

Cllr Nick Chard
Chair, Employers' Side
Fire and Rescue Services
National Employers
18 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3HZ

27th February 2023

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Nick

Re: Fire Leaders Association (FLA) Registration of Trade Dispute

We write this letter to you over the issue of pay and the national machinery for negotiation of such matters.

As you are aware, we have been extremely patient in our efforts to engage in meaningful negotiations over the pay of our members employed under Gold Book terms and conditions of employment who have not received a pay award since January 2021, more than 2 years ago. The basis of our claim for the 2022 pay year (effective from 1 January 2022) was '*...a pay increase for all staff covered by the NJC for Brigade Managers that is commensurate with, and no less favourable than, that offered to other fire and rescue service staff (e.g. grey and green book) during 2022*'.

Despite Grey Book staff receiving three formal offers and Green Book staff (having already secured a pay award for 2022) now in receipt of an offer for 2023, our Gold Book members have still received no offer whatsoever for either this or the previous year. In our 2022 pay claim, and several preceding, we also made it clear our wish to establish a formal meeting of the NJC to discuss our concerns, yet we are merely offered informal dialogue with the negotiating secretariat.

We made it clear in our letter of 26 January 2023 that if we did not receive a formal offer by 9th February, we would have no choice but to place matters on a more formal footing. In good faith, we duly met with your negotiating secretariat on the 9th only to be told that '*the Employers' had not had time to meet to discuss our pay claim*'. Against better judgment, we offered a further 7 days to receive a pay offer. We met again with your secretariat only to be advised that there was still no offer forthcoming.

Given the failure to make any progress whatsoever on pay, and the failure to follow the spirit or process set out in our NJC Constitution, we are writing this letter to put you on notice that the FLA intends to enter into a dispute with you over the issue of pay and the national negotiating machinery which will amount to a trade dispute for

the purposes of section 244 of the Trade Union & Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

This letter therefore constitutes a formal demand that you offer our members on Gold Book terms and conditions a pay increase that is commensurate with that currently offered to Grey Book staff and which fulfils the basis of our pay claim.

In light of the loss of confidence in your negotiating secretariat and the unwillingness of the Employers' to convene a formal meeting of the NJC, we advise that we have registered with the ACAS Collective Conciliation service in an effort to progress our dispute.

This dispute will continue to exist until such a time as we receive a pay offer for our members employed under Gold Book terms and conditions that we are able to recommend and which they feel able to accept.


We will be writing separately to individual Fire and Rescue Authorities in the coming days to ensure they are fully aware of our situation and the content of this letter. I would ask that you ensure all members of the Employers side receive a copy of this letter.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Hopkinson
Chair



Simon Shilton
National Secretary

cc Sarah Ward, Gill Gittins