



**Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Response Standards Consultation
Summary Report**

August 2016



PREVENTING | PROTECTING | RESPONDING

Response Standards 2016 Consultation Feedback Summary report

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1. Introduction

This report summarises the responses from the public consultation on proposals to change the way in which the response standards are defined and measured. It provides information about how the consultation was conducted, statistical data and analysis of qualitative findings. The consultation lasted from 16 May 2016 - 25 July 2016. It was carried out by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) on behalf of the Royal Berkshire combined Fire Authority (RBFA).

This response standards consultation follows the IRMP 2015-2019 consultation, which finished on 4 April 2016. Royal Berkshire Fire Authority considered the findings from the IRMP 2015-19 consultation at a meeting on 25 April 2016 and reached a decision to progress the four priority projects outlined in the consultation. As part of Project One (response standards, station locations and crewing arrangements) the first key element is to ensure our response standards are fit for purpose and are clear, transparent and easy to understand as we move forwards in developing these projects.

The current response standards have been in place since 2006 and are expressed as:

- *'We have an optimum response, where we are committed to attending an incident within 8 minutes for the first fire engine and 10 minutes for the second fire engine for dwelling fires'*
- *'We have a standard response, where we are committed to attending in 10 minutes for the first fire engine and 12 minutes for the second fire engine for dwelling fires'*
- *'We are committed to making an initial attendance to RTCs with the necessary resources to commence extrication of casualties, within 11minutes'*

The proposed changes to the current response standards requiring public consultation are as follows:

- **Proposal 1:** How should we measure the time taken to respond to an incident?

Response times or Attendance times

- **Proposal 2:** What type of incidents should we report on?:

Dwelling fires and RTC only or All emergency incidents

- **Proposal 3:** How many fire engines should be measured in the response standard?

For dwelling fires, a two fire engine response standard and for RTCs a single fire engine response standard, or

The attendance of the first fire engine to arrive at an incident

- **Proposal 4:** How should we express the reporting of our response standards?

Current measure: internal monitoring systems which measure attendance times for each station, or

Publishing the response standard with a target time and corresponding percentage, from current performance statistics.

The purpose of this report is to provide RBFA members with an overview of the consultation responses as part of the process of conscientious consideration, as well as inform those who took part and the wider public of our overall findings. This report contains both quantitative and qualitative data collected via an online questionnaire or through direct engagement with the public. The report sets out to illustrate responses from all stakeholder groups who responded, and in particular, the reasons and themes emerging as to why they responded as they did.

We received over 326 responses and as such we cannot publish them all in this report. Every effort has gone into ensuring that the qualitative data presented in this report reflects the most representative examples of the responses. To achieve this we have ensured that all comments and suggestions received have been given due consideration. At this stage, RBFA and RBFRS would like to thank all stakeholders across the communities of Royal Berkshire who took the time to take part in the response standards consultation. This year will see further consultations relating specifically to the options within each IRMP project. Your input is extremely valuable to us and we encourage you to continue to provide your feedback and suggestions in our future consultations. More information about future consultations will be made available at the appropriate time via www.rbfrs.co.uk.

2. Methodology

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides the statutory instrument that requires fire and rescue services (FRS) to have due regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England [revised 2012]. The framework 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.”

Cabinet Office guidelines [revised January 2016] suggest that the length of consultation should be proportionate to the nature and impact of the proposals. RBFRS made a decision to follow good practice guidelines and as such, the consultation period ran for 10 consecutive weeks from 16 May – 25 July 2016.

In carrying out the consultation, RBFRS followed the four Gunning Principles which specify how public bodies should consult. They specify that:

1. Consultation should be carried out when proposals are at the formative stage
2. Sufficient information is provided to allow intelligent consideration of the proposals
3. Adequate time is given for response
4. Responses are conscientiously taken into account before decisions are taken

Resources

The consultation was publicised through social media platforms, awareness raising posters, online and paper media and radio. Consultation material was made available via a number of accessible methods. These included:

- Online via www.rbfrs.co.uk
- PDF copies via email
- Consultation events
- Paper copies on request

RBFRS analysed and evaluated its key stakeholders to try to ensure that these communication methods were appropriate. Table A below summarises the communication methods used for each stakeholder group during this consultation:

Table A: Communication methods used for each stakeholder group

Stakeholder Group	Communication Method
Public	<p>The public were able to access all relevant information on our website and take part in an online or printed questionnaire (accessible options were available on request).</p> <p>Public survey activities took place in several locations in</p>

	<p>order to collate responses from the general public.</p>
<p>RBFRS Staff</p>	<p>The consultation team conducted over twenty fire station visits and internal HQ team presentations to inform staff about the consultation and how to give their feedback.</p> <p>RBFRS staff were also notified via internal email, with timed reminders sent during the consultation process.</p> <p>Information about the consultation was also published via internal publication methods- Cascade, The Shout and the internal intranet page.</p> <p>Direct contact was made with the following recognised representative bodies; Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Fire Officers Association (FOA) and the Retained Firefighters Union (RFU).</p>
<p>Government, local authorities and public sector</p>	<p>We sent direct details of the consultation to the following via email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local MPs • Unitary authorities • District, town and parish councils • Police and Crime Commissioner • Blue light partners • Education providers • GP surgeries • Neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services <p>The email included a copy of the consultation document, links to RBFRS’s consultation web page and a PDF version of the poster.</p>
<p>Businesses</p>	<p>We sent details of the consultation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport providers • Local chambers of commerce • Higher risk premises <p>A member of the consultation team attended a</p>

	<p>regional women’s business group to raise awareness about the consultation.</p>
<p>Community organisations/minority groups</p>	<p>We sent details of the consultation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community centres • Women’s representative groups, such as The Women’s Institute and Athena Network Berkshire • Students and young people via contacts at Reading University, YES Slough and Berkshire Youth • Older people’s groups- such as Age UK, sheltered housing support and community groups • Organisations representing minority ethnic communities, such as Slough Council for Voluntary Services <p>The consultation team directly engaged with a number of key community organisations listed above to raise awareness about the consultation. A number of these groups advertised the consultation information to their service users via social media, email or their website.</p>

Social Media

To complement the communication channels, social media was used throughout the response standards consultation to enable users to share the information and to encourage engagement. Information was posted on RBFRS’ Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages to remind people to take part. During the consultation, external stakeholders were identified and contacted for input and participation. The stakeholders comprised:

- Community (e.g. residents, resident associations, community organisations and special interest groups)
- Government (e.g. public authorities, MPs and opinion leaders)

Facebook

All of our posts together reached **4,174**. Facebook ‘reach’ refers to the number of unique people who saw our content.

Twitter

In total, all of our posts received **42,036** Twitter impressions and **493** engagements. An 'impression' refers to the times a user is served a Tweet in their timeline or search results and 'engagements' refers to the total number of times a user interacted with a Tweet (this includes retweets, replies, follows, likes etc.)

Feedback from all stakeholders was obtained using the following engagement methods:

- **Online questionnaire**

An online survey was designed to support respondents to give their feedback electronically. The questions used in this survey included equality and diversity information and four specific questions about each proposed change to the response standards definition. These questions gave the respondent opportunity to select their preferred option, and to give qualitative feedback if they wished. The online survey also asked respondents if they would be happy to be contacted at a further date in relation to the consultation, and if so, they were able to provide their contact details.

- **Telephone, email and letter responses**

We received 9 email responses to the consultation and no responses via telephone or written communications.

- **Consultation events with RBFRS personnel**

The consultation team delivered a number of station visits across the county and internal HQ staff team presentations. The purpose of these presentations was to highlight the consultation information and direct people on how to respond. These sessions did not collate specific feedback about the proposals; rather attendees were encouraged to submit their views online.

