

<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>AUTHORITY BUDGET MEETING</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>25 FEBRUARY 2021</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/004/21</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>DEB APPLETON</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>VICKY CAMPBELL</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>			
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF THE 2020 STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS</b>		

<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<b>APPENDIX A:</b>	<b>MFRS RESULTS PRESENTATION BY PEOPLE INSIGHT</b>
	<b>APPENDIX B:</b>	<b>STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY QUESTION SET</b>
	<b>APPENDIX C</b>	<b>INFOGRAPHICS OF STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS FOR 2020</b>

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the results of the MFRA staff engagement survey 2020. *(The full set of reports can be found at [www.merseyfire.gov.uk/about/staff-survey-results](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/about/staff-survey-results) from the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021).*

### **Recommendation**

2. That Members consider and note the content of the report.

### **Introduction and Background**

3. Understanding the levels of engagement amongst all employees and how those levels of engagement can be improved upon is a priority for the Authority.
4. Members will be aware that the fourth staff engagement survey took place from 9<sup>th</sup> November to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to monitor engagement levels and gather information about staff experiences at MFRA.
5. Through the delivery of the fourth survey, we have been able to benchmark our staff engagement progress against the results from the 2018, our earlier surveys

in 2014 and 2016 and against other clients (including fire and rescue services) of our survey facilitators, People Insight<sup>1</sup>.

6. The survey was delivered in a similar way to our previous surveys, with People Insight hosting the survey externally and managing the production and analysis of the results. This enables the Authority to maintain confidentiality and anonymity for those staff completing the survey and provides external scrutiny of the results.
7. The survey had the full support of all representative bodies, the Strategic Leadership Team, Staff Networks and the Authority.

### Organisational Context

8. The decision was taken by SLT in March to postpone the survey, which was due to be held over summer 2020, until November and December due to the developing situation with Covid-19.

### Survey Methodology

9. The survey was open for a total of five weeks from 9<sup>th</sup> November to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020, with regular targeted staff communications to encourage completion. These included the use of “message of the day” section on the Intranet Portal, Chief Fire Officer emails and internal department and team communications.
10. Every member of staff received a personal email with the staff survey link from People Insight and those who had not completed the survey received reminders twice a week about the importance of completing the survey.
11. This year it was also decided, after being approached by a number of enthusiastic members of staff, to incentivise completion of this year’s staff survey and £1 was pledged to the Firefighters Charity for every survey completed and if 500 were completed then the pledge would be doubled. As a result, we have been able to donate a total of £1274.00 to the Merseyside Committee for the Firefighters Charity for the 637 surveys completed.
12. The survey questions were designed to measure people’s attitudes, experiences and satisfaction levels against nine key employee engagement areas:

- Goal Clarity
- My Job
- Employee Involvement
- Teamwork
- Learning and Development
- Recognition and Reward
- Management Effectiveness
- Culture and Values

---

<sup>1</sup> Cheshire FRS, Derbyshire FRS, Shropshire FRS and Northern Ireland FR

- Change Management
- Health and Wellbeing
- Overall /MFRS
- Covid-19 related questions

### Reporting the outcomes

13. People Insight have delivered high level presentation of our results (see appendix A). This year the Chief Fire Officer decided to do things a little differently, and the rapid rise in the use of Microsoft Teams allowed us to broadcast the results to as many staff and Members as possible and our Staff Engagement Consultant from People Insight presented the results to staff, managers, Representative Bodies, Chairs of Staff Inclusion Networks and Authority Members on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January. The presentation was seen by over 100 people live and was also recorded to allow staff unable to make the meeting the opportunity to hear the same presentation and view the results at a more convenient time. The recording was made available via YouTube and on the intranet Portal.
14. The full set of staff survey reports will be released to staff and Authority Members on 25<sup>th</sup> February through the MFRS staff Portal and website [www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk).

### Response rates and findings

15. The survey reports that will be published on the website, include analysis of all 72 questions (see Appendix B) posed in the 2020 survey in relation to the five possible responses; strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. Results for each question have been presented as a percentage that is a combination of strongly agree and agree or strongly disagree and disagree.
16. **Response rate**

61% (637) of MFRA staff completed the staff survey, an increase of 5 percentage points from 2018 and above the average of 50-55% response rate expected for Fire and Rescue Services.

