

FIRE BRIGADES UNION

TUESDAY 26 MAY

GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE CREWS HIT BACK OVER CUTS PLAN

Greater Manchester fire crews have hit back at plans to make more cuts to the local fire service. They warn of even longer delays for fire engines and a shortage of specialist rescue and firefighting vehicles to cover major incidents.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority plans further cuts to local fire services from July 1 2009. Since 2002 over 400 frontline firefighter posts have been axed in Greater Manchester, one in four frontline firefighters.

These cuts have meant that dedicated crews have been taken off special appliances while a large number of higher reach vehicles have been completely removed from service. These cuts have led to fewer firefighters, fewer available fire appliances and delays in specialist vehicles attending fires and other emergencies.

Greater Manchester fire service is one of only five in England not keeping pace with reductions in fire deaths and has missed fire death reduction targets. [Source at end of press release].

Peter Taylor, FBU Brigade Secretary said: "Council tax and business rate payers are already paying more for a worse 999 emergency response service than they had five years ago. Domestic and commercial fire losses have hit new highs and we are not keeping pace with reductions in fire deaths.

"More cuts will mean taking longer to attend a fire or other emergencies and there will not be enough appliances to cover in the event of large incidents. Fire does not wait, and it spreads very rapidly if left to burn for even a few extra minutes.

"Even without death or injury, fire is traumatic for those touched by it. When fire does not kill or injure it keeps burning until a home or a business is totally destroyed.

"The longer a fire is left to burn, the more damage it causes. Many businesses, especially small businesses, do not recover from fires.

"Businesses already get a poorer service since the fire service reduced its response to Automatic Fire Alarms. Firefighters are now travelling to some alarms at normal road speeds and finding properties on fire.

"Some alarms will not get a response at all. Occupiers will have to go and see if there is a fire themselves.

"These cuts put your firefighters at risk. They put families, homes and businesses at greater risk from fire."

For more details of how the cuts impact on you, please see: www.saveourfireservice.co.uk

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Dismore - Fire Services Mon, 26 January 2009 | House of Commons - Written Answer

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government which fire and rescue authorities did not meet the public service agreement sub-target of having an annual fatality rate from accidental fires in the home of no more than 1.25 times the national average in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. Khan: Because of inherent fluctuations in the number of fatalities in individual Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) areas, the definition of this sub-target takes the average data across a five year period, and this runs from April 2005 to March 2010.

The comparable statistics that can be calculated now are for the five year period 2002-03 to 2006-07, and are shown in the table. However this should only be used for guidance purposes and not as a means of judging FRA performance or ability to meet PSA 3 targets.

Fire authorities exceeding 1.25 times the national average rate of accidental dwelling fires

Area	Average fatality rate (per 100,000 population) based on 2002-03 to 2006-07 data
England average	0.49
Rate 1.25* the National Average	0.61
Lancashire	0.87
Greater Manchester	0.74
West Yorkshire	0.66
Durham	0.64
South Yorkshire (1)	0.61

(1) The figure for South Yorkshire is higher than 1.25* the national average when taken to three decimal places.

Ends