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Employers' Secretary, Naomi Cooke

FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES National Employers

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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

30 January 2023

CIRCULAR EMP/1/23

Fire Brigades Union strike ballot

1. You will be aware that the Fire Brigades Union has undertaken a strike action ballot of its members in respect of the current pay award negotiation. The ballot closed today and we are advised the required thresholds in support of strike action have been met.

Next steps

2. Discussions will continue with the Fire Brigades Union to endeavour to resolve the matter through discussion and without recourse to industrial action.
3. Fire and rescue authority Chairs, Chief Fire Officers and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners received invitations last week to attend a further National Employers pay consultation meeting on 6 February.
4. The National Employers and the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services will meet on 8th February.
5. The Fire Brigades Union has made a commitment that it will not notify fire and rescue authorities of strike action in advance of that NJC meeting.
6. While it is hoped that strike action will not occur, and we continue to work towards that, fire and rescue authorities and services are reminded that we have already issued the information below and you may therefore wish to refamiliarise yourselves with the content:
 - industrial action FAQs - , containing [detailed advice](#) including, where necessary, of a fire service specific nature. Further queries should be directed to firequeries@local.gov.uk
 - [Major incidents agreement](#) - the NJC has already reached a framework agreement, which requires some action at local level, in respect of attendance of striking FBU members at major incidents,

Media interest

7. To support conversations with the media around this dispute, the National Employers has worked with its cross-organisation group of media specialists drawn from the LGA, WLGA, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service. This also supports consistency of approach and documents have been updated periodically as necessary. A revised media statement is attached and will also be kept under review.

Yours faithfully,

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

Gill Gittins
Assistant Employers' Secretary

NATIONAL EMPLOYERS' MEDIA STATEMENT

The National Employers acknowledge the outcome of the Fire Brigades Union ballot, in favour of strike action, following rejection of the employers' pay offer of 5%.

The pay offer was not conditional of any changes and the employers are also willing to explore the other contractual issues raised in the claim.

Cllr Nick Chard, Chair of the National Employers said:

"Our dedicated fire and rescue staff are rightly held in high regard by the public for their tireless efforts to help save lives and prevent fires."

"A pay award needs to strike the right balance between providing a well-deserved pay rise for fire and rescue employees and ensuring affordability for all UK services.

"The National Employers remain committed to resolving this dispute through discussion and talks with the employees' representatives are ongoing."

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. The National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire & Rescue Services is the joint employer and employee representative body that sets the pay, terms and conditions framework for approx. 48,500 uniformed employees in the fire service across the UK, including firefighters and control staff but not including senior management posts.
2. Employer representatives on the NJC are drawn from the Local Government Association, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board, Welsh Local Government Association and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board. Employee representatives are drawn from the Fire Brigades Union.