Cheshire
Fire Authority

Draft 2024-2028 Community Risk Management Plan

Summary of Pre-consultation Engagement Findings

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Introduction

This report provides a summary of the activity undertaken to develop the draft 2024-2028 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) ahead of the formal consultation on the proposals within the draft CRMP.

While not a formal requirement for fire and rescue services, pre-consultation is increasingly seen as best practice and leads to a more effective and meaningful consultation process that is conducted in line with recognised standards.

The Consultation Institute was contracted to provide support and guidance to assist in the pre-consultation activity. The Institute is a recognised independent specialist, providing quality assurance, guidance and learning in the field of consultation and has worked with several fire and rescue services to support their consultation processes, as well as with many health bodies – where the conducting of pre-consultation is a formal requirement as part of consultation.

This pre-consultation activity undertaken by the Service was intended to help inform and shape the development of proposals which form part of the formal consultation on the draft CRMP. This activity took place between June and September 2023 and is summarised further within this document.

The pre-consultation includes the following activities:

- Online survey for public and staff
- Visioning workshop sessions with Fire Authority Members
- Risk identification workshop with Year 10 work experience students
- Fire cover review workshops with staff
- Trade union briefing

The draft CRMP highlights where learning from our pre-consultation activity has influenced the development of the draft CRMP.

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September 2023

Online survey

The primary tool for engaging the public and staff was via the use of an online survey hosted on the SurveyMonkey platform. The survey was promoted at regular intervals on the Service's social media channels; via a press release; a dedicated feature on the homepage of the Service's website and through direct email to subscribers to the Service's neighbourhood alert system.

The survey ran between 16 June and 17 July 2023 and gathered 185 responses from the public and 226 members of staff.

The survey asked questions on several issues, which are outlined below:

- Views on the guiding principles
- Expected response times for various incidents
- Response standards and associated measuring/reporting
- Number of fire engines and availability
- Crewing arrangements (for staff only)
- On-call duty system
- Risk identification
- Perceptions on value for money and increasing/decreasing the precept (public only)

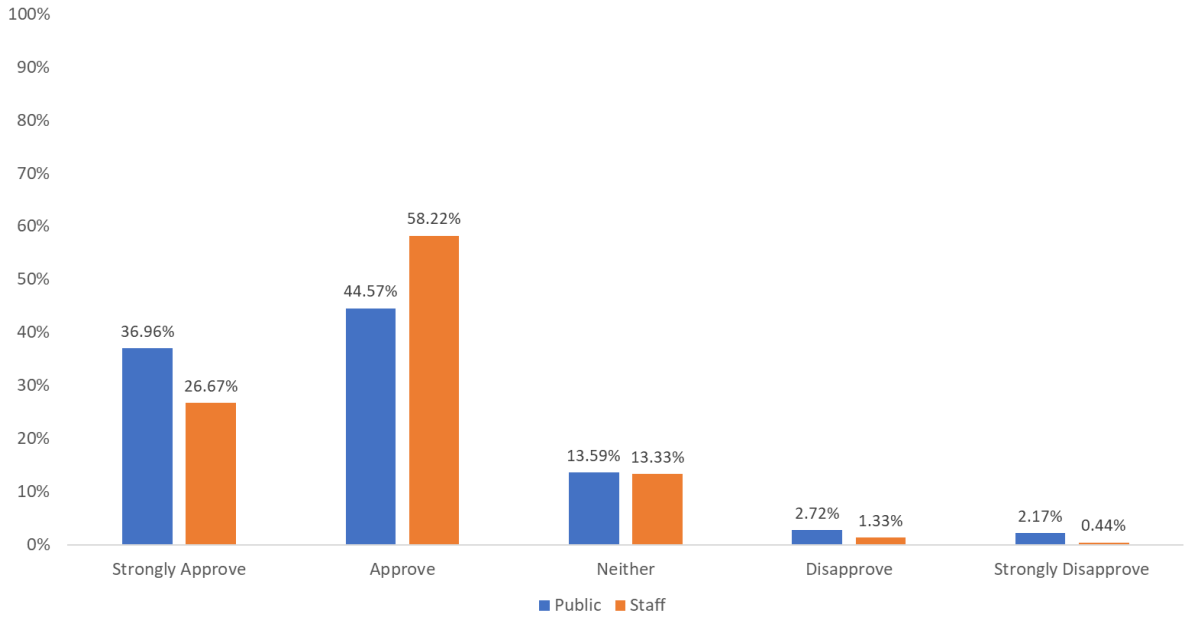
A summary of survey results is provided over the page.

Full results are provided within Annex 1. The free text comments are provided separately as an Appendix to this report.

Summary of survey results

Guiding principles

Survey respondents were asked to what extent they supported the guiding principles to develop the CRMP. 81.5% of the public and 84.9% of staff either approved or strongly approved of the principles as set out, compared to 4.9% of public and 1.8% of staff respondents who disapproved.



Narrative comments

Respondents were asked if there were any other issues that they felt should be included within the guiding principles. Comments from the public were largely concerned with the need to ensure sufficient availability of fire engines and provision of fire cover – which are referenced within the guiding principles. Staff comments centred around several themes:

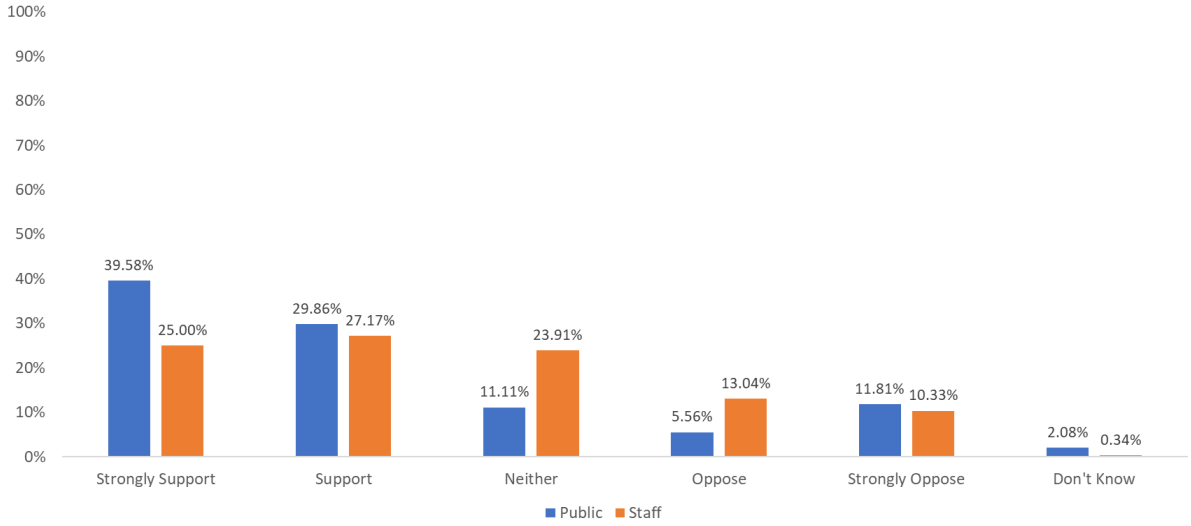
- Staff wellbeing and firefighter safety.
- Career progression and development, and organisational culture.
- Improving fire cover.

Response standard

The next section of the survey asked for views in order to help to develop a proposal around the future response standard i.e. our target for responding to incidents.

Measuring response times

Respondents were asked to what extent they would support the Service measuring its response times from the time the 999 call is received, rather than the current measurement from when the fire station is alerted. 69.4% of public and 52.2% of staff respondents supported measuring from the time of call compared to 17.4% of the public and 23.4% of staff who opposed this.

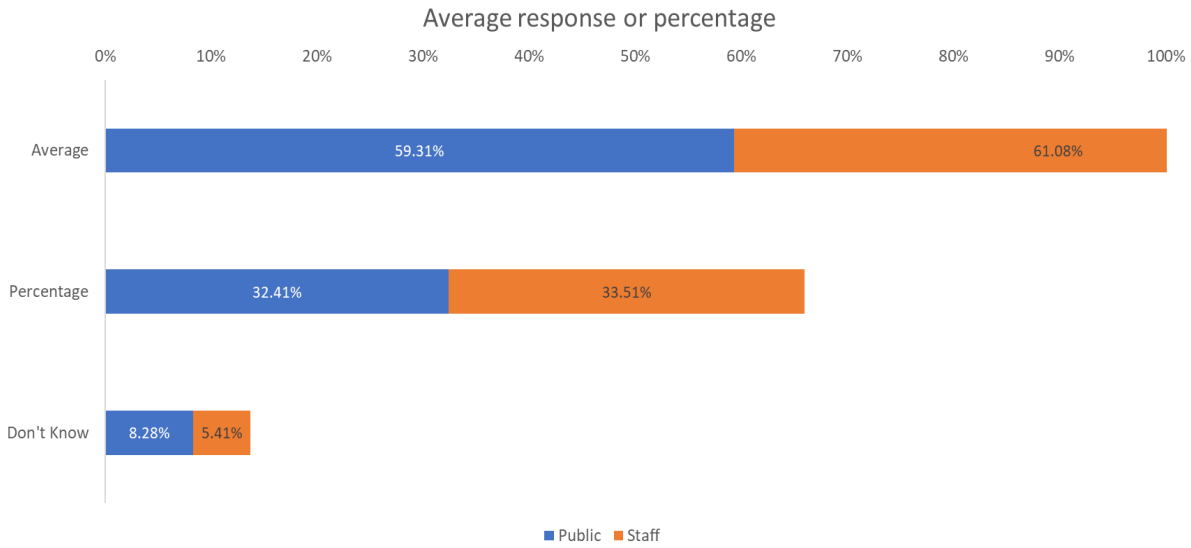


Narrative comments

Regarding the measuring of response from time of call, public comments reference the view that this was a more accurate reflection of their physical experience should they need to call 999. Staff comments were more nuanced, with some questioning how much control the Authority would have over improving response times given that call handling is undertaken by a third party (North West Fire Control). Other staff comments raised a concern that measuring response time from time of call could increase pressure on crews to ensure they meet the response time, particularly on-call firefighters (who once alerted have five minutes to arrive at the station to then respond).

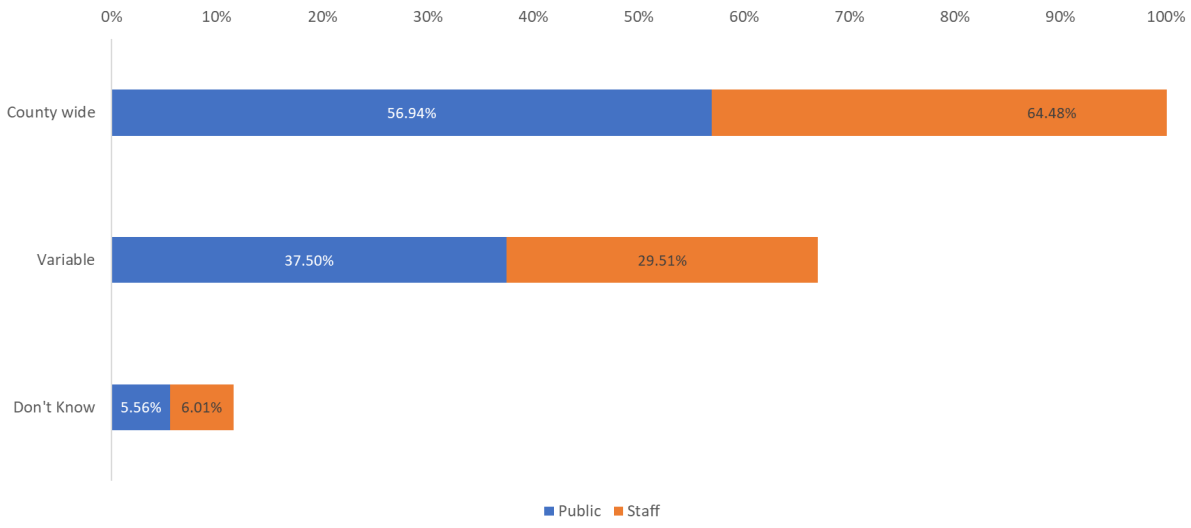
Response standard reporting

Respondents were then asked if they would prefer to see the Service's response standard reported as a percentage pass rate (current method) or as an average response time. 59.3% of public and 61.1% of staff respondents stated a preference for an average response time compared to 32.4% public and 33.5% of staff respondents who preferred performance to be reported as a percentage pass rate.



Single or variable response standard

The next question in this section asked for preferences over a single response standard for the whole county, or replacing this with a variable response standard which would lead to different response standards in different areas according to local risk factors. 56.9% of public and 64.5% of staff respondents stated a preference for a single response standard compared to 37.5% of public and 29.5% of staff who preferred a variable standard.



Narrative comments

Public and staff comments referred to the preference of using the same standard for all. Recurring themes highlighted include that a fire is a fire regardless of rural or urban areas, and that taxpayers in different areas still pay their precept so should be offered same level of service.

Some public and staff comments highlighted that increasing on-call availability will improve response times in rural areas.

A minority of staff comments supported the use of a different standard, as it was felt that this would better match resources to differing risks, as per rationale for CRMP. However, even where a variable standard was supported, there was an acknowledgement that public expectation would favour a single standard.

There was a general understanding within staff comments that in rural areas it can be challenging to meet the current standard, both as a result of geography and issues around the availability of fire engines at certain times.

Expected response times

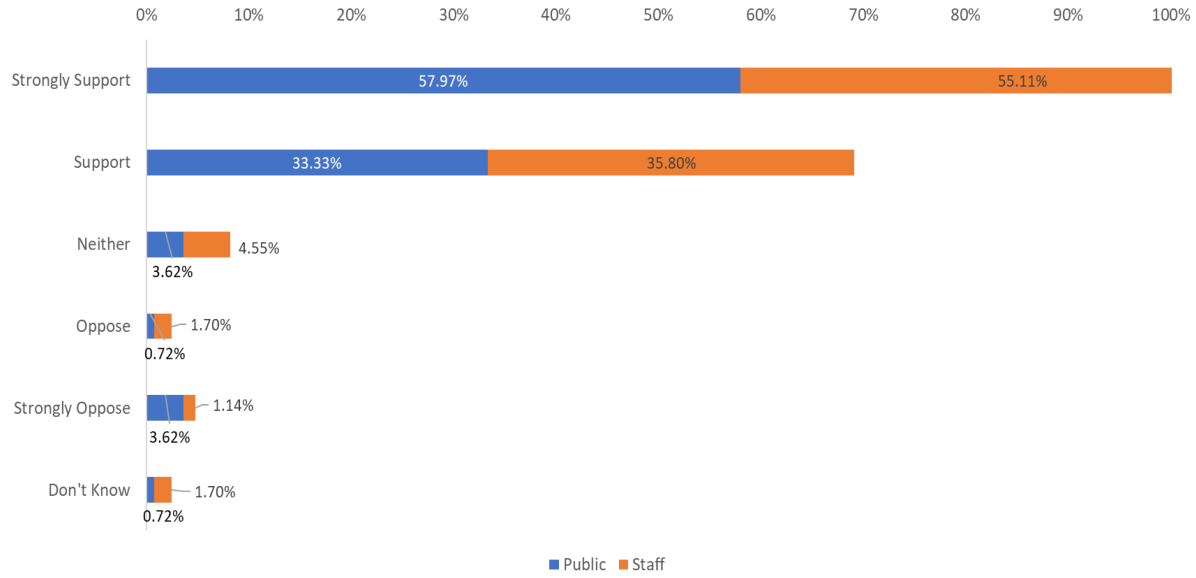
The final part of this section asked respondents to state how long they would consider it acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive in a range of different emergency scenarios.

