

Local Government Association briefing

The impact of funding reductions on fire services

House of Commons
20 February 2019



KEY MESSAGES

- According to NFCC figures, the reduction in Government funding for all standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities since 2010/11 is expected to be approximately £137 million by the end of 2019/2020.
- Similarly we are concerned by the reduction in staff in fire and rescue services over recent years, including full-time fire fighters, and control and support staff.
- In order to respond comprehensively to emergency situations, fire and rescue services need to be funded and resourced to respond to risk, not demand. Major incidents such as Grenfell or Buncefield may be rare, but the service must have the capacity to deal with them.
- Last summer's wildfires added a new dimension to risk for fire and rescue services. It is unlikely that two Grenfell-size fires will occur at once, but wildfires are most likely in drought conditions and the effects of those conditions are likely to increase wildfire risk in multiple locations at once.
- In summer 2018, 19 fire and rescue services provided assistance to Lancashire and Greater Manchester to fight the Winter Hill fire, including Dorset and Wiltshire, the London Fire Brigade and Northumberland.
- Over half of the fire and rescue services in England and Wales have experienced a significant increase in prevention and protection work, due to the safety checks carried out on high rise buildings in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire. This has usually been at the expense of other areas of work.
- The Hackitt review is expected to lead to a further increase in the number of inspections of residential buildings by fire and rescue services.
- This is unsustainable and could expose communities to risk unless the new provisions or expectations on fire and rescues services arising from the Hackitt review or subsequent changes in policy are treated as a new burden and separately funded.
- There is also a challenge facing services regarding a significant shortage of fire engineering expertise in the UK. This will need to be addressed if the ambitions of the Hackitt review are to be achieved.
- We would expect that fire and rescue services will be the home for this increased expertise and this will also require supplementary funding.

Briefing

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FURTHER READING

Local Government Association, Fire Vision 2024, March 2018

<https://www.local.gov.uk/fire-vision-2024>

National Fire Chiefs Council, Spending Review update, January 2019

[https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/NFCC%20meetings/2019/January/Item 4 - Spending Review update and progress Jan 2019 v1.pdf](https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/NFCC%20meetings/2019/January/Item%204%20-%20Spending%20Review%20update%20and%20progress%20Jan%202019%20v1.pdf)

LGA Fire Services Management Committee, Update on industrial relations and pensions issues in the fire and rescue services, January 2019

<http://lga.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s20498/FSMC%20workforce%20paper%20250119%20final.pdf>