ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Service Redesign Pre-Consultation – September 2016

Enabling people to lead safe and fulfilling lives

Contents

Introduction

This report summarises the responses to the Service Redesign pre-consultation activities that took place in August and September 2016. It was carried out by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) on behalf of the Royal Berkshire combined Fire Authority (RBFA).

Pre-consultation and engagement is an integral and important stage in the way public bodies consider the challenges they face. It enables decision makers to appraise and understand more deeply the potential solutions that will form the basis of the options the public and stakeholders will be consulted on. It is considered to be part of best practice to ensure delivery of robust and meaningful public consultation.

Methodology

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England [revised 2012] provides guidance on Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP), and suggests that an IRMP should:

"Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies, and partners."

Furthermore, the first of the 'gunning principles,' which specify how public bodies should consult, states that:

"Consultation should be carried out when proposals are at the formative stage"

Two key activities were identified to ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire Authority aligned to these principles and met good practice guidelines.

Crewing Survey

In 2013, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service commissioned an IRMP project looking at alternative crewing arrangements, as part of that project a survey was sent to frontline staff, examining their thoughts and feelings around a range of potential options to change their shift system. The report on differing shift patterns and crewing arrangements has been reviewed and updated to inform the current project on service redesign. This needed to be supported by a further survey to give a refreshed understanding of the views of staff likely to be affected by any changes.

The survey was launched on 9 August and closed on 31 August. It was intended to provide a largely statistical quantitative dataset, although several qualitative questions were posed. Participants were invited to take part via email directly from Survey Monkey and included all Wholetime Duty System (WDS) staff, as well as, operational staff currently in support roles, such as Learning and Development. Retained Duty System (RDS) staff were not included as the shift patterns and crewing arrangements were not applicable to those staff.

The statistical data is represented here in its original format along with coded summaries of the open questions that represent the main themes that emerged.

Focus groups

To support the statistical element of the survey, two focus groups were arranged to provide a qualitative balance to the evidence base. The first of these involved staff from across the organisation and the second a selection of external stakeholders.

Focus groups are designed to contain a small number of people (around 7 – 12) to look at the issues in detail, examining perceptions and opinions from a range of viewpoints.

The staff focus group took place on the 30 August with seven participants from across the organisation including; Human Resources, Protection, Corporate Services, Risk and Strategy, Business and Information Systems, Retained Support Unit and Retained Duty System. This session looked at crewing arrangements to provide juxtaposition to the survey.

The external stakeholder focus group took place in the 1 September with six participants from public and private sector including; the local authority, community groups, parish council, South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) and a self - employed HR practitioner. This session focused the potential solutions RBFA may consider in relation to asset reduction as part of its service redesign.

The evidence from these groups was captured by two note takers to ensure an accurate record was made and direct quotations are used to illustrate the themes that emerged.

Main findings

Staff focus group

The primary purpose of the staff focus group was to explore further the factors that may affect decision making on the crewing options outlined in the WDS crewing survey. The focus group is intended to complement the findings of the survey by looking at the perceptions of a broader range of people from across the organisation.

Participants were given a presentation on the function and purpose of IRMP and RBFA budgets, and likely future funding challenges. This was followed with an introduction to the different crewing options, which were then examined in more depth. They were asked the same series of questions for each option, asking them to reflect on the impact each option may have on the Service, the potential challenges that may arise and any benefits or disadvantages they could foresee.

12-hour shifts

The responses to this question largely focused around the single theme of **work/life balance** and although it was recognised that there would be an impact on family life,

there were other elements considered, such as; how certain start and finish times may allow for family time, be more beneficial when resourcing protracted incidents (especially overnight) and that 12-hour shifts would be preferential if it meant keeping the 2, 2, 4 system.

"I don't think it will impact Protection. I think it will be favoured over other options as it keeps the 2, 2, 4 shift pattern. It will impact family life."

"Would you negotiate the start and finish times? If you start later or finish earlier, you will be able to spend more time with the family."

"Affect on family life? At the start it works out quite well but then tiredness steps in. There is no quality of life. Life is just work and rest. Perhaps 12-hour shifts would be better for protracted incidents though?"

It was noted that this did not provide financial savings:

"With financial pressures - there would be no savings."

Also, this may have an effect on productivity - although participants were not specific whether this would improve or worsen:

"Includes a shift model which may have a leaning to different levels of activity on station."

Day Crewing Plus

Several themes emerged around the implementation of Day Crewing Plus (DCP) and again **work/life balance** was one of those. These comments generally indicated that there would be little benefit to staff:

"Health and wellbeing of that person in a 96-hour period. There is quite an impact to that person."

"Family/life - partners wouldn't want to come to a bungalow."

"I can see young people not being interested due to the impact on family life"

There were a number of comments around attracting and retaining staff into the DCP system. There was a view from the focus group that the crewing arrangement would be difficult to manage and for the most part would not be an attractive shift pattern. However, there was an opposing view that maintained it would be a desirable crewing arrangement for those staff who live remote from Berkshire and it could even attract transferees:

"I don't think 25% would be enough to survive with a 2nd income."

"It would be attractive to people at different stages at different times of their life. You'll get people coming and going."

"Employing new people on a DCP contract would be difficult - as you have nailed them to a system and they can't be used more flexibly"

"Pension changes mean that the 25% increase wouldn't be enough of an incentive for older workers to volunteer."

There were some thoughts raised around whether this crewing arrangement would offer value for money and what the general public's perception would be. The focus group felt there was a need for greater detail as to how the system would be implemented:

"... this forces us to look at things with different glasses. When I think of the businesses that use this similar model, why do they do it? It is for one thing - to remain competitive."

"Public facing is rose tinted - more availability, halving costs. That's what the public care about."

The group also raised some concerns over how DCP may affect the service in terms of resilience:

"DCP - can you maintain that level of cover?"

"How well does DCP stand up when major incidents occur?"

"If crews are up all night and then stand down - if they have a course booked the next day but can't attend this will have a big impact on training centre."

Pool systems

The group raised some questions and concerns around how the pool system would affect personal finances and one comment identified Pre-Arranged Over Time (PAOT) as an effective mechanism for managing personnel deficiencies:

"There will be a reduction in staff overtime. Essentially taking a pay cut."