Public and staff responses were broadly similar in these areas, with the expected response times to potential life risk incidents (house and commercial fires, road traffic collisions, water rescues) lower – under ten minutes – than other incidents such as grass fires or animal rescues.

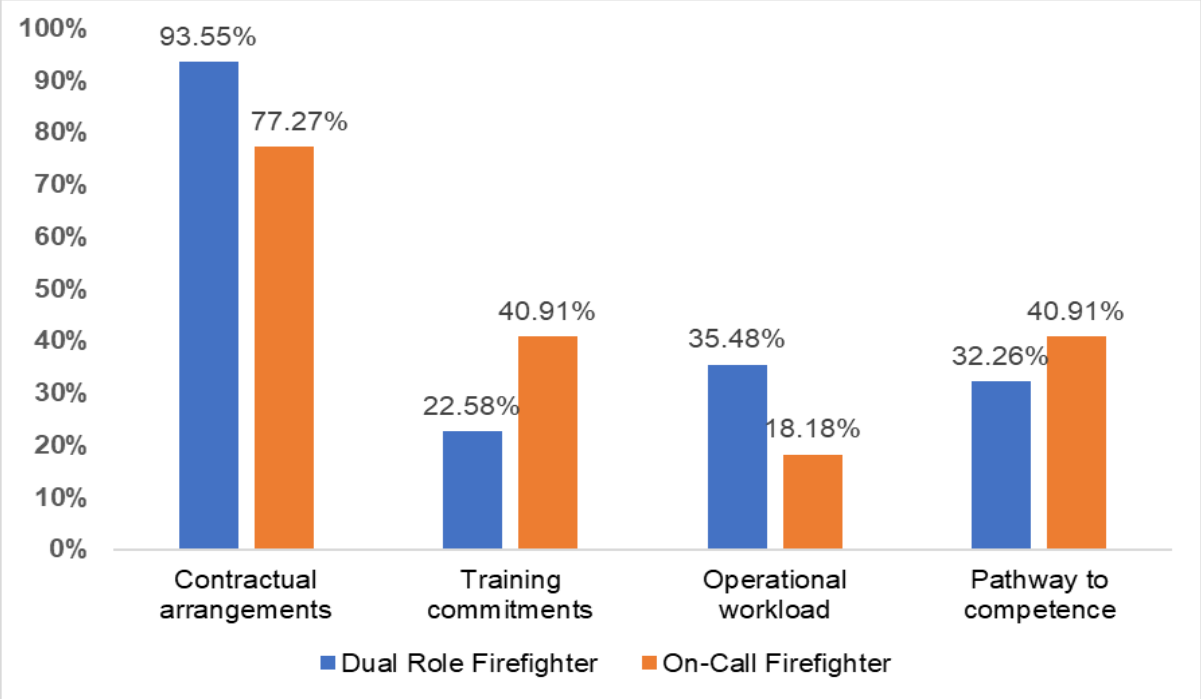
Scenario	Public average (mins)	Staff average (mins)
House fire	9	8
Fire in a commercial premises	10	9
Small fire	14	12
Road traffic collision	9	9
Rescuing someone from water	8	8
To help paramedics gain entry to a property where someone needs medical attention	10	10
To rescue an animal	15	14

Review of the on-call system

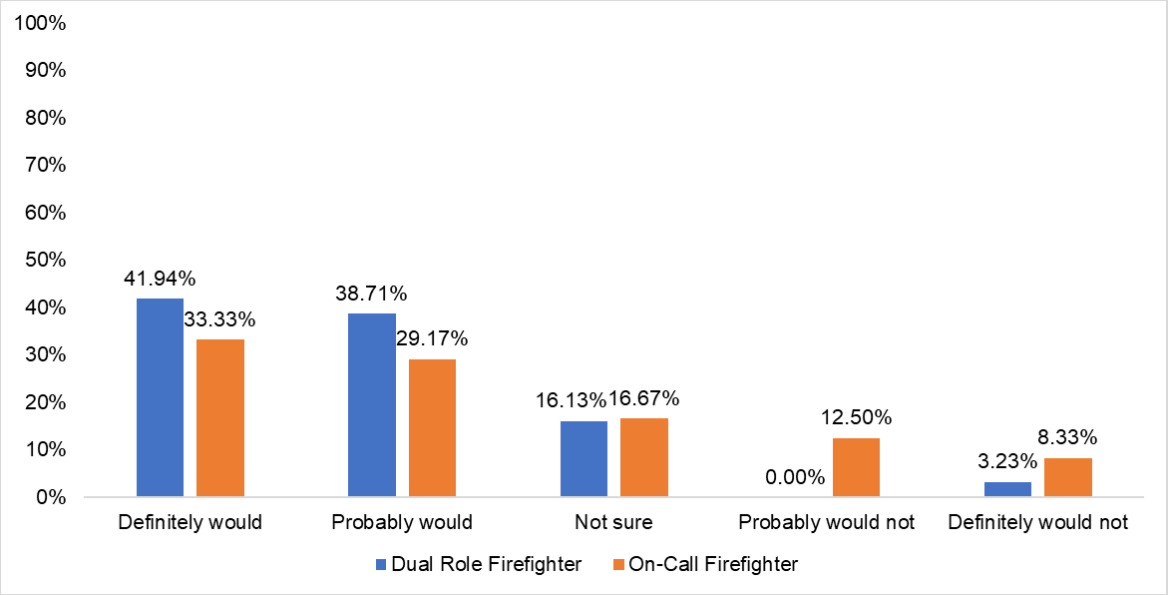
Respondents were asked to what extent they would support the Authority reviewing the on-call duty system with the aim of making it more effective and sustainable. 90.9% of staff supported this, along with 91.4% of public respondents.



Staff were asked in more detail which areas should be the focus of any review. Key areas of focus were contractual arrangements (highlighted as important by 93.6% of dual-role staff and 77.3% of solely on-call staff), followed by the pathway to achieving operational competence (marked as a suggested area of focus by 40.9% of on-call staff and 32.3% of dual role staff) and then training commitments (22.6% of dual role staff and 40.9% of on-call staff suggested this as an area of focus).

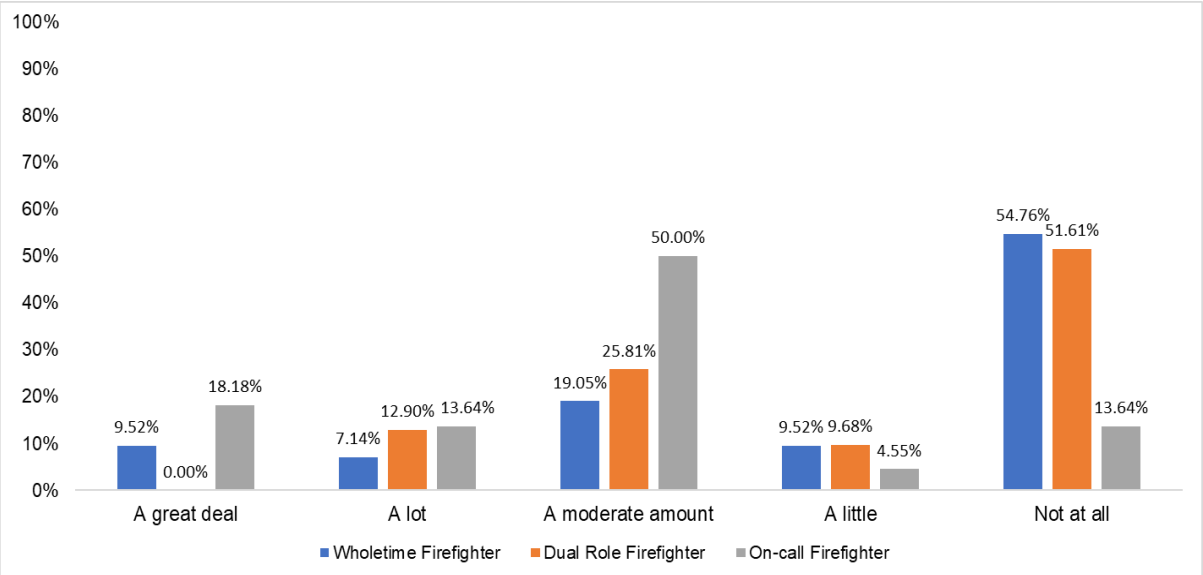


Regarding weekend cover, staff were asked to what extent a package of greater remuneration, coupled with a more structured approach to planning availability, would encourage them to provide more cover. 62.5% of solely on-call staff and 78.3% of dual-role staff said such a package either probably or definitely would encourage them to provide more cover.

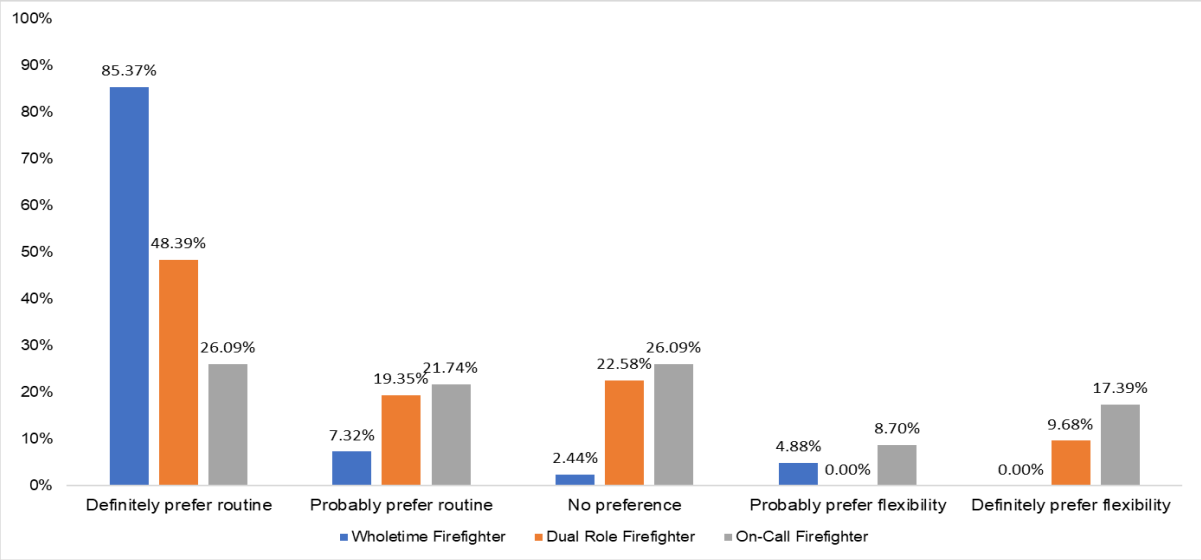


Duty systems

Operational staff were asked to what extent a daytime only shift system would appeal. 81.8% of solely on-call staff, 35.7% of wholetime staff and 36.4% of dual-role staff said such a system would appeal at least a moderate amount.13.6% of on-call staff, 54.8% of wholetime staff and 51.2% of dual-role staff said such a system would not appeal at all. Comments from those who said a system would appeal said that it would enable them to dedicate their weekends as family time and that it would be a route in to a fulltime position from an on-call role. Staff who said the system would not appeal highlighted the balance that the current 2-2-4 system provides them and how shift work fits in with their individual circumstances.



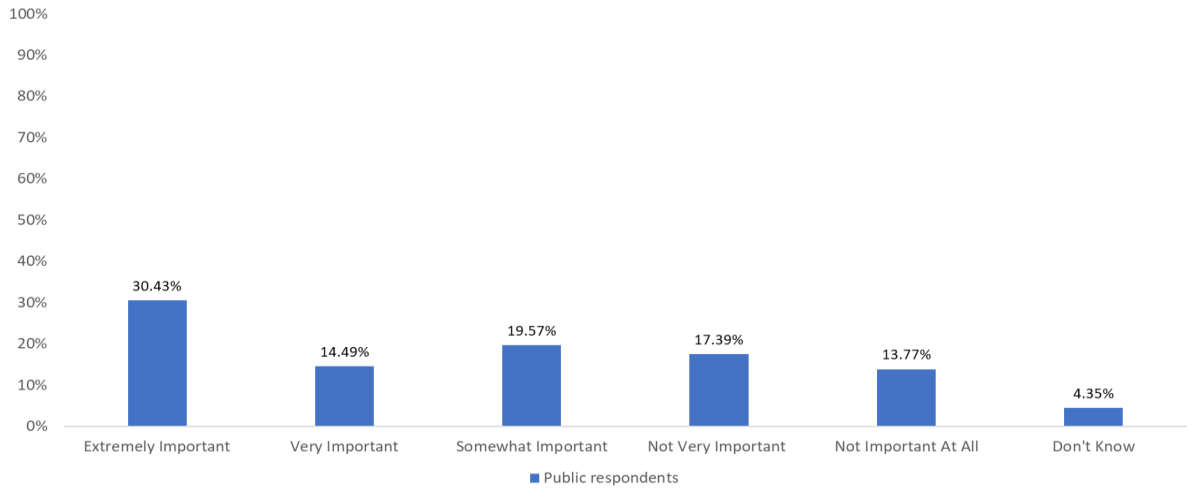
Wholetime staff were then asked whether they would prefer a more routine shift pattern or a shift pattern that was more flexibly determined on a monthly basis. 76.6% of wholetime and 68.8% of dual role respondents said they would either probably or definitely prefer a more routine shift pattern. Narrative comments provided indicate that a more rigid routine enables those who work it to plan their commitments in advance and the certainty provides a work-life balance though being able to forecast childcare and other needs.



The importance of the 'local' fire engine

The question on the public survey regarding how important it was that the respondents local fire engine responds was designed to test perceptions around the response from the town or villages local fire engine. In reality, the quickest available fire engine is mobilised to respond; but it has been suggested that there is an attachment to having a local fire engine available within a community.

44.9% of respondents stated that it was extremely or very important that the local fire engine responds. 19.6% said it was somewhat important while 31.2% said it was either not very important or not important at all.



Narrative comments

Most comments in relation to the importance of the local fire engine suggest the main concern is the response time, with whichever location the fire engine is coming from being a secondary concern.