- **Public community activities**

Two engagement events took place with the public. These occurred at supermarkets within the Reading area and were selected on the basis of high footfall. These events gave members of the public the opportunity to learn more about the consultation and to submit their responses through face to face engagement with RBFRS staff. Members of the consultation team used paper based versions of the online questionnaire to collect responses which were then manually entered online to form part of the overall analysis of findings.

3. Analysis of Data

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was used in a number of ways during the response standards consultation:

- Indication of response rate to the survey – including skipped questions and impartial completions.
- Equality and diversity information to analyse the demographic profile of respondents.
- Indication of the capacity in which the respondents were replying – such as an individual resident of Royal Berkshire or on behalf of an organisation. This also included whether they were employed by RBFRS or were related to any member of staff.
- Overall percentage of responses for each proposed consultation option. This indicated the weight of preference from the respondents in total.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was used to enable respondents to provide individual and specific feedback on the consultation proposals:

- Open ended questions were used on the online survey.
- Qualitative data was analysed using coding methodology- common themes in feedback were highlighted.
- Responses were initially categorised according to which option the respondent chose. Emerging themes for each proposal were then defined using coding methodology. These themes are detailed in the specific question analysis that follows.

4. Response to Consultation.

In total, we had **326 responses** to our response standards consultation.

Table B shows that the **majority** of the responses to the consultation came via the online **Survey Monkey** tool (317). This was an improvement of 12% from the IRMP 2015-19 consultation.

Table B: Number of responses for each feedback method

	Survey Responses	Non-Survey Responses
Number of Responses	317	9

Responses from Organisations

As part of the questionnaire, we collected data that reflecting whether people were responding on behalf of an organisation or public body. We received the following:

Organisation or body	Questionnaire	Email
Crowthorne parish council	✓	
Swallowfield parish council	✓	
Hungerford parish council	✓	
Streatley parish council		✓
Woodley parish council		✓
Fire Brigades Union		✓
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service		✓
Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service		✓
West Berkshire Unitary Authority	✓	
Circle Hospital (Reading)	✓	
Wellington college	✓	

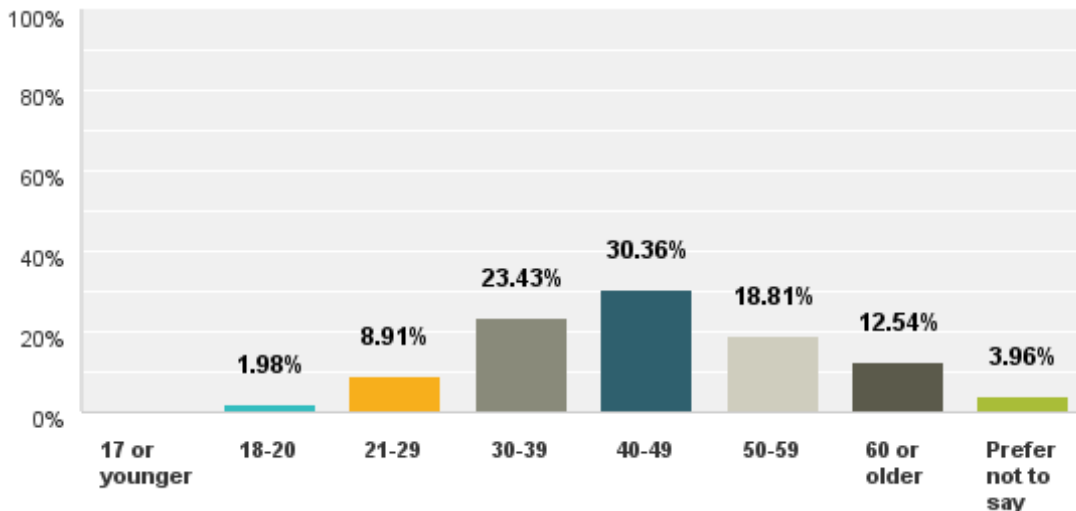
Fire and Rescue sector responses are provided in full in the appendices- See Appendix A-C. All other representative responses are summarised under each of the proposals in the main findings section.

Respondent Profile

The figures below illustrate the demographic profile for all responses via the online Survey Monkey questionnaire. RBFRS are committed to promoting equality and diversity, and therefore by collecting this information we are able to monitor the response rate to our consultation across a range of communities and backgrounds. This enables us to continually evaluate our work and to improve efforts to engage a representative sample of people within Royal Berkshire as a process of ongoing development. The equality and diversity information also enables us to monitor the weight of responses from RBFRS personnel in comparison to members of the public.

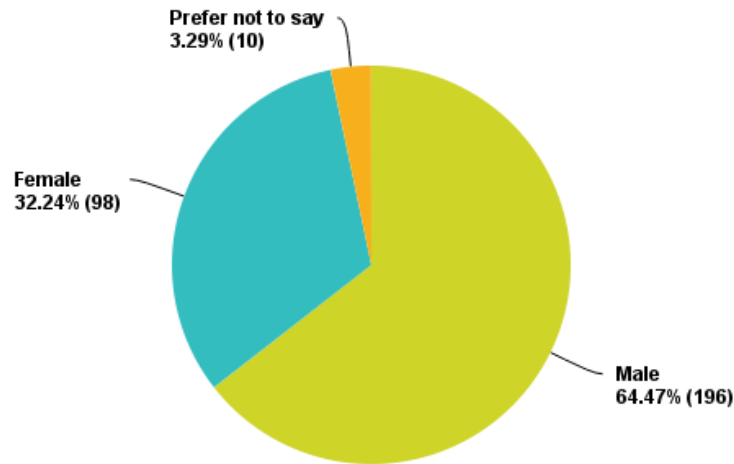
a) Age

Data shows the **majority of respondents were aged 40-49 years old (30%)**, with the minority aged 18- 20 years old (1.98%). This broadly represents the same respondent profile found in the IRMP 2015-19 consultation. However, there was a slight drop in the over 50's response rate but an increase in the under 30's; in particular the 18-20 range more than doubled.



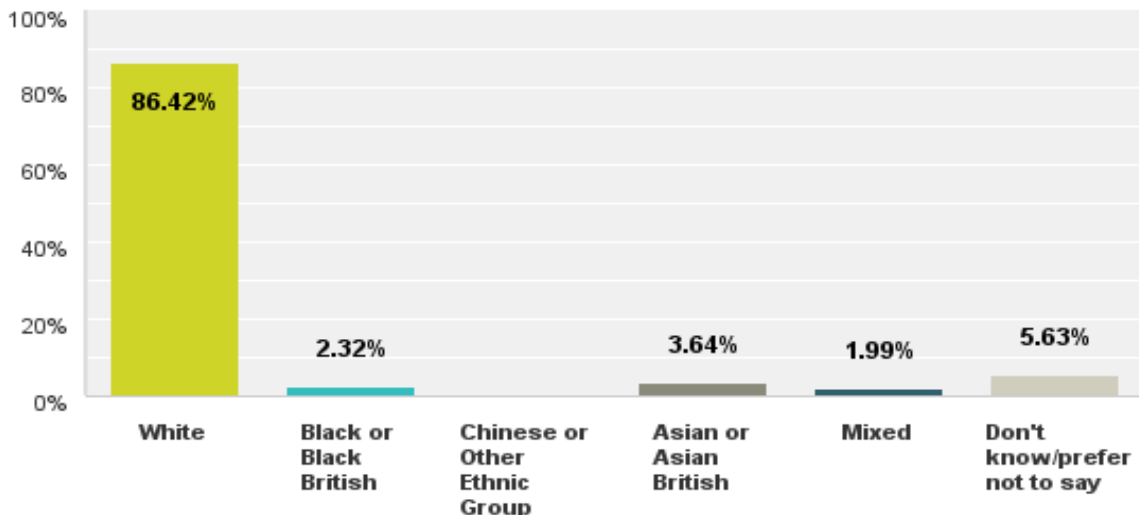
b) Gender

Data shows the **majority of respondents were male (64.43%)** compared to females (32.24 %). This shows a proportional increase of almost 10% for responses from females compared to the IRMP 2015-19 consultation.



