

On Call Conference 2021

Research findings

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Cheshire
Fire & Rescue Service



NFCC
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Chiefs Council

Research question

Exploring the motivational factors that contribute to a long-term strategy for a sustainable on call fire-fighting model:

A case study of the United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Service (UKFRS).

Masters in Business Administration



Literature Review

“The retained service is nationally around 20 per cent short of complement and finds it hard to attract recruits unlike the full-time service”. Bain (2002)

“It is an invaluable, cost-effective service”. Knight (2013)

“...a lack of professional experience in areas such as research, marketing and ultimately recruitment”. Home Office (1991)



Survey Participants

A total of 407 successful responses were submitted to the electronic survey.

Of those 407 responses, 94.8% of respondents completed 100% of the questions and 5.2% completed at least 75% of the questions.

Responses were recorded from 23 of the 46 (50%) Fire and Rescue Services across the UK.



Make up of participants

91.9% of respondents worked the On Call duty system

7.1% of respondents identified as female.

90.4% of respondents identified as male.

2.5% of respondents preferred not to disclose gender.

The age range of participants ranged from 18-55+.

There was an even spread of length of service from less than one year to 20 years +.

Over 25% had completed either 1-6 years or 20+ years.



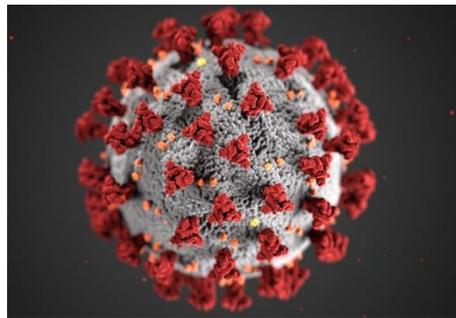
Focus Group Participants

5 firefighters currently working the On Call duty system.

The Coronavirus pandemic impact.

A single focus group interview.

Physical, virtual and remote participants.



Links to volunteering

Volunteering or paid?

West and Murphy (2016)

Is the principle the same?



Motivations

3 most important reasons for joining	Frequency	%
To serve and protect my community	341	83.8
For the excitement and personal challenge	258	63.4
For job satisfaction	185	60.5
To earn extra money	161	39.6
To learn new skills	127	31.2
To progress to a wholetime role	68	16.7
To maintain my fitness	24	5.9
To carry on a family tradition	23	5.7
For kudos and recognition	15	3.7



Ongoing commitment

Question	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither Agree nor Disagree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Total Responses
Protect community	24.3	53.1	17.4	4.7	0.5	407
Financial reward	28.5	39.6	12.5	16.0	3.4	407
Join wholetime	17.9	42.3	27.0	10.1	2.7	407



Reality check

Barriers to individuals remaining as an On Call Firefighter included:

Pay in comparison to hours of availability and a lack of operational incidents.

81.8% of respondents reported that the On Call duty system requires a different management approach to the wholetime duty system.

57.5% of respondents reported a lack of understanding of the social and domestic challenge faced by On Call firefighters.

62.9% of respondents also felt that managers still did not understand the cultural differences experienced by On Call firefighters.



Recommendations

A need to explore methods of financial support to On Call firefighters.

Enhanced recognition to On Call firefighters, their families and primary employers who release their staff to carry out the role.

The removal of barriers to progression to wholetime employment.

The management arrangements for those who work the On Call duty system in the UKFRS.

Enhancing the “offer” of what becoming an On Call firefighter involves, highlighting the need to consider what early support is required and the development pathways available.



Thank you

“The on-call model needs attention to make it work now and in the future...this includes providing greater flexibility in working arrangements and considering other incentives, such as financial...while we recognise the difficulties involved, Services need to find more innovative ways to develop and maintain the skills of these firefighters”.

HMICFRS State of Fire and Rescue report (2019)