However, some comments reveal several potential reasons for preferring a local engine:

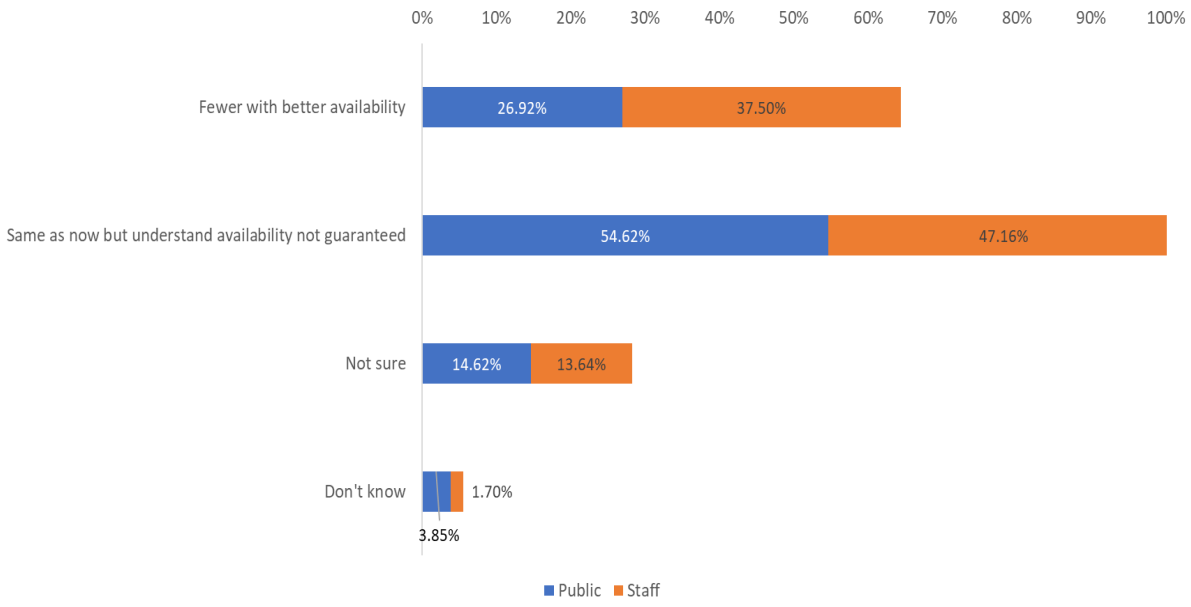
- Local knowledge (road network etc)
- Travel time from other locations
- Quicker response (suggesting a limited awareness of the 5 min delay with on-call)
- Reduces the need for a responding engine from outside area to be backfilled

Additional comments also highlighted the need to strengthen the on-call duty system to improve the availability of fire engines; in particular the need to make the duty system more attractive to existing and prospective staff, and to promote it more and engage with local employers.

Overall number and availability of fire engines

This question was asked to gauge views on preferences over having a smaller overall number of fire engines but having better availability, or having the same number of fire engines but understanding that there are issues at times with availability.

54.6% of public and 47.2% of staff respondents preferred to maintain the current fleet size of fire engines, while 26.9% of public and 37.5% of staff respondents preferred to have fewer overall fire engines, but with better availability.



Narrative comments

Some comments from both staff and public respondents reference the wish for more resources and higher availability. Ultimately, this would require more financial resources than is currently available. More generally, a reduction in the number of fire engines was viewed as a reduction in overall resources.

Comments also alluded to the view that although engines may not always be available, the perception is that more engines equals more resilience. In essence, having them available some of the time is better than not having them at all.

Major incidents was one particular scenario where it was considered important to retain the current fleet size, for the ability to scale up resources and for resilience.

Some staff comments suggest that duty systems in some areas could be changed to increase cover, with others questioning the availability of on-call second fire engines.

- Some comments suggest the number of engines is not the material issue but the ability to meet response times/standards.
- Acknowledgement that on-call system needs to be reviewed made more attractive/sustainable to improve cover and availability.
    - Better pay
    - More flexibility around contracts
    - More utilisation
    - Impact of on-call migration and dual-role staff

Prioritising activities

Respondents (both public and staff) were asked to identify which of the Authority's functions they deemed as most important.

Public responses

Activity	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	Don't Know
Responding to fires	96.2%	3.0%		0.8%		
Responding to RTCs	90.2%	9.9%				
Rescuing people from water	76.7%	18.8%	4.5%			
Rescuing trapped animals	21.8%	23.3%	37.6%	11.3%	6.0%	
Responding to some medical emergencies in certain locations	27.1%	35.3%	26.3%	4.5%	5.3%	1.5%
Major incident response	80.5%	13.5%	4.5%	0.8%		0.8%
Providing fire safety and health advice and fitting smoke alarms in the local community	22.0%	31.1%	33.3%	9.9%	3.8%	
Educating people on road safety	14.3%	23.3%	39.1%	15.8%	7.5%	
Running fire cadet units on fire stations for 11-17 year olds	13.5%	25.6%	37.6%	18.1%	4.5%	0.8%

Working with the Prince's Trust to deliver its Team Programme for 16-24 year olds	9.0%	24.1%	36.1%	21.1%	5.3%	4.5%
Working with young people to prevent fires and anti-social behaviour	26.3%	34.6%	25.6%	7.5%	4.5%	1.5%
Engaging schools through visits, our safety education centre and tailored programmes for pupils at risk of exclusion	22.6%	37.6%	23.3%	13.5%	3.0%	
Providing fire safety and health advice and fitting smoke alarms in the local community	22.0%	31.1%	33.3%	9.9%	3.8%	
Educating people on road safety	14.3%	23.3%	39.1%	15.8%	7.5%	
Running fire cadet units on fire stations for 11-17 year olds	13.5%	25.6%	37.6%	18.1%	4.5%	0.8%
Working with the Prince's Trust to deliver its Team Programme for 16-24 year olds	9.0%	24.1%	36.1%	21.1%	5.3%	4.5%
Providing volunteering opportunities	8.3%	29.3%	39.1%	12.0%	10.5%	0.8%
Delivering station open days within the community	10.6%	18.9%	48.5%	12.9%	8.3%	0.8%
Attending community events to engage people about safety	11.3%	27.1%	48.1%	9.8%	3.8%	
Providing fire safety advice to local businesses	17.3%	42.1%	30.8%	5.3%	3.8%	0.8%
Prosecuting businesses who don't comply with fire safety regulations	57.9%	29.3%	10.5%	0.8%		1.5%

Staff responses

Activity	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	Don't Know
Responding to fires	99.39%		0.61%			
Responding to RTCs	98.78%	0.61%	0.61%			
Rescuing people from water	90.24%	6.71%	3.05%			
Rescuing trapped animals	38.41%	26.22%	29.27%	4.88%	1.22%	
Responding to some medical emergencies in certain locations	38.41%	28.66%	20.73%	6.71%	3.66%	1.83%
Major incident response	82.32%	13.41%	3.66%	0.61%		
Providing fire safety and health advice and fitting smoke alarms in the local community	32.32%	38.41%	23.17%	4.27%	1.83%	
Educating people on road safety	24.54%	40.49%	28.22%	6.75%		
Running fire cadet units on fire stations for 11-17 year olds	10.98%	28.66%	37.80%	17.07%	3.66%	1.83%
Working with the Prince's Trust to deliver its Team Programme for 16-24 year olds	8.59%	28.83%	37.42%	17.18%	5.52%	2.45%
Working with young people to prevent fires and anti-social behaviour	21.95%	46.95%	27.44%	2.44%	0.61%	0.61%
Engaging schools through visits, our safety education centre and tailored programmes for pupils at risk of exclusion	21.34%	51.22%	21.34%	4.88%		1.22%

Providing volunteering opportunities	7.93%	28.66%	42.07%	14.63%	5.49%	1.22%
Delivering station open days within the community	19.75%	35.80%	27.16%	11.73%	4.94%	0.62%
Attending community events to engage people about safety	20.12%	40.24%	32.32%	6.71%	0.61%	
Providing fire safety advice to local businesses	25.00%	48.17%	23.17%	2.44%	1.22%	
Prosecuting businesses who don't comply with fire safety regulations	54.88%	35.98%	8.54%	0.61%		

An overwhelming majority of both staff and public respondents viewed the Authority's statutory functions as important (responding to fires and road traffic collisions, major incident response) Results and free text comments show a clear link and rationale for the Authority carrying out its statutory duties and most operational activity.

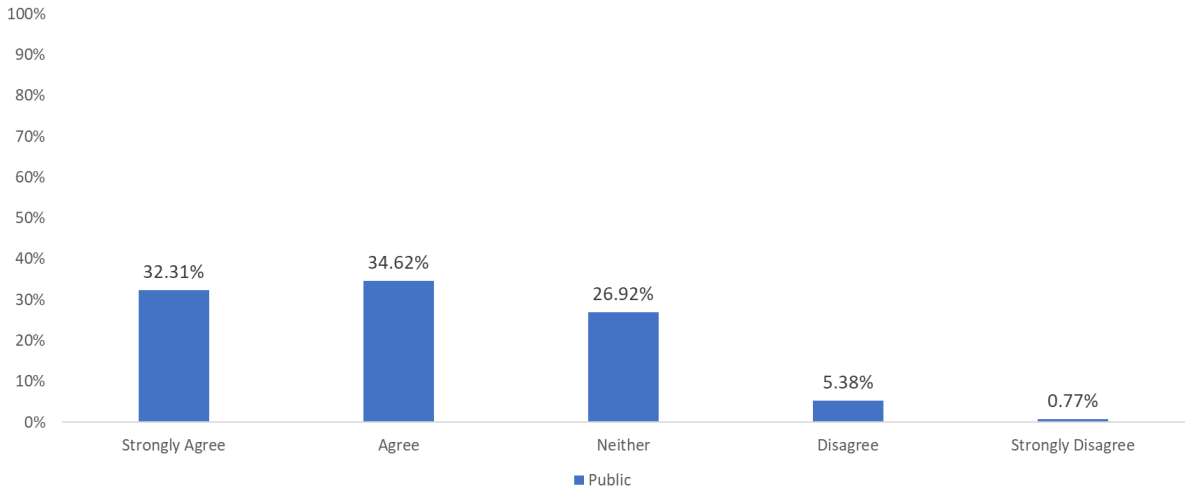
The carrying out of animal rescue is one area of operational activity which is viewed as having lower importance (45.1% of the public view it as very/extremely important compared to over 90% for other operational activity), along with responding to some medical emergencies in certain locations. This is reflected in some free text comments; suggesting the need to focus on the Authority's core role, highlighting cardiac response and medical assistance (in particular the training and skills to perform the role versus paramedics/medical staff)

Amongst public respondents, the Authority's prevention work was, on average, viewed as extremely/very important by fewer people (between 33% and 60% of respondents viewing activity as extremely/very important depending on the specific activity). In contrast, views from staff on these issues were comparatively higher (in many case over 10% higher). This suggests that the increased knowledge and awareness of these activities within the workforce has provided a higher awareness of the benefits they can bring.

Value for money and precept

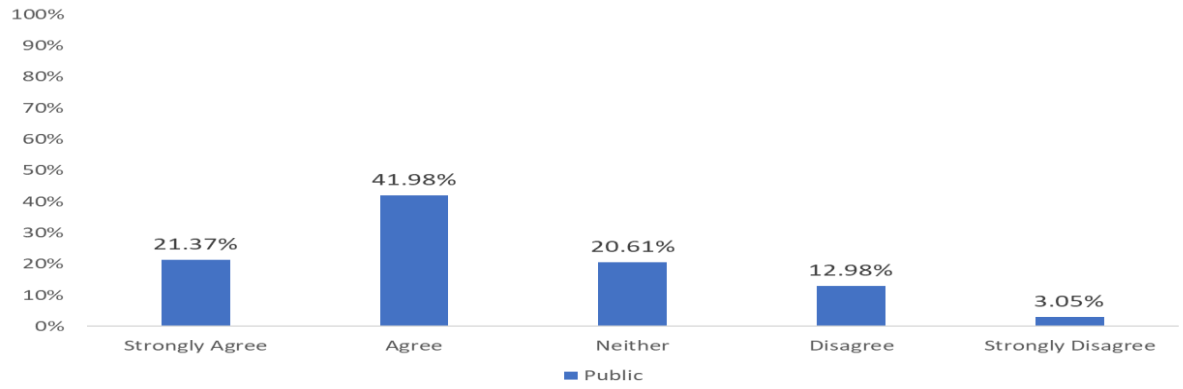
Finally, public respondents were asked whether they considered that the authority provided value for money based on its current precept and for their views on increases/decreases to the precept in future.

A total of 66.9% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed the Authority provided value for money, against 6.2% who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

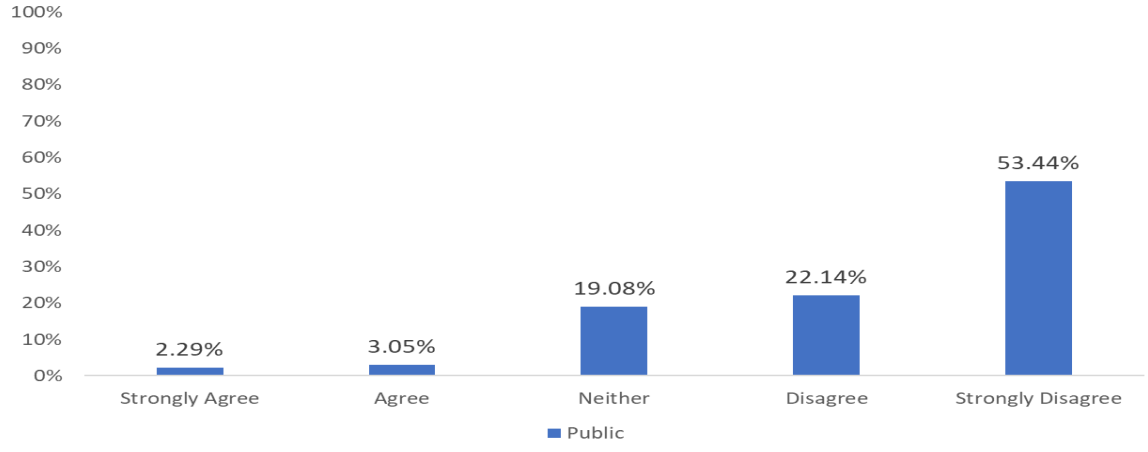


Future precept

Regarding any future precept, 63.4% of respondents said they would be willing to pay a higher precept to improve or maintain services compared to 16% who disagreed. Of those who were willing to pay a higher precept, the average annual increase they would increase the precept by was £6.90 on a Band D property.



Conversely, 5.3% of respondents agreed that they would be willing to pay a lower precept on the understanding services would be reduced as a result. 75.6% of respondents disagreed to this. Of those who wanted the precept to reduce, the average amount that they would reduce it by would be £9.50 per year for a Band D property.



Additional engagement

The following section outlines the additional engagement as part of the pre-consultation process.

Fire Authority Members

Officers engaged Fire Authority Members at an early stage of the development process. Visioning sessions were provided at two Member Planning Days on 7 July and 11 August 2023.

Here, officers provided an overview of data and information on several topics:

- Horizon scanning analysis to highlight new and emerging risks
- Performance data to show levels of risk, demand and fire cover/availability.

Members were then provided with the guiding principles and asked if there were any other principles which officers should consider as part of the CRMP development. Key feedback included the desire to maintain the current fleet of 35 frontline fire engines.

Members were also asked to outline what they saw as key risks which should be accounted for within the CRMP. The growth of lithium-ion battery products and electric vehicles were seen as a key risk, as was the impact of climate change.

School students

Officers carried out a similar workshop on 7 July 2023 with eight Year 10 high school students who were in Service on a work placement. Here, the students were asked to identify the key fire and rescue risks they considered to be facing the community. Again, lithium-ion battery products (e-scooters and bikes) and the impact of climate change were highlighted, alongside more traditional fire and rescue risks such as road safety, deliberate fires and home fire safety.

