

## **An austerity audit**

Coalition cuts to local communities  
in England since 2010

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**THE  
DAMAGE**



**WARNING:** DISMANTLING  
COUNCIL SERVICES WILL  
SERIOUSLY DAMAGE OUR LIVES  
AND OUR COMMUNITIES

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# Executive summary

Imagine a world where...

- neighbourhood police teams disappear and the local police station closes
- the bus service that you rely on to get to work no longer runs
- the council will no longer take bulky refuse items away
- women fleeing domestic violence are turned away because there are no beds left at the refuge
- the streetlights are turned off at night and people get seriously injured or even killed
- there is no longer any service for very young children with special needs
- you have rats or a wasps' nest in your home but can't afford to pay for them to be removed
- the children's centre that used to be open 40 hours a week is now only open for 5
- it takes longer for a fire engine to arrive and the fire gets out of control
- there is no-one to provide care for your neighbour who finds it difficult to get out of bed, get dressed, go to the toilet, get into the bath or cook their own food
- restaurants and fast food takeaways are inspected less frequently and food poisoning increases
- the council won't assess your child's special needs and says the school has the money but the school won't give them any support
- the local youth centre has closed and young people are congregating on street corners with nothing to do
- there aren't enough social workers to protect children at risk of neglect or harm
- you have a learning disability and the day centre you used to go to has closed, and you hardly ever get out
- the local library has closed, a community focus has gone, there is nowhere for children whose homes are overcrowded to do their homework and no programme of activities for local people
- you are disabled and the care you relied upon has been taken away
- you are sold faulty or dangerous goods but there is no-one to investigate
- your child has a mental illness but you have to wait months before you can see someone to get help.

All these things are happening today because of the unprecedented financial squeeze that is damaging vital local services. It isn't just the dreadful social cost to individuals and families, or the extra unnecessary risks that the public

now face, or the chaos and disruption caused to people's lives. It isn't the pain and hardship, or the extra time and money it now takes to do things that the council used to do, there is an economic cost too.



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Two months before the last election David Cameron told the Conservative Local Government Conference that: “Local government is officially the most efficient part of the public sector.”<sup>1</sup> This report is about the consequences that the unprecedented squeeze on council funding since 2010 has had on local public services and the people that provide them.

Some communities have seen some of their local services disappear completely. By the end of 2014 467 libraries, 361 police stations, 578 children’s centres, 33 fire stations, over 300 youth centres, 10 museums and many swimming pools and public toilets had all closed. One in five streetlights is now turned off or dimmed at night.

The council workforce in England shrank by 499,000 by the second quarter of 2014. While some of this reduction is due to academy conversions and the privatisation of local services, most is explained by jobs being cut as councils froze or restricted recruitment, restructured, re-organised, offered voluntary early retirement, voluntary redundancy or made staff compulsorily redundant. The official accounts show that Oxfordshire, for example, cut 1,000 jobs using voluntary or compulsory redundancy between 2010/11 and 2013/14.

Among the jobs that have gone are 15,506 police support staff, 5,000 library staff, 4,430 police and community support officers, 1,500 trading standards officers, 4,668 firefighters, and 2,000 youth workers.

The government has already cut the funding to local councils in England by 37 per cent or £12.5bn since May 2010. That is a cut of £232 for each of the 53.9m people in England and it is £2bn more than the government will get this year from the levies on wine, spirits, beer and cider put together.

But it isn’t simply about the cut in government funding. It is also about the cash cut happening at the same time as councils faced inflation that added another £7bn to their costs. Add to that the cost of providing services for a growing population that by 2015 will have increased by 2.3m, the cost of providing social care to more older people who are living longer, the extra costs of commitments like pension contributions and landfill tax, as well as local authorities being handed extra responsibilities but without the funds to pay for them.

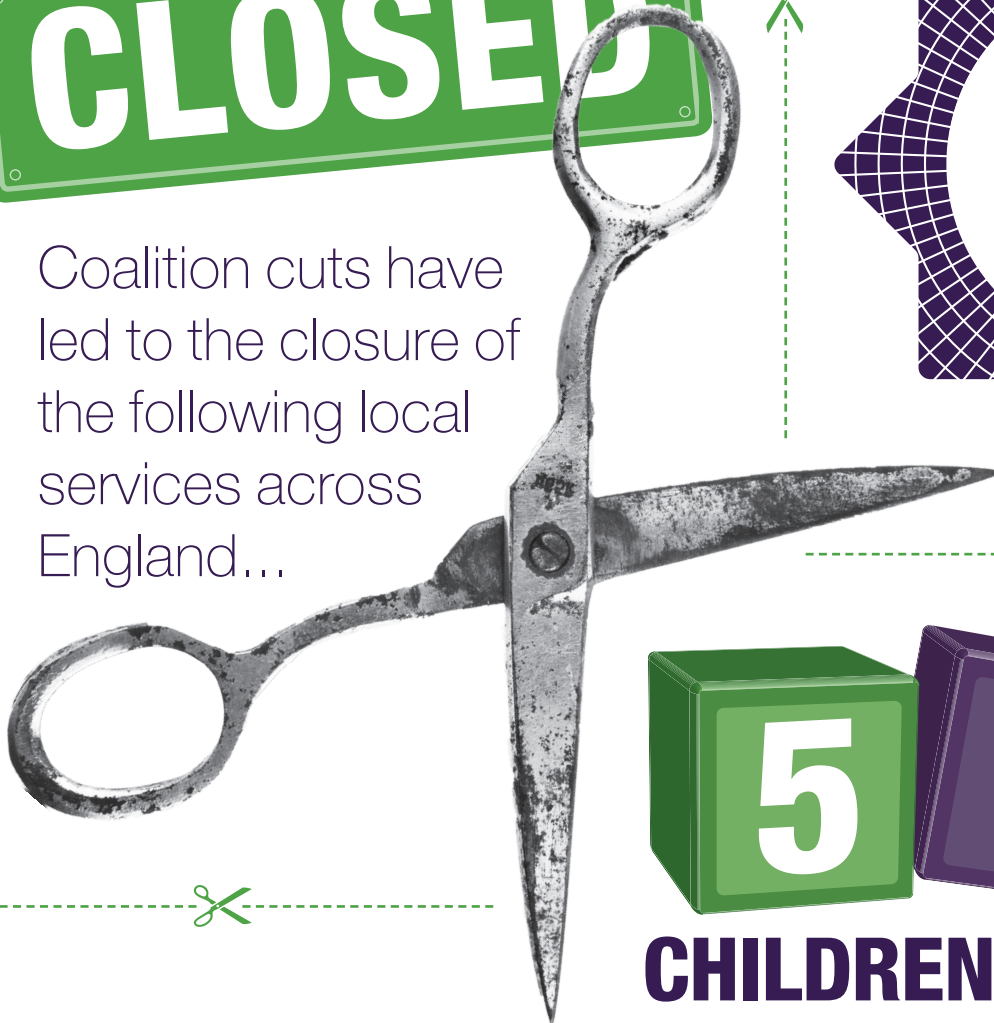
Compound this by the fact that it is the most deprived areas that are being hardest hit and it is no surprise that Sir Amyas Morse, Comptroller and Auditor General at the National Audit Office, warned that government ministers did not fully understand the implications of their actions and were making irresponsible decisions. “If you’re going to do radical surgery it would be nice if you knew where the heart was. You’re slightly more likely not to stick a knife in it by mistake.”<sup>2</sup>

As David Cameron said back in 2010 local councils are the most efficient part of the public sector. Some of the changes they have made, such as selling excess energy to the national grid, do not damage services. Others increase efficiency, such as reducing waste sent to landfill or cutting spending on agency staff and consultants.

Another consequence of councils’ funding being cut is that local people are paying more for services such as on street parking, social care and burials and cremations at a time when most peoples’ pay has not kept pace with inflation, benefits have been frozen or reduced and household incomes have been falling in real terms.



Coalition cuts have led to the closure of the following local services across England...



**CHILDREN'S CENTRES**



Councils have also been forced to make other changes to the way services are delivered that fall short of outright closure. This approach means that the service is removed from some people and is then only available to a few. Almost three quarters of local authorities restricted eligibility for social care to 'substantial or critical' cases in 2010/11, three years later it was 85 per cent.

Funding cuts also mean the scope of the service is restricted, entirely available for shorter periods or dependent on local volunteers. In Mid Essex for example, 10 children's centres that offered a service for between 32 and 40 hours a week, now only do so for between 5 and 20 hours a week. And around 400 libraries and many youth facilities now depend on volunteers to open.

In some services the cuts have been passed on to others to make. As a result voluntary organisations have faced freezes, cuts or the removal of grants leaving them to find other sources of income. Care providers have found that councils have drastically cut the rates they pay while expecting the same level of service to be delivered. Schools have been asked to find money from their budgets for key services that the council paid for previously – such as the careers service or supporting children with special educational needs. Clinical Commissioning Groups in the NHS now find that councils are asking them to pay for health-related services, especially care packages for people who are not in hospital but have complex ongoing healthcare needs.

Often people are being made to make a financial contribution towards, or given a personal budget for, the service they receive, but often the budget is inadequate to meet their needs. In the case of direct payments for care, instead of getting a service, users are given a cash sum to buy the service themselves but they often find that they are not being given enough money.

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David Cameron claims his plan involves saving just "£1 in every £100 the government spends in the next two years." But the 2015 Budget shows government departments will spend £338.6bn in 2015/16 falling to £323.8bn in 2016/17, and £312bn in 2017/18. That is not saving just £1 in every £100, it is cutting £4 in 2016/17 followed by another £3.50 the year after.

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Despite this the government has set out to create the impression that the cuts have had little impact on services and that frontline services and vulnerable people have been protected. UNISON's audit of austerity looked at the evidence for some services. The evidence flatly contradicts that view.

The scale of what has already happened to older people between 2010/11 and 2013/14 has been demonstrated by Age UK. The figures speak for themselves:

- The number of older people receiving home care has fallen by 31.7 per cent from 542,965 to 370,630
- Day care places have plummeted by 66.9 per cent from 178,000 to 59,125
- Spending on home care has dropped 19.4 per cent since 2010/11 falling by £435m from £2.25bn (£2,250m) to £1.815bn (£1,815m)
- The number receiving meals on wheels has plunged by 63.7 per cent from 81,460 to 29,560
- Spending on day care has fallen even more dramatically by £114m (from £379m to £265m) – a fall of 30 per cent.

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These figures flatly contradict the claim made by Eric Pickles MP that: “This settlement ... supports the government’s commitment to adult social care, providing councils with sufficient resources to protect people’s access to care and to deliver improved quality of outcome.”<sup>3</sup> Worse still, cuts in social care mean hospitals are unable to discharge patients and this cost the NHS £287m in the last financial year.<sup>4</sup>

Scope showed that two out of every five working age disabled people are not having their needs met.<sup>5</sup>

Mencap found that more than one in three councils had cut spending on ‘portage’ services, the free home visiting service for pre-school children with additional needs, and one in five no longer has any service at all.<sup>6</sup> YoungMinds showed that 60 per cent of councils had cut their funding for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services since 2010-11.<sup>7</sup>

In May 2010 there were 3,632 designated Sure Start children’s centres. But by December 2014 578 had gone and for every £5 councils spent on libraries in 2010/11 they spent £4 in 2013/14.

Since the closure of 10 fire stations in London and the loss of 14 fire engines, response times in 371 of London’s 649 council wards increased when compared with the previous year. Overall there are now 214 wards where it takes longer than the six minute target for a fire engine to arrive, and 141 wards also miss the second fire engine arrival target of eight minutes.<sup>8</sup>

The loss of 4,430 PCSOs is equivalent to cutting every PCSO that was employed in March 2010 in Avon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Essex, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Norfolk, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley and Wiltshire police forces.

On one day in 2014, 112 women and their 84 children were turned away from women’s refuges because they could not be accommodated. In one week 369 women were turned away. In November 2013 the Daily Telegraph<sup>9</sup> reported that two-thirds of councils were switching off or dimming streetlights. A year later it reported that it had risen to three quarters.

Supported bus services are a lifeline for vulnerable people and those who live in rural areas that are not served by commercial bus routes. Since 2010 2,000 bus routes have been cut, altered or withdrawn completely.

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Council and school employees will not recognise the claim made by the Chancellor in his last Budget speech that: “Households on average will be around £900 better off in 2015 than they were in 2010.”

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Since 2010, 350 youth centres have been closed and 41,000 youth service places have been cut in the last five years. For example, the National Youth Agency reported that Trafford is facing a high level of cuts across all its services, with plans to close all its youth centres.<sup>10</sup> It has been suggested that these centres become social enterprises that secure their own funding.

Two-thirds of local theatre venues have cancelled productions, half have produced fewer new plays and commissioned fewer writers since April 2012 due to budget cuts.





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The BBC reported in 2012 that over a third of councils in the UK ... “had cut or closed some public sports facilities in the past three years.” Councils across England entirely withdrew Supporting People money from 305 services in the 2011/12 financial year, affecting 6,790 people. Those services prevented people from becoming homeless and helped them to live independently. Services that help homeless people, those with mental health problems, and drug and alcohol addiction, were among those hit. There has been a 72.1 per cent fall in the number of trading standards prosecutions in England and Wales since 2010.

