

Questionnaire for completion by Fire and Rescue Authority

Section1: Recruitment of firefighters

1 (a). Do you plan future recruitment according to the following factors? (please tick as appropriate):

Predicted rates of staff turnover	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Promotions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Overall number of firefighters needed as per your Integrated Risk Management Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Likely task/role changes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advancement of technology	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

1 (b) Please attach a copy of your recruitment plans if available.

Only RDS recruitment takes place and this is continual dependant on needs across the Service.

2. Are there any other factors you take into account in planning recruitment?

The needs of individual stations including level of cover required.

3 (a). Do you place a cap on the number of applications per vacancy?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3 (b). If YES, please give details on how such a cap is decided

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4 (a). Are vacancies advertised for a specified period of time?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4 (b) If YES, please give details on length of period and method of advertising

We don't formally advertise our RDS vacancies in the normally accepted sense of 'advertise'. However, we use a range of methods to market and publicise that we are recruiting at specific stations. The range of options includes advertising on our website, local town websites, parish newsletters, leaflet drops targeting households within the 5 minute turnout criteria, station advertising boards, word of mouth, Twitter and Facebook. Occasionally media releases are sent out and this can result in free advertising in the local press.

5. Do you consider that role maps and/or the grey book adversely impact recruitment? (Please tick)

Not at all	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Prevention of recruiting above the basic entry grade	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prevention of setting academic entry standards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of firefighters recruited	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contracted working hours, i.e. full or part time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rigid pay structure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of fire staff to do non-operational roles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of assessment centres	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

6 (a). Do you operate a graduate recruitment scheme?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

6 (b) If you do not operate a graduate recruitment scheme, please state why?

Cost, effort and resource would not be justified as very limited opportunity for applicants. All promotion staff are given development opportunities to achieve the highest academic qualifications required for the specified post and we have a very high calibre of internal applicant for all positions.

7) Please detail your selection criteria for external recruitment.

Bespoke dependent on need, normally the Principal Officer and specialist positions, but an infrequent situation.

Section 2: Promotion of firefighters

8. Please give details of your selection criteria for internal promotion

Selection criteria differs for each role and is based on the requirements of the role map but involves full assessment of past activities and experience, qualifications, competence and suitability for role and post.

9. Do you think it would be beneficial following a promotion process or development discussion to give individuals the opportunity to move to different...

Please tick.

...Authorities?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
...Stations?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
...Watches?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 3. Crewing policy

10 (a). What mechanisms do you currently use to determine the appropriate number of firefighters in any one area?

RDS – see response to Question 10b below

Wholetime – IRMP linked global crewing system and risk assessment based on desired crewing levels, resilience, absence and training levels. This operates alongside an overtime register to minimise employed numbers and brings staff in off duty when needed.

10 (b). By what mechanism do you determine whether an individual fire station should be crewed by on-call staff, whole time staff or a mix,

IRMP linked data and professional judgment led determination, based upon, risk, activity levels and resilience.

10 (c) In response to the above question, do you believe that there is an opportunity to change this method and if so what barriers are there for change?

The current method used in HWFRS is appropriate and fit for purpose. Barriers can be provided by Representative Bodies and political influences. Historical and existing levels of cover and methods for determining fire cover and any proposal to move away from the traditional Grey Book duty systems often pose a challenge in implementing change for the previously stated reasons.

10 (d) Do you think there are benefits to changing the mechanism?

There does not need to be a formal mechanism, this will perpetuate the legacy issues. It should be an open evaluation based upon strategic needs, risk, activity levels and available resources. Greater flexibility within the Grey Book to create duty systems in accordance with local needs or indeed no mention of duty systems in Grey Book, these should be determined locally.

10 (e). By what mechanism do you decide on your crewing levels in each fire station?

Determined by station need based on five personnel on first (WT) appliance and four on second (WT) appliance, currently 12.5 staff for a two pump station and 7 for a one pump station. This is being examined on a Service-wide basis to establish whether reductions can be made.

