North Yorkshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner

Consultation to inform the Fire and Rescue Plan 2022 - 2025

Final Report

Opinion Research Services
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Consultation to inform the Fire and Rescue Plan 2022 - 2025

Opinion Research Services

The Strand · Swansea · SA1 1AF

01792 535300 | www.ors.org.uk | info@ors.org.uk

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The ORS project team

Project design and management

Kelly Lock

Dr Anna Shakeshaft

Daniel Morris

Focus group facilitation

Kelly Lock

Analysis and reporting

Kelly Lock

Daniel Morris

Richard Harris

1. Executive Summary

Key insights and considerations

The main consultation question

1.1 This chapter summarises the main outcomes from an open questionnaire, residents' survey and qualitative discussion sessions with senior North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (NYFRS) and Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) staff and stakeholders/partners to highlight the overall balance of opinion among participants. In particular, the chapter addresses the main consultation objective, which is to:

> *Recommend priorities for the new Fire and Rescue Plan to meet the needs and expectations of the public, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (NYFRS), partners, stakeholders and employees.*

1.2 The remaining chapters will, by contrast, present more detailed findings arranged according to the specific topics covered and questions asked during the consultation programme. The full report considers the feedback from each element of the consultation in turn because it is important that it provides a full evidence-base for those considering its findings. We trust that both this summary and full report will be helpful to all concerned.

Key findings, insights and considerations

Perceptions of NYFRS

1.3 Large majorities of survey respondents (henceforth referred to as residents) and those responding to the open questionnaire (henceforth referred to as respondents) said they were satisfied with the fire and rescue service in their local area.

1.4 Agreement was highest with respect to responding well to emergencies and being there when needed, followed by protecting and supporting vulnerable people and preventing fires and emergencies. It was, though, lower in terms of NYFRS reflecting the diversity of its communities, and its visibility within communities.

Top priorities for NYFRS

1.5 For respondents and residents, the main priorities for NYFRS over the next three years are to:

Ensure the fire and rescue service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future;

Focus on preventing fire and rescue related incidents before they happen, especially where response times are low;

Focus on protecting people and property through risk assessments, inspections and enforcing fire safety laws if necessary; and

Improve the 82% availability of the fire and rescue service in rural areas

1.6 This was also borne out in the qualitative discussions, during which all of the above were raised as priorities. For example, it was acknowledged that long-term financial challenges have led to chronic under-investment in NYFRS assets such as buildings, fleet, technology and equipment – meaning that staff are often working with outdated equipment and technology, and that many of the Service's buildings are ageing and no longer fit-for-purpose. As such, securing fairer, sustainable funding to address this issue was considered the top priority by some.

1.7 The Prevention work undertaken by NYFRS (often in partnership with other organisations) was said to be excellent: maintaining and developing it through greater focus and resource was thus considered a key priority for the forthcoming Plan, as was establishing better processes to evidence activity and benefit. It was also suggested that the Service consider further expanding its remit to assist partners such as the ambulance service with a wider range of health-related activity.

1.8 Although not raised as frequently as Prevention as a priority for NYFRS, there was a definite sense among senior staff and stakeholders that Protection activity will require renewed focus over the life of the forthcoming plan as a result of legislation following the Grenfell Tower inquiry. While recent grants have been provided to enhance resourcing, these are only short-term, so there was a strong sense that NYFRS needs a long-term sustainable plan to ensure maximum effectiveness in this area.

1.9 The need to better communicate the benefits of Prevention (and indeed Protection) to members of the public was raised at the discussion sessions inasmuch as people will typically prioritise Response as the foremost aspect of FRS activity. The questionnaire and survey results suggest differently however, with respondents and residents clearly placing a high value on these areas of activity – though there was lower support for NYFRS working to identify, care for and protect vulnerable people among questionnaire respondents. This suggests a need for more information and better communication about the benefits of doing this in preventing harm.

1.10 Thinking about response, ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of NYFRS' response function was thought to be a key priority by senior staff and stakeholders/partners. In particular, it was recognised that the on-call service, which makes up a significant amount of NYFRS's operations, is currently experiencing recruitment, retention and availability issues, mainly as a result of an unattractive remuneration package for such a significant commitment – but also because of long-term societal changes, whereby people no longer live and work in the same place. This, it was said, has a service-wide impact on fire engine availability, not least as the wholetime service is 'plugging the gaps'.

1.11 Within NYFRS, this issue is already being prioritised. A review is underway to identify ways to make the on-call service more attractive to both existing staff and new recruits via a better salary package, better training, and more flexibility to accommodate different lifestyles. The forthcoming Risk and Resource Model will also, it was hoped, seek to address some of these issues; though it was anticipated that the Model is likely to be controversial in what it proposes given the emotiveness of making changes to fire cover within communities.

Other priorities for NYFRS: partnership working

1.12 There was also support, especially among residents, for NYFRS working more in partnership with North Yorkshire Police and other emergency services and partner agencies. This was echoed in the discussions, where wider partnership was considered essential, providing it is targeted to achieve best effect.

1.13 Some positive working practices have developed out of the COVID-19 pandemic that must, it was said, be maintained moving forward. For example, partnership working with Yorkshire Ambulance Service, North Yorkshire County Council and local healthcare organisations was thought to have improved considerably as a result of necessary collaboration – and closer and more positive working relationships with Representative Bodies have also been seen on a local and regional level throughout the pandemic. There was a strong desire for these practices to be maintained and developed.

1.14 Specifically, it was noted that firefighters have stepped outside their usual role maps to successfully assist the COVID effort, and that maintaining that wider role could be considered moving forward. However, it was said that care must be taken to ensure such activity is properly targeted and resourced - and that NYFRS maintains its distinct brand and identity.

1.15 Also in the context of partnership working, enableNY, a formal shared services collaboration between NYFRS and NYP, was thought to have had many benefits in terms of financial savings, estate improvements and joint-working. Generally speaking, maintaining enableNY as a priority was considered essential in realising its intended – and indeed anticipated – benefits.

1.16 Some challenges were said to remain in embedding enableNY "down the ranks" however, most notably due to the two organisations' cultural differences and internal politics; and the perception within NYFRS of a police takeover and within NYP that it is subsidising NYFRS. Moreover, there was some feeling that the collaboration is not delivering the required level of service currently and that improvements must be identified in order to ensure the aforementioned benefits are achieved.

Other priorities for NYFRS: making connections with communities

1.17 While respondents and residents tended to give lower priority to 'increasing NYFRS's visibility in the community so that local people feel more connected to the Service', the importance of this was raised frequently in the responses to the open text questions and in the discussions.

1.18 Indeed, it was recognised that public knowledge of NYFRS is limited, and that better community engagement and 'PR' is needed to raise not only its profile in a general sense, but also of its evolving role, remit and activity – and the changing nature of risk as a result of climate change for example. The importance of this is perhaps highlighted by the fact that 'focusing on providing advice about flooding prevention, water safety and road safety' was somewhat lower on the list of priorities for survey and questionnaire respondents, suggesting that public perception of the Service remains centred around firefighting.

