



#EmployerBranding - Why should it matter to the Fire & Rescue Service?



Report by

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Executive Summary

This project has been undertaken as part of the Aspire Programme into the benefits of Employer Branding and how this could be applied within Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service (DWFRS) and Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS). Specific issues in the respective organisations related to the attraction of a more diverse On-call Firefighter workforce (staff who respond to emergencies whilst carrying out their everyday lives) and also improving the retention rates for this same category of staff. There is also the issue of how attraction and retention rates could be improved for Corporate Staff (non-uniformed support staff) particularly within DWFRS as a newly formed organisation.

Our preliminary research identified Employer Branding as an area of research which could add value to our organisations by improving our recruitment, engagement and retention of our staff and we therefore considered our hypothesis for our project which was whether Employer Branding should matter to the Fire & Rescue Service.

The report considers current validated views on employer branding; reviews the existing employer brand in these Services; carries out benchmarking with other relevant organisations; and provides recommendations for the way forward for employer branding in DSFRS and DWFRS.

The employer brand can be defined as a set of attributes and qualities, often intangible, that makes an organisation distinctive, promise a particular kind of employment experience, and appeals to those people who will thrive and perform best in its culture. It is also the reputation of the Service as an employer from both inside and outside the organisation. Employer branding is about developing a positive reputation that will help attract and retain staff. It is about creating a distinctively great place to work and then promoting it to the talent whose knowledge and skills are needed by the organisation to meet its business goals and objectives.

It is accepted that all employers have an employer brand whether by design or default. The brand is how they are perceived as employers by applicants, current employees and those who are leaving, or have left, their employment. It is a powerful symbol of the organisation's culture and values and has a direct impact on the 'deal' between the employer and employee. The focus should be on the whole employment lifecycle and so employer branding also influences employee engagement. An effective employer brand needs to link to values, people strategy, and HR policies as well as linking to the organisation brand.

As part of employer branding, organisations should define their Employee Value Proposition. This is what an organisation stands for, requires and offers as an

employer and leads to understanding the key ingredients that make the organisation a great place to work and distinguishes it from its competitors.

The EVP can also be segmented for different staff groups who may have differing needs eg Support Staff and On-call Firefighters. There may also be different generational outlooks eg millennials compared with baby boomers.

The research included an analysis and review of various secondary data including academic texts, journals and case studies, organisation websites and recruitment pages, Fire sector documents, engagement surveys and recruitment literature and statistics. In addition primary research was conducted via questionnaires for Support and On-call Staff.

Our research has identified that the employer brand is not a concept to be worked on in isolation but should be embedded into the way we work within our organisations. As such, we have found that an effective employer brand needs to link to what we aspire to achieve through our Vision and our organisational purpose within our Mission Statement. This needs to be underpinned through the people strategy and values and the planned improvements that we introduce. If the employer brand is authentic and reflects the experience of employees they will become its major promoters and supporters.

From our research we concluded that the original hypothesis concerning Employer Branding is that it does matter to the Fire & Rescue Service as it provides a framework within which we can ensure that we maximise the marketing of our employer brand to improve attraction, engagement and retention within our respective organisations.

We also recommended key areas where improvements can be made to ensure that the messages about our employer brand are most effective in assisting us to attract and retain the best people who ensure that we deliver our organisational purpose.

1. Introduction

As part of the Aspire Programme, delegates undertake a project into a subject that has relevance to the delegates' organisations. Within the inaugural cohort for the South West, the project team consisted of Jane Deuchars from the recently formed Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service (DWFRS) and Steven Pope from Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS).

In terms of determining the subject for the project, the delegates' course sponsors gave input into subjects of interest to the organisation. Specific issues in the respective organisations related to the attraction of a more diverse On-call Firefighter workforce and also improving the retention rates for this same category of staff and also how attraction and retention rates could be improved for Corporate Staff (non-uniformed support staff) particularly within DWFRS as a newly formed organisation.

Initially we undertook preliminary research to determine exactly what area of research we would focus on as there has previously been studies undertaken into Fire & Rescue Service related issues. We also wanted to ensure that our topic was not repeating research already undertaken by previous cohorts. We initially considered the 'Psychological Contract' but as our reading extended we turned to Employer Branding which had the potential to add value to our organisations. Our reading suggested that Employer Branding could have an impact on the recruitment, engagement and retention of our staff and we therefore considered our hypothesis for our project which was whether Employer Branding should matter to the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS).

Since this report is intended for use outside of our respective organisations it is important that the language and terminology is suitable for non-fire Service readers. So, Corporate Staff who may also be known as Support Staff are the non-uniformed staff who provide the vital support services within the FRS and will include finance, ICT, HR, procurement, marketing, administration services etc. Within the FRS, there are Wholetime Firefighters who work full-time for the service and also On-call Firefighters who often have another primary employer outside of the FRS but when there are emergency incidents they will go to their local station and then as part a crew, they will respond to the emergency. These staff will carry pagers and have periods of agreed cover which could be in the normal working day, night-time and also weekends.

The scope of the primary research for the project did not extend to Wholetime Firefighters since both services have recruited in the last 12 months and had significant numbers of applicants. Within DWFRS, the recruitment campaign attracted 1013 applicants and within DSFRS 2888 applicants. Positive diversity action was used in these campaigns with notable levels of success with 25% of

appointments in DSFRS being female. However, figures for DWFRS female appointments are not available yet as the process is still ongoing. At present, Wholetime Firefighters generally stay in post for their full career and for many it is seen as a 'job for life'. In light of this it was considered more beneficial to initially examine the employer brand of the Fire Service as perceived by On-call Firefighters and Corporate Staff. However, this study does consider whether employer branding can impact on the ability of services to attract and recruit a more diverse workforce. The lack of diversity within fire services is identified as an increasing area for concern by various key reviews which are explored further in the next section.

The report considers current validated views on employer branding; reviews the existing employer brand in these Services; carries out benchmarking with other relevant organisations; and provides recommendations for the way forward for employer branding in DSFRS and DWFRS.

2. Background and Context

There is both a national and local context to the Fire & Rescue Service and this section covers a brief background to the Fire & Rescue Service in the UK, the current corporate objectives for DWFRS and DSFRS and how these relate to Employer Branding and the current context in terms of government national direction and influence.

The history of the Fire & Rescue Service is well documented but the first national arrangements were made during World War II when local brigades and auxiliary units were merged into the National Fire Service in 1941. After the war, the running of the Fire Services was transferred back to local county authorities. Since then the role of the Fire & Rescue Service has extended to cover Road Traffic Collisions and services related to flooding, collapsed buildings, terrorist activities and also emergency medical response. A duty to promote Fire Safety became a statutory requirement under the The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

There are currently 45 Fire & Rescue Services in the UK with a framework of terms and conditions of employment that form a national collective agreement and include rates of pay, hours of work and shift patterns but with the ability to locally agreed working arrangements.

Austerity is still with us and has had a significant impact on government and local authority expenditure with the net effect that there have been significant cuts in funding available for Fire Services and other public sector organisations. To realise economies of scale and remain viable, some Fire and Rescue Services have combined including Devon with Somerset (in April 2007) and Dorset with Wiltshire (in April 2016).

These two neighbouring rural Services are similar in size and face comparable challenges in recruitment, retention, geography, funding and in coping with the challenges faced by the evolving role of the fire service. DWFRS employs 605 On-call staff and 301 Corporate staff whilst DSFRS has 1144 On-call staff and 257 Corporate staff. DWFRS has 37 stations with On-call firefighters, a further 4 day crewed stations and 9 Wholetime stations whilst DSFRS has 70 On-call stations and a further 9 stations with Wholetime and On-call firefighters, 4 stations with Wholetime only and 2 volunteer stations.

A number of recent national reviews of the Fire Service have focused on the substantial reduction in the number of fire related incidents due in part to prevention activities by the Fire Service but also societal and technological changes, increased use of fire alarms and government regulations eg furniture fire safety regulations. Fire Services have, and are, moving from emergency response to an increased role in reducing risk in the community and therefore the traditional firefighting role is evolving which in turn has also impacted on the corporate roles. There has been a call for Fire Services to transform themselves still further “to reflect the entirely different era of risk and demand they now operate in” as set out by Sir Ken Knight in his Facing the Future report from 2013. He also suggested that there should be greater collaboration with other emergency Services through shared governance, co-working and co-location.

The *Independent review of conditions of service for fire and rescue staff in England* by Adrian Thomas in 2015 argued that significant changes are required in the way Fire Services approach recruitment, training and development, conditions of service and industrial relations to meet the demands on a 21st century Fire Service. Thomas found that Fire Services are slow in adopting change, with recommendations such as Services needing to take a closer look at culture and trust; staff engagement; improve employee communications; have a greater focus on where future leaders are recruited from as well as leadership training.

The Local Government Association, produced a report titled ‘An Inclusive Service’ in February 2017 citing the then Fire Minister who said that the lack of diversity was “woeful.....shockingly embarrassingly bad”.

In response to these fire service reviews, the National Fire Chief’s Council (NFCC) has produced a draft national Fire and Rescue Service People Strategy (LGA, 2017) which identifies five key areas of work for fire services:

1. Strengthening leadership and line management to support organisational change and delivery for customers;
2. Developing cultural values and behaviours which make the fire and rescue service a great place to work;
3. Ways of working that respond to service model needs;

4. Provide excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of services to the public; and
5. Strengthen the fire and rescue service's ability to provide good service by diversifying its staff and creating a fair and equal place to work.

The strategy refers to making On-call feasible and effective in local service delivery but also recognises the challenges with this model. The plan includes looking at attraction of On-call Firefighters and sharing best practice between services. The Strategy refers to On-call branding with the issue of identity of the On-call to prospective employees, their primary employers and the wider public to ensure that the job is considered as a job for all and that the role of a modern firefighter is much wider than the previous traditional perception. The People Strategy also refers to diversity and seeking to employ a workforce which is representative of the communities that we serve. There is reference to staff engagement in encouraging people to have a voice, to contribute and offer constructive challenge.

Fire services are under close scrutiny from the Home Office to take on board the national recommendations and demonstrate how they are adapting and changing to meet 21st century needs. These national directives therefore have a direct impact on DWFRS and DSFRS people strategies which in turn impact on employer branding initiatives.

Within the DWFRS Corporate Plan, there is a People Priority to support and develop people through various actions. Examples of some of these actions include implementing improvements to recruitment processes and induction programmes for new staff and managers; taking more positive action to target under-represented groups; evaluating the performance appraisal framework as well as developing '*the consistency of our employer brand and introduce effective 'marketing' of the employment offering to develop a common understanding for existing and potential staff*'.

Within DSFRS, there is commitment in the Corporate Plan to having a workforce that is representative of the communities that it serves. There is also a commitment to improving the service whilst providing value for money and these link to the desire to reduce the rates of staff turnover. Staff diversity is one of the key objectives for the Service and by improving diversity we can:

- Makes our teams less susceptible to groupthink and more open to alternative approaches.
- Enable us to be more likely to understand and meet the needs of our communities.
- Improve our ability to engage with a diverse range of communities.
- Expands the available candidate pool making it attractive to a wider range of candidates.

- Employees working in a diverse environment are better able to engage candidates from a range of diverse backgrounds.

As DSFRS prepares for the next financial year, a separate draft Integrated Risk Management Plan has been prepared and is currently subject to public consultation. The document identifies 6 key areas of risk which require further consideration and one of these is the availability of On-call appliances. The plan includes proposed areas for further work to reduce this risk which includes giving a realistic job overview to applicants, that we attract the talent required for the role, review our rewards strategies and the skills that are required and tested as part of the selection process.

3. Employer Branding – Literature Review

What is an employer brand?

CIPD research defines an employer brand as:

‘...a set of attributes and qualities, often intangible, that makes an organisation distinctive, promise a particular kind of employment experience, and appeals to those people who will thrive and perform best in its culture’. (CIPD, 2007)

It is accepted that all employers have an employer brand whether by design or default. The brand is how they are perceived as employers by applicants, current employees and those who are leaving, or have left, their employment. Erickson et al argue that it is a powerful ‘symbol of the organisation’s culture and values’ which acts as a ‘foundation for an employer-employee relationship’. Therefore organisations should pay close attention to how they market what they have to offer to the employee as it has a direct impact on the psychological contract, the ‘deal’ between the employer and employee (CIPD, 2010), which in turn influences employee engagement.

In the past many have seen the employer brand as being mainly about attracting talent to the organisation; however, it is widely agreed that the focus should be throughout the employment lifecycle as well, with the same level of importance attached to employee engagement (CIPD 2007). This translates to show that an effective employer brand needs to link to values, people strategy, and HR policies as well as linking to the organisation brand.

What are the benefits of an effective employer brand?

Employer branding can be used effectively to recruit the best employees ‘who will be enthusiastic about their work and fiercely loyal to the organisation and its mission’ (Erickson et al 2007). It is argued that getting it right can significantly improve

employee engagement, performance and attendance levels which in turn will have a beneficial impact on costs of employee turnover (CIPD 2010).

The CIPD (2007) provide an example of how a strong employer brand can help an organisation compete for talent in the employment arena by joining those organisations who can say: 'Of course, we don't pay the highest salaries, but people are queuing to join us. They like working for us and they know our name will look good on their CV'.

