

Appendix 2

Questionnaire for completion by Fire and Rescue Authority

Section1: Recruitment of firefighters

1 (a). Do you plan future recruitment according to the following factors?
(please tick as appropriate):

Predicted rates of staff turnover	✓
Promotions	
Overall number of firefighters needed as per your Integrated Risk Management Plan	✓
Likely task/role changes	
Advancement of technology	✓
Other (Please specify)	

1 (b) Please attach a copy of your recruitment plans if available



Workforce Planning
Strategy v4.doc

2. Are there any other factors you take into account in planning recruitment?

Integrated risk management plan
Response model
Attendance times
Crewing levels
Equality and diversity strategy.
Positive Action

3 (a). Do you place a cap on the number of applications per vacancy?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	✓ We have an efficient sifting processes which allows us to capture the widest range of applicants

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

3 (b). If YES, please give details on how such a cap is decided

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4 (a). Are vacancies advertised for a specified period of time?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

4 (b) If YES, please give details on length of period and method of advertising

Normally 2 weeks via the internet

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

Not at all	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Prevention of recruiting above the basic entry grade	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prevention of setting academic entry standards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of firefighters recruited	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contracted working hours, i.e. full or part time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rigid pay structure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of fire staff to do non-operational roles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of assessment centres	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify) We believe there is an opportunity to enhance recruitment through improvements in the Grey Book. For example we have arrangements for flexible working policies.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

6 (a). Do you operate a graduate recruitment scheme?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

6 (b) If you do not operate a graduate recruitment scheme, please state why?

Our existing recruitment processes attracts the widest range of applicants in line with our personal qualities and attributes, which includes graduates.

7) Please detail your selection criteria for external recruitment.

Application process – minimum requirement of 2 x GCSE grade C (or equivalent) inc Mathematics and English.

Online psychometrics inc. situational awareness, working with numbers, dealing with information.

Written tests – psychometrics inc. situational awareness, working with numbers, dealing with information. Written PQA assessment.

Practical tests – National Firefighter Selection tests – ladder climb, casualty evacuation, manual dexterity, confined space, equipment carry. Also include ladder carry (grip test)

Interview and Briefing – PQA and knowledge based interview, briefing exercise – delivering key information verbally to an audience.

Medical Examination – health screening plus gas analysis fitness assessment

Pre employment checks – references, criminal records check, eligibility to work in the UK

Section 2: Promotion of firefighters

8. Please give details of your selection criteria for internal promotion

IPDR Individuals wishing to enter development for the next band will discuss their intentions with their line manager within their IPDR. Line manager considers with the individual how they are performing consistently in their role, demonstrating competence, talent, the ability to deliver excellence and the potential to operate confidently above current role requirements.

Development Line Managers use a tailored approach to development and utilise a wide range of opportunities which might include work shadowing, secondment, project work and management development programmes etc.

Individual and Line Manager consider which activities to include in a personal development plan in order to achieve the knowledge, understanding and experience required.

We have also developed the Progression Model for both Grey and Green book employees to provide clarity and consistency in the way in which people are selected and developed as they move between roles and to different levels in the Service.

Selection Access to application for entry to each management band is achieved by each individual undertaking on-going Workplace assessment with their line Manager to include an assessment of behaviours (Personal Qualities and Attributes) and demonstration of competence in current role.

Individuals are required to pass the appropriate level Assessment Centre and role specific selection process to be considered for conditional or substantive appointment.

When a vacancy becomes available, each position is advertised on the intranet and includes an advertisement which describes the position and entry requirements, the skills and knowledge requirements of the role, the types of activity related to the position and the personal qualities required. The advertisement also includes details of the application process.

The process used for selection is based on the behaviours and job requirements of the role. A range or combination of selection methods are used to provide a broad assessment of each individual and ensure that the highest performing applicant is selected.

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

9. Do you think it would be beneficial following a promotion process or development discussion to give individuals the opportunity to move to different...

Please tick.

...Authorities?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
...Stations?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
...Watches?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 3. Crewing policy

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

We use a combination of four mechanisms which we bring together as an evidence base for assessing appropriate staffing levels:

Assessment of Risk (and demand)

Options for delivery/Cost

Public Consultation

Fire Authority approval in accordance with our Constitution

These integrated and inter-dependant mechanisms combine to determine our Service Delivery Model, which we use in determining how we prevent, protect and respond to our communities.

To get an understanding on how we assess risk please see embedded document entitled '*What risk means to us*'. This will provide an overview of our approach to assessing risk and how we intend to match our resources to respond to these risks.

To help us understand local risk we have worked with an external risk modelling company to understand how we can most effectively position our resources to:

- > achieve the right weight of attack to an incident to provide the right balance of resources, and
- > deliver prevention and protection activities and advise on what crewing levels best support this.