Staff Engagement Forum

The Service has a well established Staff Engagement Forum, which consists of 12-15 members of staff from a range of departments and in both operational and fire staff roles.

A further workshop was then held at the Staff Engagement Forum meeting on 14 July. Here, Forum members were provided with the following information:

- An update on the progress of the fire cover review.
- Information regarding the availability of on-call fire engines.
- Demand data for each fire engine in Cheshire.
- Overall costs for a fire engine on each duty system within Cheshire.

- The overall budget for service delivery in Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Forum members were then split into two groups and each group were asked to design their own model to provide fire cover using the data above, and as far as possible within the same cost base as the current budget.

The crewing configurations devised by each of the groups was then analysed and compared to configurations being developed by the fire cover review team.

Staff workshop

A similar session to that provided for the Staff Engagement Forum was held at Sandbach Fire Station on 26 July 2023. Attendees to this workshop included operational firefighters from a range of duty systems; operational managers and non-operational fire staff.

Representative bodies

On 8 August, officers provided an initial brief to the Fire Brigades Union regarding the pre-consultation work and emergency response proposals which were intended to be included in the draft CRMP. No immediate 'red line' issues were raised during the meeting, however a more considered response would be provided through the course of the consultation after seeking the views of the union's membership.

FBU representatives did highlight the need to engage staff most affected by the proposals at an early stage during the consultation process to ensure that they are supported through the management and implementation of any potential changes, whilst also drawing attention to the both the public and staff feedback that emphasis should be on doing all we can to improve emergency provisions and skill sets and not the target driven agenda they feel is sometimes too much of a focus.

The FBU were very supportive of the proposals around attendance times and variations to the service delivery model, having advocated some elements of the proposals themselves over recent years, but stressed the need to ensure appropriate welfare facilities and agreed daily routines are provided to staff during this transitional phase, and that they looked forward to working on the details. The FBU felt this plan was a progressive and bold plan to look to address the challenges the service faces, and commented that they were impressed by the greater use of data to underpin proposals.

Influencing the draft Community Risk Management Plan

The outcomes of the pre-consultation activity has influenced the development of the final draft CRMP in several areas. These are highlighted and summarised below:

Guiding principles

Although there was broad support for the guiding principles concerning the development of the CRMP and the fire cover review, feedback from the pre-consultation survey suggested that there was a preference to maintain the current operational fleet of 35 fire engines. This was further reinforced during the workshop sessions at Member Planning Days, where feedback from Fire Authority Members indicated a preference to maintain 35 fire engines and our current fire station footprint (28 fire stations).

This feedback was then used to develop and refine the options for the provision of fire cover, including in the development of the proposal within the draft CRMP.

Wider feedback from staff centred on staff wellbeing and firefighter safety, as well as career progression, development and culture. As a result, these issues have been addressed within the draft CRMP; firefighter safety is referenced as a specific risk to be addressed, while a section of the CRMP is dedicated to the organisation's cultural improvements.

Response standard

The feedback from the pre-consultation survey suggested that there was a preference to measure our response time from the time of call rather than the existing measure of from time of alert. The pre-consultation activity also highlighted a preference amongst respondents to have a single response standard for Cheshire, rather than a variable standard which would change according to local risks; as well as reporting this standard as an average response time.

In addition, the pre-consultation survey asked respondents to highlight how long they would expect a fire and rescue response to take in a variety of scenarios. The scenarios where human life was at risk all saw an expected response time of under ten minutes.

This feedback helped to influence the final proposal within the draft CRMP regarding the change to our response standard.

Fire and rescue risks

Several engagement mechanisms, including the survey and in staff, public and Member workshop sessions, asked participants to identify key fire and rescue related risks. It was notable that highlighted amongst emerging risks were the impact of climate change and the use of lithium-ion battery products such as electric vehicles and e-scooters/bikes. This has then been referenced in the draft CRMP under the narrative for the respective risks and has influenced the development of the Authority's proposals to develop prevention advice relating to lithium-ion batteries.

Configuration of duty systems

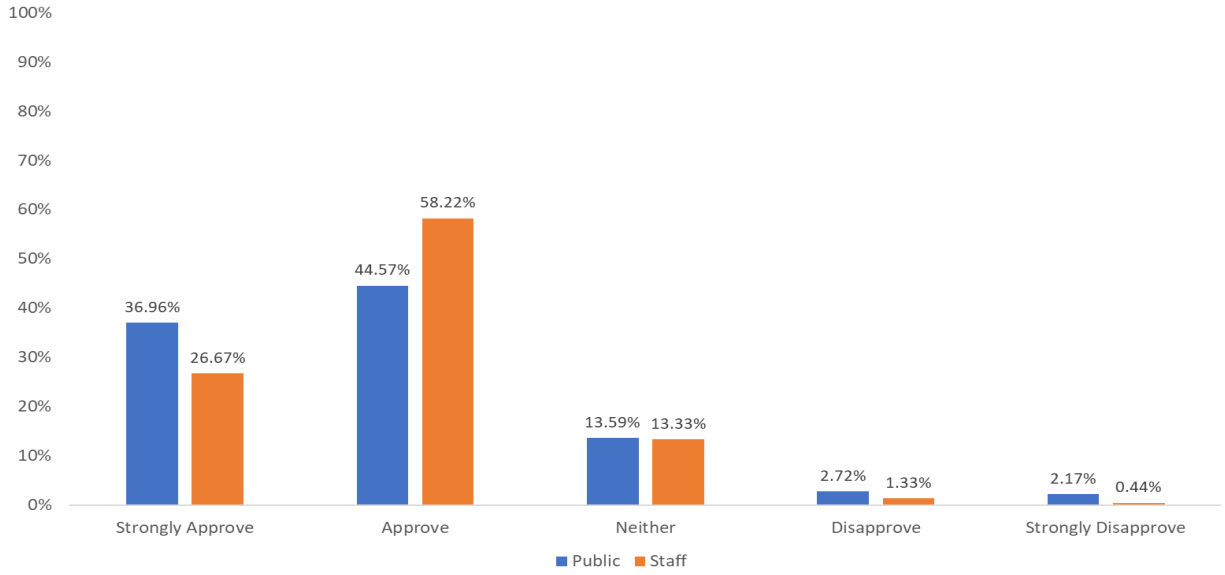
Officers held workshop session with staff which considered the challenges facing the Authority regarding the provision of fire cover. During these sessions, staff were provided with information on the availability and demand of fire engines, as well as some overall costings. They were then asked to design their own duty systems using the same parameters as the fire cover review.

While each session resulted in different final outcomes, there was a general acknowledgement of the need to amend the existing configuration of fire cover arrangements if the desired improvement in daytime cover is to be achieved. Each workshop was also given the option to change the crewing at locations to a hypothetical new duty system if they so wished. This option was taken up by each group within the workshops and helped to inform the development of a new duty system through the fire cover review which could help to improve the availability of some fire engines in the weekday daytime.

Annex 1: Pre-consultation Survey Results

Q.1 To what extent do you approve of the guiding principles to develop our CRMP?

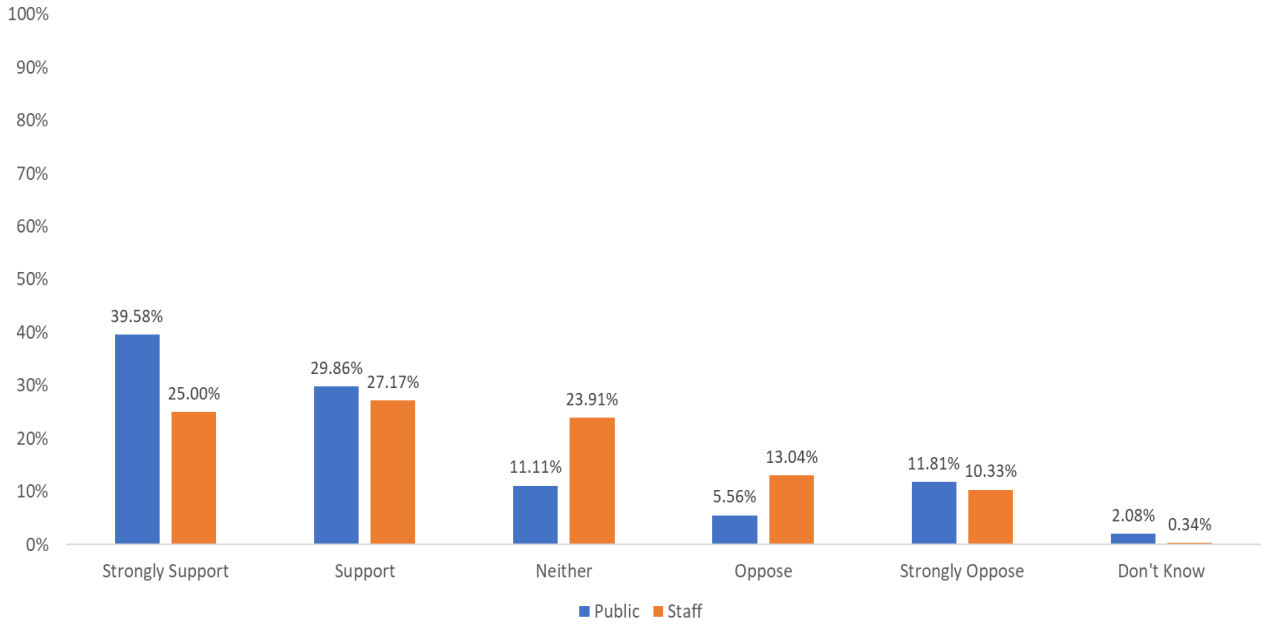
Public responses: 184 Staff responses: 225



Q.2 Comments provided in appendix.

Q.3 To what extent would you support the Service measuring its response times from the moment a 999 call is received rather than from when the first fire engine is alerted to the incident?

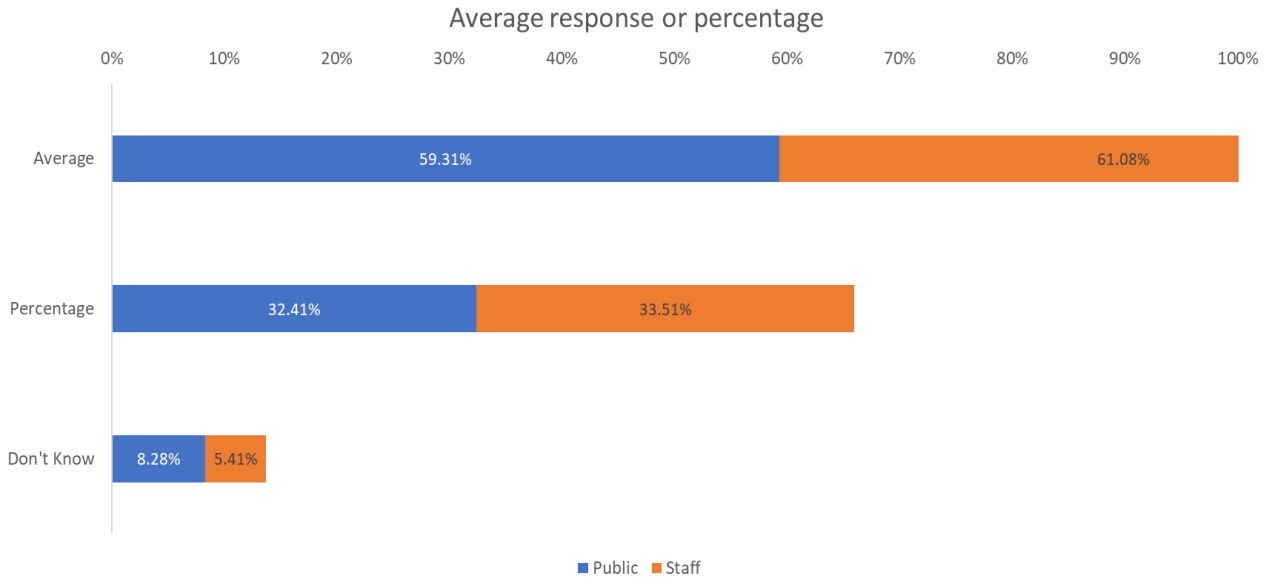
Public responses: 144 Staff responses: 184



Q4. Would it be easier for you to understand how the Service is performing if it reported its performance as an average response time or as a percentage pass rate?

In other words, would you prefer the Service to say, for example:- its average response time is 9.5 minutes against a target of 10 minutes- OR the Service meets its 10 minute response standard 80% of the time?

Public responses: 145 Staff responses: 185



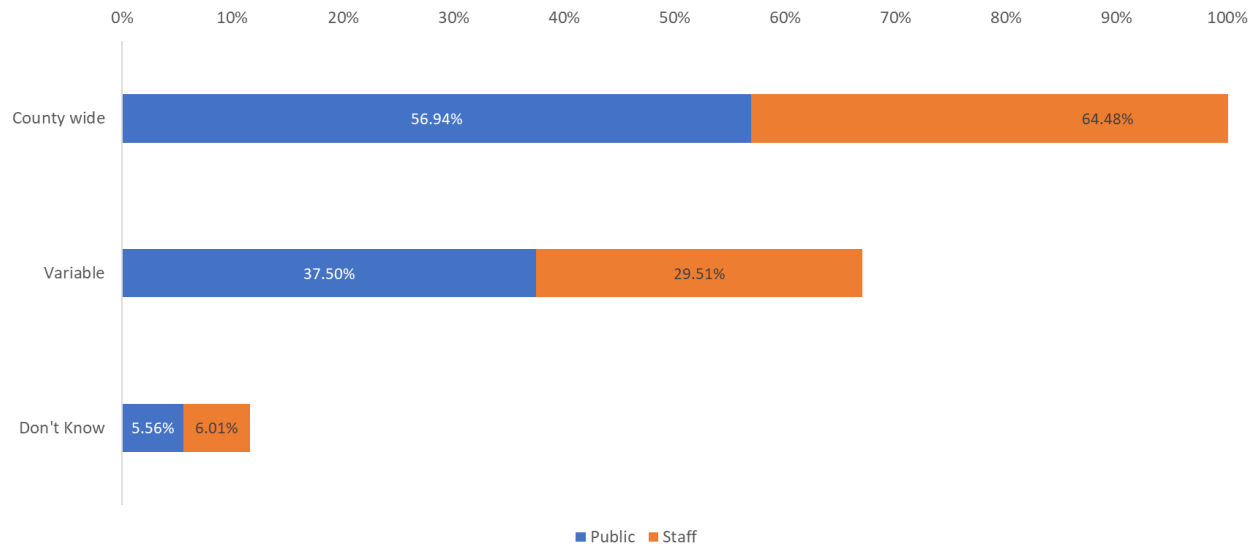
Q.5 – Q.11 How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive?

