A survey of Retained Duty System personnel, former Retained Duty System staff and Fire and Rescue Service managers

Part A – A survey of serving and former Retained Duty System personnel


This research was commissioned by the previous government and is not necessarily a reflection of the current government’s policies and priorities.

DCLG is publishing this report in the interests of transparency.
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February 2011
Department for Communities and Local Government
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Section 1

Executive summary

Introduction

In 2009 the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit and Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service jointly commissioned a survey into various issues relating to the Retained Duty System.

The focus of the research was:

- an examination of how the Retained Duty System role may have changed in recent years
- whether demographic change in areas served by the Retained Duty System, and the demands of modern-day living, may have had an impact on recruitment and retention
- the workplace experiences of Retained Duty System personnel; and
- how Fire and Rescue Services employing Retained Duty System personnel were tackling and managing the challenges posed by recruitment and retention.

The survey

The Fire and Rescue Services of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland were invited to participate in the survey. Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, all Scottish Fire and Rescue Services and 42 of the 44 English Fire and Rescue Services that employ Retained Duty System staff took part.

Three questionnaires were developed for the survey:

- one for serving Retained Duty System personnel, including a section for station managers
- one for Retained Duty System leavers (those who had left the Retained Duty System in the preceding twelve months in England; the preceding two years in Scotland, and the previous four years in Northern Ireland); and

1 Wales were invited but declined to take part as they were undertaking their own survey.
Part A of this report includes only the findings from the survey of serving Retained Duty System personnel and those that had recently left the Fire and Rescue Service in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Part B of the report sets out the findings from the organisational questionnaire (see separate document on the DCLG website).

A total of 17,365 questionnaires were sent out to current Retained Duty System personnel and 7359 usable returns were received, a response rate of 42 per cent. The findings are generally consistent across the three countries and given the number of responses they can be considered representative of the Retained Duty System population in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

A total of 1,889 questionnaires were sent out to recent Retained Duty System leavers. Two hundred and seventeen were returned, giving a response rate of 11 per cent.

Key findings

Many of the key findings from this survey suggest that progress has been slow since the Retained Review report published in 2005 and that the Fire and Rescue Service still has some way to go to address many of the issues highlighted previously, either by that review or in published research into issues affecting the Retained Duty System.

Among the key findings of this latest survey were that:

- Fire and Rescue Services were not meeting the requirements of key legislation (Working Time Regulations, Drivers Hours Rules) by failing to keep accurate records and abiding by rest and break requirements
- Fire and Rescue Services were not monitoring the hours worked and/or driven by Retained Duty System personnel for their primary employer
- Fire and Rescue Services were not communicating with or listening to their Retained Duty System staff on important issues like work-life balance and better communications, communication could be improved between the Fire and Rescue Service and Retained Duty System personnel, their families and primary employers
- many individuals felt under pressure because of their commitment to the Retained Duty System
- Fire and Rescue Services continued to rely on a narrow range of measures to tackle recruitment difficulties
• many Fire and Rescue Services continue to struggle to hold onto Retained Duty System personnel.

These issues, and others, are discussed further below.

Current Retained Duty System personnel

**Reasons for joining the Retained Duty System**
The majority of respondents (64 per cent) joined the Retained Duty System because they wanted to do a job that their community valued; nearly as many thought that the role would be “exciting” (63 per cent). Fewer (26 per cent) cited financial considerations as a reason for wanting to join (except in Northern Ireland where nearly two thirds joined for this reason) or joined because, ultimately, they wanted to be a full-time firefighter (16 per cent).

**Employment status**
The majority of respondents (95 per cent) were in (other) paid employment – for 17 per cent the primary employer was the Fire and Rescue Service (for example, firefighters on dual Wholetime/Retained contracts, etc.). Just under a quarter (23 per cent) stated that they were self-employed and five per cent were unemployed. As a comparator, the UK unemployment level at the time of the research stood at eight per cent (Office for National Statistics, April 2010).

**Primary employer profile**
Respondents were most likely to work in construction (22 per cent), manufacturing (17 per cent), wholesale and retail trades and vehicle repairers (13 per cent) or transport and storage (11 per cent). Most Retained Duty System personnel tended to work for smaller sized employers, for example just over one-third worked for organisations with fewer than ten employees (35 per cent). Local employers supplied 68 per cent of the Retained Duty System workforce, with fewer coming from national (17 per cent) or international (15 per cent) organisations.

**Employer awareness**
Ninety eight per cent of respondents who worked for a primary employer (i.e. those who were not self-employed) reported that their employer was aware of their Retained Duty System role. The remaining two per cent reported that their employer did not know.
1. Working for the Retained Duty System

Contracts
Almost one-half of respondents (49 per cent) were employed by their Fire and Rescue Service on a 100 per cent contract (i.e. commitment to be available for 120 hours per week) with just under two-fifths working a 75 per cent contract (41 per cent). Nearly all Retained Duty System personnel in Northern Ireland worked on a 100 per cent contract (91 per cent), compared with three-quarters (73 per cent) in Scotland and two fifths (40 per cent) in England.

The typical Retained Duty System working week
Respondents provided data on how many positive hours\(^2\) they gave on average to the Retained Duty System per week. In England the average was highest at 20 hours per week, in Scotland it was 11 hours and in Northern Ireland 14 hours.

In all the three countries, across all activities, respondents worked on average over 18 hours per week, split between:

- emergency response (on average just over 12.5 hours)
- training (three hours)
- community fire safety (nearly one and a half hours); and
- other tasks such as administration and maintenance (over one hour).

The time spent on emergency response duties per week was higher in England.

Changes in positive (actual) hours
Respondents were asked to state if their positive hours had changed or remained the same over the past three years.

A high proportion of Retained Duty System staff had reduced their standby (58 per cent) and emergency response (60 per cent) cover during the past three years. At the same time, Retained Duty System staff had increased community safety duties (65 per cent) and training hours (77 per cent).

Those that had increased their hours reported that this was as a result of their fire station needing them to provide increased cover (57 per cent), while those that had reduced their hours did so as a result of their primary employment (30 per cent), family (21 per cent) or personal/leisure commitments (14 per cent).

\(^2\) Positive hours are the times during which Retained Duty System personnel undertake specific duties.
Retained Duty System activities in addition to emergency response
It is clear from the survey that Retained Duty System personnel were undertaking a wide range of tasks in addition to responding to fire and road traffic emergencies. The proportion of respondents stated they were carrying out the following:

- community fire safety (87 per cent)
- water or flood rescue (25 per cent)
- operating and crewing special appliances (24 per cent)
- mass decontamination (21 per cent).

In Northern Ireland a higher proportion were involved in water or flood rescue (35 per cent compared to around a quarter in England and Scotland). In Scotland a much lower proportion operated/crewed special appliances (nine per cent compared to 27 per cent in Northern Ireland and England).

Relationships with colleagues and the Service
Most respondents indicated that they would speak highly of their Fire and Rescue Service (64 per cent), felt valued by their line manager (70 per cent) and valued by their Fire and Rescue Service (43 per cent). However, a smaller proportion did not feel valued by Wholetime Duty System colleagues (30 per cent), were unhappy at work (ten per cent) and did not feel an equal part of the team (ten per cent).

Policies and procedures
Large numbers of Retained Duty System personnel (over 80 per cent) reported that they were aware of specific Fire and Rescue Service policies on bullying and harassment, equality and diversity and health and safety. However, less than half were aware of their Service’s policies relating to EU legislation on working time and drivers’ hours, even though these may have a direct bearing on their Retained Duty System role. In all cases, significantly lower numbers reported either seeing the policy documents in question or receiving training in the policy area.

Communication
Nearly one-half of respondents (46 per cent) believed that communications between their Fire and Rescue Service headquarters or management and its Retained Duty System stations could be improved, with the need for more face-to-face contact or visits by senior managers cited most frequently. The survey also found a lack of Fire and Rescue Service communication with the families of Retained Duty System personnel: over three-quarters of unit or station managers did not keep in touch with the families of their crew members.
2. **EU legislation**

*Hours worked*

Across the three countries, Retained Duty System personnel worked an average of 40.5 hours per week for their primary employer. Two fifths worked 41 hours or more. Given that the average weekly Retained Duty System commitment of respondents to the survey was 18.4 hours, the data would suggest that many Retained Duty System personnel were working in excess of the 48 hours per week limit set by the Working Time Regulations.

**Working Time Regulations**

The findings indicate that a majority of Retained Duty System personnel working 48 hours or more had not signed a waiver to opt-out of the 48 hour average working week requirement under the Regulations with their primary employer or their Fire and Rescue Service. Nearly two-thirds had not signed an opt-out with either their primary employer or their Fire and Rescue Service. Nearly three fifths of those working between 41 and 47 hours per week for their primary employer and over one-half of those working more than 48 hours had not signed a waiver.

**Fire and Rescue Service monitoring of Retained Duty System personnel working hours**

Sixty per cent of respondents stated they were not required to inform their Fire and Rescue Service of the hours worked for their primary employer and 14 per cent did not know if they had to provide this information.

**Drivers’ Hours Rules**

Just over one in ten of those who had a Light Goods Vehicle licence drove an “in-scope” vehicle (as defined by the Drivers’ Hours Rules) in their primary employment. Drivers of in-scope vehicles are required under the Rules to abide by the rest and break requirements. Of those who drove in-scope vehicles only three per cent stated they were required to tell their Fire and Rescue Service about the tachograph recorded hours they drove for their primary employer and a further three per cent provided the hours they drove by another means, such as drivers’ logs.

3. **Recruitment and retention issues**

*Strength of stations*

As part of the survey station managers were asked a series of questions about their fire station strength and issues around local Retained Duty System recruitment and retention challenges.

Nearly two thirds (65 per cent) of station managers reported that their station was under-strength at the time of the survey. Over four fifths (85 per cent) reported difficulties covering weekday shifts, 36 per cent during weekend days and under a third (28 per cent) weekend nights.
The proportion of station managers cited the following recruitment difficulties:

- a lack of day-time employment near the station (61 per cent)
- the length of the recruitment process (55 per cent)
- employers unwilling to release staff (51 per cent)
- people not having enough free time to commit to the Retained Duty System (44 per cent)
- local employers lack of knowledge about the Retained Duty System (41 per cent)
- the entry requirements being too high (30 per cent); and
- not enough engagement with local employers (24 per cent).

Comparatively few station managers thought there was a lack of community spirit (seven per cent) or that their fire station was wrongly located (five per cent).

Station managers reported taking steps locally to address the issue of under-strength stations. The following activities were reported as being successful:

- station staff approaching friends and families (61 per cent)
- engaging with the local community (42 per cent)
- local recruitment campaigns run by station staff (41 per cent)
- open days/evenings (36 per cent)
- local community events (25 per cent)
- engaging with local media and radio (18 per cent); and
- engaging with local employers (16 per cent).

4. Training, development, and promotion opportunities

Training

It was an average of 14 weeks between an applicant being accepted into the Fire and Rescue Service and attending their first incident, with Northern Irish applicants taking the longest (17 weeks) and Scottish applicants the least time (10 weeks). English applicants took 15 weeks.

Over three quarters (76 per cent) of respondents followed a structured firefighter training programme, taking an average of just under two years to complete. In England and Northern Ireland this took around 23 months to complete compared to Scotland where it was 18 months.
Performance appraisal
More than three-quarters of respondents (78 per cent) stated that there was a system in place to ensure their development needs were met and nearly three-fifths (58 per cent) felt that the training they received met their needs.

When asked about performance appraisal, 45 per cent had received an appraisal in the previous 12 months and 32 per cent had received a training needs analysis.

Promotion
Around two fifths (39 per cent) of respondents had applied for promotion. The promotion process involved an interview (69 per cent), and/or an operational competence assessment (50 per cent), an Assessment Development Centre (22 per cent) and/or a promotion board (19 per cent). Of those who were unsuccessful (41 per cent of respondents) just over a third (34 per cent) received no feedback following the process.

5. Integration with Wholetime Duty System
Integration
Almost half of station or unit managers (45 per cent) reported that Retained Duty System and Wholetime Duty System crews were integrated at their station. Where there was no integration between the two duty systems, around a third of managers (30 per cent) stated that it was because Wholetime Duty System staff did not feel that Retained Duty System personnel were up to the job. A quarter of managers (25 per cent) stated that they used Wholetime Duty System personnel to cover shortages on Retained Duty System appliances and 21 per cent used Retained Duty System personnel to cover shortages at other Retained Duty System stations.

Smaller proportions stated that the reason for the lack of integration was due to the Retained Duty System station being too small or a one pump station (16 per cent of respondents); nine per cent stated that the Fire and Rescue Service did not encourage integration.

Nearly four fifths of Retained Duty System personnel (77 per cent) had never ridden appliances crewed by Wholetime Duty System staff, the main reason being that they worked at a Retained Duty System station (23 per cent). Just under half (46 per cent) had undertaken training with Wholetime Duty System colleagues.

Transfer to Wholetime Duty System
The data indicated that just over one fifth of Retained Duty System personnel had applied for a transfer to the Wholetime Duty System. Over two thirds (69 per cent) of Retained Duty System personnel had not applied for a transfer. Of these, 78 per cent stated they were not interested in applying at the time and the remainder (22 per cent) were told they could not apply.
Of those that had applied for a transfer nearly two thirds (65 per cent) were unsuccessful and of these 39 per cent did not receive any feedback. Almost a quarter (22 per cent) were told Retained Duty System personnel were not considered as skilled/experienced as their Wholetime Duty System colleagues and a further 14 per cent told they did not have the same level of core competence.

6. Work-life balance
Over three-fifths (62 per cent) of Retained Duty System personnel stated that they found their commitment to the Retained Duty System challenging. Thirty three per cent agreed that their family would like them to reduce the cover they provided and 38 per cent agreed that they did not have enough time to do the things they wanted (i.e. outside of the Fire and Rescue Service). One third (33 per cent) reported that their Fire and Rescue Service was not supportive in helping them to balance their commitments. Despite this, 70 per cent reported they would be willing to provide more Retained Duty System cover.

Some suggestions from respondents for achieving a better balance between work-life commitments included:

- scheduled rest periods (44 per cent)
- more crew at their station (34 per cent)
- phased alerters (26 per cent)
- electronic availability systems (25 per cent)
- support for child care (25 per cent); and
- reduced on call hours (23 per cent).

Just over a quarter (26 per cent) reported turning down promotion opportunities with their primary employer because of their commitment to the Retained Duty System.

7. Reasons for wanting to leave
Around two fifths (41 per cent) had thought about leaving the Service in the previous 12 months.

Some of the reasons given for wanting to leave the Service included:

- the level of commitment required (48 per cent)
- feeling under-valued by their Fire and Rescue Service (46 per cent)
- family commitments (35 per cent)
- lack of job satisfaction (34 per cent); and
- benefits not being good enough (27 per cent).
Nearly three-fifths (57 per cent) of the respondents who were thinking of leaving the Service did not discuss this with anyone. Reasons included feeling no-one would be able to do anything about it (37 per cent), or they did not want to talk about it (50 per cent), while smaller proportions did not know who to talk to about it (10 per cent).

Those who had recently left the Retained Duty System

Nearly one quarter of respondents had retired (18 per cent) and over a third (35 per cent) of those who had left the Service were aged between 36 and 45 years.

Reasons for joining the Retained Duty System

The reasons respondents to the leavers’ survey gave for wanting to join the Retained Duty System closely matched those given by current Retained Duty System personnel. The majority (70 per cent) joined because they wanted a job the community valued and 64 per cent thought that being a Retained Duty System firefighter would be an exciting job.

Primary employment

The vast majority of respondents (96 per cent) reported they had primary employment when they worked for the Retained Duty System. Respondents were most likely to have worked in manufacturing (20 per cent), construction (15 per cent), transportation and storage (12 per cent) and wholesale/retail and motor repairers (11 per cent) when working for the Retained Duty System.