"In my environment - PAOT is the most effective way to get the job done if you are low on staffing and resources"

The group response to the pool system identified that there may be issues created from RDS staff covering shortfalls in the WDS crewing arrangement:

"In principle, it is a good idea. However, the other cost implication is that retained staff won't have as much training at wholetime and this would need maintaining."

"If retained go to cover wholetime - they are taking their over time away. How will this affect their morale?"

There were also several comments around the logistics of such systems:

"It would need to be very well managed"

"The logistics, the managements, would be unbelievably difficult"

The Grey Watch shift system was introduced as part of the pool system debate but little comment was made by the group on this system.

Three watch system

The focus group quite strongly felt that this crewing arrangement would be detrimental to those who would work it. This was supported by prior experience from one of the focus group. They felt this system would undergo challenge and scrutiny from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU):

"Can the fire-fighter sustain this pattern for the whole period of their service?"

"We used to do 4, 2, 4 shift twice a year to bring the total hours down. FBU will challenge 2, 2, and 2 because they fought hard to remove that before."

Three eights system

No clear themes emerged in this discussion although the feeling was generally negative towards this system:

"It's not good - another handover, continuity goes to the wall, knackering"

"Relationships and morale are lost"

"Can't run a drill at 2am! There is an impact on training"

"Why do we need to change to match the police?"

Remotely managed crewing and the Retained Support Unit

Although these topics were not covered in the crewing survey and are therefore not intended to provide a contrast, it was felt that it would be beneficial to use this group to understand perceptions in these areas.

There was a limited response to the possibility of increasing the number of remotely managed fire stations, although it was felt this could increase workloads for fire station commanders:

"Operational workload, more demanding, managing three stations"

There was a member of the RSU and RDS present who provided some insight into the impact removal (or part removal) of the RSU may have:

"We as RSU, only recently [...] have increased a bigger pool. It will take 2-3 years to see all the hard work - but we now are drawing a line in the sand - but only recently have we increased the footprint."

"RSU is a big plus! It is a link between us and Training Centre. If you remove it, it will increase my overtime as I will have to pick up more administrative duties."

External stakeholder focus group

The primary purpose of the stakeholder focus group was to provide decision makers with a deeper understanding of the issues - by examining perceptions of the decisions RBFA may make in relation to the challenges ahead and gaining insight into the value of the evidence base.

Again, participants were given a presentation on IRMP, RBFA budgets and funding challenges, albeit in more detail that the staff focus group to ensure a thorough understanding was developed for those not familiar with the subject. A conscious decision was made not to incorporate the aspects of crewing arrangements for examination in this particular group. The intention behind this was to gain understanding of how asset removal could affect service delivery and the perceptions and feelings around those issues from people not familiar with the Fire and Rescue Service.

The group was posed with the question "How do you perceive that RBFA, as a public service, will manage the funding gap?" The intention was to examine the thoughts and feelings around the perception what RBFA would/could/should do to meet the challenges ahead.

The group responses to this question were perhaps unsurprisingly wide and varied, particularly as they have a limited knowledge base on how the organisation is already addressing the budget gap. There was a general feeling that our incident numbers have fallen and an interest in how we are apportioning our budgets to meet a changing environment:

"What is the budget for Prevention, Protection & Response? How is this broken down? That tempers how we think about savings."

"My perception is the responses have gone down due to prevention work activity. We work closely with the prevention teams through various projects - have volunteers coming out to educate people - I presume you would do more of that stuff."

There was a clear sense that the expectation would be for services to be reduced and that resilience needed to be considered:

"Savings will be people and premises."

"There is a danger of cutting back and having no resilience."

"Analysis of resilience information would be helpful."

There were also some thoughts around funding:

"It pushed is back through the council tax. If local people want it, they can pay for it. People are happy to pay £500 for an iphone but not put council tax up by £50 a year - if that."

"Building developments could contribute through the CIL funding. You could negotiate with the council to receive some funding. It's called the community infrastructure levy."

"Why can't you charge for enforcement activity?"

There was also reference made to an ever-changing environment, identifying population growth as a factor that could alter the demands placed upon the Fire and Rescue Service:

"*More houses, more congestion. Back at the farm - you still have to respond. If our county remains static then it's fine - but it won't. The area is expanding.*"

The focus group also discussed the opportunities regarding collaboration and resource sharing. There was a feeling that there was the potential to make savings in this area, whether it be frontline efficiencies such as the tri-service officer or backroom resource sharing:

"Tri-service - where a firefighter is also trained in community support and co-response. Each service pays a proportion for them. Utilise a reduced cost with the same outcome."

"There are definitely people who can do the tri-service work, but it's finding these people."

"We have an issue with communication. We are doing similar work in some cases but we are not sharing."

It should be noted however, that although the group as a whole had an appetite for collaboration, this view did come with a health warning:

"The administration of a tri-service is a nightmare. I don't think we will realise the savings that are predicted. The reality is that all organisations are trying to save money - and can't together."

"We have an issue with communication. We are doing similar work in some cases but we are not sharing."

"How do we regulate joint working? Govern in? Administrate it?"

The group were then asked to consider asset removal possibilities. In order for them to gain an understanding of the evidence based approach, they were shown examples of the mapping and graphical evidence derived from the modelling software.

The group responses illustrated two main themes to this area of discussion. The first of these was around the **relevance and presentation of data**. There was also some feedback and recommendations on how they felt the data should be displayed:

"Show on the map where fire stations are around the county."

"I don't think the graph would help - I would look at it and think - that graph shows you're not meeting your target in the area so why are you cutting my local fire station?"

"I would like to see the number of call outs for each station."

Perhaps surprisingly, the other theme identified was that the group felt the public should be "sold the argument" rather than presented with evidence based data.

"Response modelling data is meaningless. You need to sell the argument to the public - not the facts."

"Targets are not important sometimes, the bigger thing is the loss of life graph - all areas will still be covered but might just take a little longer those 10 minutes.'Graphs' don't completely show this, need to be clearer that you will still get a fire station within a reasonable time."

Lastly, there was some discussion around how the public may feel about changes in their local environment and how we could present the data within our consultation paper to assist with this. However, there was a perception that there may be an unwillingness to observe the facts once local services were under threat:

"You need general data and specific detail about the impact of changes on the community."

