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Circular: 2024HOC0196MW

Date: **30/04/2024**

To: **All Members**

Dear Brother/Sister,

Pay 2024: Job evaluation regarding Emergency Fire Control

As part of the settlement for pay for 2022 and 2023, the fire service employers agreed to undertake a job evaluation of the role of Firefighters (Control) to assess whether there should be an alteration to the pay gap between Control Specific roles and Firefighting roles under the current Grey Book arrangements. Job evaluation is a mechanism to assess different jobs, specifically to address and avoid any issues of prejudice or discrimination. The last such job evaluation was undertaken during negotiations for the settlement of the pay dispute in 2002/03. It was that job evaluation which was the basis for narrowing the gap between the two rates of pay at that time.

As part of the latest discussions, the NJC agreed to jointly commission Incomes Data Research (IDR), an independent pay research organisation, to conduct the job evaluation. IDR is a respected organisation which has previously undertaken work for both trade unions and employers. The outcome of their assessment was not what we desired. Their report included the following:

“The job evaluation scores indicate that while both roles are equivalent to an IDR Job Level 5, the score for Firefighter is higher than that for Fire Control Operator. In our view, this may provide grounds for a differential in pay between the two roles. However, we have serious concerns about evaluating roles based on paperwork drawn up almost two decades ago and recommend that the role maps are updated before reaching a conclusion on the role evaluations.”

I attach the letter from the employers on this issue. We are aware that while the agreed role maps for Control specific roles have not changed since 2003, the actual work undertaken by staff in Emergency Fire controls has changed and may not reflect the agreed role map i.e. employers may be asking staff to undertake activities beyond those required by the agreed role

map. This is the point identified by IDR in their comments quoted above. (I attach the employers' letter on this issue).

This outcome is clearly disappointing. Nevertheless, it opens the door to further discussions with the employers on these issues, including whether the role map reflects the current situation or whether staff are regularly working beyond their role. This may in turn make the case for new ways of addressing pay which take account of changes over the past two decades. Immediate discussions are planned with officials of the Control Staff National Committee (CSNC) to start to develop a strategy to address these concerns.

Further information will follow.

Yours in unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack', with a stylized, cursive script.

Matt Wrack
General Secretary