

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority Policy and Strategy Committee

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE QUESTIONNAIRE

Report of the Assistant Chief Officer

Date: 07 November 2014

Purpose of Report:

To seek approval for a formal response to the DCLG conditions of service questionnaire.

CONTACT OFFICER

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Sir Ken Knight's review, "Facing the Future", was published in May 2013. The review set out key areas in which, it was suggested, the fire and rescue service could consider reform. A paper on the Knight Review was considered by the Combined Fire Authority on 28 June 2013.
- 1.2 The Government has followed up the Knight review by commissioning a consultant to undertake an independent review to establish "whether the conditions of service for fire-fighters (Grey and Gold books) are seen as actual or perceived barriers to change that could otherwise provide a more efficient service to the public".

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The consultant undertaking the review has issued separate questionnaires to Authorities and employees. This report presents Members with a draft response to the questionnaire for amendment and approval so that it can be submitted to the review.
- 2.2 The questionnaire response references Service policies and these will be available for Members at the meeting should they need to consider the content in detail.
- 2.3 It is expected that the consultant will also undertake face to face meetings with a cross section of stakeholders as part of the research process. The Chief Fire Officer has invited him to Nottinghamshire, however at the time of writing, no response has been received.
- 2.4 The consultant is expected to complete and report on the review to Government by February 2015.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Whilst there are no direct human resources implications, any changes in the way that current terms and conditions are negotiated through national collective bargaining, or to changes to the Grey or Gold Book are likely to have an impact in the longer term.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as there are no impacts on service delivery or policy.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Changes to national collective bargaining processes or to the terms and conditions of Fire-fighters are likely to be challenged by the unions represented on the National Joint Council. It is important that Fire Authorities play a part in determining the type and scale of changes, if any are needed, in order to play a full part in the debate. Providing a formal response to the questionnaire is an important part of contributing to this debate.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve a final version of the response to the questionnaire as the formal submission of the Fire Authority.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

- Workforce Plan;
- Bullying and Harassment Policy;
- Policy on the use of Social Media;
- Management of Absence Policy;
- Trade Union Facilities Time 2013-14.

Neil Timms
ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER

Questionnaire for completion by Fire and Rescue Authority Section1: Recruitment of firefighters

1 (a). Do you plan future recruitment according to the following factors? (pleas appropriate):	se tick as
Predicted rates of staff turnover	✓ □
Promotions	✓ □
Overall number of firefighters needed as per your Integrated Risk Management Plan	✓ □
Likely task/role changes	✓ □
Advancement of technology	✓ □
Other (Please specify) Resizing of organisation, Conversion of function to non-uniformed roles.	
 1 (b) Please attach a copy of your recruitment plans if available Please find attached a copy of our current Workforce Plan (please is confidentially). 2. Are there any other factors you take into account in planning recruitment? 	retain this
We undertake an annual review of fire cover to establish areas of risk an future plans for the location of resources. In terms of RDS recruitment, account demographic changes and availability. We are currently review models which may assist us to address cover shortfalls in specific areas county.	we take into ving other
future plans for the location of resources. In terms of RDS recruitment, waccount demographic changes and availability. We are currently review models which may assist us to address cover shortfalls in specific areas county. 3 (a). Do you place a cap on the number of applications per vacancy? Yes	we take into ving other
future plans for the location of resources. In terms of RDS recruitment, waccount demographic changes and availability. We are currently review models which may assist us to address cover shortfalls in specific areas county. 3 (a). Do you place a cap on the number of applications per vacancy? Yes	we take into ving other
future plans for the location of resources. In terms of RDS recruitment, waccount demographic changes and availability. We are currently review models which may assist us to address cover shortfalls in specific areas county. 3 (a). Do you place a cap on the number of applications per vacancy? Yes	we take into ving other
future plans for the location of resources. In terms of RDS recruitment, waccount demographic changes and availability. We are currently review models which may assist us to address cover shortfalls in specific areas county. 3 (a). Do you place a cap on the number of applications per vacancy? Yes	we take into ving other

No

Wholetime and retained vacancies are advertised on our e-recruitment site. Applicants can sign up to e-mail alerts which automatically inform them when recruitment is open. In the last whole-time recruitment campaign (2012) we undertook a variety of positive action measures, working with local community groups and the City Council, to advertise in areas of high ethnic population density or to attract female applicants. This included posters, banners, adverts outside of stations and in gyms and sports clubs. This was supplemented by "Firefighter For A Day" events at our training centre whereby potential applicants could undertake role based activities to see if a career in the fire service appealed. We also held mentoring sessions in the evenings at various locations to assist applicants to complete the application form and practice the written and verbal tests.