Other priorities for NYFRS: workforce diversity

1.19 In the qualitative discussions, it was acknowledged that the NYFRS workforce remains wholly unrepresentative of the communities it serves, and that diversification is needed to ensure it can better understand and meet the needs of those communities. Better recruitment strategies through 'positive action' were thought to be key to this, as well as ensuring the inclusivity of Service (and particularly watch) culture.

1.20 Attempts at 'positive action' have been met with some resistance among staff though, many of whom apparently mistake it for 'positive discrimination'. The importance of continuing to educate the workforce on the benefits diversity was thus stressed. Moreover, 'increasing the diversity of the fire and rescue services' workforce to be more representative of North Yorkshire's population' was the lowest priority for both questionnaire and survey respondents, suggesting that the public too fail to understand the need for and importance of this currently.

1.21   Related to this, there was some sense that the drive for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) within NYFRS has focused too much on increasing the diversity of the workforce, and not enough on the need for wholesale culture change. This has not only resulted in some negativity among the male workforce, who apparently feel devalued as a result of the drive to increase female firefighter numbers – but also in losing sight of the widespread and strategic changes needed to ensure the Service is suitably inclusive not only on a practical level, but also in welcoming those who may not fit the 'traditional firefighter' mould. Moreover, it was said that prioritising diversity of opinion within the organisation is just as important as ensuring diversity by personal characteristics in preventing it becoming an 'echo chamber' where the same voices and views are continuously heard.

CARE[1] priorities

1.22   Finally, participants were keen to maintain the CARE priorities to ensure consistency for those attempting to deliver them, while also updating the objectives and actions underpinning them to reflect changing risk factors such as climate change. Indeed, it was said that the priorities that make up the CARE acronym (please see the footnote below) remain as relevant as ever as core fire and rescue responsibilities.

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[1] These are: **C**aring about the vulnerable; **A**mbitious collaboration; **R**ealising our potential; and **E**ffective engagement. More detail can be found here: North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2019-21

2. Introduction

Overview of the consultation programme

Background to the consultation

2.1 The North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is responsible for setting the strategy and priorities for North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (NYFRS) through their Fire and Rescue Plan. The Plan must meet the expectations of local people, businesses, partners, stakeholders and employees, and set a clear direction by defining the priorities for the next three years.

2.2 First and foremost, the public shapes the Fire and Rescue Plan, which is devised using a balance of NYFRS information, and public and stakeholder feedback, that gives insight into local fire and rescue priorities. The Plan also needs to reflect the operational environment and needs of NYFRS, along with changes taking place across the county and the wider fire and rescue sector – and needs to look at an environment post-Covid 19, taking into account changes to a 'new normal'.

The consultation programme

Introduction

2.3 The Office of the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) appointed Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake and report elements of its extensive consultation programme to identify the fire and rescue issues that are of concern to the public and stakeholders/partners. ORS is a spin-out company from Swansea University with a UK-wide reputation for social research and major statutory consultations (including for many UK fire and rescue services).

2.4 The consultation period ran from August 16th to November 7th, 2021, and during this period, residents, businesses, stakeholders/partners and employees were invited to provide feedback through a wide range of routes, which included all the following:

An open consultation questionnaire: this was available online (with paper questionnaires available on request) and yielded 1,437 responses;

A representative telephone survey of 902 residents (by random digit telephone dialling) to provide an accurate profile of opinions from the general population across North Yorkshire;

Two 'insight' focus groups with key senior staff from NYFRS and the OPFCC;

Two focus groups with stakeholders/partners with an interest in fire and rescue issues; and

Written submissions.

Quantitative consultation

Introduction

2.5 ORS (with support from the OPFCC) designed an open questionnaire and telephone survey, both of which featured the same core questions around: perceptions of NYFRS; fire and rescue priorities for the next three years; and victim and perpetrator services. There were also sections inviting respondents them to make further comments on their priorities, and to profile those responding[2].

2.6 It's important to point out that post-October 1st, when asked to provide further comments, some respondents used the opportunity to call for the commissioner to resign / be sacked or make negative comments about the commissioner generally. Comments relating to this will therefore be referenced later in the report.

2.7 Please note that when this report refers to results based on the weighted data, the results are given as the proportion of 'all residents'; but results based on the open questionnaire refer specifically to the 'respondents' (because they are not necessarily representative of all residents).

Open consultation questionnaire

2.8 The open questionnaire was available for anyone to complete online, and paper versions were readily available on request. The questionnaire could be completed by individuals and on behalf of organisations and, in total, 1,437 responses were received, including 1,415 from individuals and 22 on behalf of organisations.

2.9 Open questionnaires are important forms of consultation, in being inclusive and giving people an opportunity to express their views; but they are not random-sample surveys of a given population – so they cannot normally be expected to be representative of the general balance of public opinion. For example, the young are usually under-represented while the elderly are over-represented; and the more motivated groups or areas are also typically over-represented compared with others.

2.10 It is important that open questionnaires are accessible to all, but without allowing multiple completions (by the same people) to distort the analysis. Therefore, while making it easy to complete the survey online, ORS monitors the IP addresses through which surveys are completed. A similar analysis of "cookies" was also undertaken – where responses originated from users on the same computer using the same browser and the same credentials (e.g. user account). After careful analysis of the raw dataset, 56 responses were not included in the final analysis, mostly on the basis of having been identified as a partially completed duplicate of response that was subsequently submitted in full.

Residents' telephone survey

2.11 A residents' survey was undertaken to ensure that a representative profile of opinions across North Yorkshire was achieved. To capture the views of the general population, 902 residents took part in structured telephone interviews with ORS interviewers during the consultation period. A survey approach was used

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[2] As this consultation was also designed to inform the development of the Policing and Crime Plan 2022 – 2025, the open questionnaire and residents' survey included questions around people's perceptions of and priorities for North Yorkshire Police (NYP).

because, with a population of almost 825,000, it would have been neither practical nor cost-effective to do a postal census of all households or residents.

2.12 The survey used random digit dialling combined with quota-based sampling to ensure that residents who were less likely to engage with the consultation were included and encouraged to give their views about the proposal.

2.13 The extent to which results can be generalised from a sample depends on how well the sample represents the population from which it is drawn, for different types of people may be more or less likely to take part. Such 'response bias' is corrected by statistical weighting based on a comparison of the demographic characteristics of the respondents with data for the whole population – to identify and correct any under- or over-representation.

2.14 In order to better understand how views differ between the different areas of North Yorkshire, roughly equal numbers of interviews were targeted in each district; this was taken into account in the weighting process, to give each district a proportional influence on the overall result relative to the size of its population. The remaining quotas (i.e. those for age, gender, working status and ethnic group) were designed to be representative of the overall population of North Yorkshire, based on the most recent available secondary data.

