

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority			
Meeting of the:	Authority		
Date:	29 October 2026	Report No:	CFO/13/2627
Presenting Officer	Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle		
Responsible Officer:	Director of Strategy and Performance, Deb Appleton	Report Author:	Director of Strategy and Performance, Deb Appleton
Officers Consulted:	Community Engagement Advisor, Michelle McCreary Group Manager, Uche Ihiekwe, Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)		
Title of Report:	Staff Survey 2026 Results		

Appendices:	Appendix A: Staff Survey Presentation Appendix B: Staff Survey Full Question Set Results Appendix C: Staff Survey Full Question Set Results with Benchmarking Appendix D: Comparative Results – Age Appendix E: Comparative Results – Disability Appendix F: Comparative Results – Length of Service Appendix G: Comparative Results – Gender Appendix H: Comparative Results – Sexual Orientation Appendix I: Comparative Results - Ethnicity
--------------------	---

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the outcomes of the 2026 Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) staff survey and the next steps.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note the outcomes of the seventh biennial staff survey and the proposed next steps.

Introduction and Background

3. The seventh biennial MFRS staff survey took place in July and August 2026 and was facilitated by the external provider, People Insight. This approach continues to ensure that the responses of staff are handled independently of MFRS, allows MFRS to benefit from the extensive experience of People Insight in this area and includes the ability to benchmark MFRS results against those of other fire and rescue services (approximately a third of all UK fire and rescue services use People Insight for their staff surveys). This year, the availability of an AI tool provided by People Insight has enabled more in-depth analysis of the data and simplified the process of developing improvement actions from those results.

4. The headline results of the staff survey were presented in September by People Insight on a Teams meeting to which staff and Authority Members were invited. The recording of that meeting and the presentation (attached at Appendix A) were published on the staff intranet (the Portal) to ensure all staff had access to the results at an early stage regardless of whether they were able to attend the Teams meeting.
5. The presentation contains a summary of the outcomes of the survey, focusing on the areas that received the most positive responses and those that received the least positive, comparing them against previous survey results and the fire and rescue service benchmark. The remainder of this report provides more information about the results and the next steps.
6. The response rate for the survey was 45%. This represents an increase from 41% in 2024. People Insight reported that this increase in response rates is relatively uncommon at a time when many fire and rescue services have seen reductions in their response rates. This year, for the first time, as well as promoting the survey to staff in a variety of ways, the Service offered the option for staff to scan a QR code to complete the survey. This option was included to help address comments from previous surveys where staff who are not usually based in an office reported that receiving a link to the survey via an email did not work well for them.
7. The engagement score for the 2026 survey is 87%. This is one percentage point lower than the previous survey and one higher than the 2022 survey. This shows that MFRS is maintaining a high level of staff engagement over a prolonged period. The engagement score reflects the responses to four key questions that explore how staff feel about working for MFRS as shown below. As can be seen, the results for these questions are reasonably stable compared with those from 2024 and for all questions there was a higher level of favourable responses than the fire and rescue service benchmark, which is very positive for MFRS.

Engagement score

The Engagement score is 87%, which is in line when compared with the norms for Merseyside FRS Census 2024 and good when compared with the norms for FRS



↓ 1
compared to Merseyside FRS
Census 2024

↑ 7
compared to FRS

Question	Response Favourability	Merseyside FRS Census 2024	FRS
I am proud to say I work for MFRS	89% 8% 3%	-1	+8
I care about the future of MFRS	95% 4%	-1	+1
I would still like to be working at MFRS in two years' time	85% 9% 6%	+1	+7
If asked, I would recommend to friends and family that MFRS is a good place to work	80% 13% 7%	-3	+13

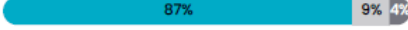
● Favourable ● Neutral ● Unfavourable

8. The results for the full question set can be found at Appendices B and C and the chart below shows the summarised results for the question themes against the scores for the two previous surveys. These results show any changes compared with previous surveys and the position of MFRS in relation to other fire and rescue services.

