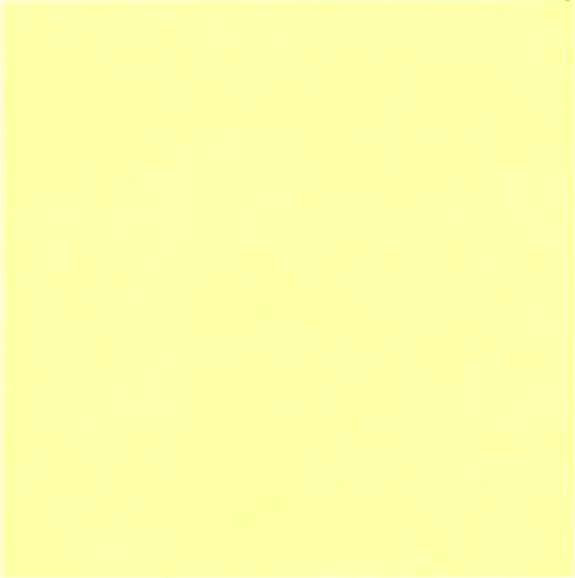
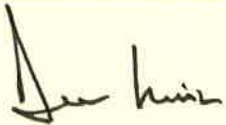




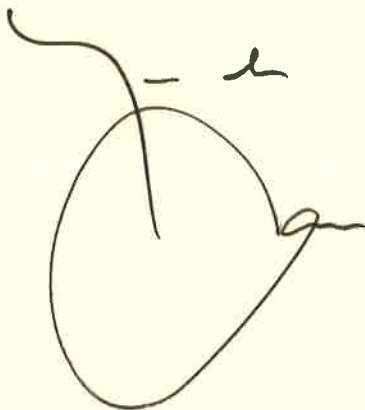
HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

I received the enclosed letter this morning from Brandon Lewis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government, in response to my representations on your behalf about reforms to the firefighters' pension schemes.

I hope you will find the Minister's comments of interest.





Department for
Communities and
Local Government

James Gray MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Brandon Lewis MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

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Our Ref: ER/BL/015840/14

18 JUN 2014

Dear James,

Thank you for your letter of 3 June 2014 enclosing correspondence from your constituent, Mr Kevin Herniman of Virginia Cottage, Nettleton, Chippenham, SN14 7NT about reforms to the firefighters' pension schemes.

Earlier this year, I met with the Union leadership and agreed that the Government Actuary's Department would cost alternative pension scheme designs that the Union had proposed. These were set out in e-mails from the Union's consulting actuary. Each of the alternative scheme designs was a variation on the early retirement factors for firefighters retiring before the age of 60. In each case, the Department provided the letters from the Government Actuary's Department to the Union as soon as possible. No other proposals were costed by the Government Actuary's Department or put forward by the Union for this purpose.

The costings were conducted during a period of constructive discussion and the Union leadership knew we were considering these proposals. I had been clear that it was only possible to consider such proposals during a period when strike action was in abeyance. Rather than continue and finalise that process, the Union leadership chose to halt it prematurely by announcing further unnecessary strikes.

The fact that the Fire Brigades Union has launched a correspondence campaign to release this information is odd, given that they already hold it. To ensure transparency, I have published copies of the relevant papers on the firefighter pensions webpage:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/firefighters-pension-scheme-reforms.

The consultation document on the draft regulations to implement the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 was published on 23 May and will close on the 4 July. The document can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-regulations-to-introduce-a-new-firefighters-pension-scheme-from-april-2015>.

BRANDON LEWIS MP