



Home Office

Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire
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To:

Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners
Chief Fire Officers
Roy Wilsher, Chair of NFCC

By Email Only

06 November 2020

Dear All,

Covid-19 – the Fire and Rescue Response

I am writing firstly to thank you, your firefighters and all staff for your continuing hard work and support during the Covid-19 outbreak. Despite the challenges every Fire and Rescue Service has faced, you have adapted quickly to new working practices while continuing to provide a high-quality service to the public. As we enter a new period of national measures, I wanted to set out my commitment to working with you all to ensure that Fire and Rescue Services can remain resilient, and also continue to provide the wider support that has proved so valuable in many communities.

As part of this commitment, I hope that the funding that services have received from Government will enable you to maintain and strengthen these efforts. We have provided £4.6 billion to local authorities to support their response to the coronavirus pandemic. Standalone fire and rescue authorities (including Greater Manchester Fire) received £6.5 million in March and a further £28.5 million in May.

The National Fire Chiefs Council has provided a very clear framework to help all services maintain delivery of core services appropriately during the pandemic. I would encourage all services to continue to utilise this framework during this next phase. It is particularly important to maintain the delivery of Covid secure ways of working on protection and prevention alongside response in line with your local integrated risk management plan. This will include continuing to take work forward to review and inspect all high-rise buildings.

I also welcome the vital support that many Fire and Rescue Services have been able to provide to their local communities. The tripartite agreement has been an important enabling framework over the initial phase of the pandemic. I have heard many great examples of this work, with a large number of services providing support to ambulance services and vulnerable people. There are too many good examples to do justice to all the excellent work, but I would like to pay tribute to a few in particular. I have been struck by

the work carried out by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service's driving instructors helping East England Ambulance with driver training. Warwickshire and others have helped with essential deliveries to vulnerable people. I was impressed by the response from West Midlands to a request from NHS dental staff, to help with face mask fitting based on their skills and training in this area. This demonstrates how adaptable and agile your services can be.

It is vital this approach is both extended and deepened to ensure Fire and Rescue Services are able to provide effective support during this time of national measures in England and over the winter period. It is critical that the Tripartite agreement is extended to enable services to provide support to the test and trace system and Covid-secure business checks. I know the employers and NFCC are working hard to ensure this is achieved and that you will do everything you can to help it continue.

I am confident that you will want to continue to do all you can to support your communities during these unprecedented times and support your Local Resilience Forum. Fire and Rescue Service leaders should also, of course, continue to work with all recognised employee representative bodies to ensure that the local support you are providing to communities continues to be targeted where most needed.

Finally, I would be grateful if you can work through the NFCC to help us develop a national understanding of how you are supporting local partners. This will help us understand the overall asks on services and support any case for future funding. I have asked my officials to work with NFCC to achieve this.

Thank you again for your continued work and support.



Lord Greenhalgh
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