WhatRiskMeans.pdf

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

As part of continued self- scrutiny on our journey to achieving excellence we have analysed our risk map and introduced a number of measures such as our Brigade Response Vehicles and flexible staffing model as solutions to the reducing number of firefighters. We have tested a range of scenarios to understand the right weight of attack to send to incidents using our new fleet arrangements.

We are legally required to provide a balanced budget and as such this will be critical in informing and shaping our options when considering our service delivery model. In order to respond to continual budget reduction we have been innovative and responsive to change resulting in our current model.

In order to ensure that we respond in the quickest time to the most significant emergencies, which involve significant risk to life or property, we have categorised our incidents and deployed our resources in closest proximity to and in greater density to the highest risk areas. We have therefore placed our 38 fire stations, the numbers of which are determined by the Fire Authority as set out in our Constitution, our 41 traditional fire engines and 19 smaller Brigade Response Vehicles and our 1,322 whole time firefighters based upon this evidence in order to provide an assertive, safe and effective service delivered to our communities.

As a metropolitan service how we deliver our services has not been without the challenges of what we believe were disproportionate cuts to central government grant funding to Metropolitan FRS'. More than 50% of the country's professional firefighters are provided by the Mets who cover the largest areas of risk outside of London in terms of fire and road traffic accidents, flooding and terrorism in addition to providing half of the country's national resilience to major incidents. WMFS successfully delivered against a 26% (£21m) cut in central government grant funding over the period 2011–2015 without affecting front line delivery with the Mets together having absorbed 62% of the budgetary cuts outside of London in the first 2 years of the reductions.

We have long placed great emphasis on meaningful consultation with our communities, practices recommended by the Cabinet Office Principles to consultation dated November 2013, in order that we remain constantly aware of what is expected of us – the highest possible attendance times, expectations which are endorsed by the Fire Authority.

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

Please see 10(a)

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

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Questions 10a and 10b are factors that significantly contribute to an Operational Service Delivery model. We believe that our current service delivery model is as lean as possible and balances excellent service to the communities in a value for money way as set by the budgetary constraints.

Consistency should be applied as outlined in the Act or National Framework contributed to by meaningful consultation and underpinned by enabling legislation for a Fire Authority to set a budget, scrutinise and monitor performance.

This process is currently hampered by the manner and mechanisms which Central Government use to make their decisions. Central government should make evidence-based decisions based on risk when varying the government grant awarded to each FRS. This will ensure appropriate recognition that there is more than one approach to delivering a value for money FRS which meets the expectations of its community and the requirements of the national framework and associated legislation.

Central government's ability to cap council tax is a barrier to change, which should be left to be decided at a local level in the line with the localism ideology

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

Benefits are; the provision of services based on risk whilst being accountable to the public via consultation and governance. In addition the approach enshrines and enables the Localism Act.

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

See 10(a).

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

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

11 (b) If YES, please provide details:

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[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Section 4: Use of on-call firefighters

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

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

12(b) If NO, please may you state why? (Then skip to Section 5)

We employ whole time firefighters who provide specialist services to us in an additional retained capacity as well as supporting other Brigades on a retained basis.

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

Integrated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Separate	<input type="checkbox"/>

What benefits or challenges of this approach have you observed:

The benefits of integrating our resources in this way ensures that we do not need secondary resources to deliver services thereby managing budgets effectively and saving on duplicated costs of training, equipment, uniforms and avoiding compromising of response times.

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

Normal hours available per month	Example DIM Support Advisors –
Normal hours required for drill nights/ training	Required to take on 8 hours of training per month which is contractually specified.

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

Poor response to recruitment campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor standard of applicants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public perception	<input type="checkbox"/>
Union tensions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimum expected response times	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor interaction with whole time crews	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer resistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level of remuneration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level of commitment required	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of awareness of on-call system	<input type="checkbox"/>
No barriers –	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Please provide details if any of the above apply

Based on a value for money enhancement of our service delivery model.

Section 5. Grey/Gold Book

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

The current graded pay structure is appropriate to the provision of current services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The graded pay structure works sometimes but Fire and Rescue Authorities need more flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/>
The graded pay structure coupled with national terms and conditions needs fundamental change to ensure FRSs have the required flexibility to meet the future needs of the service and communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

To complete – more flexibility?

16) Which of the following statements do you believe applies to GOLD BOOK employees?

