

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION		
DATE:	29 MARCH 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/005/23
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	DEB APPLETON
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	STAFF SURVEY RESULTS 2022		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY QUESTION SET
	APPENDIX B:	MFRS RESULTS PRESENTATION BY PEOPLE INSIGHT

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the results of the fifth Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority ('the Authority') staff engagement survey.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note the survey outcomes.

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 fifth staff engagement survey took place in November and December 2022 to measure engagement levels and gather insights about the experiences of our staff in Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS).
5. Through the delivery of the fifth survey, we have been able to benchmark our staff engagement progress against the results from the 2020 and earlier surveys in 2014, 2016 and 2018, and against the other clients (including fire and rescue services) of our survey facilitators, People Insight. People Insight currently provide staff surveys for 27% of fire and rescue services providing a good benchmark against which MFRS can consider its engagement score.

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.

Survey Methodology

7. The survey was open from 14th November to 21st December 2022, 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.
8. 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 regular reminder about the importance of completing the survey.
9. The survey questions (attached at appendix A) 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
 - Change Management
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Overall /MFRS
 - Some contextual questions regarding the extent to which national issues such as pay and local considerations such as grading were affecting staff.

Reporting the outcomes

10. People Insight delivered a high level presentation of our results on 21st March 2023 (see appendix B) and again this year, the use of Microsoft Teams allowed us to broadcast the results to as many staff and Members as possible. The presentation was seen by over 100 people.
11. The full set of results will be available after the Community safety and Protection Committee meeting on 6th April 2023 to staff on the intranet Portal and members of the public on the website (www.merseyfire.gov.uk). Functional Heads will work with their teams to disseminate the findings of the survey, explore those findings and consider what action to take to improve engagement in the future and build upon current successes.

Response rates and findings

12. The survey reports published on the website, include analysis of the questions posed in the 2022 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. The new contextual “other factors” questions have also been presented, but they do not contribute towards the overall engagement score.

Response rate

13. The survey response rate was 32% (317 staff) which was lower than the 61% (637) response rate in 2020. People Insight have reported similar lower levels of response rate in other emergency service surveys and cited the national firefighter pay dispute as being a potential reason for this, In MFRS, there was also local industrial action which started during the survey period. As was the case in 2020, MFRS offered to donate £1 per survey to the Firefighters Charity as an incentive for completion. Despite this being a lower response rate than in 2020, People Insight were confident that the responses were sufficient to provide valid reports for the Authority.

Overall Engagement score

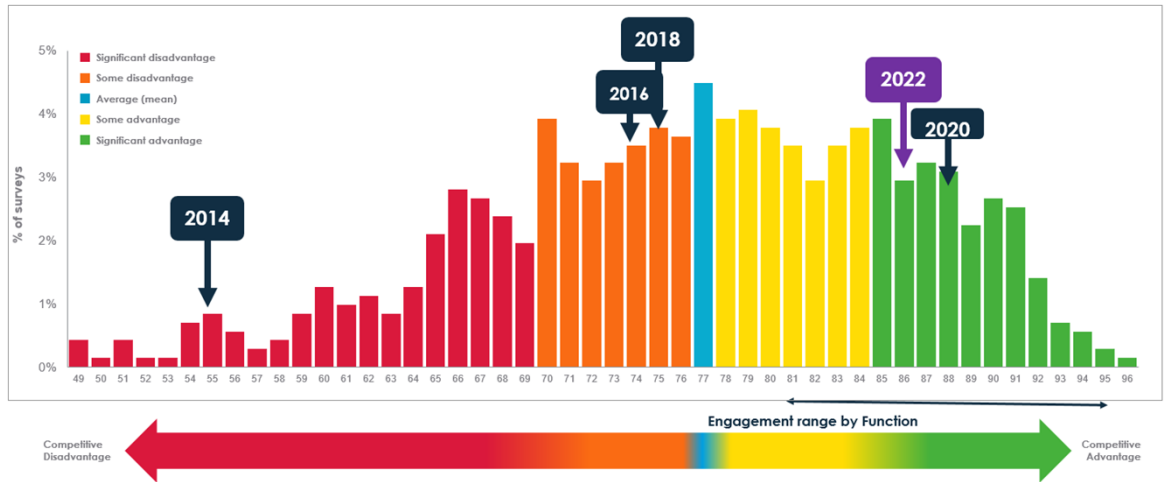
14. The overall engagement score for the 2022 staff survey was **86%**. Considering that the survey was held during a period of local industrial action and balloting for national industrial action, this is considered an outstanding result and the Service has maintained its position in the highest quartile for engagement. For context; the 2020 result was 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. What is particularly noteworthy is that in every question MFRS had a higher score than the FRS benchmark.
15. Maintaining such a high engagement score during such a difficult time for everyone is outstanding performance which has kept MFRS in a very strong position.
16. When asked about the results Costa Antoniou from People Insight said it was;

“An incredible outcome in light of the national industrial climate and cost of living challenges faced by employees.”
17. The table below shows the engagement score from 2014, the significant increases in the 2016, 2018 and 2020 surveys and the maintenance of that top quartile position in 2022.

