



Position Statement

Fire & Rescue Service Pay 2022

The UK Fire and Rescue Service is among the best in the world.

Firefighters, 999 control and all other Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) staff should be properly recognised and valued for their professionalism and commitment, demonstrated every day in the communities they serve.

The NFCC supports a fair and reasonable pay award for the FRS. This award should be reflective of the heightened levels of inflation and be cognisant of increases received by other UK public sector bodies, such as that afforded to police officers.

Firefighters and FRS staff across the UK have been subject to significant pay restraint for several years. The funding for pay, and to an extent the pay negotiation process itself, has not financially, fully reflected the current or future role of the firefighter. This is unsustainable when balanced against the ambition to create an FRS, with firefighters and staff, that is fit for the future. The current pay situation is significantly exacerbated by inflation and the cost of living crisis gripping the country.

There is a real risk of an extended period of industrial action if the situation cannot be resolved. This will put communities at increased risk, whilst damaging the excellent reputation of the FRS.

The NFCC does not have a formal role in the negotiation of pay settlements. These are delivered through the National Joint Council for Local Authority FRS, and between employer and employee representatives. However, the NFCC support the ask from the NJC employers to Government for assistance, recognising the operational implications on FRS should this not be resolved soon.

Any unfunded pay awards mean that FRA would need to find additional efficiencies within existing budgets. This could mean a reduction to front-line services to the public. This would be self-defeating at a time when the work of the FRS has never been more evident, as demonstrated through its response to wildfires and other significant events.

The NFCC believes that levels of pay and the associated cost of living increases are directly affecting FRS ability to recruit and retain the best staff. The pay rises that FRA are able to afford do not fully reflect the contribution that firefighters, 999 control and all other FRS staff are making in communities.

NFCC response to the Home Office White Paper on Reform sets out our view on the pay negotiation process, as well as pay, alongside our work in partnership with the National Employers (England) and the LGA on Fit for the Future, in which we detail our collective ambition for a 21st century FRS.

In light of the challenging financial environment in which FRS are currently operating, including pay awards, the NFCC supports calls for a more progressive approach to funding and pay. We welcome the suggested review set out in the Home Office White Paper on FRS Reform.

For English FRS, this should include greater flexibility for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) to raise local precept to meet public expectations for their FRS, in line with the flexibilities afforded to Police and Crime Commissioners.

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