



Department for
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All firefighters in England

I have received correspondence from a number of firefighters asking the Department to release the costings which the Government Actuary's Department undertook on alternative scheme designs put forward by the Fire Brigades Union. This is a correspondence campaign that was initiated by the Union.

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 alternative scheme designs were set out in emails 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 Union's requests were simply a variation on the proposals rejected by the Executive Council last June, prior to them calling strike action.

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. As firefighters clearly want to see the costings that the Union has requested, and the Union have chosen not to share them with their members yet, I am more than happy to do so. I have published them, and relevant communications, here www.gov.uk/government/publications/firefighters-pension-scheme-reforms for all to see.

BRANDON LEWIS MP