

The Update

9 Sep 2021

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

Council funding

Ministers must find emergency funding to avert catastrophic cuts



Councils face a £3bn funding black hole next year

Councils in England, Wales and Scotland are grappling with huge budget deficits of almost £3bn for the next financial year, according to research published by UNISON.

The record shortfall – totalling £2.996bn – in 2022/23 will lead to huge service and staff cuts at local authorities across Britain unless the government urgently finds the money to protect communities, the union says.

The stark results show the mammoth savings needed to balance the books, without new funding from the government. The cuts will result in significant reductions in the vital support given to local people unless councils receive emergency help, says UNISON.

Many councils have already suffered massive cuts to services in recent years, including bin collections, teaching assistant numbers, social care, library hours and community spaces such as parks. Any further reductions would strip even more essential services to the bone or remove them completely, says UNISON.

Throughout the pandemic councils have kept services running, protected the vulnerable and delivered new functions. It's essential they receive enough

Contacting Derbyshire UNISON

01629 582266

branch@unisondc.co.uk

derbyshireunison.com



funding to provide for communities as life returns to normal, UNISON says.

Councils grappling with large budget deficits include:

- Hampshire County Council, which faces making more than £65.9m savings next year. Eight libraries across the county have already closed within the past year, at the cost of 50 jobs, and the county's remaining library opening hours have been significantly reduced.
- Cheshire West and Chester Council has an almost £26m financial black hole, despite scaling back social care services by closing three respite centres. The move axed 95 beds and 98 staff roles.
- Hackney Council faces an £11m deficit in a London borough where 48% of children live in poverty. Teaching assistant jobs have been cut during several school restructures over the past year, with more cost saving reforms ahead. UNISON says the move will particularly disadvantage children with learning difficulties, behavioural issues or where English is not the first language.
- North Warwickshire Council has a £1.6m shortfall and made reductions to care services, resulting in the loss of 23 jobs.

UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea said: "These council-funding shortfalls will result in cuts that are likely to hit the poorest in society hardest.

"Children struggling in class won't be able to get the extra help they need to succeed. Families of the elderly and people needing support will be denied the services on which so many of them rely. Access to much-loved parks, libraries and community facilities are at risk of being taken away.

"The government must step up and help local councils desperately trying to keep afloat. If Boris Johnson is serious about levelling-up, this money must be found. Ministers cannot allow a two-tier society

to develop where some of the most in need are left behind."

UNISON has launched a new [website](#) which shows the individual funding shortfall faced by each local authority. It has also created a film demonstrating the value of these services to the communities as part of its Save Our Services campaign.