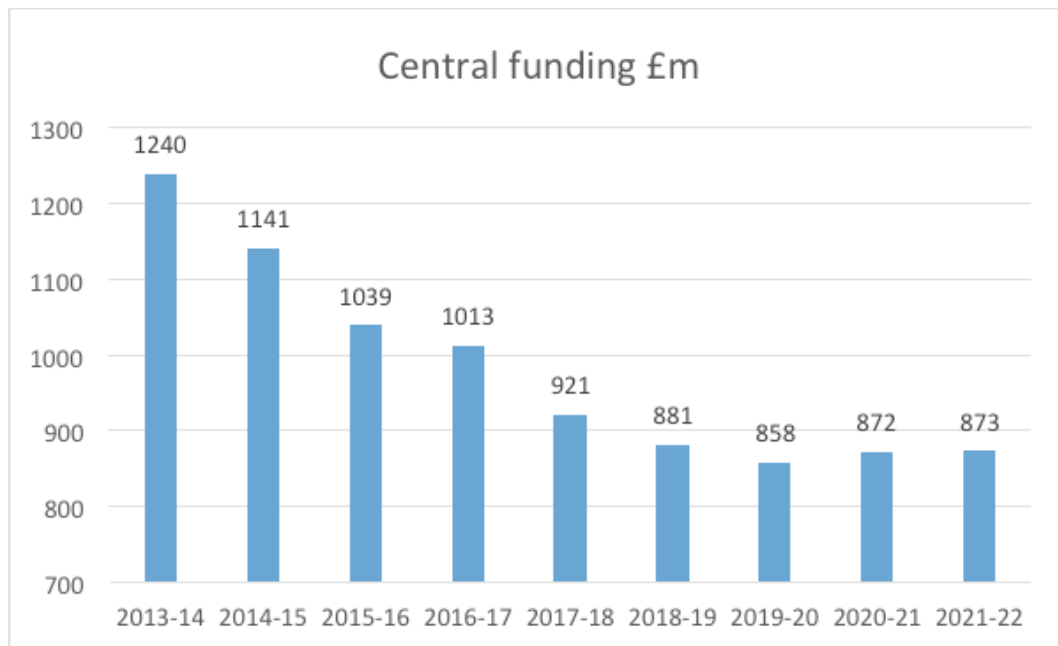


FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MATTERS

A PARLIAMENTARY BULLETIN FOR MPS FROM THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION | FEBRUARY 2021



MINISTERS IMPOSE MORE AUSTERITY ON THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE IN ENGLAND



CENTRAL CUTS

Fire and rescue services face another year of cuts, despite the incredible work done by firefighters throughout the pandemic.

On 4 February the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed its final local government finance settlement for 2021-22.

Central funding was increased by just £1.6 million for fire and rescue services in England – an increase in money terms of just 0.18%. This is well below the expected level of inflation and therefore constitutes a real terms cut.

Many fire and rescue services received increases in funding. With additional costs from the pandemic and inflation, they now face a desperate struggle for resources from local taxation, or more cuts.

The small increases in funding over the last two years have not repaired the damage done by a decade of austerity. Over the last nine years, some 30% has been cut from central funding of fire and rescue services in England. This has led to 10,000 frontline firefighters cut, 20% of the workforce.

LOCAL CUTS

The worst hit brigades are county council fire and rescue services, such as Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Warwickshire and West Sussex. They have faced huge pressure from cuts in recent years.

Ministers have promoted a model whereby councils and fire authorities agree to reduce their central funding in order to keep more of locally raised revenue from the retention of business rates. However in the context of the pandemic, where local council taxation has collapsed, much of this anticipated revenue will have disappeared.

During this crisis, firefighters have continued to provide emergency intervention at fires, floods, road traffic collisions and other incidents, as well as assisting with additional work to help vulnerable people and the NHS tackle Covid-19.

At a time of crisis, central government should have stepped in with more central funding. Instead firefighters and our communities have been ignored. Despite big promises from the NFCC, the fire and rescue service is on the receiving end of austerity yet again.

Central funding

Fire Authority	2016-17 to 2021-22 (£m)	2016-17 to 2021-22 (%)	2020-21 to 2021-22 (£m)	2020-21 to 2021-22 (%)
Cleveland	-1.6	-9.6%	0.03	0.20%
Durham	-1.7	-13.9%	0.02	0.18%
Northumberland	-0.9	-14.3%	0.01	0.18%
Tyne and Wear	-2.9	-10.5%	0.05	0.20%
Humberside	-2.6	-11.3%	0.04	0.20%
North Yorkshire	-1.8	-17.3%	0.01	0.16%
South Yorkshire	-3.0	-11.0%	0.05	0.19%
West Yorkshire	-4.8	-11.1%	0.07	0.20%
Cheshire	-2.6	-15.9%	0.02	0.16%
Cumbria	-1.5	-15.1%	0.02	0.18%
Greater Manchester	-5.8	-10.2%	0.10	0.20%
Lancashire	-3.3	12.0%	0.05	0.19%
Merseyside	-3.6	-10.2%	0.06	0.20%
Derbyshire	-2.3	-14.6%	0.02	0.18%
Leicestershire	-2.1	-13.4%	0.02	0.18%
Lincolnshire	-1.6	-14.1%	0.02	0.19%
Northamptonshire	-1.6	-17.0%	0.01	0.16%
Nottinghamshire	-2.5	-13.3%	0.03	0.18%
Hereford and Worcester	-1.9	-19.7%	0.01	0.15%
Shropshire	-1.3	-19.7%	0.01	0.14%
Staffordshire	-2.4	-14.5%	0.03	0.18%
Warwickshire	-2.9	-40.8%	0	0.00%
West Midlands	-5.7	-9.7%	0.11	0.20%
Bedfordshire	1.9	-18.9%	0.01	0.16%
Cambridgeshire	-1.8	-16.4%	0.02	0.17%
Essex	-4.3	-14.7%	0.05	0.19%
Hertfordshire	-4.2	-25.2%	0.02	0.12%
Norfolk	-2	-14.5%	0.02	0.19%
Suffolk	-1.6	-16.4%	0.01	0.18%
London	-22.1	-9.5%	0.44	0.21%
Berkshire	-2	-16.2%	0.02	0.17%
Buckinghamshire	-1.6	-18.0%	0.01	0.17%
East Sussex	-2.3	-17.4%	0.02	0.16%
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	-4.4	-15.0%	0.05	0.18%
Kent	-4.2	-16.5%	0.04	0.17%
Oxfordshire	-3.2	-38.2%	0	0.00%
Surrey	-6.1	-34.3%	0	0.00%
West Sussex	-4.3	-43.9%	0	0.00%
Avon	-2.6	-13.8%	0.03	0.18%
Cornwall	-1.9	-14.3%	0.02	0.18%
Devon and Somerset	-4.5	-16.8%	0.04	0.16%
Dorset and Wiltshire	-3.3	-18.7%	0.02	0.15%
Gloucestershire	-1.3	-18.5%	0.01	0.17%
England	-139.7	-13.8%	1.60	0.18%