2.15 The achieved sample was compared against secondary data for district, urban/rural split, interlocked age and gender, working status, and ethnicity, and subsequently weighted by working status, district and interlocked age and gender. Weights were capped at 5 with the remainder apportioned across all cases, and a final district weight was applied. As a result of this process, the survey results should be broadly representative of the overall population of North Yorkshire to within around +/- 6 percentage points. In other words, 19 times out of 20 (95%) if the whole population was interviewed then the findings would not differ by more than ±/- 6 percentage points from the survey estimates. Considering the sample sizes, and the degrees of statistical weightings used (to compensate for different response rates from different demographic groups), the survey findings are accurate enough for reliable conclusions to be drawn about residents' views on fire and rescue issues.

Qualitative consultation

Introduction

2.16 The qualitative consultation programme included:

> Two online 'insight' focus groups with key senior staff from NYFRS (three participants) and the OPFCC (seven participants)

> An online discussion with members of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel (five participants)

> Two online focus groups with stakeholders/partners with an interest in fire and rescue issues:

>> The first (for victim support services) was attended by four people representing IDAS (3) and the Victims/Witness Citizens' Advice Care Service; and

>> The second (for those with a general interest in fire and rescue issues) was attended by three people representing North Yorkshire County Council, Yorkshire Ambulance Service, and the Yorkshire Dales National Park

An in-depth discussion with the Fire Brigades Union, which was undertaken by a member of OPFCC staff who supplied notes to be included in this report.

2.17   The 'insight' workshops were held prior to the start of the consultation (in late July 2021) and were designed to gather senior staff's views on the main fire and rescue issues in/for North Yorkshire, and what they considered to be the key current and future fire and rescue priorities. The findings from these sessions were also used to inform the design of the online questionnaire and residents' survey.

2.18   The other discussions were held in late October and early November 2021 and were again designed to gather the views of a range of organisations on what they saw as the main fire and rescue issues and current and future fire and rescue priorities for North Yorkshire.

Additional discussion with the new PFCC

2.19   A supplementary discussion was held with the new PFCC in January 2022 to ensure her priorities were reflected in the consultation findings.

Written submissions

2.20   Stakeholders and partners were also invited to submit their views on the key consultation issues in writing using a pro-forma template. Two submissions were received: one from the Fire Officers Association (FOA) and the other from Ryedale District Council. Several others responded to say they had completed the online questionnaire.

Nature of consultation

2.21   The key good practice requirements for proper consultation programmes are that they should:

Be conducted at a formative stage, before decisions are taken;

Allow sufficient time for people to participate and respond;

Provide the public and stakeholders with enough background information to allow them to consider the issues and any proposals intelligently and critically; and

Be properly taken into consideration before decisions are finally taken.

2.22   As a well-established and specialist social research practice with wide-ranging experience of consultations and engagement processes across the UK, ORS considered view is that the process undertaken by the OPFCC meets these standards. The OPFCC has been conscientious in eliciting the informed opinions of a range of stakeholders; the consultation was open, accessible and fair to all; it sought to conform with 'best practice'; and was proportional in terms of its scale and the balance of elements and methods used.

The report

2.23   This report reviews the sentiments and judgements of respondents and participants. Some verbatim quotations are used, in indented italics, not because we agree or disagree with them, but for their vividness in capturing recurrent points of view. ORS does not endorse any opinions but seeks only to portray them accurately and clearly. The report is an interpretative summary of the issues raised by participants and ORS is clear that its role is to analyse and explain the opinions and arguments of the many different interests participating in the engagement, but not to 'make a case' either way for any particular priorities.

3. Scoping focus groups

Introduction

3.1   The following findings are based on three online discussions: the first with the previous PFCC and senior OPFCC staff; the second with the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (henceforth NYFRS); and the third with the new PFCC. The two former discussions were held in late July 2021 and the latter was held in January 2022 - and all were broadly designed to gather participants' views on:

- The main fire and rescue issues in/for North Yorkshire and the extent to which they differ from regional and national issues; and

- Current and future fire and rescue priorities.

3.2   The views expressed in all discussions were similar, and so have been reported together below.

Main findings

The on-call service is in need of reform

3.3   The on-call service, which makes up a significant amount of NYFRS's operations, is currently experiencing recruitment, retention and availability issues, mainly as a result of an unattractive remuneration package for such a significant commitment – but also because of long-term societal changes, whereby people no longer live and work in the same place. The problem is especially acute in rural areas within commuting distance of urban centres, as people from the rural communities are drawn to those centres for work.

> *"We serve a population of ¾ of a million with 38 fire stations (24 of those on-call). We are heavily reliant on rurally located on-call stations and firefighters which brings its own set problems with recruitment and availability. They don't get paid very well and societal changes mean that they don't live in the area that they could work in for the Fire and Rescue Service"*
>
> *"The societal change in North Yorkshire … is more acute than in some other areas. We have places like York, Harrogate and Scarborough and over our borders we have Leeds and Bradford etc. They draw people out of our rural areas … and that affects us a lot more in those areas. In places right at the end of the Dales we have good availability because people still live and work in those same areas, but they are a minority in terms of our stations. As soon as you get to the borders with those big centres, we have much less availability"*

3.4 This is, of course, a national issue that many other FRS's are trying to solve. Within NYFRS, there is a review underway to identify ways to make on-call service more attractive to both existing staff and new recruits via a better salary package, better training, and more flexibility to accommodate different lifestyles. Creative solutions are also being examined, such as targeting home workers *"on the back of COVID-19"*.

> *" … We are wanting to reform the on-call service and make the package much more attractive … "*
>
> *" … We have had reviews and identified that the system is not fit for purpose, and we are looking at opportunities to see what we could do about that locally. There's [a] risk management plan locally - the Risk Resource Model … which is an absolute high priority by March next year"*

Prevention activity requires more focus

3.5 The Prevention work undertaken by NYFRS was said to be excellent, but more focus and resource was thought to be needed to ensure maximum effectiveness – as well as better recording to evidence activity and benefit.

> *"What we need to explore is … how we refocus crews' work to target the Prevention work … to make sure we are wholly community-focused, because for some services this is second on the rung"*
>
> *"It comes back to the funding situation. We have a small team trying to do everything and it doesn't work, so there is space for more. The Prevention work when they do it is really good"*

3.6 The need to better communicate the benefits of Prevention (and indeed Protection) to members of the public was also raised inasmuch as people will typically prioritise Response as the foremost aspect of FRS activity, when the other two are at least as important.

> *"Response is third on the list for a reason… we need to tailor everything we're doing on Prevention and Protection, so that people know that Response is the last element once you've exhausted everything else ... We don't put Response first. We have to explain to the public that we are fulfilling our moral and public duties, but we will still ensure that Prevention and Protection are first and foremost … and that Response is the 'safety net' underneath them"*

3.7 As for activity designed to raise NYFRS's profile in the prevention arena, the introduction of a Public Safety Officer[3] trial in Bentham and Grassington will, it was hoped, do so locally – and ultimately in other areas when the initiative is, as is hoped, extended.

