



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

Matt Wrack  
General Secretary  
The Fire Brigades Union  
Bradley House  
68 Coombe Road  
Kingston upon Thames  
Surrey  
KT2 7AE

**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](mailto:brandon.lewis@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk/dclg](http://www.gov.uk/dclg)

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Dear Matt

I was disappointed to hear that you have called further strike action, particularly as we met, following a request from you, on 26 June. At that meeting I offered a series of meetings over the coming weeks so that we could engage constructively as the current consultation on the 2015 pension scheme regulations comes to an end, and Government reaches final decisions. I remain willing to hold further discussions as part of that process. I urge you to submit your response to the consultation as soon as possible.

At our most recent meeting I reiterated my intent to support the discussions you have had and should be continuing with the employers to ensure that the fitness and capability issues you are concerned about are addressed fully. As you know, the 2015 pension scheme makes no changes on fitness and capability requirements, which are a matter for local fire and rescue authorities as employers, and an age 60 retirement age has been in place for firefighters since 2006.

You have reached agreement "in principle" with the employers on a set of principles which, if implemented correctly, should ensure that firefighters are protected throughout their career. I have indicated on several occasions that I would be happy to consult on putting these principles, once agreed, on a statutory basis through the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework. I have also said that I would be happy to commission an independent review to test whether the principles were being implemented effectively.

In spite of these discussions, you continue to call strike action. The resolution of this dispute however, remains entirely in your hands.

**BRANDON LEWIS MP**