



FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MATTERS

A PARLIAMENTARY BULLETIN FROM THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION | SEPTEMBER 2016

FIREFIGHTERS RESCUE MORE PEOPLE THAN EVER BEFORE

Firefighters carried out record levels of rescues over the last year, underlining the irreplaceable role of emergency intervention, according to new research by the Fire Brigades Union.

Latest figures show that over **40,000** people were rescued by firefighters in the UK between April 2015 and March 2016. This equates to roughly 3,400 rescues a month, or **over 100 rescues every day**.

Over 33,000 people were rescued by firefighters in England between April 2015 and March 2016. Almost 2,000 rescues took place in Wales, whilst there were more than 1,500 rescues in Northern Ireland. The Scottish fire and rescue service rescued over 3,500 people overall between April 2015 and March 2016.

Total recorded rescue activity increased by **7% over the last year across the UK**. There were increases in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. 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, hazardous chemical spillages, road traffic collisions and lift rescues.

There were around **nine times more rescues at non-fire incidents than at fires**. This reflects the wider range of activities that modern day firefighters now undertake and shows the service provides an irreplaceable response to a vast and eclectic array of emergencies.

For the UK as a whole, **nearly 37,000** rescues were carried out at non-fire incidents in 2015-16. This is the highest figure since the FBU began collecting this data.

FIRES

The figures indicate that firefighters still make a significant intervention in fire related incidents, which is appreciated greatly the public. Across the UK, almost 4,000 people were rescued from fires by firefighters over the last year.

There were some concerns regarding the returns from some individual fire and rescue services, and also how incidents are registered – for example 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.

Following the devolution of fire policy, Westminster stopped publishing fire rescue figures. Both the Welsh Assembly and the Northern Ireland Assembly do not publish these figures either. The Scottish government publishes rescue figures for fires, but it does not for other incidents. This is why the FBU collects figures from fire and rescues and publishes them annually.

There are fewer fire rescues now due to long term societal trend - fire calls are falling due to better regulation, improved community fire safety and other activities, all campaigned for and carried out by firefighters. **Firefighters rescue 10 times as many people from fires** for every fire death that occurs.

RESCUES BY BRIGADE, APRIL 2015 - MARCH 2016

Fire and rescue service	Total rescues at fires	Total rescues at non- fire incidents	Total rescues	% change 2015-16
Scotland	495	3070	3565	+21%
Northern Ireland	138	1409	1547	+2%
Mid and West Wales	54	746	800	+29%
North Wales	28	260	288	+14%
South Wales	88	807	895	+13%
Wales	170	1813	1983	+19%
Cleveland	17	287	304	-25%
Durham	9	301	310	-11%
Northumberland	8	212	220	+35%
Tyne and Wear	56	629	685	-12%
Humberside	67	683	750	+1%
North Yorkshire	23	489	512	+18%
South Yorkshire	42	1061	1103	+9%
West Yorkshire	108	1402	1510	+17%
Cheshire	27	472	499	+4%
Cumbria	18	279	297	-8%
Greater Manchester	734	2782	3516	+140%
Lancashire	73	947	1020	+47%
Merseyside	73	419	492	-15%
Derbyshire	175	980	1155	+93%
Leicestershire	36	459	495	+14%
Lincolnshire	7	409	416	-8%
Northamptonshire	38	504	542	+38%
Nottinghamshire	39	635	674	+14%
Hereford and Worcester	25	314	339	-23%
Shropshire	73	406	479	+19%
Staffordshire	22	200	222	+17%
Warwickshire	12	269	281	-6%
West Midlands	143	707	850	-3%
Bedfordshire	12	243	255	+13%
Cambridgeshire	33	372	405	0%
Essex	68	720	788	-57%
Hertfordshire	23	601	624	-47%
Norfolk	28	528	556	-3%
Suffolk	30	333	363	-1%
Greater London	215	3096	3311	-29%
East Sussex	31	609	640	-26%
Kent	24	679	703	-8%
Surrey	77	1268	1345	+16%
West Sussex	41	467	508	+107%
Berkshire	98	613	711	-12%
Buckinghamshire	128	1907	2035	+340%
Hampshire	82	939	1021	-10%
Isle of Wight	11	67	78	-30%
Oxfordshire	106	850	956	+92%
Avon	39	583	622	-9%
Cornwall	34	266	300	+9%
Devon and Somerset	51	843	894	+3%
Dorset	24	254	278	+36%
Gloucestershire	18	273	291	-59%
Wiltshire	48	429	477	+31%
England	3022	30532	33554	+6%
UK	3825	36824	40649	+7%

Source: FBU Freedom of Information requests 2016