Work-life balance

Around two-thirds of those respondents who had left reported that they found the commitment to the Service ‘challenging’ (70 per cent). Nearly two thirds stated that it was difficult to balance Retained Duty System and personal commitments (64 per cent), while two-fifths found it difficult to balance Retained Duty System and primary employment commitments (41 per cent). In addition, 50 per cent of respondents reported that their family asked them to reduce their Retained Duty System cover.

Reasons for leaving

Almost one-half of Retained Duty System leavers reported that they left the Service because their Retained Duty System duties interfered with their personal life (45 per cent), and one-quarter left because it interfered with their primary employment. However, almost one-half left for neither of those reasons (45 per cent)3.

Leavers gave the following as reasons for leaving:

- the amount of commitment required to do the job (32 per cent)
- feeling under-valued (25 per cent)

3 Percentages add up to over 100 per cent as respondents were able to tick more than one response.
family commitments (23 per cent); and
lack of job satisfaction (21 per cent).

Just over three-quarters (77 per cent) of those who wanted to leave had spoken to at least one person about this. Those who did not speak to anyone about leaving did not think anyone would be able to do anything about it (31 per cent), almost one-quarter did not want to talk about it (24 per cent) and a smaller proportion did not know who to talk to (7 per cent).

Exit interviews and recognition on leaving
One third of Retained Duty System leavers (33 per cent) were given an exit interview when they left the Service. Almost three-fifths of those that left were given some recognition for working for the Retained Duty System (57 per cent), usually a present from station staff (67 per cent) or a thank you letter from the Fire and Rescue Service (64 per cent).

Summary
Many of the key findings suggest that since the publication of the Retained Review Report in 2005 progress on a number of Retained Duty System issues identified by that report has been generally slow. The findings indicate that for many people employed on the Retained Duty System, the burden of trying to balance home, primary employment and Retained Duty System commitments puts pressure on them and their families and also directly affects the operational effectiveness of the Fire and Rescue Service. A good proportion of Retained Duty System personnel felt that their Fire and Rescue Services did not value them and they had thought about leaving in the previous twelve months as a result of the commitment they were required to give to the Service. Most respondents indicated that Fire and Rescue Services were not communicating with, or listening to, their Retained Duty System staff on important issues like work-life balance, better communications with family and primary employers, almost all the issues highlighted by personnel who had already left the Service.

These factors impact on retention and recruitment of Retained Duty System personnel which in turn impacts on station strength. Those responding to the survey identified several ways in which recruitment and retention could be improved. For example, by providing better training and development opportunities to Retained Duty System staff, more opportunities to integrate with Wholetime Duty System personnel, recognising and valuing the commitment given by Retained Duty System firefighters, family friendly policies, better (electronic) availability systems, more flexibility for Retained Duty System personnel to suit changes in lifestyle, shortening the recruitment process and using a wider range of recruitment measures.
The findings also suggest that Fire and Rescue Services are not meeting the requirements under key legislation (Working Time Regulations, Drivers Hours Rules). Many Fire and Rescue Services did not appear to be monitoring or keeping accurate records of the hours worked and/or driven by Retained Duty System personnel for their primary employer or ensuring that they took adequate rest and breaks. In addition a significant number of Retained Duty System personnel had not signed opt-outs of the 48 hour average working week.
Section 2

The survey

Background

In 2009 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit and Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service jointly commissioned a survey into issues relating to the Retained Duty System.

The focus of the research project was to examine:

- how the Retained Duty System role and duties may have changed in recent years
- whether demographic change in areas served by the Retained Duty System, and the demands of modern-day living, may have had an impact on recruitment and retention
- the workplace experiences of Retained Duty System personnel; and
- how Fire and Rescue Services employing Retained Duty System personnel were tackling and managing the challenges posed by recruitment and retention.

The research comprised:

- a review of existing literature and research on Retained Duty System issues, as an aid to design the research project and the tools used
- qualitative research, including face-to-face and telephone interviews with Fire and Rescue Service managers and Retained Duty System personnel across England, Northern Ireland and Scotland
- a survey of serving Retained Duty System personnel (Part A) – using a self-completion postal questionnaire designed to capture information on expectations and experience prior to joining the Fire and Rescue Service, motivations for joining, their current day-to-day experiences in the Service, their primary employment and their commitment to the Retained Duty System in terms of hours provided
- a survey of those that had recently left the Retained Duty System (included in Part A) using a self-completion postal questionnaire designed to capture information from former Retained Duty System personnel on their expectations and experience prior to joining the Fire and Rescue Service, motivations for joining, their day-to-day experiences in the Service, and their reasons for leaving
A survey of those responsible for managing Retained Duty System issues in their Fire and Rescue Service (Part B of the Survey – which can be found at archive page – in email) – using a self-completion questionnaire designed to capture information about the Retained Duty System role and duties, remuneration arrangements, policies and procedures, compliance with the Working Time Regulations and Drivers’ Hours Rules, working patterns, recruitment and retention, crewing levels, training and development, promotion and transfer to the Wholetime Duty System.

Literature review

The survey drew on four previous pieces of research conducted in the past five years for DCLG and its predecessor, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister:

- The Retained Duty System: A survey of local employers (published by the Department for Communities and Local Government, December 2007)

These projects highlighted the importance of the Retained Duty System to the Fire and Rescue Service across the UK – making up significant proportions of the workforce and significant levels of emergency response cover across the country.

A Review of the Recruitment and Retention Challenges (published in 2005)\(^4\) highlighted a lack of recognition of the disparity of the challenges Services faced in recruiting and retaining Retained Duty System staff, as well as the lack of integration – common policies and procedures and terms and conditions – between the Wholetime Duty System and Retained Duty System. In addition, the research also highlighted a lack of a coherent approach to raise the profile of the Retained Duty System within local communities and the business community and tackle the lack of awareness about the Retained Duty System.

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The 2005 report made 51 recommendations including: developing partnerships with local businesses and business organisations; carrying out impact assessments on policies and procedures affecting Retained Duty System staff and to regularly review these; offering more flexible duty systems in order to maximise the opportunities for Services to broaden the recruitment pool of Retained Duty System staff.

*The Primary Employment Status of Retained Duty System Firefighters* report (published in 2006) found that Retained Duty System personnel tended to work in a full-time occupation, working 40 hours per week. This, with their Retained Duty System commitment, meant these staff regularly worked in excess of the level set within the Working Time Regulations. The report also highlighted the pressures these workers were facing, trying to balance their primary employment, their Retained Duty System employment and their personal commitments and identified the benefits to primary employers of having Retained Duty System staff on their payroll.

The 2007 survey of employers in areas served by the Retained Duty System was based on a survey of current and former employers of Retained Duty System firefighters, as well as employers who had never employed or released Retained Duty System firefighters. This survey showed that there were no insurmountable barriers to releasing staff for Retained Duty System duties. Indeed most current and former employers were enthusiastic supporters of the Retained Duty System. Primary employers who no longer employed Retained Duty System staff said this was typically as a result of the changes in the circumstances of the individual rather the organisation not releasing its employees.

The employers’ survey also highlighted the relative lack of contact and communication between existing primary employers and the Fire and Rescue Service or their local fire station. Employers recommended that Fire and Rescue Services should canvass local employers near their fire stations – using mailshots, telephone or face-to-face contact to promote the benefits of the Retained Duty System and illustrate the commitment required of employers and their employees.

Finally, the 2008 survey of current and ex-firefighters in England surveyed Wholetime Duty System and Retained Duty System staff. This research found that firefighters joined the Service because they wanted to do a worthwhile job and one that their community valued. Their route into the Service tended to come from knowing family and friends already in the Service.

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The research also reported that:

- the majority of staff were ‘happy’ at work, but that they found the commitment ‘challenging’
- firefighters tended to feel valued by their peers and colleagues, but less so by their superiors and senior officers
- a large number of respondents had been bullied or harassed while working as a firefighter; and
- as a result of bullying or harassment a significant proportion of firefighters, especially Retained Duty System firefighters, were thinking about leaving the Service (those that did leave the Service did not often receive an exit interview).

**Questionnaire design**

The design of the questionnaire was informed by existing literature, and input from the project sponsors, a Project Advisory Group and the Chief Fire Officers’ Association Retained Duty System Working Group, as well as telephone and face-to-face discussions with Retained Duty System firefighters, Retained Duty System managers, Retained Duty System Liaison Officers and Chief Fire Officers.

The resulting self-completion questionnaires were designed to capture information from existing staff and those that had recently left the Retained Duty System about their background, primary employment, Retained Duty System contracts and working patterns, knowledge of Fire and Rescue Service policies and procedures, awareness of European legislation, Retained Duty System recruitment and retention challenges, crewing levels, training, development and promotion.

Copies of the two questionnaires can be found in Appendix One and Two of this report.

**Methodology**

All Fire and Rescue Services in England and Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, were invited to take part in the research. The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, all Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland and 42 of the 44 Fire and Rescue Services in England that employ Retained Duty System personnel took part in the survey. The Fire and Rescue Service in Wales declined to take part.

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8 The group comprised of representatives from DCLG, Scottish Resilience, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service, Employment Research and Consulting (the research contractor), Fire Brigades Union, Retained Firefighters Union, Chief Fire Officers Association in England, Chief Fire Officers Association in Scotland.
Retained Duty System personnel were asked to complete a questionnaire on drill night\(^9\) or at home, while some questionnaires were dispatched directly to Retained Duty System staff at their home address either by Employment Research and Consulting or their Fire and Rescue Service.

In total, 17,365 questionnaires were sent out and 7,359 usable returns were received, giving an overall response rate of 42 per cent. The breakdown in response rates for England, Northern Ireland and Scotland is shown in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Number of questionnaires sent out</th>
<th>Number of questionnaires returned</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>13,130</td>
<td>5,506</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>1,028</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>3,207</td>
<td>1,011</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,365</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,359</strong></td>
<td><strong>42%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Respondent characteristics

Fire and Rescue Services were requested to provide data on the characteristics of each member of their Retained Duty System workforce, including their age, gender, ethnicity, length of service and rank/role. This information was used to compare the actual profile of the workforce with those that responded to the survey, so that the survey responses could be weighted\(^{10}\) to fully represent all Retained Duty System personnel.

---

\(^9\) This is a night of the week set aside for training for Retained Duty System personnel.

\(^{10}\) The weighting of the survey data addresses any under- or over-representation of respondent characteristics which can affect the quality of the data. For example, in this survey some Fire and Rescue Services obtained much higher response rates than other Fire and Rescue Services. In order to ensure that these Services with high response rates were not over-represented in the data, weights were applied (based on known workforce characteristics) to the entire dataset. So, if Fire and Rescue Service ‘X’ has a workforce that is 10% of the entire English workforce, but the proportion of survey responses from this Service in our sample is 15%, then it is necessary to ‘down-weight’ that Service’s responses so it does not distort the entire dataset.
A comparison of the characteristics of those who responded to the survey and the population of current Retained Duty System personnel can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Survey respondent profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Known Fire and Rescue Service population</th>
<th>Survey respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black and minority ethnic</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/not stated</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 years and under</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45 years</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55 years</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 years and over</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firefighter</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew manager/commander</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch manager/commander</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year joined</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979 or earlier</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1989</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2009</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relatively minor changes to the dataset as a result of the post-weighting exercise\(^{11}\) suggests the data should not be affected by non-response bias and that the data collected from this research is a reliable picture of Fire and Rescue Services across England, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

All analysis was conducted on the weighted data. The analysis conducted uses mainly descriptive statistics – frequency counts (the number or proportion of respondents answering a question in a certain way) but also cross-breaks (an analysis technique that looks at how different types of respondents answered questions) (for example men compared with women, younger with older respondents or firefighters or crew managers with watch managers, etc.).

The data analysed using cross-breaks was tested for statistical significance (to the 95 per cent confidence level). This process allows the researcher to determine whether differences in how respondent groups have answered a question are a result of ‘actual differences’ in experience or attitudes of those groups and not as a result of other issues (such as sample sizes). For example if more women than men state that they are happy in their job, a statistical test will determine whether there really is a difference in the opinion of men and women.

The report contains a number of free text comments made in response to two questions: “What do you think would improve the Fire and Rescue Service for Retained Duty System personnel to make it a better place to work?” and “Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience of working for the Retained Duty System?” The responses to these questions tended to fall into distinct categories: how much the respondents enjoy the job; requests for more training; better pay; better communications and understanding between headquarters, Wholetime Duty System staff and Retained Duty System stations and staff; the opportunity to transfer to the Wholetime Duty System; and a better understanding of the commitment required to be a Retained Duty System firefighter. Where these comments have been made, they have been included in the relevant sections of the report.

\(^{11}\) The difference between the survey respondent profile in the unweighted data and weighted data was typically between +/- 1 percentage points.
Section 3

The background of Retained Duty System Personnel

The following section considers respondents’ motivations for joining the Fire and Rescue Service, as well as how they were recruited and the length of time that recruitment process took.

It also covers respondents’ primary employment, looking at the types of employer that Retained Duty System staff tended to work for, their employers’ awareness of their role in the Fire and Rescue Service, the types of working patterns and hours undertaken in primary employment, and their availability to attend emergency calls.

Finally, the section looks at those who drove in their primary employment and concludes with the perceived skills and knowledge a Retained Duty System member of staff brought to their primary employment from working in the Fire and Rescue Service.

Reasons for joining the Retained Duty System

The majority of all respondents (64 per cent) joined the Fire and Rescue Service because they wanted a job the community valued, or thought that the Retained Duty System would be an exciting or varied job (63 per cent). Slightly higher proportions of respondents from Northern Ireland joined for this reason (68 per cent).

Just over one-quarter of all respondents (26 per cent) joined the Retained Duty System because they wanted the income with much higher proportions of Northern Irish respondents joining for this reason (38 per cent).

Around one in seven respondents (16 per cent) entered the Service because they wanted to join the Wholetime Duty System but there were no vacancies, much lower levels of Scottish respondents joined for this reason (10 per cent).
The reasons respondents gave for joining the Retained Duty System can be seen ranked in order of preference, in Table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for joining the Retained Duty System</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wanted a job the community valued</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought it would be exciting or varied job</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative or friend in the Fire and Rescue Service</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to make sure local Retained Duty System station was not understaffed or did not close</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted the income</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked the image of a firefighter</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to be a wholetime (full-time) firefighter, but there were no vacancies</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents, 7,359
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Recruitment into the Retained Duty System

Almost one-half of respondents (48 per cent) reported that they were recruited into the Retained Duty System after a friend or relative encouraged them to join. This corresponds to data in Table 3 above, which shows that 30 per cent of respondents joined because they had a friend or relative in the Service. Sixty seven per cent of station managers reported asking existing Retained Duty System staff to approach friends and family members when station vacancies arose. Station managers rated this approach as the most successful in tackling recruitment problems at their station.

Almost three in ten (29 per cent) responded to an approach to join the Fire and Rescue Service from local fire station or Retained Duty System personnel, while a similar proportion (28 per cent) responded to a formal Fire and Rescue Service recruitment campaign.
This information, as well as country breakdowns of the data, is shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Route into the Retained Duty System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A friend or relative already in the Fire and Rescue Service encouraged me to join</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I responded to an approach from the local fire station/local Retained Duty System personnel</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I responded to a Fire and Rescue Service recruitment campaign</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I approached the fire station</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My employer suggested I join</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was unsuccessful in my application for a full-time post and was offered the opportunity to become a Retained Duty System firefighter</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a Wholetime firefighter as well</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (eg always wanted to do the job, a friend joined, job centre suggestion)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Time taken to join the Retained Duty System**

Across the entire sample, respondents reported that it took just over nine months (38 weeks) from the point of applying for a Retained Duty System post to attending incidents. It took an average of 29 weeks in Scotland, 39 weeks in England and 55 weeks in Northern Ireland.

