



Fire and Rescue Services Association

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Tristan Ashby: Chief Executive Officer

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NFCC Chair Roy Wilsher
c/o West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters
99 Vauxhall Road
Birmingham
B7 4HW

Sent by email

Dear Roy

Supporting On-Call Staff

I write to you in regard to the ongoing national crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that is affecting millions of people across the UK. Due to the current (unique) circumstances many On-Call firefighters across the country are finding themselves able to provide availability for respective service over and above what they are contractually obligated. Anecdotally it appears that appliance availability in general is well above normal averages, which will be of great reassurance to Chief Fire Officers across the UK. However, call levels are significantly lower than average which is currently and will continue to cause financial hardship to On-Call firefighters due to the nature of how the Retained Duty System (RDS) operates.

The local arrangements that are also being implemented whereby maximum crewing levels are being enforced will only add to this financial hardship. I therefore would welcome your plans as to how the NFCC intends to overcome this issue, which is likely to have a detrimental effect on the retention of On-Call firefighters in the short-term and will significantly cause an impact to establishment levels in the long term.

Our view is that pay protection needs to be implemented imminently to safeguard the jobs of On-Call firefighters, their Wholetime colleagues will not receive a pay reduction during the pandemic and neither should Firefighters working the RDS. Fire and Rescue Services will financially be able to sustain such pay levels and I'm aware that the Fire Minister in England has ensured that standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities will receive a £5.9m share of this additional funding which is not ringfenced and will be paid on 3 April.

I trust that this letter will receive your immediate attention.

Yours sincerely

Tristan Ashby
Chief Executive Officer, FRSA