

Thank you for contacting me about firefighters' pensions.

The Government has made substantial changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 since discussions began in 2011. I can assure you that the issues raised by all parties have been considered methodically to arrive at the best deal available for firefighters. I believe that the deal on the table is fair and gives firefighters one of the most generous public service pensions available – £19,000 a year after a full career, rising to £26,000 with the state pension.

The Government is consulting on an amendment to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England to ensure that no firefighter aged 55 or over will face a risk of being left without a job or a good pension. These proposals underpin the fitness and capability processes that exist within individual fire and rescue authorities and complement the work being undertaken by a fitness group chaired by the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, Peter Holland.

Members will also earn more pension for each year that they are a member of the 2015 scheme than if they were in the 2006 scheme. The reformed 2015 scheme further improves on the existing firefighters' pension schemes by removing the cap on the amount of pension that can be earned, providing pension enhancements when taken after Normal Pension Age, and giving members greater flexibility by allowing partial retirement. The 2015 scheme also introduces a career average pension arrangement, which is a fairer pension scheme for lower paid members who tend to have flatter career progression.

The Government has arrived at this final scheme after extensive consultation and consideration. I believe it is a sustainable and fair pension package, which takes into account the unique and vital role of firefighters.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Best regards

Dr Andrew Murrison

MP for South West Wiltshire

Northern Ireland Office Minister

Prime Minister's Special Representative for the Commemoration of the Centenary of the First World War