

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY (ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING)		
DATE:	8 JUNE 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/031/23
PRESENTING OFFICER:	PHIL GARRIGAN, CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	DEB APPLETON
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	STAFF SURVEY RESULTS 2022		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	PROPOSED STAFF ENGAGEMENT ACTIONS
	APPENDIX B:	STAFF SURVEY INFOGRAPHIC

Purpose of Report

1. To present to the Authority a summary of the key findings for the staff engagement survey 2022 and to propose actions for continued improvement.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that:
 - a) Members note the content and findings of the report; and
 - b) Members consider and approve actions for continued improvement within this report.

Introduction and Background

3. Members will be aware that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service ('MFRS') has conducted a comprehensive staff engagement survey since 2014, making the commitment to carry out a staff survey every two years and using the previous survey as a benchmark for trend analysis.
4. The fifth staff engagement survey took place from 14th November to 21st December 2022 to monitor engagement levels and gather information about staff experiences at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority ('MFRA').
5. Through the delivery of the fifth survey, we have been able to benchmark our staff engagement progress against the results from the 2020, our earlier surveys in 2014, 2016 and 2018 and against other clients (including Fire and Rescue Services) of our survey facilitators, People Insight. People Insight delivered a high-level presentation of our results and the full set of staff survey results have been released through the MFRS staff Portal.

6. The following section (and Appendix B) 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

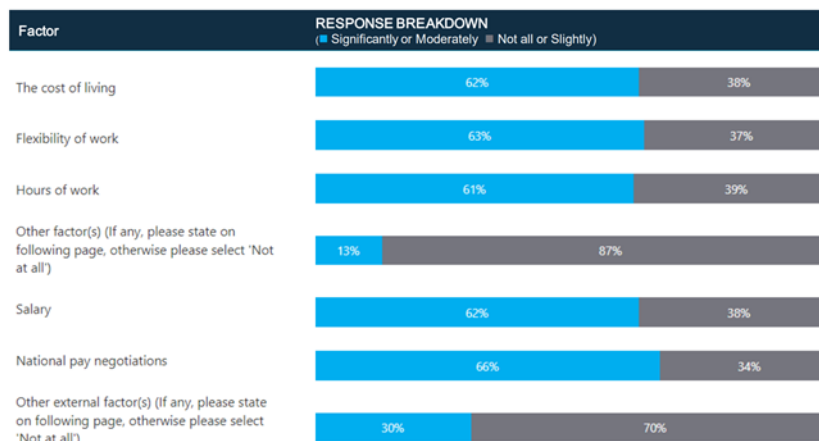
	2022	2020	2018	2016	2014
Response rate	32%	63%	56%	51%	68%
Engagement score	86%	88%	75%	74%	55%

Overall Engagement Score



7. Although there was a slight decrease of 2% in our engagement level this is still an outstanding performance 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.

For the first time, the 2022 survey included questions designed to explore the impact of external factors on the way people responded. The diagram below shows those factors:



Costa Antoniou of People Insight said the results were:

"An incredible outcome in light of the national industrial climate and cost of living challenges faced by employees"

Headline messages

- Strong employee engagement score and Top Quartile position retained
- All themes scoring higher than the Fire and Rescue external benchmark (no question has scored lower than the benchmark)
- Good confidence in the future of MFRA
- Staff feeling recognised and valued as well as useful appraisal
- Strong alignment to the values, understanding of the direction and personal connection to it
- Good communication channels/opportunities between leaders and staff

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	97% favourable, 3% neutral, 0% unfavourable	n/a	+3
I understand how the work I do helps MFRA to achieve its Purpose	95% favourable, 4% neutral, 1% unfavourable	+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	91% favourable, 7% neutral, 2% unfavourable	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	91% favourable, 7% neutral, 2% unfavourable	+9	+11
I am clear about what I am expected to achieve in my job	90% favourable, 5% neutral, 5% unfavourable	+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	39% favourable, 38% neutral, 23% unfavourable	n/a	n/a
A lot is done to help staff prepare for and cope with change	42% favourable, 35% neutral, 23% unfavourable	+6	+1
MFRA is a better place to work than it was 3 years ago	42% favourable, 38% neutral, 20% unfavourable	n/a	0
I feel that MFRA consider the impact on me and other people when making decisions	44% favourable, 28% neutral, 27% unfavourable	+10	0
Change here is well managed overall	48% favourable, 37% neutral, 15% unfavourable	+16	-8