Merseyside FRS Census 2026: Themes

Survey closed: Tuesday, 11 August 2026

Themes

Themes	Response Favourability	Survey Overall	Merseyside FRS Census 2024	Merseyside FRS Census 2022
Goal Clarity		0	-3	+3
My Job		0	+4	+3
Employee Involvement		0	0	0
Teamwork		0	-4	+2
Learning & Development		0	+4	+5
Leadership		0	+2	+4
My Manager		0	+3	+2
Culture & Values		0	-1	0
Change Management		0	-13	-1
Health and Wellbeing		0	+1	+3
Belonging		0	+4	n/a
Engagement		0	-1	+2

9. The chart above shows that the results for MFRS have remained broadly consistent over the last three surveys. One notable exception is the change management theme, which has seen a reduction of 13 percentage points in 2026. It is important to note in the table below that the results for that theme are still similar to the benchmark. That said, the Service will focus on change management in its actions to drive improvement following the survey.
10. The chart below shows the results for the same themes but alongside the fire and rescue service benchmark scores. As can be seen, for the themes where direct comparisons can be made, MFRS continues to achieve staff survey scores that are higher than the fire and rescue service benchmark. MFRS does not score lower than the benchmark in any of the question themes. It is worth noting, for

example that in the high-profile area of Culture, despite a reduction of one percentage point on the previous survey MFRS results are still five percentage points above the benchmark.

Theme scores

Themes	Response Favourability	Merseyside FRS Census 2024	FRS
Goal Clarity	88% 8% 4%	-3	+8
Engagement	87% 9% 4%	-1	+7
Belonging	86% 9% 5%	+4	n/a
My Manager	83% 10% 7%	+3	+4
Health and Wellbeing	78% 7% 15%	+1	n/a
My Job	76% 12% 12%	+4	+7
Learning & Development	75% 15% 10%	+4	n/a
Employee Involvement	73% 15% 12%	0	+6
Culture & Values	69% 17% 14%	-1	+5
Leadership	61% 22% 17%	+2	n/a
Teamwork	57% 21% 21%	-4	+8
Change Management	51% 28% 21%	-13	n/a

11. Focusing on the theme scores by department (below), the results present a mixed picture. In the chart below, a white cell indicates a score that is the same as the average for the whole Service and the levels of yellow and grey show the extent to which the scores are higher or lower than the MFRS average. As mentioned previously, MFRS results are higher than the fire and rescue service benchmark.
12. The chart shows that in general, lower scores have been recorded by staff in Operational Response (including fire stations), "Other", Protection, Preparedness and TDA and Training with pockets of lower scores elsewhere too. Higher overall scores can be seen in People and Organisational Development, Strategy and Performance, National Resilience and Prevention. Members are asked to note that "Other" is believed to have been used by staff who do not want to record their department on the survey rather than any departments being missed off the options available to staff.

	Overall	Finance and Procurement	Legal and Democratic Services and POS office	National Resilience	Operational Preparedness	Operational Response (incl. op crew staff)	People and Organisational Development	Prevention	Protection	Strategy & Performance	TDA and Training	Other (function)
No. of Responses	458	25	6	22	36	192	26	36	28	31	25	31
› Goal Clarity	88%	99%	100%	94%	86%	86%	94%	91%	88%	94%	92%	78%
› My Job	76%	93%	88%	83%	72%	70%	95%	79%	74%	85%	76%	66%
› Employee Involvement	73%	86%	100%	91%	78%	65%	94%	78%	73%	81%	80%	57%
› Teamwork	57%	83%	89%	82%	62%	43%	82%	69%	49%	69%	57%	62%
› Learning & Development	75%	89%	87%	81%	68%	70%	95%	76%	78%	87%	72%	68%
› Leadership	61%	89%	100%	89%	57%	49%	85%	69%	54%	73%	54%	55%
› My Manager	83%	83%	100%	95%	81%	84%	98%	82%	77%	89%	72%	62%
› Culture & Values	69%	80%	89%	85%	70%	64%	88%	70%	64%	77%	64%	64%
› Change Management	51%	76%	83%	80%	43%	44%	73%	53%	38%	62%	51%	35%
› Health and Wellbeing	84%	79%	88%	83%	84%	82%	90%	86%	83%	92%	83%	87%
› Belonging	86%	85%	83%	100%	85%	84%	99%	92%	85%	91%	81%	75%
› Engagement	87%	98%	92%	95%	84%	86%	95%	93%	87%	89%	85%	75%

13. Scores analysed by employment type (uniformed, non-uniformed and Control) as seen in the chart below show that the results from non-uniformed staff are consistently higher than the average and the results of uniformed staff and Control tend to be below the average.
14. When considering the types of roles undertaken by the staff who responded to the survey, the scores of managers (Station Manager and above, non-uniformed managers and strategic managers) are more likely to be above the average.
15. Strategic Leadership Team and departmental managers will review the findings for their own departments and the whole Service as they consider actions to build on the higher scoring areas and address those that are lower scoring.

