



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

24th October 2013

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Gray'.

Thank you for your further letter about the Firefighters' Pension Scheme, although I fear that on this particular topic we are unlikely to agree.

This dispute is about pensions (the Firefighters' scheme of course being one of the most generous schemes in the public sector), and about how the scheme should provide for Firefighters who find it difficult to maintain a certain level of fitness as they get older.

While of course I absolutely agree with you that the Fire Service does an outstanding job and that brave firemen and women put their lives at risk every day in the service of others, it is of course the case that they must meet minimum standards of fitness and capability in order to do the job, in exactly the same way as must serving members of the armed forces and the police. You are therefore quite right in saying that a Firefighter could be sacked on capability at any time, but of course that is true of the other services like the army or the police, where similar pension arrangements would apply. Incidentally, the military who are also constantly in harm's way have inferior pension arrangements to Firefighters, as you will know.

I hope very much that the dispute will be resolved soon for all concerned and thank you for writing back to me.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Gray'.