The table below illustrates, in simple terms, a summary of the CIPD (2010 and 2007) findings that an effective brand will enable organisations to overcome challenges such as:

| Organisation Challenge | How Employer Brand can assist to resolve |
|--|---|
| Challenging economic climate – difficult labour market conditions – skills shortages. Reduced ability to attract the people with the 'right' skills and experience. | Organisations can use their brand to make themselves stand out from others. If the employer brand is clearly 'marketed' and understood people who feel they are aligned to the organisation and what it means to work there will be more likely to want to work there and put in applications |
| It is argued that today's employees have less loyalty to organisations – the idea of a 'job for life' is fading | If the employee's needs are met, in terms of their expectations and what they are looking for from their job and the organisation, they will be more likely to remain faithful to their employer and be advocates for the brand |
| Employees whose expectations have not been met on joining the organisation and are unable to move on due to the challenging labour market conditions. In these circumstances they may remain and 'infect' colleagues with their disillusionment. (CIPD 2010) | All the more reason to ensure that the employer brand is effective in aligning the anticipated and actual experience of the organisation and role. Organisations need to ensure the brand is reflected authentically and effectively through the attraction and recruitment stages and this directly aligns realistically with experience in the role, ensuring that employee expectations are met. (CIPD 2010) |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>The demographics of society are changing. Employers want to increase the diversity of their organisations and workforce to reflect society. However, in some organisations the perception of the employer does not support the 'diversity message' and this has been ingrained in people's perceptions through generations and through the communities where it currently draws its talent. The initial brand and the reality of the role may have changed over time; however, the employment experience is 'the stuff of folklore' and the 'old' message continues to be cascaded to the next generation CIPD 2010</p> | <p>An effective employer brand can open the employer offering up to a wider community and more broadly communicate how it <i>won't be</i> to work for the organisation as well as how it <i>will be</i> – thus dispelling any pre-conceived notions and myths about working there. An example of a brand being revitalised is the London Fire Brigade who are aiming to reduce their reliance on white male applicants from families 'where joining the brigade was almost a tradition'. (CIPD 2010)</p> |
| <p>Increasing importance of social media – organisations need to take note of negative messages linked to perception of the product/service or image as an employer – which can damage an employer's reputation</p> | <p>Employer branding can ensure that an organisation determines the social media strategy, targeting specific platforms and adding value through engaging content.</p> |
| <p>Mergers and acquisitions – these can upset the deal between individuals and their employer (CIPD 2007). This can result in people finding that they are working for an employer they didn't choose and for an organisation they didn't decide to work for. They may unconsciously feel vulnerable in what they perceive to be an 'alien' culture</p> | <p>Developing an employer brand will give employees a greater affiliation with the new organisation and increased understanding of the 'new' employer's offering. They will feel more engaged (CIPD 2010)</p> |
| <p>High staff turnover, leading to high recruitment and training costs</p> | <p>Getting the employer brand right will assist with ensuring workforce is not disengaged and unproductive</p> |

What is an employee value proposition (EVP)?

CIPD defines an EVP as 'what an organisation stands for, requires and offers as an employer'. The EVP is what the organisation has to offer to attract and retain staff – it is the key ingredients that make the organisation a great place to work and

distinguish it from its competitors. The EVP has been identified as having 5 key attributes:

1. **Rewards:** Includes compensation, health and retirement benefits, and annual leave
2. **Work:** Includes job-interest alignment and work-life balance
3. **Organisation:** Includes market position, product/service quality, and social responsibility
4. **Opportunity:** Includes career opportunities, development opportunities, and organisation growth rate
5. **People:** Includes manager quality, co-worker quality, senior leadership reputation, and camaraderie

(CEB Gartner)

The EVP is widely recognised as linking to the psychological contract as it links to the employer/employee relationship and the unwritten expectations they have of one another.

There is also wide discussion around the recognition that not all employees are looking for the same things from their employer and the EVP therefore needs to meet the needs of a diverse workforce and different staff groups and roles. It is thought that different elements may need to be emphasised to different diverse groups – referred to as a ‘segmented’ approach to EVP. It is argued that it is important to identify and acknowledge these differences when forming a brand.

Erickson et al argue that people choose jobs on the basis of how well they believe their preferences and goals align with what the organisation is offering. Therefore organisations need to consider attracting potential employees who are excited by what the organisation does and the environment it operates in. These employees are more likely to be engaged in their work and less likely to seek more favourable benefits elsewhere - they will align to the ethos of the organisation, be enthusiastic, productive and loyal, infecting customers and other employees with their outlook. Their research has highlighted different categories of employee, examples being:

- Individuals who crave social connections and care about forming friendships at work
- Those that want to make as much money as possible with a lot of flexibility and not too much commitment
- Those that look for risk
- Individuals who seek well structured, steady, long-term roles.

Other differences to consider relate to generational outlooks, for example a Survey by Manpower indicates that more than two thirds of millennials (those born between

early 1980s and mid 1990s), plan to stay in their current jobs for less than 2 years (Sunday Times, January 2018). A PwC study (2011) found that millennials want to know the organisation's mission statement; they seek development and work-life balance (including flexibility over working hours and location) over reward; they look for a commitment to diversity; and they prefer to communicate electronically at work (rather than face-to-face). They found that just over half were attracted to employers because of their corporate social responsibility record and 56% would consider leaving an employer that didn't have the values they expected.

Research has shown that when an employee's experience of the role does not meet the expectations they had as a result of the recruitment literature, this will lead to low engagement. Their engagement diminishes as the role is not what they expected or wanted. It is argued that to counter this the employment offering needs to be clear and reliable, providing a realistic understanding about what it will be like to work for the organisation and undertake the role. (Erickson et al).

Considerations when identifying, developing and implementing an employer brand

Bearing in mind the benefits that can be gained from having an effective brand, organisations need to understand what areas to focus on to effect the most influence over potential and current employees' perception of the organisation as a place to work. The employer brand will have an impact on attraction, recruitment, motivation and retention (Martin et al, 2003) and should be evident in the approach to:

- ✓ Recruitment design, marketing communications and advertising – one of the most important ways to express the employer brand (CIPD 2010)
- ✓ Presentation of the organisation's culture and values – links to communication below
- ✓ Induction
- ✓ Performance management and reward, promoting effective management behaviours
- ✓ Internal communications - CIPD 2010 highlight that the employer brand can become the 'driving force behind your organisation's intranet'. It can provide consistency of message through recruitment materials, consistent graphics, templates and communication materials. This can lead to clear employer brand recognition throughout the organisation
- ✓ People leaving the organisation

CIPD (2007) outlines four key stages to formulating an effective brand:

1. **Discovery** – understand how the brand is perceived by management, employees and external talent.
2. **Analysis, interpretation and creation** – build a clear understanding of what the organisation 'stands for, offers, requires as an employer – its distinctive value

proposition' (CIPD 2007). Erickson et al, argue that organisations need to provide a 'signature experience' for candidates that tells the story about the organisation and allows people to 'self-select' into wanting to work for them. This 'signature experience' demonstrates what is different about working for that organisation and is unique to them in how it has evolved; how it reflects the leadership; what they do and their ethos. Through research, they have identified that there is no 'one-size fits all' in the approach to creating an effective brand. Offerings differ significantly between different organisations – it is about excelling at showing what makes them unique and understanding that they are not 'all things to all people': ensuring they attract and retain the people who are the best fit for their organisation.

CIPD (2010) advises considering the links between employer brand and total reward. The total reward strategy looks beyond remuneration, and other financial compensation, and includes additional elements such as learning and development, aspects of the working environment, family friendly policies, culture of looking after staff wellbeing, employee voice, organisation values and culture, appraisals, and recognition through annual awards. It follows that there is a reliance on other benefits available in the total offering. Inclusion of the total reward package is important as it is argued that an employer brand that isn't backed up by rewards can be regarded as 'little more than empty words'. If the employer brand is successfully aligned to reward this will attract and retain employees

3. **Implementation and communication** - Effective communication of the reward package is important to strengthen the employer brand as it highlights the benefits of working for the organisation to existing and prospective employees (CIPD, 2010). Ruch highlights that the brand then needs to be marketed effectively both internally and externally to impact on attraction and retention (Martin et al 2003) with effective communication from line managers being a key part of this process.
4. **Measurement, maintenance and optimisation** – checking progress and maintaining momentum. CIPD 2010 research with various organisations came to the conclusion that employer branding cannot solely reside as a responsibility for one team (such as HR) but needs to be widely 'owned' by the organisation. It is important to have commitment and buy-in from the senior leadership team, marketing, communications and HR to be able to embed the brand.

It is important to be able to assess the impact of the employer brand, consider value added, and measure its effectiveness to gain an understanding of return on investment. CIPD (2007 and 2010) suggest this can be done through:

- ✓ Employee turnover data – is this reducing?
- ✓ Length of tenure – are people leaving after relatively short periods of employment? Are they disillusioned with the role/organisation? CIPD
- ✓ Analysis of ‘reasons for leaving’
- ✓ Measuring the number of applicants that ‘fade away’ during the recruitment process and fail to remain engaged, or decline an offer of employment (CIPD 2010). Consider the cost of re-advertising
- ✓ Consider how many recruitment applications are submitted after the recruitment material is considered by the candidate. Does the material fail to meet the candidate’s expectations after the initial recruitment offering? – CIPD 2010
- ✓ Recruitment advertising spend (CIPD 2010) – is it increasing or decreasing?
- ✓ Performance reviews – are staff living the values and fitting with the culture of the organisation? Are they motivated and engaged? 2010
- ✓ Behavioural based assessments linked to employee development – these assessments (such as 360 reviews) should identify whether staff are performing effectively to champion the brand
- ✓ Engagement and attitude surveys – is employee engagement improving? Would employees be prepared to recommend the organisation to others as a good place to work? (CIPD 2010)
- ✓ Spend on recruitment consultants - this should reduce as the brand increases the organisation’s ‘presence’ and ‘reputation’ in the recruitment market place (CIPD, 2007 and 2010)

4. Research and Methodology

The following is an explanation of the methods of investigation used for this research report.

Secondary Data

Analysis was undertaken through the review of various secondary data including academic texts, journals and case studies. We also reviewed DWFRS and DSFRS websites and recruitment pages and also other organisations’ websites to understand developments in employer branding that were being used. The current thoughts and information on ‘best practice’ in employer branding gained by this method of research, provided benchmarks against which to assess DWFRS and DSFRS and also consider new different ways in which other organisations plan their employer branding strategies.

Documentary Research

Reviewing documentary data such as national Fire Service reviews, internal communications, values and mission statements, engagement survey results, recruitment literature and adverts provided evidence relating to the review of current

employer branding in the services. Other data reviewed included data relating to recruitment statistics, staff turnover and reasons for leaving.

Primary Research

Primary research was conducted via questionnaires. These methods were put in place to encourage responses:

- Questions were tailored to suit each staff group that were surveyed.
- Methods of distribution and response were varied to suit the needs of each staff group.
- All respondents were advised about the purpose of the survey and how their responses would assist the Service with its recruitment, engagement and retention – this was to ensure ‘buy in’ from the respondents.
- Staff were advised that their responses would be anonymous.
- The length of the questionnaires were limited so that they did not impinge too much on the respondent’s time.

A limitation of questionnaires is that respondents’ answers are bound by the options available to them (Anderson 2009) and there is limited opportunity to gain clarification (CIPD 2007); however, this was reduced by ensuring that there were ‘comment’ boxes at the end of several questions to enable respondent to give further explanation or information.

Research Group – Corporate staff

It was decided to survey Corporate staff in DWFRS and DSFRS who had joined the respective services since April 2016. This was the most effective timescale for DWFRS as this is the date of the formation of the new service. This also meant that the staff surveyed had relatively recently undergone the recruitment and selection process and would be able to advise on their views of the Services before and after being employed. The currency of their views would increase their relevance. DWFRS used a licenced Survey Monkey system to distribute the survey on-line (via email) with a 2 week response period. The majority of Corporate staff have their own IT and work station and this was the quickest and easiest way for them to respond during the working day which would increase response rate. DSFRS used an electronic version of the same questionnaire and the results were input into the Survey Monkey system to allow consistent analysis. The Corporate Staff questionnaire is in Appendix 1.

Research Group – On-Call staff

It was decided to survey On-Call staff in DWFRS who had joined the service since April 2016 as this was the most effective timescale as it linked to the formation of the new service and provided recent, relevant and timely feedback. A paper based survey was posted to staff at home, along with a reply paid envelope for ease to

assist them with posting their response back. They had a 2 week response period. This method was used as On-Call staff have limited time to access a computer when on station for a training evening. Therefore posting the survey to their home address gave them greater time to reflect on the questions and an easier method of response which would assist with increasing the response rate.

It was decided to survey On-Call staff in DSFRS who had joined within the last 9 years as during this period DSFRS had applied the national Firefighter Selection process to the recruitment of new on-call firefighters. The survey would also give feedback on aspects which could affect retention amongst this group. Again, they were written to along with a covering letter. In addition, the same survey was sent to the employees' home email address with the option to return it by email.

Respondents were asked a range of questions relating to their primary employment status, whether they had considered other public service roles, what attracted them to the On-call Firefighter role and how well these had been fulfilled, the suitability of the recruitment materials and the role of On-call firefighters. The On-call Firefighter questionnaire is in Appendix 2.

Research Group – Applicants to On-call

This group relating to individuals who were in the applications stage at DSFRS and had not yet progressed to being offered a post or appointed. The survey was sent to home emails explaining the purpose of the research and seeking a response to be returned by email. The questionnaire used the relevant questions from the On-call Staff survey.

Further discussions were conducted with colleagues from On-call representatives from within Organisational Development, Marketing and HR.

The number of surveys sent out and the response rates are shown in the table below. It can be seen that the response rates for existing staff are between 25 - 71% which is a sufficient sample size to have meaningful data. For the external applicants, the response rate is low and possibly reflects that these potential candidates' details are held on our e-recruitment system but they are no longer active in their application and this is something that will need to be addressed.

Response Rates

| | Number of questionnaires sent out | Number of questionnaires returned | Response rate |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| DWFRS - Corporate staff joiners from April 2016 | 60 | 42 | 70% |
| DSFRS - Support staff joiners from April 2016 | 51 | 20 | 39% |
| DWFRS - On-call staff joiners from April 2016 | 86 | 29 | 34% |
| DSFRS On-call staff joiners from 2009 | 483 | 121 | 25% |
| DSFRS Applicants | 680 | 49 | 7% |

Within the surveys there were a range of questions which included initial demographic questions, multiple choice where one or more answers could be selected, rating scale questions, likert scales eg statements with agree, strongly agree etc and open ended questions or free text where respondents could provide further information. The data could also be easily filtered within Survey Monkey to examine any specific results by demographic eg age, gender etc.

5. Summary of Findings and Analysis

Attraction Rates

In terms of attraction rates we can consider the number of applicants at each On-call station and also the numbers for the Corporate staff vacancies:

| | Applicants | |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------|
| | Average | Median |
| DSFRS Corporate Vacancies | 9.8 | 8 |
| DSFRS On-call Vacancies (2017) | 7.3 | 6 |

For DSFRS On-call stations there were 37 from 80 stations that were recruiting within fewer than 5 applicants which considering the selection process is a low attraction rate and it is these stations where greater support is required.