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[3] Public safety officers serve as on-call firefighters as well as emergency first responders for Yorkshire Ambulance Service. They are also part of the local policing team providing early intervention and monitoring antisocial behaviour.

> *"We have a Public Safety Officer trial on … where it's three hats if you like: the fire element on the prevention side of things but with an on-call element attached to it; the police element; and first responder style intervention. That's broadening and we can build that into other partnerships as well … There are very good benefits from that, and we've got an extension to put another two in"*

3.8 On a related note, it was thought that NYFRS could and should do more to assist the ambulance service with emergency medical response, as well as widen its Prevention remit into the public health sphere given the high regard in which it is held by members of the public. There was, though, recognition that this will require careful negotiation with the Fire Brigades Union in particular.

> *"I think we could do more regarding health. I've really noticed, and been surprised, at how often [NYFRS] has been called to help the ambulance service … It makes me think, 'what more collaborations can we do?' We just have to be careful regarding the grey book and the unions … "*
>
> *"People think they just put the fires out. There's so much more they could do in the community … raise their profile … Also, a more collaborative approach with health and social care partners too"*
>
> *"That ability to do more in the Prevention space is what they're good at, they're trusted by the public and they have an opportunity there. It's the health aspect of vulnerability to fire and fire-related incidents that needs to be addressed … We've done a lot on home fire safety, but it's those additional things that are the things that need to be tackled. There is so much more that can be done"*

A long-term sustainable plan is needed for Protection activity

3.9 There was apparently some loss of focus on Protection (locally and nationally) prior to the Grenfell Tower incident. While there has inevitably been a renewed focus since and grants have been provided to enhance resourcing, these are only short-term, so NYFRS needs a long-term sustainable plan to ensure maximum effectiveness in this area of activity.

> *"There's a lot of work that has gone on in the Protection area and that's all on the back of Grenfell. But it's difficult to put a plan in place with a long-term sustainable team when we've only got short-term grant funding"*
>
> *"We have received some grants [for Protection work] recently … It is not embedded finance so we need to be careful about what we do longer-term, but it enables us now to put more resource into bolstering our protection activities in terms of training and up-skilling our colleagues in the operational areas so that they will be more adept at that work …"*

NYFRS's assets (i.e., buildings, fleet and equipment) are outdated and need modernising

3.10 One of NYFRS's main challenges is finance: it was said to have an unbalanced budget and a shortfall that has led to chronic under-investment in assets such as buildings, fleet, technology and equipment.

> *"The FRS is one of the poorest funded … in the country and so has little reserves of money to invest in buildings or equipment"*
>
> *"The lack of funding means the buildings and equipment has never really kept pace … "*

3.11 As a result, staff are working with outdated equipment and technology, and many of the Service's buildings are ageing and no longer fit-for-purpose (some fire stations are neither accessible nor inclusive, having no female changing facilities for example). This was considered detrimental not only to existing staff, but also to NYFRS's ability to attract a diverse workforce.

> *"We have an infrastructure with 1950 and 1960s buildings … this is the legacy we've have inherited. And we are keen to modernise and give firefighters the tools they need"*
>
> *"We have some 1950's buildings with no changing rooms for women (without having to walk through men's changing rooms to get there)"*

3.12 In terms of driving improvement, there was a strong sense that enableNY will help (as discussed later in this chapter) – as will the reinvestment of savings identified through the forthcoming Risk and Resource Model (RRM) and through working differently as a result of COVID-19.

> *"With the RRM, once the budget is balanced then any savings achieved will be reinvested into the estate, equipment, appliances, human resources etc."*
>
> *"We have adapted a lot during COVID-19, like using videoconferencing, and that's achieved savings of approximately £100,000 on travel and subsistence. We're accounting for that as we move forward and there will be no need to be [always] travelling around in cars etc., … We've installed the technology in all the fire stations to facilitate this and it's a huge advantage in a rural area like North Yorkshire"*

Diversifying NYFRS's workforce is important in ensuring it reflects the society it services

3.13 It was acknowledged that the NYFRS workforce remains wholly unrepresentative of the communities it serves, and that better, more inclusive recruitment approaches are required to ensure diversification.

> *"It should reflect the society it serves, it doesn't and that comes with its own problems"*
>
> *"The police are moving in the right direction with diversity and the FRS is still 94% white male. Recruitment is knowing a mate down the pub who I'll ask if he's interested, or a banner outside the Fire Station"*

> *"It's important at the moment because it's … about how we reflect our communities … I think the more we can do in this area [the better] … "*

3.14 Moves are being made in this direction, with female-only taster sessions now being offered for example. Moreover, the FRS has recognised the need to think more creatively to target different audiences; by using social media in recruitment for example and using on-call fire stations as 'business hubs' for remote workers.

> *"… We run specific taster sessions for women and we need to broaden that out into the local areas with on-call districts … "*
>
> *"What I now see as our opportunity … is in recruiting for the service and addressing the diversity needs within that. We could now advertise on Facebook and drill down to advertise by gender, sex and ethnicity … reaching everybody and targeting specific populations"*
>
> *"If you can use some of your on-call fire stations as business hubs, then people can work from there for their employer and be available on-station. There's real potential for that"*

3.15 Attempts at 'positive action' have been met with some resistance among staff though, many of whom apparently mistake it for 'positive discrimination'. The importance of continuing to educate the workforce on the benefits diversity was thus stressed.

> *"We've taken a lot of positive action as a service and there is confusion between positive action and positive discrimination within the workforce (and public)"*
>
> *"The senior leadership do embrace EDI and are driving through change, but they haven't won the hearts and minds of the workforce, and they are trying to do that. Some middle management haven't entirely bought into the change either … we have to carry the workforce as part of this journey but there a few mountains to climb in the Fire and Rescue Service to make it a modern, forward-looking organisation"*

Driving forward a new culture and values is a work in progress

3.16 In terms of culture change, the previous Chief Fire Officer set a vision (Ambition 2025), which seeks to devolve authority to the 'lowest level' so staff can operate with freedom of flexibility within local accountability structures. Within this vision was a set of new values, focused on people, inclusivity and creativity. Embedding all of this remains a challenging work in progress, but also a priority moving forward.

> *"One of the significant priorities is to do with culture. 85% of our workforce are between firefighters and watch managers. Cultural change has been made at strategic level and at middle management, but a key delivery area is focusing on that level. And how that culture then reflects the services and the communities we are representing"*

> *"Our new values are very focused on people, internally and externally, and this leading to organisational results. They're about inclusivity … and welcoming people into the organisation. Creativity as well which comes back to the intent-based leadership style; making sure people are willing to come forward with their creative ideas, and learning not blame. We're on a change curve with this; we've still got some cultural issues we need to address and that's not an easy fix"*

enableNY has brought challenges, but is an essential priority

3.17   enableNY, a formal collaboration between NYFRS and NYP, was thought to have had many benefits in terms of financial savings, estate improvements and joint-working. The new shared headquarters has enabled much closer working at a strategic level for example, the benefits of which are now starting to *"ripple out"* across both organisations.