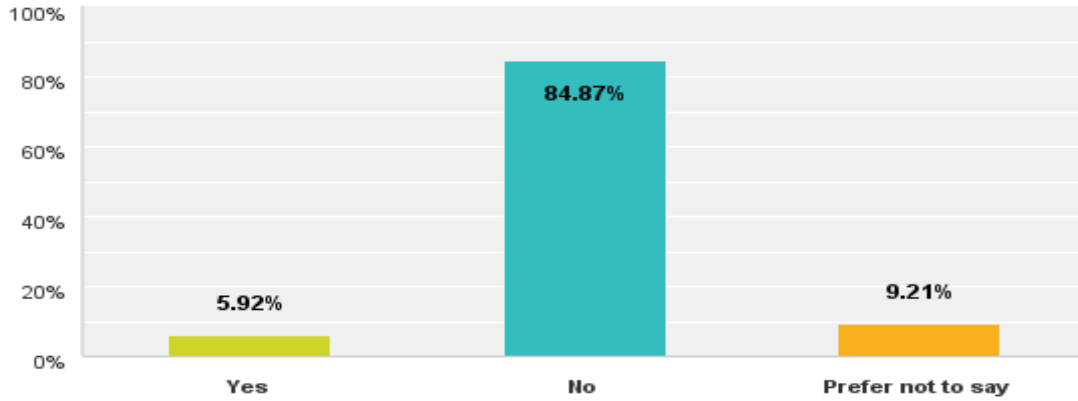
c) Ethnic Origin

Data shows that the **majority of respondents classed their ethnic origin as 'White' (86.42%)**. This profile is broadly similar to the last consultation and follows the pattern for average population data across Royal Berkshire, although there was an increase Black and Asian respondents. However, further work needs to be done to provide a representative response from these communities.



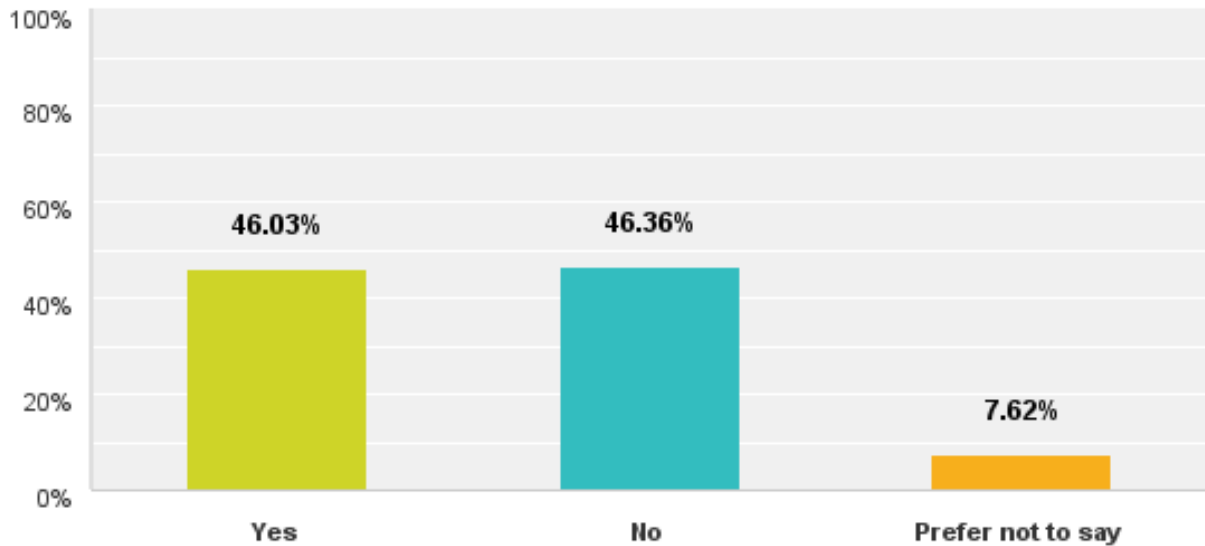
d) Disability

Data shows the **majority of respondents classed themselves as not having a disability (84.87%)**, with the minority of respondents classing themselves as having a disability (5.92%). The latter shows an increase in responses from this group compared to the IRMP 2015-19 consultation.



e) Employment

Data shows an almost **even split** between respondents identifying themselves as being employed by RBFRS (46.03%) and those who were not (46.36%).



Summary

Overall, the equality and diversity data collected for the response standards consultation **cannot be directly generalised to the entire population of Royal Berkshire**. For example, we received 326 responses from an estimated county population of 860,000 people. This equates to an overall population response rate of 0.04% to our consultation. However, we must take into account that the estimated population figure also includes children and young people who would not be able to respond. We also received 10 responses from representative bodies who were responding on behalf of more than one individual.

Secondly, although we saw an increase in the response from women- this does still not reflect an approximate 50/50 gender split between men and women in the general population.

However, the equality and diversity information showed that 86.42% of respondents classed their ethnic origin as 'White', which is similar to the overall estimate of Royal Berkshire (88.7% White). Similarly, 2.32% of respondents classed themselves as 'Black', which is also consistent with population data of Royal Berkshire (2.0% Black). We also saw an increase since the IRMP consultation in the response rate from individuals who class themselves as Asian, although we acknowledge that more work needs to be done to engage with more minority groups in following consultations.

There was also a relatively even distribution of responses from both people who work for RBFRS and those who don't (46.03% to 46.36%) which provides a reasonably balanced data set in this respect.

As previously stated, we aim to continuously improve our engagement methods and activities to ensure we reach all of our key stakeholders and provide a representative response to our consultations. In doing so, we can provide decision makers with the best information available so they can understand the impact of the choices they may make. We evaluate all our consultations at a mid way point and following its conclusion to monitor the effectiveness of our communications strategy. After the IRMP 2015-19 consultation, we noted that the response rate from some key groups could be improved and we adapted our strategy accordingly. This has resulted in an improvement in those areas as noted in Table 6. However, we recognise that despite this success there are still improvements to be made with other key groups to ensure we understand the views of all the communities across Royal Berkshire. We will be striving to achieve this in next consultation in the latter part of this year.

Table 6: Equality and diversity data illustrating improved response rate to the RS consultation

Group	% response to RS consultation	% response to previous IRMP consultation
Women	32.24%	23.74%
Young people (39 years and younger)	34.32%	29.35%
Ethnicity	2.32% Black/Black British 3.64% Asian/Asian British 1.99% Mixed	0.77% Black/Black British 1.64% Asian/Asian British 1.16% Mixed
Disability	5.92% Yes	2.75% Yes

5. Main Findings

The quantitative data reflects the responses drawn from the online Survey Monkey tool and face to face engagement with the public. Qualitative data gathered during the process of consultation is used in this report to reflect and illustrate stakeholder’s views and suggestions for each of the consultation proposals.

The questions that were put forward to the public for this consultation required respondents to make a choice between two preferred options for each proposal. This enabled us to gather an overall percentage of preference for each option for change. From this, we were able to observe the weight of opinion from respondents, i.e. the extent to which one option was preferred over another, if at all.

