

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MATTERS



FIRE BRIGADES UNION
The professional voice
of your firefighters

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FIREFIGHTER JOB CUTS PUT PUBLIC SAFETY AT RISK

The worst ever cuts in firefighter jobs will put the public at risk, according to new figures obtained by the Fire Brigades Union.

Last year, over 1,800 frontline firefighter jobs were cut – the worst single year of job cuts in the history of the modern fire and rescue service.

Firefighters are responsible for rapid deployment to fires, floods, terrorist incidents, civil disturbances, industrial explosions, train accidents and other emergencies across the UK.

Firefighter job cuts over the last five years

The last five years have seen similar levels of annual reductions. Over 6,700 frontline firefighter jobs were cut between 2011 and 2015, nearly one-in-eight (12%) of the total firefighting force over this period.

Over 4,300 of those cuts are to *wholetime (full-time)* firefighters, while nearly 2,000 *retained (part-time)* firefighters have also been cut. Almost one fifth of *control* staff have been lost.

Firefighter job cuts over the last decade

The fire and rescue service has already been downsized over the last decade. Over 8,000 firefighter jobs have been cut, around one-in-seven (14%) of all firefighters working ten years ago. Metropolitan brigades have been hard hit, but combined and county services have also suffered.

Why firefighter job cuts matter

Firefighters provide an *all-hazards emergency service*, putting themselves on the line to rescue people in their hour of need. Fewer firefighters mean increased risks to the public who pay for the service

and are entitled to professional help when they need it.

Politicians say that there are now fewer fires and fire deaths, so we don't need as many firefighters as before. There are fewer fires and fire deaths primarily because of the remarkable fire safety and prevention work carried out by firefighters helping vulnerable people in their communities. But firefighters still carry out very high levels of rescues – around 100 a day.

Anyone who has been involved in an emergency knows that every second counts. Firefighters pride themselves on a rapid response. With fewer firefighters, the ability to intervene diminishes. *Response times* have slowed, inevitably putting communities at risk when there are multiple incidents. These cuts cannot continue without putting people's lives in jeopardy.

Why have firefighter jobs been cut?

Since 2010, nearly 30% of central funding to fire and rescue services has been reduced. Around half of the total fire and rescue budget comes from this source. Local council tax, the other source of funds, has also been frozen.

The current government plans to embark on a further round of central funding cuts. The Fire Brigades Union will be speaking to MPs and others about these cuts and making the case for investment in the fire and rescue service.

The Fire Brigades Union

The Fire Brigades Union is the professional voice of firefighters throughout the UK. The union has nearly 40,000 members.

Fire and rescue service	Number of firefighter jobs cut (2011-15)	Percentage of firefighter jobs cut (2011-15)	Number of firefighter jobs cut (2014-15)	Percentage of firefighter jobs cut (2014-15)
Avon	-165	-17.4%	-72	-8.4%
Bedfordshire	-41	-8.1%	-8	-1.7%
Berkshire	-80	-14.1%	1	0.2%
Buckinghamshire	-111	-19.1%	-31	-6.2%
Cambridgeshire	-162	-25.2%	-44	-8.4%
Cheshire	-109	-14.3%	-59	-8.3%
Cleveland	-79	-13.8%	-29	-5.6%
Cornwall	-24	-3.7%	-7	-1.1%
Cumbria	-87	-12.6%	-22	-3.5%
Derbyshire	-63	-8.2%	-23	-3.2%
Devon & Somerset	-336	-16.5%	-41	-2.4%
Dorset	-51	-7.6%	-16	-2.5%
Durham	-30	-5.2%	-7	-1.3%
East Sussex	-9	-1.2%	-29	-3.9%
Essex	-109	-7.8%	-39	-2.9%
Gloucestershire	-53	-10.2%	-2	-0.4%
Greater Manchester	-468	-24.4%	-137	-8.6%
Hampshire	5	0.3%	-23	-1.4%
Hereford & Worcester	-26	-3.6%	-20	-2.8%
Hertfordshire	-79	-9.3%	-32	-4.0%
Humberside	-119	-11.4%	46	5.2%
Isle of Wight	-32	-15.0%	-10	-5.2%
Kent	-287	-18.1%	-75	-5.4%
Lancashire	-241	-18.3%	-88	-7.5%
Leicestershire	-89	-11.7%	-42	-5.9%
Lincolnshire	-113	-14.5%	4	0.6%
London	-762	-12.9%	-293	-5.4%
Merseyside	-332	-27.9%	-100	-10.4%
Norfolk	-51	-6.1%	5	0.6%
North West Control	61	N/A	61	N/A
North Yorkshire	-78	-10.0%	-35	-4.8%
Northamptonshire	-39	-6.5%	5	0.9%
Northumberland	-31	-8.0%	-24	-6.3%
Nottinghamshire	-146	-15.5%	-21	-2.6%
Oxfordshire	-40	-6.3%	-6	-1.0%
Shropshire	-47	-8.4%	-24	-4.5%
South Yorkshire	-156	-17.3%	-22	-2.9%
Staffordshire	-159	-16.6%	-54	-6.3%
Suffolk	-53	-7.1%	-21	-2.9%
Surrey	-112	-14.0%	-33	-4.6%
Tyne & Wear	-171	-18.6%	-53	-6.6%
Warwickshire	-102	-21.3%	-29	-7.1%
West Midlands	-208	-11.2%	-37	-2.2%
West Sussex	-194	-23.8%	-19	-3.0%
West Yorkshire	-314	-19.2%	-88	-6.2%
Wiltshire	-77	-13.6%	-17	-3.3%
Mid and West Wales	48	4.1%	-5	-0.4%
North Wales	-177	-19.7%	-7	-1.0%
South Wales	-140	-8.4%	-49	-3.1%
England	-5,969	-13.3%	-1610	-4.0%
Scotland	-449	-6.0%	-103	-1.4%
Northern Ireland	-53	-2.7%	-69	-3.5%
Wales	-269	-7.2%	-61	-1.7%
UK	-6,740	-11.6%	-1843	-3.5%

Sources: FBU Freedom of Information request to all fire and rescue services, April-May 2015. DCLG, Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government. 31 March each year. Headcount for wholetime, retained and control firefighters.