The average amount of time, from the point where respondents applied to join to being accepted into the Service, was 24 weeks, with Scottish applicants taking the least amount of time (19 weeks)\(^\text{12}\), followed by English applicants (24 weeks) and finally Northern Irish applicants (38 weeks).

Again, the length of time taken from being accepted into the Service until respondents were able to attend incidents follows the pattern described above. Overall, the average length of time was 14 weeks, with Northern Irish applicants taking 17 weeks, English applicants 15 weeks and Scottish applicants 10 weeks.

\(^{12}\) The difference between Scotland and the rest of the UK is, however, not ‘statistically significant’.
This information, as well as country breakdowns of the data is shown in Table 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average time taken between applying and joining the Retained Duty System</td>
<td>24 weeks</td>
<td>24 weeks</td>
<td>19 weeks</td>
<td>38 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average time between being accepted and attending incidents</td>
<td>14 weeks</td>
<td>15 weeks</td>
<td>10 weeks</td>
<td>17 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average time between applying and attending incidents</td>
<td>38 weeks</td>
<td>39 weeks</td>
<td>29 weeks</td>
<td>55 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents, 7,359
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

**Primary employment**

The vast majority of respondents (95 per cent) reported they were employed in another role besides their Retained Duty System job. A total of 58 per cent worked for one or more employer, 23 per cent were self-employed and 17 per cent worked elsewhere in the Fire and Rescue Service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working for one or more employer</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working elsewhere in the Fire and Rescue Service</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (voluntary work, etc)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents, 7,359
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Five per cent of respondents reported they were unemployed: this is lower than the UK’s unemployment level of 7.9 per cent (as at April 2010). The previous survey of the Retained Duty System carried out in 2004 had found that three per cent of the Retained Duty System workforce had no other employment.

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13 ONS Unemployment and employment February to April 2010, June 2010.
14 The sampling strategy used in the 2004 Retained Duty System survey was less robust and therefore the results may not be representative. The Primary Employment Status of Retained Duty System Firefighters: Findings from a survey in England and Wales, Department for Communities and Local Government: London May 2006.
Sector, size and type of employer

The data identified that just under two-thirds of those in primary employment worked in private sector organisations (64 per cent), while just under one-third (33 per cent) worked in the public sector. One per cent worked for a charity or the voluntary sector and a further 2 per cent did not provide information about employment outside the Fire and Rescue Service.

Respondents were most likely to work in construction (22 per cent), manufacturing (17 per cent), wholesale, retail and motor repairers (13 per cent) or transport and storage (11 per cent).

Retained Duty System personnel were most likely to work for a “local” employer (68 per cent), one that would typically allow them to combine their primary employment with Retained Duty System duties. Smaller, though significant, numbers of Retained Duty System personnel, worked for a national (17 per cent) or international (15 per cent) organisation in their primary employment.

Retained Duty System personnel tended to work for smaller sized organisations. For example, more than one-half of respondents (55 per cent) worked for organisations employing fewer than 50 staff, with just over one-third (35 per cent) working in organisations with between one and nine employees. In contrast, much smaller proportions of staff worked in larger organisations (i.e. those employing more than 500 staff). This profile is similar to data presented in the 2007 employers’ survey, where 70 per cent of current employers had up to 50 staff and one-third (34 per cent) up to 10 members of staff.15

This primary employment profile of current Retained Duty System personnel data is shown in Table 7 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7: Retained Duty System primary employer profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity or voluntary organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Retained Duty System primary employer profile (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer size (number of employees)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 9 employees</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 24 employees</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 49 employees</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 99 employees</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 to 249 employees</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 to 499 employees</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 or more employees</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and storage</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration and defence</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and support service activities</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment and recreation</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human health and social work activities</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and food service activities</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and communication</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific and technical activities</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other service activities</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and insurance activities</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate activities</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: varying number of respondents.
Employer awareness of their employee’s Retained Duty System role

Almost all respondents who worked for a primary employer (i.e. those who were not self-employed) reported that their employer was aware of their Retained Duty System role (98 per cent). The remaining two per cent reported that their employer did not know.

Of those respondents reporting that their employer did not know about their Retained Duty System role, 72 per cent said they did not tell their employer because they undertook their Retained Duty System duties outside of working hours. A further 27 per cent reported that they did not need to tell their employer about their Retained Duty System duties. Thirteen per cent reported that they did not want their employer to know about their Retained Duty System duties.

Despite large proportions of respondents reporting that their primary employer knew about their Retained Duty System role only 18 per cent of officers in charge of stations or units reported that they kept in touch with the primary employers of their station staff.

Where station or unit managers kept in touch with primary employers, they tended to do this via letters, open days at the station, sending out Fire and Rescue Service publications or newsletters, or setting up meetings with Fire and Rescue Service officers or other staff.

The 2007 survey of primary employers in England\(^ {16}\) found that almost one-half (48 per cent) of primary employers of Retained Duty System firefighters had no contact at all with the local Retained Duty System fire station or the Fire and Rescue Service while they were releasing staff for Retained Duty System duties. Where there was contact between the employer and the Fire and Rescue Service, nine per cent of employers reported that they had initiated the contact, while in 15 per cent of cases it was initiated by the Fire and Rescue Service.

Employer release agreement

As a matter of good practice Fire and Rescue Services should require their Retained Duty System firefighters to complete an employer release agreement signed by their primary employer. The agreement should be subsequently updated if a firefighter changes duties in the Service, or if there are any changes in personal circumstances, primary employment duties, place of work or primary employer.

However, almost four-fifths of respondents whose primary employers were aware of their Retained Duty System role reported that they had never updated their release agreement (40 per cent); that their Fire and Rescue Service did not use a release agreement (18 per cent); or they could not remember when the agreement had last been updated (20 per cent).

Shift patterns worked in primary employment

The vast majority of those working in primary employment (97 per cent) did so on weekdays, with smaller proportions working weekday nights (31 per cent). In addition, Retained Duty System staff also had primary employment commitments at weekends, with more than two-fifths (44 per cent) working weekend days and just over one-quarter (27 per cent) working weekend nights.

These working patterns directly impacted on respondents’ availability to undertake Retained Duty System duties, with patterns of availability showing an inverse relationship to primary employment working patterns. For example, while 97 per cent of respondents worked weekdays, a smaller proportion (76 per cent) reported that they were available for Retained Duty System duties during this time. In contrast, Retained Duty System availability during weekday evening periods (94 per cent) and weekend days (91 per cent) and weekend nights (90 per cent) was much higher. This information, as well as country breakdowns of the data, is shown in Table 8 below.

### Table 8: Shifts worked in primary employment and availability for Retained Duty System duties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shift/time</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week days</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in primary employment</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available for Retained Duty System work</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week nights</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in primary employment</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available for Retained Duty System work</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekend days</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in primary employment</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available for Retained Duty System work</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekend nights</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in primary employment</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available for Retained Duty System work</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents, 7,359
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.
Officers in charge of a unit or station were asked to identify the shift periods when they had most difficulty providing or maintaining Retained Duty System cover at their station. Over four fifths of all station managers reported difficulties covering some shifts. Weekdays were the most difficult shifts to cover (85 per cent) followed by weekend days (36 per cent), week nights (four per cent) and lastly weekend nights (28 per cent). In contrast, 14 per cent of managers responding to the question reported that they had not experienced any difficulties at all at their station.

Hours worked in primary employment

Across the entire sample, Retained Duty System personnel worked an average of 40.5 hours per week in their primary employment, although there were some variations in working hours across England (40.4 hours), Northern Ireland (40.1 hours) and Scotland (41.0 hours).

Analysis of the data shows that almost two-fifths of respondents worked between 36 and 40 hours per week (41 per cent), while the same proportion were working more than 40 hours per week (41 per cent).

This information, as well as country breakdowns of the data is shown in Table 9 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours worked</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average (mean) hours worked per week</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion working 36 to 40 hours per week</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion working 41 or more hours per week</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Data presented later in this report (see page 37/38) shows that Retained Duty System staff tended to provide around four and a half hours specifically for pre-planned Retained Duty System duties during a typical week (for weekly training and community fire safety work). In addition, Retained Duty System staff were also providing twelve and a half hours of emergency response throughout their working week. Therefore, a great many Retained Duty System personnel were working more than 48 hours per week on average, thereby falling within the opt-out requirements of the Working Time Regulations.17

Despite this, two-thirds of all Retained Duty System firefighters (64 per cent) had not signed the 48 hour opt-out agreement with either their primary employer or their Fire and Rescue Service.

17 The Working Time Directive was introduced in 1993 to safeguard worker rights by placing a weekly limit on the number of hours worked, specifying break and rest periods and rules on night-time working. However, it is possible for employees to ‘opt-out’ of the 48 hour average working week.
A significant proportion – just under three-fifths – of those working more than 40 hours per week in their primary employment had not signed an opt-out agreement with either their primary employer or the Fire and Rescue Service: 59 per cent of those working between 41 and 47 hours per week had not signed an opt-out, while 57 per cent of those working 48 hours or more per week in their primary employment had not signed an opt-out. In addition, almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of those working 100 per cent Retained Duty System contracts had not signed the opt-out thereby potentially breaching the 48 hour working week opt-out requirements of the Working Time Regulations.

Firefighters were asked if they were required to inform their Fire and Rescue Service of the hours they worked in their primary employment. Just over one-quarter reported that their Fire and Rescue Service required them to provide that information, while three-fifths said they were not required (60 per cent). Fourteen per cent did not know if they had to provide this information.

Attending calls while in primary employment

Respondents were asked to state the extent to which they were able to attend incidents when they were working in their primary employment. Just over one-half of respondents reported that they were only able to attend calls when they were not at their primary employment (51 per cent) while a further 10 per cent were only able to attend at certain times. Finally, the remaining two-fifths of respondents were able to attend calls at any time from their primary employment (40 per cent).

In contrast, the 2007 employers’ survey found that 81 per cent of employers interviewed stated that they released their Retained Duty System staff during work time. However 32 per cent of the employers in the survey imposed some restrictions on releasing employees.18

The data was analysed using cross-breaks19 and tests for statistical significance20 to determine the characteristics of those who were most likely to be able to attend incidents when they were in their primary employment. Although 40 per cent of all respondents reported that they were able to attend incidents at any time when they were in their primary employment, those who were self-employed, those working in production and service sector organisations and those working for local employers were more likely to be able to respond to incidents at any time.

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19 ‘Cross breaks’ are used to show how different respondent groups answer survey questions. For example, to illustrate the differences in opinion or action between men and women, between England, Northern Ireland and Scotland, or 100% contract staff and 75 per cent contract staff, etc.
20 Where the data has been cross-breaked, the different respondent groups have been checked to find out if the differences between them has happened as a result of chance (not statistically significant) or as a result of actual differences between respondent groups. The data in this report has been tested at the “95 per cent confidence interval”.
Of those who were released by primary employers to attend calls during work time, just over one-quarter were paid by their primary employer for the entire time of that call (26 per cent), seven per cent were only paid for some of the time, and 37 per cent were self-employed. In contrast, three in ten were not paid at all by their primary employer (32 per cent).

Those most likely to be paid by their primary employer for attending incidents during work time included those working in international (53 per cent) and national (45 per cent) organisations and those working for the public sector (44 per cent).

Driving a light goods vehicle in primary employment

Almost two-thirds of respondents in primary employment had a light goods vehicle licence (64 per cent), with crew managers, watch managers, those who worked elsewhere in the Fire and Rescue Service, and those aged 46 and over most likely to have one.

Thirteen per cent of those with a light goods vehicle licence drove an in-scope21 vehicle in their primary employment. Of these, only three per cent were required by their Fire and Rescue Service to provide information about the tachograph-recorded hours they drove, the same proportion (three per cent) were monitored by other methods, such as driver logs.

Of those driving in-scope vehicles in their primary employment, only 35 per cent reported that their Fire and Rescue Service had a policy on the Drivers’ Hours Regulations and only 23 per cent reported that they had seen the policy.

Primary employer benefits from employing Retained Duty System staff

Retained Duty System firefighters in primary employment were asked to select, from a pre-coded list, how they believed their primary employer had benefited from their role in the Retained Duty System. Just over one in ten respondents reported that their primary employer had not benefited from their Retained Duty System role (13 per cent). However, the vast majority believed that their employer had benefited in a range of different ways, through the acquisition of new skills or improvements to existing skills. The areas where respondents believed their employers had benefited, as well as country breakdowns in the data, are listed in Table 10 below.

21 ‘In-scope’ describes a vehicle that brings its driver within the scope of the EC Drivers’ Hours Rules, which limits the driving time of drivers of vehicles over 3.5 tonnes, as well as prescribing strict break and rest periods.
Table 10: Skills acquired or improved since becoming a Retained Duty System firefighter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills acquired or improved</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retained Duty System-specific skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to provide advice on fire safety</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to provide advice on health and safety issues</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became a first aider</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workplace-specific skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better team player</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved confidence</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved ability to learn new skills</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved problem-solving skills</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved managerial skills</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All who do paid work for another employer 5,653
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.
Section 4

Working as a Retained Duty System firefighter

This section looks at a range of issues connected with the role of the Retained Duty System firefighter, specifically the types of contracts respondents worked to, the number of hours they committed to the Fire and Rescue Service through emergency response, training and community fire safety duties and how that commitment may have changed in recent years. This section also investigates their knowledge of Service policies and procedures, their experience and relationships with work colleagues and how they rated the way in which the Service communicated with them as members of the Retained Duty System.

Retained Duty System contract type

Almost one-half of respondents reported that they worked for their Fire and Rescue Service on a 100 per cent contract22 (49 per cent), with just over two-fifths working a 75 per cent contract23 (41 per cent). The remaining 10 per cent worked a variety of other contracts or did not know which contract they worked to.

This information, as well as country breakdowns of the data is shown in Table 11 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract type</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 per cent (120 hours per week) contract</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 per cent (90 hours per week) contract</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other contracts/don’t know</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents, 7,359
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

The data identified that firefighters aged 46 – 65 years, watch managers, those working for a local organisation in their primary employment and those in production jobs were most likely to work the 100 per cent contract.

22 A contract for Retained Duty System personnel to provide 120 hours cover per week for Retained Duty System duties, including emergency response.
23 A contract for Retained Duty System personnel to provide 90 hours cover per week for Retained Duty System duties, including emergency response.
In contrast, respondents working a 75 per cent contract were typically those who also worked for the Service on the Whole-time Duty System, those not released by their primary employer to attend calls, those that had thought about leaving the Service in the previous twelve months, and those working in public sector organisations.

Work undertaken as a Retained Duty System firefighter

Retained Duty System respondents were asked about the tasks that they undertook in addition to emergency response. Almost nine out of ten respondents reported that they had undertaken community fire safety duties (87 per cent). Other tasks undertaken by Retained Duty System personnel, as well as country breakdowns in the data are listed in Table 12 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks undertaken</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community fire safety</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water or flood rescue</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating and crewing special appliances</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass decontamination</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-responding</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-volume pumping</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban search and rescue</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents, 7,513
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Commitment to the Retained Duty System

Retained Duty System personnel were asked to state the actual number of hours (known as ‘positive hours’) they spent undertaking Retained Duty System duties in a typical week. Across all activities, respondents worked a total of 18.4 positive hours, split between emergency response (12.6 hours), training (3.2 hours), community fire safety (1.4 hours) and other tasks, such as administration, maintenance, management, etc. (1.2 hours). The hours spent on Retained Duty System duties in England was much higher (20 hours) than in Scotland (11 hours) and Northern Ireland (14 hours).
This information, as well as country breakdowns of the data, is shown in Table 13 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retained Duty System activities</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency response</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community fire safety</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other tasks (such as administration, maintenance, etc.)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total commitment</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents, 7,359

However, some respondents were more likely to provide more hours to the Service, including crew managers (20 hours), those who signed an opt-out from the 48-hour average working week under the Working Time Regulations (21 hours), and those working a 75 per cent Retained Duty System contract (21 hours). In addition, those who drove an in-scope vehicle as part of their primary employment (22 hours), those working for primary employers who were not aware of their Retained Duty System role (25 hours) and those working in the Fire and Rescue Service (26 hours) were also more likely to work longer hours in the Retained Duty System.