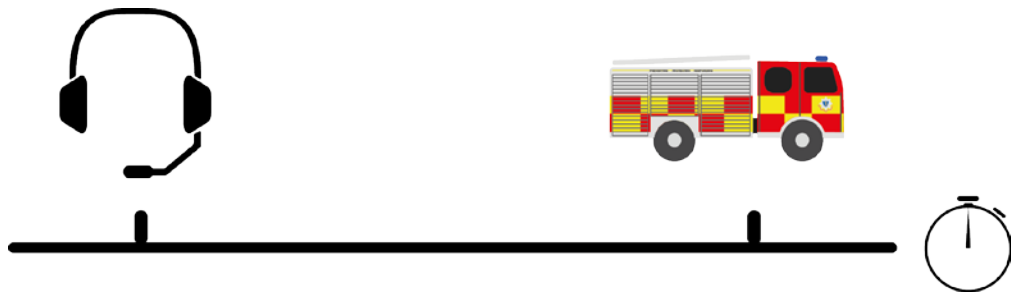
We used an open ended question for each proposal to enable us to analyse the reasons why respondents may have chosen each option. This enabled us to look for themes in the qualitative data and present these within this report as a narrative for each proposal.

The responses received from the Berkshire FBU, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service as listed in Appendices A, B and C.

Proposal 1: How should we measure the time taken to respond to an incident?

What we currently do:

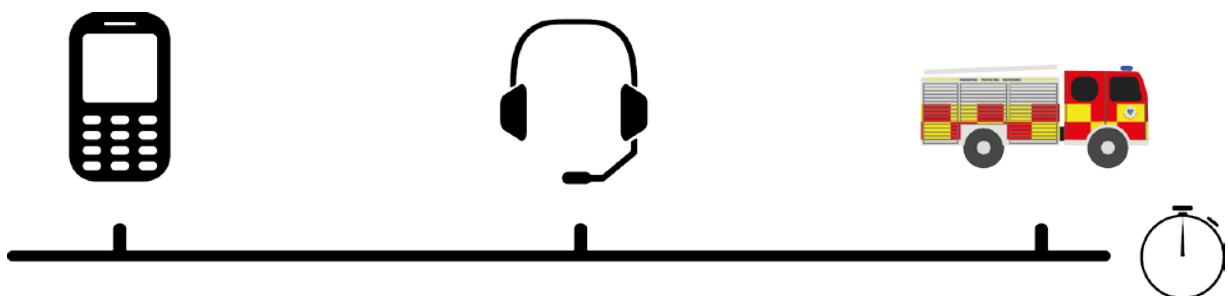
- Our standard measures an *attendance time*
- An *attendance time* is measured from the time a control operator alerts the crews at a fire station to the arrival of a fire engine at the incident



Or

Proposal for change:

- An alternative is that the standard measures *response times*
- A *response time* is measured from the time the **call is received by Control** to the time a fire engine arrives at the incident



Consultation Response

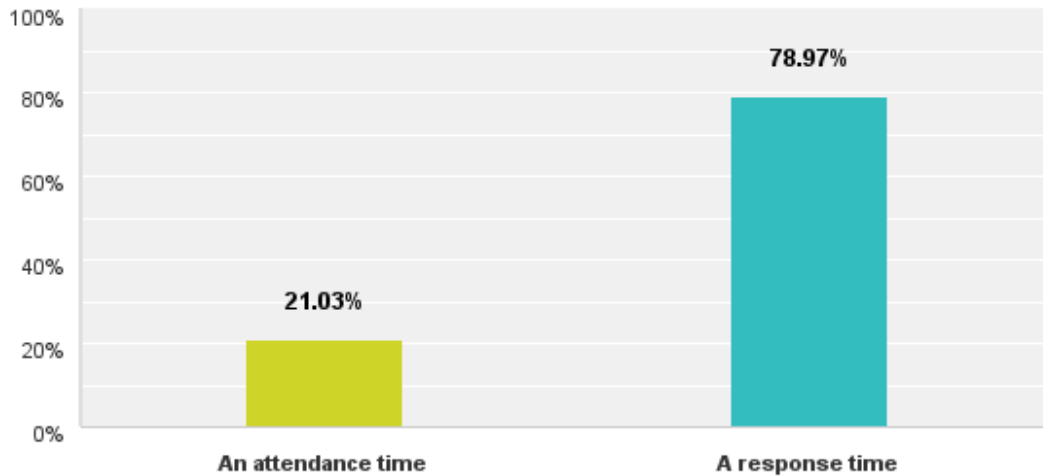
Data shows the majority of all respondents (78.97%) feel a 'response time' should be used to measure the time taken to respond to an incident. This is in comparison to the minority of respondents (21.03%) selecting an 'attendance time'.

Table 1: Number of responses for each option

Answered: 290 Skipped: 27

	Attendance Standard	Response Standard
Number of responses	61	229

Figure 1: Graph representing the percentage split of responses for each option



Qualitative Data:

- Overall, we received 168 qualitative responses to this question
- 28 comments referred to the preference for an ‘attendance time’
- 139 comments referred to the preference for a ‘response time’.

Response Time

A number of themes emerged that reflected why some respondents chose a preference for a ‘response time’. Mainly they felt that this was in line with **public expectation**, and that most individuals would **expect the time taken to respond to an incident to include the call handling time**:

“The time should start as soon as the call has been made, due to the person at the other end of the phone knowing the appliance is on its way rather than waiting for once the crew has departed the station.”

“In my opinion I would feel more assured and safer to know response is being measured as well. It would make me feel safer with this knowledge.”

“Easier for the public to understand. When they pick up a phone and call us, that’s when the clock starts in their mind.”

Some respondents also felt that a ‘response time’ was a **clearer and more accurate way of reporting** in comparison to attendance time:

“I believe that including all elements of RBFRS’s emergency call interaction will give a clearer performance picture and encourage an efficient and effective response to a community member in need”.

“To provide a more accurate response from the public contacting the Fire Service to the fire engine’s attendance at the incident”.

Lastly, some respondents also felt that using a ‘response standard’ would make it **easier to measure and analyse** RBFRS’ response performance:

“...allows us to monitor call handling and attendance times separately giving more specific ideas for performance review”.

“Providing a response time includes everything from the initial call to arriving on scene. Valuable minutes could be lost at any stage of the process and it is important to evaluate, address and improve this process.”

“This measure will allow measurement of the effectiveness of the process for mobilizing fire-engines.”

“It would allow greater comparability with other FRS’s and I believe ‘response time’ is how the vast majority of the public perceive this statistic anyway.”

Attendance Time:

Overall, those respondents who chose an ‘attendance time’ as their preferred option did so over concerns about **the impact that measuring ‘response times’ would have on the operator and control staff** who take their call:

“Persons in distress or alone may take longer to talk on the phone or may need help finding where they are. I believe that a response time rather than an attendance time widens the time frame severely and also puts undue pressure on control operators which as we know can lead to mistakes. With an attendance time, most of the fine details are known and resources are generally sent to the right place.”

“There could be time taken by an operator speaking to person before a crew is mobilized - not sure how you would measure this and don’t want to “rush” this process as may involve calming an individual down before finding out vital information.”

“I prefer to know total time rather than how long it takes to ask questions”.

Some respondents also felt that using an ‘attendance time’ would help **show the difference in response between whole-time and retained crew**:

“I believe we should stick to attendance time because it gives a true time scale that the crew within your area of the county are likely to take. It will show the difference between a whole time station and retained stations.”

“Some fire stations are part time so would not give a true reflection or rating using response time.”

Responses from Organisations

All of the responses gathered from the organisations detailed in the table on page 10 showed **agreement to the proposed change of measuring the time take to an incident as a ‘response time’**.

Summary

- The quantitative responses to this question show that the majority of people feel that the time taken to respond to an incident should be measured as a **‘response time’**.
- Qualitative data suggested that the respondents who chose the **‘response time’** option did so because they felt that this was a **clearer and more accurate** way of reporting in comparison to the attendance time, it is more **in line with public expectation** and would make it **easier to measure and analyse** RBFRS’ response performance.
- Qualitative data suggested that the respondents who chose the **‘attendance time’** option did so because they felt that including the call handling time in the response standard would have a **negative impact on control staff who take the call**, and that ‘attendance times’ would show a true **reflection of whole-time and retained crew responses**.