Council and school employees have paid a heavy price under austerity, forfeiting £8.6bn as their pay has fallen in real terms every year since 2010. They simply will not recognise the claim made by the Chancellor in his last Budget speech that: “Households on average will be around £900 better off in 2015 than they were in 2010.”

According to the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR), the 2015 Budget signals a “sharp acceleration in the pace of implied real cuts to day-to-day spending on public services and administration in 2016-17 and 2017-18.”<sup>11</sup> The respected Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) says “the cuts of more than 5 per cent implied in each of 2016-17 and 2017-18 are twice the size of any year’s cuts over this parliament.”<sup>12</sup>

Council leaders such as Nick Forbes at Newcastle have issued warnings about the consequences. “We’ve cut our play service and youth service. We have had to reduce the libraries. We have cut sport and leisure. We have reduced support for older people; we’ve cut bin collections; we’ve cut street cleaning. We have lost our flower programme in the city. We’ve cut graffiti removal. We’ve lost getting on for 1,200 jobs from the council ... we see people in abject poverty, coming through our service centres daily ... My very real concern is that ... well, if this level of cuts continue, even our statutory responsibilities, like children’s social care, will be affected. What frustrates me like nothing else is how deaf government is to this argument.”

Meanwhile David Cameron claims his plan involves saving just “£1 in every £100 the government spends in the next two years.”<sup>13</sup> But the 2015 Budget shows government departments will spend £338.6bn in 2015/16 falling to £323.8bn in 2016/17, and £312bn in 2017/18.

**That is not saving just £1 in every £100, it is cutting £4 in 2016/17 followed by another £3.50 the year after.**

Every commitment to protect one part of the public sector such as the suggestion in the *Financial Times* that ministers are likely to protect Britain’s defence budget in a post-election spending round, means “putting even greater strain on other departments and raising the prospect of ‘unsustainable’ cuts to local government, the former head of the civil service has forecast.”<sup>14</sup>

It is time to give local government services respite from cuts, assess the damage already wrought by austerity, recognise the pressures that councils face and the false economy of cutting council budgets while extra costs appear elsewhere.



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# Introduction

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This report is about the consequences of an unprecedented squeeze on funding that has had a dramatic impact on local public services and the people that provide them.

The National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee both say that the government has cut the funding to local councils in England by an estimated 37 per cent between 2010/11 and 2015/16.

This austerity audit looks at what has happened to local public services since May 2010. The story about the cuts isn't simply about the reduction in government funding and councils getting less cash. It is also about that cash cut happening at the same time as councils faced rising costs, increasing demand for their services and extra responsibilities yet without the funds to pay for them.

This UNISON audit starts by looking at the big picture, how much has gone, the budget pressures that local councils face and how they have responded to financial challenges that dwarf the cuts faced by councils in the Thatcher era. In the 1980s the shift to block grant allowed the government to impose penalties on councils that exceeded government expenditure targets, rate-capping and the hated poll tax.

Councils have adopted a host of approaches to deal with the financial crisis. At one end of the spectrum they have made straightforward efficiency savings, and eased budget gaps by increasing income or reducing spending without any impact on services.

But at the other end local services have disappeared from some communities. Many libraries (467), police stations (361), children's centres (578), public toilets, fire stations (33),

swimming pools, museums (10), and youth centres (over 300) have closed across England.

Some services no longer exist and many grants to voluntary organisations have been stopped. The figures reported here are an underestimate. They take no account of the impact of the most recent cuts because the data for actual 2014/15 council spending and the consequences of the 2015/16 budget cuts is not yet available.

In between are many other changes to the way services are delivered that fall short of outright closure. This approach results in the service being removed from some people or being restricted and only available for shorter periods.

In some services the cuts are passed on by getting others to pay. Local residents face higher fees and charges and now have to pay for some services. For social care many are now given a personal budget for the service they receive, but often the budget is not enough to meet their needs. In the case of direct payments for care, instead of getting a service, users are given a cash sum to buy the service themselves. Supporters of this approach argue that this gives people 'choice' but often the payment is not enough, and as a consequence people are denied real choice and the care they need.

Other approaches involve radically changing the way the council operates, drastically reducing the number of council buildings, changing the way the service is delivered, what is delivered, who it is delivered for, as well as who it is delivered by. Often this is accompanied by a greater reliance on the internet and new technology. The use of electronic transactions, electronic communication, or document image processing has increased in many councils.



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UNISON's austerity audit points to the warnings that have not been heeded about the cuts. This includes that from Sir Amyas Morse, Comptroller and Auditor General at the National Audit Office, that government ministers did not fully understand the implications of their actions and were making irresponsible decisions. "If you're going to do radical surgery it would be nice if you knew where the heart was. You're slightly more likely not to stick a knife in it by mistake."<sup>15</sup>

This report focuses on specific services ranging from children at risk and social care for older people through libraries, fire and police, to theatres and museums, supporting vulnerable people to street lighting, trading standards and women's refuges. In each case published evidence of the damage being inflicted is cited.

No audit would be complete without looking at the impact on the workforce. For every 208 people who worked for a council in Q2 2010, 158 were still doing so in Q2 2014. Over 5,000 (one in five) jobs have gone in local libraries, over 1,500 (more than half) trading standards officer posts have disappeared and 2,000 youth workers have been lost. One in four (4,430) police community support officers have been lost.

Despite the stereotype of overpaid 'pen pushers', the local government and school support workforce is poorly paid and has the worst pay and conditions of employment within the public sector. Council and school employees have paid a heavy price under austerity, forfeiting £8.6bn as their pay has fallen in real terms every year since 2010. They simply will not recognise the claim made by the Chancellor in his last Budget speech that: "Households on average will be around £900 better off in 2015 than they were in 2010."

UNISON's audit of austerity ends by considering the future for local government as mapped out in 2014 Autumn Statement and Budget 2015. There are no pledges to protect funding for essential local government services. No one should be in any doubt that the position is very serious.

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# The big picture

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## How much has been cut?

A total of £12.534bn (£12,534m) has been cut from government grants to local councils since May 2010. In this section UNISON sets out details of the money that the government has cut each year from the grants that are paid to local councils. Appendix 1 provides details of how much councils actually spent on various services in 2010/11 and shows how the funding cuts have eaten into council spending.

### 2010/11

£450m 'in year' cut to Area Based Grant (a general grant allocated directly to local authorities in addition to the main grant) as part of a total cut of £1.165bn (£1,165m) cut to local government funding<sup>16</sup>

### 2011/12

£3bn (£3,000m) cut in main government grant to local councils<sup>17</sup>

### 2012/13

£1.6bn (£1,600m) cut in main government grant to local councils<sup>18</sup>

### 2013/14

£1.663bn (£1,663m) cut in main government grant to local councils<sup>19,20</sup>

### 2014/15

£2.471bn (£2,471m) cut in main government grant to local councils<sup>21</sup>

### 2015/16

£3.354bn (£3,354m) cut in main government grant to local councils<sup>22</sup>

### Commentators and politicians may talk about cutting billions, but what does that mean in reality?

The £12.534bn cut in funding is:

- More than the total council tax raised by EVERY county council, district council, police authority and fire authority in England in 2010/11
- Slightly less (£200m) than the government expects the Home Office (£10.3bn) and the Department of Transport (£2.4bn) will spend in 2015/16
- About £2bn more than the government expects to raise in 2015/16 from duties on spirits (£3.2bn), wine (£3.9bn) and beer and cider (£3.4bn).



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## Budget pressures

The cut in government funding is only one part of the story of council cuts.

Each year councils have faced extra costs arising from overall population increases. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) says the population in England will grow by 2.3m by 2015 from 52.2m in 2010 to 54.5m in 2015.<sup>23</sup>

Much of that growth is accounted for by a growing elderly population. ONS mid-year estimates show the 65+ population in England increased from 8.6m in 2010 to 9.3m in 2013.

Although we are now experiencing zero inflation, in the first few years of the parliament councils faced extra costs due to price inflation on goods, services, materials, fuel and energy, as well as their contract prices, and other increased costs such as higher pension fund contributions and landfill tax.

These changes all have to be paid for – and they are leading to even bigger cuts.



### DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

- GENERAL POPULATION GROWTH – **UP 2.3M** BY 2015
- INCREASING NUMBERS OF OLDER PEOPLE – **UP 750,000** BY 2013
- INCREASING NUMBERS OF 'LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN' – **UP 4,370**
- RISING NUMBERS OF DISABLED PEOPLE RELYING ON THE SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM – 1.1M IN 2010/11 **RIISING TO 1.3M** IN 2019/20



### INFLATIONARY PRESSURES

- PRICE INFLATION – **UP 11.88 PER CENT** APRIL 2010 TO 2014
- ENERGY AND FUEL – ELECTRICITY PRICES **UP 28.3 PER CENT** APRIL 2010 TO 2014
- PAY
- CONTRACT INFLATION – USUALLY LINKED TO RPI



### ADDITIONAL PRESSURES

- CAPITAL FINANCING COSTS
- PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS
- LANDFILL TAX INCREASE – £48 PER TONNE (2010) TO £80 PER TONNE (2014)
- REDUCED INCOME
- ONE OFF ADDITIONS

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## Examples of budget pressures

### **Price inflation £7.25bn (£7,250m)**

In 2010/11 local authorities in England spent £61.5bn (£61,500m) on things other than their employees.<sup>24</sup> Retail price index (RPI) inflation between April 2010 and April 2014 saw the index rise by 11.88 per cent (from 212.2 to 237.4). This added £7.25bn (£7,250m) to council costs.

### **Looked after children £0.218bn (£218m)**

The number of children looked after by local authorities increased from 64,470 (31 March 2010) to 68,840 (31 March 2014), an increase of 4,370.<sup>25</sup> In 2012/13, councils spent an average of £137 a day, or just over £50,000 for the whole year, supporting each child they looked after.<sup>26</sup> Using the Audit Commission 2012/13 average the increase in the number of looked after children added £218m a year to local authority spending.

### **Landfill tax £0.317bn (£317m)**

In 2010 local authorities in England sent 9.9m tonnes of waste to landfill sites.<sup>27</sup> They pay a tax to the government for every tonne they send. Landfill tax rose from £48/tonne in 2010/11 to £80/tonne in 2014/15. Assuming that the waste volumes sent to landfill remained unchanged, local authority costs have increased by £317m in the last four years.<sup>28</sup>

### **Capital financing £0.263bn (£263m)**

Investing in buildings and facilities costs money, and councils largely finance that investment by borrowing. But that borrowing has to be repaid and extra borrowing increases local authorities' capital financing costs. Between 2010/11 and 2013/14, the costs of capital financing increased by £263m.<sup>29</sup>

### **Homelessness (bed and breakfast) £0.063bn (£63m)**

The number of homeless families placed in bed and breakfast hotels more than doubled, rising from 2,050 at the start of 2010 to 4,560 by the end of 2014. Families had to stay longer too. One hundred families with children had been placed in bed and breakfast hotels for more than six weeks at the start of 2010, but by the end of 2014 it was 780. The housing crisis meant that councils in England spent £163m on bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families in 2013/14 compared with £100m in 2010/11.

### **New responsibilities but without the resources**

Until 2013 the costs of council tax benefit were paid for by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). In April 2013 council tax benefit was abolished and replaced with local council tax support. Councils took over responsibility for helping local people with their council tax bills. But the DWP only transferred 90 per cent of the budget to councils, leaving them to find the missing 10 per cent, a tidy £300m according to the National Audit Office.<sup>30</sup>



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## Cuts, efficiencies – or both

**“Councils can protect frontline services by sharing services and back office functions, improving procurement to get more for less, bringing increasing senior pay under control and using transparency to cut waste.”**

Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government, Hansard, 13 December 2010

**“We know from a lot of conversations with local authorities that the bulk of the savings they have delivered have been through efficiency savings in the way they operate.”**

Sir Bob Kerslake, Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities, 26 November 2014

The government has set out to create the impression that the cuts have had little impact on services and that frontline services and vulnerable people have been protected.

The Prime Minister has tried to suggest that the cuts are not significant:

**“Of course councils face difficult spending decisions, but in many cases the level of spending and grant they are still getting is equivalent to what they received under the last government ... Councils should be held accountable for the decisions that they make, and in some cases there can be little doubt that they are making high-profile cuts to try to make a point.”** (Hansard, 6 February, 2013)

Compare this to a statement made in 2011 by Keith Mitchell, the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, which covers David Cameron’s Witney constituency:

**“This year has seen a reduction in the resources available to the council that is unprecedented in my 22 years of public service.”**

Oxfordshire County Council embarked on a programme to cut spending by £119m and the new council leader, Ian Hudspeth, said in February 2015:

**“By the end of this year we will have achieved £204m of savings.”**

But the scale of the cash reductions, coupled with budget pressures has meant that frontline services have not been protected, the workforce has paid a heavy price and vulnerable people are suffering.