Just over two-thirds reported that they would be willing to give more commitment to the Service (70 per cent), in particular for emergency response, pre-arranged training and weekly training, community fire safety and maintenance.

Changes in the level of positive hours

Respondents were asked to state if their commitment to the Service – in the shape of positive hours worked or offered – had increased, decreased or remained the same over the past three years. This information, as well as country breakdowns of the data, is shown in Table 14 opposite.

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24 Positive hours are the times that Retained Duty System personnel to undertake specific duties, for example standby cover, training or community fire safety, as well as the ‘cover’ hours offered.
The table shows that a higher proportion of Retained Duty System staff had reduced their standby and emergency response cover during the past three years. At the same time, Retained Duty System staff had increased community safety duties and training hours substantially.

Those that had increased their hours reported that this was as a result of their fire station needing them to provide increased cover (57 per cent), while those that had reduced their hours did so as a result of primary employment (30 per cent), family (21 per cent) or personal/leisure commitments (14 per cent).

Fire and Rescue Service policies, guidance and training

Retained Duty System personnel were asked a series of questions about their Service’s policies and procedures, specifically asking if they (1) knew if their Fire and Rescue Service had a specific policy or guidance on a particular issue, (2) if they had seen the policy or guidance and (3) if they had received any training on that policy or guidance. The results of these questions are shown in Table 15 below.
Table 15: Fire and Rescue Service policies and guidance (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy/guidance</th>
<th>Aware</th>
<th>Seen</th>
<th>Received training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer to Wholetime Duty System from Retained Duty System</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers’ Hours Regulations</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents, 7,359
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Relationships with colleagues and the Fire and Rescue Service

A very high proportion of respondents (64 per cent) indicated that they would speak highly of their Fire and Rescue Service and felt valued by their line manager (70 per cent) or their Fire and Rescue Service (43 per cent). A significantly lower proportion felt valued their Wholetime Duty System colleagues (30 per cent). However, a small proportion of respondents appeared to have had a negative experience of working in their Fire and Rescue Service, reporting that they were: unhappy at work (10 per cent); did not feel an equal part of the team (10 per cent); were not invited to socialise with colleagues (eight per cent), or did not feel valued by colleagues (six per cent).

This data corresponds with research carried out in 2008 among serving firefighters in England that showed: 54 per cent of Retained Duty System personnel spoke highly of their Fire and Rescue Service; 35 per cent felt valued by their Fire and Rescue Service; nine per cent were not happy at work; 14 per cent did not feel an equal part of the team; four per cent were not invited to socialise with colleagues; and 17 per cent did not feel valued by colleagues.

Communications

Almost one-half of respondents believed that communications between head quarters or management and their station could be improved (46 per cent). Of the remaining 54 per cent, 24 per cent did not think communications could be improved, while 29 per cent did not know if they could be improved.²⁵

²⁵ As a result of rounding, these figures do not add up to 54 per cent.
Of the 46 per cent that believed communications could be improved between head quarters or management and stations, more than one-quarter felt that this could be done by more face-to-face contact or direct visits (28 per cent) with much smaller proportions (fewer than five per cent in each case) giving a wide array of answers, from briefing notes being sent out earlier or on time to briefing meetings to be held more frequently.

“Listen to what we say for a start, and maybe carry out what we say instead of coming to our station listening to us and that's the last we hear of anything. As usual nothing good comes out of it”

(Member of the Retained Duty System, Scotland).

Keeping in touch with families

The survey asked station and unit managers how, if at all, their Fire and Rescue Service kept in touch with the families of their Retained Duty System staff. Three fifths of unit or station managers reported that they did not keep in touch with the families of Retained Duty System personnel.

Of those officers in charge of a station or unit that did keep in touch with the families of their staff, they did so using letters (47 per cent), Fire and Rescue Service publications or newsletters (30 per cent), open days at the station (27 per cent), meetings with officers or other Retained Duty System personnel (24 per cent) or Christmas cards (six per cent).
Section 5

Work-life balance

This section asked Retained Duty System staff to rate how they balanced their primary employment with their personal life and Retained Duty System duties.

Balancing Retained Duty System and primary employment commitments

Data presented earlier in this report showed that, on average, a typical Retained Duty System firefighter worked 40 hours per week in their primary employment, as well as committing 18 hours a week to Retained Duty System training, community fire safety duties and emergency response.26 As a result, it was unsurprising to find that over three-fifths of respondents (62 per cent) found their commitment to the Fire and Rescue Service “challenging”.

Seven per cent of respondents reported that their primary employer had asked them to reduce the level of their Retained Duty System commitment, while one in six agreed that they were unable to do the amount of overtime they would have liked in their primary employment (17 per cent). Just over one-quarter of Retained Duty System personnel reported that they had turned down a promotion in their primary employment because of their Retained Duty System duties (26 per cent).

Balancing Retained Duty System and personal commitments

Almost three-fifths of respondents (56 per cent) felt under pressure to balance their family, leisure and Retained Duty System commitments, especially in England where respondents were more likely to provide increased hours of emergency cover than their counterparts in Northern Ireland and Scotland. In contrast, just over one-third of respondents found this commitment either easy (13 per cent) or neither easy nor difficult (30 per cent).

One-third of respondents either ‘somewhat’ agreed or ‘strongly’ agreed that their family would like them to reduce their Retained Duty System commitment (33 per cent), while a slightly higher proportion agreed that they did not have enough time to do things they wanted to as a result of their Retained Duty System commitment (38 per cent).

26 This commitment will be made up of emergency response ‘shouts’ undertaken during an Retained Duty System firefighter’s primary employment, as well as times outside of this employment.
Respondents’ written comments highlighted an issue around the amount of commitment they were expected to provide as Retained Duty System firefighters, as well as a belief that their Service did not understand how difficult it was to balance their varying commitments (for example to families, primary employers, etc.). Members of the Retained Duty System made the following comments:

“The service should always bear in mind that for Retained Duty System personnel fire service work is very much secondary to the main career.” (England).

“We do a part-time job (as a Retained Duty System firefighter) that is tending toward a full time commitment.” (Scotland).

“The job is very rewarding but trying to get quality family time while having two jobs and three young children does cause friction.” (England).

“Management to start realising just how much commitment Retained Duty System actually give [and] employ more Retained Duty System personnel or employ the Retained Duty System personnel on that station to day man it.” (Northern Ireland).

“I feel that the commitment we give to the Fire & Rescue Service – ie 24/7 cover, day or night – is not wholly appreciated by some wholetime firefighters.” (Scotland).

As a wholetime crew manager I do not (think) the massive commitment it takes to work the Retained Duty System system (is understood).” (Scotland).

Easing the burden of the commitment

The responses suggest that the burden of trying to balance home, primary employment and Retained Duty System commitments was not only putting pressure on firefighters’ own time, it was also directly affecting the Fire and Rescue Service. For example, 85 per cent of officers in charge of a Retained Duty System station or unit reported that it was difficult to provide cover during normal weekly working hours, 65 per cent also reported that their station was under-strength.

Furthermore, although a good proportion of respondents were prepared to increase their hours of Retained Duty System cover, 28 per cent felt that their Fire and Rescue Service did not value them and 41 per cent were also thinking about leaving the Service – particularly as a result of the amount of commitment they were required to give.

Respondents were asked if their Fire and Rescue Service was supportive in helping them to balance their Retained Duty System and personal commitments. One-third said their Service was either ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ unsupportive in helping to balance these commitments (33 per cent), 26 per cent felt their Service was supportive and 39 per cent felt their Service was neither supportive nor unsupportive.
In some cases, the examples of the sort of support that firefighters were suggesting in order to help them balance their primary employment, personal and Retained Duty System commitments should be relatively easy for Services to implement. Typically, firefighters would like to see a range of different initiatives and schemes to help them balance their personal and Retained Duty System commitments, including:

- scheduled rest periods (44 per cent)
- phased alerters (26 per cent)
- electronic availability systems (25 per cent)
- support for childcare (25 per cent)
- a reduction of on-call hours (23 per cent)
- more crew at their station (18 per cent); and
- better communication with their family about duration of calls (15 per cent).

Twenty-nine per cent reported that their Fire and Rescue Service was not supportive in helping them balance their primary employment and Retained Duty System commitments. When these respondents were asked how their Fire and Rescue Service could help in this area, a similar pattern emerged, with Retained Duty System staff saying the following would help:

- more crew at their station (34 per cent)
- better communication with primary employer about incident lengths (16 per cent)
- electronic availability systems (15 per cent)
- reduced on-call hours (14 per cent); and
- scheduled rest periods (13 per cent).

Some of the comments from respondents about how their Service could help were as follows:

“A proper shift system of work where a designated crew is rotated to keep the crewing levels correct and allow more free time.” (England).

“Keep up recruitment and Retained Duty System numbers as this helps social time-family time and helps in holiday periods to not be overstretched and short of a crew.” (England).

“More understanding by senior personnel about how much commitment it takes to do the job. In all it has been a pleasant atmosphere and place to work.” (England)
“Ensuring Retained Duty System stations have enough personnel to allow a good mix of giving cover and time off. (Scotland).

“More staff. Officers understanding how much time Retained Duty System staff give up to meet the needs of their station.” (Northern Ireland).

“The ability to book off via the internet which would save time and inconvenience.” (England).

“More free time so we can switch off and not worry about being on duty. Been working at an under-strength station for over 10 years has been quite a strain on social life.” (England).

Providing more cover

More than two-thirds of firefighters stated they were prepared to increase the cover they offered to their stations (70 per cent). This information, as well as country breakdowns of the data, is shown in Table 16 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retained Duty System activities</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency response</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-arranged training periods</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly training</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community fire safety</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-responding</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents, 7,359
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

When asked what, if anything, limited their ability to provide more cover, just over one-fifth of respondents (23 per cent) reported that there were no limiting factors. This left just under four-fifths of respondents who were experiencing one or more pressures that did not allow them to increase their commitment.

Almost one-half of Retained Duty System respondents (49 per cent) reported that their primary employment commitments limited their ability to provide more cover, while more than two-fifths reported that their family commitments were a limiting factor (43 per cent) and almost one-third reported that their leisure or personal commitments impacted on their ability to provide more cover (32 per cent).
Section 6

Training and development

This section examines the training and development that Retained Duty System personnel receive, as well as providing information on performance appraisals, recording competence levels and the convenience of the training undertaken. Finally, the section looks at the training opportunities offered to Retained Duty System staff and if respondents had applied for, and been successful in gaining, promotion.

Induction training

Over three-quarters of respondents (76 per cent) reported that they followed a structured training programme when they joined the Service, while 15 per cent did not. Nine per cent were unsure or did not know.

Although it took an average of 95½ weeks (22 months) to complete this training, these times varied enormously, with 30 per cent taking less than one year, 17 per cent between one year and 18 months, 35 per cent between 18 months and two years and 20 per cent taking more than two years.27

Across the three countries, the length of time taken to complete this training varied and mirrored the differences in time from joining the Service to the point when Retained Duty System firefighters were able to respond to incidents. For example, firefighters in England took an average 99 weeks (23 months) to complete their ‘induction’ training and in Northern Ireland 98 weeks (23 months), compared to 78 weeks (18 months) in Scotland.

This information is shown in Table 17 below.

| Table 17: Time taken to completed Retained Duty System structured training |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Country**     | **Time**        |
| England         | 99 weeks        |
| Scotland        | 78 weeks        |
| Northern Ireland| 98 weeks        |
| All             | 96 weeks        |

Base: All respondents, 7,359
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

27 A further 12 per cent did not know or could not remember how long this training took.
Performance appraisal

Just over two-fifths of respondents reported that they had received a performance appraisal from their Fire and Rescue Service in the previous 12 months (45 per cent), while 32 per cent had received a training needs analysis. Just over two-fifths of Retained Duty System personnel had not received either a performance appraisal or training needs analysis over the previous 12 months (44 per cent).

However, over three-quarters of respondents reported that their Fire and Rescue Service had a system in place to ensure that their development needs were met (78 per cent) and almost three-fifths agreed that their training needs had been met (58 per cent). As a result, almost one-half of respondents either ‘somewhat’ or ‘strongly’ agreed that the training they received met their needs (48 per cent).

Recording training competence

Officers in charge of a unit or station were asked if, and how, training competence was recorded in their Fire and Rescue Service. Almost all managers reported that competence was recorded (98 per cent), with over three-fifths reporting that Retained Duty System staff recorded their own training competence (63 per cent) and/or managers kept a record of training competence (68 per cent). The recording methods varied, with almost three-quarters reporting that it was recorded electronically (74 per cent) or manually with a paper record (52 per cent).

Convenience and location of training

Just over three-fifths of Retained Duty System personnel (63 per cent) agreed that the training they received was delivered in a place they considered convenient to them, 29 per cent did not agree and eight per cent either did not know or were unsure.

Firefighters undertook training at various locations. Almost three-quarters of respondents received their induction training locally or at a fire station (74 per cent), while more than four-fifths attended their Fire and Rescue Service’s training centre (84 per cent) or another Service’s training centre (14 per cent) or the Fire Service College (8 per cent).

Training opportunities offered by the Fire and Rescue Service

Almost three-quarters of respondents (72 per cent) had not been given the opportunity to pursue any qualifications while at their Fire and Rescue Service.28 However, of those that

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28 Respondents were presented with the following list of qualifications: National Vocational Qualifications 1-3, National Vocational Qualifications 4, National Vocational Qualifications 5, Operations in the community NVQ 3, watch management National Vocational Qualifications 3, Institute of leadership and management, 12 week development course over three years, GCSEs, A levels, degree, masters degree, diploma, foundation degree and an option for ‘other’ responses.
were offered the opportunity, 48 per cent were offered the chance to undertake National Vocational Qualification\(^{29}\) Levels 1-3, while five per cent were offered the opportunity to undertake National Vocational Qualification Levels 4-5. Fifteen percent were given the chance to undertake the ‘Operations in the Community’ National Vocational Qualification Level 3, eight per cent were able to undertake the watch management National Vocational Qualification Level 3, and 18 per cent the ‘Institute of Leadership and Management’ qualification. Finally, 18 per cent of Retained Duty System firefighters were given the opportunity to complete the 12-week development course over three years.

**Promotion**

Just under two-fifths of respondents (39 per cent) reported that their Fire and Rescue Service allowed Retained Duty System staff to undertake an Assessment Development Centre process for a higher role. A similar proportion had applied for promotion since they joined the Fire and Rescue Service (37 per cent).

The promotion process typically involved an interview (69 per cent), an operational competence assessment (50 per cent), an Assessment Development Centre (22 per cent) or a promotion board (19 per cent). These applicants tended to apply for crew manager/commander\(^{30}\) positions (93 per cent) or watch manager/commander positions (26 per cent).

Just under three-fifths of respondents were successful in their application for promotion (59 per cent). However, of the remainder that were unsuccessful, just over one-third of applicants did not receive any feedback on their application (34 per cent).

