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Thank you for your letter of 3 December regarding the current dispute over pensions.

You argue that the National Framework only provides high-level guidance. This is not correct. The National Framework has statutory force and fire and rescue authorities have to have regard to it under primary legislation (s21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004); and the Framework is in itself secondary legislation laid in Parliament. The Judgment in the *Marrion and Others* case, which you quote, was in relation to non-statutory guidance. It is clearly incorrect to suggest that the statutory National Framework has no greater force than regular, non-statutory guidance issued by the Department.

Once again I urge you to end this unnecessary and ill-conceived industrial action.

I am copying this letter to Lyn Brown and John McDonnell.

**BRANDON LEWIS MP**