Average public response: 133 Average staff response: 182

Scenario	Public average (mins)	Staff average (mins)
House fire	9	8
Fire in a commercial premises	10	9
Small fire	14	12
Road traffic collision	9	9
Rescuing someone from water	8	8
To help paramedics gain entry to a property where someone needs medical attention	10	10
To rescue an animal	15	14

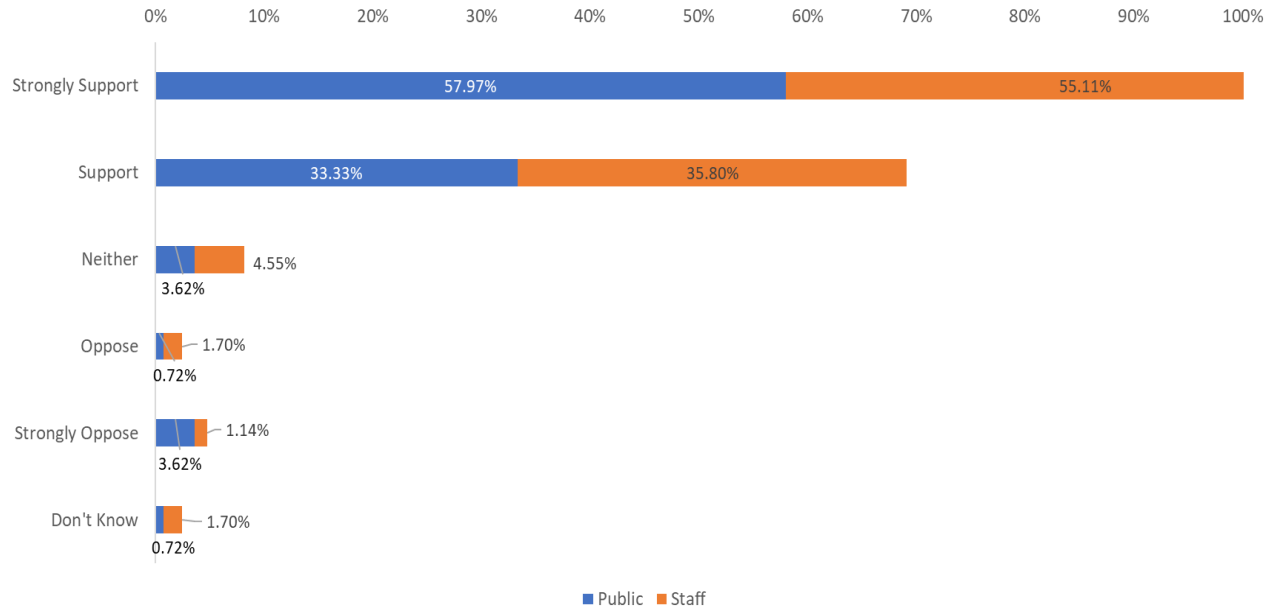
Q.12 Do you think the Service should have the same response standard across all areas of Cheshire, or differ the speed of its response to reflect fire and rescue risks in local areas?

Public responses: 144 Staff responses: 183



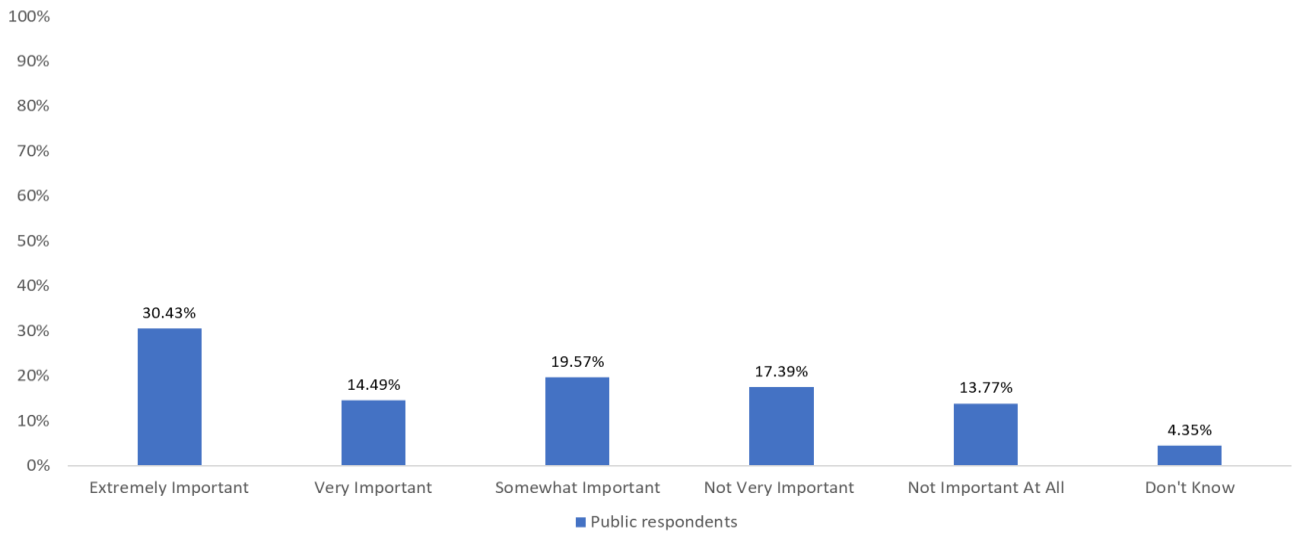
Q13. To what extent would you support the Service reviewing its on-call model to improve the availability of its fire engines?

Public responses: 144 Staff responses: 176



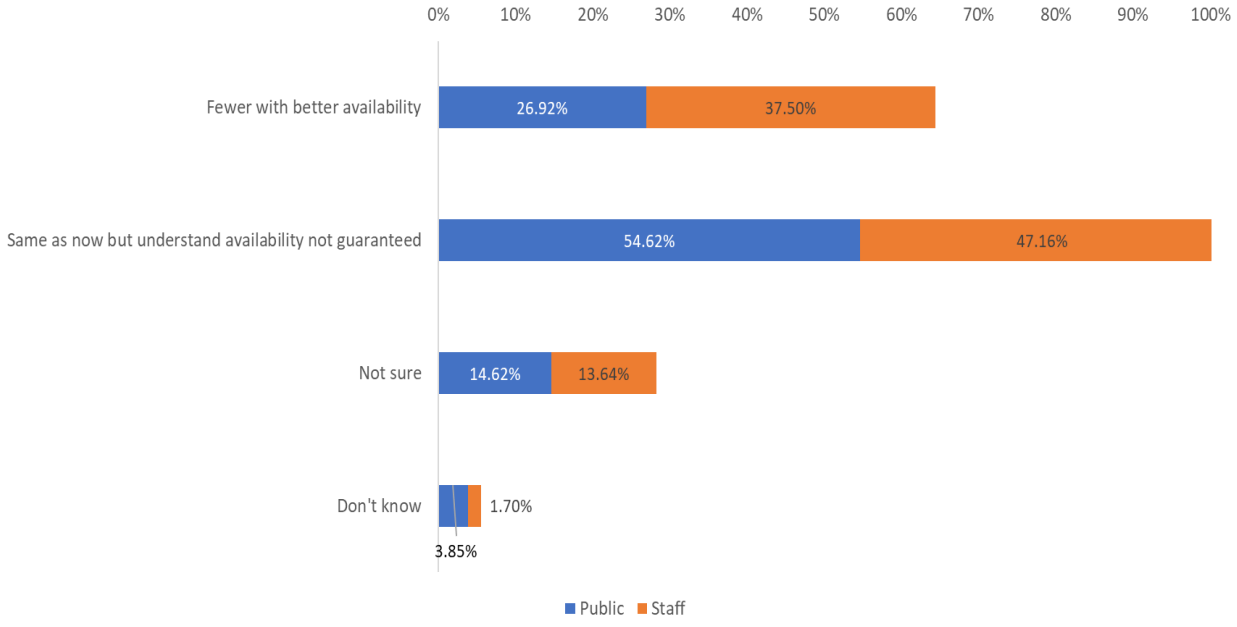
Q14. How important to you is it that the local fire engine from your town/village responds to you in an emergency rather than an engine from elsewhere in Cheshire, even if firefighters attend within the response standard?

Public responses: 138



Q.15 Thinking about the number and type of fire engines across Cheshire, which option would you prefer?

Public responses: 130 Staff responses: 176



Q16. How important is it to you that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service carry out the following activities?

Public responses: 133

Activity	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	Don't Know
Responding to fires	96.2%	3.0%		0.8%		
Responding to RTCs	90.2%	9.9%				
Rescuing people from water	76.7%	18.8%	4.5%			
Rescuing trapped animals	21.8%	23.3%	37.6%	11.3%	6.0%	
Responding to some medical emergencies in certain locations	27.1%	35.3%	26.3%	4.5%	5.3%	1.5%
Major incident response	80.5%	13.5%	4.5%	0.8%		0.8%
Providing fire safety and health advice and fitting smoke alarms in the local community	22.0%	31.1%	33.3%	9.9%	3.8%	
Educating people on road safety	14.3%	23.3%	39.1%	15.8%	7.5%	
Running fire cadet units on fire stations for 11-17 year olds	13.5%	25.6%	37.6%	18.1%	4.5%	0.8%
Working with the Prince's Trust to deliver its Team Programme for 16-24 year olds	9.0%	24.1%	36.1%	21.1%	5.3%	4.5%
Working with young people to prevent fires and anti-social behaviour	26.3%	34.6%	25.6%	7.5%	4.5%	1.5%
Engaging schools through visits, our safety education centre and tailored programmes for pupils at risk of exclusion	22.6%	37.6%	23.3%	13.5%	3.0%	
Providing fire safety and health advice and fitting smoke alarms in the local community	22.0%	31.1%	33.3%	9.9%	3.8%	
Educating people on road safety	14.3%	23.3%	39.1%	15.8%	7.5%	
Running fire cadet units on fire stations for 11-17 year olds	13.5%	25.6%	37.6%	18.1%	4.5%	0.8%
Working with the Prince's Trust to deliver its Team Programme for 16-24 year olds	9.0%	24.1%	36.1%	21.1%	5.3%	4.5%
Providing volunteering opportunities	8.3%	29.3%	39.1%	12.0%	10.5%	0.8%
Delivering station open days within the community	10.6%	18.9%	48.5%	12.9%	8.3%	0.8%
Attending community events to engage people about safety	11.3%	27.1%	48.1%	9.8%	3.8%	
Providing fire safety advice to local businesses	17.3%	42.1%	30.8%	5.3%	3.8%	0.8%
Prosecuting businesses who don't comply with fire safety regulations	57.9%	29.3%	10.5%	0.8%		1.5%

Staff Responses: 164

Activity	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	Don't Know
Responding to fires	99.39%		0.61%			
Responding to RTCs	98.78%	0.61%	0.61%			
Rescuing people from water	90.24%	6.71%	3.05%			
Rescuing trapped animals	38.41%	26.22%	29.27%	4.88%	1.22%	
Responding to some medical emergencies in certain locations	38.41%	28.66%	20.73%	6.71%	3.66%	1.83%
Major incident response	82.32%	13.41%	3.66%	0.61%		
Providing fire safety and health advice and fitting smoke alarms in the local community	32.32%	38.41%	23.17%	4.27%	1.83%	
Educating people on road safety	24.54%	40.49%	28.22%	6.75%		
Running fire cadet units on fire stations for 11-17 year olds	10.98%	28.66%	37.80%	17.07%	3.66%	1.83%
Working with the Prince's Trust to deliver its Team Programme for 16-24 year olds	8.59%	28.83%	37.42%	17.18%	5.52%	2.45%
Working with young people to prevent fires and anti-social behaviour	21.95%	46.95%	27.44%	2.44%	0.61%	0.61%
Engaging schools through visits, our safety education centre and tailored programmes for pupils at risk of exclusion	21.34%	51.22%	21.34%	4.88%		1.22%
Providing volunteering opportunities	7.93%	28.66%	42.07%	14.63%	5.49%	1.22%
Delivering station open days within the community	19.75%	35.80%	27.16%	11.73%	4.94%	0.62%
Attending community events to engage people about safety	20.12%	40.24%	32.32%	6.71%	0.61%	
Providing fire safety advice to local businesses	25.00%	48.17%	23.17%	2.44%	1.22%	
Prosecuting businesses who don't comply with fire safety regulations	54.88%	35.98%	8.54%	0.61%		

Q.17 – Q.19

Free text responses provided in appendix.

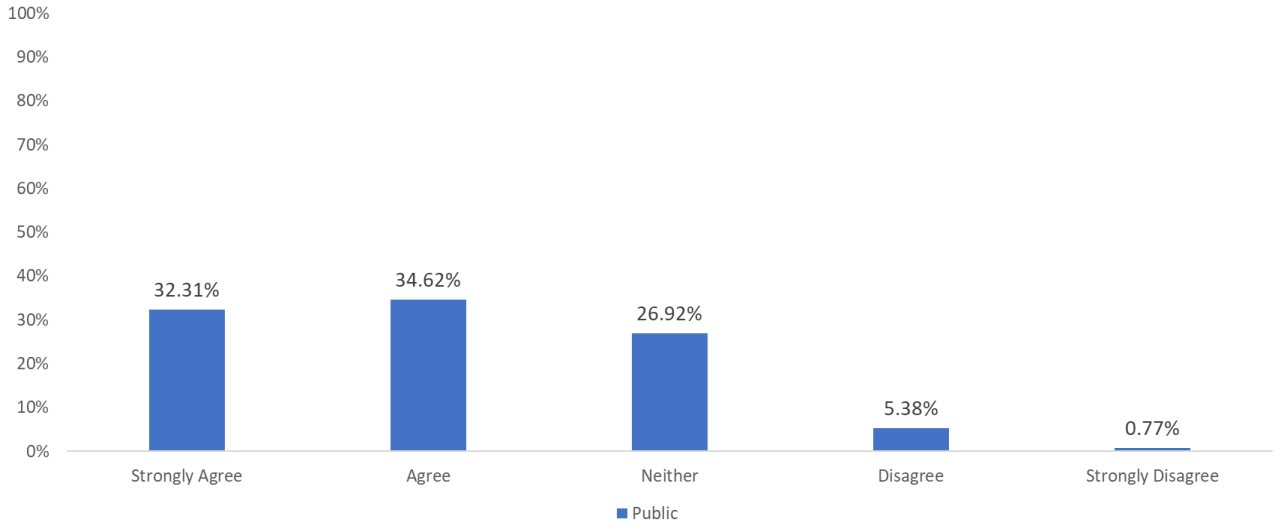
Q.20 How do you find out about the activities that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service carries out?

Public Responses: 127

Platform	Percent
National or regional TV	4.72%
Local or regional radio	0.00%
Local newspapers or news sites	6.30%
Cheshire Fire Facebook	21.26%
Cheshire Fire Twitter	7.09%
My local fire station's Twitter	1.57%
Other social media	11.81%
Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service website	16.54%
Cheshire Fire Alert (messaging system)	11.81%
Other news sites	3.15%
Word of mouth	15.75%

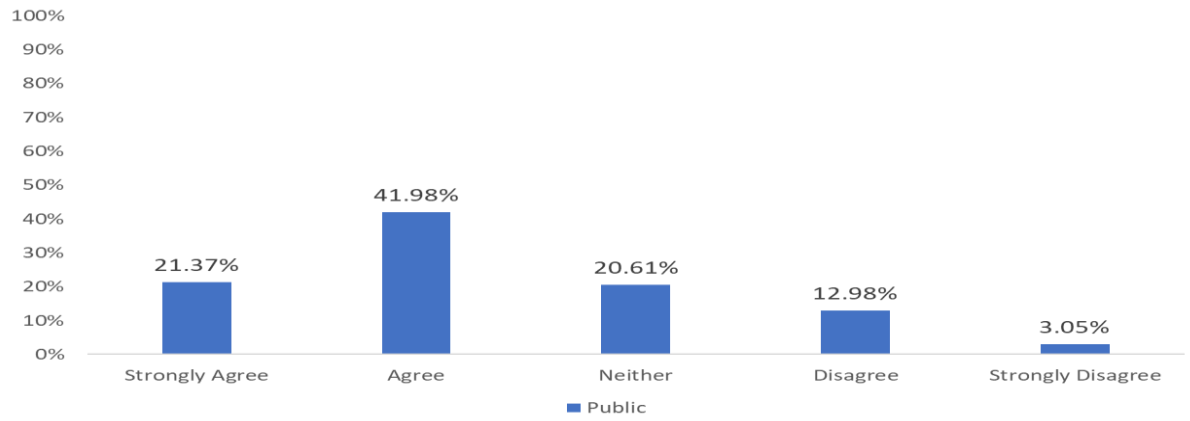
Q.21 To what extent do you agree that the current precept (the Authority's share of council tax) represents value for money in the provision of fire and rescue services across Cheshire?

