role is welcome and we are happy to do so, it is deeply disappointing that the FBU has rejected our offer and at the same time decided to withdraw from the national agreement on such trials.

“This is not where we wanted to be. We had wanted to be able to increase pay for our employees by 2.0% now while we work together with the FBU and UK governments to achieve further significant increases in pay and add even greater value to communities.

But we can only operate by agreement and the 2.0% offer has been rejected. In addition, its decision to stop the work undertaken through the trials will inevitably impact upon our ability to secure additional funding and unfortunately would leave us with little choice but to revert to a 1 per cent offer from July 1.

“We therefore call on the FBU to revisit its decision to withdraw its members from the areas of work being trialled and continue this crucial work, which is helping save and improve lives, while negotiations continue.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services is the joint body that sets the pay, terms and conditions framework for uniformed employees in the fire service across the UK. The Fire Brigades Union represents employee interests.
2. The NJC has been trialling work largely focused on co-responding with the ambulance service, but also includes other reactive interventions (e.g. trips and falls in the home) and some proactive work, such as expanding safe and well visits to, for example, include referrals to appropriate organisations e.g. dementia awareness. Whilst an independent evaluation identified some learning points, which are currently being progressed by an NJC joint employer and employee working group, there was no suggestion that the work needed to stop in the interim.

3. While successful approaches to firefighters providing emergency medical response have previously been introduced using volunteers, this approach is the first sustained attempt to explore making such activities part of the core role of firefighters.