> *"A positive story is that the Fire and Rescue Service and North Yorkshire Police are working together. We pool backroom resources within an entity we call Enable … "*
>
> *"… We both use black trousers and got them from different suppliers but when we pooled that … we saved around £45,000 … So, there are some real benefits … and in terms of the collaboration model, we have now saved something like £330,000 which pays for a new fire engine"*
>
> *"We now have a shared headquarters … the Chief Officers for both police and fire are all in one office, so the relationships form straight away … That's brought us a lot closer together in the operational environment particularly; it has broadened our development relationships and some of the benefits of that ripple out … Those close relationships also spill into training particularly to do with specialisms; we are a lot closer now and there is a lot more going on"*

3.18   In particular, the joint estates strategy developed between the two organisations will, it was said, help NYFRS address the aforementioned challenges around its outdated buildings – and has been well-received by the public in areas with shared accommodation.

> *"As this develops and goes further then our estate will be upgraded accordingly. We now have access to a wider resource to help improve this through Enable …"*
>
> *"On the whole, the sharing of estates, where its happened, it's been very well received by the public. That's good; going forward I want to look at that more"*

3.19   Indeed, there was a sense that the collaboration is generally of particular benefit to NYFRS in having a larger 'team' behind it to drive positive change and ensure a more structured approach to commissioning and workstream planning.

> *"[Through enableNY] we are moving forward and are doing so at a much faster pace than if fire was a stand-alone entity"*
>
> *"The bedding-in has been difficult but there are some really tangible benefits coming out of there in terms of having access to a huge team … "*

> *"The collaboration with Enable outstrips the Fire and Rescue Service's ability to ever do that kind of service with their own resources. Now they have work pre-planned and properly commissioned which they weren't used to having in such a business-like and structured way. There's a lot of potential in the model because of its commissioning, commercial edge and the public-centred ethos … "*

3.20 Some challenges were said to remain in embedding enableNY *"down the ranks"* however, most notably due to the two organisations' cultural differences and internal politics; and the perception within NYFRS of a police takeover and within NYP that it is subsidising NYFRS.

> *"It's really important that both services retain their distinct identity, but I think it's fair to say that the Fire and Rescue Service, being the smaller service of the two, has a perception of a Police takeover, or of them getting a lesser service because they are getting consumed by the Police"*
>
> *"… The global perception, which … has become a bit of an unshakable issue, is that somehow the scale of the police involvement in that collaboration swallows up fire priorities and fire personnel in a way that is disproportionate … It's been seen as a takeover in some quarters [and] the journey of winning, keeping and embedding positive hearts and minds stuff around the Enable model has been a significant challenge"*
>
> *"One of the perceptions from the police is that they subsidise Enable for the Fire and Rescue Service. The Fire and Rescue Service's take on it is that their work becomes second to policework"*

3.21 Nonetheless, maintaining enableNY as a priority was considered essential in realising its intended – and indeed anticipated – benefits.

> *"Enable … it's been challenging along the way, but we need to keep pushing forward on that one. Change comes with challenge. We've had a lot of pain over the last 12 months because you have to get into new habits, but we've gone through the restructure and now we have to embed it"*
>
> *"[There should be] more collaboration with the police … how we can put more toward enableNY?"*

Unitary authorities are likely to improve collaboration and integration

3.22 The forthcoming move to unitary councils within North Yorkshire could, it was felt, bring positive change by ensuring consistency in provision across the county, and removing arbitrary boundaries and barriers to data sharing and engagement.

> *"When you remove boundaries, it also allows us to remove internal boundaries. We have stuck to traditional boundaries of North, South, East, West for district areas but we can now reform our own internal structures in the way we manage those areas"*
>
> *"There is potential there … in terms of how we more comprehensively engage across the community safety landscape and data sharing etc."*

> *"One opportunity is closer networking with some of our partners at county level … I think there is a better opportunity to get a single point of contact in that new model. I'm hoping it will remove some of the nuances … so where we've got really good Business Safety Hubs and Community Safety Hubs in some areas but not others, then we hope to be more consistent"*

The positives that have emerged as a result of COVID-19 must be harnessed

3.23   Some positive working practices have developed out of the COVID-19 pandemic that must, it was said, be maintained moving forward. For example, partnership working with Yorkshire Ambulance Service and North Yorkshire County Council was thought to have improved considerably as a result of necessary collaboration – and there was a strong desire for this to be maintained and developed.

> *"The relationship with Yorkshire Ambulance Service has really improved and there are other opportunities. For example, we've had another request come in for some of our firefighters to support by driving ambulances. Overall demand means they have asked if we can support with drivers in the region and we may be able to offer some support. That dialogue means we can closely support one another"*
>
> *"One of the opportunities has been around partnership and collaboration. Being an integral member of the Local Resilience Forum has strengthened working relationships with North Yorkshire County Council where we undertook 6,000 calls to the vulnerable/shielded list … "*

3.24   Moreover, better and quicker data sharing between organisations, has, it was said, enabled NYFRS to develop a more comprehensive Community Risk Profile to increase public safety. This has been so beneficial that there is now a policy procedure agreement being established for a Service Level Agreement to make sure that the Service always has access into necessary data.

> *"COVID-19 proved that we could innovate in 14 days instead of 14 years … We wouldn't have the Community Risk Profile that we have now without COVID-19 forcing us to share data links"*

3.25   Closer and more positive working relationships with Representative Bodies have also been seen on a local and regional level throughout the pandemic. This, it was hoped, will continue and benefit not only NYFRS, but all other FRSs in the region.

> *"We also saw internal relationships improve and increase through Trade Union access; them coming to the table … Those relationships now will benefit us in the future … It also pushed a regional approach: because of the potential to lose officers because of COVID, we now have shared agreement in place. We need to ensure these things continue to evolve"*
>
> *"Throughout the pandemic there has been a locally mature response with the representative bodies that we need to push forward … "*

NYFRS must make better connections with its communities

3.26   It was recognised that public knowledge of NYFRS is limited, and that better community engagement is needed to raise not only the profile of NYFRS in a general sense, but also of its evolving role, remit and activity – and the changing nature of risk as a result of climate change for example.

> *"I don't think we are very good at marketing ourselves and we need to improve it … we need to engage better with the public … we probably need some expertise to help with that"*
>
> *" … With climate change we are seeing a real increase, especially in terms of water-related incidences across the county. The perception of the Fire and Rescue Service and what is does needs to change"*

3.27   The importance of this, and the traditional view typically held of the FRS, was thought to be demonstrated by public reaction to the introduction of Tactical Response Vehicles (TRVs)[4].