Public responses: 130



Q.22 I would be willing to pay a higher precept to Cheshire Fire Authority to maintain or improve the services that are currently provided.

Public responses: 131



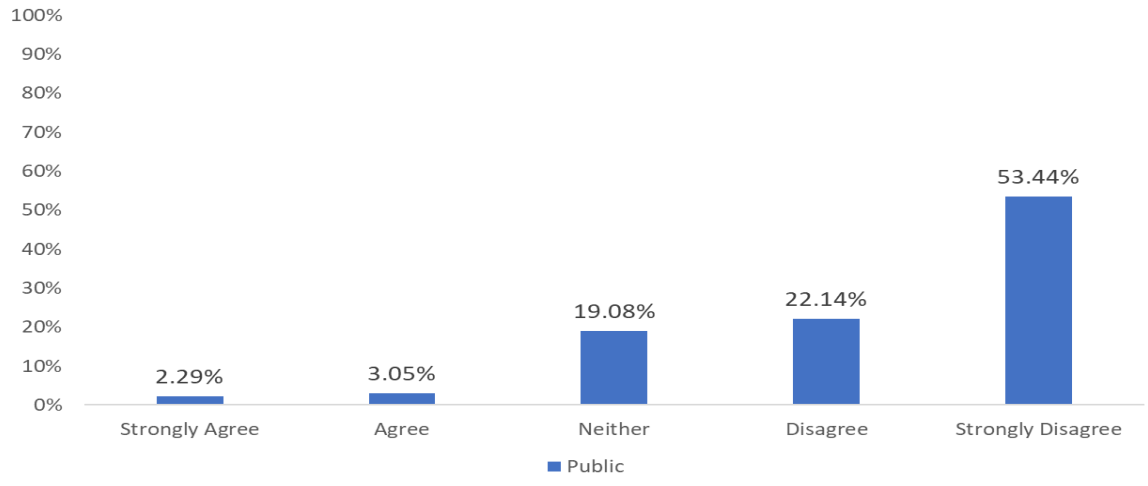
Q.23 If you would be willing to pay a higher precept, please use the slider to indicate how much more per year you would be willing to pay.For reference, the Authority's share of council tax for 2023/2024 is £87.48 for a Band D property.

Public Responses: 107

Average amount selected for increase: £6.90 per year

Q.24 I would like to pay a smaller precept to Cheshire Fire Authority but accept that this woud lead to a reduction in the services provided, including a reduction in emergency response provision.

Public Responses: 131



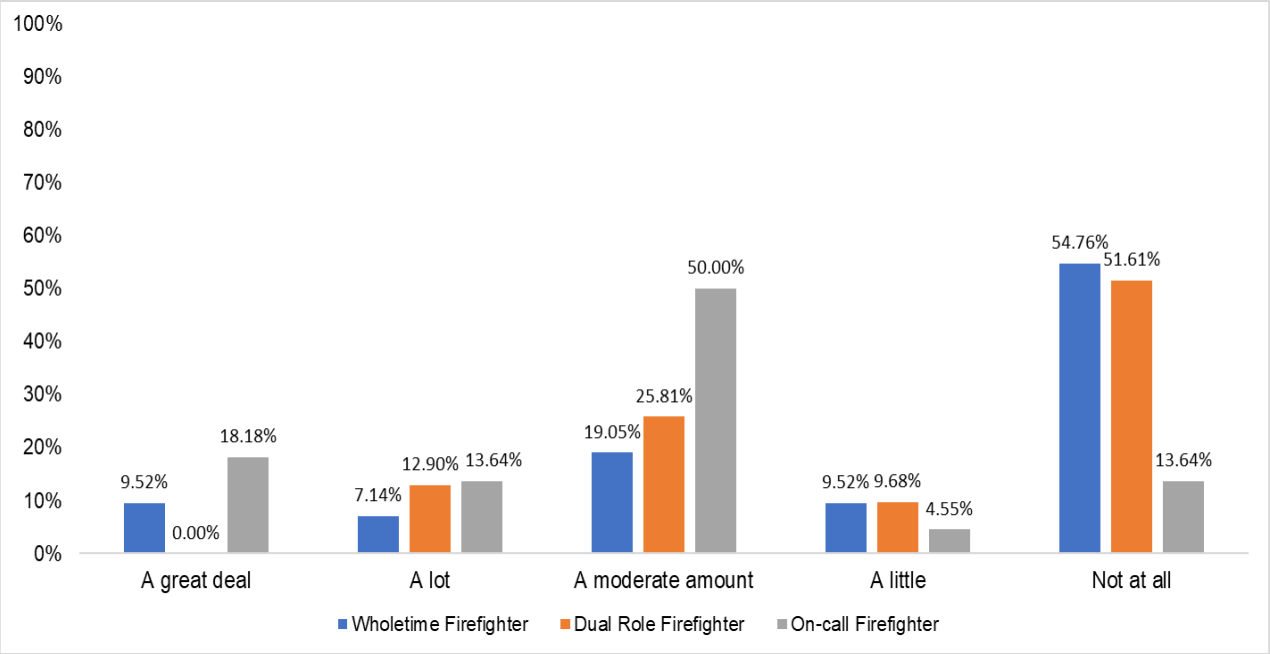
Q.25 If you would prefer to pay a smaller precept, please use the slider to indicate how much less per year you would be willing to pay. For reference, the Authority's share of council tax for 2023/2024 is £87.48 for a Band D property.

Public Responses: 41

Average amount selected for decrease: £9.50 per year

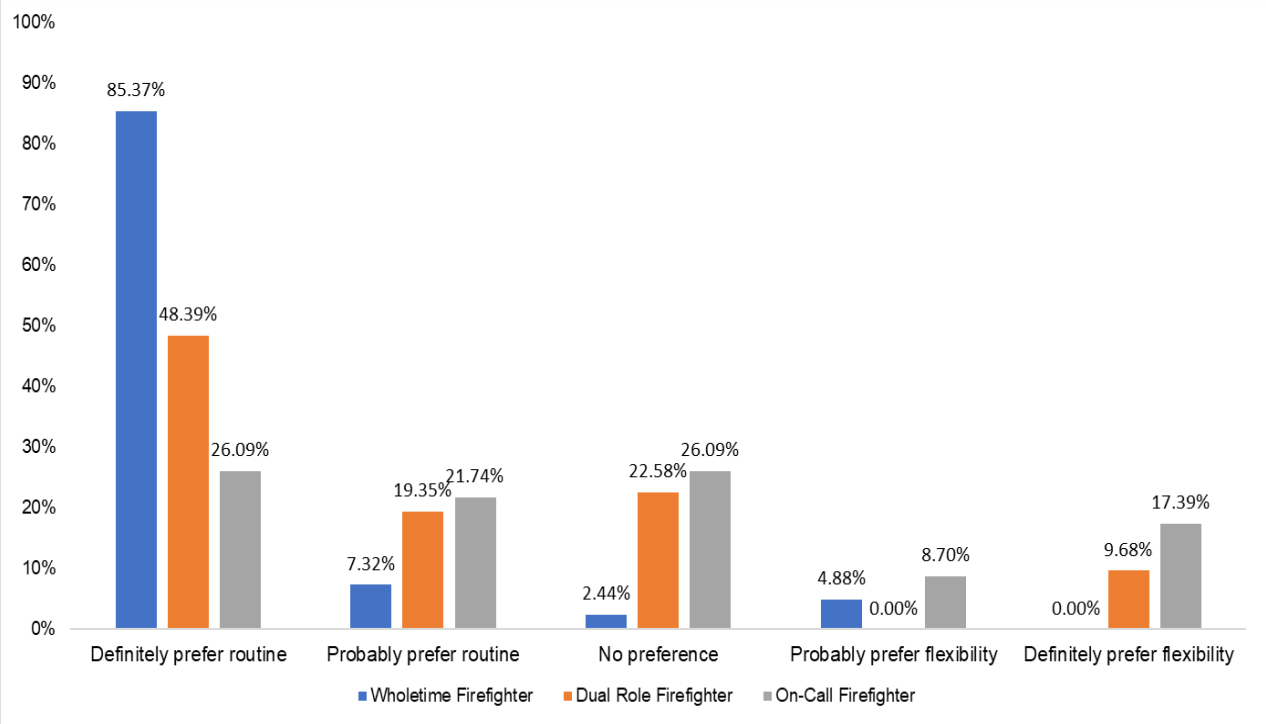
Q.26 To what extent would a daytime only shift system appeal to you?

Staff responses: 96



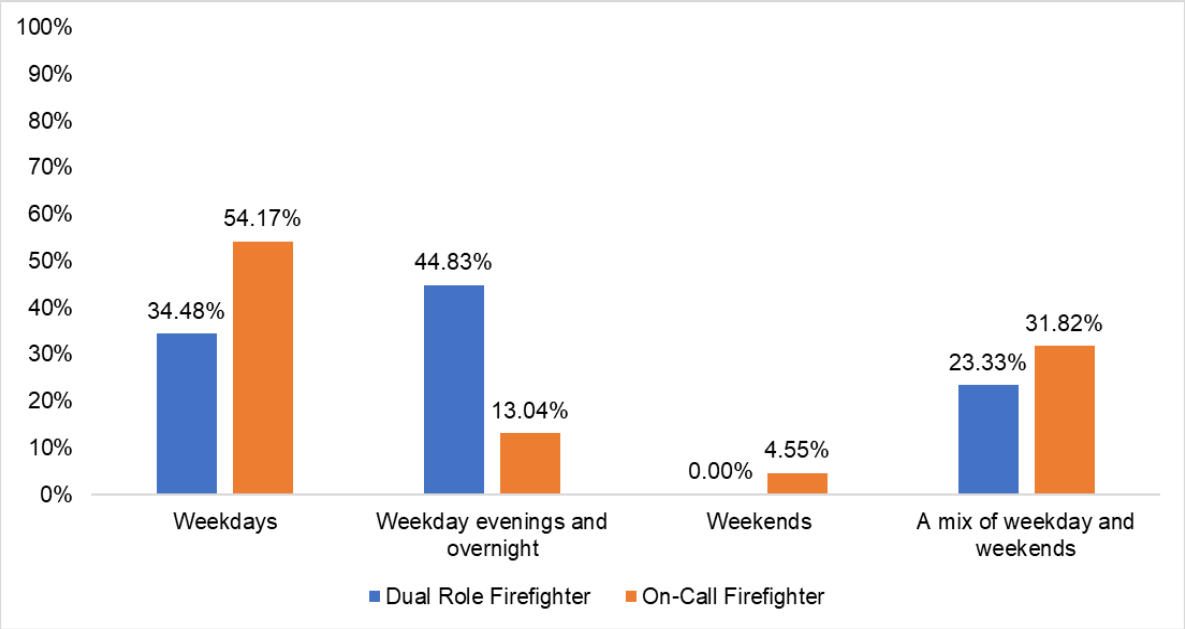
Q.27 To what extent would you prefer working a regular routine shift pattern or one which is flexibly determined on a monthly basis?

Staff responses: 96



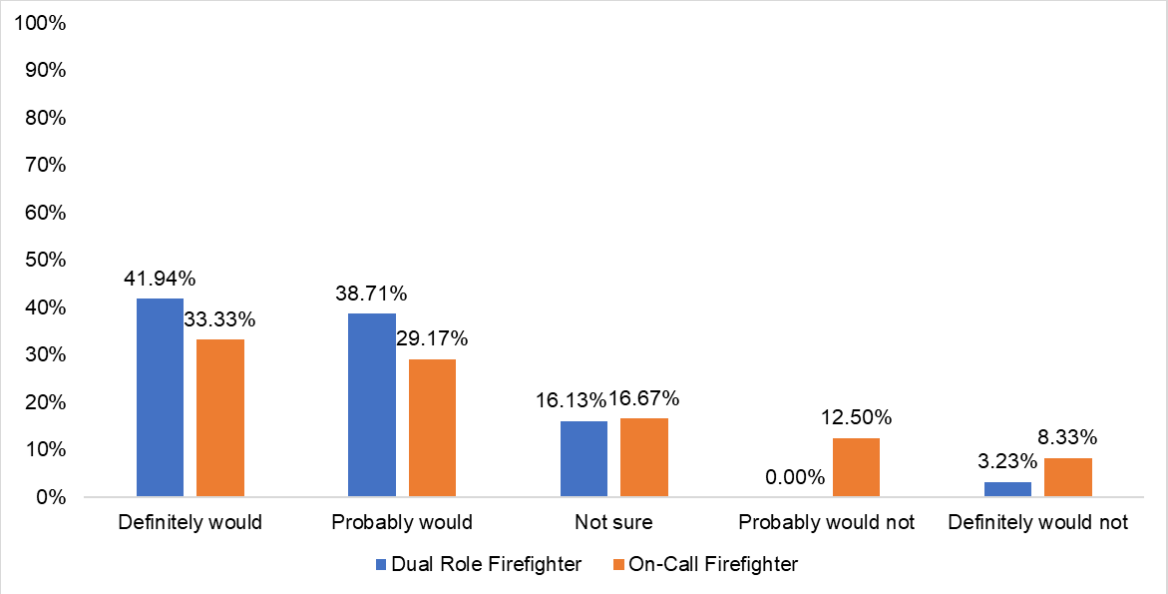
Q.28 Which time period do you prefer to provide on-call cover?