"I want two figures - county wide information and specific data about the station area."

"The impact the public worry about is the impact in their area."

"Once people have read – you're local fire station may close – that won't listen to any other facts."

Crewing survey

The crewing survey consisted of 24 questions designed to look at how frontline staff felt about their current system, why this is important to them and understand how they feel about the potential solutions that RBFA may consider. The crewing arrangements presented in the crewing survey are outlined as follows:

- 2,2,4
- 12-hour shifts
- Day Crewing Plus
- Pool systems
- Three watch system
- Three eight hour shifts
- Grey Watch

Respondent profile

A total of **354** email invitations were sent. We received 205 responses giving a 58% response rate. As intended, the majority of respondents work the 2, 2, 4 system with those in the 'other' category stating they worked a '9-day fortnight.'

2, 2, 4

2,2,4 relates to the current WDS shift system of working two 9-hour day shifts, two 15-hour night shifts and four rota days off.

Question 3 asked if personnel liked this system. This question was completed by all 205 respondents and shows the **vast majority like working this pattern**.

Q3 Do you like working your current shift system? (commonly called the 2,2,4)
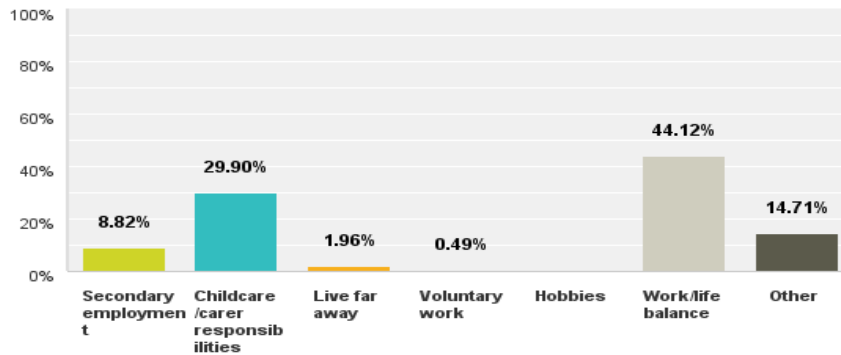
Answered: 205   Skipped: 0
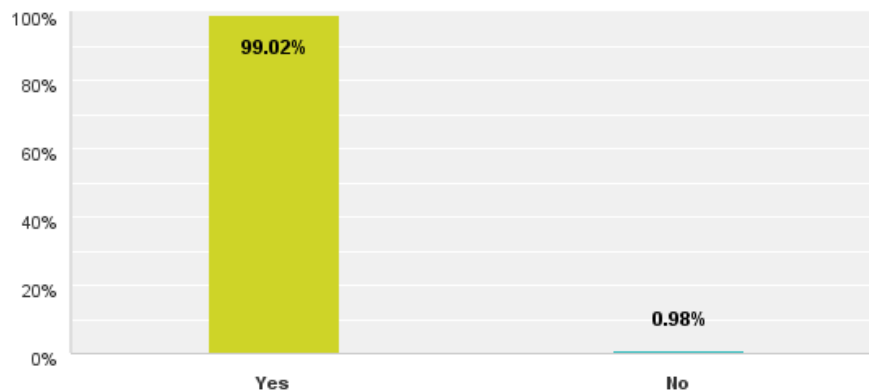
Question 4 shows **the majority of respondents like the 2, 2, 4 system** as it provides a good work/life balance. The third highest response was 'other', which provided the opportunity for respondents to provide a qualitative response as well. When looking at the qualitative data, the main theme to emerge, with 26 of 30 responses, was that respondents liked the 2, 2, 4 shift system due to one or more of the suggested reasons.

Q4 If you have indicated you like your shift system, why is this important to you?

Answered: 204   Skipped: 1

Secondary employment	8.82%
Childcare /carer responsibilities	29.90%
Live far away	1.96%
Voluntary work	0.49%
Hobbies	
Work/life balance	44.12%
Other	14.71%

Question 5 asked those respondents who did not like the 2, 2, 4 system what they would change. This seems to have been misinterpreted by some as 10 of 14 responses said the question was not applicable or reiterated why they liked 2, 2, 4.

The remaining responses are quoted here:

"You could change to more in line with civilian type hours - 8am to 6pm Mon-Fri, with a mixture of WDS and RDS providing cover at the weekend and evenings"
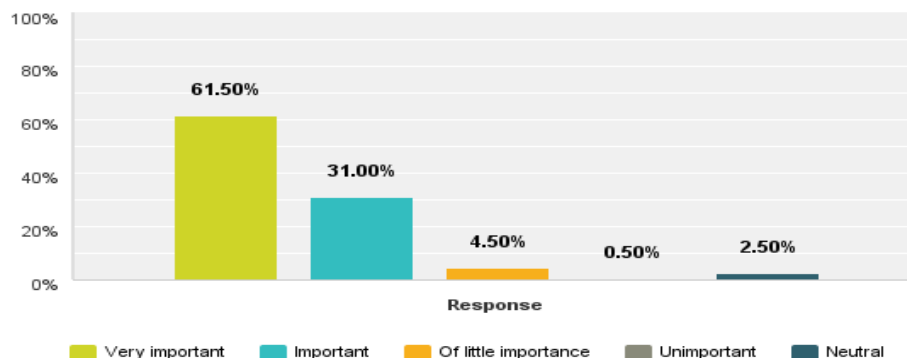
"More time with my family."

"More time at work and more pay."

Question 6 shows **the majority of respondents feel that shift start and finish times are important to them** (61.5%).

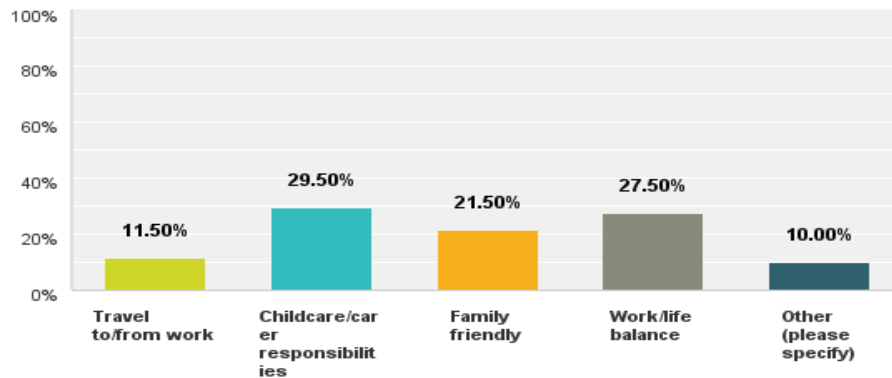## Q6 How important are the shift start and finish times to you?