Proposal 2: What types of incidents should we report on?

Answered: 286 Skipped: 31

What we currently do:

- Our current attendance standard measures only those attendances to 'dwelling fires and road traffic collision (RTC) incidents'



Or

Proposal for change:

- The standard should include 'all emergency incidents'



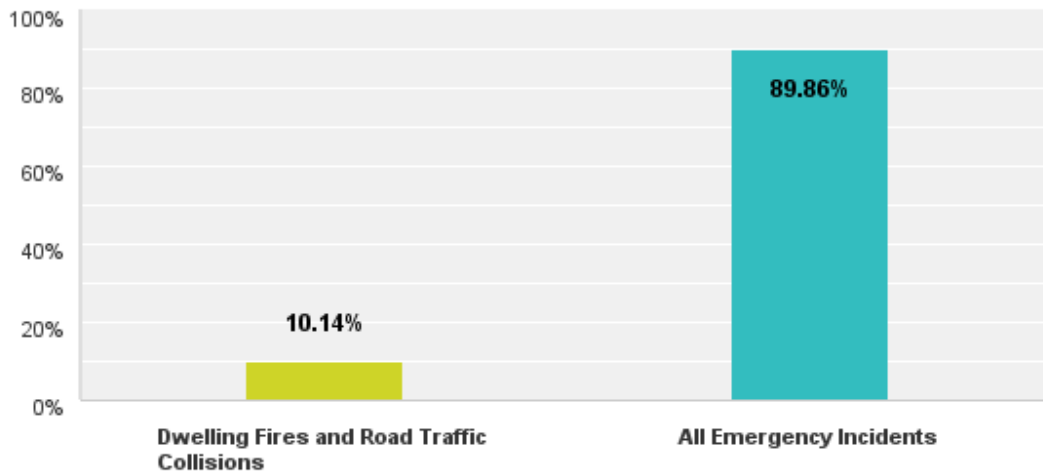
Consultation Response

Data shows the **majority of all respondents (89.86%)** feel that **'all emergency incidents' should be reported on**. This is comparison to the minority of all respondents (10.14%) who feel that **'dwelling fires and RTCs only'** should be reported on.

Table 3: Number of responses for each option

	Dwelling Fires and RTCs	All Emergency Incidents
Number of responses	29	257

Figure 3: Graph representing the percentage split of responses for each option



Qualitative Data:

- Overall, we received 163 qualitative responses to this question
- 13 comments related to the preference for ‘dwelling fires and RTCS’
- 149 comments related to the preference for ‘all emergency incidents’
- 1 comment remained uncategorised

Dwelling Fires and RTCs

The main themes that reflect why some of the respondents chose only ‘dwelling fires and RTCs’ to be included in the response standard was that they felt that these were **priority incidents** due to the potential risk for members of the public and our personnel involved:

“I have chosen this option under the guise of life threatening incidents rather than all in general. If a life is at risk or in danger of serious injury then this is where a time centered response should be measured.”

“The response times to dwelling and RTC (people related emergency) are far more important than response times to alarms or other non person related emergency.”

“Just stick to dwelling fires and RTC's - these are priorities”

“These are the incidents the general public most associate with fire & rescue services so most meaningful”.

All Emergency Incidents

A number of themes reflected why some respondents preferred the response standard to include ‘all emergency incidents’. Firstly, a large number of replies felt that **all emergency incidents are important and reporting on these would give a reflection of all the work RBFRS do:**

“It would allow the public to see ALL the different types of incidents the Brigade attends.”

“The role of the fire service is becoming more and more diverse. By reporting on all incident types this will help to highlight to work carried out by the FRS”.

“..gives a better reflection to the tax payer of the service we are paying for”.

Some respondents also felt that including all emergency incidents would be a **more accurate, clear and transparent way of reporting** the response standards to the public in comparison to an attendance standard:

“Comprehensive recording of all incidents attended”.

“I believe the community would like to know the range of incidents attended and how long it took to respond. It will also provide a clearer picture of work streams and feed into strategic planning deliberations on resource requirements.”

“A clearer understanding of our incident types and it would provide a truer attendance average”.

“Unfortunately we now live in a world where everything is measured, recorded and evaluated etc. If all emergency incidents are recorded it will provide valuable information to evidence performance, workload, justifying staff levels etc.”

Responses from Organisations

All of the responses gathered from the organisations detailed in the table on page 10 showed **agreement to the proposed change of including ‘all emergency incidents’** in the response standard.

Summary

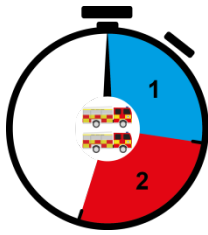
- The quantitative results showed that the majority of respondents feel that the response standard should include **'all emergency incidents'**.
- Qualitative data suggested that those respondents who chose **'all emergency incidents'** did so because they feel that this give a **truer reflection of the range of incidents that RBFRS' respond to**, and that this ensures information presented to the public is **clearer, accurate and more transparent** in comparison to only reporting on dwelling fires and RTCs.
- Qualitative data also suggested that those respondents who chose **only 'dwelling fires and RTCs'** to be measured in the response standard, felt that these were **priority incidents** which may pose a higher risk to the personnel and casualties involved, in comparison to including all emergency incidents.

Proposal 3: How many fire engines should be measured in the response standard?

Answered: 286 Skipped: 31

What we do currently:

- Our current measures: for dwelling fires, there is a two fire engine response standard and for RTCs a single fire engine response standard



Fires



RTCs

Or

Proposal for change:

- To be more consistent and align to the DCLG definition of a response standard, the response standard should measure the attendance of the first fire engine to arrive at an incident



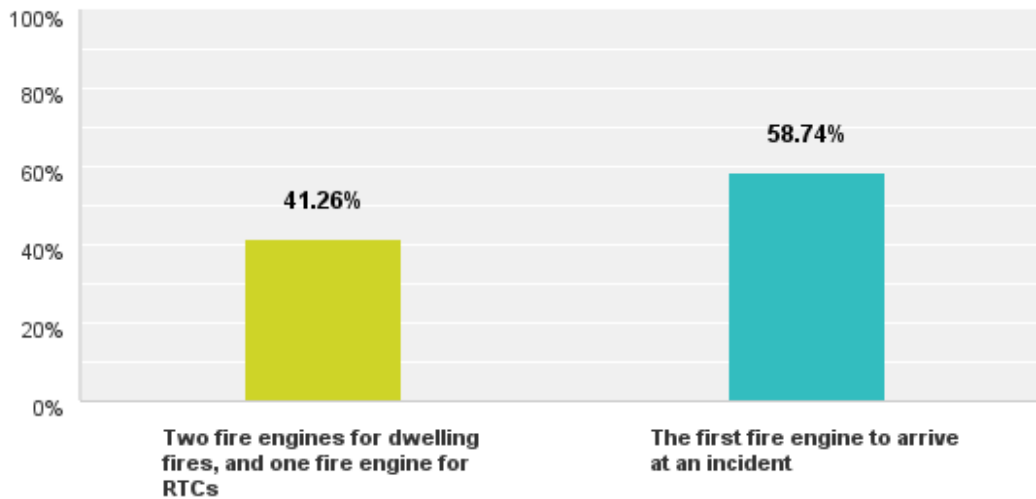
Consultation Response

Data shows the majority of all respondents (58.74%) feel that the first fire engine to arrive at an incident should be measured in the response standard. This is in comparison to the minority of respondents (41.26%) who feel that for dwelling fires, there should be a two fire engine response standard and for RTCs a single fire engine response standard.

