

# CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF:** STAFFING COMMITTEE  
**DATE:** 21 MARCH 2022  
**REPORT OF:** DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION  
**AUTHOR:** GRAEME WORRALL

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**SUBJECT:** 2021 STAFF SURVEY ACTION PLAN

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## Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with an update on progress and the development of an action plan following the 2021 staff survey.

## Recommended:

That the report be noted.

## Background

2. The Service and Authority have committed to holding a staff survey every two years to measure staff engagement and provide information on a range of subjects to drive improvements across the Service.
3. The 2021 survey was the seventh such exercise undertaken and as with previous surveys, an independent provider was contracted – People Insight. The online survey ran for six weeks between 18 October and 26 November 2021. A total of 439 members of staff responded, an overall response rate of 59%. As per previous surveys, the Service committed to donating £3 to the Firefighters Charity for each completed survey to encourage responses. This resulted in a donation of £1,317.
4. Members received a presentation from People Insight at the Planning Day on 14 January 2022. This provided: a summary of the survey results; action points to consider; and an overview of next steps.

## Survey Results

5. A key measure that the survey gauges is the Service's overall engagement score. This considers five factors such as how proud staff are to work for the Service; that they would recommend it as a good place to work; they care for the future of the organisation; they still want to be working for the Service in two years time, and that being in the Service makes them want to do the best work they can. A high engagement score demonstrates a high level of staff

engagement and organisations with high engagement can often have a competitive advantage against their peers.

6. The overall engagement score for the Service was 85%. This is the highest engagement score that the Service has achieved in a staff survey and demonstrates a 7% improvement on the previous survey.
7. People Insight use their standard PEARL methodology to construct the survey. This groups questions and subjects around the following themes:
  - a. **Purpose** - this relates to subjects including job security, staff being able to be themselves in the workplace and explaining how their job contributes to the Service's aims and objectives.
  - b. **Enablement** - having the training, development and equipment needed to do the job, the implementation of policies and procedures and feeling the promotion process is fair and transparent.
  - c. **Autonomy** - having the freedom to get on with the job, satisfaction around work/life balance and feeling staff can cope with the demands of their job.
  - d. **Reward** - how valued and recognised staff feel for the work they do, being able to develop their career and recognising good performance. and;
  - e. **Leadership** - whether senior leaders and managers are visible and provide clear leadership, views are listened to and responded to, how change is managed and that the reasons for decisions are explained openly.
8. The 2021 survey saw results increase across each of these themes. At an individual question level there were some significant increases of +10% or more, suggesting a considerable improvement on the results of the previous survey.
9. The Service also includes two bespoke sections:
  - a. **Immediate Manager** - staff relationships with their line manager and;
  - b. **Wellbeing** - more general questions relating to individual health and wellbeing.
10. For 2021, there was a slight -2% decline in scores compared to the 2019 survey for Immediate Manager (though still very high at 89%). There was also a -3% decline in Wellbeing to 65%. It is worth noting that there are a range of perceptions regarding wellbeing, with significant differences in scoring between various roles and departments within the organisation.

## **Post-Survey Communications**

11. Following the conclusion of the survey, the results have been communicated to staff across the Service. A dedicated page on the intranet contains a video of the results presentation and copies of the results, split by department, and free text comments provided.
12. Service Management Team has also been provided with an overview of the survey results. In addition individual Heads of Department have been briefed on the results from the perspective of their departments, in order to facilitate a series of feedback sessions with their teams to inform the development of action plans to address the findings of the survey. These sessions commenced in February 2022 and are expected to run through into Spring.

## **Development of Staff Survey Action Plans**

13. Action plans have previously been developed to act upon the feedback received from staff surveys and this approach is being undertaken again regarding the 2021 survey. There are two levels of action plan being developed:
  - a. Departmental Staff Survey Action Plans – these will be informed through briefings and feedback sessions with individual teams within departments, facilitated by Heads of Department.
  - b. Corporate Staff Survey Action Plan – this will be developed from actions within Departmental Staff Survey Action Plans and from feedback direct from the survey. The actions within this Plan are those that require corporate or cross-departmental activity to implement.
14. Copies of the Corporate Staff Survey Action Plan and the Departmental Staff Survey Action Plans will be provided for staff to view once they are finalised. Progress against the plans will be monitored and a further update provided to Members in due course.

## **Corporate Staff Survey Action Plan**

15. The Corporate Staff Survey Action Plan is currently being developed and it focuses on the broader themes of the survey and issues which may require the input of more than one department at corporate level to address. The themes of the action plan include:
  - a. Promoting positive health and wellbeing. This theme addresses feedback from the Wellbeing Index within the survey, which asks questions relating to the general health and wellbeing of staff. The theme incorporates actions including the introduction of Mental Health MOTs; encouraging staff to maintain an open dialogue with their line managers regarding their mental health and wellbeing; reviewing the Service's TRiM process and

- b. Encouraging a culture of learning and development. This includes reviewing of the operational promotion board process to include consideration of experience gained within temporary roles; developing an online appraisal system to enable more regular career discussions between staff and their line manager; and developing avenues to help fire staff to progress their career or gain new skills across different areas of the Service.
  - c. Improving recognition and feeling valued. The survey highlighted that while engagement has improved and increased senior officer visibility was a key contributor to this, further work is needed to improve perceptions of recognition and feeling valued across the Service. The above themes will also contribute to an increased sense of recognition and feeling valued, however some specific actions include reviewing the Service's existing reward and recognition mechanisms to ensure recognition is timely, appropriate and is applied to all sections of the Service where merited.
16. It should be noted that actions within the Corporate Staff Survey Action Plan may also cross reference to other strategies and their related action plans as appropriate, such as the Mental Health Strategy, EDI Strategy and People Strategy.

### **Financial Implications**

17. Some actions that are included within action plans may require funding to implement. In such cases, existing procedures for bidding for the required funding will be used.

### **Legal Implications**

18. None.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

19. The development of the action plans is intended to seek feedback from all areas of the organisation. Contributions are encouraged from the respective staff network groups to elicit feedback from a diverse range of staff perspectives.

### **Environmental Implications**

20. None.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**