Answered: 200   Skipped: 5

Response	
Very important	61.50%
Important	31.00%
Of little importance	4.50%
Unimportant	0.50%
Neutral	2.50%

Question 7 shows that **the majority of personnel feel the shift start and finish times are important because of childcare (29.5%),** however this is closely followed by work/life balance and being family friendly.

Q7 Please indicate the primary reason that these start/finish times are important to you?
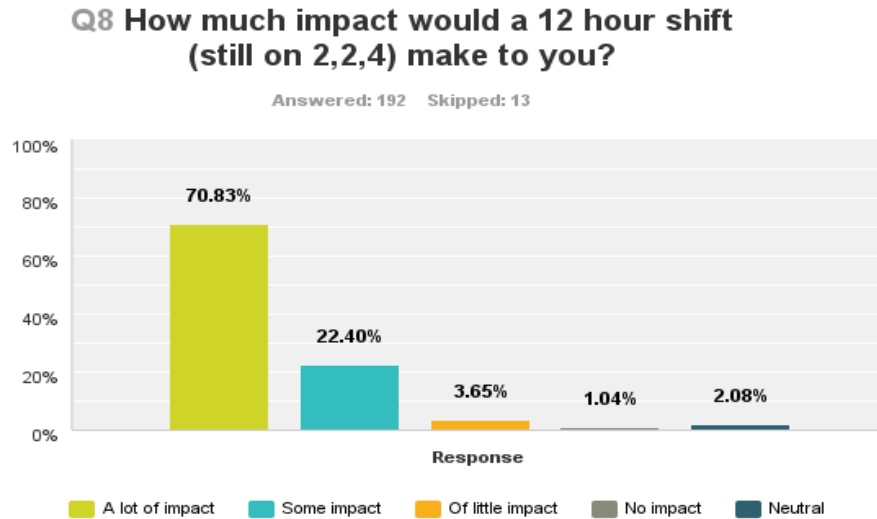
Answered: 200   Skipped: 5

| Travel to/from work	Childcare/carer responsibilities	Family friendly	Work/life balance	Other (please specify)
11.50%	29.50%	21.50%	27.50%	10.00%

There were 20-personnel who responded as 'other', which provided the opportunity for a qualitative response as well. When looking at this qualitative data, the main theme to emerge, with 19 of 20 responses, was that the start and finish times of their shift were important due to one or more of the suggested reasons.

12-hour shifts

Question 8 shows the **majority of respondents (70.83%)** feel that introduction of 12-hour shifts would have a lot of impact.

Q8 How much impact would a 12 hour shift (still on 2,2,4) make to you?

Answered: 192   Skipped: 13

Legend: A lot of impact | Some impact | Of little impact | No impact | Neutral

Question 9 shows **the majority of respondents (67.71%) would not be willing to work 12-hour shifts**, even if the stand down period was maintained.

Q9 Would you be willing to work a 12 hour shift if the stand down period was maintained for night working?

Answered: 192   Skipped: 13
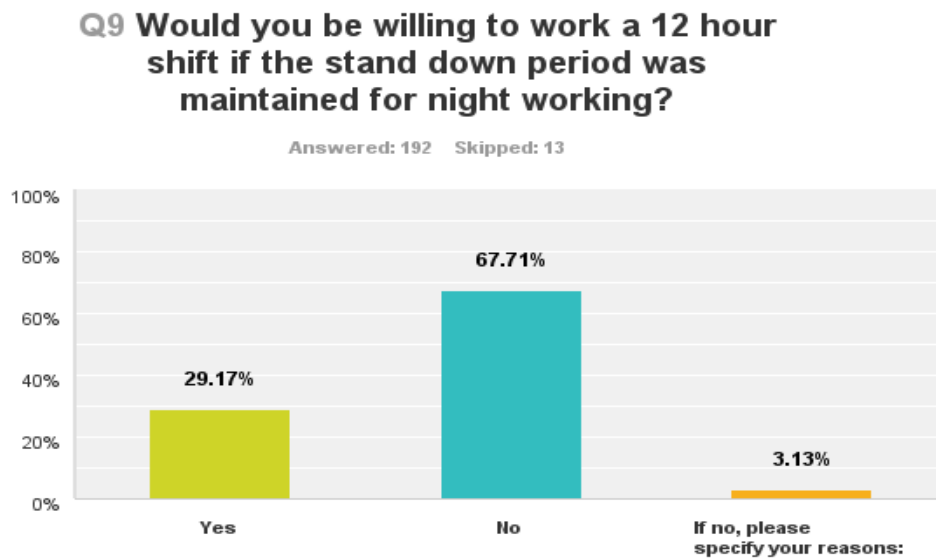
Six people chose to comment on why they would not be willing to work the 12-hour shifts and of these, only three provided meaningful answers. They describe 12-hour shifts as "unsociable", "horrible" and disrupting home/life balance and impacting child care. For statistical purposes the responses for 'if no' should be added to the 'no'

responses, resulting in an overall majority of 70.84%. This is an anomaly in the questionnaire as the reasons for not wanting to work a 12-hour shift are explored in question 10 below.

Question 10 is a qualitative response question which asks respondents to elaborate on the reasons why they would not wish to work a 12-hour shift pattern, even if the stand down period was maintained.

There were 115 responses to this question, with the main themes emerging as the '**impact on family life'**, the '**impact on working conditions.**

The **'impact on family life'** theme (approximately 55% of responses) largely reiterated the reasons expressed in question 4 and 7, although there was a bias towards those who felt it would have an effect on either the amount of time they would be able to spend with or see their children, such as school and bed times, and the associated childcare costs. Generally, qualitative responses reflected the impact on their home life. However, very few responses (about 6%) actually included reference to the stand down period and in these cases, it is suggested that it would make no difference.