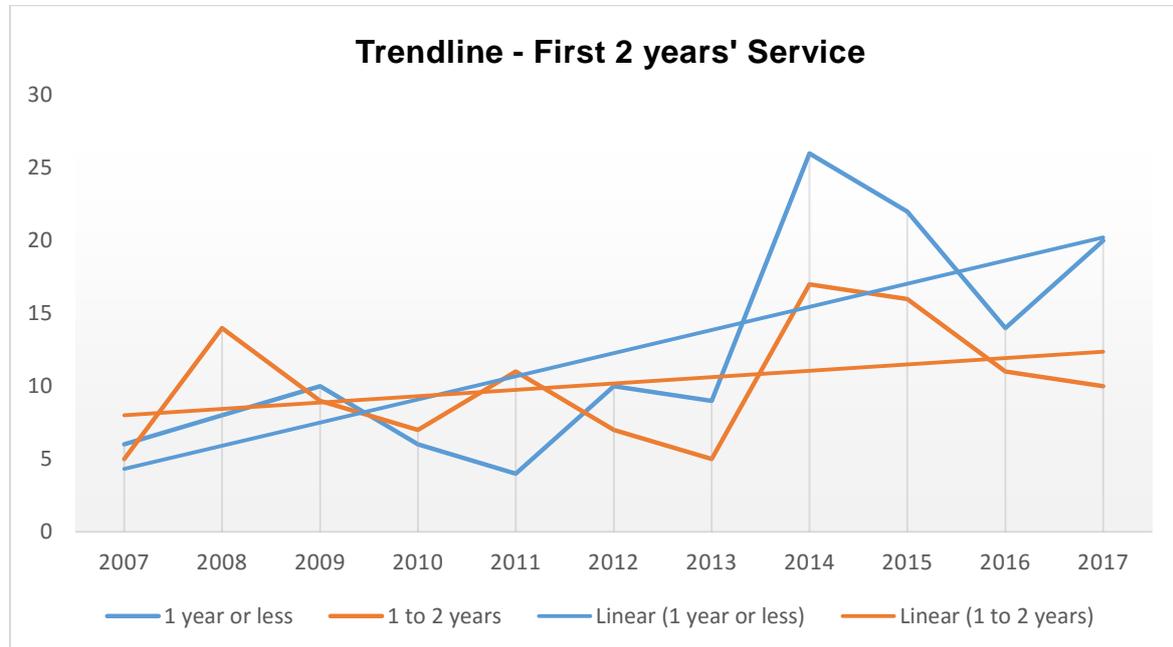
Staff Turnover

The levels of turnover within the two Services can be considered on an annual basis. For DWFRS the turnover rate of on-call firefighters in the year 2016 to 2017 is 10.5% and for DSFRS it is 10.6% or 122 staff. For Corporate staff the turnover rates within the same timeframe are 17.6% within DWFRS and within DSFRS 13.5% or 35 staff. It is accepted that the Corporate staff turnover is likely to be higher for DWFRS as the period measured was the period of transition from two organisations to one and was a period of significant uncertainty due to a corporate restructure.

We can also consider our stability of On-call firefighters in terms of their length of service prior to leaving. If we consider the data over the last 11 years for DSFRS since the organisation formed, we are able to see that the number of leavers in the first and second year have been increasing as has the overall leaver rate.

| Leavers | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | Ave |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 year or less | 6 | 8 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 9 | 26 | 22 | 14 | 20 | 12 |
| 1 to 2 years | 5 | 14 | 9 | 7 | 11 | 7 | 5 | 17 | 16 | 11 | 10 | 10 |
| 2 to 5 years | 16 | 17 | 13 | 17 | 26 | 26 | 20 | 10 | 18 | 30 | 27 | 20 |
| 5 to 10 years | 24 | 17 | 13 | 29 | 18 | 31 | 18 | 21 | 33 | 23 | 19 | 22 |
| Over 10 years | 22 | 32 | 22 | 37 | 36 | 45 | 54 | 80 | 63 | 50 | 49 | 45 |
| Total | 73 | 88 | 67 | 96 | 95 | 119 | 106 | 154 | 152 | 128 | 125 | 109 |

We also have data on the reasons for leaving and the highest reason was work/life balance followed by a number of non-specific categories such as no-reason given, unknown and personal. Retirement was then the next highest.



Of those On-call Firefighters who are resigning relatively early in their career, ie under 2 years it is beneficial to see if they achieved full competency. On-call Firefighters complete basic training as a Trainee and then can ride the fire appliances in a period of development before being assessed as fully competent. Full competency can take 18 months or more and the status of DSFRS leavers in the first 2 years is as follows:

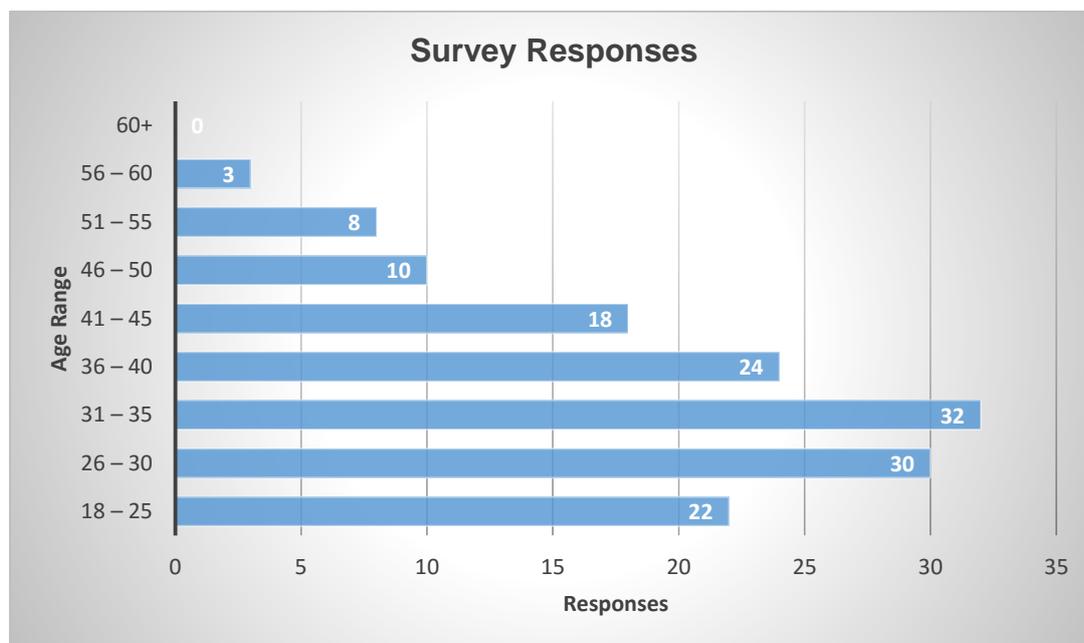
| DSFRS On-Call leavers for 2007-17 | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Trainee | 92 |
| Development | 87 |
| Competent | 57 |

| DWFRS On-Call leavers for 2016/17 | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Trainee | 3 |
| Development | 28 |
| Competent | 32 |

Once staff are in development they are adding value since they are able to ride the appliances whereas those that are trainees are not able to make sufficient contribution to the crew and would not represent sufficient return on investment. The cost of training is £15K but the time to achieve development and competency varies and the typical service for a ROI is not known.

Analysis of On-call Staff Survey

Of the respondents, the age profile reflected the generally younger ages of new recruits and this was particularly so for the DWFRS responses where 31% were aged 18-25. Overall, the level of responses was as follows:



In terms of gender, the responses were significantly higher for men but proportionately representative of the survey sample. With only 8 female responses a further request was made to the females to seek further information and this resulted in two more survey responses and agreement to have further discussions. There were however, a further 10 female responses within the applicant category. Responses from females were generally consistent with males and where there were differences then the sample size of female responses was not considered sufficient to draw specific conclusions.

In terms of employment status 88% of respondents had primary employment and of those employed, only 23% were self-employed which was less than we generally consider for On-call staff and could also link into the aspect of whether employers would release On-call staff to attend incidents.

From a talent competition perspective, there were questions relating to whether staff had considered undertaking other public service roles and examples were given. Some of these are voluntary and some are paid and 37% of respondents said they had considered other roles, but a number of these related to full-time roles and when the figures are adjusted to secondary roles, 27% had considered the alternatives

shown below. NB Some respondents were interested in more than one public service.

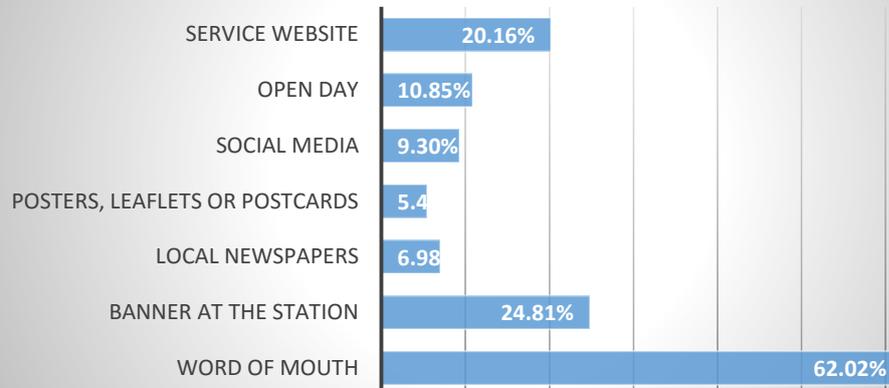
Other public services of interest to staff

| Public Service | Number of responses |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Army Reserves | 10 |
| Coastguard | 5 |
| First Responder | 5 |
| Police Specials | 11 |
| RNLI | 15 |
| Royal Navy Reserves | 1 |

The survey allowed free text for staff to indicate why they had chosen the FRS over these other public services and when these are themed the most frequent reasons are around location from a perspective of being close to home and also that the role was serving the community. Other reasons included an absolute desire/ambition to be become a Firefighter or the interest they had in the role of a Firefighter. For some, it was also the financial incentive.

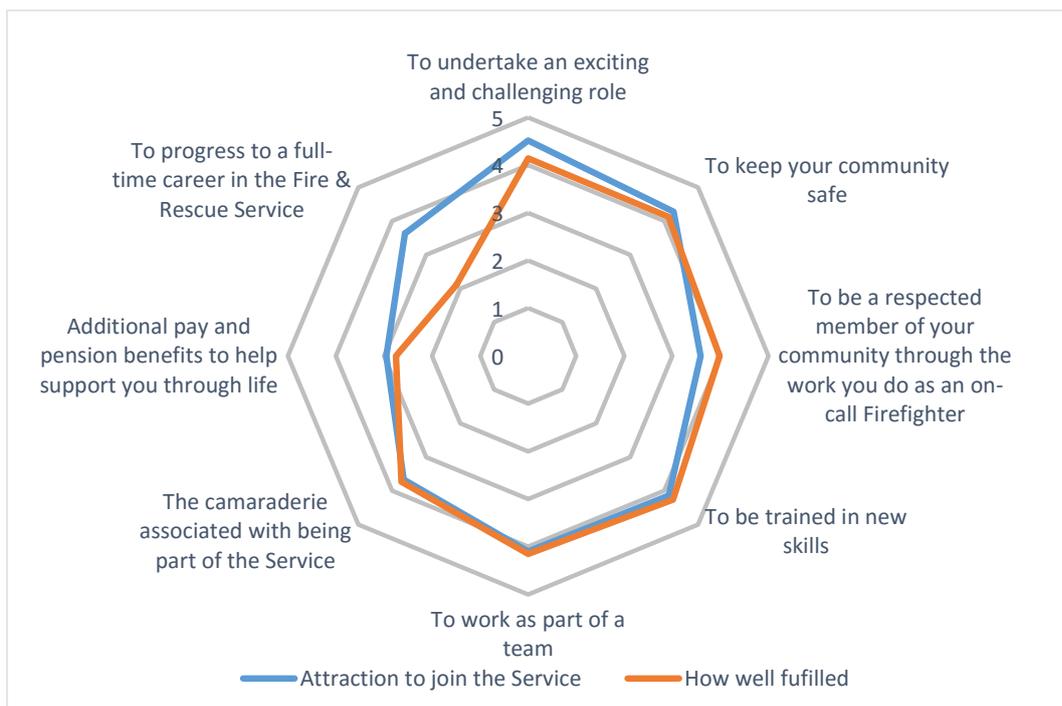
The survey asked how staff heard about vacancies and the responses in the chart below indicate that this is highest through word of mouth at 62% of responses. From a perspective of getting a first-hand view of what the job entails, this is an excellent way for perspective staff to get a realistic preview of the job and having direct contact with someone from the station could help them in making their first move to apply for a job. However, in terms of diversity, word of mouth is more likely to result in applicants who are similar to those already employed by the Service and so other methods are also useful. The advertising banner at a station enables the Service to get its message over to perspective candidates who live in the local area and was rated by 24.8% of responses. Social media was not particularly effective at 9.3% but amongst applicants, it had increased to 19.57% which was reflective of a younger age range. The Service website was used by 20% to hear of positions which is a good endorsement but could also be where applicants follow-up after initially hearing of a position.

How Staff first heard about Vacancies



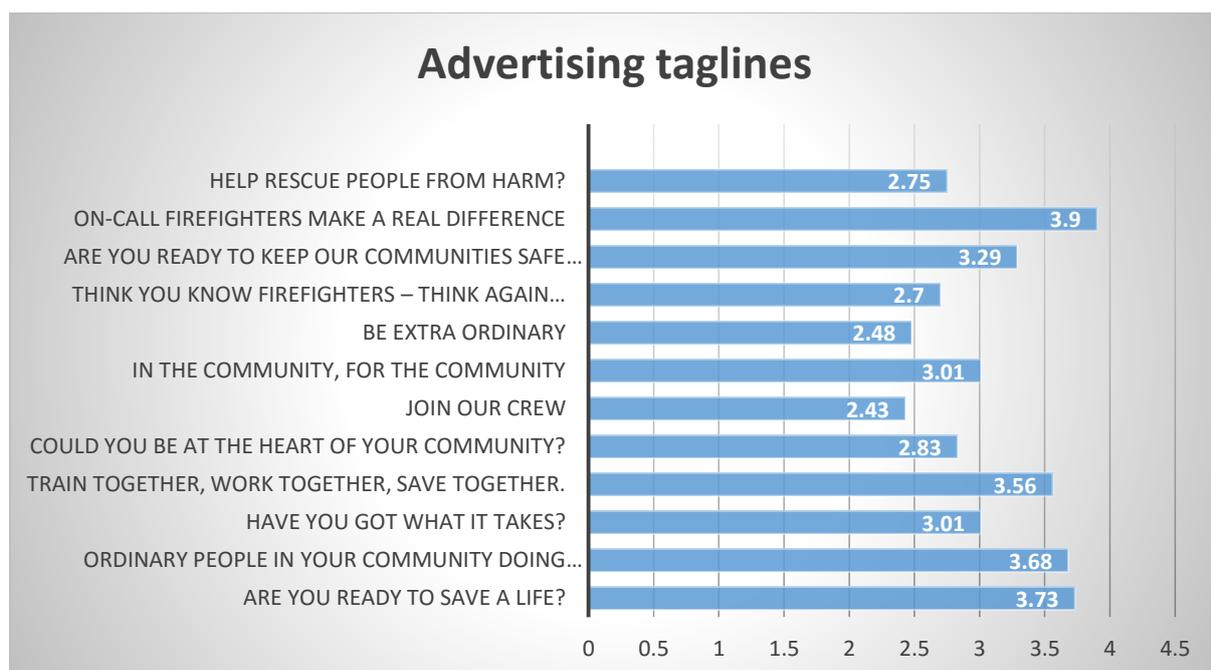
Within the survey, we wanted to consider what attracted staff to apply to the Service in the first place and how well this was fulfilled on joining. There was a slight drop in terms of whether the role was exciting and challenging and the levels of pay but being a respected member of the community was rated higher than expected. The most significant difference was in terms of progressing to a full-time career with the FRS. In DSFRS, the Wholetime recruitment campaign in 2017 resulted in 2888 applicants and whilst there were an additional 11 staff recruited from On-call through this process, that is a very small percentage of On-call staff who could be seeking a full-time role. The Service also had introduced the requirement for GCSEs or equivalent and some On-call staff were unable to meet this requirement.