Those that had not applied for promotion since joining the Service gave a range of different reasons. Just over one-half reported that they were ‘happy in their current role’ (51 per cent), while two-fifths believed they did not have enough experience or had not been in the Service long enough (40 per cent) to apply for promotion. Around one-fifth of Retained Duty System staff reported that there had been no vacancies or opportunities (21 per cent), while a slightly smaller number were not interested in promotion as a result of the amount of administration involved in taking up a higher role (19 per cent).

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\(^{29}\) Scottish National Vocational Qualification in Scotland

\(^{30}\) These positions are the same in the Service – as a term, ‘crew manager’ is used in England and ‘crew commander’ is used in Northern Ireland.
Section 7

Integration with Wholetime Duty System

This section looks at the extent to which Retained and Wholetime Duty Systems were integrated within the Fire and Rescue Service. Specifically, it details the extent to which fire stations had Wholetime Duty System and Retained Duty System staff, the types of activities that Retained Duty System staff undertook with their Wholetime Duty System colleagues and if training was integrated. The section concludes with a look at how many Retained Duty System staff had applied to transfer to the Wholetime Duty System and how many were successful.

Retained Duty System station managers’ questions

Station managers were asked about the extent to which Retained and Wholetime Duty Systems were integrated at their station. One in seven station managers reported that Retained Duty System crew at their station covered shortages on Wholetime Duty System appliances (15 per cent), while in one-quarter of cases Wholetime Duty System crew were used to cover shortages on Retained Duty System appliances (25 per cent). In just over one-fifth of cases, Retained Duty System crew were used to cover shortages at other Retained Duty System stations (21 per cent) and one in ten Retained Duty System respondents stated they were able to ride Wholetime Duty System appliances to gain more experience (11 per cent).

In just over one-half of cases (53 per cent), station managers did not select one of the above answers, suggesting that there was either no integration or there was no opportunity to integrate Retained and Wholetime Duty Systems at their station. Where there was no integration, the reason given by nearly one-third was that Wholetime Duty System staff did not believe Retained Duty System personnel were up to the job (30 per cent).

Training undertaken by Retained Duty System with Wholetime Duty System staff

All respondents were asked how often they undertook training with their Wholetime Duty System colleagues. Although respondents sometimes (33 per cent), often (11 per cent) or always (two per cent) undertook training with Wholetime Duty System staff, just over one-half reported that they had never (16 per cent) or rarely (39 per cent) undertaken training with Wholetime Duty System colleagues.
Riding appliances with Wholetime Duty System staff

The vast majority (77 per cent) of Retained Duty System personnel had never ridden an appliance that was normally crewed by Wholetime Duty System staff. Almost one-quarter reported that this was because they worked at a Retained Duty System station (23 per cent), or there were no Wholetime Duty System firefighters at their station (10 per cent) or there were no Wholetime Duty System stations near their station (10 per cent).

Thirteen per cent reported that they were not allowed to, or were not required to, ride an appliance with Wholetime Duty System colleagues and 11 per cent of respondents stated that they had never been asked to, or offered the opportunity to, ride an appliance with Wholetime Duty System colleagues. Five per cent reported that their Wholetime Duty System colleagues did not think they were up to the job.

Applying to transfer to the Wholetime Duty System

Retained Duty System personnel were asked if they had applied to transfer to a Wholetime Duty System role since joining the Retained Duty System. The vast majority had not applied to transfer (69 per cent), while one-fifth had applied (21 per cent).

Of those that had not applied to transfer to the Wholetime Duty System, the vast majority (78 per cent) were not interested in joining (at the time of the survey) while the remainder were told they could not transfer (22 per cent).

Of those that applied to transfer to the Wholetime Duty System, almost two-thirds (65 per cent) were unsuccessful, while 22 per cent were successful. Six per cent were either waiting to hear about the outcome of their application or were in the process of making the application (one per cent).

Of those that were not successful in their application to transfer to the Wholetime Duty System, almost two-fifths did not receive any feedback as to the reasons why (39 per cent), while just over one-third reported that there were too many applicants for too few places (35 per cent). However, almost one-quarter were told that Retained Duty System staff were not considered skilled or experienced enough for a Wholetime Duty System role (22 per cent) or did not have the same level/standard of core competence (14 per cent). Finally, one-fifth were told that their application was not good enough (22 per cent), while 17 per cent were not given enough support to make the application.

One comment made by a Retained Duty System respondent about integration with the Wholetime Duty System included:

“I think that it should be easier to transfer from Retained Duty System to wholetime given the experience and training that a lot of Retained Duty System personnel have. Sometimes, I feel that Retained Duty System personnel are looked upon as second class firefighters compared to the wholetime yet a lot of Retained Duty System firefighters have attended more operational incidents than some of their wholetime colleagues.” (Northern Ireland).
Section 8

Officers in charge of stations and units

This section focuses on a series of questions included in the questionnaire, and answered by 753 officers in charge of stations and units, about their experiences of managing aspects of Retained Duty System personnel and activities. In particular, it looks at the existing strength of their station or unit, the challenges faced in recruiting to the Retained Duty System, and the reasons, as well as the steps taken at Fire and Rescue Service and station-level to address these difficulties.

Station strength

Almost two-thirds of station or unit managers (65 per cent) reported that their station was currently ‘under-strength’ or had vacant posts. Although being under-strength does not always mean that ‘pumps are off-the-run’31 it would certainly contribute to an increased number of emergency response incidents that the remaining staff were expected to attend and therefore the amount of commitment required of these staff.

The survey data supported the anecdotal evidence elicited in the earlier stage of the survey and showed that there were many reasons for Retained Duty System fire stations being under-strength. However, the data from station managers showed a common theme emerging across the countries involved in this research. Overall, those station managers who reported that their unit was under-strength said that the main reason for this was an inability to recruit sufficient Retained Duty System staff (73 per cent), despite undertaking a range of activities to address this issue.

However, almost one-half of station managers (45 per cent) reported that some Retained Duty System staff were unable to commit enough cover, while nearly one-third reported that some staff were not able to fulfil their contractual commitments to the Service (32 per cent).

Just over one-fifth of station managers reported that Retained Duty System contracts were not flexible enough (22 per cent), while smaller proportions reported problems with sickness or absence (14 per cent).

Finally, 15 per cent of station managers reported a lack of support and guidance on how to manage availability at their station.

31 ‘Pumps’ are how fire appliances or engines are often referred to by the Fire and Rescue Service. ‘Off-the-run’ describes an appliance that is unavailable for deployment.
Reasons for recruitment difficulties

The questionnaire invited station and unit managers to say why they believed it was difficult to recruit staff to the Retained Duty System.

Three-fifths (61 per cent) believed that there was a lack of local day-time employment near their station while just over one-half (51 per cent) believed that it was as a result of local employers being unwilling to release staff to undertake Retained Duty System duties. Additionally, managers stated that there was a lack of knowledge about the Retained Duty System (41 per cent), while just under one-quarter (24 per cent) believed there was not enough engagement with employers. The 2007 survey of local employers\(^\text{32}\) came up with similar results. For example, it found that 45 per cent of employers that did not employ Retained Duty System staff had not heard of it, while 48 per cent of organisations that did employ Retained Duty System staff had no contact with their Fire and Rescue Service.

Station and unit managers also corroborated the data provided by Retained Duty System firefighters around the issue of personal commitments, with just over two fifths of managers (44 per cent) reporting that either people did not have enough free time to commit, or that family or caring commitments added to the recruitment difficulties (18 per cent).

Finally, nearly a third (30 per cent) believed that the Retained Duty System entry requirements were too high, while smaller proportions believed there was a lack of community spirit (seven per cent) or that their fire station was in the wrong location (five per cent).

This information, as well as country breakdowns of the data, is shown in Table 18 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of local daytime employment near the station</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The recruitment process takes too long</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers unwilling to release staff</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People do not have enough free time to commit to the Retained Duty System</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge about the Retained Duty System</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry requirements to join are too high</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough engagement with local employers</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18: Reasons for Retained Duty System recruitment difficulties *(continued)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family or caring commitments</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of community spirit</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The station is in the wrong location</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Officers in charge of stations or units, 753
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Addressing the issue of under-strength stations

Station and unit managers were asked what their Fire and Rescue Service could do to help address the problems associated with being under-strength.

Just over three-fifths of station or unit managers (63 per cent) believed that their Fire and Rescue Service should engage with more local employers or undertake a local recruitment campaign (63 per cent) to tackle crew shortages at their stations, while almost one-half (49 per cent) felt that their Service should advertise in newspapers, on TV or the radio. In addition to these recruitment activities, a large proportion of station managers (59 per cent) believed that the Service should shorten the recruitment process.

This information, as well as country breakdowns of the data, is shown in Table 19 below.

Table 19: Activities Fire and Rescue Service could do to tackle recruitment difficulties in Retained Duty System stations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage with more local employers</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake a recruitment campaign</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorten the recruitment process</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising in newspapers, TV or radio</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower the Retained Duty System entry requirements</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Officers in charge of a unit or station, 426
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.
Activities undertaken by station managers to tackle under-strength Retained Duty System stations

Despite the additional hours managers worked in their primary employment and the extra hours they committed to their Retained Duty System duties, many station/unit managers also took steps to address local recruitment. The activities undertaken and their relative success at station level are presented in Table 20 below.

Table 20: Activities undertaken by station and unit managers to tackle under-strength Retained Duty System stations and the most successful activities undertaken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Proportion undertaken these tasks</th>
<th>Proportion rating these tasks as successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Station staff approached friends and family</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging with the local community</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station staff run a local campaign</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open days/evenings</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local community events</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging with local employers</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement with local media and radio</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station involved in a countywide or region-wide campaign</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked local parish or council for support</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Officers in charge of stations or units, 753
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.
Section 9

Thinking about leaving the Retained Duty System

This section looks at those Retained Duty System personnel who thought about leaving the Service, the reasons why, if they had discussed these with their Fire and Rescue Service and, if so, the outcomes of the discussions.

Length of service

Respondents were asked how long they expected to stay in the Retained Duty System when they joined and how long they thought they would stay at the time of survey. In most cases they said that, at the time of the survey, they wanted to stay longer than when they first joined. This information is presented in Table 21 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time</th>
<th>When first joined</th>
<th>At the time of survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than five years</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 years</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents, 7,359

Thinking about leaving the Retained Duty System

The data showed that just over two-fifths of current Retained Duty System personnel (41 per cent) had thought about leaving the Service in the preceding twelve months.

An analysis of the data shows that those who were thinking about leaving displayed a distinct set of characteristics, including those: whose family asked them to reduce their Retained Duty System commitment; working in Fire and Rescue Services that were not
supportive in helping them to balance their various commitments; staff who had turned down a promotion in their primary employment; and public sector employees.

Those that were thinking about leaving the Service were asked if they had spoken to anyone about this. The majority had not (57 per cent), while almost one-quarter had spoken to someone at their station (25 per cent) and a smaller proportion had spoken with their immediate supervisor (20 per cent). Finally, those thinking about leaving had also spoken to someone at another station (six per cent), their trade union (three per cent), family or friends (three per cent) or the Fire and Rescue Service personnel/Human Resources department (two per cent).

Reasons given by respondents for not discussing their intentions about leaving the Fire and Rescue Service included the following: they felt no one would be able to do anything about it (37 per cent); they did not want to talk about it (50 per cent); or they did not know who to talk to (10 per cent).

Reasons for wanting to leave the Fire and Rescue Service

Those thinking about leaving did so for a range of different reasons. However, it is interesting to note that some of the reasons stated help to corroborate some issues already raised elsewhere in this report. The reasons are shown in Table 22 opposite.

Almost one-half of respondents (46 per cent) claimed that the reason for wanting to leave was because they felt under-valued by the Service or because of the amount of commitment required of them as members of the Retained Duty System (48 per cent). Linked to this issue, just over one-third (35 per cent) cited family commitments as a reason for wanting to leave or problems around childcare (10 per cent).

Other issues, linked to the job itself, included not being satisfied with the job (34 per cent), that the benefits were not good enough (27 per cent) or that they were being bullied or discriminated against (11 per cent).

Finally, some respondents thought about leaving following changes to their primary employment (nine per cent) or after they moved house or to another area (four per cent).
Table 22: Reasons for wanting to leave the Fire and Rescue Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Eng</th>
<th>Scot</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The amount of commitment required</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt under-valued</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family commitments</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was not satisfied with my job (as a Retained Duty</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System member of staff)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The benefits were not good enough</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was being bullied/ discriminated against</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with childcare arrangements</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had to change my main job/employer</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I moved house/moved to another area</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents thinking about leaving the Service, 7,359
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.
Section 10

Survey of leavers

As part of the research, a survey of those who had recently left the Retained Duty System was conducted.

A total of 1,889 questionnaires were sent to Fire and Rescue Services in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland for onward distribution. In England, questionnaires were sent to the last known address of former Retained Duty System personnel who left the Fire and Rescue Service in 2009. Given the smaller numbers of personnel that had left the Retained Duty System in Scotland and Northern Ireland, questionnaires were sent to the last known address of Scottish Retained Duty System personnel that left between 2007 and 2009, while in Northern Ireland questionnaires were sent to the address of those that left the Retained Duty System between 2005 and 2009.

A total of 217 completed questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 11 per cent, with 93 from English leavers (giving a response rate of six per cent), 96 questionnaires from Scottish Retained Duty System leavers (21 per cent), and eight Northern Irish leavers (eight per cent). A further 20 responses were received from leavers who did not state the name of their Fire and Rescue Service.

Profile of leavers

The profile of the respondents is shown in Table 23 below.

| Table 23: Profile of those leaving the Fire and Rescue Service |
|------------------|------------------|
| Characteristic   | All              |
| **Country**      |                  |
| England          | 43%              |
| Scotland         | 44%              |
| Northern Ireland | 4%               |
| Not known/stated | 9%               |
| **Gender**       |                  |
| Men              | 87%              |
| Women            | 8%               |
| Not stated       | 5%               |
Table 23: Profile of those leaving the Fire and Rescue Service (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority ethnic</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 35 years</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 45 years</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 to 55 years</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 years and over</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firefighter</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew manager or commander</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch manager or watch commander</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year joined the Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 1980</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981 – 1990</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991 – 2000</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 – 2009</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Reasons for joining the Retained Duty System

The reasons for wanting to join the Retained Duty System closely matched those given by the current Retained Duty System workforce. The respondents typically wanted a job that the community valued or wanted to make sure their local Retained Duty System fire station did not close. In addition, large numbers of respondents thought the Retained Duty System would be an exciting job or they liked the image of a firefighter. This information is presented in Table 24 overleaf.
Table 24: Reasons for joining the Retained Duty System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wanted a job the community valued</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought it would be an exciting/varied job</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to make sure my local Retained Duty System station was not understaffed/did not close</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a relative/friend in the Fire and Rescue Service</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked the image of being a firefighter</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted the income</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to be a wholetime firefighter, but there were no vacancies</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Primary employment

The vast majority of respondents (96 per cent) had a primary employer when they worked in the Retained Duty System – working for one or more employers (69 per cent) outside the Fire and Rescue Service; were self-employed (16 per cent); or worked elsewhere in the Fire and Rescue Service (eight per cent). The remainder of the sample were either unemployed (three per cent) or had full time caring responsibilities (one per cent). Those that worked in primary employment tended to work in smaller organisations, in the private sector and in production jobs. This information is shown in Table 25 below.