The following quotes provide examples of this theme:

"The 12-hour shift involves either an early start or a late finish to the shift. With my wife also working it would be virtually impossible to sort my child care arrangements. I would also see far less of my children with no chance of seeing them in the evenings."

"Family life, childcare and fatigue will be all be affected by doing a 12-hour shift, regardless of whether we have a stand down period or not. I also do not believe that the stand down period agreed to as part of this process will remain in place."

"For above reason! A 12-hour day is too long to be away from home I miss school drop off and bed time. I also get no quality time with my partner."

"The impact on my work/life balance would be detrimental to my family. I would see my family a lot less and my wife would have to change her job to accommodate that shift pattern."

The '**impact on working conditions'** theme (approximately 10% of responses) highlighted that staff believed how productivity and health and safety would be affected due to increased fatigue, low motivation, as well as a drop in productivity. Some of these responses were provided by staff who had previously worked this system.

The following quotes provide examples of this theme:

"I believe that the current day shift and night shift pattern is far more effective with regards to training, completing our community safety obligations and for firefighter fatigue levels. I think that 4 x 12 hours shifts would negatively impact on the health and wellbeing of firefighters on the new system."

"I've worked 12-hour shifts in the fire service and they tend to fatigue much more that the 9-hour days and 15-hour nights. Stand down periods are not a given. Call outs will always be a priority."

"Very difficult to keep people motivated for 12-hr day shifts - productivity and concentration get worse the longer people have to remain at work."

Question 11 was initially challenged by the FBU, due to the question not having a 'none of the above' option.

The FBU issued a statement to members on the 9 August asking them not to complete the survey. The issue was rectified and a joint FBU statement was then issued encouraging members to participate. From the data it appears that 24 responses were made on the 9 and 10 August, these persons did not have the opportunity to respond 'none of the above'. From the 11 August this answer does appear. Therefore, the 24 responses for Q11 need to be discounted from the 'time' totals. Both sets of numbers are shown on the graph (red is the adjusted total) and this shows that the majority of respondents (64.58%) did not prefer any of the suggested options and that, although the 'time' totals have been reduced by the adjustment, the general trend is the same with 7am until 7pm being the most popular of the start and finish times.

Q11 If 12 hour shifts were introduced, which would be your preferred start/finish time?

Answered: 192 Skipped: 13
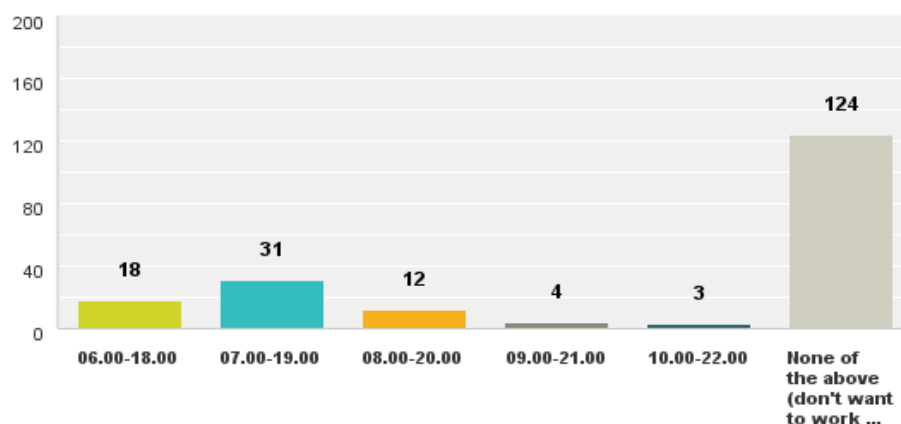
Day Crewing Plus

The majority of respondents (86.49%) indicated that they would not be willing to volunteer for Day Crewing Plus (DCP). For statistical purposes, the responses for 'if no' should be added to the 'no' responses, resulting in an overall majority of 89.19%. This is an anomaly in the questionnaire as the reasons for not wanting to work a pool system are explored in question 13 below.

Q12 Having read the 'Day Crewing Plus' document, would you be prepared to volunteer to a DCP system?

Answered: 185   Skipped: 20
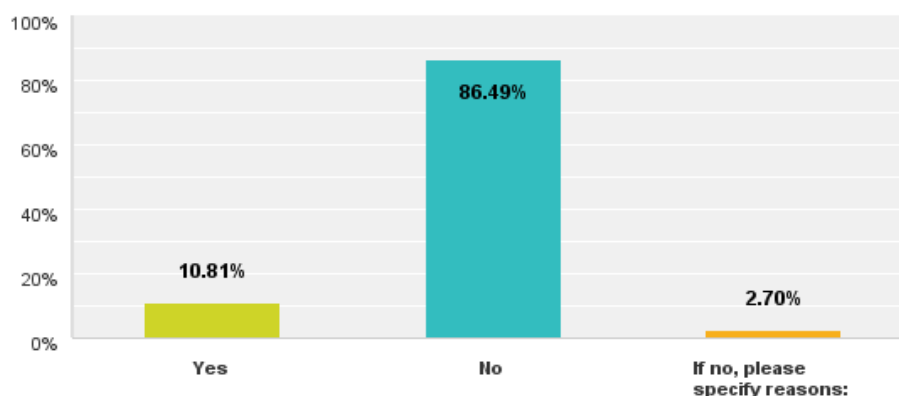
Question 13 is a qualitative question that asked respondents to specify the reasons they would not volunteer to work a DCP shift system. There were 136 responses to this question. The main emerging themes were; 'family life', 'work/life' balance, and those who 'do not like it' or prefer '2, 2, 4'. There were also several comments around health and money.

50% of respondents cited DCP as causing problems with family life and nearly 20% citied general issues with their work life balance:

"I feel that DCP would have a detrimental effect on my family and their needs."

"Why would I volunteer for something that will make my life difficult and stressful for my family."

"Work/life balance childcare responsibilities - wouldn't be able to find childcare to cover the hours required. Would hardly see my children, particularly at weekends."

"Because I'm not a robot. I have a life outside of this job."

