



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

To Chairmen of Fire and Rescue Authorities and  
Chief Fire Officers in England

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The consultation on the reforms to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes closed last Friday. Naturally it will take us a little time to consider all the responses we have received, but I am now in a position to make a decision on one important issue.

I have decided to reinstate the offer I made in June last year regarding more generous actuarial reductions to the pensions of firefighters who retire between the ages of 55 and 57. The actuarial reduction rate applied would be 21.8% at age 55, and 17.9% at age 56, using today's assumptions. This compares favourably with the 2006 Firefighters' Pension Scheme, where the reduction at age 55 is around 40%, and at age 56 is around 37%.

I have done so because a number of non-striking trades unions have asked for this; in recognition of the work of those who have continued to protect their communities throughout strike action; and because it is something many of you to whom I have spoken over the last couple of months have requested. This improved proposal addresses a specific recommendation Dr Williams made in his report. It is fair to firefighters and tax payers alike.

Additionally, as set out in the recent consultation, our proposals include a significant reduction in employee contribution rates for firefighters transferring from the 1992 Scheme to the 2015 Scheme. Contributions for such a firefighter earning £29,000 a year will go down from 14.2% to 12.2% in April 2015.

I have also agreed to a request from the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services that the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser should chair a Joint Working Group on firefighter fitness. I will initiate an independent review to ensure that firefighter fitness is being dealt with in a fair and sustainable manner. I am also happy to provide statutory reinforcement to agreements made at the National Joint Council by incorporating the 11 principles on fitness and capability in the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

These measures – together with the strong transitional protection already built in - will address the majority of concerns that firefighters have raised and I am sure you will welcome them. I hope the FBU will now take steps to bring its unnecessary strike action to an end.

**BRANDON LEWIS MP**

