

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MATTERS



FIRE BRIGADES UNION
The professional voice
of your firefighters

September 2015

RESCUES ILLUSTRATE THE VALUE OF FIREFIGHTERS' WORK

Firefighters continue to carry out an impressive number of rescues every day, reinforcing the vital role of emergency intervention, according to new research commissioned by the Fire Brigades Union.

Over **38,000** people were rescued by firefighters in the UK between April 2014 and March 2015, the latest figures available.

These rescues equate to over **3,000** rescues a month. **That's over 100 rescues every day.**

In England, over **32,000** were rescued by firefighters between April 2014 and March 2015. Over **1,600** rescues took place in Wales, while over **1,500** rescues were affected in Northern Ireland. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service rescued almost **3,000** people overall between April 2014 and March 2015.

Total recorded rescue activity **increased by 2%** over the last five years – on average around 35,000 rescues – or approximately 100 a day.

This underlines both the diversity of emergencies that firefighters now deal with and the continued importance of emergency intervention.

Non-fire incidents

A major finding is the huge number of rescues from non-fire incidents including flooding, road traffic collisions, hazardous chemicals and lift rescues.

Across the UK over **34,000** rescues were carried out at non-fire incidents in 2014-15, a remarkable figure.

There were over **nine times** more rescues at non-fire incidents, reflecting the wider range of activities now undertaken by firefighters, and indicating that the

service provides an irreplaceable response to a huge range of emergencies.

Fires

The figures for fires indicate that firefighters still make a significant intervention in these types of incidents, which is well appreciated by members of the public. For the UK as a whole, over **3,700** people were rescued at fires by firefighters over the last year.

There were some issues of concern with the returns from some individual fire and rescue services. One fire and rescue service reported that the only rescues it records at non-fires are road traffic collision extrications and these are recorded by vehicle not people extricated.

There are ongoing concerns with how some incidents, such as floods, are recorded. Recording a basement flood and a whole high street as a single incident masks very different resource requirements.

It is possible some brigades have not recorded all incidents, so the overall figures may underestimate the real extent of rescue activity carried out by firefighters.

DCLG does not publish rescue figures systematically and has not done so since the turn of the century. Neither does the Welsh Assembly or the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Scottish government does publish rescue figures for fires, but not other incidents.

There are probably fewer rescues than before because of long term societal trends, with fire calls falling due to better regulation, more community fire safety and other activities carried out by firefighters. However for every fire death, firefighters rescue **10 times** that many people from fires.

	Number of rescues at fire incidents	Number of rescues at non-fire incidents	Total number of rescues
Avon	67	617	684
Bedfordshire	15	211	226
Berkshire	114	667	811
Buckinghamshire	27	435	462
Cambridgeshire	26	381	407
Cheshire	39	440	479
Cleveland	27	377	404
Cornwall	37	238	275
Cumbria	45	277	322
Derbyshire	36	564	600
Devon and Somerset	69	796	865
Dorset	20	185	205
Durham	20	327	347
East Sussex	54	808	862
Essex	231	1816	2047
Gloucestershire	49	662	711
Greater Manchester	134	1330	1464
Hampshire	125	1013	1138
Hereford and Worcester	21	421	442
Hertfordshire	160	1011	1171
Humberside	81	663	774
Isle of Wight	17	94	111
Kent	40	727	767
Lancashire	79	616	695
Leicestershire	31	404	435
Lincolnshire	21	430	451
London	439	4209	4648
Merseyside	64	518	582
Norfolk	28	546	574
North Yorkshire	31	403	434
Northamptonshire	23	369	392
Northumberland	18	145	163
Nottinghamshire	36	553	589
Oxfordshire	27	472	499
Shropshire	70	331	401
South Yorkshire	64	951	1015
Staffordshire	27	162	189
Suffolk	24	344	368
Surrey	67	1095	1162
Tyne & Wear	91	691	782
Warwickshire	29	271	300
West Midlands	154	721	875
West Sussex	28	217	245
West Yorkshire	74	1222	1296
Wiltshire	22	341	363
England Total	2931	29071	32002
Mid and West Wales	47	573	620
North Wales	22	231	253
South Wales	74	721	795
Wales Total	143	1525	1668
Northern Ireland	209	1310	1519
Scotland	437	2518	2955
UK Total	3720	34424	38144

Sources: Labour Research Department; Freedom of Information requests 2015