

<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>20 MARCH 2025</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/84/24</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE, DEB APPLETON</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE, DEB APPLETON</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM</b>		
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>STAFF SURVEY RESULTS 2024-25 APRIL - DECEMBER UPDATE</b>		

<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<b>APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS</b>	<b>APPENDIX B: PEOPLE INSIGHT PRESENTATION</b>
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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the results of the sixth 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 sixth staff engagement survey took place from October to December 2024 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 sixth survey, we have been able to benchmark our staff engagement progress against the results from the 2022 and earlier surveys in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020, and against the other clients (including fire and rescue services) of our survey facilitators, People Insight. People Insight currently provide staff surveys for 33% 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 23rd October to 11th December 2024, 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 reminders 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
  - Belonging
  - Engagement
  - Overall /MFRS
  - Some contextual questions regarding how information is communicated throughout the organisation, how we could further improve culture and what more can we do to create an environment where everyone feels able to contribute.

### **Reporting the outcomes**

10. People Insight delivered a high-level presentation of the survey results on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025 (see appendix B) and again this year, the use of Microsoft Teams allowed us to broadcast the results to as many staff and Authority Members as possible. The presentation was seen by over 300 people.
11. The full set of results will be available to staff on the intranet Portal and members of the public on the website ([www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk)) following the Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 . 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 2024 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 **41%** (422 staff) an improvement on than the 32% response rate in 2022. People Insight have reported similar response rates in other fire and rescue service surveys. As was the case in 2022, MFRS offered to donate £2 (increased from £1) per survey to the Firefighters Charity as an incentive for completion. People Insight were confident that the responses were sufficient to provide valid reports for the Authority.

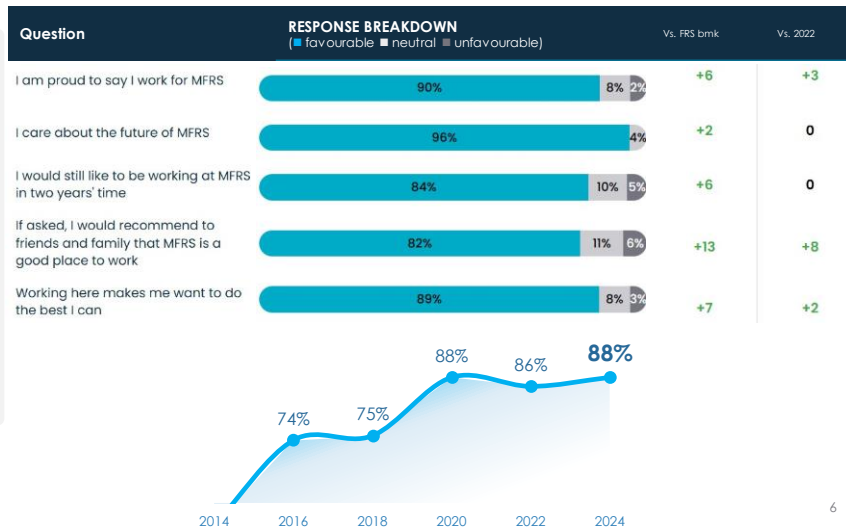
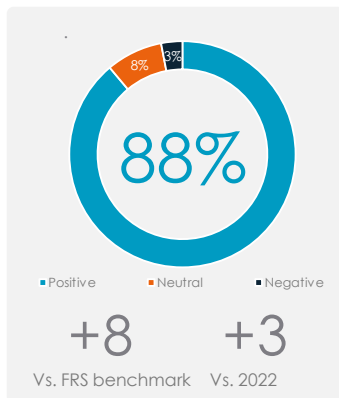
## Overall Engagement score

14. The overall engagement score for the 2024 staff survey was **88%**. This is an outstanding result, 8 percentage points above the Fire and Rescue Service ('FRS') benchmark. People Insight have confirmed that this is the highest engagement score seen across the sector in recent years. For context, the 2024 result was an improvement of 3 percentage points on the 2022 result and an increase of 33 percentage points in the ten years since the first survey in 2014.
15. Maintaining such a high engagement score is outstanding performance which has kept MFRS in a very strong position.
16. When asked about the results Costa Antoniou from People Insight remarked ;  
  
*“That’s a really good result against the fires service benchmark, I would go as far as to say you are over performing”.*
17. 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?

18. The diagram below shows the five key areas of the report which are used to calculate our overall engagement score. Out of the five questions two scores have remained stable and three have increased.

