

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	PC/23/9
MEETING	PEOPLE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	28 JULY 2023
SUBJECT OF REPORT	2023 PEOPLE SURVEY RESULTS OVERVIEW
LEAD OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES (TREASURER)
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This report highlighting the purpose, methodology and high level findings of the People Survey undertaken in 2023. A results summary overview is also set out in Appendix A.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	N/a
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	N/a
APPENDICES	A. iDeck presentation slides summarising all survey responses overview
BACKGROUND PAPERS	n/a

1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

- 1.1. The People Survey gives our workforce (including volunteers) the opportunity to tell us how they feel within their role in Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (hereinafter referred to as “the Service”), encouraging open and honest feedback with a confidential survey. To use this feedback at all levels of the service to influence our priorities, decision making and objectives to achieve the workplace the Service aspires to.

Aims:

- use, and demonstrate how we use, the people survey results to shape future plans and strategy within Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
- use, and demonstrate how we use, the people survey results to develop action plans and objectives to address issues that come out of the people survey, managing expectation about timeframe
- continue to learn and build trust within our workforce with timely surveys.

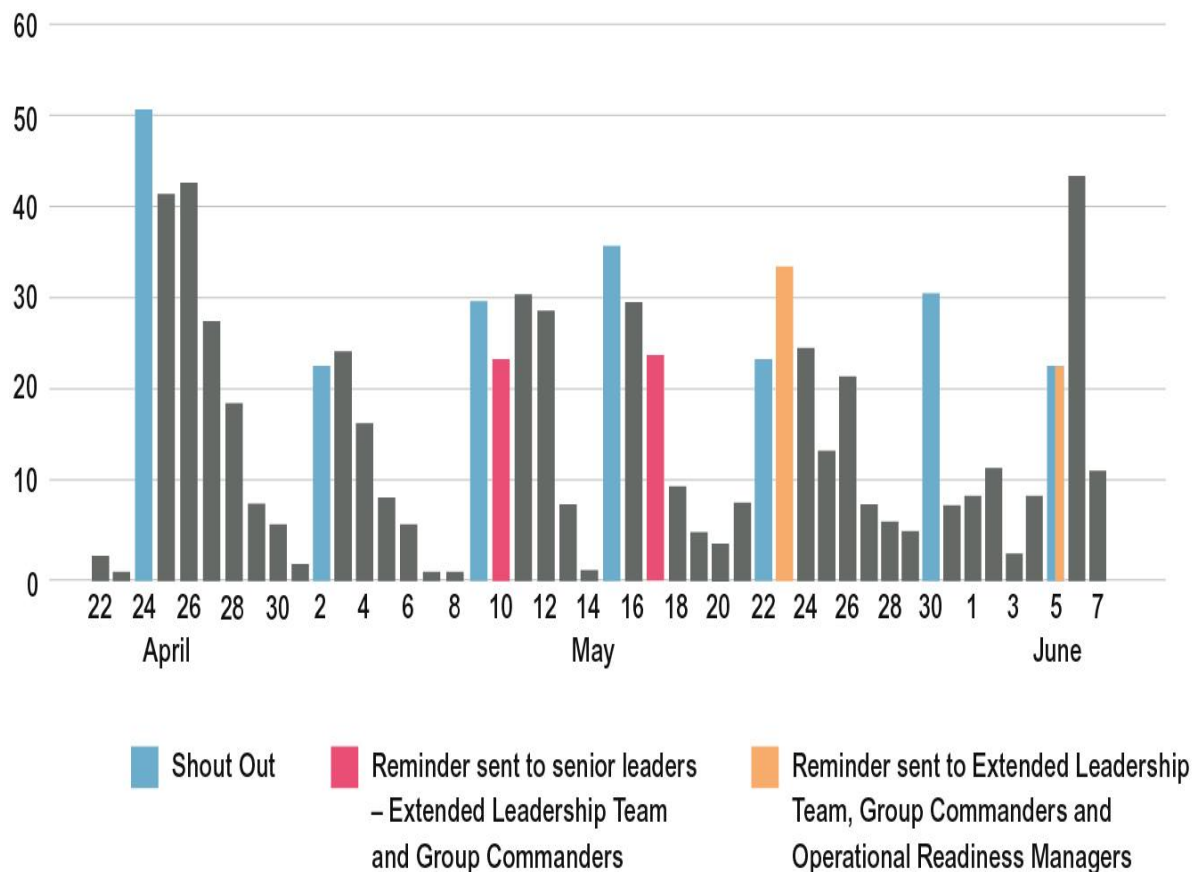
2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. The survey was live between 24 April and 7 June. The survey was designed to enable staff to easily complete and share their honest opinions. It was responsive so would be accessible on any device. No paper copies were requested.
- 2.2. The survey was managed and facilitated internally by the Communications and Engagement Team. The survey was developed using the team’s survey software tool (Snap).
- 2.3. The survey was made up of a series of questions focused around the themes of the People Strategy with an additional question asking whether people would recommend the Service. The questions were not compulsory so there may be a different number of responses for some questions. Each theme comprised of a number of personalised statements where respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement/disagreement. At the end of each of the themes an open-ended question allowed respondents to put forward any further views/comments.
- 2.4. The questions had a five-point scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. This is an industry recognised LIKERT scale.