Table 25: Primary employer profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity or voluntary organisation</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/don’t know</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer size (number of employees)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 9</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 24</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 49</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 99</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 to 249</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 to 499</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 or more</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 25: Primary employer profile (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and storage</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale/retail trade, repair of motor vehicles</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human health and social work activities</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration, defence, education</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas, steam &amp; air conditioning</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and support service activities</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply, sewerage, waste management</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, including financial services, real estate and mining</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Managing Retained Duty System work and personal commitments

Around two-thirds of respondents found their commitment to the Service ‘challenging’ (70 per cent) and either ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ difficult to balance their Retained Duty System and personal commitments (64 per cent), while two-fifths found it difficult to balance their Retained Duty System and primary employment commitments (41 per cent). In addition, 50 per cent of respondents reported that their family had asked them to reduce their Retained Duty System cover and almost three-fifths (59 per cent) said they had felt under pressure in balancing Retained Duty System duties with work and personal commitments.

### Reasons for leaving the Retained Duty System

Respondents were asked about their reasons for leaving the Retained Duty System.

Almost one-half (45 per cent) reported that they left because their Retained Duty System duties interfered with their personal life, while one-quarter left because it interfered with their primary employment. Almost one-half of respondents left for neither of those reasons (45 per cent).\(^{33}\)

Respondents were then asked to choose from a list of possible reasons as to why they left the Service. Mainly they left because of the amount of commitment required to do the job (32 per cent) and because of family commitments (23 per cent).

\(^{33}\) Respondents were able to tick more than one response, so the total adds up to over 100 per cent.
In addition smaller numbers of respondents left the Service due to either a change in their primary employment (17 per cent) or because they moved house or moved to another area (12 per cent). However, a large proportion of respondents were unhappy with working in the Service, either because they felt under-valued (25 per cent), were not satisfied with the job (21 per cent), were being bullied or discriminated against (17 per cent), or were unable to transfer to the Wholetime Duty System (11 per cent).

Finally, almost one-quarter of respondents had retired (18 per cent).

Information on reasons for leaving is shown in Table 26 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The amount of commitment required</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt under-valued</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family commitments</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was not satisfied with my job (as a Retained Duty System member of staff)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was being bullied/ discriminated against</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had to change my main job/employer</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill-health</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I moved house / moved to another area</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunities to transfer to the Wholetime Duty System</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The benefits were not good enough</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunities for training and development</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with childcare arrangements</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey of Retained Duty System Leavers in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland, ERC 2010. Base: All leavers who left the Service for a reason other than retirement, 175
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Talking about leaving the Fire and Rescue Service

Those that left the Service were asked if they had spoken to anyone about leaving, and just over three-quarters had spoken to at least one person (77 per cent). In the 2008 firefighter survey that figure for the Retained Duty System in England was 60 per cent.34

Those that did not speak to anyone reported that they did not think anyone would be able to do anything about the reasons for wanting to leave (31 per cent). Almost one-quarter (24 per cent) did not want to talk about it and smaller proportions either did not know who to talk to (seven per cent) or had

already decided to leave (five per cent). In addition to these reasons, a wide range of other, different, reasons were given for not speaking to anyone about leaving the Service, including that respondents were in hospital for a long period, or had ‘no choice’ but to leave.

Where respondents did speak to someone about leaving the Service, this tended to be with Fire and Rescue Service personnel either at their station or headquarters, while much smaller proportions tended to speak with the trade union or representative body or family and friends. This information is presented in Table 27 below.

### Table 27: The person spoken to by Retained Duty System personnel thinking about leaving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>All 2010 survey</th>
<th>All 2008 English survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate supervisor</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone at my station</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel/ Human Resources department</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone at another station</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union/ representative body</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Manager</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/friends</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station manager</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare department</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divisional officer</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District station officer</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area commander</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey of Retained Duty System Leavers in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland, ERC 2010. Base: All leavers who left the Service for a reason other than retirement, 175

Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

**Exit interviews**

Sixty one per cent of respondents did not receive an exit interview when they left the Service. Thirty three per cent did and six per cent could not recall if they had received an interview.

Most exit interviews were carried out on leaving or shortly before leaving the Retained Duty System (for 86 per cent of those who were interviewed) while 14 per cent received it sometime after leaving.
The main reasons respondents did not receive an interview were: they were not offered one (79 per cent); they asked for one but did not receive it (four per cent); their station closed (two per cent) or they did not know they could have one (two per cent). In contrast, 11 per cent did not want an exit interview.

Recognition on leaving the Fire and Rescue Service

Almost three-fifths of those that left the Service received some recognition for working for the Retained Duty System (57 per cent). Typically the recognition they received tended to come from their station colleagues in the form of a present, a formal recognition from their Service (i.e. a thank you letter) or an event arranged by their colleagues or the Service. This information is presented in Table 28 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A present from station personnel</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A “thank you” letter from the Fire and Rescue Service</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A certificate</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A present from the Fire and Rescue Service</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A medal</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A financial reward</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An event at the station</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An event off-station</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal at local restaurant</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A party</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An event at the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey of Retained Duty System Leavers in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland, ERC 2010. Base: All leavers who left the Service who received some recognition for their service, 124
Notes: Column does not add to 100 per cent as respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Making the Retained Duty System a better place to work

Leavers were asked what they felt would make the Retained Duty System a better place to work. The responses to these questions echoed those given by current serving staff, including that staff employed on the Retained Duty System required more understanding from senior Fire and Rescue Service management, and that the commitment to the Retained Duty System was a significant one which required Fire and Rescue Services to help staff manage work-life balance and recruit more staff on Retained Duty System stations. Respondents also reported that Retained Duty System remuneration and benefits needed to be improved, along with more and better training and better communication between headquarters, senior managers and Retained Duty System staff.

Respondents also reported that the issue of an ‘us and them’ culture and being valued by Wholetime Duty System colleagues was important, as was the opportunity to transfer to the Wholetime Duty System. Nonetheless, despite these comments, a large number of respondents reported, unprompted, that they had enjoyed the job and the experience of being a Retained Duty System firefighter.
Section 11

Appendix One

Questionnaires shown on following pages
Dear Sir/Madam

A SURVEY OF RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM PERSONNEL

The Department for Communities and Local Government, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit/Scottish Resilience, have jointly commissioned Employment Research and Consulting (ERC) to undertake a survey of all personnel currently employed on the Retained Duty System (RDS) and those who left the Fire and Rescue Service recently.

The views of RDS firefighters were taken on board as part of the last major review of the duty system in 2004. That study concluded that issues such as social change in areas served by the RDS, changing motivations and competing demands on people’s time had an effect on availability and put pressure on Fire and Rescue Services that rely on the RDS.

This new survey is a broad examination of the RDS. It will look at how the role may have changed in recent years; whether demographic change in areas served by the RDS, and the demands of modern-day living, may be having an impact. We want to know about the issues that affect the people employed on the RDS and the views of those responsible for managing the duty system. The survey will also look at how the Service is tackling RDS recruitment and retention and managing the pressures.

The survey will provide up-to-date information on the RDS (i.e. a profile of the workforce); the nature of your employment outside the Fire and Rescue Service, your work-life balance, your job in the RDS, and issues linked to training, development and promotion. This survey will provide information that will help to shape the Retained Duty System for the future. To get an accurate picture your contribution and your views as a member of the Fire and Rescue Service are very important.

We would be grateful if you would complete the questionnaire attached to this letter. It should take no longer than 30 minutes. We want to reassure you that:

- All responses to this questionnaire will be anonymous;
- No questionnaire answers or comments will be attributable;
- Only the company undertaking the survey will have access to individual responses;
- Individual responses will not be shared with anybody else, including your Fire & Rescue Service.

ICM, the company undertaking the data processing for this project, is a registered data controller under the Data Protection Act. When you have completed your questionnaire please return it directly to us in the pre-paid envelope [or seal it in the pre-paid envelope]
and hand it back to your station manager]. This will ensure that your responses are kept confidential. Once we have received your questionnaire it will be analysed along with those received from other RDS personnel.

FOR YOUR VIEWS TO COUNT, PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE BY TUESDAY 6th APRIL IN THE FREEPOST ENVELOPE ENCLOSED.

If you have any questions about completing this questionnaire, or if there are any issues you would like to discuss with regard to data protection for this project, please contact Michael Thewlis at ERC on 07900 954 129.

Thank you in advance for your time and help with this important study.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

Michael Thewlis
IMPORTANT NOTE

This questionnaire will be processed using a scanner. Help us by completing it carefully using a black pen. Mark the answer option boxes with a ☑ and not a tick. If you make a mistake, shade the box ✗ and mark the correct box(es).
6. How long did it take between applying to join the RDS and being accepted?
   □□ months □□ weeks
   □ I don’t know/can’t remember

7. How long did it take from being accepted into the RDS before you were allowed to attend incidents?
   □□ months □□ weeks
   □ I don’t know/can’t remember

8. Apart from working for the RDS do you do any other paid work?
   SELECT □ ONE ONLY
   □ Yes, I work elsewhere in the Fire & Rescue Service – go to Q13
   □ Yes, I work for one or more other employers – go to Q9
   □ Yes, I am self-employed – go to Q11
   □ Yes, other please state, then go to Q9
   □ No, I am unemployed – go to Q29
   □ No, I am a student – go to Q29
   □ No, I have full time caring responsibilities (eg looking after a relative at home) – go to Q29
   □ No, I am retired – go to Q29
   □ No, other please state, then go to Q29

9. This section of questions asks about your primary employment – this is the work that you do outside the RDS. If you work for more than one employer, please answer the following questions about your main employer.

Is your primary employer...

SELECT □ ONE ONLY
   □ In the private sector
   □ In the public sector (eg a local authority, government agency etc)
   □ A charity or voluntary organisation
   □ Other please state

10. Is your primary employer a...
    SELECT □ ONE ONLY
        □ Local organisation
        □ National organisation
        □ International organisation

11. Approximately how many people work at the site at which you are based?
    SELECT □ ONE ONLY
        □ 1 to 9
        □ 10 to 24
        □ 25 to 49
        □ 50 to 99
        □ 100 to 249
        □ 250 to 499
        □ 500 or more
        □ Don’t know

12. Please tell us what type of business takes place where you work (for example food manufacturer, estate agent, clothes retailer, supermarket etc).

13. Please tell us your job title and briefly describe your role.
    If you are self-employed please describe your role.
14. When do you usually work in your primary employment?

SELECT ☐ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Week days  ☐ Week nights
☐ Weekend days  ☐ Weekend nights

15. On average how many hours per week (excluding meal breaks) do you usually work for all your employer/s (ie outside the Fire and Rescue Service), or yourself, if self-employed?

Number of hours ☐ ☐ ☐

16. Does your Fire and Rescue Service require you to tell them about the number of hours you work for all your employer/s (ie outside the Fire and Rescue Service)?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Don’t know

17. Which of the following, if any, best describes your ability to attend calls when you are at your primary employment?

SELECT ☑ ONE ONLY
☐ I am released to attend calls at anytime – go to Q18
☐ I am released to attend calls only at certain times – go to Q18
☐ I am only available for calls when I am not at my primary employment – go to Q19

18. If you attend an emergency call when working in your primary employment, which of the following happens?

SELECT ☐ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ My primary employer pays me for the entire time I am at the call
☐ My primary employer pays me for some of the time I am at the call
☐ My primary employer does not pay me at all for the time I am at the call
☐ My FRS reimburses me for lost pay (over and above the call out payment)
☐ I am self-employed/Not applicable
☐ Other, please state
19. Please tell us for which of the following.....

(a) You hold a recognised qualification
(b) Your Fire & Rescue Service is aware that you have this qualification(s)
(c) The skill(s) you have is useful as a member of the RDS

SELECT ☒ ALL THAT APPLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Hold a recognised qualification</th>
<th>(b) My FRS is aware of my qualifications</th>
<th>(c) This skill is useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Auto-mechanic</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Construction/building</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Carpenter/joiner</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Electrician</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Engineer</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. Plumber</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please state</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii. ___________________________</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii. ___________________________</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DRIVING IN YOUR PRIMARY EMPLOYMENT

20. Do you hold a current LGV driving licence?
   ☐ Yes – go to Q21
   ☐ No – go to Q25

21. Do you drive a vehicle in your primary employment which brings you within the scope of the EC Drivers' Hours Rules?
   ☐¹ Yes – go to Q22
   ☐² No – go to Q25
   ☐³ Don’t know – go to Q22

22. Does your Fire & Rescue Service require you to provide the tachograph-recorded hours you drive in your primary employment?
   ☐ Yes – go to Q24
   ☐ No – go to Q23

23. Does your Fire & Rescue Service monitor the hours you drive in some other way?
   ☐ No
   ☐ Don’t know
   ☐ Yes – Please give details

24. Has your primary employer allowed you to take on a different role or reduce driving time to enable you to carry out your RDS duties and meet the EC Drivers’ Hours Rules?

   SELECT ☒ ONE ONLY
   ☐ Yes – all the time
   ☐ Yes – some of the time
   ☐ No
   ☐ I have never asked to change hours
25. Is your current primary employer aware of your RDS role?
   - Yes – go to Q27
   - No – go to Q26
   - I am self-employed – go to Q29

26. If no, why is that?
   SELECT ‼️ ALL THAT APPLY
   - I undertake my RDS duties outside my normal working hours
   - I do not need to tell my employer
   - I do not want my employer to know
   - I only recently started working for my primary employer
   - Other reason, please state

27. When was the last time that you updated your employer release agreement?
   SELECT ‼️ ALL THE APPLY
   - After my duties with my Fire & Rescue Service changed
   - After my personal circumstances changed (eg I moved house, changed primary employer, etc.)
   - My Fire & Rescue Service does not use an employer release agreement
   - The last time my Fire & Rescue Service asked me to
   - I have never updated my employer release agreement
   - Can’t remember

28. Thinking about the work you do for the RDS, how do you think that your primary employer has benefited?
   SELECT ‼️ ALL THAT APPLY
   - I am able to provide advice on health and safety related issues
   - I am able to provide advice on fire safety
   - I have become a first-aider
   - It has improved my managerial skills
   - My confidence has improved
   - I am a better team player
   - My ability to learn new skills has improved
   - My problem-solving skills have improved
   - My primary employer has not benefited at all
   - Other, please state
29. Which of the following best describes your RDS contract?

SELECT ONE ONLY
- 100% retainer fee
- 75% retainer fee
- Other percentage scheme, write in the boxes here
- Other scheme, such as front-loaded salary, commitment based payment etc. Please give details

30. When are you typically available to work for the RDS?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY
- Week days
- Week nights
- Weekend days
- Weekend nights

31. Have you signed a waiver to opt-out of the 48-hour maximum working week under the Working Time Regulations?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY
- Yes – with my primary employer
- Yes – with my Fire & Rescue Service
- Neither

32. Over and above emergency response which of the following do you provide or undertake?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY
- Community fire safety
- Mass decontamination
- Co-responding
- Urban search and rescue
- Water rescue or flood rescue
- High volume pumping
- Operating/crewing special appliances
- Other please state

33. In a typical week, how many positive (actual working) hours have you provided to your Fire & Rescue Service in each of the following categories?

- Emergency response
- Training
- Community Fire Safety
- Other, please state

- Emergency response
- Training
- Community Fire Safety
- Other, please state

- Emergency response
- Training
- Community Fire Safety
- Other, please state
34. Would you consider providing more positive hours to your Fire & Rescue Service in any of the following areas?

SELECT ✓ ALL THAT APPLY
- I do not want to or can’t provide any more hours to the Fire & Rescue Service
- Emergency response
- Co-responding
- Weekly training
- Pre-arranged training periods
- Community fire safety
- Administration
- Maintenance
- Other please state

35. Which of the following specialist vehicles do you drive or ride?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drive</th>
<th>Ride</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGV sized pumping appliance</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small fires pumping vehicle</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerial appliance</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescue vehicle</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water carrier</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-road vehicle</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please state below</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36. Please tell us which of the following policies or guidance.....

(a) Does your Fire & Rescue Service have?
(b) Have you seen?
(c) Have you received training on?

