



Matt Wrack General Secretary

Fire Brigades Union

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

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TO: All Members

Pay discussions

The Executive Council met today following receipt of a letter from the employers (attached) setting out a proposal in relation to pay. After discussion, the Executive Council agreed the following statement and recommendation.

Pay: Executive Council recommendation

The Executive Council notes the proposal from the fire service employers for pay and CPD to be "uplifted by 2.0% with effect from 1 July 2018 while negotiations continue to put in place a longer term deal".

This proposal completely fails to address the urgent need for significant increases in pay in the fire and rescue service.

- *It fails to take account of the impact of eight years of government imposed pay restraint.*
- *It fails to take account of the fact that FBU members have already significantly expanded the work and activity undertaken in the service, in most cases without any appropriate payment.*

The FBU, through the National Joint Council, has engaged in discussions with the fire & rescue service employers on the future of pay, including those areas of FRS activity where the role has already expanded and those areas where further expansion might be possible. These NJC discussions have made useful progress. Regrettably they have stalled largely as a result of the failure of central government to address the issue of the underfunding of the fire service and the failure to invest in it.

The FBU has sought to take these issues forward jointly with the employers, including various attempts to lobby government ministers for adequate resources for our service, including to cover the need for increases in pay. The situation is complicated by the current political situation in Northern Ireland. While some progress has been made in Scotland and in Wales, discussions in Westminster have not progressed to the same degree and the Home Office appears to remain committed to a programme of cuts to the fire & rescue service and further cuts to the real living standards of those working within it.

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We are aware that the employers' proposal has emerged from a series of employers' consultation meetings with Chief Fire Officers and the Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities or the relevant boards. It is disappointing in the extreme that within these meetings no fire authority Chair or Chief Fire Officer appears to have made a robust case for the significant pay rises which are required.

This employers' proposal therefore marks a turning point in the approach which the Fire Brigades Union should take.

The Executive Council recommends:

- 1. That the proposed pay uplift should be made and negotiations should continue.*
- 2. That FBU members should be consulted on the issue with a decision made at the Executive Council scheduled for 18-20 September.*
- 3. That the employers should be informed that their proposal does not address the broader needs of the service or those working within it.*
- 4. That a brigade level audit be undertaken of all work currently undertaken within FRSs in order to identify those areas which are **outside** of the agreed role maps – and which are therefore being undertaken either without pay or under inadequate pay arrangements.*
- 5. That plans are drawn up for a major campaign of lobbying at local and national level to highlight the gross underfunding of the fire and rescue service and to make the case for investment and for significant increases in pay for Grey Book staff.*
- 6. That members are consulted on the need to prepare for industrial action. This includes the need to prepare for strike action as well as developing plans for a withdrawal from all non-agreed or non-contractual work currently undertaken within the service.*

Brigade Officials will now be informed about the next steps in relation to auditing the work undertaken in each FRS. All members are asked to attend and participate in branch meetings as part of this consultation process.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally



Matt Wrack
General Secretary