When recruiting to RDS vacancies, we have information about recruitment on stations, in local community areas and in the local press. Local RDS crews may also attend market days etc., mailshot local residents and hold open days on station to generate interest.

For whole-time recruitment, we tend to have information about recruitment on our erecruitment website (which is shared with regional partners) and internet site for a number of weeks prior to opening a campaign, however we only open an application window for up to five days to restrict the number of applications to a manageable number.

For RDS recruitment, we tend to open the application period for up to two weeks but only seek to recruit to specific stations where there are vacancies.

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

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

6 (a).	Do you c	perate	e a graduate red	cruitm	ent s	cheme?
Yes						
No	✓					
6 (b)	If you do r	not ope	erate a graduate	e recru	uitme	nt scheme, please state why?
- the nece track	se includessarily pe	e fitne erform sion s	ess, job related better in thes cheme, there w	tests e test	s, wri ts in	to successfully undertake a range of tests ten and numeric tests. Graduates do not our experience. As we do not have a fastovalue in undertaking a graduate
7) Ple	ease detai	l your	selection criteria	a for e	exterr	al recruitment.
residence to the term of the t	lents to pi B years old e UK. Appen and nu	romot d (whe plican ımeric	e employment en commencin ts currently pro tests (iii) job r	oppo g ope ogres elate	rtuni erations s the d tes	we restricted access to Nottinghamshire ties within the county. Applicants must nal training) and must be eligible to work ough (i) application shortlisting stage (ii) ts (iv) interview (v) fitness and medical rences and security clearance.
Sec	tion 2: I	Prom	notion of fire	efigh	iters	<u>i</u>
8. Ple	ease give	details	of your selection	n crit	eria f	or internal promotion
appli supe comp	cants mu rvisory de prises of a	st hav evelop an ass	ve successfully oment program sessment centr	pass me to e who	sed a be be ere c	being undertaken. At supervisory level, in initial incident command course and eligible to apply for promotion. Selection andidates undertake a role based tion and a generic interview.
gene scen For F	rally cons ario and i Principal (sists c ntervi Office	of a written repo ew.	ort, a	n ope	Manager (AM) roles the assessment erational assessment, presentation, media s, there is a full Member interview and
9. Do	you think	it wou	ıld be beneficial	follov	ving a	promotion process or development
	•	ive ind	lividuals the opp	ortun	ity to	move to different
	se tick. thorities?	\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \				
		Yes	V	No		
5ta	ations?	Yes	✓ 🗌	No		
Wa	atches?	Yes	✓ □	No		

Section 3. Crewing policy

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

The Service has a self-rostering collective agreement which sets out appropriate crewing levels for each station.

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

An annual fire cover review is undertaken which aligns risk to cover. This takes account of historical data, facilities, risk and demand (i.e. from new or changing requirements). The Chief Fire Officer will determine from this whether any changes need to be made to address cover issues. Changing cover arrangements significantly requires public consultation. Changing a duty model requires negotiations with representative bodies where the proposed duty system is outside of the Grey Book.

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

Yes, the Grey Book should determine national Terms of Conditions, such as pay, leave and broad role descriptors, however, deployment through shift patterns and working hours should be determined locally to meet risk, and not subject to the national dispute mechanism.

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

There is the potential to implement local arrangements to meet specific cover requirements outside of Grey Book parameters following agreement from the workforce. Without agreement this cannot be achieved and can stifle innovation.

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

For Whole-time crewing, this is decided via annualised hours arrangements determined locally and based on demand.

For RDS crewing, individual cover profiles are developed based upon demographics of the area and availability.

