
All Station/Brigade Reps – Briefing Note 04/17

RFU Circular Position Statement – Emergency Medical Response withdrawal

The RFU is extremely disappointed to hear that the FBU has decided to withdraw from the national **Emergency Medical Response** trials from 24 August 2017, after [rejecting the employers' pay offer](#).

While we originally questioned the need for these trials, since many Fire & Rescue Services had been successfully operating various Co-Responder Schemes for over a decade, we had hoped that a successful trial would help to further widen the use of such schemes which have already proved to be a vital and cost effective service to the public.

It is important to note that the fact that the national trials have ceased will have no impact on the schemes that were already in operation before the trials commenced and the RFU will continue to support the expansion of a medical response within fire services that are within the parameters of other viable schemes across the country.

It is vitally important that the public are made aware that the decision by the FBU to withdraw from the trials will not mean that all Co-Responder schemes will cease to operate. While the FBU is the only representative body on the National Joint Council (NJC) they do not represent all operational staff across the UK, thousands of employees are members of the RFU, the FOA or not affiliated to any union. The views and opinions of these employees who wish to continue to fulfil this life-saving role must not be ignored. The development adds further weight to our argument that the NJC is in urgent need of reform as a large section of the workforce is currently not being represented appropriately.

The introduction of Co-Responder schemes has, in several cases, filled the void left by the reduction in fire calls (*due to improved preventative measures and challenging call-handling*) and allowed On-Call fire stations to remain viable and relevant to protecting local communities. They have also aided the recruitment and retention of On-Call staff. Put simply, the advantages of Co-Responder schemes far outweigh any potential negatives and we believe that to hinder the wider use of such a scheme is short-sighted.

While we agree that the current pay structure does need to be reviewed as part of fire reform, it must not be at the expense of saving lives. Over many years our members have made their feelings clear regarding their involvement in Co-Responder schemes and we will continue to provide support for this to continue unhindered.

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