Most positive comparisons

+ difference scoring

QUESTION	Vs. FRS Bnk
I have confidence in the future of MFRA	+26
I have a sense of good job security	+25
My last Appraisal meeting was useful in helping me improve how I do my job and show where I'm performing well (If you have not had an appraisal, please skip this question)	+23
Employees at my level are able to communicate their concerns to higher management	+22
I am communicated with about change that affects me in good time	+20

QUESTION	Vs. 2020
I understand the need for change at MFRA so the Service remains relevant and continues to meet the needs of our communities	+11
I feel valued and recognised for the work that I do by senior managers	+7
I feel valued and recognised for the work that I do by my line manager	+5
I am able to use my own initiative at work to do my job	+4
My last Appraisal meeting was useful in helping me improve how I do my job and show where I'm performing well (If you have not had an appraisal, please skip this question)	+4

Least positive comparisons

- difference scoring

QUESTION	Vs. FRS Bmk
My manager communicates regularly about issues that affect my work	+2
We are good at sharing ideas to make things work better	+3
I am satisfied with my physical working conditions (i.e. working environment, space, equipment etc.)	+3
I care about the future of MFRA	+3
My manager gives me regular feedback on how I am doing	+3

QUESTION	Vs. 2020
MFRA provides me with information that promotes a healthier lifestyle	-20
We are good at sharing ideas to make things work better	-13
I am able to strike the right balance between my work and home life	-11
Morale in my immediate team/watch/section is generally high	-11
MFRA supports a positive work-life balance	-9

Qualitative feedback themes – best thing

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:

- The people, the flexi, serving the community, introduction of hybrid working for support staff in 2023
- I feel supported by Senior and Principal management who I feel appreciate the work that I do for the Authority.
- Most people are positive about working for MFRA which makes a good, enjoyable working environment
- The variety within the role. Every day is different and provides me with challenges
- My team and my line manager support me in my role and I get good satisfaction from completing my duties



Qualitative feedback themes – one thing to change

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

- More opportunity for green book development as progression is often limited due to line management roles largely being grey book in some department.
- Introduce hybrid working for green book or grey book day staff where applicable to match other areas of the public sector post pandemic
- Non-salary incentives that mitigate comparatively low pay such as free tunnel fees, free business insurance if expected to drive personal car for work, dental/ healthcare schemes. Childcare schemes.
- More active involvement, communication and listening from middle management, to match that from our senior leadership



Positives to build on – since the last survey

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

- Clear open communication from the Leadership team
- Updated vision and values of the service
- Consideration for improved flexible working and hybrid working
- Culture of openness, communication and staff networks
- Flexibility of shift patterns
- Empowerment in decision making for Senior Managers
- The promotion of good, competent officers into senior positions

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

- Low response rate
- Consideration of how change is managed
- Notable drop in worklife balance question
- Opportunities to better collaborate
- Notable hotspots by demographics (Control, Crew Manager, Protection etc.)

Next steps

8. The Strategic Leadership Team met in May to consider the outcomes from the survey and develop actions that will build on areas of strong engagement and help address areas where engagement could be improved, this includes SLT carrying out more engagement with their teams to drill deeper into the responses and address any local issues plus the use of pulse surveys to maintain ongoing survey-style engagement between the full staff surveys.
9. The proposed actions are included as an appendix to this report and will be incorporated into existing plans.

Equality and Diversity Implications

10. The staff survey positively supports equality and diversity at MFRS, the questions used within the survey consider staff satisfaction in relation to culture, staff engagement and the wider equality and diversity.
11. People Insight have provided equality reports for the survey results by gender, ethnicity, age etc. These reports are available on the website and will be analysed separately.
12. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed alongside the action plan to review the proposals and to ascertain their impact on members of staff in terms of equality.

Staff Implications

13. The survey is an invaluable opportunity for staff to express their opinions about how engaged they feel with the organisation. It is hoped that the response rate can be improved for the 2024 survey; it is believed that the national ballot for industrial action and local industrial action impacted on the response rate in 2022.

Training Implications

14. There are no training implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

15. 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

16. There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any costs associated with actions resulting from the staff survey will be the subject of separate reports.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

17. There are no health and safety, risk management or environmental Implications arising from this report.

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.*

18. The survey measures staff engagement levels which are important, these levels may have a bearing on the levels of performance and standards across the organisation including service delivery. Understanding issues staff may have, and responding to them positively to improve engagement, as well as building on positive areas, may, in turn support any improvement in service delivery.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/011/11 NONE