11 (a). Has your authority ever experienced a conflict or any other issues as a result of staff having second jobs?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

11 (b) If YES, please provide details:

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Section 4: Use of on-call firefighters

12(a) Do you employ on-call/retained firefighters?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

12(b) If NO, please may you state why? (Then skip to Section 5)

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12(c) If YES, how do your on-call/retained firefighters work alongside your whole time crews as part of normal station working?

Integrated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Separate	<input type="checkbox"/>

What benefits or challenges of this approach have you observed:

It has taken time to integrate the two work areas, but this has been achieved successfully. Barriers are usually based on ignorance and prejudice. Initiatives to break down barriers include having RDS staff on overtime (resilience) duties for WT appliances and allowing RDS staff to transfer into WT. Having former RDS staff now at WT middle manager level and having a strategic holistic approach to a workforce as a single entity and not operating each unit independently either operationally or managerially has also contributed significantly to the effective integration of RDS and WT.

12 (d) How many hours are your retained firefighters normally available per month, and how many hours are they required to attend for drill nights and training? :

Normal hours available per month	This can vary between 160 to 480 hours per month. We operate a variety of contracts in relation to hours of availability.
Normal hours required for drill nights/ training	12 hours per month and an additional eight days per year.

13. If you do operate an on-call/retained duty system, what barriers if any have you encountered to operating the system effectively? (please tick as appropriate)

Poor response to recruitment campaigns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Poor standard of applicants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Public perception (lack of understanding of role)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Union tensions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimum expected response times	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cost	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training (commitment required in first two years)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Poor interaction with whole time crews	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer resistance (primary employer)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Level of remuneration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level of commitment required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lack of awareness of on-call system	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No barriers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Please provide details if any of the above apply

Employer engagement and a willingness to release staff from the workplace is a major issue, alongside the need for significant time for staff to be released in the first two year to complete initial training.

National Firefighter Selection tests are wholly inappropriate for RDS personnel (including PQA and IPDS based systems).

Level of commitment is less of an issue due to innovative banded contracts and managed flexibility provided by HWFRS.

Section 5. Grey /Gold Book

15. Which of the following statements do you believe is appropriate in respect of GREY BOOK employees?

The current graded pay structure is appropriate to the provision of current services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The graded pay structure works sometimes but Fire and Rescue Authorities need more flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/>
The graded pay structure coupled with national terms and conditions needs fundamental change to ensure FRSs have the required flexibility to meet the future needs of the service and communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

We do not believe pay levels are an issue in this Authority.

16) Which of the following statements do you believe applies to GOLD BOOK employees?

The current pay structure is appropriate to the provision of current services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The pay structure works sometimes but should be applied either more consistently or flexibly across differing authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>
The pay structure needs fundamental change to ensure value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

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17 (a). Do the 'grey book' and 'role maps' provide appropriate flexibility in the way you manage the existing service?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

17 (b) If NO, what are the issues? (please tick as appropriate)

Operational management/ decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>
People Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of latent capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Co-responding with other emergency services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fear of legal action	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify) Lack of flexibility and too prescriptive especially around duty systems.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

18. Could local terms and conditions enable services to improve the outcomes and value for money to local communities? Please tick

It is not possible to respond to this question via yes/no as the question isn't specific.

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

19 (a). When a member of staff is injured at work or is taken ill, what are the procedures that follow in regards to sign off, sick pay and level of absence? Please provide details.

When an on duty injury occurs the incident is reported by the relevant manager to our Health and Safety team and an appropriate investigation is carried out. The manager records the absence on the HR information system and rota system. Support is provided to the employee by Occupational Health including doctor/ nurse reviews and physiotherapy or counselling if required. A referral is made to the Fire Fighters Charity if appropriate.

Occupational sick pay provisions are in accordance with the employee's terms and conditions of employment.

A comprehensive return to work plan is devised by the relevant manager taking into account occupational health advice.

