

## Model letter to MP's

Dear MP,

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME**

I wish to raise with you my great concern over proposals to change the pension rights and benefits that I expected to receive as a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

I understand that the lead employers, the Local Government Association, are pressing for the 'Rule of 85' to be withdrawn. This rule gives those members whose age plus years of service add up to 85, the right to retire at 60 with unreduced benefits. The ODPM has initiated a consultation on new Regulations which will put this into effect from October 2006 asking for responses by 28 February.

Many of my colleagues, as well as myself, are angry and distressed about this proposal and want to ask you for your support.

Many of us have planned our work and finances in retirement on the basis of this element of our scheme and now it appears to be about to be taken away from us, destroying our retirement plans and breaking the promise of the scheme to which we signed up and have been paying 6% of our earnings into in good faith. The Conservative-controlled LGA is making my colleagues and I pay the cost of the contribution holidays the employers took in the early 90's.

Our colleagues in the Health, Teachers, Civil Service, Uniformed Police and Armed Forces pension schemes reached agreements with the Government last year that current members of those schemes would have their pension age and benefits protected with changes to be negotiated for future scheme members.

Members of the Local Government Pension Scheme are being treated badly in comparison and current members are being offered protection only to 2013. I believe this is tantamount to the employers breaking their contract on pensions with me.

I understand that significant savings will be made by other proposed changes to the LGPS by allowing members to take a larger lump sum on retirement with a reduced pension. This proposal, while welcome in principle, would amount to a 6.25% reduction in my overall pension. The consequent savings are more than enough to provide protection for current scheme members and improve the scheme for the future.

*cont.*

The Local Government Pension Scheme covers many thousands of staff beyond local government - in schools, probation, higher and further education, police and fire services, meat hygiene, bus transport and the private and voluntary sectors – so there are many hundreds, if not thousands, of your constituents who are affected by this move. The anger is widespread and we are asking our unions to take this up strongly with the possibility of industrial action in the coming months as a last resort to protect our pensions.

I would like to know your views on the LGA's proposals to remove the 'Rule of 85' with limited protection and whether you believe that all current members should have their present pension provisions protected as have members of the other public sector schemes.

I would also like to know if you support your constituents on this matter, that you will make your views known to the relevant Local Government Employer bodies and make representations to the ODPM on the issue.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours