

Fire brigade's millions in overtime revealed

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Scotland's fire service is spending increasing amounts of cash on overtime as the organisation endures years of SNP cuts.

The brigade spent £7.2 million on overtime costs last year, the second highest amount in years.

It comes as unions argue the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has been putting up with more than a decade of funding reductions.

The statistics were obtained by the Scottish Conservatives through Freedom of Information.

They show £5.5 million was spent in overtime in 2015/16, followed by £5.8 million the following year.

That then dropped to £4.9 million in 2016/17 but rocketed to £8.3 million in 2017/18.

The five-year total is now more than £31 million.

Earlier this year, the Fire Brigade Union said there were 917 fewer firefighters than in 2010, placing a greater strain on firemen and women and putting the public at more risk.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

"We know the fire service has been placed under increasing strain over the years by this SNP government.

"The fact so many millions more are being spent on overtime payments proves that point.

"Clearly, the existing firefighters and other brigade staff are being asked to do more, and that's down to a lack of resources.

"It's time the SNP started listening to firefighters and provided the organisation with what they need to do the job.

"Of course an organisation like the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will always require some overtime work, but the millions more being spent in the last couple of years point to a real problem."