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Roddy Robertson
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Dear Roddy,

I am fully aware that Scottish firefighters are very concerned about their pensions, contribution rates and take-home pay. I know that firefighters already pay high contribution rates and that further increases are hurting.

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth has confirmed today in a written response to the Scottish Parliament that the Scottish Government remains committed to public service pensions that are affordable, sustainable, and fair and has repeatedly set out its opposition to the UK Government's policy of increasing employee contributions in this way and at this time. However, unless there is a change in UK Government policy, the Scottish Government will move to apply the third increment of employee contribution rate increases across the NHS, Teachers', Police and Firefighters' pension schemes in Scotland from April 2014.

The Scottish Government has taken this decision as a result of the clear financial sanctions that will be imposed if it does not. In the attached letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth dated 14 October 2013, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury confirmed that, as in previous years, if the Scottish Government does not apply the increases, or applies them later than April 2014, the UK Government will impose matching reductions in the Scottish budget.

The UK Government have again imposed pension contribution rate increases and are hitting hard pressed firefighters at a time when you are seeing bills rise and the real purchasing power of your pay reduce. The Scottish Government remains wholly opposed to pension increases being applied for a third year in a row to hard working firefighters at this time and in this way.



We all agree that firefighters' pension reforms in Scotland should be taken forward in partnership with firefighters rather than being imposed by Westminster direction and I look forward to the day that we will do that in an independent Scotland.

Yours

Roseanna

Roseanna Cunningham