



FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MATTERS

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CUTS TO FIRE SAFETY INSPECTORS PUT THE PUBLIC AT RISK

Cuts to the number of fire safety inspectors, who are responsible for vital statutory fire safety inspections and audits, are putting the public at risk according to new research by the Fire Brigades Union. These are the inspectors who audit hospitals, schools, offices, shops as well as other communal and public spaces to check the owners are complying with safety law.

Under the Fire Safety Order 2005, or similar legislation in the devolved administrations, fire and rescue authorities have important duties to enforce fire safety law. Yet the number of professional, special-trained fire safety inspectors who carry out this irreplaceable work have been cut for the past two decades.

OVERALL CUTS SINCE 2010

Since 2010, the number of fire safety inspectors has fallen by **28%**. This is greater than the drastic fall in staffing right across the fire and rescue service, which is approximately 20%.

Since 2013, the number of fire safety inspectors has fallen by **13%**. Four fifths of fire and rescue services provided data, indicating that a significant minority are not even in a position to quantify their inspectors at present.

The Grenfell Tower fire has underlined the importance of the work of fire safety inspectors. The London Fire Brigade was able to provide detailed figures for our request - a decade ago the LFB had over 200 fire safety inspectors, but this has been reduced to just over **150** in 2017.

CUTS IN THE LONG RUN

There are currently **1,169 fire safety inspectors** across the UK. The Westminster government does not routinely publish figures on the number of these inspectors. This illustrates its laissez faire approach of leaving responsibility to local authorities and underlines the lack of oversight and strategic scrutiny at Westminster of overall, national resilience.

The old HM inspector of fire services in England and Wales, scrapped at the turn of the century, reported these figures annually. In 1996-97, it estimated there were 1,724 fire safety inspectors in England and Wales. Today there are 1,041 indicating a **40% fall** in the number of inspectors over the last twenty years.

The number of fire safety inspectors has been falling for at least two decades. Comparisons in the long run are hampered by the data available from fire and rescue services. Only two-fifths of services provided data on the number of inspectors in 2006 and only half from a decade ago.

The figures in the table overleaf come from Freedom of Information requests to local fire and rescue authorities/boards, July-September 2017. Where the field is blank, no data was provided. The posts are expressed as full time equivalent (FTE), as some inspectors have other roles. Some services indicated that some additional personnel such as senior officers or principal managers might carry out inspections.

FIRE SAFETY INSPECTORS

	2010	2013	2017	Change 2010-17	Change 2013-17
Scotland		102	90		-12%
Northern Ireland		50	38		-24%
Mid and West Wales	58	45	39	-33%	-13%
North Wales		17	16		-6%
South Wales	48	44	40	-17%	-9%
Cleveland	17	11	9	-47%	-18%
Durham	10	8	5	-50%	-38%
Northumberland	11	9	7	-36%	-22%
Tyne and Wear	34	26	23	-32%	-12%
Humberside			20		
North Yorkshire	16	15	15	-6%	0%
South Yorkshire	29.8	25.6	20.8	-30%	-19%
West Yorkshire	89	33	27	-70	-18%
Cheshire			25		
Cumbria	21	12	10	-52%	-17%
Greater Manchester	58	53	47	-19%	-11%
Lancashire		36	29		-19%
Merseyside	38	42	34	-11%	-19%
Derbyshire			18.8		
Leicestershire	14	15	14	0%	-7%
Lincolnshire	15	12	12	-20%	0%
Northamptonshire	15	12	8	-47%	-33%
Nottinghamshire	5	14	17	240%	21%
Hereford and Worcester		12	12		0%
Shropshire	11.2	11	10	-11%	-9%
Staffordshire	18	11	12	-33%	9%
Warwickshire		6	5.6		-7%
West Midlands	82.5	67.5	58.3	-29%	-14%
Bedfordshire			8		
Cambridgeshire			38		
Essex		10.9	16.9		55%
Hertfordshire	24	24	25	4%	4%
Norfolk	34.8	14.5	14.2	-59%	-2%
Suffolk	20	25	15	-25%	-40%
London	182.1	172.6	151.8	-17%	-12%
Berkshire	20	20.5	16.8	-16%	-18%
Buckinghamshire		8	9		13%
East Sussex		17.4	19.1		3.4%
Hampshire	54	46.5	38	-30%	-18%
Isle of Wight	4.6	4.6	2.6	-43%	-43%
Kent	67	65	54.5	-19%	-16%
Oxfordshire	16	16	11	-31%	-31%
Surrey	22	22	18.2	-17%	-17%
West Sussex	21	15	11	-48%	-27%
Avon	22	15.5	11	-50%	-29%
Cornwall					
Devon and Somerset			30		
Dorset and Wiltshire	11.2	8.7	14.3	27%	63%
Gloucestershire	6.6	4	2.6	-61%	-35%