



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Brandon Lewis MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

**Department for Communities and Local
Government**

Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 0303 444 3430

Fax: 0303 444 3986

E-Mail: brandon.lewis@communities.gsi.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/dclg

To: Chairmen of fire and rescue authorities
Chairman of the LGA's Fire Service Management
Committee

CC: Chief Fire Officers, Chief Executives, CFOA,
LGA.

5 June 2014

You will by now have heard that the Fire Brigades' Union has called further industrial action. This is despite several constructive meetings between me, my officials and Union representatives, culminating in a meeting with Matt Wrack on 3 June, where I made clear that I was willing to work with them to make real progress on the fitness and capability issues.

I made the Union an offer to define the steps that could lead to a positive resolution to the fitness and capability issues. This included a working group on the issue, chaired by Peter Holland, to define fitness standards and put in place a process engaging with fire and rescue authorities to adopt procedures to maintain fire fighter fitness, building on the ten principles the employers have agreed 'in principle', with the Union. While fitness and capability matters are clearly a matter for the employer, I also offered to embed adherence to these procedures in the Fire and Rescue National Framework, which provides additional statutory and compliance comfort, including a commitment on working with the employers to develop a positive approach on an eleventh principle. In addition to this, I was willing to offer an independent review of fire and rescue authority fitness policies and more detailed, independent research on the matter.

I have also brought forward proposals for lower employee contributions in the 2015 scheme. A firefighter member of that scheme, earning £29,000, will pay 12.2% in 2015-16. This puts £460 back in the pocket of a current 1992 scheme member who transfers to the 2015 scheme in that financial year.

Despite all of this, the Union has instead chosen to launch industrial action, undermining a period of open consultation on the draft pension regulations, which will now be laid once we have reviewed the consultation responses.

BRANDON LEWIS MP