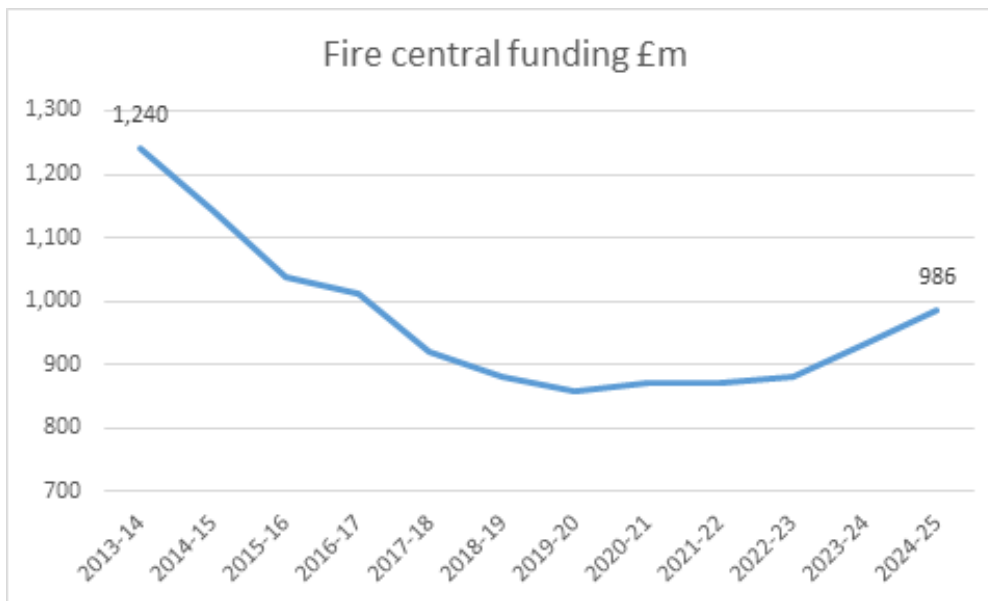


FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MATTERS

A PARLIAMENTARY BULLETIN FOR MPS FROM THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION | FEBRUARY 2024

STILL UNDERFUNDED - FIRE AND RESCUE CENTRAL FUNDING STILL LOWER THAN A DECADE AGO



The fire and rescue service still needs sustained investment, despite the first above-inflation central funding increase for more than a decade.

On 5 February 2024, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities published its final local government finance settlement for the financial year 2024-25. This is the amount of central funding provided to fire and rescue services from April 2024.

While central funding in England has increased by 5.5%, this does not remedy years of cuts the fire and rescue service has suffered.

Central funding for fire and rescue services in England has been increased by £51.6m, bringing the total to £986m. However, in 2013-14, fire central funding was £1,240m. Brigades in England have experienced cuts of 20% overall in money terms since 2013-14, and many will struggle to meet costs.

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service again had the largest boost, after the takeover by the

police and crime commissioner. Ministers continue to put in a little extra money to sweeten this bitter decision.

Metropolitan fire and rescue authorities in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire, along with London, Cleveland and Humberside – have this year received slightly more than they got in 2016-17. However inflation has risen over that period, so they are still worse off in real terms.

Oxfordshire, Surrey, Warwickshire and West Sussex get less central funding, but keep more local-raised revenue under a deal brokered during austerity.

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. Centrally-funded investment remains necessary for resilience.

Fire authority	Change 2016-17 to 2024-25 (£m)	Change 2016-17 to 2024-25 (%)	Change 2023-24 to 2024-25 (£m)	Change 2023-24 to 2024-25 (%)
Avon	-0.5	-2.9%	0.9	5.4%
Bedfordshire	-0.9	-9.0%	0.5	5.4%
Berkshire	-0.7	-5.4%	0.6	5.7%
Buckinghamshire	-0.7	-7.6%	0.4	5.5%
Cambridgeshire	-0.6	-5.7%	0.5	5.6%
Cheshire	-0.9	-5.6%	0.8	5.3%
Cleveland	0.4	+2.2%	0.9	5.4%
Cornwall	-0.6	-4.3%	0.5	4.5%
Cumbria	0.9	+9.0%	1.7	18.8%
Derbyshire	-0.7	-4.2%	0.7	5.0%
Devon and Somerset	-1.9	-7.2%	1.1	4.7%
Dorset and Wiltshire	-1.6	-9.2%	0.8	5.0%
Durham	-0.4	-3.3%	0.6	5.0%
East Sussex	-1	-7.7%	0.6	4.8%
Essex	-1.1	-3.8%	1.4	5.3%
Gloucestershire	-0.6	-8.7%	0.3	5.0%
Greater Manchester	0.8	+1.5%	2.9	5.4%
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	-1.2	-4.2%	1.4	5.3%
Hereford and Worcester	-1	-10.5%	0.4	4.8%
Hertfordshire	-2.8	-16.6%	0.7	5.3%
Humberside	0.1	+0.4%	1.2	5.4%
Kent	-1.6	-6.2%	1.2	5.3%
Lancashire	-0.3	-0.9%	1.3	5.1%
Leicestershire	-0.4	-2.4%	0.8	5.4%
Lincolnshire	-0.4	-3.5%	0.5	5.0%
London	7.1	+3.0%	13.5	5.9%
Merseyside	0.5	+1.4%	1.8	5.3%
Norfolk	-0.6	-4.0%	0.6	5.0%
North Yorkshire	-0.8	-7.6%	0.4	4.8%
Northamptonshire	-0.6	-6.6%	0.5	5.6%
Northumberland	-0.3	-4.0%	0.3	4.8%
Nottinghamshire	-0.4	-2.3%	0.9	5.3%
Oxfordshire	-2.8	-32.7%	0.3	5.0%
Shropshire	-0.7	-10.7%	0.3	4.8%
South Yorkshire	0.1	+0.4%	1.4	5.3%
Staffordshire	-0.6	-3.8%	0.8	5.3%
Suffolk	-0.6	-6.0%	0.5	5.2%
Surrey	-5.1	-28.6%	0.6	4.8%
Tyne and Wear	0.3	+1.2%	1.4	5.4%
Warwickshire	-2.5	-35.6%	0.2	4.8%
West Midlands	1.2	+2.1%	3	5.3%
West Sussex	-3.9	-39.1%	0.3	4.7%
West Yorkshire	0.1	+0.3%	2.1	5.2%
England	-27.2	-2.7%	51.6	5.5%

Source: DLUHC, Key information for local authorities: final local government finance settlement 2024-25