The current pay structure is appropriate to the provision of current services	<input type="checkbox"/>
The pay structure works sometimes but should be applied either more consistently or flexibly across differing authorities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The pay structure needs fundamental change to ensure value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

The Gold book currently affords opportunities for two pay increases whereas the Grey book affords one.
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[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

17 (a). Do the 'grey book' and 'role maps' provide appropriate flexibility in the way you manage the existing service?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

17 (b) If NO, what are the issues? (please tick as appropriate)

Operational management/ decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>
People Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of latent capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Co-responding with other emergency services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fear of legal action	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Could local terms and conditions enable services to improve the outcomes and value for money to local communities? Please tick

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To enhance, not replace
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

19 (a). When a member of staff is injured at work or is taken ill, what are the procedures that follow in regards to sign off, sick pay and level of absence? Please provide details.

WMFS have some of the best attendance standards in the country due to effective application of our attendance management policy.
Please find attached the attendance management policy for further details.



H:\0501 Attendance
Management Policy.p

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

19(b). Are the current conditions of service a barrier in this process?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Opportunities exist for enhancement.

Section 6. Collaboration with other services

20. Have you explored joint training opportunities with other Fire and Rescue Authorities?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

21 (a). Have you pursued co-responding with other emergency services?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

21 (b) If NO, to one or both of the above, then what were the reasons for not doing so? (Please tick all that apply)

Role Maps do not allow it	<input type="checkbox"/>
Representative body resistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fear of legal action	<input type="checkbox"/>
No clear leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extra burden on the service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not a priority	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Please provide details if any of the above apply

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22 (a). Have you explored sharing your estate with other emergency service providers?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

22 (b) If NO, is this the result of an issue related to the grey book?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please Comment:

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23. Have you explored any other opportunities for more closely integrated/ joint working with other fire and rescue services or other organisations?

Please provide comments:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• shared fire control• joint training• ICT• ambulance on stations• regional Fire Investigation• regional scientific advisors• policy work eg BA and ESMCP• support services• Pension boards

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Section 7. Industrial relations

24. How do you rate the effectiveness of the National Joint Council as a means of making decisions and resolving disputes?

Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat effective	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all effective	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify) Our limited exposure to this experience has been positive. We acknowledge through the LGA's response to the Review Chair that the processes for national dispute are aimed at assisting fire authorities to applying change by working to obtain the agreement of the trade unions in a harmonious manner with minimal impact on relations and services.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

25 (a). If you answered 'very effective' or 'somewhat effective' what you do you consider the key strengths of the National Joint Council?

N/A

25 (b). If you answered 'somewhat effective' or 'not at all effective' what do you consider the key weaknesses of the National Joint Council?

N/A

26. Does the National Joint Council represent the views of employing authorities effectively?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

If not, then please give details why and how this could be improved.

27. What has been the impact of strike action on your operations? (Not limited to the current industrial dispute over Pensions)

WMFS have been unable to fulfil its full commitment to its communities through our risk based response model or prevention and protection activities. We have a rigorously developed Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and the impact of the strikes is that we cannot apply it.

We have had to activate our business continuity plans to provide limited emergency response through our resilience cover, which has largely consisted of non-striking personnel, predominantly made up of middle and senior managers. We have not been able to perform training or prevention based activities during periods of strike action.

We therefore increase risk during strike action.

28 (a). Do you think firefighters should have the right to:

Strike	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strike, but legally required to return to duty in certain circumstances	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/> See Statement
Take industrial action short of strike	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/> See Statement
Be required to maintain a skeleton emergency service to the public in the event of strike action.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/> See Statement
Be required to give more than 7 days' notice of strike action during a dispute.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/> See Statement

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

28 (b) If the answer to the last question is yes, how much notice should be given to allow an Authority to prepare for strike action?

See Statement

29 (a). Should current return to work arrangements during industrial action be legally formalised?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See Statement

29 (b). If yes, who should be held accountable for this arrangement?

Local Employer	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A See Statement
Relevant trade union	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statement:

The West Midlands Fire Authority recognises the right of the firefighter's to strike. During the recent industrial action WMFS have, through working closely with our representative bodies, developed an enhanced agreement through discussions with the FBU based upon the national agreement between the FBU and DCLG.

This enhanced agreement provided the Service with the ability to recall firefighters who were partaking in industrial action to work in the event of a large incident that would put members of the public at risk and stretch contingency arrangements to an acceptable level. We are happy to share this approach.

30. What industrial relations training do you provide for your managers/employees (by grade)? Please give specific details.

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Service Support and Employee Relations provide some coaching and advising to managers and this particular activity is covered to some extent in The Effective Manager Series, which would satisfy IPDS development module 007 Employee Relations. All activities identified on e-academy have been approved by the Ops People Lead.

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

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY.
PLEASE REMEMBER TO SAVE IT AND THEN EMAIL IT TO
Neeta.Patel-Keena@communities.gsi.gov.uk

PLEASE RETURN BY FRIDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2014