Our engagement score



Compared to other organisations surveyed by People Insight

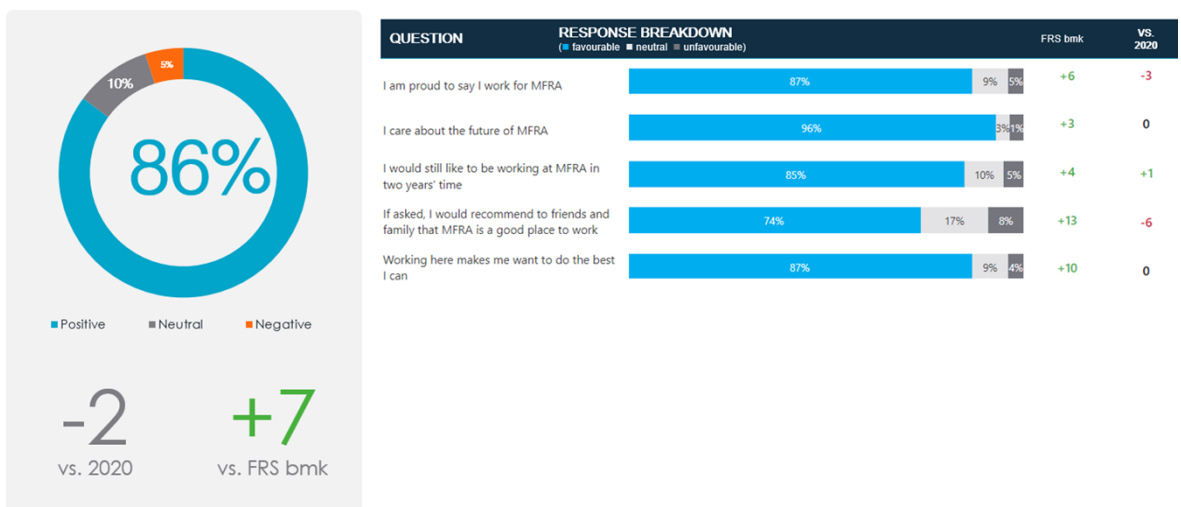


18. Continuing to strive for these highly positive results will be the focus of the Strategic Leadership Team for the future.

How is our Engagement score calculated?

19. The diagram below shows the five key areas of the report which are used to calculate our overall engagement score. As would be expected with the slight dip in engagement score, the scores for two of these questions have reduced on the 2020 results, but it is important to note that all the scores remain above the FRS benchmark score and the overall score is 7 percentage points above the overall FRS benchmark.

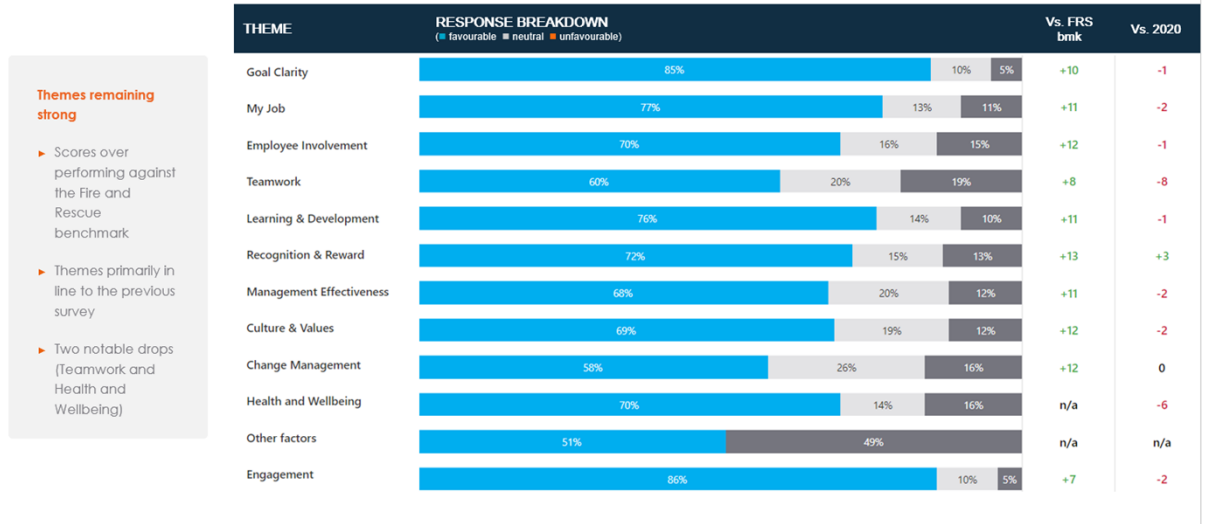
Engagement levels – remaining strong following previous improvement