Table 4: Number of responses for each option

	First and Second Engine (RTC/Dwelling Fires)	First Fire Engine
Number of responses	118	168

Figure 4: Graph representing the percentage split of responses for each option



Qualitative Data:

- Overall, we received 158 qualitative responses to this question
- 80 comments referred to the preference for a 'first and second fire engine' standard
- 76 comments referred to the preference for the 'first fire engine only' standard
- 1 response remained uncategorised

First and Second Engine (RTCs/Dwelling Fires)

Overall, qualitative data suggested that those respondents who showed preference for a 'first and second engine' to be measured in the response standard chose this option because they felt that **if an incident required this amount of resource, then this should be accounted for:**

"House fires require more fire engines and firemen so it's important they both get there with a required time".

"One fire engine may not be able to deploy a safe system of work so the arrival of second should be recorded as this will allow a safe system to be deployed and therefore recorded".

"Why wouldn't you measure the attendance time for all assets on the initial 999 call? Measuring just the first appliance is like you are trying to hide the facts. This would be careless and irresponsible".

A number of responses chose a preference for a two pump standard, as they felt in comparison; **a single pump standard would not provide enough resources**, particularly if changes were made to crewing levels:

"Simply having a resource in attendance does not mean there is sufficient crew there to deal with the incident appropriately".

"With a high probability of only have 4 crew on a fire engine, that's not enough personal for effective safe work. Only measuring the first appliance makes it too easy to justify lowering numbers of appliances to the detriment of staff and the public."

"I do not want to be left at a house fire as a sole OIC because control did not send/waiting to send/waiting for my 1st message/ sent a different appliance to keep cover in an area. As will happen if discretion is given to the length of time it takes for appliances to arrive. This has the potential for mistakes further down the line."

"With minimal crewing the second appliance getting there ASAP will be essential for saving savable life and savable property".

Respondents also felt that public would expect to know **how long each fire engine would take to arrive should they need this level of response:**

"The public needs to know exactly how many appliances are coming to assist."

"I think it should be two appliances for all appropriate incidents, I believe that people should know how long it will take for a full attendance of two appliances which due to crewing levels are often necessary for the successful outcome of any serious operational incident."

"I feel that I would want to know when all the help I need is going to arrive. I.e. If I need 2 fire engines then I want to know when they will be arriving, as obviously one isn't enough to deal with my incident if two are needed."

“I am assuming that two are sending because two are needed, therefore both count.”

“I believe that it is wrong to give response time which sounds reasonable to the public if in actual terms they might be misleading. With a single pump it is limited in its ability to deal with certain types of incidents. That is why we have a PDA. If we concentrate on single pump attendance /response times there will be little drive to make sure a second (or third for persons) will arrive in a reasonable time.”

First Fire Engine

A number of themes also emerged that suggested why some respondents chose a preference for the response standard to measure the ‘first fire engine’ only. Mainly, this was around the view that **the first fire engine would provide a sufficient immediate response** to begin to tackle the emergency:

“First response is crucial in my opinion, and then further resources will be deployed if necessary.”

“Once first crew is on scene the duty of care lies on them. They have the responsibility to act in a manner that promotes the best outcome regardless of how many of them are there. They're not going to sit and wait for the other crew to arrive so why should they be measured in relation to that.”

“I think it only really matters about the first engine to arrive as I am sure that one engine is usually sufficient for most calls.”

“As soon as the first crew arrives at the incident they will be carrying out some sort of activities to resolve the incident. The second engine will arrive to assist the first crew --- although important, it isn't as time critical as the attendance of the first appliance at most incidents.”

They also felt that **public expectation centres around the arrival of the first emergency help on scene:**

“As a member of the public, the first engine is the most important”.

“ The arrival of first fire engine is the most significant public event”

“It's better to know the sooner you'll get there.”

“Easier to understand 'first to all incidents'. It's what the public 'measures'. But must continue to provide safe systems of work.”

“For the public, the first appliance and crew is all they are concerned about. Internally, other measurement for additional resources is more important.”

Responses from Organisations

All of the responses gathered from the organisations detailed in the table on page 10 showed **agreement to the proposed change of reporting on the measurement of the ‘first fire engine’ only** in the response standard.

In particular, the Berkshire FBU commented:

“We can understand the need to simplify the response standard so it is easy for the public to understand. What should be made clear to the public is what a fully crewed fire engine is and this should be reflected in the wording of any future response standard.”

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service also stated:

“We agree with your proposal to measure the time taken for the first appliance to arrive at an incident. This is the approach used by us for our 10 & 20 minute attendance standards. However, note that we also set a 20 minute standard for the arrival of all appliances required under the relevant incident pre-determined attendance standard (PDA).”

Summary

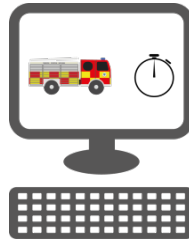
- Quantitative data showed that the **majority of respondents feel the ‘first fire engine’ only** should be measured in the response standard.
- Qualitative data suggested that the respondents who felt that **the ‘first fire-engine only’** should be included in the response standard did so because they think that **this would provide sufficient immediate response in the first instance** and that **this is in line with public expectation** when they call 999 for emergency assistance.
- Qualitative data also suggested that those who felt that both the **‘first and second fire engine’** should be included in the response standard did so because they think that **if an incident needs more than one fire engine then this should be measured** to be in line with **public expectation**.

Proposal 4: How should we express the reporting of our response standards?

Answered: 279 Skipped: 38

What we do currently:

- Our internal performance monitoring systems measure the attendance times of the fire engines for each station. This tells us when we have not met our expected attendance times

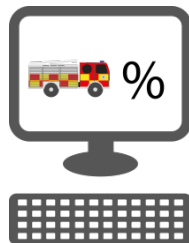


Or

Option for change:

- The response standard would be published as a **target** time and percentage, as this would create a more transparent and measurable reporting response standard
- This would be expressed as:

“We will target our operational response activities to arrive at incidents within ‘X’ minutes on ‘Y’ % of occasions.”



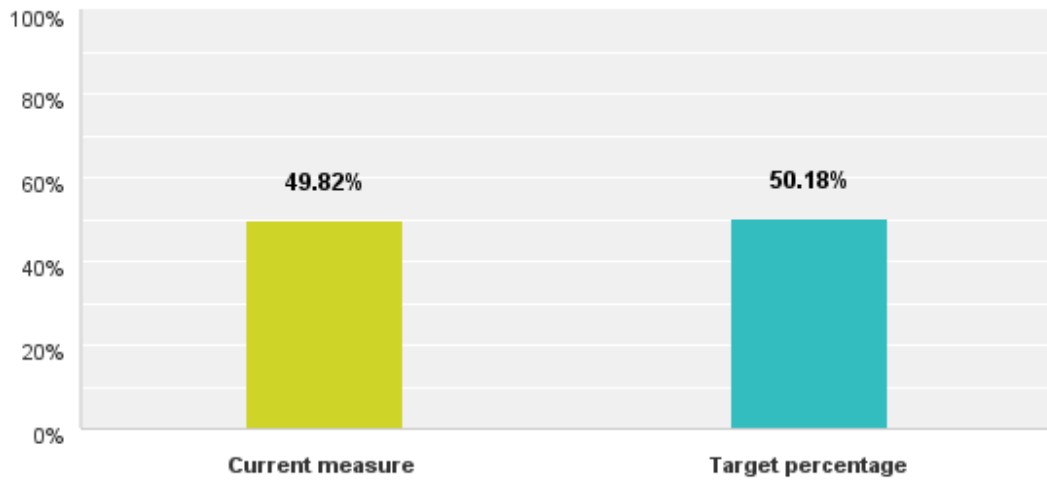
Consultation Response

Data shows a minimal difference **between respondents**. 49.82% of respondents feel that the response standards should be expressed using the current measure, where as 50.18% of respondents feel that the response standards should be expressed as a target percentage.