> *"… a much more modern engine and equipment, just as capable of dealing with every situation, but because it's smaller people don't like it. You can't get a typical appliance down small winding streets so having a smaller appliance [is] beneficial to people in smaller communities, but we get back to the public perception issue i.e., it's not a proper fire engine"*

The CARE[5] priorities should be maintained

3.28   Participants were keen to maintain the CARE priorities to ensure consistency for those attempting to deliver them, while also updating the objectives and actions underpinning them to reflect changing risk factors such as climate change.

> *"We want to keep CARE but sharpen up some of the underlying analysis to make it more relevant"*
>
> *"There is a strong appetite to have some continuity with the CARE priorities from the last plans and then to look at updating the objectives underneath those to reflect the new circumstances"*
>
> *"The thing we need to pick up on is that, with climate change, we are seeing more flooding, so the Ouse used to flood very rarely but now it's a regular occurrence … The risk factors are changing, and we need to make sure that in terms of this consultation we colour that in a little bit because it will help us further down the line in the work that we are doing"*

---

[4] Smaller fire engines crewed by three staff, rather than four or five on a standard fire engine. They have the same standard pump as a normal fire engine, but also carry new equipment that is designed to be operated with fewer staff than previously required.

[5] These are: **C**aring about the vulnerable; **A**mbitious collaboration; **R**ealising our potential; and **E**ffective engagement. More detail can be found here: North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2019-21

4. Open consultation questionnaire

Introduction

4.1 The consultation programme included an open questionnaire – to offer an inclusive opportunity for anyone (residents, organisations and any other stakeholder, both inside and outside the county) to give their views. The questionnaire was available online and on paper between August 16th and November 7th, 2021, and 1,437 responses were received in total.

4.2 Of the 1,437 responses, 22 were received from organisations. Responses from organisations might represent the views of large numbers of individuals or key stakeholders who might be particularly informed, or they could raise technical arguments that cannot easily be summarised. For these reasons, ORS typically reports the views of individual respondents and organisations separately.

Respondent profile (individuals)

4.3 The table below profiles the 1,415 individual respondents to the consultation questionnaire. Figures may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

4.4 The engagement questionnaire was publicised and made freely available to any individual or group who wished to express their views about the fire and rescue issues that are of concern to them. This means that the response profile is not necessarily representative of the North Yorkshire population (aged 16 and over). For example, while around a quarter of the population aged 16 and over in North Yorkshire is aged under 35 (Mid-Year Population Estimates for 2020), only 7% of respondents who provided their profile details were in this age group. Likewise, people aged 55 to 74 and those living in Harrogate are over-represented in data. The open questionnaire findings should be considered in this context; nonetheless they are important and should be taken seriously alongside the deliberative results and other evidence.

Table 1: Individual questionnaire responses by demographics (Mid-Year Population Estimates 2020 for age and gender; Census 2011 for ethnic group and disability)

Characteristic	Count	% Valid responses	North Yorkshire population 16+ %
BY AGE			
Under 25	23	2%	12%
25 to 34	76	5%	14%
35 to 44	144	10%	13%
45 to 54	221	16%	16%
55 to 64	361	26%	17%
65 to 74	390	28%	15%
75 or over	195	14%	13%
Total valid responses	**1,410**	**100%**	**100%**
Not known	*5*	*-*	*-*
BY GENDER			
Male	709	58%	49%
Female	499	41%	51%
Other[6]	5	*	-
Total valid responses	**1,213**	**100%**	**100%**
Not known	*202*	*-*	*-*
BY ETHNIC GROUP			
White British	1,115	94%	97%
Not White British	73	6%	3%
Total valid responses	**1,188**	**100%**	**100%**
Not known	*227*	*-*	*-*
BY DISABILITY / LIMITING ILLNESS			
Activities limited a lot	86	7%	9%
Activities limited a little	206	17%	11%
No limiting illness/disability	933	76%	80%
Total valid responses	**1,147**	**100%**	**100%**
Not known	*190*	*-*	*-*

Table 2: Individual responses by area, compared to the North Yorkshire population aged 16+ (Census 2011)

Area	Count	% Valid responses	North Yorkshire population 16+ %
York	189	16%	26%
Selby	125	11%	11%
Ryedale	99	8%	7%
Scarborough	117	10%	13%
Hambleton	173	15%	11%
Harrogate	319	27%	19%
Craven	76	6%	7%
Richmondshire	82	7%	6%
Total valid responses	**1,180**	**100%**	**100%**
Not known	*235*	*-*	*-*

[6] Please note, no suitable secondary data is currently available for 'other'; therefore the population data above is based on male and female only.

4.5   Overall, 29 individual respondents indicated they were an employee of North Yorkshire Police and 20 indicated they were an employee of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, while a further 17 stated they work in North Yorkshire or York but live elsewhere.

Duplicate and Co-ordinated Responses

4.6   It is important that engagement questionnaires are open and accessible to all, while being alert to the possibility of multiple completions (by the same people) distorting the analysis. Therefore, while making it easy to complete the questionnaire online, ORS monitors the IP addresses through which questionnaires are completed. A similar analysis of "cookies" was also undertaken – where responses originated from users on the same computer using the same browser and the same credentials (e.g. user account). There can be valid reasons where duplicate cookies might occur, e.g. where two or more respondents have used the same device to complete their questionnaires, in which case all responses are included in the data analysis and reporting. However, it can also occur when the same user has part-completed the questionnaire and then returned later, starting again from the beginning and completing it in full.

4.7   After careful analysis of the raw dataset, 56 responses were not included in the final analysis, mostly on the basis of having been identified as a partially completed duplicate of response that was subsequently submitted in full.

Responses from organisations

4.8   Respondents had the option of responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. Overall, 22 respondents said that they were responding on behalf of organisations. Respondents acting on behalf of organisations were informed that, where feedback is from representatives of organisations or someone acting in an official capacity, it may be attributed to them.

4.9   15 of the organisations who responded to the engagement questionnaire are shown in Table 3 below (7 did not provide a response when asked which organisation they were representing or it was unclear which organisation they were representing), and their feedback is reported separately from that of individuals, in a dedicated section at the end of this chapter.

Table 3: Organisational responses to the open engagement questionnaire.

Organisation	
Aldwark Area Parish Council	Northallerton Over Fifties Forum
Churchfield Open Space, Wigginton	Original Richmond Business and Tourism Association
East & West Layton & Carkin Parish Council	Regent Street Neighbourhood Watch
Hambleton District and Northallerton Town Councillor	Skipton Town Council Planning Committee
Hebden Parish Council	Stanwick St John Parish Council
Hospitality owner in North Yorkshire (unnamed)	Survive Charity (2 responses)
Linton Parish Council	Yorkshire Steel Buildings

Interpretation of the data

4.10   For simplicity, the results for the open engagement questionnaire are presented in a largely graphical format, where the numbers on pie or bar charts indicate the percentage or proportion giving a particular view. Grouped percentages are used e.g. to show overall levels of agreement and disagreement. Where possible, the colours of the charts have been standardised with a 'traffic light' system in which green shades represent positive responses (such as 'agree'), red shades represent negative responses (such as 'disagree'), and beige shades represent neither positive nor negative responses. Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may

be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of "don't know" categories, or multiple answers. An asterisk (*) denotes any value less than half of one per cent.