## Engagement levels are strong and above the norm



PeopleInsight

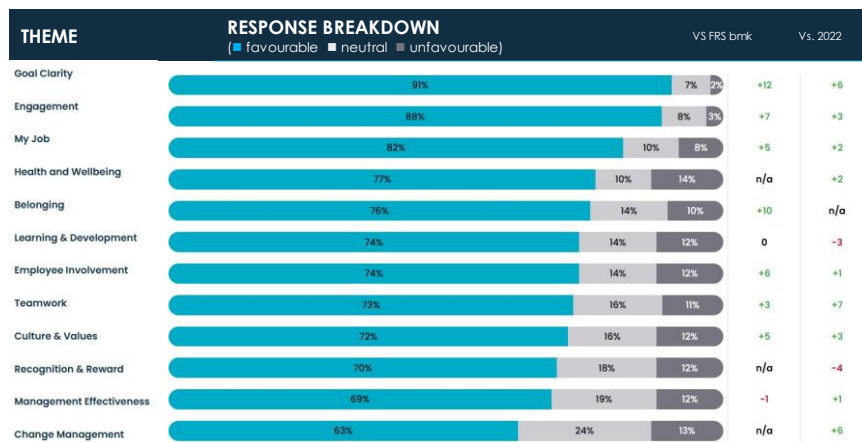
### Survey themes

19. People Insight confirmed that the results are again very positive, and they are certainly beating the trend. The Authority should be proud that we have improved in a number of areas, and this should be celebrated. The scores in the table below show that Goal Clarity (91%), Engagement (88%) and My Job (82%) are the top scoring sections in the survey. All other scores have improved apart from a slight drop in Learning and Development 74% (-2 percentage points from 2022) and Recognition and Reward 70% (-4 percentage points from 2022). All scores remain above the FRS benchmark apart from Management Effectiveness which is only slightly below at 69% (-1 percentage point). Plans for improvements will be presented to the Authority later in the year which will pick up on these.

### Survey Themes

**Back on track results**

- Themes primarily jumping back up to some of the strengths we saw a few years ago
- Themes primarily back on being above the FRS benchmark
- Two themes slightly below the external FRS benchmark



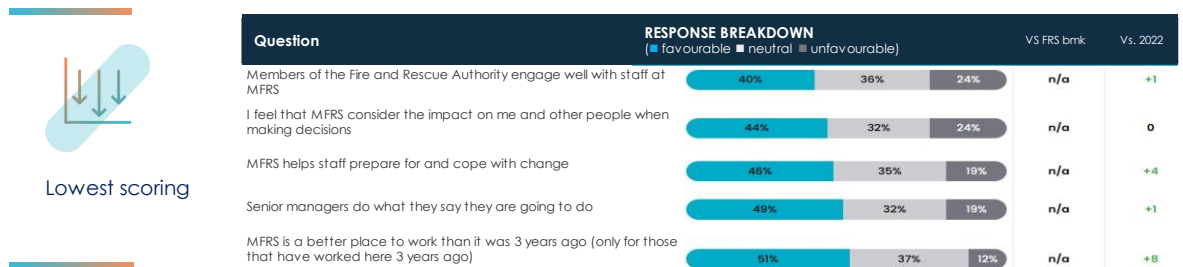
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## 20. Higher and lower results by questions

### Highlights



### Lowlights



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 eight percentage points above the FRS benchmark. The table shows an outstanding score of **83%** for the question asking if the Chief Fire Officer and Strategic Leadership Team provide a clear vision of the overall direction of MFRS. This result is **+26** percentage points above the FRS Benchmark and an increase of 15 from 2022. As the table shows, negative responses are relatively low. The biggest drop is related to good quality equipment at 69% (-9 v 2022), all will be considered in the process of developing 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:

### **What is the best thing about working here?**

*“Huge feeling of pride whenever I put the uniform on and speak to communities, they recognise we are trusted organisation and happy to engage with us whenever they get the chance.”*

*“The job is varied, interesting and exciting. There are a lot of decent, moral and honest personnel”*


### **Other Factors**

23. For the first time, the staff survey included questions asking how people felt about “Belonging” factors such as feeling welcome, sharing feelings with team members, being comfortable to speak up and constructively challenge the way things are done. The intention was to help place the survey results into context by understanding how these factors were affecting staff.
24. The findings highlight a favourable Belonging score of **76% (+10** above the FRS benchmark).

### **Next Steps**


25. The 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.
26. People Insight stress that it is important to reflect on the positive as well as on areas for improvement and Strategic Leadership Team will do that. People Insight also suggested areas to focus on in the future and these are:

## Summary and focus




**Celebrate great results:**


- Retained high engagement score
- Response rate bounce back
- Improved scores since the 2022 survey (especially good given the intense scrutiny and low morale across the sector)



'Keep doing what we are doing'



Continue to create opportunities for dialogue between senior management and staff



Further strengthen the line management approach (e.g. 360 feedback, manager development programmes)

PeopleInsight

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27. A further report will be presented to the full Authority Committee in 2025/26 which will contain details of future actions and actions already implemented as a result of the staff survey outcome.

### 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 the Strategic Leadership Team will take action to address.
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.

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

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33. The staff survey cost £17,050 plus a £844 donation to the Firefighters Charity. This was planned for and has been met from existing budgets.

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### **Risk Management and Health & Implications**

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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.

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### **Environmental Implications**

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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.

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**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.*

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36. The completion of another staff survey assist the Authority to be an employer of choice, and the Authority can achieve its vision to be the best Fire and Rescue Service.

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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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**NONE**

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### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

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**MFRS** Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service  
**FRS** Fire Rescue Service