Table 5: Number of responses for each option

	Current Measure	Target Percentage
Number of responses	139	140

Figure 5: Graph representing the percentage split of responses for each option



Qualitative Data

- Overall, we received 148 qualitative responses to this question
- 68 responses referred to the preference to maintain the ‘current measure’
- 77 responses referred to the preference to use a ‘target percentage’
- 3 responses remained uncategorised

Current Measure:

The qualitative data suggested that those respondents who chose a preference for the reporting of response standards to be expressed using the 'current measure' felt that this was suitably **clear and accurate as it is and that there would be no logical reason to change:**

"The current system gives adequate and accurate information already so why change it? A target percentage almost gives space for slow response and excuses."

"Why change something that works?"

"Trust the fire service- we don't need targets"

"If attendance times are not being met, why change the way we monitor these so they are met. Surely RBFRS need to work on these attendance figures by strategically moving pumps so times can be met!"

"I believe that the current measure is adequate, you cannot determine minutes and occasions to respond to an incident. All incidents are different and should be recorded to evaluate performance etc."

A number of respondents also felt that using a '**target measure**' instead would be **misleading to the public** and contradict the aims of making the response standards clearer and transparent:

"Because like many members of the public, I do not fully understand percentage ratings."

"Percentages are misleading."

"Prefer to see the raw data, as some things could be hidden by %."

"Real times will be more useful and will provide clear information. A percentage system will not give a clear indication of performance."

Lastly, a number of responses felt that by changing to 'target measures' as opposed to keeping the current measure in place, **would create cuts in service if target aims were not met** and some station areas appeared to be underperforming:

"Targets mean cuts and essentially I feel there is no difference between the current measure and target. Both are the quickest they should be- plus you can't control for external variables with target percentages- this may skew data and public perceptions".

“I’m not sure I believe this one. Why not do what the Government does and use the RPI and the CPI and use the result that is cheapest for public funds. This looks like a request to provide figures that will result in less cost and therefore less assets to deploy. Use both but for the benefit of the public as stated not as a justification to reduce costs.”

“Current system is fine, targets will only lead to cuts in service and lives being further put at risk.”

“I believe this will give you more 'freedom' to move resources around for optimum cover in order to maintain 'best' attendance times”.

Target Percentage

In contrast, the qualitative data suggested that a number of respondents felt that using a ‘target measure’ would be a **better measure RBFRS’s performance, enabling targets to aim for and to identify areas for improvement:**

“Targets to aim for.”

“You need to know which stations and areas need improvement”.

“I believe we need a target response time. I don’t believe that we should put a percentage figure in as part of the target. We should aim to achieve the target 100% of the time. However we should report our achievement of meeting that time as a percentage i.e. 'We achieved our target response time on 90% of occasions'. We don’t want to confused the public by saying we met our target of 'arriving at incidents within X min on 80% of occasions', by only 60% of the time. Let’s keep it simple.”

“Easier for members of the public to grasp the figures and to compare performance year on year”

“More forward looking as a target, which we can then measure against and is more comparable when different variables are used.”

Lastly, some respondents felt that using a target measure **met public expectation and would be clearer and easier to understand:**

“A clear and transparent way to show your performance”.

“Communities and the people in RBFRS must have a single understanding of realistic performance targets for their local station. Crews must have an incentive to meet / exceed those targets given the nature of the service being provided”.

“More meaningful to understand local performance which may vary significantly across stations”.

“It is easier for the public to see exactly what service they will be receiving - and the likely waiting times for the FRS to arrive.”

“I feel this would appear more accurate, and easier to understand by the public.”

Responses from Organisations

The majority of the responses gathered from the organisations detailed in the table on page 10 **showed agreement to the proposed change of expressing the response standard as a ‘target percentage’**.

In particular, the Berkshire FBU responded with the following:

“We would welcome a response standard that is published as a percentage target but this should be a challenging one. Our preference would be that none of the options above 10 minutes are considered as these would only be picked due to looking good on paper and also would potentially be used for future cuts as the percentage has a long way to come down until it starts looking like a bad service.”

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service commented:

“We support your proposal to change to a target percentage as this aligns with our current approach to target setting. For your information our current standards are:

- *Achieve attendance with the first operational resource for all emergency incidents within 10 minutes on 80 per cent of occasions, and 99 per cent of all emergency incidents within 20 minutes; and,*
- *All pumping appliances required as part of the predetermined attendance arrive within 20 minutes on 90 per cent of occasions.”*

However, two of the representative bodies felt that the using the **current measure** to express the response standards would be more appropriate.

Specific feedback from these two responses are illustrated below:

“In my view it is confusing and does not provide the user any guarantee of a set level of service. You may get that level of service – you may not. I would support a response that guarantees a level of service 100% of the time even if the response time is longer. It would, in my view, be acceptable to tailor that response time on geography given response times are directly affected by the distance from the fire station. “

“Real times will be more useful and will provide a clear information. A percentage system will not give a clear indication of performance.”

Summary:

- Quantitative data showed an **almost even split between respondents** who felt that reporting of the response standards should be expressed using either the **current measure or a target percentage**.
- Qualitative data shows that those respondents who felt the ‘**current measure**’ should be used to express the response standard information do so as they think that this measure is **already clear and accurate** and there is **no valid reason to change**. Secondly, they also felt that in comparison, a target percentage would be misleading and potentially lead to cuts in the service provided by RBFRS.
- Qualitative data showed that those respondents who felt that a **target percentage** should be used to express response standard information did so because they feel that this would **provide targets for RBFRS to aim towards, identify areas for improvement** and that a target measure would be **more in line with public expectation** and **clearer to understand** in comparison to an attendance time.

Lastly, we also asked respondents that in light of the information in our response standards consultation document and the four proposals for change to the way we define and report our response standards, do you feel there is anything else we should consider in light of these matters?

The general feedback from respondents was very varied and wide ranging; as such it was difficult to generalize themes emerging from this data which did not already capture the feedback in relation to the specific proposals. However, a sample of responses are illustrated below:

“The weight of the response (number of crews/personnel attending) is as important as the speed of the response.”

“Resilience associated with available ‘weight of attack’ needs to be monitored. If we only focus our attention on first-strike pumps, how do we assure ourselves, the Fire Authority and the public that we have the resources necessary to deal with large scale incidents on the rare occasions that they happen?”

“There is no mention of reporting the use of fire engines from other counties to deal with emergencies in Berkshire. If a fire engine from Surrey or Hampshire is regularly used to attend areas of Berkshire this should be reported. Equally if Berkshire fire engines are regularly used in Oxfordshire then that should also be reported.”

“Yes. Where you have retained stations, when they are mobilized a second whole time pump should be mobilized at the same time every time. This will effectively make every retained pump the second attendance as the whole time pump will already be 7 mins in front and more than likely reach an incident in the allotted 8 mins. This could allow you to recruit more retained personnel from just outside the 6 min zone. Thus having better availability to attend incidents.”

“On a separate point, thanks for consulting, and the infographics in the consultation document make it easy to understand.”

“I hope RBFRS listen to the voices of those who will be affected and take into account these views.”

“Showing a clear indication of our performance against other FRSs. On its own it’s pretty meaningless. We could be the worst or best FRS for response times in the UK, the public would never know.”

“Nope, I think all emergency services do a fantastic job and are under so much pressure it’s sometimes unfair as we are hit with Unreachable targets sometimes!”

“Cut down the paperwork the public are aware of how hazardous the work is and the stress involved, paper pushing is one less item they should worry about simple templates with tick boxes are enough for anyone to gather the stats that are sought after.”

6. Final Summary and Next Steps

This report has illustrated the statistical quantitative data from the response standards consultation. It reflects the overall trend of responses from all the stakeholders who responded via the online survey tool, as well as the qualitative themes which emerged from respondent feedback.

