



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr D Keen
Horseshoe Barn
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TR10 9BY

8th May 2013

Dear Mr Keen

Thank you for contacting me about the pension age of firefighters:

Firefighters provide the British public with a vitally important service and consistently put themselves in danger in order to protect us. I fully appreciate that the physical stresses of doing this require a careful evaluation of what constitutes a fair and reasonable pension age.

The Proposed Final Agreement, published in May 2012, set out that the Normal Pension Age for firefighters will be 60, which is in line with current arrangements for members of the New Firefighters Pension Scheme 2006. The Department commissioned a report into the implications of a normal pension age of 60. The report found that a significant proportion of firefighters will maintain operational fitness until age 60, provided that they are sufficiently fit when recruited and maintain their body mass index and physical activity levels as they age.

The Proposed Final Agreement already allows firefighters to access their 2015 pension scheme benefits from age 55 with an actuarial reduction. In recognition of trade unions' concerns, the Government has proposed enhanced retirement arrangements for active scheme members who are age 57 and over.

I would also like to stress that a large proportion of firefighters will be unaffected by the changes. 45 per cent of members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992 are fully protected and will see no change in when they expect to retire. A further 20 per cent will receive tapered protection.

The Fire Minister, Brandon Lewis, has stated that he will consider the Government's response to the report and publish a report on the Department for Communities and Local Government website shortly. I will of course follow developments closely.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

George Eustice

George Eustice MP