Attraction to join the Fire Service and How well Fulfilled



Within both the survey of On-call there were likert ratings of the selection process and 70% of respondents either strongly agreed that they felt it was a professional and engaging process and they felt values as an applicant.

In terms of the advertising slogans or taglines that have been used by various FRS and also our own, respondents were asked to rate these 1-5 and the results are shown in the chart below. The results show the weighted average, with several taglines being popular but those relating to the potential exciting role of an on-call firefighter and also around the community are most highly rated. The tagline 'Are you ready to save a life' was rated as one of the best taglines and is the previous tagline that DSFRS used. However, the current DSFRS preference is not to use it as the Service is seeking to avoid being considered in such a heroic manner since many incidents are more routine and the Service is seeking to ensure that applicants do not have an unrealistic expectation of their role. The term 'make a real difference' is one that has perhaps been over used and has become more of a cliché.



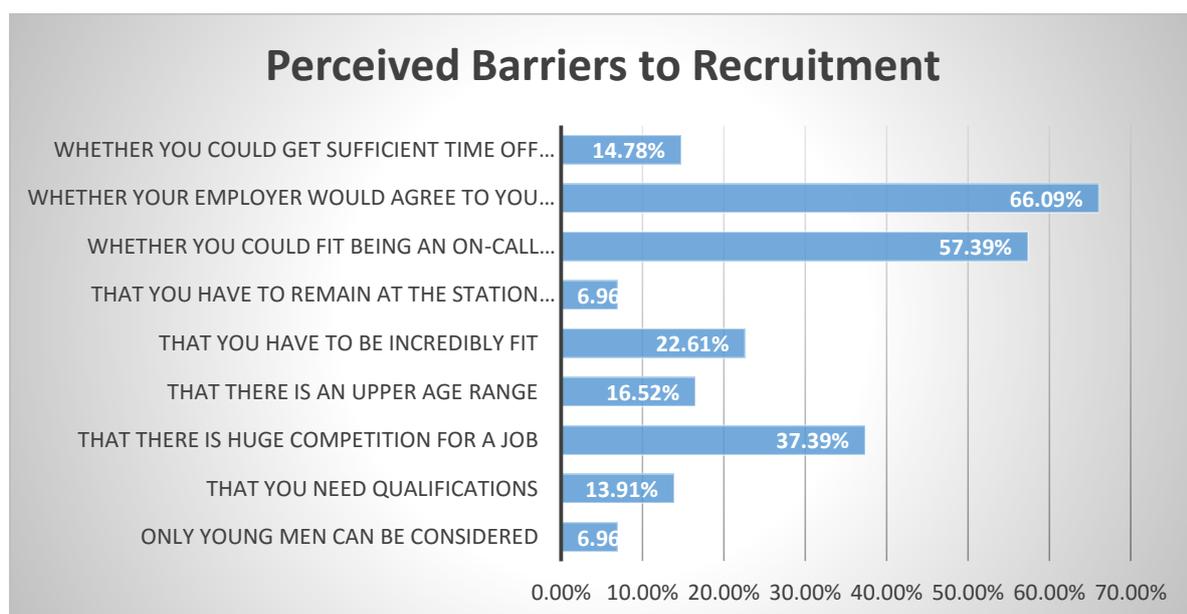
DSFRS is currently using 'From the community, for the community' which is something new and reflects the message that On-call firefighters are from and serve the local community. DWFRS have not used a specific tagline for On-call but for Wholetime recruitment are using 'Be One Of Us' and have used this as part of their positive action campaign. It could be adapted to use across all staff categories ie Corporate, Wholetime, On-call and Control.

Be One Of Us

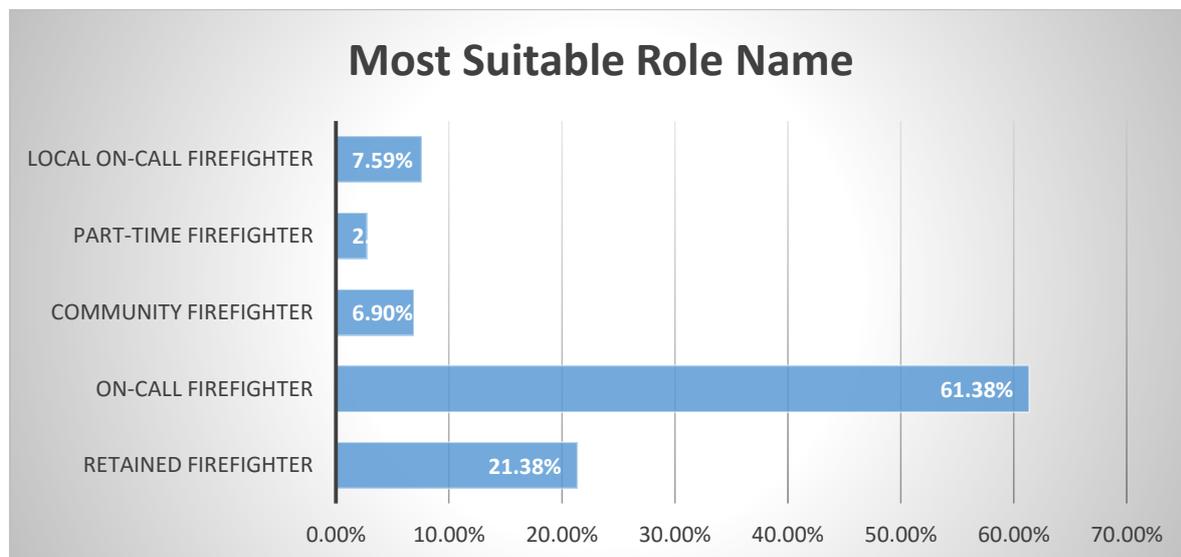


Another area that the survey considered was whether there were any perceived barriers for staff in joining the Service which represent areas that we should seek to overcome and to inform applicants through say messaging or using Frequently Asked Questions.

The perception that there is huge competition for the job at 37.4% was perhaps unexpected and reflects that possibly the general perception may be that demand for Wholetime jobs is so high and that this may be also reflected across to On-call firefighters. The highest concern was whether employers would release staff and this is something that the Service needs to work on to ensure that applicants can be supported with advice to employers. This is particularly so when you consider that 88% of respondents stated that they were employed. The other high rating was whether being On-call could be fitted in alongside other aspects of life. This work-life balance is always a difficult one for the Service and is at the very nub of how we seek to ensure that On-call stations are sustainable.



Within the survey, we checked to see what staff considered to be the most suitable role name to tell potential recruits what the job entails. Originally the title Retained Firefighter was used to describe the role and it was only in 2009 that the title On-call Firefighter was adopted nationally and advertising toolkits were provided through the Department of Communities & Local Government (as was). Despite this many FRSs have continued to use the title Retained Firefighter or used Retained internally and On-call externally. Within Services, we refer to staff being conditioned to a duty system with the Wholetime Duty System and Retained Duty System so unless we change this title to On-call Duty System then the title Retained will continue to be used. There is also a 'retaining fee' that is paid to these staff for being On-call which again leads to the title continuing to be used. There is a national trade union for On-call staff and they are called the Retained Firefighters' Union. It is therefore clearly a slow cultural shift to move to the new title. The RFU undertake their own Surveys and their findings from the 2017 survey were that 65% of responses favoured the titled Retained Firefighter whilst 26% favoured On-call Firefighter (up from 19% in 2014). The RFU survey is open to all existing staff rather than those more recently recruited and they too recognise that for external advertising, On-call is a better descriptor.



The survey included some free text responses and posed the question as to what are the 3 best things about working for the Service. We have used a wordle application on the text in to identify the most frequently used words. The app removes common English words but does not recognise specific phrases so for example the word 'community' is used to describe being part of the community and also serving the community.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Attraction | Advertise through station Facebook page |
| | Incentivise staff to attract new applicants |
| | Increase public awareness of On-call eg a documentary series like the RNLI. |
| | Put recruitment resources on-line eg YouTube |
| | Advertise more on TV, radio |
| | Recruitment training for station based staff |
| | Use the training as a unique selling point to promote the service |
| | Reduce time from showing interest to being on the run |
| | More flexible in how much cover is given |
| Development | Appoint mentors to new recruits |
| | Better career paths into Wholetime |
| | Bring in a rota system so that all crew get to ride the pumps instead of the same people all the time |
| | Encourage On-call staff to undertake shifts on Wholetime watches on a regular basis to encourage integration and to gain operational experience |
| | More on-station training |
| Employers | Employer tax benefits for releasing staff |
| | Engagement evenings with potential employers to highlight commitments and benefits of employing On-call Firefighters |
| | Work with local businesses |
| Retaining Fee | Incentivise day cover due to recognise additional commitment required |
| | One system of payment for all stations rather than current differences |
| | Pay hourly rate for being On-call |
| | Pay staff who give more cover per month to show appreciation of commitment |
| | Reward loyalty |
| General | Employee Forum |
| | Senior officers with On-call background to understand demands |
| | Standardise crew rotas, station training etc |
| | Support with the fitness test |
| | Make all stations co-responder to support SWAST who are struggling |

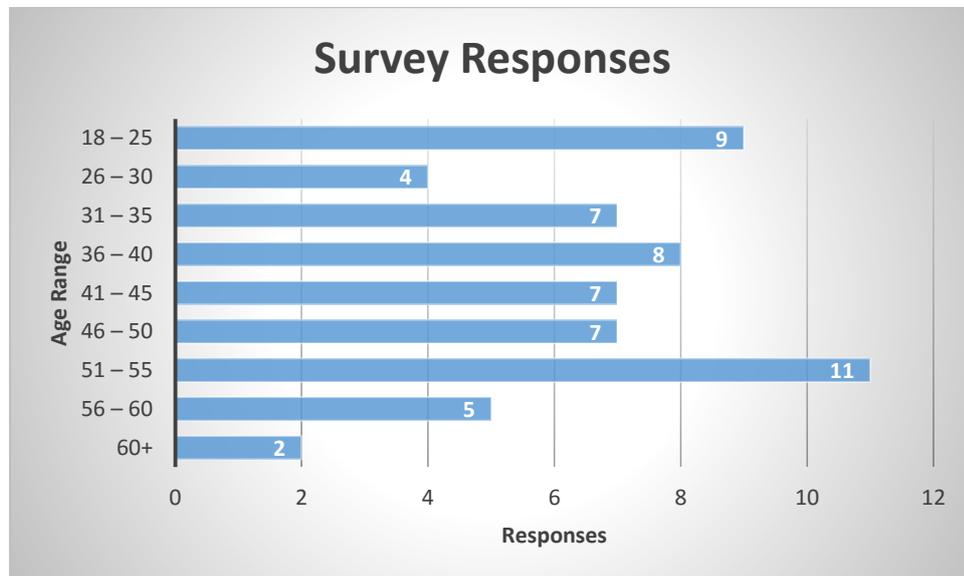
From the survey of On-call staff it can be concluded that:

- A significant proportion of our more recent joiners are employed rather than self-employed which reinforces the importance of developing relationships with Employers in the area.
- Although, we have competition from other emergency sector employers, the Fire & Rescue Service has a distinctive offering in that we are locally based to the applicants' homes and the role is serving the local community rather than society generally. It is also paid and despite concerns about the actual hourly rate for being On-call, it is still an added benefit when compared with some other voluntary roles in other emergency services.
- Currently, word of mouth is the most effective way of advertising followed by the station banner. As yet, we have made only limited use of social media and there is still plenty of scope to do more.
- We already have a good idea of what makes it attractive to join the On-call and this has been re-enforced by our research. However, we do need to be clear with new applicants that to join the Wholetime service is a very competitive process.
- There are a range of advertising taglines that have been used by our Services and elsewhere and there is no single tagline which stands out well above the rest. The tagline that DSFRS currently uses (From the Community, For the Community) fulfils the intent to succinctly explain to perspective applicants why they should join and when combined with images of typical Firefighter activity will show exactly what we are about. It also linked with what staff considered as the 3 best things about being in the service.
- In terms of barriers to joining, being released by employers is high on the ratings and therefore something that we need to take into account with our marketing. The work-life balance is also very important and we need to be more flexible in what we offer.
- Using the title On-call firefighter is the most effective way of telling perspective candidates what the job is about.
- Learning new skills and being part of a team are also very important to people and these are other areas that we can promote within our employer branding.
- Generally the application process was well received but it needs to be swifter from initial interest to appointment.