Staff responses: 54



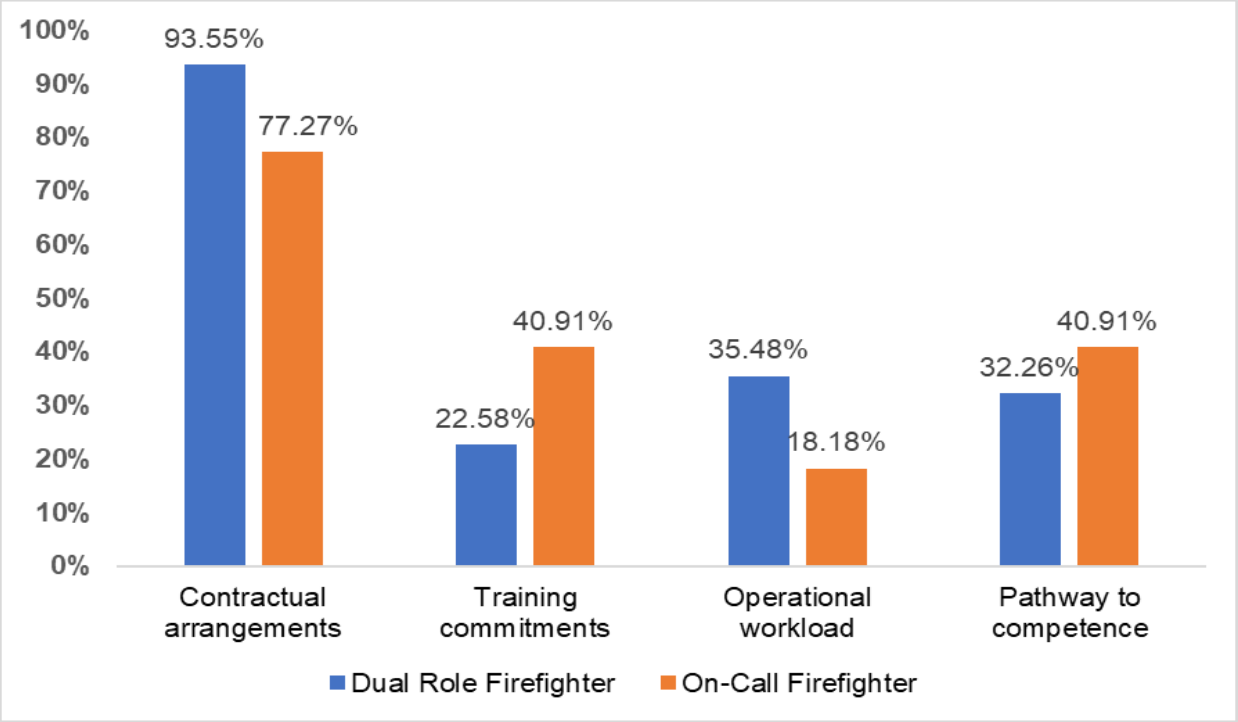
Q.29 To what extent would a package of increased financial remuneration encourage you to provide additional cover over weekends, but using a more structured approach to planning and managing availability?

Staff responses: 61



Q.30 Which areas of the on-call duty system do you feel could be improved in order to improve availability and staff retention?

Staff responses: 53



Annex 2: Public Survey

Developing Our Plans For The Future

This financial year (2023/24) is the final year of Cheshire Fire Authority's current Integrated Risk Management Plan, a four-year strategy that set out objectives to improve the effectiveness of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, address key fire and emergency-related risks and keep communities safe.

The Authority must now start to develop its strategy for the next four years (2024-28). For the first time, this will be known as a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The CRMP will ensure the Service continues to develop the skills of its people and invests in vehicles and resources to enable it to respond to emergencies and reduce risks in the face of changes in society, technology and the environment. These improvements must be affordable.

In the autumn and winter of 2023/24, Cheshire Fire Authority will be consulting the public, its staff and its stakeholders on proposals for the new CRMP. The consultation will be publicised widely to ensure everyone has the opportunity to have their say.

Ahead of the formal consultation, the Authority is asking a series of questions to enable it understand what people expect of their fire and rescue service. The responses will help it develop its detailed proposals for later in the year.

Please answer as many of the questions as you feel able to. If you have any questions about the survey, please email graeme.worrall@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Our Guiding Principles

Shaping Your Fire and Rescue Service

The Authority is aiming to develop the CRMP in line with several guiding principles. These will inform how it develops its plans and achieves the vision of a Cheshire where there are no deaths, injuries or damage from fires and other emergencies. It is proposed that the principles that will guide the development the CRMP are:

• Giving our colleagues and communities a genuine say in the development of our Service.

• Continuing to respond to incidents as quickly as we do now and where possible, even more quickly in the future.

• Using the latest equipment and technology to respond to incidents safely and effectively, to drive improvements in the service we provide.

• Enabling our staff to be more productive and effective with their time, keeping our communities safe.

• Strengthening our prevention and protection programmes to meet the needs of those at most at risk.

• Providing high quality, sustainable workplaces for our colleagues by continuing to modernise our buildings and facilities.

• Continuing to nurture our Service's safe, supportive and inclusive workplace culture.

1. To what extent do you approve of the guiding principles to develop our CRMP?

- Strongly approve

- Approve
- Neither approve nor disapprove
- Disapprove
- Strongly disapprove

2. Is there anything else you think the Authority should consider within its guiding principles?

FREE TEXT

Emergency Response Standard

Shaping Your Fire and Rescue Service

There is no national response standard. Fire and rescue services have agreed different targets and different ways of measuring the speed of firefighters' arrival at an incident. Some services, for example, start the clock from the moment the control room operator takes the 999 call. Others, such as Cheshire, measure response from when crews are alerted by the control room.

In Cheshire, when you dial 999 and ask for fire, you will speak to a control room operator in North West Fire Control. They will then alert and mobilise the fire engines to respond to an emergency.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service currently aims to get to incidents where lives are at risk within 10 minutes of the fire station or fire engine receiving an alert from the fire control room. The Service's performance target is to meet this 10 minute response standard 80% of the time.

Our current performance means we meet our response standard 88% of the time, but there are parts of Cheshire where geography means it is more difficult to get to an incident within 10 minutes and the response might take longer.

To ensure that response times continue to be monitored and managed effectively, the Authority is considering options to change the way in which it measures performance by including the call handling within our response time.

This would add around 90 seconds on average to our reported response times, as we do not include call handling. In reality this would not change the speed of response you currently receive as call handling is part of our emergency response, it is just that we don't report it within our performance figures.

Please explain why you chose your preferred option

3. To what extent would you support the Service measuring its response times from the moment a 999 call is received rather than from when the first fire engine is alerted to the incident?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

4. Would it be easier for you to understand how the Service is performing if it reported its performance as an average response time or as a percentage pass rate?

In other words, would you prefer the Service to say, for example: - its average response time is 9.5 minutes against a target of 10 minutes - OR the Service meets its 10 minute response standard 80% of the time

- Using an average response time would be easier to understand
- Using a percentage pass rate would be easier to understand
- Don't know

The next set of questions seek your feedback on your expectations for the Service's emergency response and ask you how long you think it would be acceptable to wait for a fire engine in several different scenarios.

For reference, the current response standard is to respond to life-risk incidents within 10 minutes; with a performance target to reach this standard on 80% of occasions.

5. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive for a house fire? (Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

6. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive for a fire in a commercial premises? (Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

7. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive for a small fire (e.g. bin fire or grass fire)? (Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

8. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive at a road traffic collision? (Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

9. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive to rescue someone from water? (Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

10. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive to help paramedics gain entry to a property where someone needs medical attention? (Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

11. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive to rescue an animal? (Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

As referenced above, our current response standard is to attend life risk incidents within 10 minutes on 80% of occasions. The same standard is used across all areas of Cheshire.

Our current performance means we meet our response standard 88% of the time, but there are parts of Cheshire where geography means it is more difficult to get to an incident within 10 minutes and the response might take longer.

As part of considering our future response standard, we are seeking your views on whether to maintain a single response standard across Cheshire or to use different standards depending on risk and activity.

A common response standard would mean the same response target across the county, regardless of where you live.

Different response standards would take into account local risks and demands and might see a different response target depending on where you live in Cheshire. For example areas of higher risk and activity, typically more urban areas, would have a quicker response standard than areas of lower risk and activity, which are typically more rural parts of Cheshire.

Please explain why you chose your preferred option

12. Do you think the Service should have the same response standard across all areas of Cheshire, or differ the speed of its response to reflect fire and rescue risks in local areas?

- I would prefer the same response standard across Cheshire
- I would prefer a different response to reflect local risks and demands in different parts of Cheshire
- Don't know

Reviewing the On-Call Duty System

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service operates a range of different shift systems in order to staff its 28 fire stations and 35 fire engines in ways that suit the needs of their local communities.

In busier areas with more risk, fire engines are crewed 24/7 by firefighters. In many of the lower risk areas of Cheshire, the Service operates an on-call duty system. The on-call duty system relies on people who live or work within five minutes of their fire station training as firefighters and making themselves available to respond to emergencies when alerted via a pager.

Thirteen fire stations in Cheshire are staffed using solely using the on-call duty system, in the following locations:

Cheshire East: Alsager, Audlem, Bollington, Homes Chapel, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach.

Cheshire West and Chester: Frodsham, Tarporley, Malpas.

Warrington: Stockton Heath.

In some other areas, such as Macclesfield, Northwich, Penketh, Runcorn and Winsford, one of the two fire engines on these stations is staffed by on-call firefighters.

The recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters is an issue facing many fire and rescue services. In Cheshire, a significant amount of work has been undertaken to improve the availability of our on-call fire engines.

Despite this, the most recent performance data shows that on average, Cheshire's on-call fire engines are available 53% of the time against a target of 85% availability. When a fire engine in a particular location is unavailable, a fire engine from another part of Cheshire will always respond in the event of an emergency.

It is becoming increasingly clear that societal changes and the modern employment market is making the on-call duty system less attractive to many people, which is having an impact on the Service's ability to recruit and retain on-call firefighters and the availability of fire engines in on-call station areas.

13. To what extent would you support the Service reviewing its on-call model to improve the availability of its fire engines?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Please explain why you chose your preferred option:

FREE TEXT

14. How important to you is it that the local fire engine from your town/village responds to you in an emergency rather than an engine from elsewhere in Cheshire, even if firefighters attend within the response standard?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not so important
- Not at all important
- Don't know

Please explain why you chose your preferred option

FREE TEXT

15. Thinking about the number and type of fire engines across Cheshire, which option would you prefer?

- I would support an overall reduction in the number of fire engines, so long as those remaining were available more frequently than is currently the case and able to meet response standards most of the time.
- I would prefer to keep the same overall number of fire engines as now, but I understand that some of these may not always be available to respond to emergencies.
- Not sure
- Don't know

Reviewing the Service's Other Activity

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service undertakes a wide range of activities to keep its community safe. Some of these activities fall under the Authority's legal obligations, such as responding to fires and road traffic collisions, promoting fire safety and enforcing the fire safety regulations in premises.

The Service undertakes other activities that are not its statutory responsibility, but that help to keep people most at risk safe from harm, often in partnership with other public and voluntary sector organisations.

As part of the development of the CRMP 2024-28, the Authority will review the full range of community safety activities and is keen to understand which of these you think it should continue to focus on.

Rating Scale

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Don't know

Activity

- Responding to fire incidents
- Responding to road traffic collisions
- Rescuing people from water
- Rescuing trapped animals
- Responding to some medical emergencies in certain locations
- Responding to major incidents (terrorism, industrial incidents, flooding)
- Providing fire safety and health advice and fitting smoke alarms in the local community
- Educating people on road safety
- Running fire cadet units on fire stations for 11-17 year olds
- Working with the Prince's Trust to deliver its Team Programme for 16-24 year olds
- Working with young people to prevent fires and anti-social behaviour
- Engaging schools through visits, our safety education centre and tailored programmes for pupils at risk of exclusion
- Providing volunteering opportunities
- Delivering station open days within the community
- Attending community events to engage people about safety
- Providing fire safety advice to local businesses
- Prosecuting businesses who don't comply with fire safety regulations

17. Is there anything that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service currently does that you think it should either change or stop doing?

FREE TEXT

18. Are there any new or emerging risks that you think we should be taking into account in our planning for the future?

FREE TEXT

19. Do you have any further comments about your fire and rescue service that you wish to make?

FREE TEXT

20. How do you find out about the activities that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service carries out? (please tick all that apply)

- National or regional TV
- Local or regional radio
- Local newspapers or news sites
- Cheshire Fire Facebook
- Cheshire Fire Twitter
- My local fire station's Twitter
- Other social media
- Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service website
- Cheshire Fire Alert (messaging system)
- Other news sites
- Word of mouth

Value For Money

Cheshire Fire Authority provides a fire and rescue service for the communities of Cheshire. It receives the money it needs to do this through two main sources; funding from central government and funding through its council tax precept (the Authority's share of your council tax bill).

Around 67% of funding comes from the Authority's share of local council tax, with the remaining 33% coming from central government. For 2023/2024, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's total funding requirement is £51.74m. To meet this requirement, Cheshire Fire Authority is charging the following precept amounts as listed below. The precise figure depends on your council tax banding, which you will see on your annual council tax bill.

- Band A - £58.32 per year.
- Band B - £68.04 per year.
- Band C - £77.76 per year.
- Band D - £87.48 per year.
- Band E - £106.92 per year.
- Band F - £126.36 per year.
- Band G - £145.80 per year.
- Band H - £174.96 per year.

21. To what extent do you agree that the current precept (the Authority's share of council tax) represents value for money in the provision of fire and rescue services across Cheshire?

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

The following questions ask you about your thoughts on the Authority's share of council tax (the precept). Please note that these questions are to provide an indication only. Formal budget proposals for future years would be subject to further consultation once they are finalised.

22. I would be willing to pay a higher precept to Cheshire Fire Authority to maintain or improve the services that are currently provided.

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

23. If you would be willing to pay a higher precept, please use the slider to indicate how much more per year you would be willing to pay.

For reference, the Authority's share of council tax for 2023/2024 is £87.48 for a Band D property.

MIN: £1.00 MID: £5.00 MAX: £10.00

24. I would like to pay a smaller precept to Cheshire Fire Authority but accept that this woud lead to a reduction in the services provided, including a reduction in emergency response provision.

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

25. If you would prefer to pay a smaller precept, please use the slider to indicate how much less per year you would be willing to pay. For reference, the Authority's share of council tax for 2023/2024 is £87.48 for a Band D property.

MIN: £1.00 MID: £5.00 MAX: £10.00

About You

You do not have to answer the following questions, however this data is collected to help ensure the Authority is listening to all parts of the community. This information is not shared with anyone else and data is held in accordance with data protection legislation. For more information please visit cheshirefire.gov.uk or click here

If you are responding on behalf of a partner agency or local stakeholder, please provide the name of the organisation below.

26. Are you answering the survey as

- A member of the public
- A business owner
- A representative of a partner agency or local stakeholder
- None of the above

27. In which area of Cheshire do you live?

- Cheshire East
- Cheshire West and Chester
- Halton
- Warrington
- I do not live in Cheshire
- Prefer not to say

28. What is your postcode?

FREE TEXT

29. Do you currently pay council tax to either Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Halton Borough Council or Warrington Borough Council?

- Yes
- No

30. Where is your nearest fire station?

- Alsager Fire Station
- Audlem Fire Station
- Birchwood Fire Station
- Bollington Fire Station
- Chester Fire Station
- Congleton Fire Station
- Crewe Fire Station
- Ellesmere Port Fire Station
- Frodsham Fire Station
- Holmes Chapel Fire Station
- Knutsford Fire Station
- Lymm Fire Station
- Macclesfield Fire Station
- Malpas Fire Station
- Middlewich Fire Station
- Nantwich Fire Station
- Northwich Fire Station
- Penketh Fire Station
- Powey Lane Fire Station
- Poynton Fire Station
- Runcorn Fire Station
- Sandbach Fire Station
- Stockton Heath Fire Station
- Tarporley Fire Station
- Warrington Fire Station
- Widnes Fire Station
- Wilmslow Fire Station
- Winsford Fire Station

31. Your gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- I prefer to self-describe (please specify below)

32. Is your gender the same as that assigned to you at birth?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

33. Your age

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85 and over
- Prefer not to say

34. Your ethnicity

- White English/Scottish/Welsh/Northern Irish/British
- White Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background
- White and Black British
- White and Black African
- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background
- Asian British
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background
- Black British
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Any other Black background
- Arab
- Any other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say
- I prefer to self-describe (please specify)

35. What is your religion?

- No religion
- Buddhist
- Christian (including C of E, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Prefer not to say
- Other religion (please specify)

36. What is your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual or straight
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Prefer not to say

37. Do you have a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

38. How did you hear about this survey?

- Newspaper
- Television
- Radio
- Facebook
- Twitter

Annex 3: Staff Survey

Developing Our Plans For The Future

This financial year (2023/24) is the final year of Cheshire Fire Authority's current Integrated Risk Management Plan, a four-year strategy that set out objectives to improve the effectiveness of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, address key fire and emergency-related risks and keep communities safe.

