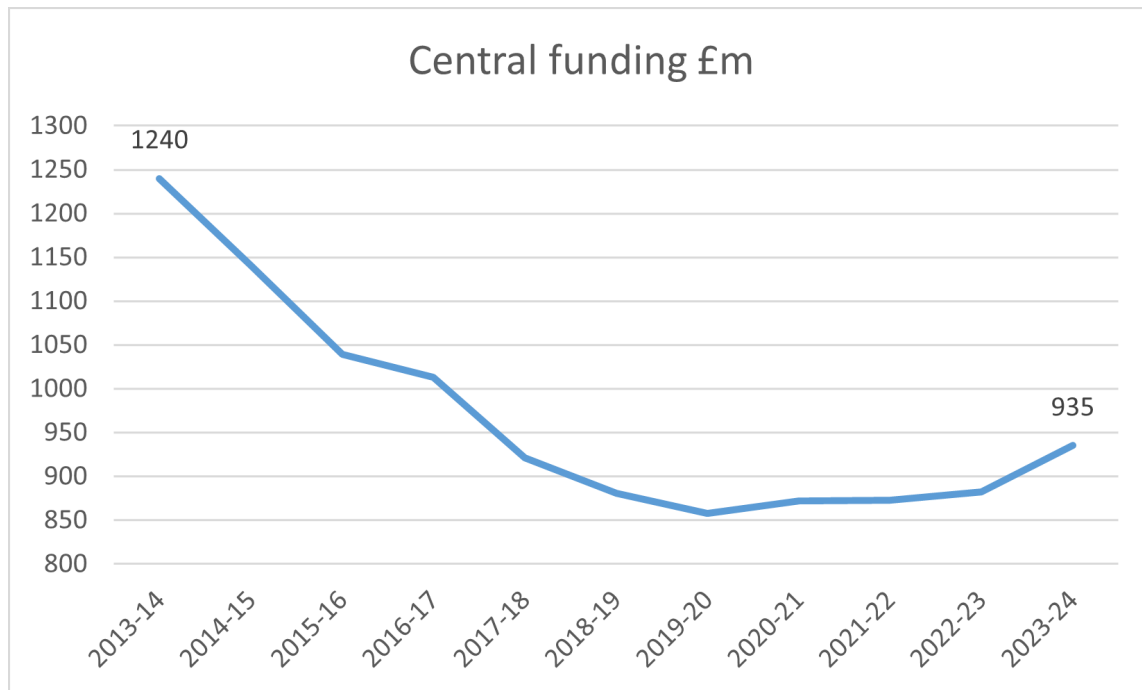


FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MATTERS

A PARLIAMENTARY BULLETIN FOR MPS FROM THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION | JANUARY 2023



FIRE AND RESCUE CENTRAL FUNDING CUTS - NOT ENOUGH FOR INVESTMENT OR PAY



The Westminster government is planning to cut the fire and rescue service again next year in real terms, reducing investment in our communities and imposing further pay cuts on firefighters. The FBU believes that ministers have made the political choice to impose further cuts, even though they could easily raise the money.

On 19 December 2022, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities published its provisional local government finance settlement for the financial year 2023-24. This is the amount of central funding provided to fire and rescue services for the next financial year.

While central funding for fire in England has increased by 5.9% nationally, this does not match the current rate of inflation nor the expected rate of inflation for the coming year. It does not remedy the years of cuts the fire and rescue service has suffered. Austerity continues for the fire and rescue service.

Central funding for fire and rescue services in England has been increased by £52.3m, bringing the total to £935m. However, in 2013-14, fire central funding was £1,240m. This settlement means brigades in England have experienced cuts of 25% overall in money terms since 2013-14, and many will struggle to meet costs.

On 17 November 2022, the Office for Budget Responsibility estimated that CPI inflation would be 9.1% for the calendar year 2022 and 7.4% for 2023. Current CPI inflation is 10.7%.