Of the 637 responses to the survey 211 respondents did not take part in the previous survey in 2018 and 524 did not feel the pandemic influenced their responses.

17. **Overall Engagement score**

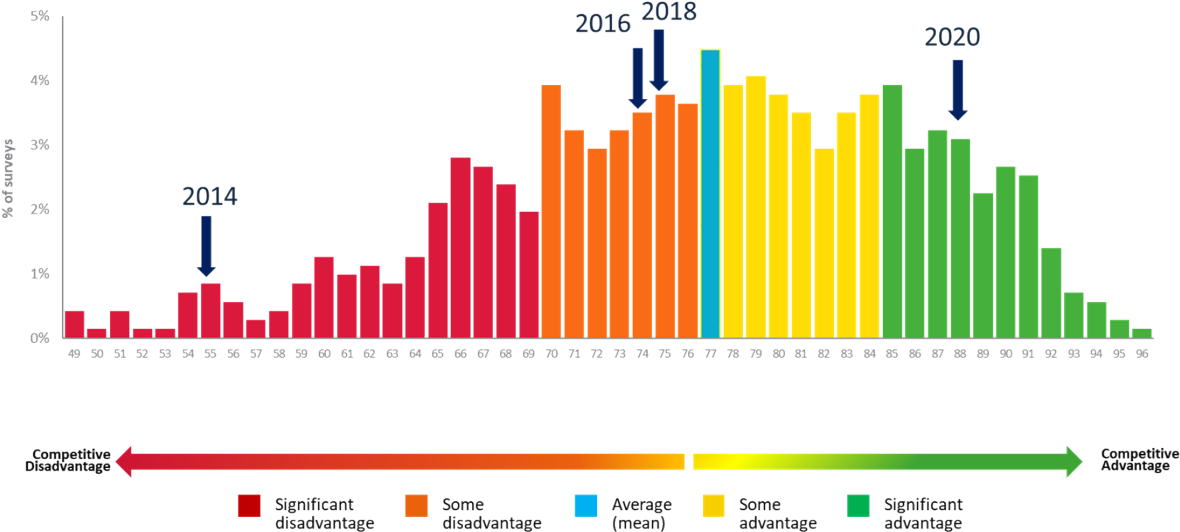
Our overall engagement score for the 2020 staff survey is 88%, this is an excellent result and is an improvement of 12 percentage points on the 2018 result and an increase of 33 percentage points in the six years since the first survey in 2014. This outstanding performance has put MFRS in a very strong position

despite the significant challenges that have been taking place, most of which have had a direct impact on staff personally and in their work at MFRA.

When asked about improvement in our results Costa Antoniou from People Insight said;

*"To transform engagement from 55% in 2014 to 88% in 2020 is a tremendous result. Although such an improvement is possible, it is also very uncommon. A change of over 30% points in engagement means Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service have gone from being in the bottom quartile to the top quartile, and this clearly reflects the work undertaken internally to act on employee survey results and make positive change a reality."*

The table below shows the engagement score from 2014 and the significant increase from that in the 2016, 2018 and 2020 surveys which now places MFRA in the top quartile of results.

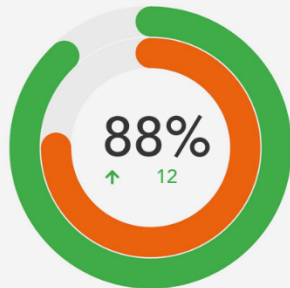


Building on these highly positive results will be the focus of the Strategic Leadership Team for the future.

**18. How is our Engagement score calculated?**

The diagram below shows the five key areas of the report which are used to calculate our overall engagement score. The diagram shows that 90% of staff answered favourably to the question “I am proud to say I work for MFRS”, this is an 11 percentage points increase on 2018. When asked If they would recommend to friends and family that MFRA is a good place to work 81% answered favourable, this particular question saw the largest increase of 21 percentage points since 2018.

