



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

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FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION COMMITTEE

Thank you for your letter of 24 January raising some further points about the draft Blueprint for the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

a. Cut off point for review of Ill-Health Awards

Whilst the Fire and Rescue Authority will have discretion as to the timing of the reviews, we intend to make it clear that an FRA should have regard to the advice of the Independent Medical Practitioner. We do not think that any person should be excluded from the review arrangements and to give an FRA too much discretion runs the risk of abuse.

b. Other questions related to review of Ill-Health Pension

- (a) The present arrangements in Rule K make no specific provision for payment of the person's expenses – but my assumption is that a FRA will pay reasonable travel and subsistence or will make arrangements for the medical examination to be conducted at a place which is reasonably accessible to the person. I am aware that some Authorities cap travel costs because some ill-health pensioners have moved overseas. Of course, currently this does not necessarily mean that their travel costs will be higher than a person who has remained in the United Kingdom.
- (b) If the person is unfit to travel, then it would be open to them to provide the FRA with the necessary medical evidence in support. The FRA could then decide that this, plus other medical evidence, was sufficient for the purposes of the review; or arrange for any medical examination to be carried out either at a place reasonable of access or at the person's home.

c. H2: Medical Appeals

We are proposing to follow the terms of Rule H3 (2) of the Police Pension Regulations 1987 which enable the matter to be referred back to the Medical Practitioner who issued the H1 certificate and this would protect the firefighter's right to pursue the matter further through an H2 appeal.

I hope that the points set out in this letter give you the reassurance which you are seeking for your members.

MARTIN HILL