12.5% of respondents stated that they did not like the system, preferred 2,2,4 or stated that the system was illegal. The comments were short and all broadly similar so a small selection is included below for reference:

"Illegal and not worth the money."

"It would be worse than the current system"

There were several comments related to **health** (just of 5% of responses):

"It just does not interest me and I think we will be putting ourselves at risk of being fatigued. Having spoken to firefighters who have worked it, they say initially it is great, but the fatigue soon sets in making it dangerous."

"Long shifts are a risk to health and safety of crews and public."

A small percentage (3.8%) of respondents felt **DCP did not offer a financial incentive:**

"I don't want to spend half my life at work for very little money. You would be doubling my time away from my family and only paying me a fraction more."

"This system would greatly affect my family life. I earn more in my secondary employment for less working hours in comparison to the payrise I would get for working DCP which would not compensate for the extra workload."

In contrast to this, a small minority, contrary to the question posed, did express an interest in DCP but had reservations:
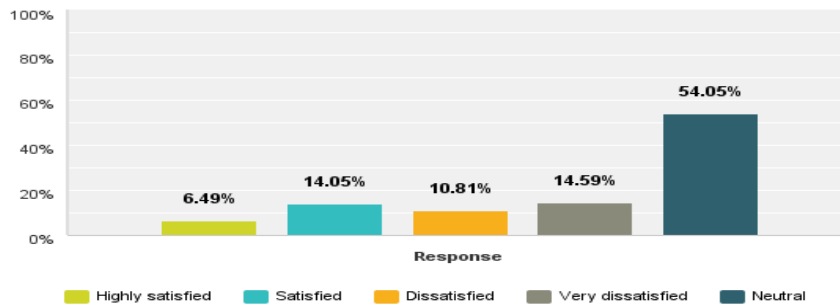
"Day crewing plus would benefit me living a long distance from station, however I do not trust that the accommodation and living standards provided would be adequate."

"Would have to know which stations were going DCP before I could answer."

Question 14 shows the **majority (54.05%) of respondents were neutral** in their attitude towards colleagues working a DCP system if they could remain on 2, 2, 4, at their current fire station.

Q14 If you could continue to work 2,2,4 and remain on your current station, how would you feel if a number of your colleagues were working DCP elsewhere in RBFRS?

Answered: 185   Skipped: 20

- Highly satisfied: 6.49%
- Satisfied: 14.05%
- Dissatisfied: 10.81%
- Very dissatisfied: 14.59%
- Neutral: 54.05%

Pool systems

Q15 Having read pages 18-22 in the 'Alternative or Complementary Wholetime Duty Systems' document, would you be prepared to volunteer for a pool system if they were introduced?

Answered: 171   Skipped: 34

- Yes: 16.37%
- No: 81.29%
- If no, please specify your reasons: 2.34%
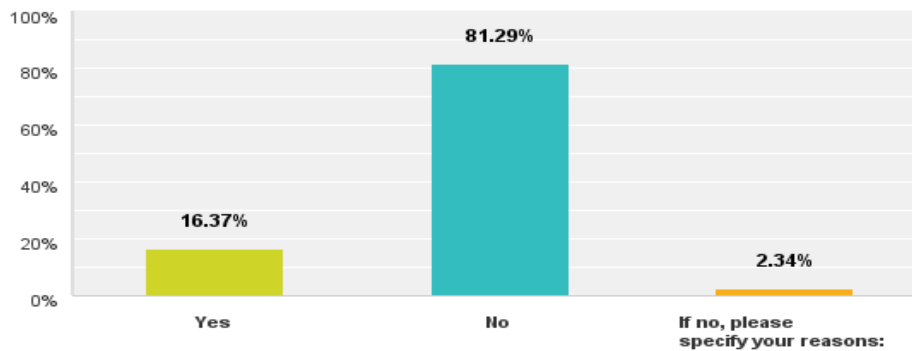
Question 15 shows the **majority of respondents (81.29%) would not be prepared to volunteer to work a pool system**. For statistical purposes, the responses for 'if no' should be added to the 'no' responses, resulting in an overall majority of 83.63%. This is an anomaly in the questionnaire as the reasons for not wanting to work a pool system are explored in question 16 below.

Question 16 is a qualitative question which asked respondents to specify the reasons they would not volunteer to work a pool system. There were 104 responses to this question with the emerging themes of '**work/life balance'** and '**planning, organisation and flexibility'**. There were also concerns that the system would not

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work and a small minority of respondents needed more information before deciding if they would be willing to volunteer for a pool shift system.

The **majority (44%) of respondents felt that this would affect their work/life balance**:

"I believe our current shift and working hours gives me a good work/life balance. This is why I have not signed up to take part in the current pre-arranged overtime arrangements as I do not what the additional hours. My home life is more important to be than an additional rise in my salary."

"I like things the way they are - it works for me!"

24% of respondents felt that it would be **difficult to plan**, **increase home life organisation** and be **less flexible** than the current system:

"My wife's employment is based around me knowing my hours in advance. I would potentially be willing to work the pool system, but would have to take a long hard look at the real life realities of how it works."

"I don't like to be called into work at short notice. I have transport issues."

"The random nature of this shift would impact child care and leave you unable to plan."

Some respondents (11%) felt the **system wouldn't work:**

"System does not fit or support a strong 'team' ethic."

"I enjoy having a set station and watch. I believe this is very important for training and safety on incidents."

Some respondents (5.8%) felt they may be interested but didn't have enough information:

"I do not feel there is enough detail to make a decision."

"Possibly subject to rules imposed."

Question 17 Respondents were asked to rank the different types of pool system in order of preference. Figure 1 below shows the weighted average response and Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the all the rankings.