4.11   All open-ended responses have been read and classified (coded) using a standardised approach (code frame). This approach helps ensure consistency when classifying different comments and the resulting codes represent themes that have been repeatedly mentioned.

4.12   Where results are shown based on district, these are based on individual respondents' postcodes (where the information was provided).

Main findings (individuals)

Perceptions of North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the fire and rescue service in your local area?

4.13   Over 9 in 10 (92%) respondents reported that they are satisfied with the fire and rescue service in their local area, with around half (51%) claiming to be very satisfied. Less than 1 in 10 (8%) said they were dissatisfied.

Figure 1: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the fire and rescue service in your local area?
Base: All individuals (1,001)

Legend: Very satisfied | Fairly satisfied | Fairly dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied
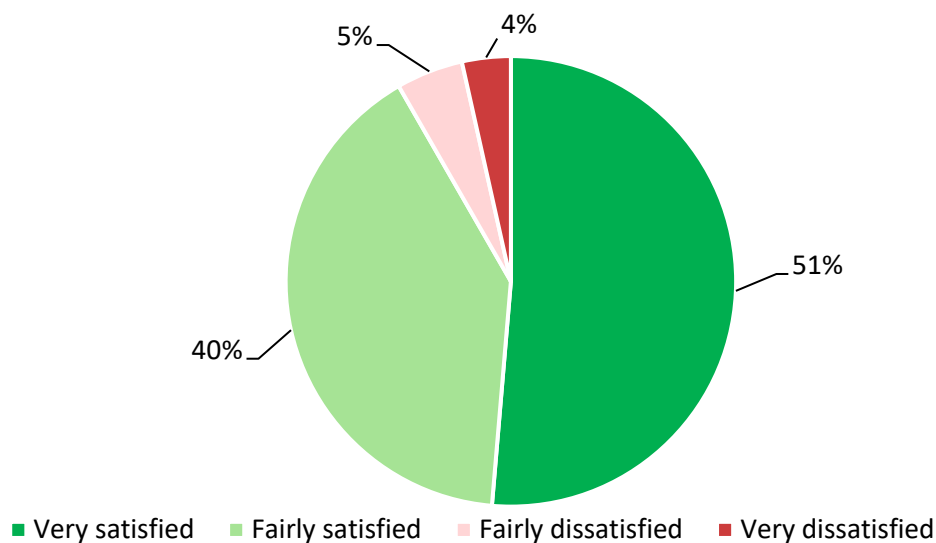
Differences by sub-group

4.14 Figure 2 below shows how the responses for this question vary across different sub-groups of the population who are satisfied with the fire and rescue service in their local area. Results for sub-groups which are more likely than the overall score are highlighted in green, whilst results which are less likely are highlighted in red.

4.15 Respondents who live in Harrogate, are aged 65+, are White British and have no concerns about their mental health are more likely to be satisfied with the fire and rescue service in their local area. In contrast, respondents aged 35-44 are less likely to say this.

Figure 2: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the fire and rescue service in your local area? (Grouped responses by sub-group)
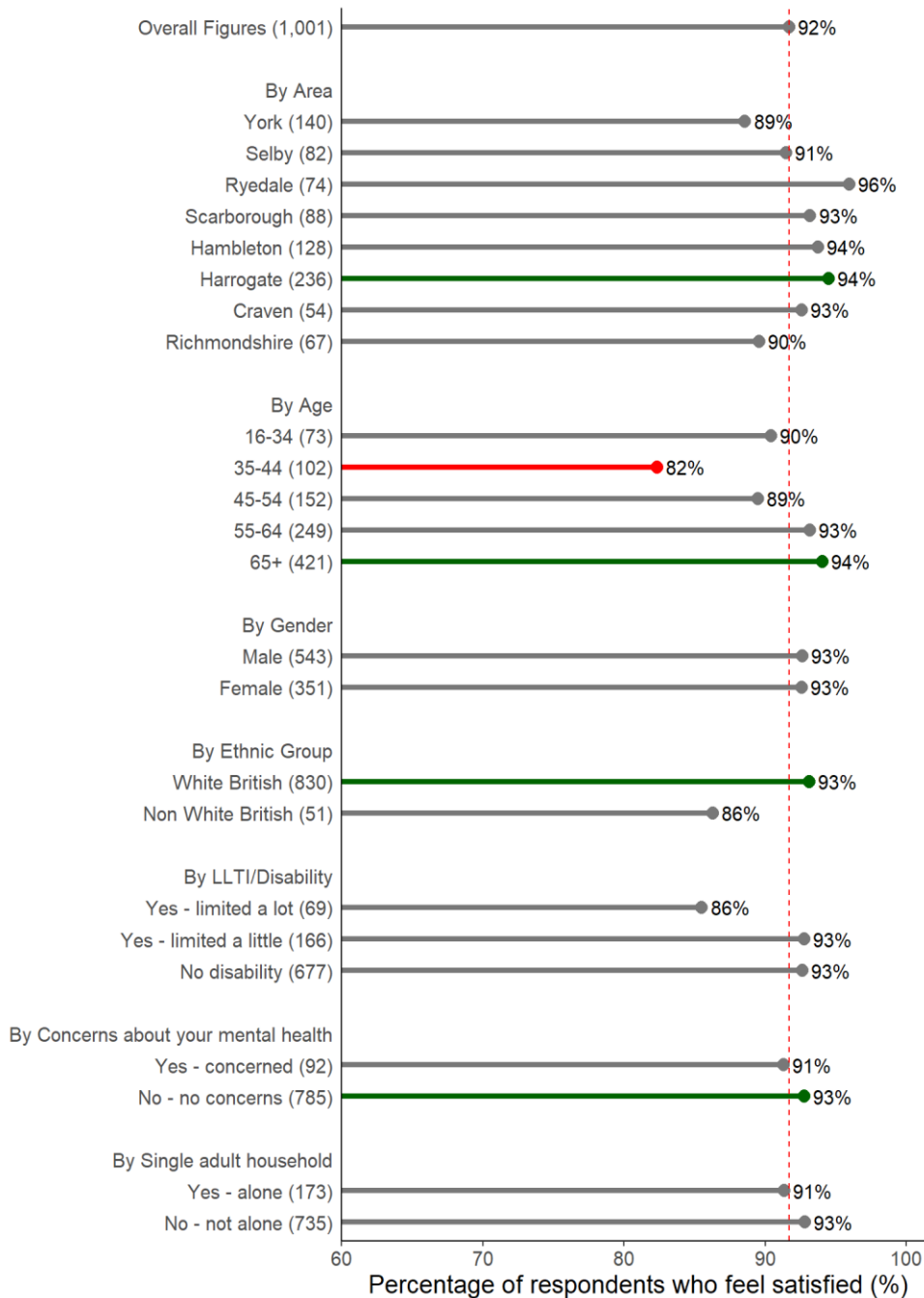
4.16　Over 9 in 10 respondents agreed that the fire and rescue service respond well to fires, road traffic collisions, floods and other emergencies (94%) and would be there if they needed them (93%), whilst over four fifths agreed they prevent fires and emergencies in their community (86%) and protect and support vulnerable people in their community (81%).