Analysis of Corporate (Support) Staff Survey

The Corporate Staff survey was circulated to 60 new joiners in DWFRS with an even split of 50% in each gender group. The same survey was circulated to 51 new joiners in DSFRS of whom 22 were female and 28 were male. The combined response rate was slightly higher from female respondents at 58%; therefore there was a balanced

response rate from each gender group and both groups were sufficiently represented. The table below indicates the level of overall responses by age range:



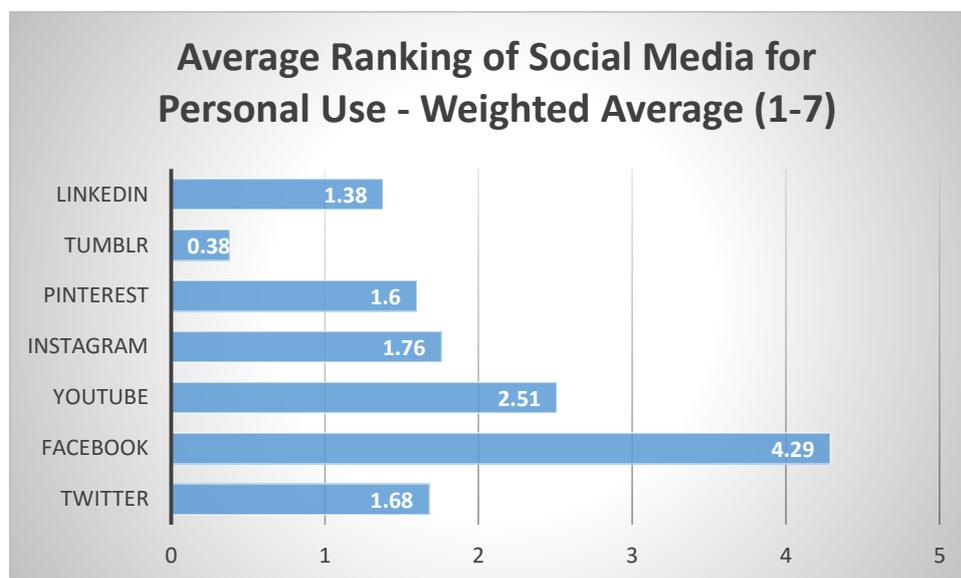
Breaking it down into more detail, for DSFRS the age group that provided the highest level of responses was the 18 to 25 age range as they accounted for 33% of responses, whereas for DWFRS the highest response rate was from those in the 51 to 55 age group at 21.4%; however, responses were generally balanced between the other age groups.

Overall, before their application, 68.3% of respondents had an excellent to good perception of the Fire Services as an employer. However, 25% of respondents said they had no perception of what the Fire Service was like as an employer before joining. This indicates that the employer brand and what it is like to work for the Fire Service has not been communicated effectively to these individuals. There were comments such as ‘no previous knowledge’ and ‘I didn’t have any information prior to application’.

We asked whether people’s mobile phone was an important part of their job search and the main technology device they used for searches and communication. The responses were fairly evenly split with 51.6% predominantly using their mobile phone. However when breaking this down to look at specific age groups there is a clear difference between older and younger respondents. In the 18 to 25 age group, 66.67% respondents indicated that they found their mobile phone to be the main technology used for job searching whereas the figure was only 36.6% for those in the 51 to 55 age group. This indicates that it may be necessary to adopt a wide range of recruitment technologies in order to reach the widest number of applicants from different age groups and therefore attract a more diverse workforce.

The survey asked respondents to indicate which forms of social media they used the most outside of work – they were given the options of selecting Facebook, Twitter,

YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, LinkedIn or none at all. As could be potentially anticipated, those in the 18 to 25 age group said that Facebook was their number one choice of social media at 77.78%, followed by YouTube. This outcome aligns with those in the older 51 to 55 age who also chose Facebook as most popular. It is important to consider that the literature review highlighted the increasing importance of social media outside of organisations with forums where people can comment on workplaces (such as Glassdoor). Negative and positive comments in social media about an employer can have a direct impact on the image it seeks to represent and organisations should be keen to monitor how they are perceived in this media.



The most common way of finding out about a vacancy was through the Services' websites as this was indicated by 35% of respondents. 'Agency websites' was the next highest choice at 28.3%. Only 5% of respondents first heard about the vacancy through social media. This may be because the Services are not focusing on social media as a way of publicising vacancies or it may be that individuals are still searching for jobs through more 'traditional' methods.

We asked applicants about what research they did to find out more information about the Services before applying. 76.6% said that they searched for more information about the Services (such as priorities, values and areas of work); closely followed by 71.6% who visited the recruitment pages on the website to find out more information. 21% compared the benefits the Services were offering with other employers and 23% spoke to others to gain their opinion of the Services. Only 5% did not do any research. This demonstrates that information provided on the Services' websites and recruitment pages is important to inform applicants and may influence their perception of the Services as an employer. Although we do not know who the 'others' are that 23% spoke to in order to gain their opinion of the Service it is clear that opinions and views that people have of the Service can have an influence

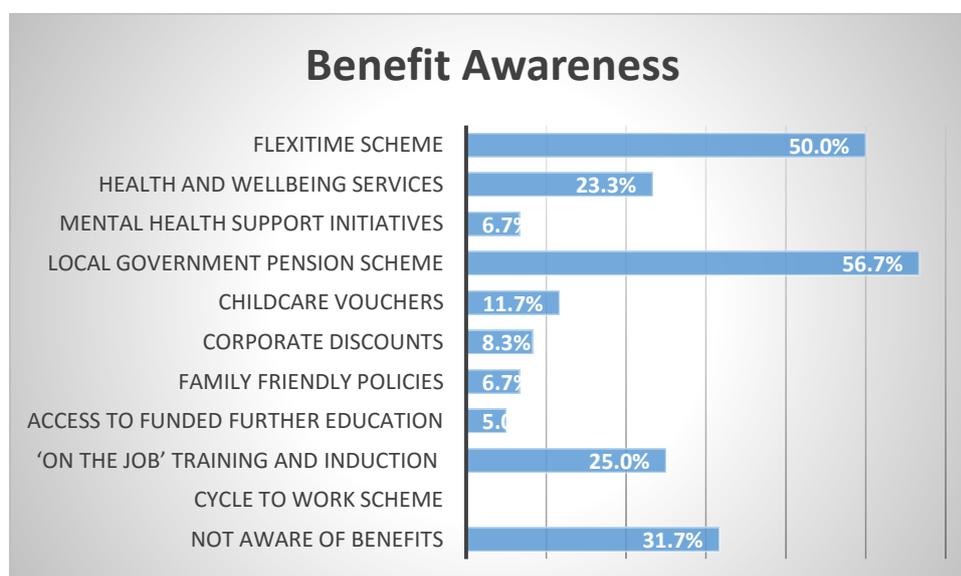
applicants. An example of a response is that one respondent said that they had done 'general web searching on the internet to see what other people have written about DSFRS as both a service and an employer'.

61.15% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the Services' website recruitment pages provided them with enough information about the Service and the job they applied for. Respondents were asked to provide further information around their responses and a common themes being:

- "I think the recruitment site and main site needed to be read in partnership"
- "Extra research was needed"
- "Not too much mention of specifics of the role – very general"
- "Does not mention how flexi hours work, which is a big plus for people"

90% of applicants agreed or strongly agreed that the recruitment and selection process was professional, engaging and valued them as an applicant (eg satisfactory job information, application process, interview and selection process). This is a very positive outcome. However, some of the negative comments received related to issues with the website application process not being user friendly; feeling that the process was long winded; and having difficulty in being able to speak with the new line manger after the interview process.

When asked what benefits applicants were aware of when applying, 31.7% had not been aware of any benefits at this stage. The table below indicates that overall the most widely known about benefits are the Local Government Pension Scheme and the Flexitime Scheme - a clear indication that the message about other benefits is not widely received by applicants. Taking this on board, the lesser known benefits such as family friendly policies and supportive health and wellbeing initiatives are potentially not being tapped into as a 'draw' for candidates.



When broken down by Service, 40.48% of DWFRS applicants were unaware of benefits whereas only 11% of DSFRS applicants were unaware of benefits at this stage. This backs up the finding the total benefits available to Corporate staff is not clearly publicised on the DWFRS online recruitment pages whereas DSFRS have a benefits summary document with each job vacancy.

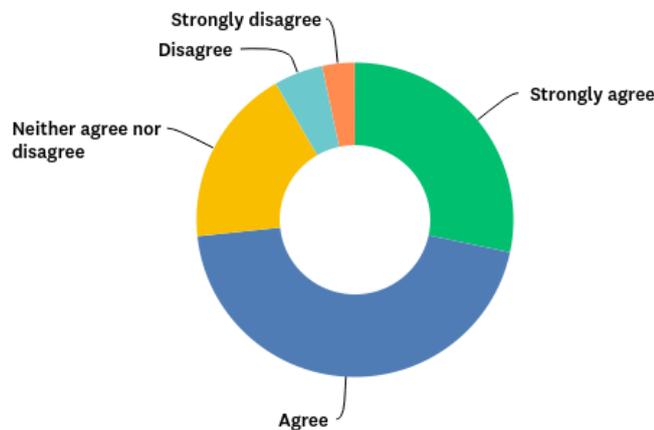
70% of total respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the process of bringing them into the organisation after job offer was effective. When broken down by Service, DWFRS respondents 66.67% thought the process was effective and for DSFRS the figure was higher at 77.78%. This is significant if considering the impact this may have on an individual's first impression of their new employer and would also influence their initial engagement.

When asked specifically about their induction into their new role, 71.66% of total respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their induction within their team was effective. For DSFRS this figure was 61.11% and for DWFRS it was 76.19%. This process would have a key impact on employee engagement and alignment to the employer brand and culture of the organisation and would be a key area to have influence in terms of providing an effective on-boarding process. In contrast only 10% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that their induction was effective.

85% of total respondents believed that their job was measuring up to the expectations they had when they joined. For DSFRS this figure is 83.34% and for DWFRS the figure is 85.71% therefore the figures are generally balanced between both services. Research previously mentioned has indicated that meeting pre-employment expectations is one of the significant elements of retention from an employer branding perspective so it is encouraging that the dissatisfied figure is relatively low in this instance.

In a similar vein, the same question was posed but relating to whether the *Service* was measuring up to individual's expectations they had if it as an employer. The chart below indicates the overall responses where 73.33% agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case. This figure is encouraging for DWFRS as it is a relatively new employer (formed in April 2016) and has therefore had to communicate a combined set of values, behaviours and culture in a relatively short period of time. Research identified that if a new organisation is able to develop an employer brand and communicate this effectively it will increase the employees' affiliation to the new organisation and improve their engagement.

The Service is measuring up to the expectations I had of it as an employer:

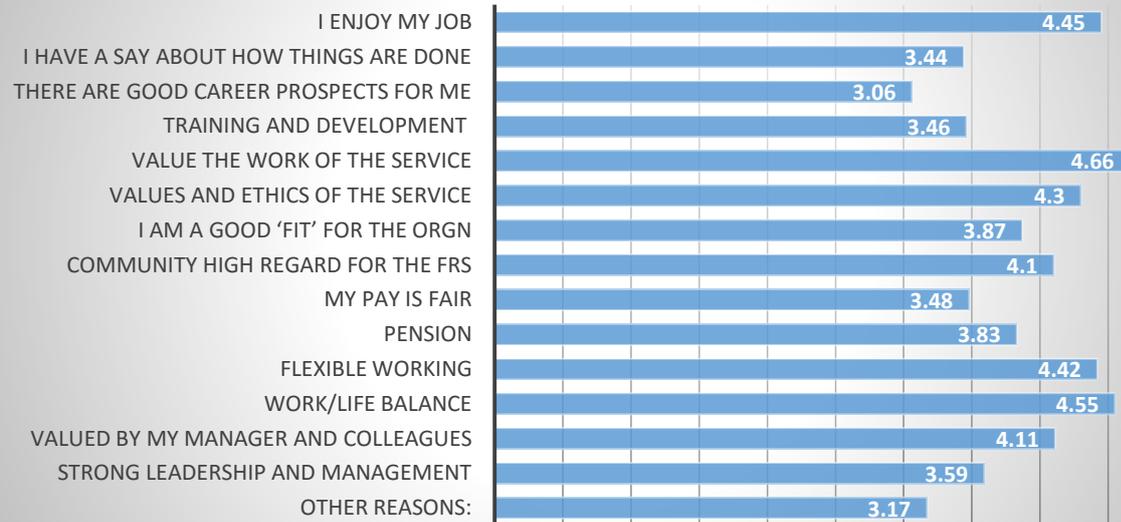


88.33% of total respondents agree or strongly agree that they would like to be working for their Service a year from now.

Respondents were asked to rate the reasons why they work for their Service. They were provided with various options to rate from 1 to 5, where 1 is not important and 5 is extremely important. For the age band 18 to 25 (classed as millennials) 57.14% said that the most important reason they work for the Service is that they believe in the values and ethics of the Service. Similarly this was the most important reason for those in the age band 51 to 55 with 90% stipulating this reason. 55.56% of 18 to 25 year olds found the work the Service does and the benefit it brings to the community to be a very important reason for why they work for the Service; 50% said that they worked for the service because they enjoy their job. However, the highest weighted average score favoured having a work-life balance. 90% of those aged 51 to 55 also rated work-life balance as very important. These findings for the 18 to 25 year olds support the results of the Literature Review where research indicated that millennials are attracted to an organisation's mission statement, seek development and a work-life balance and more than half would consider leaving their employer if they didn't have the values they expected.

The table below indicates the overall findings from the combined services' results with the most important reasons why people work for the service being that they value its work, closely followed by work-life balance.

Reasons for Working for the Service - Weighted Average (1-5)



The least important reason for 18 to 25 year olds to work for the Service related to 'having a say about how things are done' with a weighted average score of 3.17 whereas having 'good career prospects' was least important to 51 to 55 year olds, with a 2.44 weighted average.

74.57% of respondents agree, or strongly agree, that they would recommend the Service as a great employer. For DSFRS the figure is 70.59% and for DWFRS it is 76.2%. Following on from this, 96.61% of total respondents are proud to work for the Service. These positive statistics are significant in terms of engagement and employees potentially 'selling' their place of work to other potential applicants.

