

APPENDIX A

Extracts from Thomas review

These extracts are from the executive summary and comprise the priorities and specific recommendations that are directly relevant to this report. The original numbering has been maintained.

Priorities

III. Conditions of service are currently documented in the Green, Grey and Gold books. My review makes no recommendation as to the Green Book. However, I find very little value in capturing conditions of service in the **Gold and Grey Books**. I found the Gold Book to be redundant, unread and unused in virtually every authority I visited or which responded to my questionnaire. I recommend that the Gold Book is discontinued and that the employers and representative bodies implement this recommendation as soon as is reasonably practicable. The Grey Book is held by fire fighters as a key foundation or anchor for their conditions of service, even though in most fire and rescue services there are local derivations away from the national provisions contained within it. Employers repeatedly pointed out to me either that the Grey Book was a barrier to alignment of conditions of service with local delivery or that they had managed to change locally the conditions of service despite the Grey Book. Either way it appears to me that the Grey Book should be slimmed down. Consideration should be given by the employers, in consultation with representative bodies, as to replacing the Grey Book with a contract of employment at the local level, supported by an employee handbook. Base Pay (see section on training) should remain national but all other conditions of service should have a more regional/local flavour and I recommend that the national joint council takes action to explore how such a system could operate in practical terms.

IV. The description of **role maps and duty systems** in the Grey Book creates inflexibility in the deployment of fire fighters in support of the local Integrated Risk Management Plan. Roles maps are too restrictive and duty systems within the Grey Book in many fires and rescue services do not reflect the changing activity from response to prevention. Both the list of role maps and the pre-determined duty systems should be removed from the Grey Book by the employers, in consultation with representative bodies.

Recommendations

Documented conditions of service (section 5)

13. Slim down and modernise the Grey Book, removing duty systems and reference to role maps and national occupational standards and replace with contracts of employment.
14. Minimum night time shift hours should be removed from the Grey Book

15. Disagreements regarding additional payments, collaborations or implementation of new technologies and working practices should be resolved locally without resort to the national advisory panels.

16. The national employers, government and employee representatives should, in support of establishing a changed culture (as detailed earlier), meet and agree a re-defined national joint protocol on industrial relations.

17. The ability to compulsorily move an individual from the flexible duty system should be introduced.

• **Industrial relations (section 6)**

18. The National Joint Council should be retained for the purposes of national pay bargaining for basic pay whilst reforming itself to represent employers and employees on a more local basis for all other conditions of service including incremental pay for acquiring competences beyond 'safe to ride'.

19. The National Joint Council should consider operating regionally to reflect the requirements of the different fire authorities whilst retaining a national umbrella with respect to basic pay

20. Remove Technical Advisory Panels and Resolution Advisory Panel and replace with a direct to ACAS approach. Fire and Rescue Authorities are undertaking a significant amount of local negotiation as they agree positions out with the Grey Book locally and this will not significantly increase workload or cost – in fact the Knight review suggested that local negotiations save money.

• **Management of the Fire and Rescue service (section 8)**

37. The expectation that all fire fighters attain the same, maximum, level of competency should be removed. The wide and increasing range of roles and activities undertaken by fire fighters calls for a more sophisticated alignment of capability with the activity required in support of the local Integrated Risk Management Plan than can be provided by the view that 'a fire fighter is a fire fighter'.

38. Training and pay should reflect a 'safe to ride' measure – basic core skills and core pay followed by competency based increments as required (which in the event of losing that competency means that the fire fighter retains their job albeit without that competency).

42. The Gold Book (conditions of service for principal officers) should be removed along with that for Brigade Managers. With pay and conditions of service agreed locally subject to the introduction of a more sophisticated job evaluation programme that better reflects job size, role complexity and other duties in a way which allows inter authority comparison.