



Department for
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Dear Matt

Thank you for your letter of today's date.

I have been clear all along about the scope for further change on top of the improvements that have been made through recent constructive engagement. I have also expressed my willingness to explore this further with you and within Government. I wrote to you on 23 April to say I was willing to continue those discussions and hoped you would likewise. Similarly I have also been clear on our view that an announcement of industrial action signals your call to end discussions.

It was highly regrettable that, despite this commitment, the Executive Council decided to call further industrial action. This has undermined what you say about the Union's willingness to continue discussion and negotiation in a bid to find a resolution.

I remain willing to continue our discussions and exploration of the further changes we have been considering but will not do so under the threat of industrial action or if industrial action takes place this weekend. I cannot promise to include changes in the final scheme design, but I will be able to let you know the outcome of governmental deliberations as soon as possible.

It is, of course, a decision for the Union to take as to whether strike action proceeds. However, in doing so you will have demonstrated that you wish to pursue conflict rather than dialogue and leave me with no choice but to implement the scheme as it stands. In this form it is affordable, sustainable and fair to firefighters and tax payers alike.

BRANDON LEWIS MP