As with the On-call survey, the final question was open ended and asked the respondents to provide suggestions as to how the Service could attract and retain staff and be a great employer of choice. The majority of responses fell into 7 categories of themes for focus or improvement as indicated below. As clearly indicated, the theme with the most comments was linked to 'selling the benefits'.

| Category for themes for focus or improvement | % of comments received |
|--|------------------------|
| Communications | 5.41% |
| Improve Induction | 13.51% |
| Leadership | 10.81% |
| Provide more information | 13.51% |
| Recruitment process | 10.81% |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Sell the benefits | 35.14% |
| Training and development | 10.81% |

Examples of feedback in relation to the themes are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication needs to be improved • Make people understand how they contribute to the overall service, so that they feel valued |
| Improve Induction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement planning for the integration of new staff • Improved induction process - less dry, more people orientated, more induction to the full service not just the area recruited to |
| Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I believe that clear supportive leadership/direction would help retain staff • Listen to the staff needs • The middle management has to be right • Management and communication needs to be improved |
| Provide more information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about the variety of support roles, as well as firefighters • In my opinion the service is an employer of choice, it's just people who don't know it's a choice. • Give information to all and update websites more frequently • Improve the support staff vacancy page e.g. departments, roles, careers. • I had no idea about the Fire Service, or the sort of roles that might be available, and had minimal awareness of what the service does. I think that getting out there and shouting about what we do, and what roles there are, in a way that means that people get the message without having to actively search for us, would help • I think the most important factor for people wishing to join is the feeling of being part of such a worthwhile organisation and doing 'my bit', even in the smallest of ways. |
| Recruitment process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially joining the service I found the process very long winded and difficult. |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Sell the benefits</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The flexi time working and encouragement for a healthy work life balance are second to none • Things like flexible working (which I wasn't even aware of when I applied), make a huge difference • I think it would help if the flexible working options were made more obvious as these days a lot of employers don't offer this • Greater transparency of benefits • Promote the family friendly , health and wellbeing aspects • Advertise flexi working hours at recruitment stage • Be more vocal about the benefits and culture of working for the fire service • I think the Service offers a number of incentives that would attract new staff to joining |
| <p>Training and development</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give more training • No one has really looked at my future development needs for my job or made me aware of what opportunities are available to me for development • Offer more development opportunities for staff • Improve training for managers • Encourage development through effective performance management - encourage and make use of the skills of individuals. Boost motivation through regular team building and social events |

Benchmark analysis of recruitment websites

A qualitative analysis was made of various public sector recruitment websites as a comparator against the sites of DSFRS and DWFRS. The organisations were chosen on the basis of being local to DSFRS and DWFRS and their relevance to the sector. This involved a review of the recruitment pages for:

- Dorset Police
- London Fire Brigade
- Bournemouth Borough Council
- Dorset County Council
- Wiltshire Council
- Devon County Council
- Cardiff Borough Council (Winner of CIPD 'Best Employee Engagement Award')

The analysis considered the following questions:

- Was there an EVP?
- Did the EVP distinguish the employer from others?
- Is the message clear and unambiguous?
- Are the culture and values clear?
- Are there clear messages about attracting a diverse workforce?
- Is the information about specific jobs clear?
- Are there social media links?
- Are the benefits of working for the organisation clear?
- Are there any messages about community involvement?
- What is the overall image of the site – ease of website navigation when looking for jobs and information about the organisation?

Results of the website reviews were varied, however the sites that stood out as meeting most of the relevant criteria indicated in the literature review as having a positive impact on employer branding was Wiltshire Council and Cardiff Borough Council. Wiltshire Council's vision and values were clear on the front recruitment page and there were photographs of people linked to jobs, ie 'the face of social care'. There were strong messages about careers and realising your ambition. It was possible to click on short film clips to meet the people who work there and hear first-hand from employees about their jobs. Visitors to the site could take a Behaviour Quiz to see if they were the 'right match' so it is clear for people to see whether they are the type of person who is a good fit for the organisation. Social media was key on the site and there was the facility to Tweet about the role or share it on Facebook. They are up front about checking Glassdoor to see what employees think so that they can improve where necessary. 'Wiltshire Facts' are shown scrolling through on the screen to 'sell' the county as a place to work. There is an Experience EPIC document under a 'What we Offer' tab which provides a comprehensive guide to the benefits including social involvement (such as a choir), development and coaching. All of which must be working as they indicate on their site that in their latest staff survey, responses reflected strong embedding of the behaviours framework with 95% of staff stating they understand the behaviours that are expected of them; they have been named the best council to work for in Britain by Glassdoor and between 2012 and 2016 there was a rise of 7% in the number of 'fully engaged staff'.

Similarly the Cardiff Council site was easy to use and links to further information are clear- the 'Why join us' link details the benefits of working for them very clearly. There is an 'Employee Charter' attached to each job that details their culture and values and behaviours expected of employees, managers and senior managers. This page is bright and engaging with images of people that work for the Council with the strapline of 'Make the difference'. It is clear that nowadays one of the first impressions of an organisation for job seekers can be through the advert and organisation website and therefore it can be critical to get this right. The website has

a huge part to play in the initial presentation of the employer brand and, as discussed in the literature review, how they are perceived as an employer.

Full information relating to the recruitment web pages can be viewed at Appendix 3.

Engagement Surveys

In 2017 DWFRS completed a staff engagement survey to gauge staff views within the organisation since its recent formation. There was a 43% response rate and the employee engagement score from the survey was 68% which is slightly higher than the 66% UK norm. There were many positives that came from the survey as well as some areas for improvement. Developments identified related to strengthening communications; greater employee voice in change management; reviewing opportunities for staff development; more cross departmental collaboration and, finally, improving wellbeing through work/life balance, job control and sufficient resources. At the time it was felt that these were reasonable areas for improvement given that the Services had combined less than a year ago and staff had been through a period of uncertainty through a re-structure to a new organisation. Much work has been undertaken since the survey to tackle the improvements identified.

An 'Eyes and Ears' forum has been set up to review and discuss engagement activities on a quarterly basis, focusing on what the Service is doing in response to the previous engagement survey. This is an organisation representative group consisting of existing staff at all levels and teams across DWFRS. They assist with identifying issues and monitoring how teams are reacting and feeling about new initiatives and day-to-day activities and promoting the culture of the organisation.

Another engagement survey is due to take place shortly to measure whether there has been an increase in staff engagement.

Within DSFRS, the Service undertakes a staff engagement survey every two years and has recently completed the 2017 survey. The survey incorporated 9 key questions and the responses are currently being analysed but an early indicator of overall satisfaction with the Service as an employer is as follows:

| | Corporate | On-call |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Agree | 71% | 62% |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 12% | 22% |
| Disagree | 16% | 14% |
| Don't Know | 1% | 1% |
| Blank | 1% | 1% |

This is the second time that the survey has been run in this format and the service has improved its levels of satisfaction amongst staff.

Engagement Surveys are an important tool to assist in identifying whether the employer brand is strong and achieving its objective and certainly the areas for development identified for DWFRS link closely to facets of the employer brand.

Internal Communications

We have reviewed the methods of communication used within DWFRS to pass on service wide messages to staff.

The main methods of communication with staff within DWFRS are:

- Weekly Update – critical information
- Monthly news ‘magazine’ – ‘nice to know’ information
- Chief Fire Officer’s (CFO) video communications/staff updates
- Question Times – telephone in to talk to CFO and his Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Staff briefings – workplace visits by SLT
- Intranet – various communication areas including the recent introduction of ‘Yammer’ for forming work groups for interaction

It is therefore clear that there are several methods of communication available to disseminate messages to staff; but we would need to understand more clearly how the employer brand message is communicated through these means.

6. Conclusion

Our research has identified that the employer brand will have an impact on attraction, engagement and retention. It is not a concept to be worked on in isolation but should be embedded into the way we work within our organisations. As such, we have found that an effective employer brand needs to link to what we aspire to achieve through our Vision and our organisational purpose within our Mission Statement. This needs to be underpinned through the people strategy and values and the planned improvements that we introduce. If the employer brand is authentic and reflects the experience of employees they will become its major promoters and supporters and spread the word.

Having identified that it has a clear impact on the employment lifecycle of individuals and a direct impact on staff engagement it is clearly important for fire services to take employer branding seriously. From our studies we can therefore conclude that the original hypothesis concerning Employer Branding is that it does matter to the Fire & Rescue Service as it provides a framework within which we can ensure that we maximise the marketing of our employer brand to improve attraction, engagement and retention within our respective organisations.

It is interesting to note that the concepts identified as being areas where the employer brand can have significant influence also link closely to four of the five key

areas of work raised in the national Fire and Rescue Service People Strategy (LGA, 2017) mentioned previously. These are: 'strengthening leadership and line management to support organisational change and delivery for customers'; 'developing cultural values and behaviours which make the fire and rescue service a great place to work'; providing 'excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of services to the public'; and 'strengthening the fire and rescue services ability to provide good service by diversifying its staff and creating a fair and equal place to work'.

It is encouraging to see that the research undertaken for this report has provided some positive affirming results in terms of individuals' perceptions of the fire service as an employer. However, we were able to identify key areas where improvements can be made to ensure that the messages about our employer brand are most effective in assisting us to attract and retain the best people who ensure we deliver our vision and mission statements:

- "Passionate about changing and saving Lives" (DWFRS)

DWFRS Vision: We are much more than a Fire and Rescue Service. We are about helping you to become safer, healthier and to live more independently. Improving your wellbeing and investing in our future generations is central to our way of thinking. We will play a key part in supporting our communities and businesses to grow safely and responsibly. When you need us, we will respond quickly and professionally to limit distress, harm and economic loss.

- "Act to Protect and Save - to prevent emergencies, create safer communities and respond, when required, in order to save life" (DSFRS mission statement)

DSFRS Vision: Our vision is to make Devon and Somerset a 'safer place to live, work and visit'.

7. Recommendations

A number of themes have emerged from our research into employer branding and our focus on understanding to what level the employer brand is clear and embedded within our fire services. This has enabled us to focus on some recommendations to assist with ensuring a strong employer brand that meets the needs of a diverse workforce. Within these recommendations consideration should be given to whether a more segmented approach to communicating the brand may be effective as different staff groups will be looking for different messages and this may ensure the greatest buy-in and engagement. The themes that we identified were:

- Ensure senior leadership buy-in
- Take a 'Health Check' of the organisation
- Communication of the employer brand to existing and potential employees
- Promote the benefits of working for the fire service more widely

- Review recruitment process
- Review On-boarding/Induction
- Measure the impact of the employer brand

Ensure senior leadership buy-in

Our senior leaders should be clear about the importance and benefits of having a strong brand as they need to be engaged in defining what the offering is to potential and existing employees. Our research has identified that if an organisation is able to develop an effective employer brand and communicate this successfully it will increase the employees' connection, loyalty and engagement to the organisation. Senior leadership buy-in and involvement should be evident throughout the fire service and will have an impact on the other recommendations listed below. As discussed below, there should be cross functional involvement in embedding the brand as it is widely agreed that responsibility for the employer brand does not just sit with HR.

Take a 'Health Check' of the organisation

We need to be clear that managers are 'living the brand' and understand whether there are more improvements that can be put in place.

- In DWFRS, there is an 'Eyes and Ears' forum. This group is an effective way of supporting and monitoring the employer brand to shape the culture of the organisation. This group could have a greater involvement in actively supporting communication of the employer brand in the other recommendation areas identified in this report.
- Once DSFRS have the results from their staff engagement survey it would be beneficial to have a similar engagement group to take findings forward.
- The Corporate survey indicated that a key draw for working for the fire service was that people believed in the values and ethics of the Service. Staff also rated highly the work the Service does and the benefit it brings to the community; enjoying their job; and having a work-life balance. These findings are useful in ensuring that these key messages are publicised throughout recruitment, and sustained in our working culture and practices. Linked to this, research identified that it was important that the employer brand linked to values, people strategy, HR policies and the organisation brand. A review to ensure that this is the case would be beneficial in terms of ensuring a cascade of the values and culture through all aspects of the organisation and its outward facing employer brand communication. As well as the messages identified from the survey, this should take on board the increased focus on growing the diversity of the workforce which is an important message emerging from national fire service reviews.

Communication of the employer brand to existing and potential employees

It has been identified that it is important to engage employees and potential employees with the brand. A variety of methods of communication should be used to be able to do this effectively and we have discussed various methods already used within our fire services to communicate with staff; however, another area for consideration is to ensure that the culture, values and behaviours continue to be echoed to existing staff in their appraisals.

The surveys looked at the use of social media and mobile phones and results indicated that it may be necessary to adopt a wide range of media for communications (including increased use of social media) in order to reach the widest number of applicants from different age groups, therefore attracting a more diverse workforce. As may have been anticipated, Facebook and YouTube are the main social media used by staff outside of work and there are links to them from the Service's online recruitment pages.

It is important to consider that the literature review highlighted the increasing importance of social media outside of organisations with forums where people can comment on workplaces (such as Glassdoor). Research concluded that negative and positive comments in social media about an employer can have a direct impact on the image it seeks to represent and organisations should be keen to monitor how they are perceived in this media or indeed take an active role in how they are represented.

- A recommendation would be for each Service to undertake a further review of how it interacts with various social media in order to promote their vacancies as well as their positive working environments and cultures.
- Similarly, a review of each Service's website and recruitment pages is important to ensure that applicants, or indeed members of the public, are suitably informed and have a strong perception of the culture of the Services as employers. Increasingly the website is the main source of information about the Services for people who are external to the organisation and therefore it is key to present our culture and values effectively. Consideration should be given to increasing the number of images of staff at work in a variety of different teams (ensuring that diversity is reflected) with input from staff about what it is like to work for the fire service.
- Our research indicated that 'ownership' of the employer brand does not just sit within HR, but should have involvement and collaboration from teams such as Communications and Marketing to communicate the brand. Bearing this in mind, wider consideration should be given to how the employer brand can continue to be communicated to existing employees – with use of intranet as the 'driving

force' to communicate consistent messages. For external communication, as well as reviewing the website, evaluation of recruitment literature used at events should take place as well as considering how fire service presence at community events/initiatives and careers fairs can be used to more effectively promote the employer brand.

Promote the benefits of working for the fire service more widely

This is important for public sector organisations where pay increases have been frozen in recent years and pay is therefore not necessarily at the centre of the reward package.

Our corporate survey indicated that the most widely known about benefits are the Local Government Pension Scheme and the Flexitime Scheme - a clear indication that the message about other benefits is not widely received by applicants. Taking this on board, the lesser known benefits such as family friendly policies and supportive health and wellbeing initiatives are potentially not being tapped into as a 'draw' for candidates. Similarly, information about staff development opportunities could be more widely communicated as there was comment from survey respondents that this would be a factor that would improve their perception of the Services as an employer of choice.

- The benefits of working for the Service should be publicised more widely on the DWFRS general recruitment information web pages and also linked to the individual jobs being advertised. There should also be more information about the counties of Dorset and Wiltshire as great places to live and work.
- The benefits are already publicised as an attachment to individual jobs on the DSFRS website. However, greater publicity on the recruitment information pages should also be considered along with information about the counties of Devon and Somerset as great places to live and work.
- Both Services should consider an engaging approach to promoting the benefits, with use of images and comments from staff 'selling' how the benefits work for them.