This consultation saw an increased an improvement in responses from different groups in the community of Royal Berkshire and we would like to thank all those who took part by providing their valuable feedback.

As previously stated, we aim to continuously improve our engagement methods and activities to ensure we reach as many of our key stakeholders as possible and provide a representative response to our consultations. However, we recognise that despite this success there are still improvements to be made with other key groups to ensure we understand the views of all the communities across Royal Berkshire. We will be striving to achieve this in next consultation in the latter part of this year.

We also feel that every effort has been made to ensure that all of consultation material was accessible to the general public of Royal Berkshire and staff members of RBFRS alike. We have received positive feedback from some stakeholders around the presentation of our documents and the use of graphics to help illustrate the consultation options in this document. However, we still feel strongly about continuous improvement

of our consultation information material and the delivery of this. If you have any suggestions of how we could improve this further, please don't hesitate to get in contact with us using the contact details below.

What happens next?

This report will be presented to RBFA at a meeting on 17 August 2016 where Fire Authority members will consider these findings. A video of the meeting showing the consideration of the feedback and the decisions made by the Fire Authority will be published on our website at www.rbfrs.co.uk.

As part of the continuing IRMP 2015-2019 consultation process, RBFA and RBFRS are currently shaping the proposals for their next consultation, due to launch in Autumn this year. This consultation will centre on future service delivery and service re-design.

RBFA will meet on 19 October 2016 to agree the proposals and following this our next consultation will launch on 24 October 2016. Full details will be made available on the consultation page via our website www.rbfrs.co.uk.

Contact Details

We value your feedback, views, ideas and opinions. There are a number of ways that you can get in contact with us:



You can respond visit our website www.rbfrs.co.uk



You can write to us with your comments, ideas or views at:
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, IRMP Consultation, Newsham Court,
Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 7SD



You can email us at irmp@rbfrs.co.uk



You can telephone 0118 938 4331 and leave us a message



You can visit your local station and discuss any issue you have with the duty crew



You can follow us on social media – both Twitter and Facebook

Appendix A: FBU response



RESPONSE STANDARDS CONSULTATION

July 2016

Introduction

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) welcomes the opportunity to be consulted on response standards.

The FBU's comments are intended to be constructive and based on the principles contained within its IRMP Framework document which has in the past; been distributed to RBFA Members and RBFRS Senior Management.

Response standards are ultimately one of the most important aspects of the fire and rescue service, having an impact on both the lives of the Public and Firefighter safety. It does not take any graphs, stats or statements to realise that the quicker a fully crewed fire appliance arrives at the scene of any emergency the better the outcome for the public.

In an ideal world without financial constraints we would have a fire appliance on every corner, however realistically we must work with a realistic public affordability. With this in mind it is important to realise that currently the fire and rescue service provides a 24/7 all emergency response with a cost to the public of just £1 per week per person.

The FBU are pleased to see that after years of pointing out the inadequacy of what RBFRS was reporting on that this has finally been put forward for change. It has taken a peer review to point this out before change was considered, but we would like to think that once again the FBU was right about a problem and should have been listened to earlier.

Whatever standard we end up with from this and future consultations it should be clear to the public, easy to understand and not be used as a tool to make frontline cuts. We should at the very least be looking to maintain what we achieve now and the service the public receive.

Executive Summary

Overall we welcome the change to a response standard rather than an attendance standard. As previously mentioned we believe that whatever standard is set it should at least match what we do now, if anything it should challenge RBFRS to achieve better.

Changing to an all incidents standard makes sense as it will reflect the vital work that Firefighters carry out in making a difference to people's lives every day at a variety of incidents. Having said this it would be nice to see RFBA pressuring central government for funding to carry out these non statutory duties, the FBU seems to be the lone voice in doing this.

We urge caution in changing to a single appliance response standard; it needs to be clear in the response standard that the first appliance is a fully crewed fire engine. The minimum definition of this to us is an appliance crewed with 4 Professional Firefighters and this should be made clear to the public. Although we understand the need for simplicity in reporting to the public, therefore only having a single appliance standard; we seek reassurances that the additional appliances are not just monitored internally but reported in an auditable format viewable to all at anytime.

We welcome the introduction of a target response standard that is clear for the public to measure RBFRS performance, we will totally oppose though if the target is set just because it looks good i.e. 12 minutes in 85% of the time. We believe the target should be set to challenge RBFRS and improve on what we do now.

Proposal 1

We 100% back the move to measuring response times instead of attendance times, we would advise that the individual elements that make up the overall response time are monitored and reported on locally.

Proposal 2

We welcome the change to an all incident standard as this better reflects the life saving interventions that fully crewed fire engines make outside of the statutory duties of RBFA. RBFA should not lose sight though of the reasons for having an optimal response time to dwelling fires and Road Traffic Collisions. The response times to dwelling fires and RTCs should also be reported to the public and reported on internally.

Proposal 3

We can understand the need to simplify the response standard so it is easy for the public to understand. What should be made clear to the public is what a fully crewed fire engine is and this should be reflected in the wording of any future response standard.

Proposal 4

We would welcome a response standard that is published as a percentage target but this should be a challenging one. Our preference would be that none of the options above 10 minutes are considered as these would only be picked due to looking good on paper and also would potentially be used for future cuts as the percentage has a long way to come down until it starts looking like a bad service.

Appendix B: Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire & Rescue Service Response to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Response Standards Consultation 25 July 2016

Proposal 1: How should we measure the time taken to respond to an incident?

We agree with your proposal to change to measuring the time that the call is received through to time of arrival at the incident. However, we are of the view that you should also preserve the ability to measure and report on the call handling time and attendance time as subsets of the overall measure.

Proposal 2: What types of incident should we report on?

We agree with your proposal to include all emergency incidents as this is the approach used by us and will improve consistency of reporting across the Thames Valley area.

Proposal 3: How many fire engines should be measured in the response standard?

We agree with your proposal to measure the time taken for the first appliance to arrive at an incident. This is the approach used by us for our 10 & 20 minute attendance standards. However, note that we also set a 20 minute standard for the arrival of all appliances required under the relevant incident pre-determined attendance standard (PDA).

Proposal 4: How should we express the reporting of our response standards?

We support your proposal to change to a target percentage as this aligns with our current approach to target setting. For your information our current standards are:

- Achieve attendance with the first operational resource for all emergency incidents within 10 minutes on 80 per cent of occasions, and 99 per cent of all emergency incidents within 20 minutes; and,
- All pumping appliances required as part of the predetermined attendance arrive within 20 minutes on 90 per cent of occasions.

Appendix C: Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Response to Response Standards Consultation



HAMPSHIRE
FIRE AND
RESCUE
SERVICE

We make life safer

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority – Response Standards Consultation

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on your consultation.

We have no specific comments to make on the response standards themselves as they are a matter for you and your local communities. We have detailed what Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service does in each proposal just for your information, not to say that this is right for Royal Berkshire, or what you should consider.

Proposal 1 – Hampshire reports its Response Standards as the time from when the station is alerted to the time the fire engine arrives at an incident. We do however also measure, monitor, and manage the time of call to the alert to the station and the turn out times.

Proposal 2 – We report on the whole range of incidents that we attend. However we have different targets for critical, non critical and non-emergency incident types.

Proposal 3 – Hampshire measures the attendance time of the first fire engine only.

Proposal 4 – Hampshire's response standards are made up of three categories:

- Critical response (8/80) - An appliance will be in attendance within 8 minutes, 80% of the time, where there is risk to life or property.
- Non-critical response (15/100) – 15 minutes where no apparent threat to life or major risk to property, 100% of the time.
- Non-emergency response (60/100) - 60 minutes for a single officer to give expertise on a situation that may require further fire service intervention, 100% of the time.