Q17 **If a pool system was introduced, please rank the following pool systems in your preference order from 1- 4 (1 = most preferred 4= least preferred):**
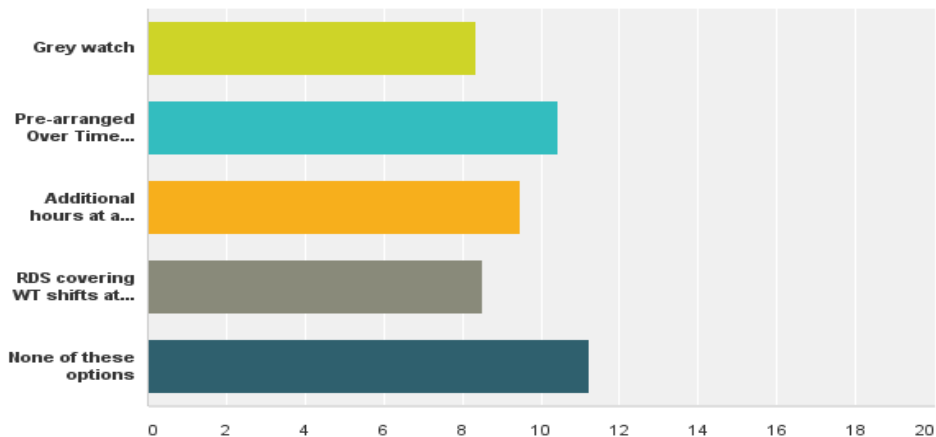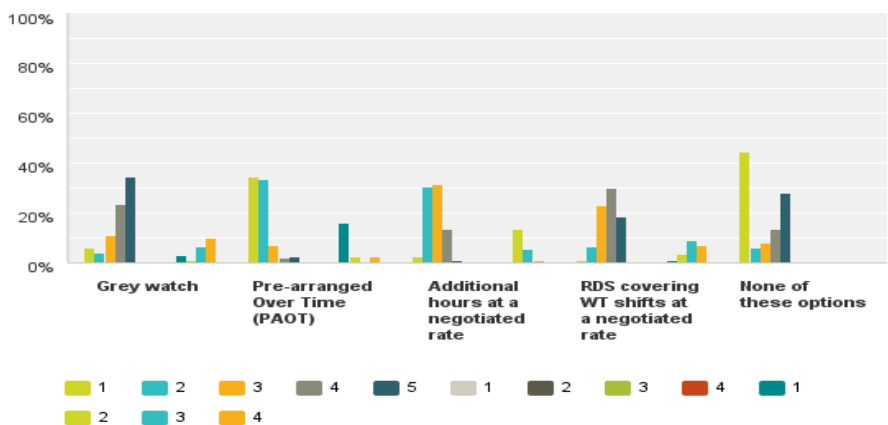
Answered: 171   Skipped: 34

Figure 1

Q17 **If a pool system was introduced, please rank the following pool systems in your preference order from 1- 4 (1 = most preferred 4= least preferred):**

Answered: 171   Skipped: 34

Figure 2

Both these tables clearly show that most respondents chose 'none of these options' as their first choice followed by 'Pre Arranged Over Time' (PAOT) which is the system RBFRS currently operates. 'Additional hours at a negotiated rate' was the majority of respondents second and third choices followed by 'Retained Firefighters
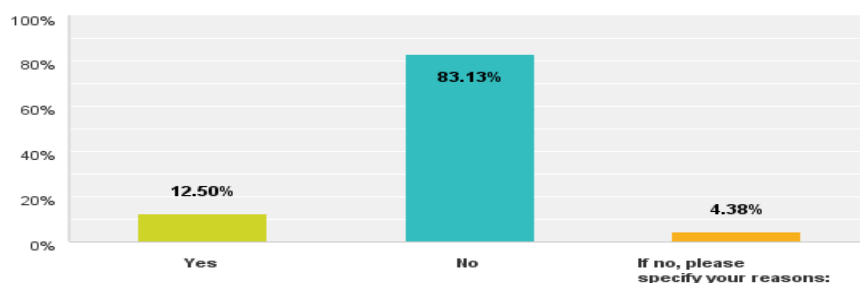
covering WDS shifts.' 'Grey Watch' was the majority of respondents 4th and 5th choice.

Three watch system

Question 18 shows the **majority of respondents (83.13%) would not be willing to work a three watch system**. For statistical purposes, the responses for 'if no' should be added to the 'no' responses, resulting in an overall majority of 87.51%. This is an anomaly in the questionnaire as the reasons for not wanting to work a pool system are explored in question 19 below.

Question 19 is a qualitative question which asked respondents to specify the reasons they would not be willing to work a three watch shift system. There were 92 responses and the main theme to emerge was '**work/life balance**' in conjunction with a preference for the current 2, 2, 4 system.

69% of respondents felt this would affect their **work life balance** and/or **expressed a preference for the current system**:

"The hours expected for us to work would be crippling, we would still be working 9 hours of our first rota day 00.00-09.00hrs. We would in effect get 1 whole day off before being back on duty. Definitely not a family friendly shift system."

"A very poor work life balance and not family friendly. You would effectively only have one clear day of a week before returning to duty!"

"The pay doesn't make up for the hours spent at work – 56-hr week with less than 48hrs off (in real terms). No work life balance. It would cause more people to go sick."

"I would be willing to work any system that was enforced however a 3 watch system would ultimately mean a poorer work life balance and more time at work for the same wage."

Three eight hour shifts

Question 20 shows the **majority of respondents (91.88%) would not be willing to work a three eights shift system**. For statistical purposes, the responses for 'if no' should be added to the 'no' responses, resulting in an overall majority of 95.63%. This is an anomaly in the questionnaire as the reasons for not wanting to work a pool system are explored in question 21 below.

Q20 Having read page 24 in the 'Alternative or Complementary Wholetime Duty Systems' document, would you be willing to work a Three Eights shift system?

Answered: 160   Skipped: 45
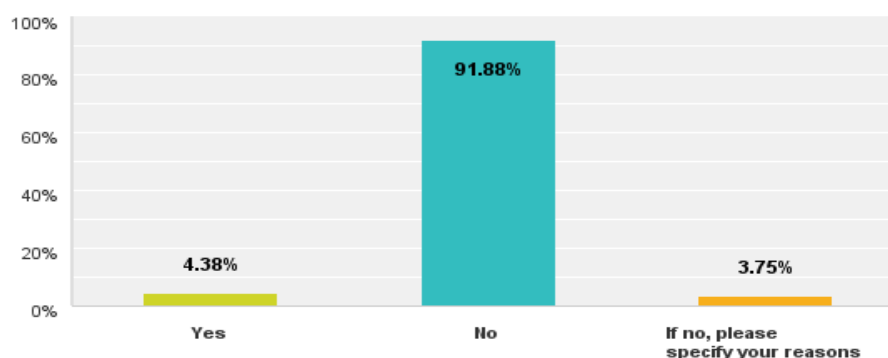
Question 21 is a qualitative response question which asked respondents to specify the reasons they would not be willing to work a three eights shift system. There were 101 responses and the main theme to emerge was '**work/life balance**' in conjunction with a preference for the current 2, 2, 4 system. The comments around these themes largely reiterated those in the previous questions with a similar majority of around 69%.