Councils have adopted a host of approaches to deal with the financial crisis. Budget gaps have been eased by increasing income or reducing spending without any impact on services:

- Increasing council tax – £26.3bn 2010/11 to £26.7bn 2012/13
- Generating income – Doncaster planned to raise £100,000 from selling excess energy to the National Grid and another £100,000 from the sale of spare capacity within a waste Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scheme
- Better income collection – council tax collection rates improved from 97.3 per cent in 2010/11 to 97.4 per cent in 2012/13
- Management of investment and debt – in 2015/16 Doncaster planned to save £2m over two years from improved management of council investment and debt (treasury management)

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- Revising capital expenditure plans – Oxfordshire planned to save £13m between 2011/12 and 2015/16 as result of having a smaller capital programme and using reserves
  - Rescheduling capital financing repayments
  - ‘Capitalising’ revenue expenditure – in 2013/14 Cheshire East planned to save £200,000 by paying for some costs linked to a major two-year programme of highways improvement works and £125,000 for ICT strategy staff from capital.

Councils have also made straightforward efficiencies:

- Reducing spend on agency staff and consultants – in 2013/14 Cheshire East planned to save £500,000 by reducing the number of agency staff and replacing them with social workers with child protection expertise
- Cutting energy costs – in 2015/16 Doncaster planned to save £450,000 from reducing energy expenditure on street lighting
- Cutting landfill costs by increased recycling – in 2013/14 Cheshire East planned to save £113,000 saved by diverting waste from landfill
- Sharing chief executives and/or other senior staff or jointly providing specific services – West Dorset District Council shares the role of Chief Executive with Weymouth and Portland Borough Council and is set to extend this to North Dorset District Council.

Fees and charges have been raised so local residents have to pay more for the service they get. On-street parking raised £739m in 2013/14 compared with £662m in 2010/11,<sup>31</sup> elderly people are paying £155m more in fees and charges for social care even though fewer people are getting a service. Another extra £20m came from registering births deaths and marriages (up 20 per cent) and the fees for burials and cremations had gone up 16.4 per cent to raise another £34m.

Staffing levels have been cut by:

- Recruitment freezes or restrictions – in 2013/14 Cheshire East planned to save £2.5m by not replacing at least 50 per cent of the vacancies created by ‘natural wastage’, while Sheffield planned £574,000 savings from vacancy management, salary sacrifice and management of supplies services and contracts
- Restructuring
- Voluntary and compulsory redundancy – Oxfordshire made over 1,000 people redundant between 2010/11 and 2013/14.

But local services have also disappeared for some communities. Many libraries, police stations, children’s centres, public toilets, fire stations, swimming pools, museums, and youth centres have closed. Some services no longer exist and many grants to voluntary organisations have been stopped.

Councils have also been forced to make other changes to the way services are delivered that fall short of outright closure. This approach results in the service being removed from some people. It means the scope of the service is restricted, perhaps only available for shorter periods or dependent on local volunteers:

- Tightening eligibility criteria, which has been a feature of social care – 74 per cent of local authorities restricted eligibility to ‘substantial or critical’ in 2010/11, three years later it was 85 per cent.<sup>32</sup>



**“Our local authority has moved to critical and substantial and dropped high moderate and is supporting those in high moderate until alternate services can be found. Funding to voluntary sector has been maintained and ring-fenced but grants and contracts are being recycled into new contracts which mean local groups lose funding as larger charities coming in from outside the borough get the tenders.”** (quote from a service provider)<sup>33</sup>

**“My local authority has changed their eligibility criteria and this has reduced my support hours.”** (quote from a person with a learning disability)<sup>34</sup>

- Restricting access to a service to cease providing services to some people and reduce demand. This has been a feature of changes to home to school transport provision
- Around 400 libraries now depend on volunteers.

In some services the cuts are passed to others to make:

- Cuts in grants to voluntary sector organisations, theatre and arts groups – in 2013/14 Sheffield planned a £120,000 reduction in grants to Sheffield Theatres Trust (£106k), Sheffield Media & Exhibition Centre alongside a £301,000 reduction in the voluntary sector grants budget. In Doncaster the council will save £50,000 from reduced grants to voluntary organisations involving the discontinuation or reduction of grants to the Industrial Communities Alliance, Doncaster CAB, Doncaster Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Service (DRASACS) and Choice for All Doncaster (ChAD).

- Care providers have found that councils have drastically cut the rates that they pay while expecting the same service to be delivered – Essex County Council worked with providers to remove contract inflation with effect from 2009/10 for care contracts. This has been actively enforced by removing uplift clauses from contracts through introduction of framework agreements
- Schools have been asked to find money from their budgets for key services that the council paid for previously – such as the careers service or supporting children with special educational needs. In 2013/14 Oxfordshire cut £2.195m from its contribution to schools budgets and another £1.15m from the budget for school improvement
- Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) find that councils are asking them to pay for health related services. In 2013/14 Cheshire East planned to save £1.45m, £250,000 by ensuring that healthcare needs of some children are recharged and funded from health, and another £250,000 and £950,000 respectively by ensuring the CCGs are recharged appropriately for the continuing healthcare needs of adults and people with learning disabilities.

Service users might also be asked to make a financial contribution or given a personal budget for the service they receive. In the case of direct payments for care, instead of getting a service, users are given a cash sum to buy the service themselves. This often means they get less than they were getting before.

**Tim has a visual impairment. He has received support from the council for several years, but his care package has been reduced. He has been told that if he still wants support with shopping, he will have to pay for it himself.**<sup>35</sup>

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Other approaches involve radically changing the way the council operates, drastically reducing the number of council buildings, changing the way the service is delivered, what is delivered, who it is delivered for as well as, and sometimes, who it is delivered by. Often this is accompanied by a greater reliance on the internet and new technology.

**“Transport for clients no longer provided. Charges for services increased. Day services [are] being reviewed with a view to closing some of these and replacing with community options e.g. groups based in leisure centres. Not obvious cuts but involves significant change for many individuals.”** (quote from a local authority)<sup>36</sup>

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## Warnings not heeded

Evidence of the damage being inflicted on local services is extensive.

In June 2013 150 council leaders wrote to *The Observer* warning that the impact of the cuts was already “severe”:

**Councils have so far taken £3.1bn from the annual pay bill, reduced management costs by more than 12.5 per cent and saved hundreds of millions of pounds by teaming up to provide both back office and frontline services. Council tax increases have also been kept well below the rate of inflation for the past four years. The resilience of local government cannot be stretched much further. For many councils, new funding cuts in 2015/16 will lead to a significant reduction in, and in some cases even loss of, important local services.**

Eighteen months later, in November 2014, 119 council leaders wrote again to the paper:

**After a 40 per cent reduction in funding during this parliament, our efficiency savings are coming to an end. Further reductions without radical reform will have a detrimental impact on people’s quality of life and will lead to vital services being scaled back or lost altogether. Services such as libraries, leisure centres and road maintenance continue to buckle under the strain of cuts and the ever-rising cost of caring for our growing elderly population. Failure to address this will not only jeopardise other services, but will pass costs on to the NHS, which will have to pick up the pieces if we cannot protect adult social care or provide the services that keep people healthy.**

More recently (28 January 2015) the Public Accounts Committee drew attention to the different treatment of councils by the government following the publication of a further report by the National Audit Office:

**“... Those local authorities with the highest spending needs have been receiving the largest reductions. Further funding reductions could not just undermine the entire viability of most discretionary services, but might threaten some statutory services in these areas.”**  
(Public Accounts Committee; 28 January 2015, HC 833)



## Deprived areas hit hardest

**“The Department for Communities and Local Government confirmed that authorities in the most deprived areas had received the biggest cuts in spending power.”**

**“The cuts in spending power in the 10 per cent most deprived areas are significantly higher in percentage terms -4.9 per cent in 2014/15 and -5.3 per cent in 2015/16 compared with the cut in the 10 per cent least deprived areas -0.7 per cent in 2014/15 and an increase of +1.5 per cent in 2015/16.”**

Public Accounts Committee HC 833  
January 2015

One key feature of the cuts has been their unequal distribution. Research from Newcastle City Council showed the change in the government measure of ‘spending power’, and while some councils in the North and inner London have seen losses of more than £225 per head, some local authorities in the South East have gained up to £15 per head.

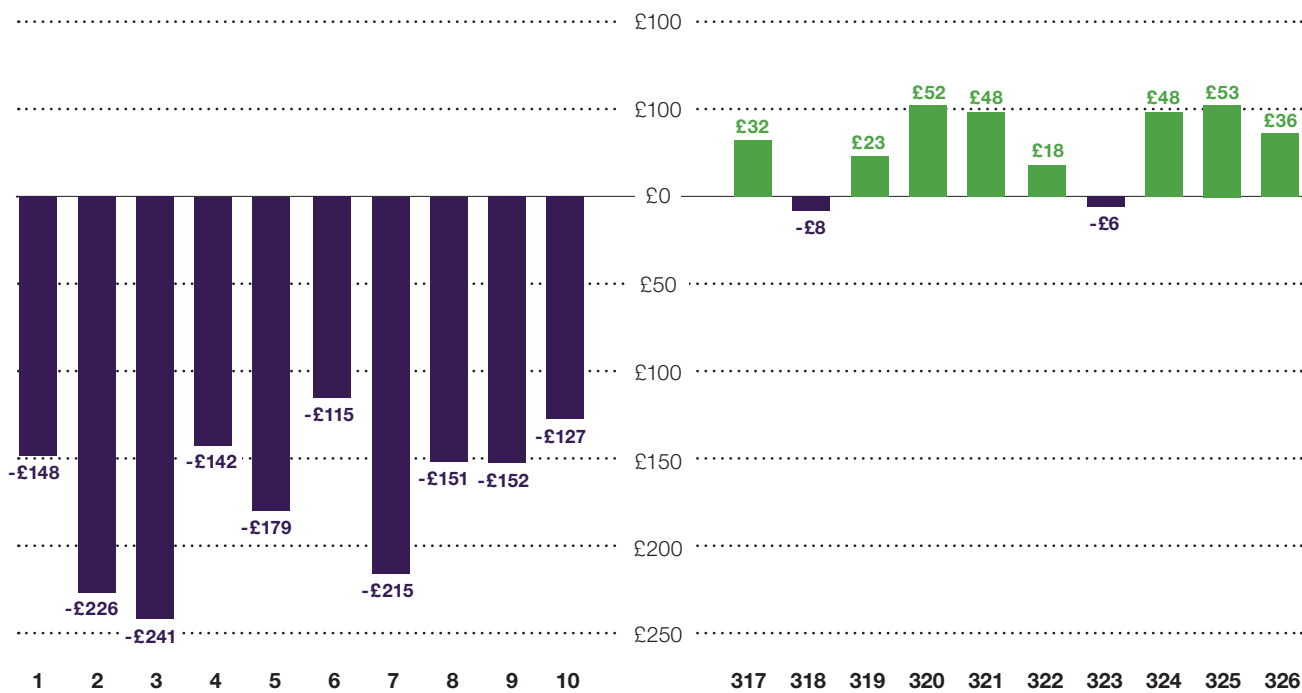
The analysis from CIPFA’s written submission to the Public Accounts Committee (24 November 2014) illustrates the difference between the ten most deprived and ten least deprived local authorities – see Table 1 and Figure 1. The pattern is clear.

**Table 1**

Ten most and least deprived councils according the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation (rank of average rank)


TEN MOST DEPRIVED COUNCILS Using 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation	
Rank	Local authority
1	Hackney
2	Newham
3	Tower Hamlets
4	Manchester
5	Liverpool
6	Islington
7	Waltham Forest
8	Barking and Dagenham
9	Sandwell
10	Blackpool

TEN LEAST DEPRIVED COUNCILS Using 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation	
Rank	Local authority
317	West Oxfordshire
318	Rushcliffe
319	Harborough
320	Waverley
321	South Cambridgeshire
322	Elmbridge
323	South Northamptonshire
324	Surrey Heath
325	Wokingham
326	Hart



**Figure 1:**  
Change in spending power in 2015/16 in £ per dwelling for  
the ten most deprived and ten least deprived areas





The number of older people receiving home care has **fallen** by almost

**ONE THIRD**

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The number of older people receiving meals on wheels has **fallen** by almost

**TWO THIRDS**




**1 in 3**

local authorities **closed** day services for adults with learning disabilities

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**2 in 5**

of working age disabled people are not having their **needs** met



The number of people contacting local mental health services has **risen** by almost

**500,000**

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The number with mental health problems getting help has **fallen** from 118,000 to

**91,000**

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# How the cuts have affected specific services

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## Children at risk

Growing levels of deprivation and poverty, as a result of austerity and associated welfare reforms, have been reflected in an increase in the number of children who are at risk of emotional or physical abuse and neglect. In England, 2.3m initial contacts were made to children's social services in 2013/14 and the rate of initial contacts per 10,000 population had risen from 1,835 in 2010/11 to 2,021 in 2013/14, an increase of more than 10 per cent.<sup>37</sup> There were 68,840 looked after children in March 2014, an increase of 4,370 since March 2010.

Despite this growing demand for support and the important role of social care staff in safeguarding children, spending on children's social care staffing has been cut by £147m,<sup>38</sup> which has put a huge strain on staff and the level of support they can provide.

The 24,890 social workers currently supporting children in England<sup>39</sup> are forced by a lack of resources to take on more cases than they can reasonably manage, meaning that some lower risk cases are not dealt with before they become urgent, piling more pressure on already stretched social care staff.

Councils are faced with increased demand, rising prices and less money. The National Audit Office found that prices for foster care and residential care had risen since the 2010 spending review and that in the capital councils had responded by shifting resources from residential to foster care. Local authorities in London cut spending on residential care for looked after children by almost 18 per cent and spending on foster care by 1.2 per cent between 2010/11 and 2012/13.<sup>40</sup>

Across the UK:

- 77 per cent of social workers say their caseload is unmanageable<sup>41</sup>
- 39 per cent of children's social care staff left work at the end of the day with serious concerns about one of their cases<sup>42</sup>
- 55 per cent of children's services staff said that their practice had been affected by the cuts<sup>43</sup>
- Just one in nine children who are at risk are receiving adequate support, as the combination of budget cuts and record numbers of children requiring attention forces social services to focus only on the very worst cases.<sup>44</sup>

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## Social care – older people

Announcing the 2011/12 local government finance settlement for councils in England Eric Pickles said:

**"This settlement also supports the government's commitment to adult social care, providing councils with sufficient resources to protect people's access to care and to deliver improved quality of outcome ... We want to put extra money into authorities with social services departments, and thanks to my Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Health, we are looking at putting in serious money to deal with adult social care."** 13 December 2010 (Hansard, col 680)

Eric Pickles is wrong – councils simply do not have “sufficient resources to protect people’s access to care and to deliver improved quality of outcome.” And according to the National Audit Office, adult social care expenditure fell by 8.7 per cent in real terms between 2010-11 and 2014-15 (HC 783, 19 November 2014).

In February 2015 Age UK published a score card on social care.<sup>45</sup> It shows the scale of the change between 2010/11 and 2013/14 – the figures speak for themselves:

- The number of older people receiving home care has fallen by 31.7 per cent from 542,965 to 370,630
- Day care places have plummeted by 66.9 per cent from 178,000 to 59,125
- Spending on home care has dropped 19.4 per cent since 2010/11 falling by £435m from £2.25bn (£2,250m) to £1.815bn (£1,815m)
- The number receiving meals on wheels has plunged by 63.7 per cent from 81,460 to 29,560
- Spending on day care has fallen even more dramatically by £114m from £379m to £265m, a fall of 30 per cent.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies has published figures<sup>46</sup> showing that in real terms spending on social services in England had fallen from £24.6bn in 2010/11 to £21.8bn in 2014/15, a fall of 11.5 per cent.

## Social care – adults with a physical or learning disability

Many people with a physical or learning disability use the support provided by councils’ social care services to lead fulfilling and independent lives.

People with learning disabilities are a particularly marginalised group in society, and are much less likely to have a job or a home of their own. Austerity measures such as the bedroom tax and the replacement of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) have made independent living more difficult. Research by the Learning Disability Alliance has found that those with the most severe disability are targeted by the cuts six times more than the average person.<sup>47</sup>

It is estimated that by 2020 the number of disabled people in need of social care support will have risen to 1.3m. With more people needing support and major cuts being made to social care, the system is in crisis. This means longer waiting times and fewer opportunities for disabled people to live independently.

In England:

- Social care for disabled adults is underfunded by at least £1.2bn a year<sup>48</sup>
- Over 90,000 disabled people or one in six of all people using care, lost social care support between 2008 and 2013<sup>49</sup>
- Two out of every five working age disabled people are not having their needs met<sup>50</sup>
- Advocacy services empower people with learning disabilities, give them a voice and choice and control in accessing and challenging services. They were cut by 15 per cent between 2009 and 2013 with 23 advocacy organisations for people with learning disability closing in just one year (2011)<sup>51</sup>



- 
- Almost one in three (32 per cent) local authorities closed day services for adults with learning disabilities. One in five (20 per cent) of these did not say they have provided replacement services<sup>52</sup>
  - In 2011/12 (57 per cent) 57,654 out of 100,245 people with a learning disability, who were known to social services no longer receive any day service provision<sup>53</sup>
  - Three in five (60 per cent) of local authorities have increased charges for day service attendance and related services, such as transport, on average by 70 per cent<sup>54</sup>
  - One in four people with a learning disability who responded to a Mencap online survey now spend less than one hour outside their home every day. More than one in three admits to feeling 'scared about the future' (37 per cent), 'isolated' (27 per cent) or 'lonely' (28 per cent)<sup>55</sup>
  - Almost one in four family carers (23 per cent) state that their family is financially worse off due to the changes to day service provision<sup>56</sup>
  - Almost three-quarters of carers (72 per cent) fear that their child will not receive the support they need to live a full and independent life<sup>57</sup>
  - More than one in three councils in England and Wales has cut spending on 'portage' services, the free home visiting service for pre-school children with additional needs, and one in five no longer has any service at all, according to Mencap.<sup>58</sup>

Research by Demos in 2012 looked at cuts to disability services in each of the 152 councils responsible for social services.<sup>59</sup>

For example, West Sussex had cut the budget:

- for disabled children and families' care and support by 3.52 per cent
- for adult care and support by 7.56 per cent and
- for older people's care and support by 19.51 per cent.

West Sussex increased the cost of meals at day centres by 23.5 per cent and raised the eligibility criteria for care from 'moderate' to 'substantial' or 'critical'.

Hertfordshire had cut the budget:

- for disabled children and families' by 12.9 per cent
- for adult care and support by 6.95 per cent.

Hertfordshire increased the cost of community meals services by 15 per cent.

Windsor and Maidenhead had cut the budget:

- for disabled children and families' by 23.03 per cent
- for adult care and support by 13.11 per cent.

Bristol had cut the budget:

- for adult care and support by 30.74 per cent
- for older people's care and support by 11.96 per cent.

Bristol increased the cost of community meals services by 33 per cent.

## Social care – adult mental health

Community-based social care for adults with mental health problems or a mental health disability can be a great source of support. Social care provides services that help people to manage their everyday lives, such as help with managing money, housework and personal care, and using support groups and employment services.

Specific services, like Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP), help adults and young people experiencing their first episode of psychosis, which can affect well being, relationships and the ability to manage everyday tasks. Social care provides the support that people need to manage their mental health whilst living in their communities and helps to ease the pressure on crisis health care services, such as accident and emergency departments.

Mental health problems are experienced by one in four people and cost the national economy £105bn each year. The number of people contacting mental health services has risen by almost 500,000 since 2010/11, including an increase of over 155,000 in 2013/14 alone. With this number set to carry on increasing, the costs to local government and the NHS will only get worse.

In England:

- The number of people with mental health problems getting help from local authority community services fell from 118,000 in 2010/11 to 91,000 in 2012/13 (146,000 in 2009/10)<sup>60</sup>
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) data obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by YoungMinds found that 74 of the 96 NHS clinical commissioning groups that provided data (77 per cent) had cut or frozen their investment in CAMHS in 2014-15. Almost half (49) of the 101 local authorities that provided data had cut or frozen their CAMHS budgets in 2014-15, while 60 per cent of councils had cut funding since 2010-11<sup>61</sup>
- Half of Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP) services have been cut in the past year. If everyone eligible received early intervention it would save the NHS £44m each year.<sup>62</sup>

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## Children's centres

Sure Start was launched in 1998 and by 30 April 2010 there were 3,632 designated Sure Start children's centres. But by December 2014, 578 had gone by December 2014 according to Hilary Benn MP.<sup>63</sup>

Sure Start children's centres were controlled by local authorities and were expected to provide:

- Integrated early learning and childcare in the 30 per cent most disadvantaged areas for a minimum of 10 hours a day, five days a week, 48 weeks a year, as well as support for a childminder network
- Drop-in activity sessions for children, such as stay and play sessions, in centres in the 70 per cent least disadvantaged areas
- Family support and parental outreach, including advice on parenting, information about services available in the area and access to specialist, targeted services
- Child and family health services, such as antenatal and postnatal support, information and guidance on breastfeeding, health and nutrition, smoking cessation support, speech and language therapy and other specialist support
- Links with Jobcentre Plus to encourage and support parents and carers who wish to consider training and employment.

## Children's centres in Essex

In October 2013, Essex County Council began consulting on plans to close 11 of its 85 children's centres. The plans also included moving to a 'main site and designated delivery site' model in order to cut £2.5m by 2016.

Main sites would be open for drop-in visits and service delivery. Services would be available to families for 50 hours a week through a combination of centre open hours and telephone service operating times.

Designated delivery sites would be open for a set number of hours, varying from 5 to 35 hours per week. Outreach services would be held in community venues such as church halls, village halls, libraries or health centres. Services delivered from these venues are flexible.

At the time, all 85 of the county's children's centres were managed by the charities 4Children, Barnardos and Spurgeons. Three

children's centres were closed and another seven were de-registered and turned into 'outreach venues'.

The remaining 75 centres now operate under either a 'main site or a designated delivery site' model.

In North East Essex 20 registered children's centres were replaced with nine main sites and seven designated sites. In Mid Essex 22 registered children's centres were replaced with 9 main sites and 11 designated sites. In West Essex 17 registered children's centres were replaced with nine main sites and six designated sites. In South Essex, 27 registered children's centres were replaced with 10 main sites and 14 designated sites.

The impact in Mid Essex of becoming a designated delivery site can be seen in the table below.

District	Centre name	Current hours p/w	Proposed hours p/w
Braintree	Roundabout Children's Centre	42.5 (centre open)	10 (centre open)
Braintree	Rainbow Children's Centre	32 (centre open)	5 (centre open)
Braintree	Valley Children's Centre	40 (centre open)	10 (centre open)
Braintree	Silver End Children's Centre	40 (centre open)	20 (centre open)
Chelmsford	Beeches Children's Centre	42.5 (centre open)	10 (centre open)
Chelmsford	Sunflower Children's Centre	32 (centre open)	5 (centre open)
Chelmsford	Chelmsford Central Children's Centre	25 (centre open)	10 (centre open)
Chelmsford	Bumblebee Children's Centre	40 (centre open)	10 (centre open)
Chelmsford	Galleywood Children's Centre	14 (centre open)	5 (centre open)
Maldon	The Dengie Children's Centre	41 (centre open)	10 (centre open)
Maldon	Yellow Brick Road Children's Centre	40 (centre open)	5 (centre open)

Sure Start children's centres were funded through a £1.5bn (£1,549m) ring fenced specific grant to local authorities in 2010/11. In May 2010 £311m was cut from the Sure Start grant as part of the £6.2bn cuts announced on 24 May 2010 before the emergency budget in June.

From 2011/12 Sure Start funding was one of a number of grants totalling £2.5bn (£2,483m) that were replaced by a new specific grant called early intervention grant (EIG) of £2.2bn (£2,212m) – an overall reduction of almost £271m.

In 2011 a survey of 3,500 centre managers for the Daycare Trust and 4Children found more than half of the 900 Sure Start centres that responded were expecting to run reduced services.

Then children's minister Sarah Teather claimed there was enough money available to maintain existing children's centres, adding that the new EIG gave local authorities the freedom to make the best decisions for the families in their areas.

But then Education Secretary, Michael Gove, confirmed that: "in 2011-12, the overall amount that will be allocated through EIG will be 10.9 per cent lower than the aggregated funding for 2010-11".

By 2013/14 early intervention grant ceased to be a separately identifiable specific grant. Instead it was subsumed into the general funding arrangements for local authorities. The 2015/16 local government finance settlement now contains just £1.4bn (£1,436m) for early intervention funding.

## Libraries

- Councils have cut nearly £135m from their library budgets since 2010. For every £5 they were spending on libraries in 2010/11 they spent £4 in 2013/14
- CIPFA library statistics show a reduction of 467 library service points between 2009/10 and 2013/14,<sup>64</sup> and the Library Campaign now predicts that 1,000 libraries will have closed by 2016<sup>65</sup>
- Library visits are down from 322m in 2009/10 to 282m in 2013/14, which means that annual visits to libraries have fallen by 40m in four years<sup>66</sup>
- CIPFA library statistics show a fall of 5,438 library staff (full-time equivalent posts) – equivalent to more than one in every five staff since 2009/10.

Brent Council closed 6 of its 12 libraries in April 2012. The libraries that closed were at Barham, Preston, Neasden, Cricklewood, Kensal Rise and Tokyngton.

Gloucestershire initially planned to close 10 out of its 38 libraries and withdraw the mobile libraries. Campaigners challenged the decision in the courts forcing the council to review its plans. Three libraries originally earmarked for closure (Hesters Way in Cheltenham, and Matson and Tuffley in Gloucester) still remain part of the public library network, with 21 hours per week of statutory provision and council staffing, supplemented by volunteers. Seven libraries have been closed and are no longer public libraries but have been 'transferred' to the community to run and fund themselves, cut off from the public library network. A decision on the future of mobile libraries has been deferred pending public consultation.

As part of the cuts planned for 2015/16, the flagship Library of Birmingham will reduce staffing levels from 188 to 95 full time equivalent posts and opening hours from 73 to 40 hours a week.

**Table 2**

CIPFA statistics on library service points and full time equivalent (FTE) staff 2009/10 to 2013/14

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Change
<b>Library service points*</b>	4,612	4,466	4,265	4,194	4,145	-467
<b>FTE Staff</b>	24,746	23,663	21,780	20,302	19,308	-5,438

\*A library service point is any library, static or mobile, through which the public library authority provides or directly manages a service to the general public.

## Fire services

Firefighters do a difficult and dangerous job, protecting people, communities and businesses and saving lives. Working alongside every firefighter is a team of control room and support staff who make their work possible.

Thanks to important safety and fire prevention work, the number of fire incidents is falling, allowing fire and rescue services to engage in other important emergency work, such as dealing with flooding, and national incidents such as possible terrorist attacks.

In cash terms the overall cut in government funding for fire and rescue authorities was 22.5 per cent in the four years to 2014/15.<sup>67</sup>

In England:

- A total of 4,668 firefighter jobs had been cut from the fire and rescue service between 2010/11 and 2013/14<sup>68</sup>
- Thirty three fire stations were closed between 2010/11 and 2013/14<sup>69</sup>

Separate figures for England for the loss of fire engines, support staff and response times are not available but:

- 1,732 support roles have been cut from the fire and rescue service between 2010/11 and 2013/14 across the UK<sup>70</sup>
- 145 fire engines have been cut from the fire and rescue services across the UK since 2010<sup>71</sup>
- Response times have increased by 25 per cent in the ten years to 2012/13<sup>72</sup> and it is likely that as jobs are cut, response times will increase even further.

**Table 3**

Government funding of fire and rescue authorities 2010/11 to 2014/15

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
<b>Final spending control total (£m)</b>	1,057	996	989	914	836
<b>Percentage reduction</b>		-5.8	-0.7	-7.5	-8.6
<b>Cumulative cash cut (£m)</b>		-61	-68	-158	-236
<b>Cumulative percentage cut</b>		-5.8	-6.4	-13.9	-22.5

### London Fire Service<sup>73,74</sup>

The budget for London's Fire Brigade has been cut by £105.8m since 2009/10.

In January 2014 10 fire stations closed across London, with the loss of 552 firefighter jobs and 14 fire engines. Since then another 13 fire engines have been taken 'off the run' as attempts are made to cut another £18.6m by 2016/17.

The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) hopes to save £28.8m from closing fire stations and generate up to £50m from the sale of nine fire stations to developers for possible conversion into schools or flats.

Data on response times between January and August 2014, published by the London Fire Brigade, show that since the closures, response times in 371 of London's 649 council wards increased when compared with the previous year. Overall there are now 214 wards where it takes longer than the 6 minute target for a fire engine to arrive, and 141 wards also miss the second fire engine arrival target of 8 minutes.

## Police

We all know how important police officers are, but equally important are the police staff who work alongside them to deliver policing. The 999 call taker who answers emergency calls, the scenes of crime officer who visits the homes of people who have been burgled, the custody officers, the financial investigators, the crime analysts, interviewers and statement takers are all police staff. Without them, policing would not happen; not to mention the finance, training, IT, and other police staff on whom forces depend.

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are also police staff. They patrol the streets, reassure the public, get to know the community and keep an eye on the local neighbourhood. In 2010, PCSOs made up 75 per cent of the neighbourhood policing teams keeping communities safe. Cuts to police budgets have hit PCSOs the hardest.

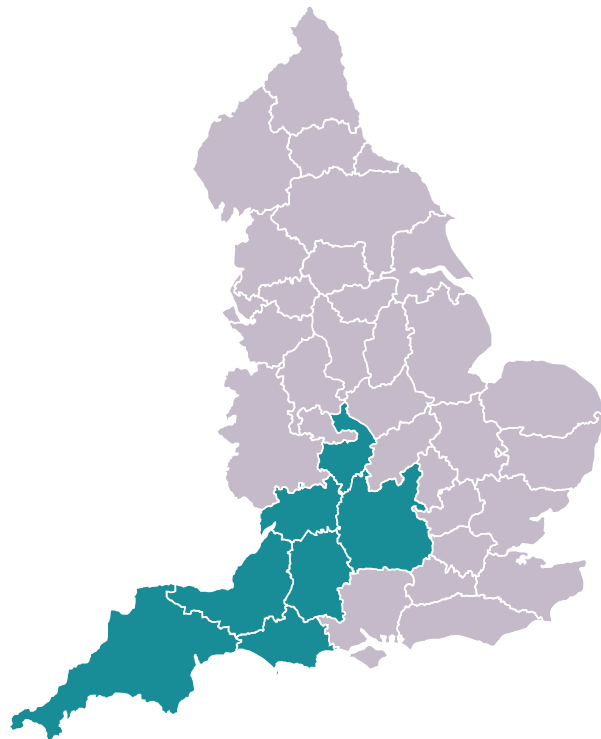
According to Home Office statistics between 31 March 2010 and 31 September 2014, in England:

- The number of police officers fell by 16,139, meaning that there were only 9 police officers in September 2014 for every 10 in March 2010
- The number of PCSOs fell by 4,430, leaving only 7.5 PCSOs in September 2014 for every 10 in March 2010
- The number of police staff (excluding PCSOs) fell by 15,506, so there were only 8 police staff (excluding PCSOs) in September 2014 for every 10 in March 2010.

By March 2012 the Sunday Telegraph survey revealed that at least 361 of some 1,300 police stations in England and Wales had closed to the public or were due to close. In London 65 police stations had closed by the beginning of 2015.

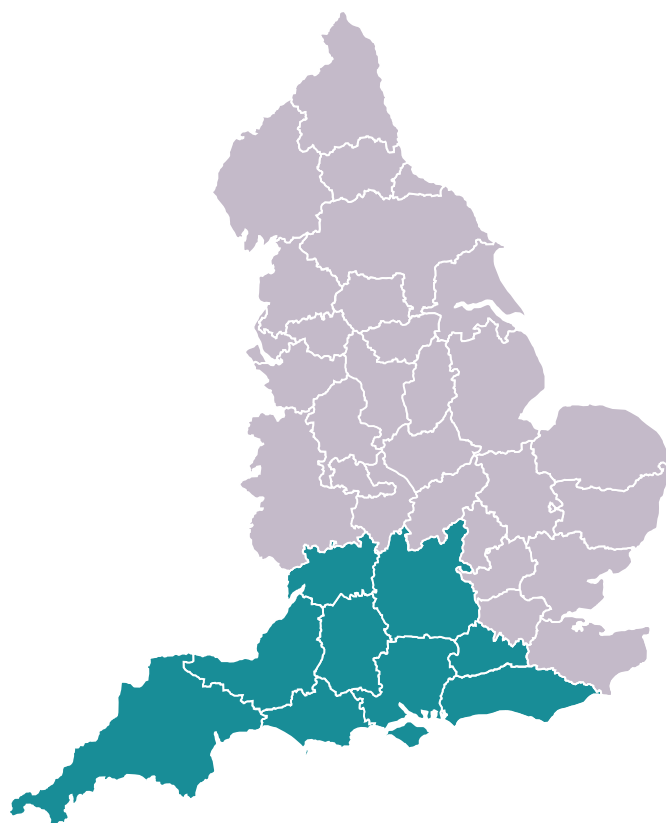
**Cutting 16,139 police officers** is equivalent to losing virtually every police officer in seven of the 39 police forces in England.

Police Officers: March 2010	
Force	Police Officer Total
Devon & Cornwall	3,556
Avon & Somerset	3,302
Wiltshire	1,181
Gloucestershire	1,308
Dorset	1,486
Thames Valley	4,434
Warwickshire	973
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,238</b>



**Cutting 15,506 police staff** is equivalent to losing every member of the police staff in nine of the 39 police forces in England.

Police Staff: March 2010	
Force	Police Staff Total
Avon and Somerset	1,871
Devon and Cornwall	1,766
Dorset	1,027
Gloucestershire	729
Hampshire	2,271
Surrey	1,829
Sussex	2,139
Thames Valley	2,930
Wiltshire	833
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,174</b>





### Police station closures

Nottinghamshire Police closed police stations in Calverton, Carlton in Lindrick, Collingham, Radcliffe on Trent, Ravenshead, Sherwood and Warsop in 2011/12.

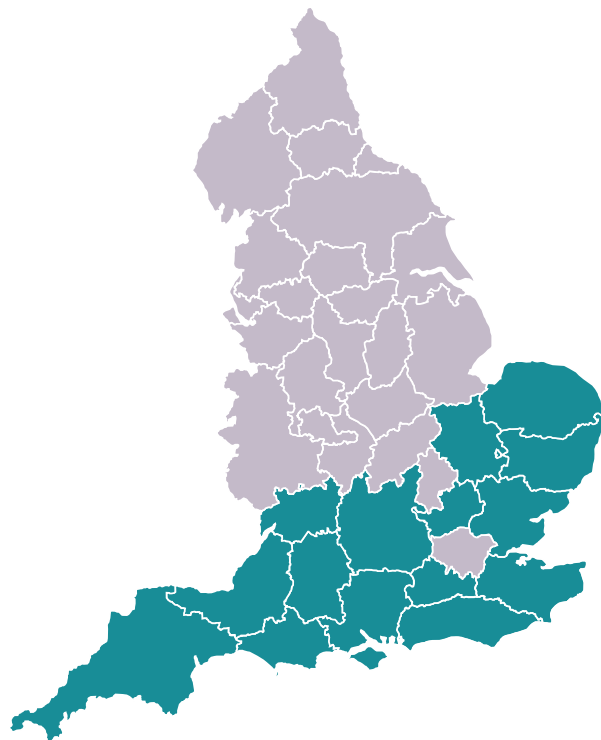
Police stations in Balderton, Bingham, Blidworth, Clifton, East Leake, Keyworth, Kimberley, Kirkby, Ruddington, Stapleford and Wollaton closed in 2012/13.

Beeston police station closed in 2013/14 and Harworth in 2014/15.

Five more stations – Central, Sneinton, Meadows, Arnold, Canning Circus and Retford are due to close in the next 12 months but Nottinghamshire Police say that with the exception of Canning Circus they will all be replaced.

**Cutting 4,430 police community support officers** is equivalent to cutting every PCSO in fifteen of the 39 police forces in England.

PCSOs: March 2010	
Force	PCSO Total
Avon and Somerset	430
Cambridgeshire	209
Devon and Cornwall	363
Dorset	164
Essex	445
Gloucestershire	148
Hampshire	347
Kent	387
Hertfordshire	262
Norfolk	275
Suffolk	173
Surrey	224
Sussex	377
Thames Valley	500
Wiltshire	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,429</b>



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## Women's refuges

Women's refuges and specialist domestic violence services across the UK save lives and protect children from trauma, drawing on decades of experience supporting women and their children to flee violent relationships.

These organisations are often run on a shoestring budget, but manage to support many women. Last year 109 outreach services helped 88,000 women and children.<sup>75</sup> Refuge workers squeeze as much as they can out of every penny to give women emotional and practical support when escaping violence, helping women to find a new home or job if they need to, get legal advice, rebuild their confidence and stay safe.

But five years of cuts have severely weakened the small network of organisations working against domestic violence in the UK, so that they now have to turn women away and leave those at risk

of abuse or violence without the help they desperately need.

In England:

- Since 2010 the number of specialist refuge services fell from 187 to 155, a 17 per cent drop
- Nearly a third (31 per cent) of referrals to refuges were turned away last year (2013/14) because of a lack of space<sup>76</sup>
- On one day in 2014, 112 women and their 84 children were turned away because they could not be accommodated. In one week 369 women were turned away<sup>77</sup>
- England has 3,660 refuge bed spaces and is nearly 2,000 short of the internationally recommended number of 5,387.<sup>78</sup>

### SAFE

In March 2014, Stop Abuse for Everyone (SAFE) closed its women's refuge and the majority of its outreach services in Exeter after Devon County Council withdrew its core funding.

After more than 20 years providing domestic violence services, the refuge was in high demand, with a 96 per cent occupancy rate. But the refuge has not been kept open although the new organisation, Splitz, will continue to provide outreach services, such as

safety planning or welfare and housing advice, for women who have experienced abuse.

Most of the outreach team staff were transferred to Splitz, but the majority of the refuge staff were made redundant. Women fleeing domestic violence are now supported by the outreach services in temporary accommodation, while the specialist expertise and holistic approach developed by SAFE's refuge workers has been lost.



## Street lighting

Street lights switched on at night are crucial to road traffic and personal safety. Not only do they prevent accidents and personal injury, they also make an important contribution to easing residents' perceptions of crime and fears over their safety at night.

Faced with rising energy costs, a significant number of councils have cut the number of street lights they switch on overnight at full power, leaving many areas dimly lit or completely in the dark at night. This has led to roads that aren't as safe at night and rising fears of an increase in crime or injury from falls, particularly amongst women and older people.

- There are 5.7m street lights in England
- In May 2010 69,000 street lights were turned off at night, by 2014 that figure had risen to 558,000<sup>79</sup>
- In May 2010 79,000 street lights were dimmed. By 2014 that figure had risen to 797,000<sup>80</sup>
- One in five street lights is either switched off or dimmed at night
- In November 2013 the *Daily Telegraph* reported that two-thirds of councils were switching off or dimming street lights. A year later it reported that it had risen to three quarters<sup>81</sup>
- Night-time road accidents have fallen by 15.6 per cent in the last five years where roads are lit, but only fell by 2 per cent on unlit ones<sup>82</sup>
- Road casualties have risen by 20 per cent and 324 more people have been killed or seriously injured in the past four years in areas where street lights have been turned off<sup>83</sup>
- In a UNISON survey of 7,554 women members, conducted in 2014, 85 per cent said that too little street lighting would affect how safe they felt at night, with 70 per cent saying it would put them off going out at night.

### Essex switches off

Essex County Council switched off 105,746 street lights between midnight and 5am in 2013/14 – almost all the lights in the county.

Local residents, district councillors and charities raised concerns about a potential increase in crime and injury after the switch-off. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Eric Pickles MP) argued that "It's saving a phenomenal amount of money, it's decreased crime ... and, as someone who lives in a main street that has had its lights cut off, I can now get a good night's sleep."

But Essex Police disagreed and told the council to switch the lights back on in certain areas of the county to prevent residents from feeling vulnerable to crime, after a wave of burglaries, muggings and vandalism that locals directly linked to the street light switch-off.

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## Supported bus services

Bus travel is essential for many people and is the most popular form of public transport – two thirds of all public transport journeys are made by bus.

Supported bus services are a lifeline for vulnerable people and those who live in rural areas that are not served by commercial bus routes. Women are less likely to own cars than men and rely on public transport to get children to school. Without funding from local councils it is unlikely that there would be any public transport in these areas. This means the cuts have had an immediate impact on the local community, particularly on disabled, younger and older people, who rely on these services to get to work, school, shops and to access other public services.

In January 2015 Devon County Council (DCC) published plans to cut £1.7m from supported bus services. The accompanying impact assessment spells out the implications:

**“Using government figures relating to the socio-economic value of bus journeys (Department for Transport, March 2013), based on 2012/2013 passenger numbers on subsidized bus services in Devon and levels of DCC financial support, each £1 in DCC financial support for buses is worth £2.40 to the local economy. Based on the annual spend survey (Devon County Council 2013), each £1 of DCC grant to community-based Ring & Ride services, combined with similar levels of income from other sources, generates £7.06 spending in local shops.”**

**“Shopmobility users contributed an estimated £885,449 into the Devon economy during 2013 (Devon County Council 2013). This equates to £21.48 for every £1 of grant funding invested by Devon County Council. Significant loss of County Council contracted work could**

### Rural communities cut off

In January 2014, North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) cut £2m from its bus subsidy budget, in spite of petitions from residents. As one of the largest rural counties in England, these cuts are having a huge impact on people across the county, particularly older and disabled people living in rural areas.

Research by the Campaign for Better Transport found that 90 bus services had been cut in North Yorkshire in 2013-14. Consultation on a proposal to stop providing free home to school transport for primary school children who live between two and three miles from their normal or catchment school closed on 15 March 2015.

**lead to Bus Operating Companies becoming unviable, with a subsequent impact on local jobs. Removal of support and consequent withdrawal of bus services for tourists likely to affect viability of local attractions and shops.”**

- Seven out of every ten councils in England have cut spending on supported bus services. And spending fell from £294.1m in 2010/11 to £249.9m in 2014/15<sup>84</sup>
- 2,000 bus routes have been cut, altered or withdrawn completely since 2010<sup>85</sup>
- In just one year, 2014/15, funding was cut by £9m – 222 bus services were cut altogether and another 274 were cut or altered<sup>86</sup>
- North Yorkshire (90) and Cumbria (68) had cut the largest number of bus routes. Six councils in England spent nothing on supported bus services in 2014/15.<sup>87</sup>

## Youth services

Youth unemployment remains stubbornly high. Opportunities for low-cost further education are fading fast since the abolition of the education maintenance allowance, so with cuts to further education and the hike in tuition fees, youth services are needed more than ever.

Youth clubs and sports activities are often the only places where vulnerable and disadvantaged young people can socialise with others in a secure environment. This is particularly true for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and disabled young people. These services allow youth workers to build relationships with other young people and adults and identify other areas of life in which they may need extra support.

Youth services increase opportunities to get qualifications or find work, prevent youth crime and improve mental health and confidence in young people. This in turn helps to decrease demand on more expensive 'crisis' services, such as accident and emergency, the police and social services.

Councils are steadily scaling back on non-statutory youth services because of the cuts, with some areas losing almost all their youth service provision. These quick fix cuts will undo years of preventative work by youth workers and will cost local authorities and central government more money in the long term.

UNISON research into youth services found that between 2012 and 2014:

- Youth services had lost £60m of funding with the loss of 2,000 jobs
- A total of 350 youth centres have been closed and 41,000 youth service places for young people have been cut
- Of the local authorities surveyed, 77 per cent said that some of their services would disappear altogether, 69 per cent predicted that more youth centres would close, and 24 per cent said that specialised targeted support would disappear.

### **Youth service closures and reductions<sup>89</sup>**

Staffordshire County Council ended its open provision in December 2014, closing all youth centres in the area, and supporting community provision instead.

Trafford is facing a high level of cuts across all services, with plans to close all youth centres in the area. It has been suggested that these centres become social enterprises that secure their own funding.

West Sussex closed a number of youth centres in 2012, due to financial cuts and declining need. Members of the local community, in partnership with 4Youth have continued to run one centre, offering clubs and groups for young people, parents, and pre-school activities. The

centre is running successfully, and is a benefit to the community.

Cornwall Council will not provide an open access youth service in 2015/16 due to financial cuts. This places youth centres in doubt, with some needing to be sold as the council cannot afford the upkeep of the buildings.

Wolverhampton reduced its budget by £1.75m, in 2014/15, which severely reduced youth services. Only 8 youth work positions remained in the area, with 140 redundancies taking place.

North Yorkshire needs to make reductions of £74m in the next financial year and youth services will be reduced. The council has emphasized that statutory requirements will still be met following cuts.



# CUTS TO YOUTH SERVICES

BETWEEN 2012 AND 2014...

**£60m** LOSS IN  
FUNDING

**41,000** YOUTH SERVICE  
PLACES **LOST**

**35,000** HOURS OF OUTREACH  
WORK **REMOVED**

**2,000** YOUTH WORKERS  
**AXED**

**350** YOUTH CENTRES  
**CLOSED**

## THE IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

### INCREASED MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

**69%** of UNISON members working in youth services felt austerity had led to increased mental health issues

### HIGHER YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

**88%** of UNISON members working in youth services felt austerity had led to higher youth unemployment

### MORE CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

**84%** of UNISON members working in youth services felt austerity had led to more crime and anti-social behaviour

## Theatres and museums

Local theatres and museums are an important part of a network of non-statutory services, which enhance people's feelings of well-being and participation in their local community, and help prevent the need for vulnerable people to access emergency health and community services.

Museums often complement the work of local schools and libraries, providing a space for children and young people to be creative and learn about local history, the arts, science and their local community. Some theatres and museums also run invaluable schemes that work with particularly marginalised groups of people, including homeless people, young offenders and people with disabilities or illness such as dementia.

Theatres have been one of the early victims of austerity. Often funding comes from many separate sources and 'match funding' is a common criteria. Arts budgets have been cut by 50 per cent in some areas. This lack of match funding has often meant that other funding was lost too. So, when combined with severe cuts from Arts Council England, whose government grant has been cut by 36 per cent since 2010, many

theatres have had to make changes to productions and outreach work or face closure.

In England:

- Two-thirds of theatre venues have cancelled productions, half have produced fewer new plays and commissioned fewer writers since April 2012 due to budget cuts<sup>89</sup>
- Spending by local councils on museums and galleries fell by £31m (11 per cent) between 2010/11 and 2013/14.<sup>90</sup>

Figures for England were not available, but across the UK:

- 39 museums have closed since 2010, including the James Bond Museum (closed 2011), the Police Museum (2014) and the National Conservation Museum (2010)<sup>91</sup>
- More than half (52 per cent) of museums experienced a cut to their overall income in 2014. Over a fifth (21 per cent) cut their opening hours and one in ten has considered selling part of its collections to generate money in the past year.<sup>92</sup>

### Museum discovers its fate

The Snibston Discovery Museum in Leicester is due to close in July this year, after a vote by Leicestershire County Council approved the closure in January 2015.

The museum, which showcases Leicestershire's science, design, technology and engineering collections, costs £900,000 to run each year. According to local campaigners,

it is worth more than £4.2m to the local economy and visitor numbers had increased by 15 per cent in the past year.

The council aims to sell the main building to developers and create a smaller mining museum on the same site, depending on its affordability after the general election, meaning that the museum's legacy is still at risk.



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## Sports development and facilities

Sports services play an important part in society. They can enhance people's quality of life, improve health, promote social inclusion and in the case of swimming pools, can develop safety in water, helping people to avoid potentially dangerous situations. One in five adults is unable to swim in the UK and 2012 saw a 35 per cent increase in the number of children drowning.

The sport and leisure industry as a whole provides over four million jobs and contributes approximately £200bn to the UK economy. For every £1 central government contributes to sport, £5 is raised in tax.<sup>93</sup>

Local authorities are the main providers of local leisure and sports services, spending twice as much on cultural and sporting opportunities for communities as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the National Lottery combined. But cuts to central government funding have undermined councils' efforts to provide these services and put the planned legacy of the London 2012 Olympics, to increase regular participation in sport across England, at risk.

In England:

- Between 2010/11 and 2013/14 total expenditure by local authorities in England on sports development and community recreation fell by more than a quarter from £379m to £282m
- Between 2010/11 and 2013/14 total expenditure by local authorities in England on sports and recreation facilities, such as leisure centres, swimming pools, pitches, tennis courts etc, fell by more than £100m, from £975m to £874m
- In a 2011 Local Government Association (LGA) survey, 13 per cent of local authorities said sports and leisure facilities would be targeted for proportionally greater savings in 2011/12.

### Haslingden Swimming Pool Closure Announcement

Full Council decided at the meeting on Wednesday 25th September that Haslingden Swimming Pool will close by 3 November 2013.

This difficult decision follows over 15 months of consultation between Rossendale Borough Council, Rossendale Leisure Trust, the Pool Panel, pool users, schools and the wider community.

All options to keep Haslingden Swimming Pool open have been extensively explored in the consultation period, which started in June 2012. This included seeking expressions of interest to take over the running of the pool, but unfortunately no financially viable bids came forward.

The Council understands that some people will be unhappy about the pool closure but the Council's financial situation has meant that nothing further can be done to keep Haslingden Swimming Pool open. Work is on-going to help reduce the impact on those affected as far as possible. Rossendale Leisure Trust will continue to work with the users of Haslingden Swimming Pool as the closure is implemented to signpost users to alternative swim times and venues.

Site disposal options will now be considered by the Council and will be communicated to residents when a decision is made.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Alyson Barnes said: "This was a difficult decision that was not taken lightly. The Council's financial position means that now more than ever we need to focus on our priorities and ensure that we do not continue to lose large amounts of money. The pool is losing £137k per year and would continue to do so."

Above: an example of a swimming pool closure driven by budget cuts – Rossendale Council press release, 2013

Across the UK:

- By 2012 the BBC was reporting that over a third of councils in the UK "had cut or closed some public sports facilities in the past three years." (BBC News, 7 September 2012)

## Supporting people

The supporting people programme was launched in 2003 as a £1.8bn ring fenced grant to local authorities, and intended to fund services to help vulnerable people live independently.

It was not only a programme aimed at vulnerable people. It was seen as a preventative programme. CapGemini estimated that the net financial benefits for the client groups were £3.41bn per annum (against an overall investment of £1.61bn).

CapGemini was clear that the removal of supporting people services would lead to “increased costs in the areas of homelessness, tenancy failure, crime, health and (in particular) residential care packages”.

This list of groups who benefitted included vulnerable young people; the homeless or people sleeping rough; those with drug or alcohol addiction; mental health problems, poor social skills or behaviour that would put them at risk of offending. Other beneficiaries included those leaving institutions (including some ex-offenders released from prison); or experiencing psychological trauma (including that caused by domestic violence); or those with a learning disability; sensory impairment; a chronic illness or were frail due to old age.

In 2009, the ring fence was removed but it was still separately identified as a funding line. In 2010/11 it was included within area based grant (a general government grant to local authorities that they could decide how to spend) as a separately identifiable funding stream. The coalition government announced the abolition of area based grant from 2011/12 and the supporting people allocation was subsumed in the formula grant paid to local authorities – as formula grant was a single grant not divided by any service in any way, there was no longer a specific budget line for supporting people services.

Cuts to supporting people and the impact on vulnerable people became an early focus in the ‘cuts’ debate with the government claiming that funding levels would decrease from £1.64bn in 2010/11 to £1.59bn in 2014/15. The difficulty was that the money was not separately identified, just included in the main grant to local authorities that the government was cutting.

The figures speak for themselves. In 2010/11 councils in England spent £1.342bn on supporting people. Three years later, in 2013/14, that figure had fallen by £502m (37.5 per cent) to £840m. Without a ring-fence, supporting people budgets were being cut.

A March 2012 report by *Inside Housing*, based on freedom of information submissions to 152 councils, found that of the 150 that responded:

**More than 46,000 of England’s most vulnerable people have had vital care services scrapped or scaled back after council budget cuts forced the termination of hundreds of support contracts.**

Freedom of information requests reveal that councils across England entirely withdrew supporting people money from 305 services in the 2011/12 financial year, affecting 6,790 people. Services that help homeless people, those with mental health problems, and drug and alcohol addiction, were among those hit.