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

Yes	✓ 🗌
No	

11 (b) If YES, please provide details:

Specific issues around the employment of police officers or drivers covered by road traffic regulations. More generally, it can be difficult for RDS employees to be released for training. There is potential for issues around the application of the working time regulations and the requirement for 11 hours breaks between "shifts", and what constitutes positive hours.

Section 4: Use of on-call firefighters

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

Yes	✓ □
No	

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

Integrated	✓ □
Separate	✓

What benefits or challenges of this approach have you observed:

On integrated stations, there is value to joint training and response. It also supports a more collaborative way of working. We are currently reviewing other cover models which may enhance this approach.

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

Normal hours available per month	Average of 87 hrs per week (348 hrs per month)
Normal hours required for drill nights/ training	Average of 2 hrs per week (8 hrs per month)

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

Poor response to recruitment campaigns	✓ 🗌
Poor standard of applicants	✓
Public perception	
Union tensions	
Minimum expected response times	✓
Cost	
Training	✓
Poor interaction with whole time crews	
Employer resistance	
Level of remuneration	✓
Level of commitment required	✓
Lack of awareness of on-call system	✓
No barriers	

14. Please provide details if any of the above apply

The fact that proximity to station is a selection factor means the potential pool of candidates is restricted both in terms of number and quality of applicants. Demographics mean that many RDS sections are located in areas of low population density or areas where people do not work locally – day time cover is therefore particularly problematic. Employers are less able or willing to release their workers for training or attendance than previously and individuals therefore need to take paid or unpaid leave to attend training courses to establish and maintain their competence. Competence is a specific concern given that there is less exposure to operational incidents than for WDS employees and training is for only a 2-3 hrs period each week. There is also a significantly higher turnover of RDS employees (approx. 10% per year) compared to WDS employees (approx. 5.5%) due mainly to changes in personal or work circumstances which mean that individuals are no longer able to provide cover.

Section 5. Grey /Gold Book

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

The current graded pay structure is appropriate to the provision of current	√ □
services	_
The graded pay structure works sometimes but Fire and Rescue Authorities	-/ D
need more flexibility	v
The graded pay structure coupled with national terms and conditions needs	
fundamental change to ensure FRSs have the required flexibility to meet the	
future needs of the service and communities.	
Other (Please specify)	
Comments:	
The introduction of role maps as part of the last review has reduced flexil are too prescriptive. Services need to be more agile about creating new changing priorities and needs. Removal of role maps would greatly assist establishing different roles and specialisms. The inability to remove a flexiduty allowance once allocated can be problemdividual is unable to provide operational cover or has competency issued.	roles to meet t in ematic if an
16) Which of the following statements do you believe applies to GOLD BOOK	employees?
The current pay structure is appropriate to the provision of current services	
The pay structure works sometimes but should be applied either more consiste	ently
or flexibly across differing authorities	
The pay structure needs fundamental change to ensure value for money	
Other (Please specify)	√ □

Comments:

The principle of a national minimum wage for Chief Officers is good but needs to be realistic. The fact that no Authority uses them demonstrates that the values set are not appropriate. Merely basing them on population is a blunt tool and requires greater thought. If national pay criteria was suitable then the 'twin track' pay review could be removed and be much simpler.

	provide appropriate flexibility in the way you	
manage the existing service?		
Yes		
No ✓ □		
17 (b) If NO, what are the issues? (please	tick as appropriate)	
Operational management/ decision making	9 🗆	
People Management	✓ □	
Use of latent capacity	✓ □	
Co-responding with other emergency servi	ices ✓ 🗌	
Community safety		
Fear of legal action		
Other (Please specify)		
18. Could local terms and conditions enab	le services to improve the outcomes and value for	
money to local communities? Please tick		
This is difficult to answer yes/no. Local arrangements and collective agreements already exist in relation to local duty systems, but if this were to be extended to areas such as pay then unintended consequences may arise in areas such as regional migration, and a pay escalation process. The answer is therefore yes for some things, but not everything.		
Yes		
No 🗆		
19 (a). When a member of staff is injured at work or is taken ill, what are the procedures that follow in regards to sign off, sick pay and level of absence? Please provide details.		
Management of sickness absence police	y attached.	
19(b). Are the current conditions of service	e a barrier in this process?	
Yes		
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Although the protection of flexi-duty allowance can be a barrier when an individuals is no longer able to undertake operational cover due to a medical issue.