Review the recruitment process

The majority of Corporate applicants believe that the recruitment process is professional, engaging and valued them as an applicant. There were only a few negative comments that emerged from the corporate surveys. It is important to identify whether the negative comments received are a valid pattern or one-off issues for individual applicants – comments related to issues with the website application process not being user friendly; feeling that the process was long winded; and having difficulty in being able to speak with the new line manger after the interview process.

- Consider setting up a focus group with recent new starters to identify areas for improvement in the recruitment process. The Service's need to be sure there is complete alignment between what the candidate expects from the employer brand communicated on the recruitment pages, to what they actually experience.

Review On-boarding/Induction

It is widely identified that induction has a significant impact on employee engagement and alignment to the employer brand and culture of the organisation. Therefore a major influence on engagement and identification with the brand would be to provide an effective on-boarding process.

It is important to ensure that all staff are receiving the same consistent 'messages' about the Services on appointment and are having the best possible chance at integration and understanding of the Services and their values.

- For DWFRS a recommendation is to review team induction and the corporate induction programme as well as the evaluation feedback received from participants. This review will ensure that it is effectively linking to the employer brand and delivering the outcomes required.
- There is a similar recommendation for DSFRS; however, there may also be consideration to introducing a formal induction session bringing all new starters together from every staff group for cross functional integration. This would be an ideal forum to have a consistent approach to sharing information about the wider work the Service does as well as re-emphasising its culture, values and ethics.

Measure the impact of the employer brand

As outlined previously there are several ways to measure the success of the employer brand and it is important to identify the most appropriate before and after measures taking on board the recommendations above. It will be important to understand how improving the brand has created value, and increased engagement and organisational effectiveness.

The recommendation is to review the areas where the Services wish to make the most in-roads and consider the metric options discussed in the literature review to identify and provide hard evidence where progress has been made.

Additional on-call Recommendations

For the On-call Firefighters the survey was predominantly used for DSFRS with staff with up to 9 years' service providing feedback. This give further insight into how we can impact the retention as well recruitment which are both aspects of employer branding and this raised some actions that can be considered for future improvements alongside other appropriate actions:

Attraction & Recruitment

- Determine our future role for On-call Firefighters through the Service risk plans so that we can ensure that we are attracting staff for our current and future requirements.
- Use the discovery research from this report to support further workshops to create an Employee Value Proposition.
- Focus attraction on diversity and incorporate the careers available for On-call and where there are crossover points to Wholetime eg Crew and Watch Manager selection processes.
- The Service website also needs to be compatible with mobile phones since people are more likely nowadays to access information via a range of devices.
- Improve the social media footprint by advertising through selective social media channels with targeted use of station Facebook and local Facebook job pages and short YouTube video clips.
- Enhance our website with employee profiles/perspectives which are more personal and tell external candidates what it can be like to work for the Service.
- Service Ambassadors can be created who are active on-line and with training can create story-led content with employee experiences which will support the attraction of suitable candidates. Ambassador video footage could also be used as part of a Service News Desk.
- Seek to encourage TV channels/producers to create a life-interest or drama programme about On-call firefighters either through the National Fire Chiefs' Council or through direct contact. This would make excellent viewing with the people stories, scenery and action but also raise awareness of the role.
- Train a station lead contact in the importance of diversity and the recruitment process including how to use the e-recruitment system.
- Map the recruitment process incorporating the changes to online testing and local interviews and ensure that it is clear to managers, staff and applicants.
- Monitor the time from enquiry to appointment and use this data to improve performance.

Working with Primary Employers

- Create recognition for employers who are supportive of the work of the FRS with an On-call Firefighter supporter logo that can be used as part of their marketing and a framed certificate or plaque to display at their premises. This

could be presented to the employer by the station with the associated publicity that can be gained from this.

- Keep a register of On-call employer supporters with contact details and send information periodically to them eg newsletters.
- Use this database to help consider the feasibility of an Employer annual awards evening.
- Contact existing On-call primary employers seeking feedback on the benefits and issues with supporting On-call firefighters.
- Provide employer information leaflets which can be distributed to stations for applicants to give to employers.
- Invite perspective applicant employers to visit the local station and learn more about the valuable service that the station provides and have a go with the equipment available.

Reviewing the Rewards (DSFRS)

- Offer more flexible commitments for cover periods eg 42 hours or annualised hours through agreement with Trade Unions for a pro-rata retaining fee.
- Consider converting set retaining fees to hourly availability payments using current rates so that staff can flex up or down the cover they give.

Improving the Development of Technical Skills (DSFRS)

- Used phased or selective alerting to ensure that only the required numbers are required to attend at the station rather than having more people than needed turn-up. This can be combined with a ladder system so that those that have not been on 'shouts' are given higher priority and therefore maintain their competence.
- Allow new recruits to ride the appliance at the earliest opportunity as an observer/auxiliary once manual handling training is given.
- Consider allowing Wholetime staffing to drop below establishment levels through natural turnover so that there are more opportunities for On-call firefighters to be part of a staffing pool and to occasionally work a Wholetime shift. This will enhance their development and support their integration with Wholetime firefighters as well as making On-call more attractive.
- Give further consideration as part of the DSFRS Service Integrated Risk Management Plan as to whether certain strategic stations can have a part-time commitment for positive hours as well as being On-call.

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Appendix 1 - Support Staff Survey – Employer Branding

BASIC DETAILS:

1. Which age band do you fall within:

- 18 - 25
- 26 - 30
- 31 - 35
- 36 - 40
- 41 - 45
- 46 - 50
- 51 - 55
- 56 - 60
- 60+

2. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

3. How long have you worked for the Service?

- Less than 3 months
- 3 to 12 months
- 13 to 24 months

4. What is the nature of your employment contract, please tick all that apply:

- Full time
- Part time
- Permanent contract
- Fixed term contract

MAIN QUESTIONS:

5. What was your perception of the Service as an employer before you applied for your current role?

- Excellent
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Poor
- Very poor
- Don't know

6. Which of these most popular social media sites do you use outside of work?

Please rank from most to least used (1 being most used and 7 being least used):

| | |
|--|--|
| | Twitter |
| | Facebook |
| | YouTube |
| | Instagram |
| | Pinterest |
| | Tumblr |
| | LinkedIn |
| | Other |
| | None of the above/I don't use social media |

7. How did you first hear about the vacancy you applied for? Please tick all that apply:

- Local Press
- National Press
- Specialist Journal
- Social Media (eg Twitter, Facebook)
- Service Website Recruitment Pages
- Agency Website
- Word of Mouth
- Radio
- Job Centre
- Poster or Leaflet
- FRS Event
- Other

8. What research did you do before applying to join the Service? Please tick all that apply:

- Checked on Social Media to see what others were saying about the Service as an employer
- Compared what benefits the Service was offering with other employers
- Spoke to others to gain their opinion of the Service
- Visited the recruitment pages on the Service website
- Searched for more information on the Service website about the Service
- I didn't do any research
- Other – please advise

9. My mobile phone was an important part of my job search and is the main technology device that I use for searches and communication:

- Agree
- Disagree

10. I believe the Service's website recruitment pages provided me with enough information about the Service and the job I applied for:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

11. I believe the recruitment and selection process was professional, engaging and valued me as an applicant (eg satisfactory job information, application process, interview and selection process):

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12. On application, which of the following benefits of working for the Service were clear to you (tick all that you were aware of):

- Flexitime scheme
- Supportive Health and Wellbeing services (including occupational health, physiotherapy, counselling, access to fitness equipment, advice and support)
- Local Government Pension Scheme
- Childcare Vouchers
- Corporate discounts for being a Fire Service employee
- Family friendly policies (eg higher than statutory maternity and adoption pay, special leave)
- Potential access to relevant further education
- Induction and training to support being effective and efficient in role
- I wasn't aware of any benefits at the application stage

13. I believe the process of bringing me into the organisation (after I accepted the job offer) was an effective and positive experience (eg job offer, provision of contract, induction):

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

14. On starting with the Service, I believe my induction into my role within my team was effective in helping me understand my role and how it fits with the work of the wider Service:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

15. My job is measuring up to the expectations I had when I joined:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

16. The Service is measuring up to the expectations I had of it as an employer:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

17. I would like to be working for the Service a year from now:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Any comments:

18. If you did think about leaving in the future, please rank the reasons why this might be the case (from 1 which is not important to 5 which is extremely important):

| | |
|--|--|
| | Better career prospects elsewhere |
| | Salary too low |
| | Lack of training and development |
| | Leadership and management of the organisation |
| | Workloads are too high |
| | My job is not as I thought it would be |
| | The organisation is not living up to my expectations |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| | Other reasons |
|--|---------------|

If other reasons then please state:

19. Please rank the following criteria as reasons why you work for the Service (1 is not important to 5 extremely important):

| | |
|--|---|
| | I enjoy my job |
| | I have a say about how things are done |
| | There are good career prospects for me |
| | There are relevant training and development opportunities available to me |
| | I value the work the Service does and the benefit it brings to the community |
| | I believe in the values and ethics of the Service |
| | I am a good 'fit' for the culture of the organisation |
| | Others in the community have a high regard for us and the service we provide |
| | My pay is fair |
| | Pension |
| | Flexible working |
| | Work/life balance |
| | I believe I am valued by my manager and my colleagues |
| | I believe there is strong leadership and management to take the Service forward |
| | Other reasons |

If other reasons then please state:

20. I would recommend the Service as a great employer:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

21. I am proud to work for the Service:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

22. What else can we do to attract and retain staff and be a great Employer of Choice?

Appendix 2: Realistic Recruitment – Survey of Existing On-call Staff

BASIC DETAILS:

1. How old are you? (Please tick)

- 18 – 25
- 26 – 30
- 31 – 35
- 36 – 40
- 41 – 45
- 46 – 50
- 51 – 55
- 56 – 60
- 60+

2. What is your Length of Service? (Please tick)

- Under 1 year
- 1 – 2 years
- 2 – 3 years
- 3 – 4 years
- 4 – 5 years
- 5 – 6 years
- 6 – 7 years
- 7 – 8 years
- 9 years and over

3. What is your gender? _____

4. Do you have employment outside of the FRS? Yes/No*

*Delete as appropriate

5. Please tick which applies to your role outside of the FRS:

- Employed
- Self-employed

6. How many incidents would you say you personally attend on average per month (attendances rather than turn-outs)? ____

7. How many turnouts would you say that you personally attend on average per month? ____

8. When considering the types of incident you attend, please rank them in terms of frequency? (Where 1 is the most frequent and 4 the least frequent)

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| | Fire |
| | RTC |
| | Co-Responder (if applicable) |
| | Other |

MAIN QUESTIONS:

9. Did you ever previously consider undertaking any other public service role eg Police Specials, Army Reserves, First Responders, RNLI, Coastguard? Yes/No (Delete as appropriate)

If yes, which of these? _____

And why did you choose the Fire & Rescue Service over these other choices?

10. When you first joined the Service, how did you hear about the vacancy at your local station? Please tick all those applicable:

- Word of mouth
- Banner at the Station
- Local newspapers
- Posters, leaflets or postcards
- Social Media
- Open day
- Service Website
- Any others:

11. Which statements below best describe what attracted you to join the Service and how well do you think that these have been fulfilled?

(You only need to rate the statements that you consider as important and for each of these, please score 1 to 5 where 5 is the highest rating of importance)

| Statement | Attraction to Join (1-5) | How well Fulfilled (1-5) |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| To undertake an exciting and challenging role | | |
| To keep your community safe | | |
| To be a respected member of your community through the work you do as an on-call Firefighter | | |
| To be trained in new skills | | |
| To work as part of a team | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| The camaraderie associated with being part of the Service | | |
| Additional pay and pension benefits to help support you through life | | |
| To progress to a full-time career in the Fire & Rescue Service | | |
| Other – please state | | |

12. Please rate the following advertising messages in terms of whether you consider them realistic and motivational in encouraging new recruits to apply:

(Please score each one 1 to 5 where 5 is the highest rating)

| | |
|--|--|
| | Are you ready to save a life? |
| | Ordinary people in your community doing extraordinary work |
| | Have you got what it takes? |
| | Train together, Work together, Save together |
| | Could you be at the heart of your community? |
| | Join our crew |
| | In the Community, for the Community |
| | Be Extra Ordinary |
| | Think you know firefighters – think again... |
| | Are you ready to keep our communities safe every day? |
| | On-call Firefighters make a real difference |
| | Help rescue people from harm? |

Can you suggest any other suitable messages?

13. Did you believe that there were any barriers to recruitment as an on-call Firefighter?

(Please tick any that you thought might have been barriers):

- Only young men can be considered
- That you need qualifications
- That there is huge competition for a job
- That there is an upper age range
- That you have to be incredibly fit
- That you have to remain at the station rather than providing cover from your home or work
- Whether you could combine being an on-call Firefighter with your other activities
- Whether your employer would agree to you being on-call
- Other – please state below

14. Please describe the 3 best things about being part of the Fire & Rescue Service:
15. What do you consider are the most important qualities to be an On-call Firefighter?
16. role name best tells potential new recruits what we do? Please tick one of the following:

- Retained Firefighter
- On-call Firefighter
- Community Firefighter
- Part-time Firefighter
- Local On-call Firefighter

Any other suggestions for the role name?