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## Trading standards and environmental health

Trading standards and environmental health services protect us from unsafe food and dangerous products.

The statutory duties to enforce over 250 pieces of legislation rest with trading standards, requiring specialist skills and knowledge – a gap which cannot be filled by volunteers or untrained staff

Trading standards officers tackle loan sharks, dishonest traders and rogue landlords who often prey on vulnerable people, particularly older people and those living in poverty. Environmental health or food safety officers prevent animal disease outbreaks and deal with air pollution, pest control and food safety. Trading standards have a crucial role to play in preventing a repeat of the European horse meat scandal.

Trading standards and environmental health services don't just help to create a healthy economy by protecting legitimate businesses, they save the public money. Every £1 spent tackling unfair trading practices saves the public £6 and every £1 spent advising and assisting consumers saves consumers £7.<sup>94</sup>

But council cuts have led to fewer trading standards and environmental health officers. Local authorities now concentrate their efforts on complaints from the most vulnerable consumers or issues with an immediate risk to public safety. This means that there are fewer prosecutions of dishonest businesses and fewer chances to spot dangerous practices, putting us all at risk.

"The contraction in budgets and staffing levels have led to changed ways of working and priorities, and a reduced portfolio which has resulted in areas stopping various special initiatives, such as the administration of 'proof of age' and 'approved trader' schemes, reduced product testing and fewer enforcement projects."<sup>95</sup>

Liverpool was named four years ago as an area which could be disproportionately affected by the negative impact of counterfeiting by the Serious Organised Crime Agency.

In 2014, the city council made major cuts to its trading standards services. Staffing levels were reduced from 17 to 9 and consumer advice is now managed by the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Trading standards officers deal with both licensing and trading standards issues, which used to be managed separately.

These decisions raise questions as to whether the council can continue to meet its statutory obligations.

- Councils in England have cut over £41m from trading standards spending, since 2010 and some councils have cut their budgets by more than 40 per cent
- Total expenditure on food sampling by councils in England has fallen by almost a fifth
- Detailed figures for the staffing loss in England are not available but a workforce survey by the Trading Standards Institute identified 3,534 staff working in 122 local authorities in England and Wales in 2009. A follow up survey in 2014 identified just 1,995 staff working in 126 local authorities<sup>96</sup>
- The Trading Standards Institute says "The number of trading standards staff has already been halved over five years, potentially putting the health and well-being of consumers and the economy at risk"<sup>97</sup>
- There has been a 72.1 per cent fall in the number of trading standards prosecutions in England and Wales since 2010.

## Other services

But it isn't just the services described earlier that have been cut. Under the pressure of unprecedented cuts, between 2010/11 and 2013/14 local councils in England reduced their spending across the whole range of services that they deliver.

In some cases, such as council tax and housing benefit administration, the cut in spending is partly

due to more efficient use of new technologies, but in other areas such as pest control, services have been reduced, withdrawn or seen significant increases in charges.

Below are examples showing £14.7bn of spending on a range of council services where spending has been cut by £2.3bn.

**Table 4**

Actual 2010/11 spending by councils in England on various services

	Spending 2010/11 £m	Spending 2013/14 £m	Cut £m
Adult and community learning (lifelong education)	615.709	411.084	-204.625
Older people (aged 65 or over) including older mentally ill	7,336.448	6,602.510	-733.938
Adults under 65 with physical disability / sensory impairment	1,552.241	1,472.10	-80.138
Homelessness administration	185.671	159.866	-25.805
Housing benefits administration	514.739	480.420	-34.319
Parks and open spaces	815.562	716.164	-99.398
Tourism	124.023	75.008	-49.015
Pest control	31.549	25.255	-6.294
Public conveniences	78.462	67.075	-11.387
Crime reduction	250.705	171.409	-79.296
Waste collection	957.565	884.040	-73.525
Building control	81.017	61.727	-19.290
Development control (planning applications)	351.913	229.118	-122.795
Economic development	903.744	392.360	-511.384
Community development	481.116	309.065	-172.051
Council tax collection	374.130	269.982	-104.148
Registration of births, deaths and marriages	35.190	17.059	-18.131
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,689.78</b>	<b>12,344.25</b>	<b>-2,345.54</b>

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# The workforce

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The local government and school support workforce is poorly paid and has the worst pay and conditions of employment within the public sector.

Council and school employees have paid a heavy price under austerity. Uniquely within the public sector, their pay was frozen for three years in 2010, 2011 and 2012 and rose by just 1 per cent in 2013 while CPI and RPI increased by 16.34 per cent and 17.23 per cent respectively between April 2009 and April 2014. In real terms pay had already been declining since 1997.

So the workers who still have jobs effectively lost £1bn in 2010/11; £2bn in 2011/12, £2.6bn in 2012/13 and £3bn in 2013/14, as their pay failed to keep pace with inflation.

Thirty out of every 100 staff earn less than £15,000 a year and 64 out of every 100 staff earn less than £21,000 a year.

In the Emergency Budget (July 2010) the Chancellor said that despite a two-year public sector pay freeze, the lowest paid workers, earning less than £21,000 a year, would still get a flat rate £250 pay rise. This did not happen except for

those who worked for a handful of councils who felt that they had a moral duty to pay the £250.

In July 2014 there were half a million local government and school support staff earning less than the living wage.<sup>98</sup> With the exception of a small number of NHS employees, local government is the only part of the public sector where the minimum rate of pay is less than the living wage.

In 2014 the Local Government Association had to ask local councils and schools to increase the bottom rate of pay to avoid falling below the national minimum wage.

On top of poverty pay, many councils have cut terms and conditions of employment, that were already the worst in the public sector. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) car allowances that do not compensate social workers, home care workers and others who often have to travel long distances are now the norm. As a result staff subsidise their employers.

In many local authorities, unsocial hour payments, for care workers or weekend working, have been slashed or removed.

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## Jobs

For every 208 people who worked for a local council in April 2010, only 158 did so in April 2014. In England 406,900 permanent and 92,500 temporary or casual jobs working for the local council disappeared between Q2 2010 and Q2 2014.<sup>99</sup> Some of that reduction is due to the conversion of community schools to academies or because a service has been privatised. But that was only the start. By 2015, one in every three jobs that existed in some local authorities in 2010 had gone.<sup>100</sup>

next three years the council would shed 6,000 more jobs on top of the 7,000 lost since the start of the decade – the equivalent, he said, of taking out twice the workforce that lost their jobs at the Rover plant in Longbridge in 2005.

Table 5 below shows the council with the greatest percentage drop in headcount between quarter 2 2010 and quarter 2 2014. Appendix 2 provides details of the top ten percentage reductions in headcount in each region.

The leader of Birmingham City Council, Sir Albert Bore, warned in September 2014 that over the

**Table 5**

Councils with the greatest percentage drop in headcount between Quarter 2 2010 and Quarter 2 2014.

Local Authority	Headcount Q2 2010	Headcount Q2 2014	Change	% Change	Region
Wellingborough	365	137	-228	-62	East Midlands
Central Bedfordshire	14,915	2,395	-12,520	-84	Eastern
Barnet	11,241	5,423	-5,818	-52	London
Gateshead	13,125	5,692	-7,433	-57	Northern
Cumbria	20,594	7,193	-13,401	-65	North West
Southampton	8,369	3,546	-4,823	-58	South East
West Dorset	637	67	-570	-89	South West
Birmingham	58,552	38,233	-20,319	-35	West Midlands
North East Lincolnshire	6,563	3,158	-3,405	-52	Yorkshire & Humber



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# The future

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In December 2014 the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) published the chart overleaf (Figure 2) showing its projection for council spending following the 2014 Autumn Statement.<sup>101</sup>

After Budget 2015 the OBR confirmed the “sharp acceleration in the pace of implied real cuts to day-to-day spending on public services and administration in 2016-17 and 2017-18.”<sup>102</sup> The respected Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) says “the cuts of more than 5 per cent implied in each of 2016-17 and 2017-18 are twice the size of any year’s cuts over this parliament.”<sup>103</sup>

Many of the things that councils do, like providing youth services, are not legal requirements. So when they are closed or taken away the public find they have no right to those services. Even when there is a statutory duty, how it is interpreted may be open to redefinition as we have already seen with libraries, home to school transport and social care.

Alarm bells are being rung about the consequences of further cuts for local services. Council leaders already talk of reaching a ‘tipping point’ or say that optional services will simply cease. Others warn that further cuts will mean that there simply isn’t the money to meet their statutory obligations. More importantly the government does not appear to understand the implications or care about the consequences.

Sir Amyas Morse, (Comptroller and Auditor General at the National Audit Office) repeated concerns that government ministers did not fully understand the implications and were making irresponsible decisions about the cuts. In March 2015, he said: “If you’re going to do radical surgery it would be nice if you knew where the heart was. You’re slightly more likely not to stick a knife in it by mistake.”<sup>104</sup>

For many vulnerable people it is already too late. Cuts to social care meant patients could not be quickly discharged from hospital, blocking beds resulting in a crisis in accident and emergency and cancelled operations that cost the NHS £287m. Cuts to services for children and young people with mental illness resulted in them ending up in police cells, being transferred hundreds of miles away or placed on inappropriate adult wards.

**“We had the choice to either cut all non-statutory services to the bare minimum or chase out all the efficiencies we could. The problem now is that Bexley has nowhere left to go.”**

Mark Charters, Director for Education and Social Care.<sup>105</sup>

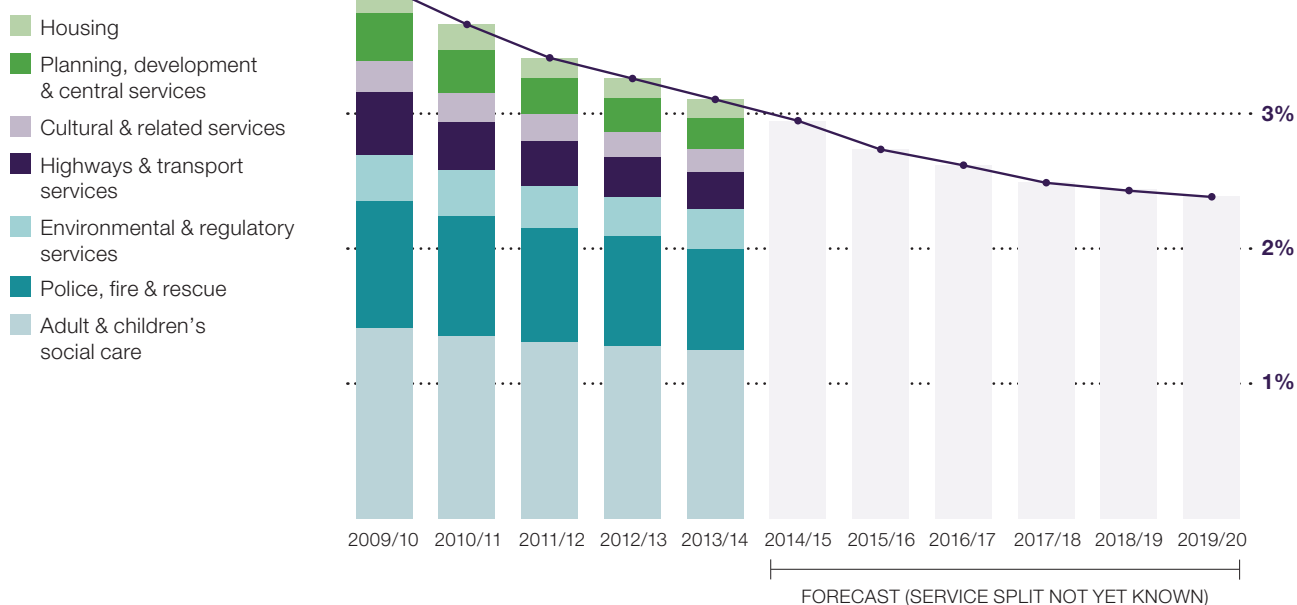
Politicians of all parties are making pledges about the future funding of the NHS, schools, education and pensioner benefits, but there are no pledges to protect funding for essential local government services.

The 2015/16 budgets have been set. In February 2015 an independent commission warned that councils were on a ‘cliff edge’ and that services which have been ‘part of everyday life’ for many years ‘may not be there much longer’.

Many more facilities will close, thousands of jobs will be cut, services where there is no legal requirement to provide them such as pest control, children’s centres, youth services, non statutory allotments, museums and sports facilities will either simply disappear or only be available ‘at cost’. Expect councils to draw the boundary of what is a statutory requirement even tighter than they do now.



**Figure 2:**  
Local authority  
spending in England as  
a percentage of GDP



**“Lincolnshire Police in 2016/17 will be, on the basis of current financial projections, on the edge of viability. In the following year it will be unsustainable.”** Neil Rhodes, Chief Constable, Lincolnshire (Letter to Home Secretary, 21 November 2014)<sup>106</sup>

New homes bonus money should go back into main grant system, government support must be increased to reflect budget pressures, the link to need and population growth must be re-established, and record low interest rates provide an opportunity to refinance local authority debt and release existing resources into day to day services.

Clearly the public want the next government to find the resources that the NHS needs. But people may not realise the importance of local council services and how close many of them are to disappearing unless something is done.

