

Ministear airson Slàinte Coimhearsnachd agus Cùisean Lagha
Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs

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Matt Wrack
General Secretary
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Ur faidhle/Your ref:
Ar faidhle/Our ref:

25th June 2014

Dear Matt,

I am pleased to tell you that the Scottish Government will tomorrow publish our first consultation on regulations for the Firefighters Pension Scheme Scotland 2015 and that these draft regulations embody our offers of enhanced protection and early retirement options for Scottish firefighters. They do not yet embody fitness matters, but this is simply a matter of timing – as we have previously agreed, we will continue to discuss how fitness can best be reflected in the regulations so that Scottish firefighters are not placed in a situation where they face “no job, no pension”.

We have noted with interest the recent on-line publication by DCLG on 12 June 2014 of correspondence from Brandon Lewis to FBU and the associated emails which outlined options and costs for early retirement factors. I can confirm that the Scottish Government remains available to discuss potential changes in this area subject to the restraints of the scheme cost ceiling, and would be grateful if you or your colleagues could come and discuss with me your thinking here: clearly if you have actuarial advice on these options beyond that published by DCLG, it would be helpful if we could see that in advance of any meeting so we can confirm the cost ceiling implications. We would of course treat such information in confidence if you prefer. And, as we have previously said, should further progress on other aspects be made in your negotiations with the UK Government, we will match any resulting improvements in the scheme design.

In what I hope reflects our partnership approach in Scotland, given our willingness to pursue further discussions with you in coming weeks, and particularly with the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in mind, it would be most helpful if FBU could refrain from taking further industrial action in Scotland whilst our discussions take place.

I look forward to our continued partnership working to deliver a fair, affordable and sustainable Scottish firefighters' pension scheme for 2015, and to further discussions with you soon.

Yours
Roseanna

Roseanna Cunningham