SELECT ✓ ALL THAT APPLY
- Bullying & harassment
- Driver Hours Regulations
- Equality & diversity
- Health & safety
- Maternity & paternity
- Sickness absence
- Working Time Regulations
- Transfer to wholetime from RDS

(a) My FRS has a policy or guidance on this
(b) I have seen the policy or guidance
(c) I have received training on this
37. Do you think that communication between HQ/management and your station could be improved?

☐ Yes – go to Q38
☐ No – go to Q39
☐ Don’t know – go to Q39

38. What, if anything, would you recommend to improve communication between HQ/management and your station?

39. Using the scale, please state how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements about working for the RDS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither disagree or agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. I am happy at work</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. I feel an equal part of the team</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. I am invited to socialise with my colleagues</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. I am thinking about leaving the service</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. I find the work challenging</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. I feel valued by my colleagues</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii. I feel valued by my line manager</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii. I feel valued by my FRS</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix. I feel valued by my wholetime colleagues</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x. If asked, I would speak highly of my FRS</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xi. I find the commitment to the RDS challenging</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE RDS AND YOUR WORK-LIFE BALANCE

40. Have you ever turned down a job or promotion in order to remain in the RDS?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

41. How easy or difficult do you find balancing your commitment to the RDS with your personal time?

SELECT ☐ ONE ONLY
☐ Very difficult
☐ Somewhat difficult
☐ Neither difficult nor easy
☐ Somewhat easy
☐ Very easy
42. How supportive is your Fire & Rescue Service in helping you to balance your RDS and personal commitments?

SELECT □ ONE ONLY
- Very unsupportive
- Somewhat unsupportive
- Neither unsupportive nor supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Very supportive

43. What could be done to improve balancing your commitments to the RDS and your personal time?

SELECT □ ALL THAT APPLY
- Nothing
- More crew at my station
- Scheduled rest periods (ie regular time-off from RDS commitments)
- Phased alerters to call only those firefighters needed to respond
- Support for child care
- Better communication with my family about how long I might be detained at incidents
- Electronic availability systems
- Reduce the on-call hours
- Other please state

44. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about working in the RDS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither disagree or agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. My primary employer has asked me to reduce the amount of RDS cover I provide</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. I am not able to do the amount of overtime I would like to in my primary employment because of my RDS commitments</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. My family would like me to reduce the amount of RDS cover I provide</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. I have enough time to do the things I want to despite my RDS commitments</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. I do not feel under pressure balancing my work, family and RDS commitments</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
45. How easy or difficult have you found balancing your commitments to the RDS with your primary employment?

SELECT ONE ONLY
- Very difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Neither difficult nor easy
- Somewhat easy
- Very easy
- I am not in primary employment – go to Q48

46. How supportive is your Fire & Rescue Service in helping you to balance your RDS and primary employment commitments?

SELECT ONE ONLY
- Very unsupportive
- Somewhat unsupportive
- Neither unsupportive nor supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Very supportive

47. What could be done to improve balancing your commitments to the RDS and your primary employment?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY
- Nothing
- More crew at my station
- Better understanding of RDS by my primary employer
- Better communication with my primary employer about how long I might be detained at incidents
- Electronic availability systems
- Reduce the on-call hours
- Scheduled rest periods
- Other please state

48. What, if anything, limits your ability to provide more cover?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY
- Nothing limits my ability to provide more cover
- My work for my primary employer
- My family commitments
- My leisure/personal commitments
- Fire & Rescue Service policy
- Other please state

49. In the past three years, please tell us whether the number of positive hours you provide to the RDS has changed for any of the following.

- Standby cover
- Training attended
- Community Safety Duties
- Emergency Response

SELECT
- Increased hours
- Decreased hours
- Not applicable

50. Why did the positive hours you provide to the RDS change?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY
- My work commitments
- My family commitments
- My leisure/personal commitments
- My Fire & Rescue Service/station needed me to
- Other please state
51. When you started working for the RDS, did you follow a structured training programme?
- Yes – go to Q52
- No – go to Q54
- Don’t know/unsure – go to Q54

52. How long did this structured training take to complete?
- ☐ ☐ years ☐ ☐ months ☐ ☐ weeks

53. Where did this structured training programme take place?
SELECT ☐ ALL THAT APPLY
- Locally/at your station
- Your Fire & Rescue Service’s training centre
- Another Fire & Rescue Service’s training centre
- National fire training college (at Moreton-in-Marsh or Gullane)
- Other, please state

54. Which of the following have you received in the past 12 months?
SELECT ☐ ALL THE APPLY
- A performance appraisal
- A training needs analysis
- Neither

55. Is there a system in place to ensure your identified development needs are met?
- Yes – go to Q56
- No – go to Q57
- Don’t know/unsure – go to Q56

56. Have your previously identified development needs been met?
SELECT ☐ ONE ONLY
- Yes
- No
- Undertaking or plans in place for appropriate development
- Don’t know/unsure

57. To what extent do you disagree or agree that the training you receive meets your needs as a member of RDS personnel?
SELECT ☐ ONE ONLY
- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

58. Is on-going training delivered at times and places that are convenient to you – for example, to accommodate your personal circumstances?
- Yes
- No
- Don’t know/unsure

59. How could the provision of training be improved at your Fire & Rescue Service?
60. How often, if at all, is your training undertaken alongside wholetime colleagues?

SELECT ONE ONLY

☐ Never
☐ Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Always

61. Which of the following have you been given the support to undertake by your Fire & Rescue Service?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

☐ NVQ Level 1-3
☐ NVQ Level 4
☐ NVQ Level 5
☐ Operations in the Community (S)NVQ Level 3
☐ Watch management (S)NVQ Level 3
☐ Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)
☐ 12 week development course over three years (full-time equivalent)
☐ GCSE(s) (or CSE/GCE/O level(s))
☐ A level(s)
☐ Degree (ie BA, BSc)
☐ Masters degree/PhD
☐ Diploma
☐ Foundation degree
☐ Other please state

☐ I have not been given the opportunity to undertake any of the above

PROMOTION IN THE RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM

62. Does your Fire & Rescue Service allow RDS staff to sit Assessment Development Centres (ADC) for a higher role?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Don’t know

63. Have you applied for promotion since you joined the RDS?

☐ Yes – go to Q64
☐ No – go to Q67

64. If you have applied for promotion which role(s) did you apply for?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

☐ Crew manager or crew commander
☐ Watch manager or watch commander
☐ Other, please state

65. If you were unsuccessful, did you get feedback?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Did not ask for feedback
☐ Not applicable
66. Which of the following did you undertake when you applied for promotion?

SELECT ☐ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Assessment Development Centre
☐ Interview
☐ Operational competence assessment
☐ Promotion board
☐ Other, please state

Please go to question 68

67. If you have not applied for promotion, why was that?

SELECT ☐ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ I don’t have enough experience or have not been in the service long enough
☐ I am happy in my current role
☐ The amount of admin involved in a higher role
☐ I am concerned I’ll be treated differently by my colleagues if I am successful
☐ I am not supported by my line manager
☐ There are no vacancies/opportunities
☐ Other, please state

INTEGRATION WITH WHOLETIME DUTY SYSTEM

68. In the past 12 months how often have you ridden an appliance normally crewed by wholetime duty system staff?

☐☐☐ approximate number of times in past 12 months – go to Q70

☐ I have never ridden an appliance usually crewed by wholetime duty system staff in the past 12 months – go to Q69

69. If you have not ridden an appliance normally crewed by wholetime duty system staff in the past 12 months, why do you think that is?

70. Have you applied to transfer to a wholetime duty system role?

SELECT ☐ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Yes – within my Fire & Rescue Service
☐ Yes – to another Fire & Rescue Service
☐ No, I was told I couldn’t – go to Q73
☐ No, I am not interested at the moment – go to Q73
☐ Other, please state

71. What was the outcome of your application to transfer to a wholetime duty system role?

☐ I was successful – go to Q73
☐ I was unsuccessful – go to Q72
☐ Other, please state – go to Q73
72. Why do you think your application to transfer to a wholetime duty system role was unsuccessful?

SELECT ☐ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ I do not know – I did not receive any feedback
☐ My application was not good enough
☐ Too many applicants for too few places
☐ I was not given enough support or encouragement
☐ I was told that I did not have the same level/standard of core competencies
☐ RDS staff are not considered skilled or experienced enough
☐ There were no vacancies
☐ Other, please state

QUESTIONS FOR OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF A STATION OR UNIT

73. Only answer Q73 – Q86 if you are an officer in charge of a station or unit. If you are not an officer in charge of a station or unit, go to Q87

Is your unit or station currently understrength?
☐ Yes ☐ No – go to Q76

74. If your unit or station is understrength, why do you think that is?

SELECT ☐ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Some RDS staff cannot commit to enough cover
☐ Some RDS staff are not fulfilling their contractual commitments
☐ Some RDS staff who respond never get a place on the appliance
☐ RDS contracts are not flexible enough
☐ Sickness or absence
☐ Lack of support/guidance to manage availability
☐ Unable to recruit sufficient RDS staff
☐ Other please state
75. If your station or unit is under-strength, what would you recommend that your Fire & Rescue Service do to address that?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Engage with more local employers
☐ Undertake a recruitment campaign
☐ Advertising in newspapers, TV or radio
☐ Lower the RDS entry requirements
☐ Shorten the recruitment process
☐ Other, please state

76. If your station or unit is or has been under-strength, what steps has your station taken to address that?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Engaging with the local community
☐ Engaging with local employers
☐ Station staff have run a local campaign
☐ The station has been involved in a county-wide or region-wide campaign
☐ Engagement with local media and radio
☐ Station staff have approached friends and family members
☐ We have asked the local parish or council to support us
☐ Open days/evenings
☐ Local community events
☐ Other please state
☐ None of the above/not applicable – go to Q78

77. Which of the steps in Q76 you have taken have been the most successful?

Please write in the numbers from the list above ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

78. Which of the following times, if any, does your unit or station find it difficult to provide or maintain RDS cover?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Weekdays
☐ Week nights
☐ Weekend days
☐ Weekend nights
☐ We do not find it difficult

79. What are the barriers to RDS recruitment in your local community?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Lack of community spirit
☐ People do not have enough free time to commit to the RDS
☐ Family or caring commitments
☐ Lack of local day-time employment near the station
☐ The station is in the wrong location
☐ Not enough engagement with local employers
☐ Lack of knowledge about the RDS
☐ Employers unwilling to release staff
☐ Entry requirements to join are too high
☐ The recruitment process takes too long
☐ None of the above
☐ Other, please state
80. Which of the following apply at your station?

SELECT ☑ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ RDS personnel are used to cover shortages on wholetime appliances
☐ Wholetime Duty System personnel are used to cover shortages on RDS appliances
☐ RDS personnel are used to cover shortages on other RDS stations
☐ RDS personnel are able to ride wholetime appliances to gain more experience
☐ None of the above.

81. Are wholetime and RDS personnel integrated at your station/unit?

☐ Yes – go to Q83
☐ No – go to Q82

82. In your opinion, why are RDS and wholetime Duty System personnel not integrated?

83. Which of the following does your Fire & Rescue Service do to keep in touch with primary employers?

SELECT ☑ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ We do not keep in touch
☐ Open days at the station
☐ Meetings with officers or other RDS personnel
☐ Fire & Rescue Service publication/newsletter
☐ Letters
☐ Other, please state

84. Which of the following does the Fire & Rescue Service do to keep in touch with families of RDS personnel?

SELECT ☑ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ My Fire & Rescue Service does not keep in touch with my family
☐ I do not have any family or dependents
☐ Open days at the station
☐ Meetings with officers or other RDS personnel
☐ Fire & Rescue Service publication/newsletter
☐ Letters
☐ Medal presentation
☐ Senior officers attending social functions
☐ Other, please state

85. Do you formally record training competence of RDS personnel? For example, Personal Development Record (PDR) or training record.

SELECT ☑ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Yes – we ask RDS staff to record their own training competence
☐ Yes – the managers keep a record of training competence
☐ No – go to Q87
☐ Don’t know/unsure – go to Q87

86. In what way is training competence recorded?

SELECT ☑ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ In a manual or paper record
☐ Electronically
☐ Don’t know/unsure
☐ Other, please state
LEAVING OR THINKING ABOUT LEAVING

87. Thinking back to when you first joined the RDS, how long did you expect to stay in the service?
SELECT □ ONE ONLY
☐ Less than five years
☐ 5 – 10 years
☐ 11 – 20 years
☐ More than 20 years
☐ Don’t know

88. In total, how long do you expect to stay in the RDS now (from the time you joined)?
SELECT □ ONE ONLY
☐ Less than five years
☐ 5 – 10 years
☐ 11 – 20 years
☐ More than 20 years
☐ Don’t know

89. Have you thought about leaving the Fire & Rescue Service in the past 12 months?
☐ Yes
☐ No – go to Q94

90. If you have thought about leaving, why was that?
SELECT □ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ I moved house/moved to another area
☐ I had to change my main job/employer
☐ My main employer relocated
☐ I was not satisfied with my job (as an RDS member of staff)
☐ I felt under-valued
☐ Ill-health
☐ I was being bullied/discriminated against
☐ The benefits are not good enough
☐ Family commitments
☐ Problems with childcare arrangements
☐ The amount of commitment required
☐ Other – please state

91. Did you talk to anyone in the Fire & Rescue Service when you were thinking about leaving?
SELECT □ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ No – please go to Q93
☐ Yes – my immediate supervisor
☐ Yes – someone at my station
☐ Yes – someone at another station
☐ Yes – Personnel/HR department
☐ Yes – my trade union/representative body
☐ Yes – Someone else – please state

92. What was the outcome of this discussion?

PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 94

93. If you did not talk to someone about leaving, why was that?
SELECT □ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Did not think anyone would be able to do anything
☐ Didn’t know who to talk to
☐ Didn’t want to talk about it
☐ Don’t know
☐ Other, please state
YOUR FINAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SERVICE

94. What do you think would improve the Fire & Rescue Service for RDS personnel to make it a better place to work?

95. If there is anything else you would like to add about your experiences of working for the RDS, please write it here.

DEMOGRAPHICS

This final section of the survey asks a few more questions about you. These are important questions that will allow us to see how different types of people have answered the survey. Please remember, all the information you give here will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

96. Are you …
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

97. How old are you?
- ☐ 17 to 24 years
- ☐ 25 to 35 years
- ☐ 36 to 45 years
- ☐ 46 to 55 years
- ☐ 56 to 65 years
- ☐ 66 years & over

98. Which of the following, if any, do you have caring responsibilities for?
- SELECT ☒ ALL THAT APPLY
- ☐ Children aged 16 and under
- ☐ Disabled children aged 18 and under
- ☐ Adults, such as your parents

99. What is your current status?
- ☐ I am single
- ☐ I am married, in a civil partnership or living with a partner
- ☐ I am divorced
- ☐ Other – please state

100. Which one of the following best describes your religion?
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ None
- ☐ Not stated
- ☐ Other, please state

101. What academic qualifications did you have when you joined the RDS?
- SELECT ☒ ALL THAT APPLY
- ☐ No formal qualifications
- ☐ NVQ Level 1-3
- ☐ NVQ Level 4
- ☐ NVQ Level 5
- ☐ GCSE (or CSE/GCE/O level(s))
- ☐ A level(s)
- ☐ Degree (ie BA, BSc)
- ☐ Masters degree/PhD
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Foundation degree
- ☐ Other, please state
102. What academic qualifications do you have now?

