

19 July 2010

NJC for Local Authority's Fire and Rescue Services Pay

1. The Employees' Side of the NJC is seeking an across the board increase of 5.1%, the rationale for such a claim being it represents the Retail Prices Index figure released on 15 June.
2. The Employers' Side has considered the claim in the context of what is affordable and sustainable and in the light of announcements made in relation to public sector pay in the most recent Budget and consequently advised the Employees' Side that the financial position is such that it is unable to offer any increase for 2010/11.
3. Fire authorities have been advised of the position. They have also been provided with a model letter for use in communication with employees as well as information relating to media activity/interest in support of a consistent message across all fire authorities.
4. A formal reaction has so far not been received from the Employees' Side. However we are aware that at least one union, the Fire Brigades Union, is taking soundings from membership at local level to inform its response. At present there is no expectation of any form of industrial action.
5. Members may also be interested to know that Local Government Employers has received clarity from the Government on its policy on public sector pay as announced in the Chancellor's budget statement, and its implications for local government.
6. Local government pay remains a matter for free collective bargaining between the national employers and trade unions through the respective National Joint Councils.
7. The Government has confirmed that its assumptions about pay awards in local government for the next two years will be fed into the forthcoming spending review.
8. The Government will therefore expect the national employers to show similar restraint on pay to the rest of the public sector; it will also expect them to have regard to the Government's fairness agenda, which seeks to provide the lower paid with some protection from the impact of pay

restraint. In the case of the fire service this could affect a small number of control operator staff at trainee and development levels.

9. Whether or not the national employers wish to regard this year as the first year of restraint (as opposed to commencing in 2011 as in the Budget announcement) remains a matter for the national employers. There is no need to make any decision on that yet and it is expected that there will be discussion about whether or not there should be a co-ordinated approach.

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