



COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

24 SEPTEMBER 2018

CULTURAL SURVEY

REPORT OF HEAD OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the findings of the second cultural survey conducted by Durham University Business School (DUBS) in April 2018.

Background

2. The Service, in collaboration with DUBS, launched its first cultural survey in October 2016 to study the impact of a range of workplace factors and how this affects service delivery to the public. To gain an independent, credible view of the culture of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS), this work was undertaken by Dr Les Graham who has worked with approximately 36 police forces nationally, including Durham Constabulary, on collaborative research projects studying '*Service excellence in the policing profession*', in which organisational culture plays a significant part. The projects have been very successful and identified by the Home Office as best practice. The survey applies academic rigour to benchmark our culture and enable it to be tracked over time.
3. From the results, an action plan was developed by the Service to design and deliver interventions which could make positive impacts on workplace culture, in particular the three areas which were highlighted from the 2016 survey as areas of focus. These areas were: perceived organisational support; procedural justice (fairness); and co-worker undermining behaviour.
4. In April 2018, the second cultural survey was launched. A paper survey was circulated to all employees to measure workplace factors, staff attitudes, motivation, wellbeing and leadership. The survey also included a co-worker survey whereby employees were asked to rate behaviours they regularly viewed from their fellow co-worker. Responses were collected over a four-week period from 30 April to 31 May 2018. In total, 366 responses (65.5%) were received which is an increase in responses from the 2016 survey (58.6%), the co-worker survey received 319 responses (57.1%).
5. To enable analysis of the data over time and measure change in an individual's behaviour and their perceptions, the Service will continue to undertake the survey every 12-18 months. For this purpose, respondents were asked to formulate an anonymous identification code, 74.2% of respondents were prepared to provide this which again is a very positive result.
6. The findings of the survey were delivered by DUBS on 23 July 2018. All staff and the representative bodies were invited to attend the Service Training Centre to receive the results at the same time as the Service Leadership Team (SLT). This was a critical milestone in our cultural journey, the aim being to increase trust and transparency. Further

to this, key highlights of the survey's results were communicated to staff via the communications brief in July and have been further disseminated via the weekly information bulletin using a number of infographics.

Findings

7. The explanation of the key measures, survey findings and relationships between key measures are included within the report produced by DUBS and is attached as Appendix A.
8. The descriptive statistics for the key measures are presented in Table 1 and Table 2 below. Table 1 shows the measures which were used in both the 2016 and 2018 surveys. These measures were identified by the Service and DUBS as the most important where positive impacts could be made over time and improvement tracked. Table 2 shows several new measures which were included in the 2018 survey focussing on leadership and innovation which are key areas of the Service's Workforce Development Strategy.

Table 1: Average scores for measures used over time, all respondents

Measure <i>(All measures use a 1-7 scale unless specified)</i>	2016 (Average)	2018 (Average)	Direction of travel
Perceived Organisational Support	4.13	4.5	↑
Experienced Co-worker Undermining Behaviour <i>(1-6 Scale)</i>	2.65	2.22	↓*
Procedural Justice (Fairness)	3.64	3.86	↑
Job Satisfaction	5.45	5.76	↑
Engagement	5.47	5.82	↑
Emotional Energy	4.97	5.42	↑
Ego Depletion	2.63	2.03	↓*
Voice Behaviour	5.47	5.64	↑

Note: ↓* equates to a positive reduction in negative behaviour.

9. The results show a positive direction of travel in all measures used in the second cultural survey compared to the first survey in 2016 and in particular an increase in perceived organisational support and procedural justice (fairness). This suggests that our workforce have seen or experienced a change in the way procedural decisions are made as well believing the Service shows consideration for their efforts, well-being and will support them during challenging times.
10. The workforce has also reported lower levels of undermining behaviour from their co-workers since the 2016 survey. This suggests individuals believe that, in general, the levels of undermining behaviour that occur in the workplace are low however, some individuals did still report experiencing moderately high levels.
11. Improvements in the other 5 key measures show high levels of job satisfaction, engagement and employee wellbeing (emotional energy and ego depletion). The data also suggests a high percentage of respondents feel confident to communicate their ideas, suggestions, concerns and information about any work-related issues with the intent to make improvements for the Service.