SELECT □ ALL THAT APPLY

☐ No formal qualifications
☐ NVQ Level 1-3
☐ NVQ Level 4
☐ NVQ Level 5
☐ GCSE (or CSE/GCE/O level(s))
☐ A level(s)
☐ Degree (ie BA, BSc)
☐ Masters degree/PhD
☐ Diploma
☐ Foundation degree
☐ Other, please state

103. Do you consider yourself to have a disability (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act)?

The Disability Discrimination Act defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

☐ Yes – go to Q104
☐ No – go to Q106

104. If yes, does your Fire & Rescue Service know about your disability?

☐ Yes – go to Q105
☐ No – go to Q106

105. If yes, has your Fire & Rescue Service made reasonable adjustments to allow you to undertake your RDS role?

☐ Yes
☐ No

106. Which one of the following best describes your ethnic origin?

White
☐ British
☐ Irish
☐ Other

Mixed
☐ White and Black Caribbean
☐ White and Black African
☐ White and Asian
☐ Other

Asian or Asian British
☐ Indian
☐ Pakistani
☐ Bangladeshi
☐ Other

Black or Black British
☐ Caribbean
☐ African
☐ Other

Other ethnic groups
☐ Chinese
☐ Irish traveller
☐ Other – please state
☐ Prefer not to say

107. Which one of the following best describes your sexuality?

☐ Bisexual
☐ Gay or lesbian
☐ Heterosexual
☐ Not stated
Many thanks for taking part in this survey.

Please be assured that none of the answers you have given will be given to your FRS or any other person.

Please place your questionnaire in the envelope provided, seal it and return it to:

Fieldwork UK – RDS Survey
5th Floor Block 2
Elizabeth House
39 York Road
LONDON SE1 7NQ
Section 12

Appendix Two

Questionnaires shown overleaf
Dear Sir/Madam

A SURVEY OF RECENT RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM PERSONNEL LEAVERS

The Department for Communities and Local Government, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit/Scottish Resilience, have jointly commissioned Employment Research and Consulting (ERC) to undertake a survey of all personnel currently employed on the Retained Duty System (RDS) and those who left the Fire and Rescue Service recently.

The views of RDS firefighters were taken on board as part of the last major review of the duty system in 2004. That study concluded that issues such as social change in areas served by the RDS, changing motivations and competing demands on people’s time had an effect on availability and put pressure on Fire and Rescue Services that rely on the RDS.

This new survey is a broad examination of the RDS. It will look at how the role may have changed in recent years; whether demographic change in areas served by the RDS, and the demands of modern-day living, may be having an impact on those currently employed as well as those that have recently left the Service.

The survey will provide up-to-date information on those currently employed by the RDS as well as those who have recently left; the nature of RDS employment outside the Fire and Rescue Service, work-life balance and issues linked to training, development and promotion. This survey will provide information that will help to shape the Retained Duty System for the future. To get an accurate picture your contribution and your views as a former member of the Fire and Rescue Service are very important.

We would be grateful if you would complete the questionnaire attached to this letter. It should take no longer than 15 minutes. We want to reassure you that:

- All responses to this questionnaire will be anonymous;
- No questionnaire answers or comments will be attributable;
- Only the company undertaking the survey will have access to individual responses;
- Individual responses will not be shared with anybody else, including your previous Fire & Rescue Service.

ICM, the company undertaking the data processing for this project, is a registered data controller under the Data Protection Act. When you have completed your questionnaire please return it directly to us in the pre-paid envelope. This will ensure that your responses are kept confidential. Once we have received your questionnaire it will be analysed along with those received from other former RDS personnel.
FOR YOUR VIEWS TO COUNT, PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE BY TUESDAY 6th APRIL IN THE FREEPOST ENVELOPE ENCLOSED.

If you have any questions about completing this questionnaire, or if there are any issues you would like to discuss with regard to data protection for this project, please contact Michael Thewlis at ERC on 07900 954 129.

Thank you in advance for your time and help with this important study.

Yours faithfully

Michael Thewlis
IMPORTANT NOTE

This questionnaire will be processed using a scanner. Help us by completing it carefully using a black pen. Mark the answer option boxes with a ☑ and not a tick. If you make a mistake, shade the box ■ and mark the correct box(es).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Please give the name of the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) that you were employed by as a member of the RDS. Please do not use abbreviations

☐ Fire and Rescue Service

2. Which of the following factors, if any, were important in your decision to join the RDS?

SELECT ☑ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ I wanted a job the community valued
☐ I wanted to make sure my local RDS station was not understaffed/did not close
☐ I liked the image of being a firefighter
☐ I thought it would be an exciting/varied job
☐ I wanted to be a wholetime firefighter, but there were no vacancies
☐ I wanted the income
☐ I had a relative/friend in the FRS
☐ Other please state

3. What was your role or job title prior to leaving the RDS?

CROSS ☑ ONE ONLY
☐ Firefighter
☐ Crew manager or crew commander
☐ Watch manager or watch commander
☐ Other, please state

4. In which year did you first join the RDS?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ year first joined

5. Which year did you leave the RDS?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ year left

6. When you worked for the RDS did you do any other paid work?

SELECT ☑ ONE ONLY
☐ Yes, I worked elsewhere in the Fire & Rescue Service – go to Q11
☐ Yes, I worked for one or more other employers – go to Q7
☐ Yes, I was self-employed – go to Q9
☐ Yes, other please state, then go to Q7
☐ No, I was unemployed – go to Q15
☐ No, I was a student – go to Q15
☐ No, I had full time caring responsibilities (eg looking after a relative at home) – go to Q15
☐ No, I was retired – go to Q15
☐ No, other please state, then go to Q15
### WORKING FOR YOUR PRIMARY EMPLOYER WHEN IN THE RDS

7. This section asks about the primary employment you undertook when you worked on the Retained Duty System. If you worked for more than one employer, please answer the following questions about your primary (main) employer.

**Was your primary employer...**

**SELECT ONE ONLY**

- In the private sector
- In the public sector (eg a local authority, government agency etc)
- A charity or voluntary organisation
- Other please state **SELECT ONE ONLY**

8. **Was your primary employer a...**

**SELECT ONE ONLY**

- Local organisation
- National organisation
- International organisation

9. **Approximately how many people worked at the site at which you were based?**

**SELECT ONE ONLY**

- 1 to 9
- 10 to 24
- 25 to 49
- 50 to 99
- 100 to 249
- 250 to 499
- 500 or more
- Don’t know

10. **Please tell us what type of business took place where you worked** (for example food manufacturer, estate agent, clothes retailer, supermarket etc).

11. **Please tell us what your job title was and briefly describe your role.**

   If you were self-employed please describe your role.

12. **When did you usually work in your primary employment?**

    **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**

    - Week days
    - Week nights
    - Weekend day
    - Weekend nights

13. **On average how many hours per week (excluding meal breaks) did you usually work for all your employer/s (ie outside the Retained Duty System), or yourself, if self-employed?**

    Number of hours

14. **Which of the following, if any, best described your ability to attend calls when you were at your primary employment?**

    **SELECT ONE ONLY**

    - I was released to attend calls at anytime
    - I was released to attend calls only at certain times
    - I was only available for calls when I was not at my primary employment
15. Which of the following best describes the RDS contract you had?

SELECT ☐ ONE ONLY
☐ 100% retainer fee  ☐ 75% retainer fee  ☐ Other percentage scheme, write in the boxes here ☐☐☐%  ☐ Other scheme, such as front-loaded salary, commitment based payment etc. Please give details

16. When were you typically available to work for the RDS?

SELECT ☒ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Week days  ☐ Week nights  ☐ Weekend days  ☐ Weekend nights

17. Did you ever turn down a job/promotion in order to remain in the RDS?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

18. How easy or difficult did you find balancing your commitment to the RDS with your personal time?

SELECT ☐ ONE ONLY
☐ Very difficult  ☐ Somewhat difficult  ☐ Neither difficult nor easy  ☐ Somewhat easy  ☐ Very easy

19. How supportive was your Fire & Rescue Service in helping you to balance your RDS and personal commitments?

SELECT ☐ ONE ONLY
☐ Very unsupportive  ☐ Somewhat unsupportive  ☐ Neither unsupportive nor supportive  ☐ Somewhat supportive  ☐ Very supportive

20. What could have been done by your FRS to improve balancing your commitments to the RDS and your personal time?

SELECT ☒ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Nothing  ☐ More crew at my station  ☐ Scheduled rest periods (ie regular time-off from RDS commitments)  ☐ Phased alerters to call only those firefighters needed to respond  ☐ Support for child care  ☐ Better communication with my family about how long I might have been detained at incidents  ☐ Electronic availability systems  ☐ Reduced the on-call hours  ☐ Other please state
21. Using the scale, please state how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements for when you worked for the RDS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither disagree or agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. I was happy at work</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. I felt an equal part of the team</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. I was invited to socialise with my colleagues</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. I thought about leaving the service</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. I found the work challenging</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. I felt valued by my colleagues</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii. I felt valued by my line manager</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii. I felt valued by my FRS</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix. I felt valued by my wholetime colleagues</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x. If asked, I would speak highly of the FRS</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xi. I found the commitment to the RDS challenging</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements relating to when you worked for the RDS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither disagree or agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. My primary employer asked me to reduce the amount of RDS cover I provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. I was not able to do the amount of overtime I would have liked to in my primary employment because of my RDS commitments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. My family would have liked me to reduce the amount of RDS cover I provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. I had enough time to do the things I wanted to despite my RDS commitments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. I did not feel under pressure balancing my work, family and RDS commitments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23. How easy or difficult did you find balancing your commitments to the RDS with your primary employment?
SELECT □ ONE ONLY
☐ Very difficult
☐ Somewhat difficult
☐ Neither difficult nor easy
☐ Somewhat easy
☐ Very easy
☐ I was not in primary employment when I was in the RDS – go to Q26

24. How supportive was your Fire & Rescue Service in helping you to balance your RDS and primary employment commitments?
SELECT □ ONE ONLY
☐ Very unsupportive
☐ Somewhat unsupportive
☐ Neither unsupportive nor supportive
☐ Somewhat supportive
☐ Very supportive

25. What could have been done by your FRS to improve balancing your commitments to the RDS and your primary employment?
SELECT □ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Nothing
☐ More crew at my station
☐ Better understanding of RDS by my primary employer
☐ Better communication with my primary employer about how long I might have been detained at incidents
☐ Electronic availability systems
☐ Reduced the on-call hours
☐ Scheduled rest periods
☐ Other please state

LEAVING THE RDS

26. Did you retire from the service or leave for some other reason?
☐ Retired – go to Q33
☐ Left for another reason – go to Q27

27. Did you leave because your RDS duties interfered too much with:
SELECT □ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Your personal life
☐ Your primary employment
☐ None of these
28. Did you leave the RDS for any of the following reasons?
SELECT ☐ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ I moved house/moved to another area
☐ I had to change my main job/employer
☐ My main employer relocated
☐ My primary employer asked me to give up my RDS duties
☐ I was not satisfied with my job (as a RDS member of staff)
☐ Lack of opportunities for training and development
☐ Lack of opportunities for promotion
☐ Lack of opportunities to transfer to the wholetime duty system
☐ I felt under-valued
☐ Ill-health
☐ I was being bullied/discriminated against
☐ The benefits were not good enough
☐ Family commitments
☐ Problems with childcare arrangements
☐ The amount of commitment required
☐ Other – please state

29. If you would like to tell us more about the reasons you left, please do so here:

30. Did you talk to anyone in the Fire & Rescue Service when you were thinking about leaving?
SELECT ☐ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ No – please go to Q32
☐ Yes – my immediate supervisor
☐ Yes – someone at my station
☐ Yes – someone at another station
☐ Yes – Personnel/HR department
☐ Yes – my trade union/representative body
☐ Yes – Someone else – please state

31. What was the outcome of that discussion?

PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 33

32. If you did not talk to someone about leaving, why was that?
SELECT ☐ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Did not think anyone would be able to do anything
☐ Didn’t know who to talk to
☐ Didn’t want to talk about it
☐ Don’t know
☐ Other, please state

33. When you left, did your FRS carry out an exit interview?
☐ Yes
☐ No – go to Q35
☐ Don’t know – go to Q36

34. When did you have your exit interview?
☐ On leaving the service or shortly before
☐ Some time after leaving

PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 36

35. If you did not have an exit interview, why was that?
☐ I did not want one
☐ I was not offered one
☐ Other reason – please state

36. When you left the service were you given any recognition of your past commitment to the RDS?
☐ Yes – go to Q37
☐ No – go to Q38
37. If you received some recognition after leaving the service, what was it?
SELECT ☑ ALL THAT APPLY
☑ A certificate
☑ A present from the FRS
☑ A present from station personnel
☑ A ‘thank you’ letter from the FRS
☑ An event at the station
☑ An event at the FRS HQ
☑ A voucher
☑ A financial reward
☑ Other, please state

YOUR FINAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SERVICE

38. What do you believe are the barriers to RDS recruitment in your local community?
SELECT ☑ ALL THAT APPLY
☑ Lack of community spirit
☑ People do not have enough free time to commit to the RDS
☑ People’s family or caring commitments
☑ Lack of local day-time employment near the station
☑ The station is in the wrong location
☑ Not enough engagement with local employers
☑ Lack of knowledge about the RDS
☑ Employers unwilling to release staff
☑ Entry requirements to join are too high
☑ The recruitment process takes too long
☑ None of the above
☑ Other, please state

39. What do you think would improve the Fire & Rescue Service for RDS personnel to make it a better place to work?

40. If there is anything else you would like to add about your experiences of working for the RDS, please write it here.
DEMOGRAPHICS

This final section of the survey asks a few more questions about you. These are important questions that will allow us to see how different types of people have answered the survey. Please remember, all the information you give here will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

41. Are you ...  ☐ Female  ☐ Male

42. How old are you?
☐ 17 to 24 years  ☐ 25 to 35 years
☐ 36 to 45 years  ☐ 46 to 55 years
☐ 56 to 65 years  ☐ 66 years & over

43. Which of the following, if any, do you have caring responsibilities for?
SELECT ☒ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ Children aged 16 and under
☐ Disabled children aged 18 and under
☐ Adults, such as your parents

44. What is your current status?
☐ I am single
☐ I am married, in a civil partnership or living with a partner
☐ I am divorced
☐ Other – please state

45. Which one of the following best describes your religion?
☐ Buddhist  ☐ Christian  ☐ Hindu
☐ Jewish  ☐ Muslim  ☐ Sikh
☐ None  ☐ Not stated
☐ Other, please state

46. What academic qualifications do you have?
SELECT ☒ ALL THAT APPLY
☐ No formal qualifications
☐ NVQ Level 1-3
☐ NVQ Level 4
☐ NVQ Level 5
☐ GCSE (or CSE/GCE/O level(s))
☐ A level(s)
☐ Degree (ie BA, BSc)
☐ Masters degree / PhD
☐ Diploma
☐ Foundation degree
☐ Other, please state

47. Did you consider yourself to have a disability when you were working for the RDS (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act)?
The Disability Discrimination Act defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
☐ Yes – go to Q48
☐ No – go to Q50

48. If yes, did your Fire & Rescue Service know about your disability?
☐ Yes – go to Q49
☐ No – go to Q50
49. If yes, did your Fire & Rescue Service make reasonable adjustments to allow you to undertake your RDS role

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

50. Which one of the following best describes your ethnic origin?

**White**
- British
- Irish
- Other

**Mixed**
- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Other

**Asian or Asian British**
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Other

**Black or Black British**
- Caribbean
- African
- Other

**Other ethnic groups**
- Chinese
- Irish traveller
- Other – please state

- Prefer not to say

51. Which one of the following best describes your sexuality?

- Bisexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Heterosexual
- Not stated

---

Many thanks for taking part in this survey.

Please be assured that none of the answers you have given will be given to the FRS or any other person.

Please place your questionnaire in the envelope provided, seal it and return it to:

Fieldwork UK – RDS Survey
5th Floor Block 2
Elizabeth House
39 York Road
LONDON SE1 7NQ