There were comments around the **disruption and extra travelling time** required by this system, the **effect on productivity** and some respondents remarked on the **effect on Police** colleagues:

"I did this in the police - it felt like you were working all the time."

"The shift pattern would not allow adequate time for drilling, because of time lost early in the morning or late at night and during handing over periods."

"It would be harder to get any work done as you would be unable to do many activities on nights and lose extra time in the middle of the day for an additional shift change. It would also, I assume, mean working overnight and as such we would lose time on rota days/time as we would be resting."

Grey Watch

Question 22 shows the **majority of respondents (90%) would not be willing to work the Grey Watch shift system**. For statistical purposes, the responses for 'if no' should be added to the 'no' responses, resulting in an overall majority of 93.75%. This is an anomaly in the questionnaire as the reasons for not wanting to work a pool system are explored in question 23 below.

Q22 Having read page 28 in the 'Alternative or Complementary Wholetime Duty Systems' document, would you be willing to work a Grey Watch shift system?

Answered: 160   Skipped: 45

	Yes	No	If no, please specify your reasons:
	6.25%	90.00%	3.75%
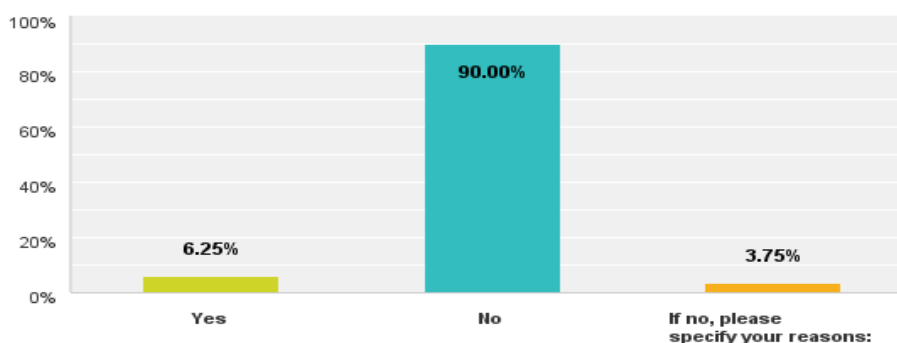
Question 23 is a qualitative question which asked respondents to specify the reasons they would not be willing to work the Grey Watch system. There were 101 responses and again the main theme to emerge was '**work/life balance'** in conjunction with a preference for the current 2, 2, 4 system. The comments around these themes largely reiterated those in the previous questions with a similar majority of around 58%.

Specific to the Grey Watch shift system, there were a number of comments relating to the **inflexibility of the system** and the **uncertainty of working rota days**:

"This system dictates when I have annual leave therefore takes away my choice of when I take it."

*"Don't like the 'maybe' working factor when off roster reserve."*

"I have to travel a long way and for a single shift during my rota days it would be costly."

"Don't like the idea of my leave being dictated as well as having days off but being on edge that I might have to drop everything to go into work - you can't live like that."

Question 24 asked staff how important it was that any new system was voluntary. The data shows that **the majority (89.68%) felt that this was very important.**

Q24 How important is it to you that any new shift system is voluntary?

Answered: 155   Skipped: 50

Very Important · Important · Marginally Important · Not important · Neutral
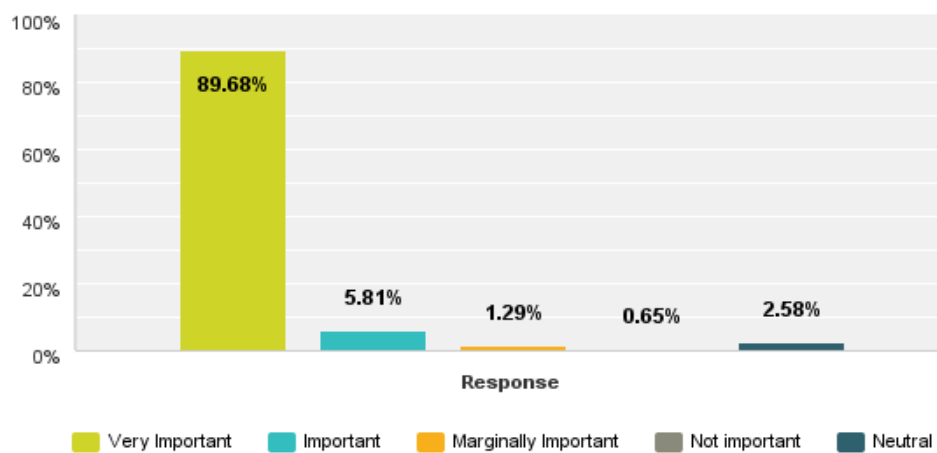
Crewing survey summary

A significant proportion of the polled sample responded to the survey and there are some general trends that can be observed. It is clear that the current shift system of 2,2,4 suits the vast majority of WDS staff as it provides flexibility and a satisfactory work/life balance. Conversely, the other crewing options presented in the survey

would not be acceptable to most as the perception is that they would lose the positive aspects that make 2, 2, 4 preferential.

Summary and next steps

The service redesign pre-consultation research provided a range of both quantitative and qualitative feedback from a broad spread of internal and external stakeholders.

The WDS staff survey provided statistical evidence which highlighted that operational personnel are largely satisfied with the current crewing arrangement and would be disinclined towards some of the other models.

The internal focus group, which also explored the crewing arrangements, provided qualitative evidence to suggest that again, changes to the current 2-2-4 system would present challenges. The most predominant theme being the impact to a work/life balance.

The external stakeholder focus group offered an opportunity to examine perceptions of how RBFA will manage the challenges ahead and communicate with stakeholders in the consultation phase.

This report will be presented to decision makers when considering the potential solutions available to RBFA in determining how to manage its service delivery functions into 2019.