The Engagement score is 88%, which is excellent when compared with the norms for Merseyside Fire & Rescue 2018



● Your score ● Merseyside Fire & Rescue 2018 norm

### Items comprising the Engagement score

Question	Response favourability		2018
I am proud to say I work for MFRA	90%	8%2%	+11
I care about the future of MFRA	96%	3%1%	+7
I would still like to be working at MFRA in two years' time	84%	11%5%	+10
If asked, I would recommend to friends and family that MFRA is a good place to work	81%	13%7%	+21
Working here makes me want to do the best I can	88%	9%3%	+18

● Favourable ● Neutral ● Unfavourable

## 19. Average Scores

The scores in the table below show that Goal Clarity (86%) and My Job (80%) were the top scoring sections in the survey, with Teamwork (68%) and Change Management (58%) being the lowest scoring sections. It is important to note however, that all areas saw an increase on the 2018 scores and the table also shows the consistent upward trend, with Teamwork Improving by 25 percentage points (the largest increase) and Health and Wellbeing improving by 3 percentage points (lowest area of improvement) since 2018 survey.

### Consistent upward trend across themes

Themes	Response favourability		2018
Goal Clarity	86%	10% 4%	+7
My Job	80%	12% 8%	+11
Employee Involvement	70%	15% 15%	+15
Teamwork	68%	18% 14%	+25
Learning & Development	76%	15% 8%	+10
Recognition & Reward	67%	20% 13%	+5
Management Effectiveness	68%	20% 12%	+13
Culture & Values	70%	19% 11%	+13
Change Management	58%	27% 15%	+17
Health and Wellbeing	79%	15% 7%	+3
COVID-19 Related Questions	86%	9% 6%	n/a
Engagement	88%	9% 4%	+17
Yes/No Questions	74%	26%	n/a

## 20. Engagement levels by staffing group

The heat diagram below shows the difference in responses for our different groups of staff. While many of the responses from Firefighters and Support staff are in pink or pale red they are in fact only just below the average response for that particular area of engagement. This is reflective of the overall high levels of engagement.

The heat diagram shows the highest number of responses on the left of the table with the lower number of responses on the right. Previously these results were shown in just 3 categories Uniformed, Non-Uniformed and Fire Control, so this helps create a more detailed picture and allows us to look at the different engagement scores across the different levels of the organisation.

It is important to note that when looking at these heat comparison diagrams that the results are being compared against the overall score recorded for each question. In some cases, results may show in red, this does not mean the results are poor, just that they are lower than overall score recorded for that particular question.

