



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority

# PRINCIPAL OFFICER PAY REVIEW

Report of the Clerk and Treasurer to the Fire and  
Rescue Authority

**Date:** 15 December 2023

**Purpose of Report:**

To consider the outcomes from the Principal Officer pay review which is undertaken on a two-yearly basis, and seeks a recommendation to the Fire Authority in line with the Authority's Pay Policy.

**Recommendations:**

That Members consider the information contained within the report and support a recommendation that pay levels for Principal Officer roles are maintained at their current rate.

## CONTACT OFFICER

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The conditions of service for Principal Officers within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) are largely determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services. The NJC seeks to reach agreement on a national framework of pay and conditions for Brigade Managers for local application throughout the fire and rescue services in the UK. Collectively the agreements are contained within the “Gold Book”.
- 1.2 The Gold Book makes the following statements with regard to salary and also gives advice and guidance to Authorities on pay determination, as attached at Appendix A to this report:

“The NJC will publish annually recommended minimum levels of salary applicable to Chief Fire Officers employed by Local Authority Fire and Rescue Authorities.

There is a two-track approach for determining pay for Brigade Manager roles:

- (i) at a national level, the NJC shall review annually the level of pay to all of those covered by this agreement;
  - (ii) all other decisions about the level of pay and remuneration to be awarded to individual Brigade Manager roles will be taken by the Fire Authority locally who will annually review those salary levels” – advice on other considerations when setting salary levels has also been provided by the NJC and is included within Appendix A.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 31 January 2014, the Policy and Strategy Committee agreed revised benchmarking arrangements as part of its local review of Chief Officer pay. The comparator group comprised of fire and rescue services who form the “Family Group” of authorities who are similar to the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in terms of population size, deprivation levels, risk area and total fire calls. In determining its decision on an appropriate pay level, it was agreed that consideration would be given to the median average salary of this review group. Those fire and rescue authorities who make up the Family Group are set out at Appendix B.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1 In accordance with the Authority’s published Pay Policy, Principal Officer salary levels are reviewed in line with national pay agreements on an annual basis and are subject to local review every two years.
- 2.2 The salaries applied to Principal Officers below the level of Chief Fire Officer are based upon a % of the Chief Officer salary, as follows:

- Assistant Chief Fire Officer – 75%

2.3 Additionally, appointments to new Principal Officer roles are applied as follows:

Year One: 90% of full pay  
 Year Two: 95% of full pay  
 Year Three: 100% of full pay

Approval for progression between the pay points are subject to confirmation of satisfactory performance in role and are confirmed by the Chair of the Fire Authority (Chief Fire Officer) or by the Chief Fire Officer (Assistant roles).

2.4 The last salary review took place in 2021 and was considered by the Fire Authority on 17 December 2021. This review did not support a local increase in Principal Officer pay for the period commencing January 2022.

2.5 However, the pay of the Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officers has increased in line with the application of incremental and national pay awards since this time, in line with their agreed contractual terms. This saw an increase of 4% from 1 January 2022 and 3.5% from 1 January 2023.

2.6 The Chief Fire Officer pay rate is currently £165,581 per annum, however the maximum point of the grade is £174,296 per annum.

2.7 A benchmarking review has been undertaken using the salary data from the family group of fifteen fire and rescue authorities. The outcome of this review is attached as Appendix C. Please note that three fire and rescue services did not respond to the request for salary information and therefore the median is based upon twelve responses.

2.8 The median salary within this group is £162,790 per annum, although the range is from £133,908 to £171,169. The salary range applied to the NFRS Chief Fire Officer pay band is £156,866 to £174,296 per annum, with the current incumbent being paid at 95% of the top of the scale based upon their length of tenure in role.

