



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

The Cost of Fire – a UK Perspective

**Roy Wilsher – Chair
National Fire Chiefs Council**

**Urban Fire Forum
Boston**



Presentation outline

- 1. Cost of fire – Economic and Social**
- 2. How does this shape national policy?**
- 3. Other issues shaping national policy**
- 4. What value do fire services add?**
- 5. How can we quantify this?**



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Economic Cost of Fire – Fast Facts

- The estimated **total cost of fire for England in 2008 was £8.3bn (\$10.75bn)**
- Dwelling fires account for 9% of all large loss financial loss, with an **average cost of £370,459 (\$479,020) per fire**
- Self-contained sheltered **housing fires have an average cost of £115,662 (\$150,000) per fire**
- While the number of fire related claims are decreasing, the **cost of claims are significantly increasing**
- The Association of British Insurers report that around **60% of private businesses never recover from a fire**

Sources: <http://www.stoparsonuk.org/arson/Insurers.php>

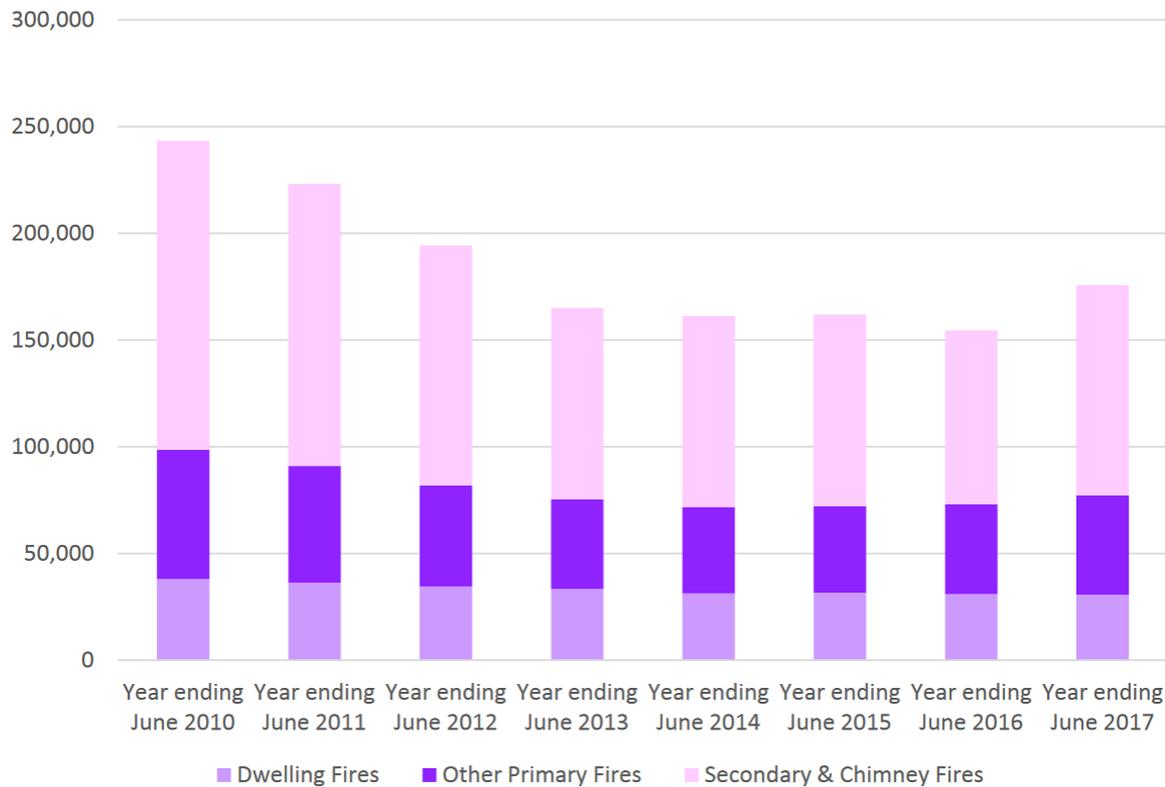
The economic cost of fire: Supplementary tables of estimates for 2008 (England) – Fire Research Report 3/2011



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Numbers of fires

Figure 3.2 Total fires attended by incident type, England; year ending June 2010 to year ending June 2017



Source: FIRE0102



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Cost of Fire – Social



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Cost of Fire – Social



Primark Store-
Belfast, City
landmark and 400
jobs lost.

28 August 2018



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Cost of Fire – Social

National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil – 200 years of work and a nation's history lost. 3 September 2018



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Cost of Fire – Social

Roding Primary School, Dagenham, London – 4 September,
day before the school year start



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

How does this shape national policy – spending reductions

- **Fire and Rescue services have not been protected through austerity – there has been a 21% reduction in wholetime firefighters over ten years**
- **Since 2010, government funding for fire and rescue authorities in England has been reduced by between 26% and 39%**
- **There has been a 17% real-term reduction in spending power of stand-alone fire authorities from 2010–11 to 2015–16**
- **Spending power has fallen most in areas assessed as having highest levels of fire risk i.e. those with high-risk social groups or industrial facilities**
- **30% reduction in fire safety audits and inspections carried out by fire and rescue authorities 2010–11 to 2014–15**
- **Fire and rescue authorities have not been able to offset funding reductions by increasing income**
- **If funding cuts persist, the sector will be faced with twin challenges: to implement new cost-reduction measures and to manage increased risks**

(National Audit Office, 2015)



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Issues shaping the national policy agenda

- **Terror threats, changing nature of crime and modern day slavery** – WannaCry Cyber Attack, London Bridge and Westminster (2017 and 2018) attacks, Manchester Bombing, and acid attacks across London
- **Grenfell** – recommendations and increases to building safety activity
- **Climate - 2018 wildfires** – seen across the Northern Hemisphere. Will climate change see this continue, or increase? Will we see increased flooding?
- **An aging population** – what will increasing vulnerability amongst an aging population mean, including factors such as dementia and frailty
- **Pressures associated with adult social care** are squeezing available budgets in some areas
- **Changes to UK law in 2017** – Police and Crime Commissioners (locally elected members who govern Police Forces) can now take on the governance of Fire and Rescue Authorities



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Keeping people safe means...

- Responding to crises
- Maintaining resilience and managing risk
- Protecting the vulnerable
- Preventing harm
- Preventing terrorism
- Cutting crime



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

How does Fire deliver all this?

- A trusted brand
- Safeguarding skills
- Unrivalled access to communities
- Role models and educators
- The skills to identify and work with the vulnerable
- A large volunteer workforce



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Quantifying the value

- **Can we quantify the value added by these activities? How can we do this?**
- **Fire and rescue value adds through cost avoidance**
- **The sector needs to continually demonstrate and highlight our intrinsic value of our operations to government and the public**
- **Risk v Demand or Risk and Demand**
- **Comprehensive Spending Review 2019**



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council