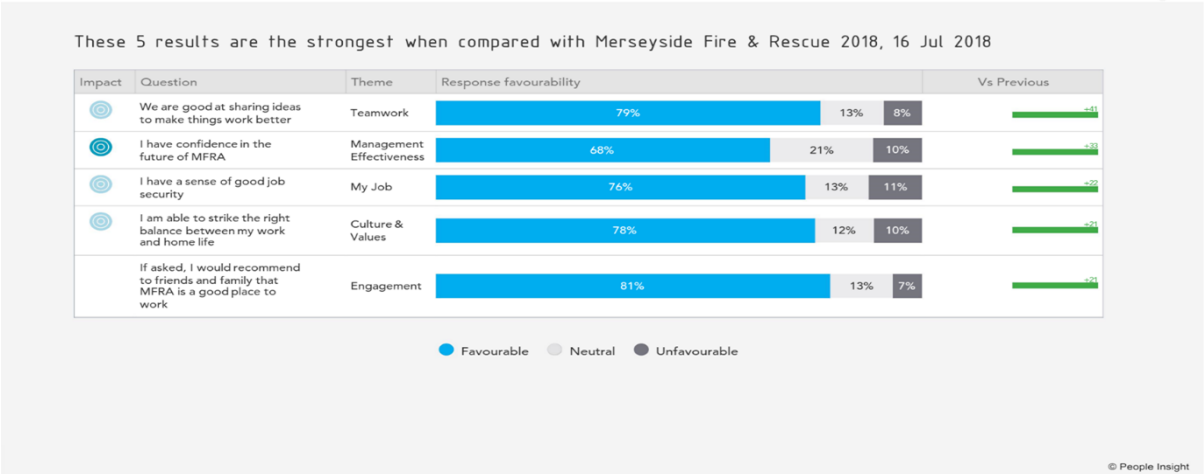
	Overall	Firefighter	Support Staff	Watch Manager	Manager	Station Manager	Crew Manager	Watch Manager/Crew Manager (Control)	Firefighter (Control)	Group Manager	Head of Function/Director
No. of Responses	637	228	173	95	44	22	19	15	15	9	7
Goal Clarity	86%	83%	87%	89%	89%	89%	87%	88%	85%	100%	100%
My Job	80%	80%	77%	81%	76%	88%	77%	85%	85%	92%	94%
Employee Involvement	70%	67%	72%	65%	78%	78%	71%	70%	63%	94%	96%
Teamwork	68%	67%	67%	68%	58%	74%	75%	73%	71%	74%	81%
Learning & Development	76%	78%	73%	72%	77%	79%	78%	78%	71%	94%	93%
Recognition & Reward	67%	67%	65%	61%	72%	75%	76%	53%	71%	91%	100%
Management Effectiveness	68%	69%	66%	66%	64%	73%	74%	60%	64%	96%	93%
Culture & Values	70%	68%	68%	66%	71%	77%	76%	73%	63%	94%	86%
Change Management	58%	54%	57%	59%	59%	77%	68%	49%	38%	94%	81%
Health and Wellbeing	79%	78%	79%	76%	79%	81%	82%	87%	86%	85%	77%
COVID-19 Related Questions	86%	84%	84%	86%	84%	91%	89%	93%	91%	100%	95%
Engagement	88%	87%	88%	83%	89%	93%	88%	97%	93%	100%	100%

## 21. Highlight of engagement results by questions

The following section provides a summary of the highest and lowest results for the whole organisation, showing theme, question, response rates and engagement scores. It also goes on to show a visual of the top five results with the biggest improvements and the lowest five results (which have also increased rather than reduced) when compared to our 2018 survey.

### Greatest Improvements

The diagram below shows the five questions that have seen the greatest improvement in responses since the 2018 survey. They show an increase of between 41 percentage points when asked “We are good at sharing ideas to make things work better” to a 12 percentage points improvement when asked the question “I am able to strike the right balance between my work and home life”.

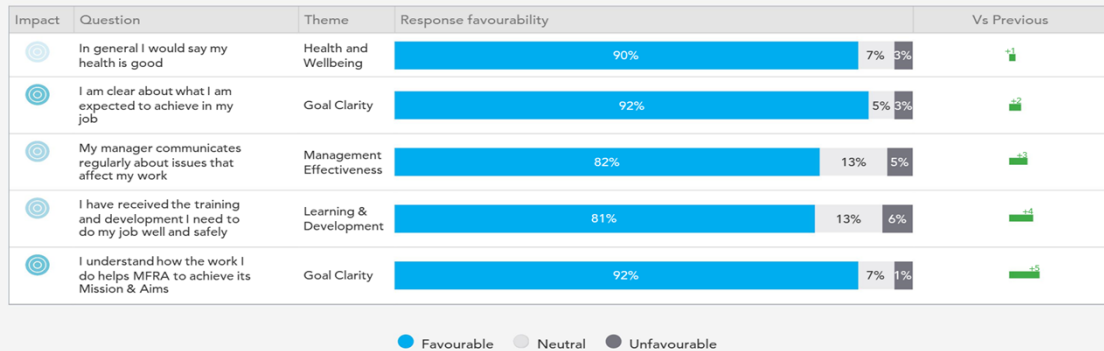


### Lowest Improvements

The diagram below shows the five lowest improvements. The diagram shows that the question with the lowest level of improvement is “In general I would say my health is good” has improved by only 1 percentage point but it is important to note that 90% of staff have answered this particular question favourably. Another lower level of improvement can be found in relation to “I understand how the work I do helps MFRA to achieve its Missions & Aims, but again the overall score was very high, with a 5 percentage point increase taking our

favourable responses to 92%.

