Cuts to the fire and rescue service

A senseless and dangerous agenda

FIRE BRIGADES UNION

Since 2010 central government has cut its funding to the fire and rescue service, its main source of income, by nearly 30%.

The other source of funding, local council tax, has mostly been frozen.

This has resulted in the loss of over 6,700 firefighter jobs. That's one in eight jobs gone over the last 5 years.

Last year (2014-15) saw the largest reduction in firefighter posts ever with 1800 jobs axed.

Alongside record job losses, 40 fire stations have closed, forcing some areas to reduce standard levels. Equipment and appliances have also been cut.

These cuts inevitably affect how long it takes for a fire engine to arrive at an incident - 999 response times have increased by two minutes over the course of the last two decades.

In a life or death situation, every second counts. Independent research by Greenstreet Bernam predicted that by 2020, there could be up to 200 more deaths, as a result of rising response times.

Recent research by the Labour Research Department found that firefighters rescued a staggering 38,000 people across the UK last year.

The fire and rescue service costs every man, woman and child just £50 every year.

A recent YouGov survey found that 82% of respondents thought that the fire and rescue service was value for money. Only 4% said they thought there should be fewer firefighters, with 43% arguing for more.

Government should provide the fire and rescue service with a financial settlement for 2015-16 that reflects the huge role firefighters play in keeping communities safe.

Further cuts would be senseless and dangerous.

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