Table 2: Average scores for key measures, all respondents

Measure	2018 (Average)
Supportive Leadership	5.33
Authoritarian Leadership	3.78
Discomfort with Leadership Style	2.6
Leadership Effectiveness	5.58
Respect for Leader	5.73
Trust in Leader	5.03
Leader Prosocial Motivation	5.75
Leader Self Serving Motivation	3.18
Leader Integrity	5.41
Organisational Integrity	4.2
Individual Integrity ^{cw}	6.04
Organisational Identification	5.19
Challenge Stressors (1-5 scale)	3.67
Hindrance Stressors (1-5 scale)	2.71
Extra Mile Behaviour towards the Organisation ^{cw}	5.73
Innovation Behaviour (1-5 scale)	3.42
Improvement Behaviour	4.86

Note: All measures used a 1 to 7 scale except where stated (e.g. 1–Strongly Disagree, 2–Disagree, 3–Slightly Disagree, 4–Neither Agree or Disagree, 5–Slightly Agree, 6–Agree, 7–Strongly Agree).

12. Leadership was a key focus of the 2018 survey to assist the Service in understanding the style of leadership experienced by our workforce and to aid the development of future leadership programmes. Overall, the results from the key leadership measures were generally high suggesting individuals perceive their immediate supervisor as being competent, having personal integrity, caring about the wellbeing and development of those who work for them as well as being focussed on serving their communities. However, overall moderate levels of authoritarian leadership were also reported across the organisation which requires further investigation.
13. On average staff reported high levels of challenge stressors. These reflect individuals' perceptions of work-related demands, such as workload, time pressures, and levels of responsibility and whilst they may find them stressful, staff will view these as an opportunity for personal development or achievement.
14. In contrast hindrance stressors were reported as moderately low across the Service. Hindrance stressors are linked to work-related demands; however, individuals view these demands as constraints that hinder their performance and achievements at work. The research suggests this impacts strongly on their wellbeing and reduces their engagement in discretionary behaviours therefore it is important we identify and address these areas.
15. The results also show that levels of improvement and innovation behaviour are high across the Service. This means that our workforce is able to generate and implement new and creative ideas and will proactively find solutions to organisational problems, making small changes to working procedures and introduce new working methods. This is further supported by the results from the co-worker survey which measured extra mile behaviour towards the organisation with a high percentage of employees stating this is something they regularly see demonstrated by their colleagues.

Summary

16. Overall, the survey reported positive findings across the majority of the measures included and improvements have been made across all 8 measures used in both surveys.
17. DUBS commented that the results reported were reflective of an organisation that was performing well and that the Service should be pleased with the outcome of the survey.
18. To help us improve further, the report identified 3 areas in which the Service should focus their attentions, these being:
 - Continue to concentrate efforts around perceived organisational support, procedural justice (fairness) and co-worker undermining behaviour. These will positively impact on engagement, support and wellbeing measures.
 - The style of leadership demonstrated across the organisation with a move towards a supportive leadership approach which should positively impact engagement, hindrance stressors and leadership itself.
 - Removal of any hindrance stressors staff may be experiencing which should positively impact engagement, support and wellbeing factors.

Next Steps

19. The Service will continue to identify appropriate interventions to improve performance and outcomes in the 3 areas highlighted in paragraph 18 (above) to positively impact our culture moving forward. Further surveys will be conducted in collaboration with DUBS to assess whether the interventions have been successful in effecting a positive cultural change.

Recommendations

20. Members are requested to:
 - (a) **note** and comment on the content of the report.

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