



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

24 November 2020

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 3 November to the Chancellor enclosing correspondence from your constituent,

about Fire Services. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

I welcome his views on the importance of a sustainable funding settlement for fire and rescue services in this Spending Round, which I am discussing with the Home Secretary along with other funding pressures. I recognise the fire services' crucial role in keeping the public safe, including their continuous and invaluable support throughout the pandemic.

Over the past 10 years there has been a 18 per cent decrease in the number of incidents and a 36 per cent decrease in the total number of fires attended by Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in England. In 2020/21 fire services saw an increase in their budgets, and will receive around £2.3 billion in 2020/21, with standalone FRAs seeing an increase in their core spending power of 3.2 per cent in cash terms. Furthermore, FRAs received an additional £20 million in the Budget 2020/21, which will enable services to increase fire inspection and enforcement capability and to build capacity to respond to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's findings. A further £10 million was provided by MHCLG, which will support FRAs to assess all high-rise buildings in their respective area by December 2021.

In recognition of the FRAs' critical service to tackle Covid-19, the Home Office

has launched a £6 million Fire Covid-19 Contingency Fund to support Fire Services with any significant costs as a result of taking on additional duties. FRAs were invited to submit notices of intent to apply for funding by 30 June and formal grant applications by 30 September. The Home Office is currently assessing the applications received and the funding allocations will be announced in due course. An additional £4.6 billion were provided to Local Authorities in an un-ringfenced grant to support their response to the coronavirus pandemic. From this funding, Standalone FRAs received £6.5 million in March and a further £28.5 million in May.

My officials continue to work closely with the Home Office to understand the pressures on fire services and what these mean for this Spending Round.

Please pass on my thanks to _____ for taking the trouble to make me aware of these concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Barclay', is centered on a light grey rectangular background.

RT HON STEVE BARCLAY MP