- 2.5. There were also questions which identified directorate, department, group, length of service which were compulsory. Optional demographic questions followed to help identify whether there are particular groups within our Service where we should focus or prioritise. Asking directorate and department was asked for the first time this year to enable departments to deliver action planning.
- 2.6. The results have been shared with industry experts People Insight who have created a dashboard to help understand the responses. The dashboard has been shared with our Extended Leadership Team, as well as Group Commanders, Operational Resource Managers (ORMs) and nominated managers across all departments.

PROMOTION OF THE SURVEY

- 3.1. The Service aimed to generate a high response rate from all our staff. Historically the response rates from operational staff, specifically on-call, has been low. To address this, we regularly monitored the response rates from different staff groups and then targeted communications to encourage a higher response rate.
- 3.2. The Service implemented a focused approach to our communications and promoted the survey using the following channels:
- Shout Out – internal newsletter;
 - Viva Engage – internal social media channel;
 - Leader blogs;
 - Service intranet homepage with a banner at the top of the page for the duration;
 - The survey was responsive to devices so that it could be easily accessed from a mobile phone or tablet so that it could be shared through station what's app groups;
 - Emails to Extended Leadership Team, Group Commanders (GCs) and Operational Readiness Managers (ORMs) requesting support and promotion of the survey with operational and support staff across the Service;
 - Posters sent to every station and displayed at Service Headquarters with a QR code to scan; and
 - Link on DS Connect for ease of access to operational staff (received 45 clicks) – which was made live on 21 April 2023.
- 3.3. The Service monitored the impact of our communication, and the chart below shows the increase in responses each time specific communications were issued.



4. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

4.1. 813 people completed the survey which is 44% of the workforce. This number of responses is above the industry recognised confidence rating of 95% confidence with a 2.5% margin of error. This compares with 845 responses for the 2017 survey when paper copies were handed out. However, the establishment for the organisation was higher during this time. In 2021, a health check survey was issued which saw 619 responses, which was 32% of the workforce, so there is improvement in engagement.

4.2. The survey asked people to select their role. This question was multiple choice as it was recognised many of the workforce have multiple roles:

Role	Number selected
Uniformed – Wholetime duty system	711
Uniformed – On-call duty system	674
Uniformed – Control	45
Support staff	520
Other	33

5. **KEY FOCUS AREAS**

- 5.1. An overview of the results can be found in slides set out at Appendix A of this report. From these results 5 key focus areas emerged.

Inclusion of thought

- 5.2. Opinions and ideas being valued and receiving feedback on input is an area highlighted by the responses. Questions which indicated this include 'I will be asked for my opinion to give input before decisions and made' (39% agreement, 30% disagreement) and 'I feel my ideas and opinions are valued and I have the opportunity to share them' (59% agreement, 18% disagreement). Although the question about feedback from my line manager saw 70% agreement, understanding about strategy and Service vision is referenced in the free text comments.

Bullying and harassment, and reporting this

- 5.3. The survey asked whether respondents had witnessed or experienced bullying or harassment in the last 12 months. 68% answered no, 10% prefer not to say and 22% said yes. Of this, 67% experienced it themselves. 62% reported what they had witnessed or experienced. 31% said they felt there was a satisfactory outcome.

Trust in leadership

- 5.4. The question 'I trust our leadership team to make decisions that support me and my colleagues' had 43% agreement and 39% disagreement, with 28% neutral. This is a decrease from when the same question was asked in 2021 where 56% answered in agreement. Senior management demonstrating our Service values is consistently lower than line managers displaying the values, with honesty and working together being the least favourable responses.

Support staff

- 5.5. The survey consistently shows that people who have identified that they work as 'uniformed – wholetime duty system' or 'support staff' are less likely to answer favourably to the questions asked.
- 5.6. The largest difference is within the Learning and Development theme, with support staff 11% less likely to answer in agreement on average. The question where this is most notable is 'I understand how to progress in the organisation if I want to', compared to the whole workforce average of 50% agreement, 34% support staff agreed, compared with 69% on-call, 55% wholetime and 53% control.

Working well together (high negative)

- 5.7. The average responses for each theme of the People Survey show that 'ways of working' has the lowest agreement, and highest disagreement rates. Within this section, the question 'I feel that different parts of the Service are working well together has a disagreement score of 31% and agreement of 41%.

5.8. Less than half (47%) agree that senior management (Executive Board, Service Leadership Team and Group Commanders) demonstrate the value 'working together', with 26% disagreeing.

