



**Department for
Communities and
Local Government**

Penny Mordaunt MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

***Department for Communities and Local
Government***

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Dear Firefighter,

Update following Industrial Action

Since I last wrote to you, we have had four days of strike action in England. I deeply regret the Fire Brigade's Union calling for this as I know that the overwhelming majority of you wish to get back to stability in your fire and rescue service and loathe stepping down from providing the cover for the communities you serve. Industrial action has been counterproductive and this last period of strikes has meant a considerable amount of pay lost for firefighters in the approach to Christmas.

I hope you have been able to work out via you fire and rescue authority and the materials provided by DCLG, what the pension changes mean to you personally. If there are further questions or issues you have about the scheme, the fitness protections or your own personal circumstances then I would encourage you to raise it with your Chief Fire Officer, or my office.

I have been asked to provide some further information about the different schemes in the four nations by your Chief Fire Officers which I have done, and to confirm that benefits earned in existing schemes are fully protected and can be taken in full at the age they were expected to be taken, with no actuarial reduction applied. I attach a grid explaining the differences in each nation which I hope is helpful.

The consultation on changes to the statutory Fire and Rescue National Framework has started and will add principles that fire and rescue authorities must have regard to when setting their local fitness procedures. These principles have been designed to ensure that firefighters are supported in working to 60 and are not dismissed simply for failing a fitness test with no access to a pension. The proposals include a review to check that authorities are implementing procedures in line with the principles and Peter Holland, the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, will be facilitating a working party with the employers and your representative bodies to identify good practice. It should be remembered that, because of the protections I have agreed, it will not be until 2022 that the first people on the pre-2006 schemes will have to start working beyond 55.

I had a very useful meeting with the leadership team from Women in the Fire Service. I was very interested to hear from them on the issues women face, and the ways in which they can be tackled. I will be meeting with them on a regular basis. I was reminded in preparing myself for the meeting as to how under-represented women are. I think we can do more –

particularly in encouraging women to join the retained, where there are vacancies across the country.

Finally I would like to thank all those who worked over the strike period, those supporting contingency arrangements, support staff, those who came back to work during the strike period and those who broke the picket line to assist. Your actions are much appreciated by the communities you serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Penny Mordaunt'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PENNY MORDAUNT MP