19(b). Are the current conditions of service a barrier in this process?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

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Section 6. Collaboration with other services

20. Have you explored joint training opportunities with other Fire and Rescue Authorities?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

21 (a). Have you pursued co-responding with other emergency services?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
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No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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21 (b) If NO, to one or both of the above, then what were the reasons for not doing so? (Please tick all that apply)

Role Maps do not allow it	<input type="checkbox"/>
Representative body resistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fear of legal action	<input type="checkbox"/>
No clear leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extra burden on the service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not a priority	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify) Joint training with other FRS' generally works well, however geography and distance can be a barrier Co-responding - Difficulty engaging with Ambulance Service. Local Ambulance Service has chosen Community First Responders rather than the co-responder model as it is cheaper and probably more effective.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please provide details if any of the above apply

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22 (a). Have you explored sharing your estate with other emergency service providers?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

22 (b) If NO, is this the result of an issue related to the grey book?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please Comment:

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23. Have you explored any other opportunities for more closely integrated/ joint working with other fire and rescue services or other organisations? Yes

Please provide comments:

Joint Property Vehicle – a property management venture is being explored with six other public sector partners and the GPU. Sharing of a police and fire station has been successfully implemented Sharing of a community Fire station with Police, Ambulance, voluntary water rescue team and Red Cross is being explored – transitional funding bid to DCLG. Sharing of HQ building with local Police is being explored - transitional funding bid to DCLG.
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Section 7. Industrial relations

24. How do you rate the effectiveness of the National Joint Council as a means of making decisions and resolving disputes?

Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat effective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not at all effective	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

25 (a). If you answered 'very effective' or 'somewhat effective' what do you consider the key strengths of the National Joint Council?

Resolutions are eventually achieved.

25 (b). If you answered 'somewhat effective' or 'not at all effective' what do you consider the key weaknesses of the National Joint Council?

Resolutions take time and the process is restrictive. Why national resolution for local issues? Authorities should have the flexibility to negotiate and implement decisions locally. The NJC route is often seen as a delaying tactic and the ultimate resolution is a compromise that dilutes effectiveness.

26. Does the National Joint Council represent the views of employing authorities effectively?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If not, then please give details why and how this could be improved.

By asking for the views directly. However, it isn't possible for one national organisation to effectively represent the views of FRAs that are so diverse in nature and geographic location.

27. What has been the impact of strike action on your operations? (Not limited to the current industrial dispute over Pensions)

Due to RDS support and the support of non-FBU WT staff the impact has not been as dramatic as is found in other FRAs. Significant resources are required to plan and prepare for strike action and only a minimum standard of resilience cover can be provided. Ultimately this provides, longer response times and lower resilience, alongside a greatly reduced ability to deal with larger incidents.

28 (a). Do you think firefighters should have the right to:

Strike	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strike, but legally required to return to duty in certain	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

circumstances				
Take industrial action short of strike	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be required to maintain a skeleton emergency service to the public in the event of strike action.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be required to give more than 7 days' notice of strike action during a dispute.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

28 (b) If the answer to the last question is yes, how much notice should be given to allow an Authority to prepare for strike action?

It is not possible to achieve a consensus to answer this question that could be considered to be the view of the Fire Authority. The right to strike, or not, is a national government policy decision and, as such, it is within that political arena that a determination should be made. Comments apply to qs. 29(a) and 30 below.

29 (a). Should current return to work arrangements during industrial action be legally formalised?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

29 (b). If yes, who should be held accountable for this arrangement?

Local Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant trade union	<input type="checkbox"/>

30. What industrial relations training do you provide for your managers/employees (by grade)? Please give specific details.

It is part of our development programme for Officers.

If you any further comments you would like to make about firefighters' conditions of service (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-opens-independent-review-of-firefighter-conditions>). Please tell us here.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY.
PLEASE REMEMBER TO SAVE IT AND THEN EMAIL IT TO
Neeta.Patel-Keena@communities.gsi.gov.uk

PLEASE RETURN BY FRIDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2014