Survey themes

20. The scores in the table below show that Goal Clarity (85%) and My Job (77%) remain the top scoring sections in the survey, with Learning and development (76%) and Recognition and Reward (72%) scoring well. Teamwork (60%) and Health and Wellbeing (70%) have seen reductions of 8 and 6 percentage points respectively and plans for improvement to be presented to the Authority in June will pick up on these.

Survey themes



Highlight of engagement results by questions

Top and bottom scores



Highest Scoring

QUESTION	RESPONSE BREAKDOWN (= favourable ■ neutral ■ unfavourable)	VS. FRS Bnk	VS. 2020
I am aware of the Health and Wellbeing support services available through the Occupational Health Team		n/a	+3
I understand how the work I do helps MFRA to achieve its Purpose		+14	+3
I know what I should do and what action I should take if I was concerned that bullying and harassment were taking place		n/a	n/a
I understand the need for change at MFRA so the Service remains relevant and continues to meet the needs of our communities		+9	+11
I am clear about what I am expected to achieve in my job		+6	-2

Lowest Scoring

QUESTION	RESPONSE BREAKDOWN (= favourable ■ neutral ■ unfavourable)	VS. FRS Bnk	VS. 2020
Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority engage well with staff at MFRS		n/a	n/a
A lot is done to help staff prepare for and cope with change		+6	+1
MFRA is a better place to work than it was 3 years ago		n/a	0
I feel that MFRA consider the impact on me and other people when making decisions		+10	0
Change here is well managed overall		+16	-8

21. The top and bottom scoring questions from the survey are shown above. One point of note is that 95% of respondents understand how the work they do helps the Authority achieve its purpose. This is three percentage points up on the 2020 score and 14 percentage points above the FRS benchmark. The lowest scoring questions are also notable because of the extent of the neutral responses, which means that in all cases the negative responses are relatively low. That said, all will be considered in the process of considering actions for improvement.

22. The survey also includes free text questions and examples of responses to those questions are contained in the attached presentation and below:

Changes that have ‘impacted you positively’

“Leadership message has been necessary refresh and is much more comprehensive to teach/promote to others.”

“Consideration for improved flexible working and hybrid working”

“Flexibility of shift patterns”

Other Factors

23. For the first time, the staff survey included questions asking how people felt about national factors such as the cost of living crisis and pay settlements and internal matters such as the grading of roles and hybrid working. The intention was to

help place the survey results into context by understanding how these factors were affecting staff.

24. The responses to these questions show that approximately half of the staff who responded said that the way they felt about MFRS had been affected by these factors.

Next Steps

25. Strategic Leadership Team will discuss the findings of the survey with their teams, to seek further insight into the results. They will use this insight to develop areas for improvement for the future. These will feature in a second report to the Authority in June.
26. People Insight stress that it is important to reflect on the positive as well as on areas for improvement and SLT will do that. People Insight also suggested areas to focus on in the future and these are:

“The process of change

Change often does not please people so some negativity is typical here.
However:

Explore ways people can have some involvement with upcoming change
Continue to listen and respond before, during, and after the change. Check in with people to see if anything can be provided (in the realm of possible)”

“Work life balance

Exploration into the drop around work life balance.
What has changed over the years to create the notable difference?
Do people feel less enabled to manage the balance in comparison to two years ago?”

27. A further report will be presented to full authority in June which will contain details of future actions.

Equality and Diversity Implications

28. People Insight have provided equality reports for the survey results by gender, ethnicity, age etc. Their analysis showed no significant difference in the way that different genders responded to the survey and there were not enough responses to determine any difference based on ethnicity, but the results did indicate that people with a disability tended to respond less favourably, which SLT will take action to address. These reports will be analysed separately and presented to a Culture and Inclusion Board.
29. Future action taken to address issues raised by the survey will be subject to an equality impact assessment.

Staff Implications

30. The staff survey and the subsequent actions taken by management and the Authority will have implications for our staff. The organisation is keen to strengthen engagement in the future and will develop ways of doing this.
31. 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

32. The staff survey supports the Authority 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 the Authority to target any changes and improvement required.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

33. The Survey cost £15,650 plus a £317 donation to the Firefighters Charity. This was planned for and has been met from existing budgets.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

34. 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 Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

35. The survey allows the Authority 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
