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Communities and  
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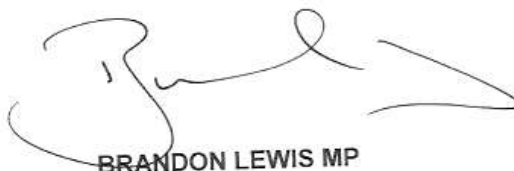


Thank you for your email of the 11 February on behalf of your constituent, Mr William Hendy, about reforms to the Firefighters Pension Scheme.

A firefighter who earns £29,000, and retires after a full career aged 60, will get a £19,000 a year pension, rising to £26,000 with the state pension. An equivalent private pension pot would be worth over half a million pounds and require firefighters to contribute twice as much. I would like to stress that I have always been clear about the breakdown of these numbers; they provide a useful point of comparison to other public sector pensions as for the majority of public sector workers the State Pension Age is their schemes Normal Pension Age.

Your constituent also raises the issue of fitness and capability. The Fire Brigades Union's Trade Dispute letter was clear they were not striking over the Normal Pension Age of 60, which has been in place since the introduction of the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006. One in three pension scheme members is already a member of the 2006 scheme, and less than a quarter of firefighters will see a change to their Normal Pension Age in 2015. An independent review found that there was no reason why every firefighter who stays physically fit could not work until 60.

In respect of your constituent's comments that 66% of firefighters will not be able to maintain the recommended fitness standard after the age of 55, Dr Williams' findings were in respect of current serving firefighters over the age of 55, all of whom will be fully protected from the changes and will be able to retire at the age they expected to. My recently issued consultation on a set of draft fitness principles will ensure that no conscientious firefighter will leave the service without access to a job or a pension after they are age 55. No one will have to work beyond their current Normal Pension Age until beyond 2022, and this will give firefighters sufficient time to undertake training to maintain or improve their current fitness.



**BRANDON LEWIS MP**