Cumbria fire and rescue had the largest boost, after the takeover by the police and crime commissioner was granted by ministers. Despite massive local opposition to the move, ministers have put in a little extra money to sweeten the bitter decision.

Although ministers have allowed local councils to increase the fire precept, this only accelerates the move away from central funding towards mainly locally resourced, more fragmented fire and rescue services, weakening overall national resilience.

Fire authority	Change 2016-17 to 2023-24 (£m)	Change 2016-17 to 2023-24 (%)	Change 2022-23 to 2023-24 (£m)	Change 2022-23 to 2023-24 (%)
Cleveland	-0.5	-3.1%	+0.9	+6.1%
Durham	-1.0	-7.9%	+0.6	+5.9%
Northumberland	-0.5	-8.4%	+0.3	+5.9%
Tyne and Wear	-1.1	-3.9%	+1.5	+6.1%
Humberside	-1.1	-4.8%	+1.2	+6.1%
North Yorkshire	-1.2	-11.8%	+0.5	+5.7%
South Yorkshire	-1.3	-4.6%	+1.5	+6.0%
West Yorkshire	-2.0	-4.6%	+2.4	+6.1%
Cheshire	-1.7	-10.3%	+0.8	+5.7%
Cumbria	-0.8	-8.2%	+0.6	+7.0%
Greater Manchester	-2.1	-3.7%	+3.1	+6.1%
Lancashire	-1.6	-5.7%	+1.5	+6.0%
Merseyside	-1.3	-3.7%	+1.9	+6.1%
Derbyshire	-1.4	-8.7%	+0.8	+5.8%
Leicestershire	-1.1	-7.4%	+0.8	+5.9%
Lincolnshire	-0.9	-8.0%	+0.6	+5.9%
Northamptonshire	-1.1	-11.5%	+0.4	+5.7%
Nottinghamshire	-1.4	-7.2%	+1.0	+5.9%
Hereford and Worcester	-1.4	-14.6%	+0.4	+5.5%
Shropshire	-1.0	-14.8%	+0.3	+5.4%
Staffordshire	-1.4	-8.6%	+0.9	+5.9%
Warwickshire	-2.8	-38.5%	+0.2	+3.7%
West Midlands	-1.8	-3.1%	+3.3	+6.1%
Bedfordshire	-1.4	-13.7%	+0.5	+5.6%
Cambridgeshire	-1.1	-10.7%	+0.5	+5.8%
Essex	-2.5	-8.7%	+1.5	+6.0%
Hertfordshire	-3.5	-20.8%	+0.7	+5.2%
Norfolk	-1.2	-8.5%	+0.7	+6.0%
Suffolk	-1.0	-10.7%	+0.5	+5.9%
London	-6.4	-2.7%	+13.3	+6.2%
East Sussex	-1.6	-11.9%	+0.6	+5.7%
Kent	-2.8	-10.9%	+1.2	+5.7%
Surrey	-5.7	-31.9%	+0.4	+3.7%
West Sussex	-4.1	-41.8%	+0.2	+3.7%
Berkshire	-1.3	-10.5%	+0.6	+5.8%
Buckinghamshire	-1.1	-12.5%	+0.4	+5.8%
Hampshire and IoW	-2.6	-9.1%	+1.5	+5.9%
Oxfordshire	-3.0	-35.9%	+0.2	+3.7%
Avon	-1.5	-7.9%	+0.9	+5.8%
Cornwall	-1.1	-8.3%	+0.7	+5.9%
Devon and Somerset	-3.1	-11.4%	+1.3	+5.6%
Dorset and Wiltshire	-2.4	-13.6%	+0.8	+5.5%
Gloucestershire	-0.9	-13.0%	+0.3	+5.8%
England	-78.7	-7.8%	+52.3	+5.9%

Source: DLUHC, Key information for local authorities: provisional local government finance settlement 2023 to 2024