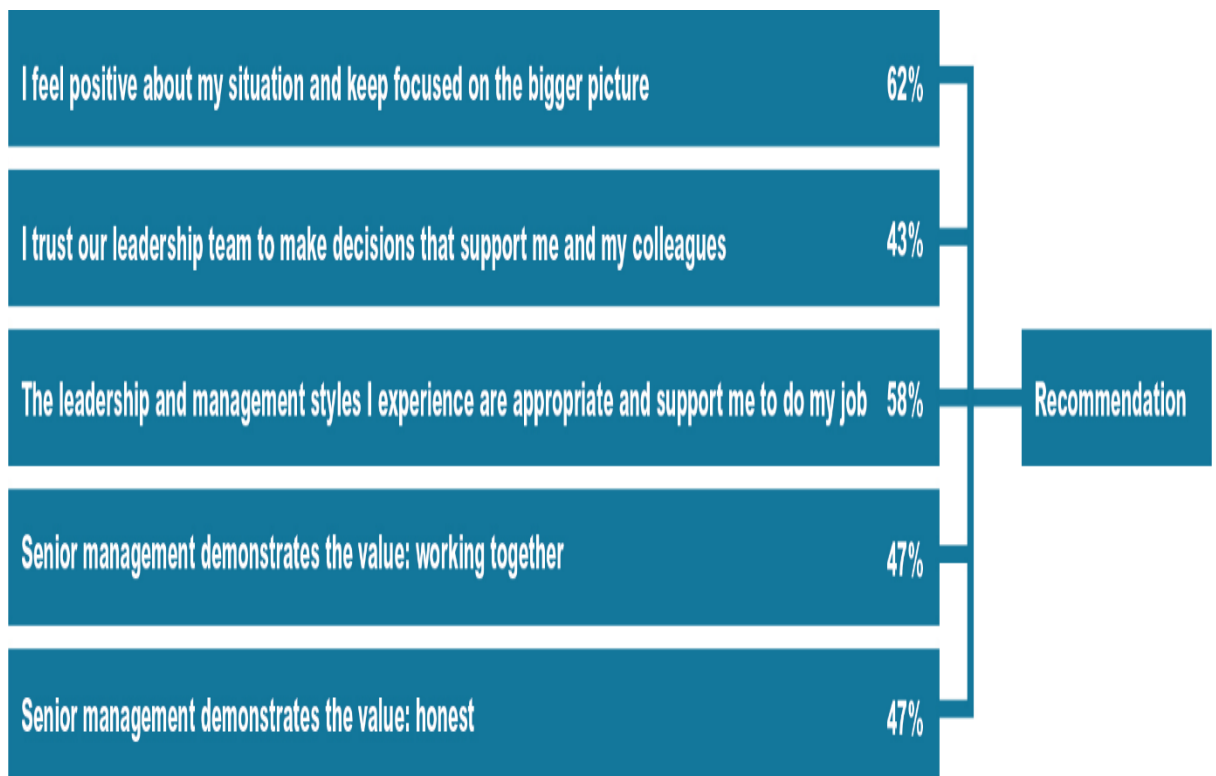
6. **RECOMMENDATION SCORE AND KEY DRIVERS**

6.1. 58% of the people who completed the survey agreed or strongly agreed that they are happy in their work and would recommend the Service as an employer. This changes to 50% when looking at support staff, 58% for wholetime and 68% for on-call and control.

6.2. The key drivers – the questions which are most likely to impact whether people answer that they would recommend the Service – are focused on leadership and management.

6.3. The questions include how senior leaders demonstrate our values 'honest' and 'working together' (both 47% agreement, both 28% neutral and 25% and 26% respectively disagreement), trust in our leadership team to make decisions that support me and my colleagues (43% agreement, 28% neutral and 29% disagreement), and leadership and management styles being appropriate to support people to do their job to the best of their ability (58% agreement, 19% neutral and 23% disagreement).

6.4. The key drivers change also include the question 'I feel positive about my situation and keep focused on the bigger picture', with 62% agreement, 23% neutral and 15% disagreement).



- 6.5. The key drivers remain the same for on-call and wholetime colleagues. When looking at support staff, the senior management demonstrating the value: respectful replaces the question about leadership and management styles being appropriate and supportive.
- 6.6. The key drivers for respondents who have identified as working in Control is split between leadership and inclusion, values and ethics, with questions about ideas and opinions being valued and the culture of the Service replacing the questions about senior management demonstrating the values.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1. The Service Leadership Team (SLT) is currently working with their teams to review the results, discuss the themes and issues / opportunities flagged, with a view to create and drive forward key actions.
- 7.2. The Service will present an action plan and any appropriate information regarding the progress on the survey at the next People Committee.

SHAYNE SCOTT

Director of Finance & Corporate Services (Treasurer)