17. Please rate the recruitment and selection process in terms of whether it was professional, engaging and valued you as an applicant (eg job information, application process and selection process): (Please tick)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

18. Is your job measuring up to the expectations you had when you joined: (Please tick)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

19. Is the Service measuring up to the expectations you had of it as an employer when you joined: (Please tick)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

20. What else we can do to attract and retain On-call staff and be a great employer of choice?

| Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an EVP – tagline? • Does it distinguish the employer from others? • Is the message clear and unambiguous? • Are culture and values clear? Vision, values and behaviours? | Are there clear messages about attracting a diverse workforce? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional image and ease of website navigation when looking for jobs and organisation information. Are graphics recognisable and consistent? • Is info about specific jobs clear? • Social Media links? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the benefits of working for them clear? • Are messages about community involvement, volunteering? |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|
| DWFRS | <p>‘Be one of us’ is tagline for Wholetime FF recruitment. There is no tagline for On-Call or Corporate staff. The Recruitment home page has links to different staff groups, Volunteering, values and behaviours, pay policies. There is the Service badge on the recruitment home page – text, no pictures. Possible to search for vacancies by contract type, working hours, location etc. There is no EVP stated. Access to Values and Behaviours is on a link on the recruitment home page. This goes to a page that provides a service statement re behaviours and a link to download the full Behaviour doc. Includes a picture – not all text. Can click on a link to complete behaviours self-assessment.</p> | <p>Link to E&D. ‘Passionate about changing and saving lives’ mission statement is pictured. Page about commitment to E&D - and link to an Equality Information Report.</p> | <p>Easy to navigate and find information out about the Service. Specific job info includes JD and PS and application guidance notes. Social media links to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn are at the bottom of the recruitment home page.</p> | <p>Investing in Volunteering logo is at the bottom of the page – very small. However, Volunteering is a clear link to access on the recruitment home page – when access the page there is a picture of volunteers at work and also a statement about opportunities and the benefits of volunteering. Education information about working with young and vulnerable people is only clear from Service home page. Benefits are not obvious. They are not on the recruitment home page or linked to specific vacancies.</p> |
| DSFRS | <p>‘Working for us’ page has separate links off to On-Call, Wholetime and then Current Vacancies (non-uniform</p> | <p>All the logos for Positive about Disabled People,</p> | <p>Site is easy to navigate and consistent in approach and use of logo and red colour theme.</p> | <p>Support staff advert contains information on salary, pensions scheme and annual leave</p> |

| Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an EVP – tagline? • Does it distinguish the employer from others? • Is the message clear and unambiguous? • Are culture and values clear? Vision, values and behaviours? | Are there clear messages about attracting a diverse workforce? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional image and ease of website navigation when looking for jobs and organisation information. Are graphics recognisable and consistent? • Is info about specific jobs clear? • Social Media links? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the benefits of working for them clear? • Are messages about community involvement, volunteering? |
|---------------|---|--|--|--|
| | <p>staff group not specifically mentioned). Empty box in centre of page – IT issues with my laptop or error on site?</p> <p>There is no obvious EVP on home page.</p> <p>Values and Behaviours framework is stated in the job advert – but no link to where you can get further or more detailed information.</p> | <p>Stonewall etc are at the bottom of recruitment pages. Need to go back to Service home page to click on a separate link to see E&D statement and information. Use of picture – not all text. There are other links from here to Positive Action (pictures used of female FFs); also core values in detail, equality objective etc – very detailed information.</p> | <p>At bottom of home page there is ability to link to Facebook, Twitter and ‘share’ with other social media (very small).</p> | <p>entitlement. There is an Additional Information Factsheet attached to jobs that lists the benefits – it is not obvious that this is the benefits until you click into it. Information on volunteering or whether this is an option is not clear.</p> <p>Work with young people is clear from home page.</p> |
| Dorset Police | <p>‘Be part of something more’ is the message on page 1. Functional site that provides process information. No</p> | <p>There is a link to click on to take you to a page on Positive Action. All Text – no</p> | <p>Use of graphics is limited. Images of people are not used up front. Consistent layout. Easy to click on links and find</p> | <p>Salary is quoted in advert – but other benefits are not clearly visible. Attendance management</p> |

| Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an EVP – tagline? • Does it distinguish the employer from others? • Is the message clear and unambiguous? • Are culture and values clear? Vision, values and behaviours? | Are there clear messages about attracting a diverse workforce? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional image and ease of website navigation when looking for jobs and organisation information. Are graphics recognisable and consistent? • Is info about specific jobs clear? • Social Media links? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the benefits of working for them clear? • Are messages about community involvement, volunteering? |
|---------------------|---|---|--|---|
| | <p>images other than police badge/logo. Not eye catching. There is a link to the values and priorities and the code of ethics and Police and Crime Plan. Easy to click on links to find out info about the force – various stat’s on crime rates etc</p> | <p>images. You can fill in a form on line to have contact from someone who will discuss whether you need any assistance.</p> | <p>out more information. Traditional formal approach. JD and PS criteria are very detailed and lengthy – lots of lists.</p> <p>Twitter, Facebook, flickr and YouTube are available – but greyed, so not standing out. At bottom left of page under ‘other sites’</p> | <p>document is part of the job information!</p> <p>There are links to click on to find out about volunteering in administrative roles.</p> |
| London Fire Brigade | <p>‘Join London FB’ is at the top. Large boxes across the page entitled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to Apply • Benefits • Inclusion • Health and Safety <p>YouTube box with a film ‘Recruitment Start a new career’</p> <p>Large logos for Stonewall and Positive About Disabled People.</p> <p>Vision and values are not clearly evident on the recruitment home</p> | <p>Large link from home page takes you to Inclusion message with large image of Rainbow fire engine. Statement about commitment and strategy for E&D Pictures of people and comment from black FF and female Station Manager.</p> | <p>Colour theme of red is on each page with LFB logo.</p> <p>Information about the jobs is clear – a JD is provided for each.</p> <p>Links to social media are at the bottom of each individual job advert and not on the recruitment home page.</p> | <p>Large link from home page describes benefits that are for operational and non-operational roles. Mention flexible working, pension, childcare, annual leave etc.</p> <p>No information about volunteering is evident on the recruitment home page.</p> |

| Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an EVP – tagline? • Does it distinguish the employer from others? • Is the message clear and unambiguous? • Are culture and values clear? Vision, values and behaviours? | Are there clear messages about attracting a diverse workforce? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional image and ease of website navigation when looking for jobs and organisation information. Are graphics recognisable and consistent? • Is info about specific jobs clear? • Social Media links? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the benefits of working for them clear? • Are messages about community involvement, volunteering? |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | <p>page. There is a separate page for careers that you do not appear to be able to link to from the recruitment page – but can only get to from LFB home page. ‘Protecting the future of others’ is a statement that may be an EVP.</p> <p>Under FF recruitment is a picture of a home safety check taking place (rather than a fire picture).</p> <p>It is not obvious about where to access the behaviours/values.</p> | | | |
| Bournemouth Borough Council | <p>Initial landing page has a picture of the head office to link off to recruitment page. Play box short film clip near top of recruitment page ‘selling’ Bournemouth as a coastal location and lifestyle – destination to live and work. Use of images to demonstrate volunteering, social care, E & D with links to find out more information. Links to finding out information about living in Bournemouth, the benefits of</p> | <p>E&D info is followed from a link from first recruitment page. Application advice covers ‘disability confident’ – no images – text only.</p> | <p>Logo and ‘Building a Better Bournemouth’ mission statement is on every page. Consistent approach. Easy to navigate. JD and PS are available and clear with a section for ‘Career Path Linked to this Post’ to give wider picture of future prospects. Not clear where to find more detailed info on ‘Qualities and</p> | <p>Link from page one to all the benefits. Gives detail about flexible working, pension, family support, wellbeing, cycle to work etc. Text – no images.</p> <p>Volunteering is a link from first recruitment page.</p> |

| Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an EVP – tagline? • Does it distinguish the employer from others? • Is the message clear and unambiguous? • Are culture and values clear? Vision, values and behaviours? | Are there clear messages about attracting a diverse workforce? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional image and ease of website navigation when looking for jobs and organisation information. Are graphics recognisable and consistent? • Is info about specific jobs clear? • Social Media links? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the benefits of working for them clear? • Are messages about community involvement, volunteering? |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | <p>working for BBC and Learning and Development. It is not clear on recruitment pages where to find the vision, behaviours and values ('Qualities and Attitude'). The Application Advice link doesn't provide info on what you will be assessed against – the behaviours expected are on the JD but it is not clear where to find descriptors.</p> | | <p>attitude' other than those listed on the JD.</p> <p>Not easy to navigate back to home page from Recruitment to get more info about the Council.</p> <p>Social media links not evident on home recruitment page.</p> | |
| Dorset County Council | <p>The recruitment pages are for Combined job page for North Dorset, Purbeck DC, Christchurch and East Dorset and Dorset CC. Mission statement – 'Dorset for You'. Segmented – can take you to the 'Proud to Care' page for social care jobs.</p> <p>There is a current feed of Tweets about jobs on top right of page. Tab on living in Dorset and quality of life (image of countryside) with links to tourist information.</p> | <p>Very small link to E&D statement at the bottom of the page like a footer – sits next to link for terms and conditions of the website, Privacy and Cookies, Accessibility – not very prominent.</p> | <p>Tabs for 'Working for us', 'Benefits', 'learning and development'. Each one provides more detailed information. Working for us has images of employees and their story about working for the council – a personal approach. There is a link to each councils learning and development opportunities for employees. Text only.</p> | <p>There is a Benefits tab that goes into detail about rewards and benefits including increments, pension, health and wellbeing, work life balance, support available etc – a good level of detail – Text only.</p> <p>Not clear as it is a combined site for several councils</p> |

| Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an EVP – tagline? • Does it distinguish the employer from others? • Is the message clear and unambiguous? • Are culture and values clear? Vision, values and behaviours? | Are there clear messages about attracting a diverse workforce? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional image and ease of website navigation when looking for jobs and organisation information. Are graphics recognisable and consistent? • Is info about specific jobs clear? • Social Media links? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the benefits of working for them clear? • Are messages about community involvement, volunteering? |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| | | | <p>Easy to navigate and can search for jobs by location, type and a headline tells you how many jobs are currently available. Links to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube along bottom of page. Info on jobs is available through JD and PS etc and a document showing behaviours. There is also a context statement that shows where the role sits in the team and the wider picture about the role and context of the work and the team to the organisation. Links to Facebook, Twitter, flickr, Google Plus at bottom.</p> | |
| Wiltshire Council (EPIC) | Vision and values clear on front recruitment page. Photographs of people link to jobs, ie the face of Social care, Apprenticeships. Strong | Photo's on front page are of white women and men with a mix of ages. | Easy to search for jobs. Advert is clear with easy access to JD and Behaviours from the advert. Map of location of role is near | There is a tab for 'what we offer'. Can click on an Experience EPIC guide to understand the benefits – covers flexible working, pensions as |

| Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an EVP – tagline? • Does it distinguish the employer from others? • Is the message clear and unambiguous? • Are culture and values clear? Vision, values and behaviours? | Are there clear messages about attracting a diverse workforce? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional image and ease of website navigation when looking for jobs and organisation information. Are graphics recognisable and consistent? • Is info about specific jobs clear? • Social Media links? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the benefits of working for them clear? • Are messages about community involvement, volunteering? |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|
| | message about careers and realising your ambition. Can click on short film clips to meet the people who work there 'Live Work Explore', 'Live Work Innovate', 'Live work Care'. Consistent and clear – Hear first hand from employees about roles. Can take a Behaviour Quiz on page 1 to see if you're the 'right match' – tells you what they are looking for and the sort of person you need to be to work for them. | Equality and Diversity information is included in the Experience EPIC document under 'What We Offer' tab on front page. Photo's are less obvious in terms of reflecting disabled employees or BAME. | the bottom and also the facility to Tweet and share the role on Facebook, LinkedIn or by email. 'Wiltshire Facts' are shown scrolling through different information at the bottom 'selling' the county as a place to work and the organisation in terms of its engagement stat's etc. | well as social involvement (eg choir), development & coaching. Up front about using Glassdoor to check what employees think so they can improve. Pictures of working environment and lots of pictures of staff at work. #LoveWhereYouWork #3BestThings – YouTube clips from staff who tell why they love working there. Health and Wellbeing, community are covered here as well. Very comprehensive in getting across values. Opportunities to volunteer are clear on front page. |
| Devon County Council | Find a link from DCC home page to 'Search for Job vacancies' this links to a page that lists all jobs vacant. Need to click on tabs to get information about specific work areas and advice | Need to link to specific authorities where the vacancies are based. | Navigation is mixed – it is all there but you need to look for it. JD is available for DCC jobs and encompasses PS, Health & | Need to link to specific authorities where the vacancies are based. Cannot see specific link to Benefits for DCC jobs. |

| Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there an EVP – tagline? Does it distinguish the employer from others? Is the message clear and unambiguous? Are culture and values clear? Vision, values and behaviours? | Are there clear messages about attracting a diverse workforce? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional image and ease of website navigation when looking for jobs and organisation information. Are graphics recognisable and consistent? Is info about specific jobs clear? Social Media links? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the benefits of working for them clear? Are messages about community involvement, volunteering? |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| | <p>on applying. ‘Devonjobs’ is the tagline for the page but not EVP visible as it is a landing page for jobs from various public sector bodies in Devon. Need to link to each separate job to understand more about where you are applying to.</p> <p>The route to applying for a job is mixed - for DCC jobs it is online via this site or need to contact each individual advertiser and potentially request a paper copy or have application info emailed to you.</p> <p>Map showing job location is provided. Once you have accessed a DCC job the link to behaviours, values etc for the council are not evident.</p> | No obvious info for DCC jobs in this area. | <p>Safety info and JE factor information. Structure chart for team where job is based is also available.</p> <p>Links to social media are not evident on recruitment home page. Only once you click into a specific job are links to social media available to ‘like’ and ‘share’ only.</p> | |
| Cardiff Council – Best Employee Engagement Award (CIPD) | Text based job pages with Council logo at the top. There is no obvious EVP. Home page is geared around searching for jobs and facility to | There is an Equal Opportunities statement attached to each job vacancy to be opened along | Site is easy to use and links to further information are clear. All text (other than council logo) – no pictures. | ‘Why join us’ link details all the benefits clearly. |

| Organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an EVP – tagline? • Does it distinguish the employer from others? • Is the message clear and unambiguous? • Are culture and values clear? Vision, values and behaviours? | Are there clear messages about attracting a diverse workforce? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional image and ease of website navigation when looking for jobs and organisation information. Are graphics recognisable and consistent? • Is info about specific jobs clear? • Social Media links? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the benefits of working for them clear? • Are messages about community involvement, volunteering? |
|---------------------|---|---|---|--|
| | <p>search by location, job category, salary, working hours etc. There is a link to information about living in Cardiff, and also a link to information about the council. This provides info on their key areas of responsibility and their corporate plan.</p> <p>There is an ‘Employee Charter’ attached to each job that details culture and values and 9 behaviours expected of employees, managers and senior managers. This page is bright and engaging with pictures of people. Strapline here is: ‘Make the difference’</p> | <p>with JD, PS etc. It outlines their commitment to ED.</p> | <p>Info attached to jobs is clear – PS, JD, E&D statement, Employee Charter, Application Guidance. No links to social media on home page.</p> | |