



FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MATTERS

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WESTMINSTER CONTINUES TO CUT THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE IN ENGLAND

The Westminster government is continuing to cut the fire and rescue service, despite the terrible Grenfell Tower fire and the increase in fire fatalities over the last year.

This month the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) confirmed its Local Government Settlement, providing figures for the central funding allocated to fire authorities in England.

They show that the Westminster government has cut central grant funding (known as the Settlement Funding Assessment, SFA) to fire authorities by **15%** over the years 2016-17 to 2019-20.

This confirms that austerity continues. The fire and rescue service has not been protected, in spite of the Grenfell Tower fire and other major incidents firefighters have tackled over the last year.

The new figures show that Westminster provided over a **billion pounds** to fire and rescue services in England in 2016-17, but intends to cut this to **£857m** by 2019-20.

The level of cuts planned for fire authorities in England over the four years, comparing 2016-17 with 2019-20, is set out in the table overleaf. Over the five year period to 2019-20, the cuts amount to **21%**.

FURTHER CUTS

The planned cuts are even worse than those announced last year. Then the government said it would spend £868m on fire in 2019-20. They have cut the budget further knowing full well the terrible death toll at Grenfell and other incidents.

In general, county fire authorities have been hardest hit in these years, followed by combined fire authorities. In previous years, metropolitan fire authorities have suffered the heaviest funding cuts.

The cuts come on top of **30%** central funding reductions between 2010 and 2015, which were highlighted in the National Audit Office report on the financial sustainability of fire and rescue service.

Since 2010, more than **11,000** firefighter jobs have been cut across the UK – one-in-five frontline firefighter jobs, hitting wholetime, retained and control firefighters.

The cuts have been imposed against the background of increased fire deaths in England. New Home Office figures show that in the year ending September 2017, there were 346 fire-related fatalities (including 71 from the Grenfell Tower fire) compared with 253 in the previous year – a 37% increase (up 9% not including Grenfell).

MORE MISERY

Fire authorities are also funded by revenue raised locally through council tax. This money, together with SFA, is known as core spending power. The changes Westminster is introducing to allow local authorities to keep more revenue raised locally affect these figures too – particularly as they are simultaneously cutting central funding streams.

All fire authorities are facing central funding cuts and most will not be able to make up the shortfall with locally-raised revenue or their reserves. Figures for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were not made available.

Table: Final local government settlement for fire authorities in England, 2016-17 to 2019-20

Fire Authority	Settlement Funding Assessment 2016-17 (£m)	Settlement Funding Assessment 2019-20 (£m)	Change SFA 2016-17 to 2019-20 (£m)	% SFA 2016-17 to 2019-20
Cleveland	16.3	14.4	-1.9	-12%
Durham	12.3	10.4	-1.9	-15%
Northumberland	6.4	5.4	-1.0	-16%
Tyne and Wear	27.4	24.1	-3.3	-12%
Humberside	22.7	19.8	-2.9	-13%
North Yorkshire	10.5	8.6	-1.9	-18%
South Yorkshire	27.1	23.7	-3.4	-13%
West Yorkshire	43.1	37.7	-5.4	-13%
Cheshire	16.0	13.2	-2.8	-18%
Cumbria	9.9	8.2	-1.7	-17%
Greater Manchester	56.5	49.8	-6.7	-12%
Lancashire	27.6	23.8	-3.8	-14%
Merseyside	35.0	30.8	-4.2	-12%
Derbyshire	15.5	13.0	-2.5	-16%
Leicestershire	15.4	13.1	-2.3	-15%
Lincolnshire	11.4	9.6	-1.8	-16%
Northamptonshire	9.3	7.5	-1.8	-19%
Nottinghamshire	18.8	16.0	-2.8	-15%
Hereford and Worcester	16.8	14.1	-2.7	-16%
Shropshire	9.7	7.6	-2.1	-22%
Staffordshire	6.5	5.1	-1.4	-22%
Warwickshire	7.1	4.2	-2.9	-41%
West Midlands	58.7	52.0	-6.7	-11%
Bedfordshire	10.2	8.3	-1.9	-19%
Cambridgeshire	10.7	8.8	-1.9	-18%
Essex	29.4	24.6	-4.8	-16%
Hertfordshire	16.6	12.2	-4.4	-27%
Norfolk	14.0	11.8	-2.2	-16%
Suffolk	9.7	8.0	-1.7	-18%
London	233.4	207.4	-26.0	-11%
Berkshire	12.2	10.0	-2.2	-18%
Buckinghamshire	9.1	7.3	-1.8	-20%
East Sussex	13.3	10.8	-2.5	-19%
Hampshire	25.9	21.5	-4.4	-17%
Isle of Wight	3.2	2.7	-0.5	-16%
Kent	25.6	21.0	-4.6	-18%
Oxfordshire	8.4	5.1	-3.3	-39%
Surrey	17.8	11.5	-6.3	-35%
West Sussex	9.9	5.4	-4.5	-45%
Avon	18.6	15.8	-2.8	-15%
Cornwall	13.4	11.3	-2.1	-16%
Devon and Somerset	26.9	21.9	-5.0	-19%
Dorset and Wiltshire	17.6	14.1	-3.5	-20%
Gloucestershire	7.1	5.7	-1.4	-20%
England	1013.0	857.3	-155.7	-15%

Source: MHCLG, Key information for local authorities on the final local government finance settlement 2018 to 2019, 6 February 2018
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-information-for-local-authorities-final-local-government-finance-settlement-2018-to-2019>

The FBU is the democratic, professional voice of firefighters and other workers within fire and rescue services across the UK. We represent the vast majority of wholetime (full time) and retained (part time, on-call) operational firefighters and control staff.
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