

Dear xxxxxxxx

The Retained Firefighters' Pension Settlement

Introduction of the new modified scheme for individuals who were employed as retained firefighters for all or part of the period 1 July 2000 to 5 April 2006 inclusive

When you started your employment as a retained firefighter with the Fire and Rescue Service, although you were covered by the same injury and compensation provisions as applied to regular firefighters, you were unable to join the of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992 (the "1992 Scheme").

Following the Court's decision in the Employment Tribunal case involving retained firefighters who made a claim for equal treatment with whole-time regular firefighters under the Part Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, the Government has now introduced the terms of the Retained Firefighters' Pension Settlement. The Settlement will offer new pension arrangements (the "*modified scheme*") for all employees who were employed as retained firefighters between 1 July 2000 and 5 April 2006 inclusive (the "*relevant period*").

The pension benefits on offer under the terms of the modified scheme are comparable, albeit different, to those provided under the terms of the 1992 Scheme. Full details on the terms of the modified scheme are set out in the accompanying employee information leaflet.

Please note that those who were employed on retained duties **and** as a whole-time regular firefighter under the same contract of employment are not eligible to join the modified scheme.

Options Exercise

Fire and rescue authorities are now required to undertake an options exercise to provide those individuals affected with an opportunity to join the modified scheme. Our records show that you were serving as a retained firefighter during the relevant period and may be entitled to join. If you are interested in joining the modified scheme but have previously joined the Firefighters' Pensions Scheme 2006 (the "*2006 Scheme*") from 6 April 2006 in respect of your retained employment, you will have the option of converting your 2006 Scheme service to service in the modified scheme.

If you express an interest in joining the modified scheme on the 'expression of interest form' enclosed, the details you provide will be treated at this stage as a request for further information and will not bind you to purchase pension rights. This information will be used to provide you with a personalised statement of the past service in respect of which you may be entitled to purchase, and to provide you with a quote on how much it will cost you to purchase that service. There will be **no commitment** to purchase any service at this stage.

ACTION REQUIRED - If you are interested in joining the modified scheme then it is important that you complete the attached form and return it **urgently** to your current employing fire and rescue authority or, in the case where you are no longer employed as a retained firefighter, to your last employing fire and rescue authority.

Please note that if you fail to respond to this notification, your option to join the modified scheme may be lost. Once the options exercise has concluded there will be no further opportunity to join. The enclosed form **must** be completed and returned regardless of whether or not you intend to join.

If you were employed as a retained firefighter by more than one fire authority during the relevant period, you should also approach each authority as they will be responsible for implementing your pension entitlement in respect of that particular period of employment. You will also need to confirm on your expression of interest form whether you would like to combine the periods of retained service as a single membership. In this case, your last employing fire authority will liaise with your former employing authorities in order to determine your entitlement.

The employee contribution rate for purchasing the backdated service will reflect the contribution rate payable in the 1992 Scheme i.e. 11% of pensionable pay before April 2012 and the relevant contribution tariff in the 1992 Scheme for any period on or after April 2012. There will be a number of available options for members to pay back these contributions, please refer to the accompanying employee information leaflet.

Time-limited death grant

If you are the surviving spouse or civil partner of someone who was employed as a retained firefighter during the relevant period and who continued in that employment until they died before 6 April 2006, then you may be entitled to receive the payment of a death grant equal to 2.5 times the pensionable pay that the deceased earned in their last year of service, as determined by the fire authority. Your entitlement will be subject to the submission of an application to the deceased member's last employing fire authority before the 1 April 2015.

Please note that where there is no surviving spouse or civil partner, an eligible child of the deceased member, to be determined as on the date of the deceased's death, may make the application to the fire authority for the death grant before the 1 April 2015. Where the child is still a minor, the legal guardian of the child can make the application on behalf of the child

Compensatory Injury Awards

Under the current terms of the Firefighters' Compensation Scheme there is a protected right for retained firefighters appointed before 6 April 2006 to receive a whole-time equivalent injury award and compensatory ill-health pension where they are permanently disabled whilst undertaking their role as a firefighter i.e. a qualifying injury. You will wish to note that this protected right **will be removed** from the 1 April 2014 regardless of whether you elect to join the modified scheme.

Any retained firefighter who suffers a qualifying injury on or after 1 April 2014 will receive a pro-rated injury award to reflect the part-time status of their employment. This is same treatment for retained firefighters appointed on or after 6 April 2006, and for part-time regular firefighters. The removal of these rights **will not affect** those former retained firefighters currently in receipt of an injury award.

Next Steps

Once the fire authority has received your completed expression of interest form they will respond to you in writing setting out the amount of service you are entitled to purchase and the full cost of purchasing this past service. Once you have received the quote you will have 4 months to confirm that you wish to join the modified scheme; it will be at this stage that you will be required to commit to paying the backdated contributions, including interest, if you wish to join the modified scheme. Further details can be found in the employee information leaflet accompanying this letter.

If you have any questions about membership of the new modified scheme or would like additional information about this options exercise please contact me on the number below.

Yours sincerely

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