The Authority must now start to develop its strategy for the next four years (2024-28). For the first time, this will be known as a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The CRMP will ensure the Service continues to develop the skills of its people and invests in vehicles and resources to enable it to respond to emergencies and reduce risks in the face of changes in society, technology and the environment. These improvements must be affordable.

In the autumn and winter of 2023/24, Cheshire Fire Authority will be consulting the public, its staff and its stakeholders on proposals for the new CRMP. The consultation will be publicised widely to ensure everyone has the opportunity to have their say.

Ahead of the formal consultation, the Authority is asking a series of questions to enable it understand what people expect of their fire and rescue service. The responses will help it develop its detailed proposals for later in the year.

Please answer as many of the questions as you feel able to. If you have any questions about the survey, please email graeme.worrall@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Our Principles

The Authority is aiming to develop the CRMP in line with several guiding principles. These will inform how it develops its plans and achieves the vision of a Cheshire where there are no deaths, injuries or damage from fires and other emergencies. It is proposed that the principles that will guide the development the CRMP are:

• Giving our colleagues and communities a genuine say in the development of our Service.

• Continuing to respond to incidents as quickly as we do now and where possible, even more quickly in the future.

• Using the latest equipment and technology to respond to incidents safely and effectively, to drive improvements in the service we provide.

• Enabling our staff to be more productive and effective with their time, keeping our communities safe.

• Strengthening our prevention and protection programmes to meet the needs of those at most at risk.

• Providing high quality, sustainable workplaces for our colleagues by continuing to modernise our buildings and facilities.

• Continuing to nurture our Service's safe, supportive and inclusive workplace culture.

1. To what extent do you approve of the guiding principles to develop the CRMP?

- Strongly approve

- Approve
- Neither approve nor disapprove
- Disapprove
- Strongly disapprove

2. Is there anything else you think the Authority should consider within its guiding principles? FREE TEXT

Emergency Response Standard

There is no national response standard. Fire and rescue services have agreed different targets and different ways of measuring the speed of firefighters' arrival at an incident. Some services, for example, start the clock from the moment the control room operator takes the 999 call. Others, such as Cheshire, measure response from when crews are alerted by the control room.

In Cheshire, when you dial 999 and ask for fire, you will speak to a control room operator in North West Fire Control. They will then alert and mobilise the fire engines to respond to an emergency.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service currently aims to get to incidents where lives are at risk within 10 minutes of the fire station or fire engine receiving an alert from the fire control room. The Service's performance target is to meet this 10 minute response standard 80% of the time.

Our current performance means we meet our response standard 88% of the time, but there are parts of Cheshire where geography means it is more difficult to get to an incident within 10 minutes and the response might take longer.

To ensure that response times continue to be monitored and managed effectively, the Authority is considering options to change the way in which it measures performance by including the call handling within our response time.

3. To what extent would you support the Service measuring its response times from the moment a 999 call is received, as opposed to from when the first fire engine is alerted to the incident?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Please explain why you chose your preferred option (FREE TEXT)

4. Would it be easier for you to understand how the Service is performing if it reported its performance as an average response time or as a percentage pass rate?

In other words, would you prefer the Service to say, for example: - its average response time is 9.5 minutes against a target of 10 minutes - OR the Service meets its 10 minute response standard 80% of the time

- Using an average response time would be easier to understand
- Using a percentage pass rate would be easier to understand

- Don't know

The next set of questions seek your feedback on your expectations for the Service's emergency response and ask you how long you think it would be acceptable to wait for a fire engine in several different scenarios.

For reference, the current response standard is to respond to life-risk incidents within 10 minutes; with a performance target to reach this standard on 80% of occasions.

5. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive for a house fire?

(Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

6. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive for a fire in a commercial premises?

(Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

7. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive for a small fire (e.g. bin fire or grass fire)?

(Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

8. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive at a road traffic collision?

(Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

9. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive to rescue someone from water?

(Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

10. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive to help paramedics gain entry to a property where someone needs medical attention?

(Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

11. How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for a fire engine to arrive to rescue an animal?

(Sliding scale)

MIN: 5 minutes MAX:20 minutes

As referenced above, our current response standard is to attend life risk incidents within 10 minutes on 80% of occasions. The same standard is used across all areas of Cheshire.

Our current performance means we meet our response standard 88% of the time, but there are parts of Cheshire where geography means it is more difficult to get to an incident within 10 minutes and the response might take longer.

As part of considering our future response standard, we are seeking your views on whether to maintain a single response standard across Cheshire or to use different standards depending on risk and activity.

A common response standard would mean the same response target across the county, regardless of where people live.

Different response standards would take into account local risks and demands and might see a different response target depending on where people live in Cheshire. For example areas of higher risk and activity, typically more urban areas, would have a quicker response standard than areas of lower risk and activity, which are typically more rural parts of Cheshire.

Please explain why you chose your preferred option

FREE TEXT

12. Do you think the Service should have the same response standard across all areas of Cheshire, or differ our speed of its response to reflect fire and rescue risks in local areas?

- I would prefer the same response standard across Cheshire
- I would prefer a different response to reflect local risks and demands in different parts of Cheshire
- Don't know

Reviewing our On-Call Duty System

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service operates a range of different shift systems in order to staff its 28 fire stations and 35 fire engines in ways that suit the needs of their local communities. In busier areas with more risk, fire engines are crewed 24/7 by firefighters.

In many of the lower risk areas of Cheshire, the Service operates an on-call duty system. The on-call duty system relies on people who live or work within five minutes of their fire station training as firefighters and making themselves available to respond to emergencies when alerted via a pager.

Thirteen fire stations in Cheshire are staffed using solely using the on-call duty system, in the following locations:

Cheshire East: Alsager, Audlem, Bollington, Homes Chapel, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach.

Cheshire West and Chester: Frodsham, Tarporley, Malpas.

Warrington: Stockton Heath.

In some other areas, such as Macclesfield, Northwich, Penketh, Runcorn and Winsford, one of the two fire engines on these stations is staffed by on-call firefighters. The recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters is an issue facing many fire and rescue services. In Cheshire, a significant amount of work has been undertaken to improve the availability of our on-call fire engines.

Despite this, the most recent performance data shows that on average, Cheshire's on-call fire engines are available 53% of the time against a target of 85% availability. When a fire engine in a particular location is unavailable, a fire engine from another part of Cheshire will always respond in the event of an emergency.

It is becoming increasingly clear that societal changes and the modern employment market is making the on- call duty system less attractive to many people, which is having an impact on the Service's ability to recruit and retain on-call firefighters and the availability of fire engines in on-call station areas.

13. To what extent would you support the Service reviewing its on-call model to improve

the availability of its fire engines?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

14. Thinking about the number and type of fire engines across Cheshire, which option would you prefer?

- I would support an overall reduction in the number of fire engines, so long as those remaining were available more frequently than is currently the case and able to meet response standards most of the time.
- I would prefer to keep the same overall number of fire engines as now, but I understand that some of these may not always be available to respond to emergencies.
- Not sure
- Don't know

Please explain why you chose your preferred option FREE TEXT

15. What is your role within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service?

- I am a wholetime firefighter on the Optimum Crewing System
- I am a wholetime firefighter on the Nucleus Crewing System
- I am a wholetime firefighter on the DC1 Crewing System
- I am a wholetime firefighter in Cheshire who is also an on-call firefighter in Cheshire (Dual Role)
- I am solely an on-call firefighter in Cheshire
- I am an officer on a Day Duty or Flexi-Duty System
- I am a member of fire staff
- I am a member of Cheshire Fire Authority

16. Where is your normal place of work?

For dual-role staff please select your primary workplace.

- Alsager Fire Station
- Audlem Fire Station
- Birchwood Fire Station

- Bollington Fire Station
- Chester Fire Station
- Clemonds Hey
- Congleton Fire Station
- Crewe Fire Station
- Ellesmere Port Fire Station
- Frodsham Fire Station
- Holmes Chapel Fire Station
- Knutsford Fire Station
- Lymm Fire Station
- Macclesfield Fire Station
- Malpas Fire Station
- Middlewich Fire Station
- Nantwich Fire Station
- Northwich Fire Station
- Penketh Fire Station
- Powey Lane Fire Station
- Poynton Fire Station
- Runcorn Fire Station
- Sadler Road
- Safety Central
- Sandbach Fire Station
- Stockton Heath Fire Station
- Tarporley Fire Station
- Warrington Fire Station
- Widnes Fire Station
- Wilmslow Fire Station
- Winsford Fire Station

17. If you are a dual-role member of staff please select where you provide your on-call cover.

- Alsager Fire Station
- Audlem Fire Station
- Birchwood Fire Station
- Bollington Fire Station
- Frodsham Fire Station
- Holmes Chapel Fire Station
- Knutsford Fire Station
- Macclesfield Fire Station
- Malpas Fire Station
- Middlewich Fire Station
- Nantwich Fire Station
- Northwich Fire Station
- Penketh Fire Station
- Poynton Fire Station
- Runcorn Fire Station

- Sandbach Fire Station
- Stockton Heath Fire Station
- Tarporley Fire Station
- Winsford Fire Station

Reviewing our Wholetime and On-Call Duty Systems

As part of the planning for the next CRMP, the Service will be reviewing how it deploys the various shift patterns across our wholetime duty system. The answers you provide will help it to understand your preferences as potential future options for staffing our fire engines are developed.

The following three questions relate to your primary wholetime role, so please answer from this perspective.

18. To what extent would a daytime-only shift system appeal to you?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all

Please explain why you chose your preferred option (FREE TEXT)

19. To what extent would you prefer working a regular routine shift pattern or one which is flexibly determined on a monthly basis?

- I would definitely prefer a routine shift pattern
- I would probably prefer a routine shift pattern
- I would have no preference over either option
- I would probably prefer a more flexible shift pattern
- I would definitely prefer a more flexible shift pattern

The following questions on this page now relate to your on-call role within the Service, so please answer from this perspective.

20. Which time period do you prefer to provide on-call cover? (Please rank from your most preferred to least preferred)

- Weekday daytime
- Weekday evenings and overnight
- Weekends
- A mix of weekday and weekends

Please provide any further details on this issue you think we should consider (FREE TEXT)

21. To what extent would a package of increased financial remuneration encourage you to provide additional cover over weekends, but using a more structured approach to planning and managing availability?

- Definitely would
- Probably would

- Not sure
- Probably would not
- Definitely would not

Please provide any other issue you would like to be considered (FREE TEXT)

22. Which areas of the on-call duty system do you feel could be improved in order to

improve availability and staff retention? (Please tick all that apply)

- Contractual arrangements (e.g. cover bandings)
- Training commitments
- Operational workload
- Pathway to competence

23. Which time period do you prefer to provide on-call cover? (Please rank from your most preferred to least preferred)

- Weekday daytime
- Weekday evenings and overnight
- Weekends
- A mix of weekday and weekends

Please provide any further details on this issue you think we should consider (FREE TEXT)

24. To what extent would a package of increased financial remuneration encourage you to provide additional cover over weekends, but using a more structured approach to planning and managing availability?

- Definitely would
- Probably would
- Not sure
- Probably would not
- Definitely would not

Please provide any other issue you would like to be considered (FREE TEXT)

25. Which areas of the on-call duty system do you feel could be improved in order to improve availability and staff retention? (Please tick all that apply)

- Contractual arrangements (e.g. cover bandings)
- Training commitments
- Operational workload
- Pathway to competence

As part of our planning for the next Community Risk Management Plan, we will be reviewing how we deploy the various shift patterns across our wholetime duty system. The answers you provide will help us to understand your preferences as we develop potential future options for staffing our fire engines.

26. To what extent would a daytime-only shift system appeal to you?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all

Please explain why this would or would not appeal to you (FREE TEXT)

27. To what extent would you prefer working a regular routine shift pattern or one which is flexibly determined on a monthly basis?

- I would definitely prefer a routine shift pattern
- I would probably prefer a routine shift pattern
- I would have no preference over either option
- I would probably prefer a more flexible shift pattern
- I would definitely prefer a more flexible shift pattern
- Please explain why you chose your preferred option

Reviewing Our Activity

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service undertakes a wide range of activities to keep its community safe. Some of these activities fall under the Authority's legal obligations, such as responding to fires and road traffic collisions, promoting fire safety and enforcing the fire safety regulations in premises.

The Service undertakes other activities that are not its statutory responsibility, but that help to keep people most at risk safe from harm, often in partnership with other public and voluntary sector organisations.

As part of the development of the CRMP 2024-28, the Authority will review the full range of community safety activities and is keen to understand which of these you think it should continue to focus on.

Rating Scale

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Don't know

Activity

- Responding to fire incidents
- Responding to road traffic collisions
- Rescuing people from water
- Rescuing trapped animals
- Responding to some medical emergencies in certain locations
- Responding to major incidents (terrorism, industrial incidents, flooding)

- Providing fire safety and health advice and fitting smoke alarms in the local community
- Educating people on road safety
- Running fire cadet units on fire stations for 11-17 year olds
- Working with the Prince's Trust to deliver its Team Programme for 16-24 year olds
- Working with young people to prevent fires and anti-social behaviour
- Engaging schools through visits, our safety education centre and tailored programmes for pupils at risk of exclusion
- Providing volunteering opportunities
- Delivering station open days within the community
- Attending community events to engage people about safety
- Providing fire safety advice to local businesses
- Prosecuting businesses who don't comply with fire safety regulations

29. Is there anything that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service currently does that you think it should either change or stop doing? (FREE TEXT)

30. Are there any new or emerging risks that you think we should be taking into account in our planning for the future?

About You

You do not have to answer the following questions, however this data is collected to help ensure the Authority is listening to all parts of the community. This information is not shared with anyone else and data is held in accordance with data protection legislation. For more information please visit cheshirefire.gov.uk or click here

31. Your gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- I prefer to self-describe (please specify)

32. Is your gender the same as that assigned to you at birth?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

33. Your age

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85 and over
- Prefer not to say

34. Your ethnicity

- White English/Scottish/Welsh/Northern Irish/British
- White Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background
- White and Black British
- White and Black African
- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background
- Asian British
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background
- Black British
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Any other Black background
- Arab
- Any other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say
- I prefer to self-describe (please specify)

35. What is your religion?

- No religion
- Buddhist
- Christian (including C of E, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Prefer not to say
- Other religion (please specify)

36. What is your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual or straight
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Prefer not to say

37. Do you have a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say