It is time to give local government services respite from cuts, assess the damage already wrought by austerity, recognise the pressures that councils face and the false economy of cutting council budgets while extra costs appear elsewhere.

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# Appendices

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Since 2010, £12.5bn has been cut from government grants to local councils. To give a sense of what it means, Appendix I overleaf puts the money actually spent on different services by every council in England in 2010/11 in order, starting with the smallest.

The first two columns give the service and the actual spending. The third column shows how much government funding has been cut each year,

so the reader can see how far the funding cut is eating into council spending.

So for example start with 2010/11. The £450m cut made by the Chancellor on 24 May 2010 before the emergency budget is equivalent to total spending by all councils in England on every service from business improvement district ballots to conservation and listed buildings planning policy – £437.088m.

**Appendix I:** Actual 2010/11 spending by service by all local authorities in England compared with central government funding reductions.

Service	Total spend by all councils in England 2010/11 £m	Funding cut 2010/11
Business improvement district ballots	0.068	£450m
Council tax discounts for prompt payment	0.447	
Non housing revenue account (HRA) rent rebates – discretionary payments	2.407	
Water safety	3.054	
Other court services	3.121	
Council tax discounts locally funded	4.375	
Rent rebates to council tenants (HRA) – discretionary payments	4.979	
Housing advances	5.688	
Accommodation within the authority's own stock (non HRA)	11.762	
Agriculture and fisheries services	16.33	
Climate change Costs	16.404	
Port health	16.732	
Non-domestic rates collection	16.824	
Coast protection	17.789	
Defences against flooding	22.406	
Rent allowances – discretionary payments	22.967	
Other nightly paid private sector accommodation	24.307	
Foreshore	25.142	
Waste minimisation	25.463	
Accommodation within housing association (registered social landlord) stock	26.257	
Airports harbours and toll facilities	27.883	
Homelessness support	32.78	
Registration of births, deaths and marriages	35.19	
Land drainage and related work	37.054	
Conservation and listed buildings planning policy	37.659	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£437.088m</b>	<b>£450m</b>

Service	Total spend by all councils in England 2010/11 £m	Funding cut 2011/12
Hostels (non HRA support)	38.694	£3bn or £3,000m
Private rented housing standards	41.554	
Student support	45.945	
Other welfare services	46.981	
Directly with a private sector landlord	48.82	
Pest control	49.223	
Homelessness prevention	49.375	
Other adult social care – asylum seekers (lone adults)	51.182	
Private managed accommodation leased by housing associations (RSLs)	51.893	
Conducting elections	53.611	
Emergency planning	54.061	
Health and safety	56.264	
Other council (non HRA property)	57.032	
Archives	60.397	
Coroners' court services	70.823	
Heritage	71.141	
Structural maintenance of bridges	71.945	
Registration of electors	72.158	
CCTV	73.469	
Public conveniences	82.003	
Other temporary accommodation	89.107	
Community centres and public halls	96.311	
Bed and breakfast accommodation	99.997	
Environmental initiatives	100.941	
General grants, bequests and donations	102.136	
Social care strategy for adults	104.773	
Administration of financial support for repairs and improvements	109.048	
Other private sector renewal	124.948	
Food safety	125.534	
Congestion charging	132.187	
Trade waste	144.788	
Public and other transport planning policy and strategy	150.094	
Structural maintenance – principal roads	152.945	
Arts development and support	154.986	
Road safety education and safe routes (including school crossing patrols)	166.307	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,000m</b>	<b>£3,000m</b>

Appendix I

Service	Total spend by all councils in England 2010/11 £m	Funding cut 2012/13
Private managed accommodation leased by local authority	173.025	£1.6bn or £1,600m
Support to operators – other	173.643	
Environmental protection	175.865	
Tourism	177.386	
Licensing alcohol and entertainment licensing, taxi licensing	178.944	
Animal and public health, infectious disease control	195.129	
Trading standards	201.189	
Safety services	215.236	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,490.417m</b>	<b>£1,600m</b>

Service	Total spend by all councils in England 2010/11 £m	Funding cut 2013/14
Winter service	216.725	£1.663bn or £1,663m
Cemetery cremation and mortuary	217.777	
Buiding Control	225.296	
Homelessness administration	228.844	
Other planning policy	240.448	
Community fire safety	262.68	
Council tax benefits administration	268.128	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,659.898m</b>	<b>£1,663m</b>

Service	Total spend by all councils in England 2010/11 £m	Funding cut 2014/15
Housing strategy advice and enabling	271.555	£2.471bn or £2,471m
Museums and galleries	285.494	
Highway maintenance planning policy and strategy	315.806	
Crime reduction	344.141	
Theatres and public entertainment	350.357	
Off street parking	353.967	
Structural maintenance of other local authority roads	369.331	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,290.651m</b>	<b>£2,471m</b>

Service	Total spend by all councils in England 2010/11 £m	Funding cut 2015/16
Council tax collection	374.130	£3.354bn or £3,354m
Sports development and community recreation	378.756	
Environmental safety and routine maintenance of principal roads	388.932	
Other traffic management	443.061	
On-street parking	457.495	
Nursery schools	464.227	
Community development	481.116	
Street lighting (including energy costs)	529.026	£3,354m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,516.743m</b>	

## Remaining spending

The spending totals that are left are shown next. Councils have no control over school spending – they simply pass the money on to schools. So £43bn is passed straight to schools. The same is true for the police, almost another £12bn, where spending is controlled by police and crime commissioners.

So of the £133bn spent by local councils, police and fire authorities in 2010/11 – about £55bn goes straight to schools and the police. That leaves about £78bn of which £13.7bn is for the fire service leaving just £64.3bn of which £12.5bn has been cut.



Service	Total spend by all councils in England 2010/11 £m	Remaining spending
Housing benefits administration	604.906	£50,575m
Development control	618.616	
Adult and community learning	637.524	
Public transport co-ordination	640.901	
Other adult social care - other	641.926	
Recycling	755.473	
Environmental safety and routine maintenance of other local authority roads	776.314	
Support to operators - rail services	822.948	
Street cleansing (not chargeable to Highways)	863.465	
Economic development	903.440	
Sports and recreation facilities including golf courses	974.606	
Libraries	1,036.217	
Youth education services	1,049.565	
Support to operators - bus services	1,060.585	
Parks and open Spaces	1,107.407	
Strategic management of non-school services	1,115.055	
Waste collection	1,168.142	
Concessionary fares	1,264.576	
Other non-school education funding	1,328.887	
Supporting people	1,341.793	
Adults aged under 65 with mental health needs	1,420.188	
Corporate and democratic core (central functions, committees, scrutiny etc)	1,646.063	
Adults aged under 65 with physical disability or sensory impairment	1,800.083	
Waste disposal	1,850.619	
Pre-school education	2,172.112	
Adults aged under 65 with learning disabilities	5,705.409	
Children social care	7,287.664	
Older people (aged 65 or over) including older mentally ill	9,980.754	
Fire fighting and rescue operations	1,890.081	Fire Authorities
Fire and rescue service emergency planning and civil defence	11,895.000	Fire Authorities
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£64,360.319</b>	
Special schools	3,071.509	Paid to schools
Primary schools	20,417.446	Paid to schools
Secondary schools	20,208.917	Paid to schools
Police services	11,948.042	Police and Crime Commissioners
<b>Total</b>	<b>£120,006.233m</b>	

**Appendix II:** Top 10 percentage reductions in headcount  
(Q2 2010 to Q2 2014) by region.<sup>107</sup>

East Midlands				
Local authority	Headcount Q2 2010	Headcount Q2 2014	Change	% change
Wellingborough	365	137	-228	-62
Northampton	1,609	611	-998	-62
Leicestershire	24,246	12,231	-12,015	-50
Nottingham	17,632	9,919	-7,713	-44
Northamptonshire	15,347	8,658	-6,689	-44
Daventry	318	204	-114	-36
South Holland	434	282	-152	-35
Derbyshire	41,333	27,303	-14,030	-34
Nottinghamshire	29,521	20,517	-9,004	-31
Lincolnshire	19,940	13,980	-5,960	-30

Eastern				
Local authority	Headcount Q2 2010	Headcount Q2 2014	Change	% change
Central Bedfordshire	14,915	2,395	-12,520	-84
Watford	497	225	-272	-55
Waveney	723	414	-309	-43
Bedford	7,142	4,349	-2,793	-39
Ipswich	2,161	1,378	-783	-36
Suffolk	28,323	18,331	-9,992	-35
Forest Heath	331	216	-115	-35
Essex	41,822	28,461	-13,361	-32
Thurrock	4,548	3,179	-1,369	-30
Norwich	899	631	-268	-30

London				
Local authority	Headcount Q2 2010	Headcount Q2 2014	Change	% change
Barnet	11,241	5,423	-5,818	-52
Brent	7,364	3,576	-3,788	-51
Richmond upon Thames	5,184	2,969	-2,215	-43
Kingston upon Thames	5,056	3,449	-1,607	-32
Bromley	7,044	4,844	-2,200	-31
Hillingdon	4,262	2,935	-1,327	-31
Bexley	6,918	4,835	-2,083	-30
Westminster	5,103	3,585	-1,518	-30
Harrow	8,582	6,053	-2,529	-29
Haringey	8,952	6,416	-2,536	-28

Northern				
Local authority	Headcount Q2 2010	Headcount Q2 2014	Change	% change
Gateshead	13,125	5,692	-7,433	-57
North Tyneside	8,376	4,042	-4,334	-52
Darlington	4,849	2,499	-2,350	-48
Sunderland	13,375	8,216	-5,159	-39
Newcastle upon Tyne	16,135	10,159	-5,976	-37
Redcar and Cleveland	5,846	3,926	-1,920	-33
Middlesbrough	9,022	6,122	-2,900	-32
Stockton-on-Tees	9,952	7,997	-1,955	-20
Durham	22,039	17,951	-4,088	-19
Northumberland	12,177	10,064	-2,113	-17

North West				
Local authority	Headcount Q2 2010	Headcount Q2 2014	Change	% change
Cumbria	20,594	7,193	-13,401	-65
Burnley	672	364	-308	-46
Rossendale	286	172	-114	-40
Fylde	449	275	-174	-39
Trafford	8,364	5,475	-2,889	-35
Cheshire East	12,815	8,442	-4,373	-34
Copeland	343	228	-115	-34
Pendle	423	285	-138	-33
Carlisle	791	555	-236	-30
Oldham	9,649	6,899	-2,750	-29

South East				
Local authority	Headcount Q2 2010	Headcount Q2 2014	Change	% change
Southampton	8,369	3,546	-4,823	-58
Tonbridge and Malling	735	312	-423	-58
Isle of Wight	6,593	3,296	-3,297	-50
Dartford	589	328	-261	-44
Wycombe	540	313	-227	-42
Dover	474	289	-185	-39
Wealden	537	334	-203	-38
Woking	558	359	-199	-36
Shepway	528	350	-178	-34
Runnymede	708	472	-236	-33

## Appendix II

South West				
Local authority	Headcount Q2 2010	Headcount Q2 2014	Change	% change
West Dorset	637	67	-570	-89
Torbay	5,821	2,485	-3,336	-57
North Dorset	273	134	-139	-51
Cornwall	23,884	12,097	-11,787	-49
Gloucestershire	21,454	10,987	-10,467	-49
Cotswold	484	284	-200	-41
Gloucester	487	308	-179	-37
Bristol	18,939	12,110	-6,829	-36
Plymouth	11,719	7,625	-4,094	-35
Forest of Dean	421	275	-146	-35

West Midlands				
Local authority	Headcount Q2 2010	Headcount Q2 2014	Change	% change
Birmingham	58,552	38,233	-20,319	-35
Herefordshire	5,562	3,666	-1,896	-34
Cannock Chase	804	534	-270	-34
Staffordshire Moorlands	322	214	-108	-34
Staffordshire	30,666	20,861	-9,805	-32
Sandwell	13,613	9,777	-3,836	-28
Worcestershire	17,721	12,827	-4,894	-28
Warwickshire	18,422	13,546	-4,876	-26
Stoke-on-Trent	9,860	7,315	-2,545	-26
Shropshire	11,303	8,399	-2,904	-26

Yorkshire and the Humber				
Local authority	Headcount Q2 2010	Headcount Q2 2014	Change	% change
North East Lincolnshire	6,563	3,158	-3,405	-52
Doncaster	14,291	9,137	-5,154	-36
Kingston upon Hull	13,776	8,984	-4,792	-35
Wakefield	15,108	10,956	-4,152	-27
York	8,835	6,426	-2,409	-27
Calderdale	10,183	7,550	-2,633	-26
Sheffield	19,150	14,307	-4,843	-25
North Lincolnshire	7,302	5,493	-1,809	-25
Barnsley	10,415	7,912	-2,503	-24
Rotherham	13,117	10,257	-2,860	-22

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# THE DAMAGE



**WARNING:** DISMANTLING  
COUNCIL SERVICES WILL  
SERIOUSLY DAMAGE OUR LIVES  
AND OUR COMMUNITIES

This UNISON report is one in a series of studies looking at some of the vital services provided by councils. In it we explore the long-term damage to the public and to the economy caused by ongoing austerity cuts.

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a million  
voices  
for  
public  
services

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