Section 6. Collaboration with other services

20. Have you explored joint training opportunities with other Fire and Rescue Authorities?				
Yes ✓ □				
No				
21 (a). Have you pursued co-responding with other emergency services?				
Yes ✓ □				
No				
21 (b) If NO, to one or both of the above, then what were the reasons for not doing so? (Please tick all that apply)	ı			
Role Maps do not allow it				
Representative body resistance				
Fear of legal action				
No clear leadership				
Extra burden on the service				
Not a priority				
Other (Please specify)				
Please provide details if any of the above apply				
22 (a). Have you explored sharing your estate with other emergency service providers?				
Yes ✓ □				
No				

22 (b) If NO, is this the result of an issue related to the grey book?					
Yes					
No					
Discoo	Comment				
Please	e Comment:				
other f	ave you explored any other opportunities for more closely integrated/joint worki fire and rescue services or other organisations? e provide comments:	ng with			
neighl FRS a a joint	We have attended Joint Boards with the Police, and collaborated on issues with neighbouring FRA's on a number of issues. We are currently working with Derbyshire FRS and Leicestershire FRS to introduce a joint control system – with the potential for a joint control room. Formal meetings are currently being held at CFO/Chair level with Leicestershire FRS to look at further joint working.				
Sect	ion 7. Industrial relations				
	ow do you rate the effectiveness of the National Joint Council as a means of ma	aking			
Very e	ffective	$\square $			
Some	what effective				
Not at	all effective				
Other	(Please specify)				
25 (a). If you answered 'very effective' or 'somewhat effective' what you do you consider the key strengths of the National Joint Council?					
National support and collective bargaining ensures a consistency of approach and ensures that individual FRA's are not isolated.					

25 (b). If you answered 'somewhat effective' or 'not at all effective' what do you consider the key weaknesses of the National Joint Council?						
26.Does the National Joint Council represent the views of employing authorities effectively?						
Yes ✓ 🗌						
No						
If not, then please give details why and how this could be	improved					
27. What has been the impact of strike action on your ope industrial dispute over Pensions)	rations? ((Not limit	ed to the	current		
The current strike action has severely impacted on operational capability, however contingency plans have ensured that minimum cover has been maintained. There is also a knock-on effect of disruption of normal business as a result of planning for or recovering from periods of strike action which has distracted from other priorities. It has cost the Service in the region of £500k to deal with the current dispute.						
28 (a). Do you think firefighters should have the right to: Strike	\\\		No			
	Yes	√□	No			
Strike, but legally required to return to duty in certain circumstances	Yes		No	√□		
Take industrial action short of strike	Yes	√□	No			
Be required to maintain a skeleton emergency service to the public in the event of strike action.	Yes		No	√□		
Be required to give more than 7 days' notice of strike action during a dispute.	Yes		No	√□		
28 (b) If the answer to the last question is yes, how much notice should be given to allow an Authority to prepare for strike action?						
It is a fundamental right to withdraw labour. Locally staff have volunteered to provide a response to life risk incidents.						

29 (a).	Should curren	t return to work arrangements during industrial action be legally
formali	ised?	
Yes		
No	√ □	
arrang signifi	gements, this i cantly lower t	legislative threshold of cover was required due to 'return to work' is the only level of cover we would receive and could be han that which is already volunteered.
29 (b).	If yes, who she	ould be held accountable for this arrangement?
Local E	Employer	
Releva	ant trade	
union		
		elations training do you provide for your managers/employees (by specific details.
		ot provide specific industrial relations training but this forms part

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

Whilst there is value in negotiating certain core terms and conditions at a national level (pay, allowances, occupational schemes, leave), certain sections which cover general employment law practice – for instance, handling grievance and disciplinary issues, local consultation and negotiation, fairness and dignity at work – are best left to local arrangements and discretion.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY.
PLEASE REMEMBER TO SAVE IT AND THEN EMAIL IT TO

Neeta.Patel-Keena@communities.gsi.gov.uk

PLEASE RETURN BY FRIDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2014

Conditions of service questionnaire

Part 1: Statistical information

Section 1: your workforce

1)	How do v	you determine	pav per	firefiahter	grade?
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National Level	√
Local Level	
Both	

2) How do you determine the pay of the chief fire officer?

