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Employers' Secretary, Naomi Cooke

## **FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES National Employers**

Direct Dial  
020 7187 7335

Website: [www.local.gov.uk/](http://www.local.gov.uk/)

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**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**

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3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021

### **CIRCULAR EMP/4/21**

#### **PAY**

1. You will be aware of the employees' side pay claim of 29<sup>th</sup> April. For ease of reference a copy is attached.
2. At today's meeting of the National Joint Council the employers' side made an offer of 1.5%. A copy of the subsequent formal letter to the employees' side secretary is attached.
3. The employees' side will now consider the offer and we will update you in due course.

Yours faithfully,



**Gill Gittins  
Assistant Employers' Secretary**



**Matt Wrack** General Secretary  
Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road,  
Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE  
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Our Ref: MW/sll

29 April 2021

Naomi Cooke  
Employers' Secretary  
Fire and Rescue Services  
National Employers  
18 Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3HZ

Dear Naomi

### **June NJC: Fire Service Pay 2021**

We have discussed the issue of pay 2021 at meetings of the NJC joint secretaries and of the NJC lead members. At these meetings, we have set out the position of the FBU. We are approaching the June meeting of the NJC and the pay settlement date. We have also expressed our view that the employers' side should be in a position to respond to us on the issue of pay with an offer earlier than in previous years. We hope this can be done by the June meeting so that an offer on pay is available for consideration by our members prior to the settlement date of 1<sup>st</sup> July.

You are aware that a decade of austerity and government pay freezes has reduced real wages for firefighters. This has undermined morale in the service and created real hardship for our members and their families. The employers' side has an obligation to address this and to avoid turning the fire and rescue service into a low pay industry.

Both sides of the NJC will be aware that firefighters (including emergency fire control staff) have delivered outstanding public service since the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic early in 2020. They have ensured that we continue to deliver a first class fire and rescue service despite the safety challenges posed by Covid-19. Furthermore, they have delivered numerous additional Covid-related activities which have assisted the effort to tackle the pandemic. We should all be extremely proud of the contribution they have made. After a hugely challenging year, the employees' side of the NJC expects this contribution to be acknowledged; that includes by delivering a real increase in pay.

1. **Pay increase:** Using CPI as the measure of inflation a competent firefighter needs an increase of more than £4,000 to restore real wages lost over more than a decade of austerity. Therefore a settlement for 2021 should urgently begin to address this through an immediate and significant pay rise as well as by setting out a roadmap for further significant improvements in pay.

Contd/2...

2. **Pay progression:** We have set out our concerns about the impact of the current flat pay structure on our members. You are aware that this has had the effect of hitting employees on Grey Book rates harder than those in sectors with systems of pay progression. CPD should be equalised and could be incorporated into a new system of pay progression beyond the competent rate.
  
3. **New roles:** The employees' side has also previously set out the union's expectation for any agreement in relation to broadening the role of a firefighter. We remain committed to developing the work of our service in the face of changing risk. This must be done by negotiation and agreement. It also requires investment from the governments of the UK. Nevertheless, these discussions should be immediately progressed.

In view of the above, the employers' side of the NJC needs to urgently address these issues by means of an immediate and substantial pay increase to NJC rates of pay. We hope this can be concluded prior to 1<sup>st</sup> July.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack', written in a cursive style.

**Matt Wrack**  
**General Secretary**

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Fire Brigades Union  
Bradley House  
68 Coombe Rd  
Kingston upon Thames  
Surrey, KT2 7AE

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021

### **BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Matt,

I write in response to your letter of 29<sup>th</sup> April.

The Employers' Side has now had an opportunity to consider the issue of a pay award for the next settlement year (21/22) and it wishes to make an offer of 1.5% on all pay rates and Continual Professional Development payments with effect from 1 July 2021.

While careful consideration was given to the points raised in your letter and members recognise the exceptional circumstances of the last year, members were as always also mindful of a number of factors including affordability, pay policies of all the relevant governments, fire and rescue authority and service views across the UK, economic factors and progress of pay discussions elsewhere.

The Employers remain supportive of wider discussions with regard to how fire and rescue services across the UK could enhance or develop with the aim of providing broader support to communities. Those dialogues will of course include the implications for the workforce and the matter of funding.

Exploratory discussions have already commenced in respect of pay structure. It is a complex matter and should any proposals for change emerge from those discussions they will of course take time to develop to ensure they take into account the needs of both the employing authorities and the workforce.

The Employers hope that an agreement to apply a 1.5% pay award for 2021/22 can be reached in order that the increase can be applied as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

*Naomi Cooke*

**Naomi Cooke**  
**Employers' Secretary**