These 5 results are the weakest (or least strong) when compared with Merseyside Fire & Rescue 2018, 16 Jul 2018 – **more positivity!**



22. A free text question was asked “What is the **best** thing about working at MFRS”. People Insight have provided a useful summary of those results:

- **Purpose** – supportive colleagues, friendly, hardworking, dependable, working as a team
- **Serving communities and making a difference** – helping people and communities when they most need it, sense of feeling as if you’re doing something good, meeting different people everyday
- **Working as part of a strong and close-knit team**
- **Learning and development** – continued learning, opportunities to train and grow
- **Job security** – job for life, stability, security during the pandemic

23. A further free text question was asked “If you had the chance to change one thing at MFRS, what would it be?” The common themes were profiled by People Insight as follows:

- **Senior management** – even more listening, more involvement in the department they manage, more accessible, transparent in communication
- **Work life balance** – more flexibility in hours and location, more options to allow working from home
- **Career progression and development** – fair and transparent promotion process, more opportunity for green book, more transparent opportunities
- **Reward and recognition** – performance related pay, fair and consistent pay



24. The full list of responses to free text questions will be available with the complete report pack published on the website and intranet Portal.

## 25. Next Steps

In summary, the following highlights are notable:

- An 88% engagement score surpasses the People Insight external benchmark and the 2018 score by over 10 percentage points. Taking MFRS into the top quartile of organisations.
- It is encouraging to see the response rate grow by 5 percentage points
- It is even more encouraging to see that 211 staff took part who didn't do so last time. A number of those staff also reported that they have seen improvements since 2018.
- All questions have seen an increase in positive responses since 2018 and hardly any are notably lower than the external benchmark
- Areas particularly addressed last year (**change management, cross service collaboration, communication**) have shown big improvements. Importantly, people felt this improvement is not just down to the response to the pandemic
- 90% and over feel that MFRA is doing a good job in maintaining the services it provides during the pandemic and keeping staff informed and communicated with
- In the few areas we have seen lower engagement scores from particular groups of staff or from within certain areas of the organisation and we will work with staff and managers to improve in those areas.

People Insight's suggested areas to focus on in the future are:

- **Leverage our strengths:** Strategic Leadership Team to develop actions points to help build on the success of this year's results
- **Continue to strengthen staff-management connection**  
**Localised actions:** to develop local actions to tackle key issues identified within specific demographics or areas of the Service.

26. The Strategic Leadership Team will cascade the results to their own Functions using the standard template provided by People Insight during March and April. There will be an opportunity for staff to provide further feedback at those meetings which will help SLT to identify areas for further improvements and actions will be created from this further engagement. These actions will be built into our planning processes. We will also introduce shorter more frequent "pulse" surveys during 2021/22 in response to staff feedback and to ensure we have up to date information to assist us in the future.

---

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

27. People Insight have provided equality reports for the survey results by gender, ethnicity, age etc. These reports are available on the website from 25<sup>th</sup> February

and will be analysed separately and presented to a Strategy and Performance (ED&I) Board.

---

### **Staff Implications**

---

28. The staff survey and the subsequent actions taken next by management and the Authority will have implications for our staff. The organisation is keen to strengthen the Authority's Think People concept, introduced following earlier surveys and this will continue to be the foundation of efforts to improve engagement in the future.
29. A number of staff will be involved in projects and work streams arising out of the survey and consideration will be given to any additional staff time and resources that will be needed undertake this work.

---

### **Legal Implications**

---

30. The staff survey supports MFRA in complying with the Equality Act 2010 - Public Sector Equality Duties. Being aware of the engagement levels and satisfaction levels of staff groups will help MFRA to target any changes and improvement required.

---

### **Financial Implications & Value for Money**

---

31. The Survey has cost MFRA £13,700. This was planned for and has been met from existing budgets.

---

### **Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications**

---

32. The staff survey measures engagement levels which have been proven to positively impact on organisational results and performance across all sectors. In particular, a high level of employee engagement/satisfaction has shown to lead to improved productivity, quality, and reducing accidental actions have been taken to manage risk.

---

### **Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters***

---

33. The survey allows MFRA to measure staff engagement across all areas of their employment including community facing activities and service delivery to help enhance our services to the public in the future.

---

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

---

---

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

---