	Overall	Uniformed	Non-Uniformed	Control
No. of Responses	458	242	200	16
› Goal Clarity	88%	86%	91%	92%
› My Job	76%	72%	81%	69%
› Employee Involvement	73%	70%	79%	63%
› Teamwork	57%	49%	68%	58%
› Learning & Development	75%	73%	78%	72%
› Leadership	61%	54%	69%	61%
› My Manager	83%	85%	80%	84%
› Culture & Values	69%	66%	73%	68%
› Change Management	51%	48%	55%	48%
› Health and Wellbeing	84%	83%	86%	76%
› Belonging	86%	83%	89%	84%
› Engagement	87%	85%	89%	95%

	Overall	Firefighter	Crew Manager	Watch Manager	Station Manager	Group Manager	Area Manager
No. of Responses	234	90	32	67	23	10	8
› Goal Clarity	86%	89%	88%	78%	86%	98%	100%
› My Job	72%	68%	61%	72%	72%	74%	98%
› Employee Involvement	70%	67%	65%	65%	79%	93%	94%
› Teamwork	50%	43%	39%	49%	61%	83%	83%
› Learning & Development	73%	72%	72%	69%	77%	74%	91%
› Leadership	54%	50%	41%	47%	70%	85%	97%
› My Manager	85%	84%	90%	81%	87%	90%	94%
› Culture & Values	66%	63%	68%	61%	73%	84%	89%
› Change Management	48%	48%	33%	38%	55%	83%	96%
› Health and Wellbeing	83%	82%	72%	87%	86%	77%	97%
› Belonging	83%	85%	80%	77%	79%	85%	100%
› Engagement	85%	90%	84%	78%	83%	88%	100%

	Overall	Head of Function/Director, Head of Department	Managers	Support Staff
No. of Responses	195	10	41	144
› Goal Clarity	91%	100%	88%	91%
› My Job	81%	96%	84%	79%
› Employee Involvement	78%	100%	84%	75%
› Teamwork	68%	100%	77%	63%
› Learning & Development	78%	100%	77%	77%
› Leadership	69%	98%	75%	66%
› My Manager	79%	100%	85%	77%
› Culture & Values	73%	96%	75%	71%
› Change Management	55%	97%	68%	48%
› Health and Wellbeing	85%	100%	86%	84%
› Belonging	89%	100%	87%	88%
› Engagement	89%	98%	90%	88%

Next Steps

16. A number of steps are being taken to ensure the results of the survey are fully considered and that action is taken to address areas where the response scores were lower, as well as continuing to develop the Service in areas where the scores were higher.
17. Action plans will be developed with the help of an AI analysis and planning tool provided by People Insight. This will allow for more detailed analysis than has been possible in the past and will also make it easier to involve departmental managers in the action planning process.
18. For the first time, staff will be encouraged to discuss staff survey themes within their teams, particularly those where survey scores are lower or have reduced (for example, change management). There will be a structured approach to this in the sense that all teams will be provided with a theme to discuss, but these discussions will be held independently of senior managers. The results will be fed back to Strategic Leadership Team and in this way, it is hoped that staff will feel able to have an open conversation with their colleagues about what working for MFRS means to them. The Strategic Leadership Team will review the feedback and use it to help develop actions for the future.

19. Members will recall that the Service publishes details of the staff survey results on the website and Intranet Portal and the results for this survey will be published to correspond with the date of this Authority meeting.

Equality and Diversity Implications

20. There is no Equality Impact Assessment required for this report, but EIAs will be completed for future actions or projects resulting from the survey as appropriate.
21. The survey results have been analysed in the context of the diversity of the staff completing it. These results show differing levels of engagement between the different demographic groups and these will be considered in the action planning process. The comparisons for age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, length of service and ethnicity are attached at Appendices D to I.

Staff Implications

22. The staff survey is the primary method by which MFRS canvases the opinions of employees. The survey is open to all staff and this year the addition of a QR code was introduced to assist those staff who are not routinely working at a computer.
23. The report itself explains how the results of the survey will be used to make improvements and the ways in which further information will be sought to add more context to the results.

Legal Implications

24. The survey is secure from a privacy perspective (e.g. Data Protection) and no one at MFRS is able to access any information that will enable individuals to be identified.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

25. There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any costs arising from future actions will be the subject of separate reports.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

26. Any risk management or health and safety implications arising from the survey results will be considered in the action planning process.

Environmental Implications

27. There are no 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.*

28. A better understanding of how MFRS staff feel about working for the Service assists in the provision of high quality services to the public.

Background Papers

NONE

Glossary of Terms

MFRA **M**erseyside **F**ire and **R**escue **A**uthority

MFRS **M**erseyside **F**ire and **R**escue **S**ervice