2.9 There is nothing, therefore, that would suggest that the pay of the Chief Fire Officer in Nottinghamshire is significantly out of line with the median point of other Chief Officers within the comparator group. This would indicate that the pay of the Chief Fire Officer is currently set at the appropriate level.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The budget for Principal Officer pay is based on the incremental point in the three-point scale which is appropriate for each of the Officers. At this point in time the following salaries are applied:

Chief Fire Officer	£165,581 (95%)
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	£130,722 (100%)

**4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 A local two-yearly review of Principal Officer pay levels forms a contractual provision for the roles of Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer.
- 4.2 Any change in the way that Principal Officer pay is undertaken by the Authority would need to be reflected in the published Pay Policy.
- 4.3 Any proposal to reduce the pay of the Chief Fire Officer to the level of the family group median salary may need to involve some level of pay protection.

**5. EQUALITIES AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 As there are no implications for existing policy or to service provision, no equality impact assessment has been undertaken.
- 5.2 The report into the review of Principal Officer pay by the Fire Authority supports the requirement of the Localism Act for transparency about pay decisions, particularly at senior levels of the organisation, demonstrating integrity and openness in NFRS governance arrangements.

**6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental or sustainability implications arising from this report.

**7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 In line with the requirements of the Localism Act, any decisions relating to pay in excess of £100k per annum must be discussed and agreed by the full Fire Authority at a public meeting.
- 7.2 The Authority is required to publish its pay policy which includes the way in which Principal Officer pay is determined.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

A robust and auditable methodology for setting Principal Officer salary levels is essential if the Service is going to stand up to external and internal scrutiny in respect of this matter. Additionally, the Service needs to ensure that it is able to recruit and retain quality officers to ensure that NFRS meets the expectations of the Service and the community.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

As this is a local pay review, determined by the Fire Authority, there are no collaboration implications.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members consider the information contained within the report and support a recommendation that pay levels for Principal Officer roles are maintained at their current rate.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

Malcolm R. Townroe  
**CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY**

Mark Kimberley  
**INTERIM TREASURER TO THE AUTHORITY**

### NJC GUIDANCE AND SALARY STRUCTURES

1. When determining the appropriate level of salaries for all Brigade Managers, the FRA should refer to the relevant minimum salary of the CFO and the most relevant benchmark data.
2. Normally the FRA will wish to begin by determining appropriate salary for their most senior manager.
3. When deciding how these posts should be remunerated, the following factors are to be considered:
  - (a) The CFO's salary and that of any service staff not covered by the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Gold Book).
  - (b) The relationship of current salary to the appropriate illustrative national benchmark
  - (c) Any special market considerations.
  - (d) Any substantial local factors not common to FRA's of a similar type and size e.g. London weighting, complex local regional or national responsibilities which bring added value.
  - (e) Comparative information to be supplied on request by the Joint Sec's on salaries in similar Authorities.
  - (f) Top management structures and size of management team compared to those other Fire and Rescue Authorities of similar type and size; and
  - (g) The relative job size of each post, as objectively assessed through an appropriate Job Evaluation process or otherwise, and
  - (h) Incident command responsibility and the requirement to provide operational cover with the employing authority and beyond.

The process for setting salary levels should include consideration of the following criteria:

- Minimum salary levels for chief officers in relevant sized local authorities.
- Market rates of pay for service managers in a range of private and public-sector organisations; and
- Evidence of recruitment and / or retention difficulties with existing minimum rates.

**FAMILY GROUP RESPONDANTS**

Avon\*  
Cheshire\*  
Cleveland\*  
Derbyshire\*  
Hampshire\*  
Hereford and Worcester\*  
Humberside\*  
Kent\*  
Leicestershire\*  
Lincolnshire  
Nottinghamshire\*  
Staffordshire\*

\* Combined Fire Authorities

**COMPARATOR SALARY LEVELS (in ascending order)**

(Please note that this information has been provided on the basis that it does not identify participant authorities.)

£133,908

£152,611

£154,305

£155,947

£159,564

£160,000

£162,790 Median point

£165,581

£169,630

£169,999

£170,537

£170,000

£171,169