National Level	
Local Level	
Both	✓
Comment	

3) What is the average age of your firefighters at retirement (by role)?

Please note that this information is not available by role:
2013: 52
2012: 52
2011: 52
2010: 52
2009: 52
2008: 51
2007: 53
2006: 52
2005: 52
2004: 52

4) What is the average length that people stay on as whole time firefighters within your authority? (% of workforce)

Over the past 9 years, (from 2006) the average length of service of those leaving has been 29 years, broken down as follows:

Less than 6 months	1.3
6 months – 1 year	0.2
1 – 2 years	1.4
2 – 5 years	3.8
5 – 10 years	2.7
10 – 20 years	3.9
More than 20 years	33.3

5) What is the average length that people stay on as retained firefighters within your authority? (% of workforce)

Over the past 9 years (from 2006) the average length of service of those leaving has been 24 years, broken down as follows:

Less than 6 months	3.8
6 months – 1 year	9.4
1 – 2 years	7.7
2 – 5 years	18.6
5 – 10 years	30.8
10 – 20 years	22.8
More than 20 years	12.8

Section 2: Recruitment and training of firefighters

6) What are the typical standards for entry for entry-level firefighters?

GCSE's				
A Levels				
Fast track Graduate entry schemes				
Vocational course				
None of the above		✓		
Other (Please specify)				
7(a) Are there any other entry grades, i.e. above a normal entry-level?				
Yes				
No ✓				
7(b) If YES, what are the typical standards for entry?				
GCSE's				
A Levels				
Fast track Graduate entry schemes				
Vocational course				
None of the above				
Other (Please specify)				
8(a) How many applicants do you receive, on average per vacancy?				
Whole time 33*				
Retained 8				

^{*}This average is based on the 2012 recruitment campaign which was restricted by geographic area and time advertised, which resulted in 900 applicants. If this were to be a national process, which was not restricted other than by closing date, the numbers of applicants per vacancy would be significantly higher.

8(b) How are vacancies communicated/ advertised? (Please tick all that apply)	l
Print media	✓ □
Internet	✓ 🗌
Recruitment agency	
Jobcentre	✓ 🗌
Specialist/ in house publication	
Referral to friends and family from existing staff	
Other (please specify) Posters at stations, local clubs, community venues.	✓ □
9(a) Do you seek to recruit firefighters from other fire and rescue authorities? Yes □ No ✓ □ 9(b) If YES, do you recruit:	
Whole time	
Retained	
Both	
Any other comments:	
Whilst we do not actively seek to recruit from other FRA's, we are approached by existing FF's who are seeking to transfer and retain their details on a holding list. Depending on our establishment position, we may transfer-in from other Services from time to time.	
Section 3: General employment practice 10) What proportion of your staff are known to have second jobs?	
10) What proportion of your staff are known to have second jobs? This data relates only to Wholetime Fire-fighters who have registered secondary employment: 180 (34%)	

11) How many whole time firefighters have a second job as a retained firefighter?
Notts FRS employ 62 fire-fighters on RDS contracts (dual employment). In addition, 12 Fire-fighters provide RDS cover to other FRA's.
12(a) Do you collect data on bullying and harassment?
Yes ✓ □
No
12(b) If YES, please can you provide any data (type and/or results) you have over the last 10 years
We only have data from 2010 onwards. In total we have dealt with 11 complaints under our Bullying and Harassment Policy.
12(c) Please provide any bullying and harassment policy you may hold Attached.
12(d) Please provide any policy you may hold on the use of social media Attached
Section 4: Industrial relations
13) How much facility time do you allow as a percentage of your pay bill?
0.1%
14) How many individuals receive facility time, by individual and trades union?
Please see attached information.
15) What proportion of each individual's time is facility time?
Please see attached information

16)Do you have specific rules on the use of premises and notice boards etc for trades unions work (please explain in box)

Trade Unions are able to use a notice board at each premise to promote their activity / messages.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY.
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BY FRIDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2014