4.17　Around three quarters also agreed that the fire and rescue service reflect the diversity of their community (76%) but less than 7 in 10 (68%) agreed that they are sufficiently visible in their community.

Figure 3: Thinking about the fire and rescue service in your local area, do you agree or disagree that the fire and rescue service…? Base: Number of individuals shown in brackets
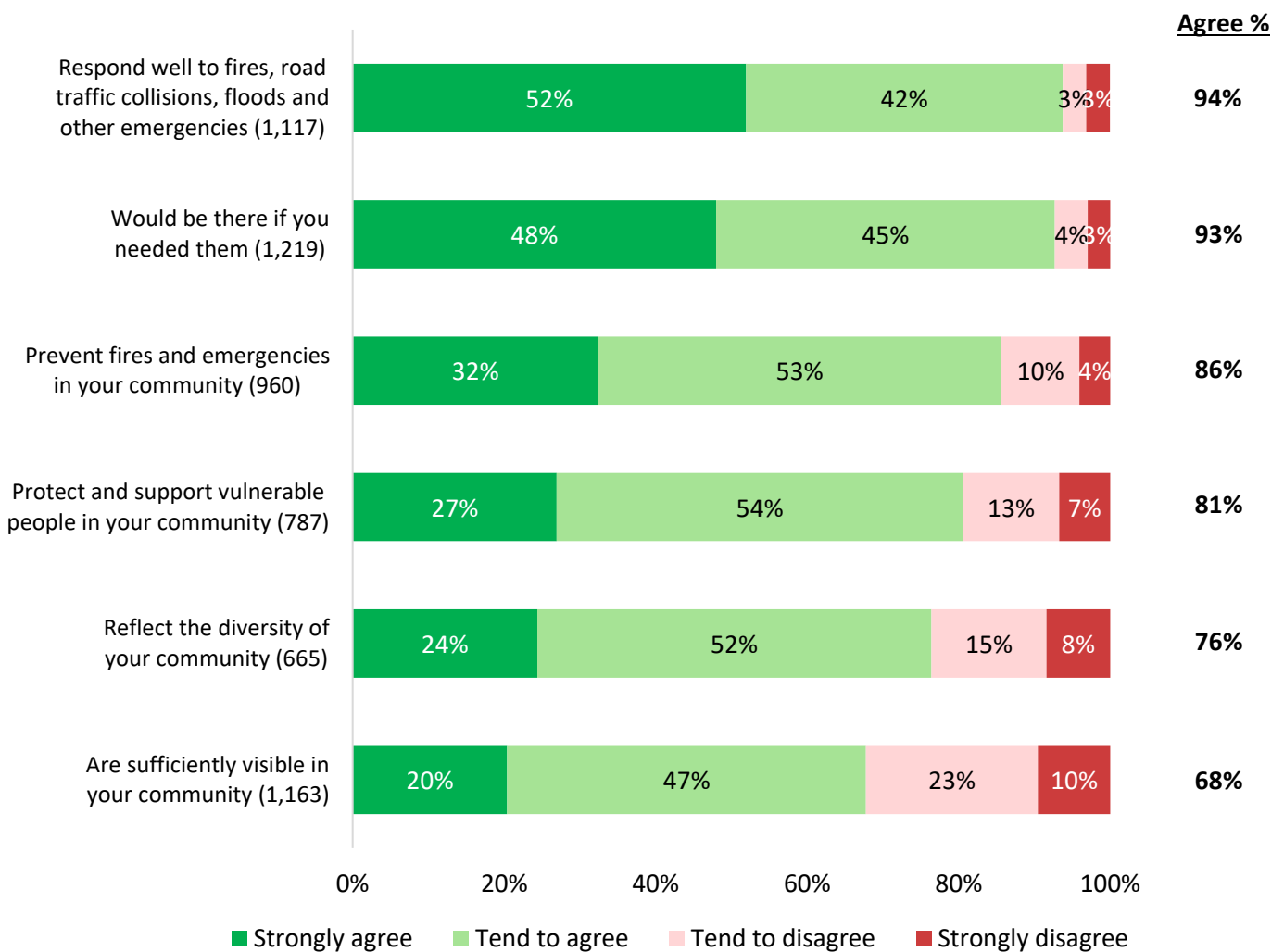
Differences by sub-group

4.18   Table 4 shows how the responses for this question vary across different sub-groups of the population who stated they are agree with a series of statements about the fire and rescue service.

4.19   Respondents who have no concerns about their mental health are more likely to agree with four of six statements about the police, whilst female respondents are more likely to agree with three statements.

Table 4: Thinking about the fire and rescue service in your local area, do you agree or disagree that the fire and rescue service…? (Grouped responses by sub-group)

Thinking about the fire and rescue service in your local area, do you agree or disagree that the fire and rescue service…?	More likely to <u>agree</u>	Less likely to <u>agree</u>
Respond well to fire, road traffic collisions, floods and other emergencies (94%)	Live in Harrogate (96%) Aged 65+ (96%) Female (96%) White British (95%) No concerns about mental health (95%) Live in a single adult household (97%)	-
Would be there if you needed them (93%)	Live in Ryedale (97%) Live in Hambleton (97%) No concerns about mental health (94%) Do not live in a single adult household (94%)	-
Prevent fires and emergencies in your community (86%)	Live in Richmondshire (95%) Aged 16-34 (93%) Female (89%)	-
Protect and support vulnerable people in your community (81%)	Live in Ryedale (92%) Female (85%) White British (82%)	-
Reflect the diversity of your community (76%)	Live in Richmondshire (86%) Aged 65+ (82%) No concerns about mental health (79%)	Live in York (67%) Aged 45-54 (69%)
Are sufficiently visible in your community (68%)	Male (71%) No concerns about mental health (70%) Do not live in a single adult household (69%)	-

North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service Priorities

> *How important or not are each of these for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years?*

4.20 Respondents were presented with a list of priorities for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire and asked to rate how important each is in the next three years. From the list, the top priorities for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years are:

> To ensure the fire and rescue service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future (97%);

> To focus on preventing fire and rescue related incidents before they happen, especially where response times are low (95%);

> To focus on protecting people and property through risk assessments, inspections and enforcing fire safety laws if necessary (95%); and

> To improve the 82% availability of the fire and rescue service in rural areas (95%).

> Respondents felt that increasing the diversity of the fire and rescue services' workforce to be more representative of North Yorkshire's population is the least important priority from this list (56%).

Figure 4: How important or not are each of these for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years?
Base: Number of individuals shown in brackets

Important %

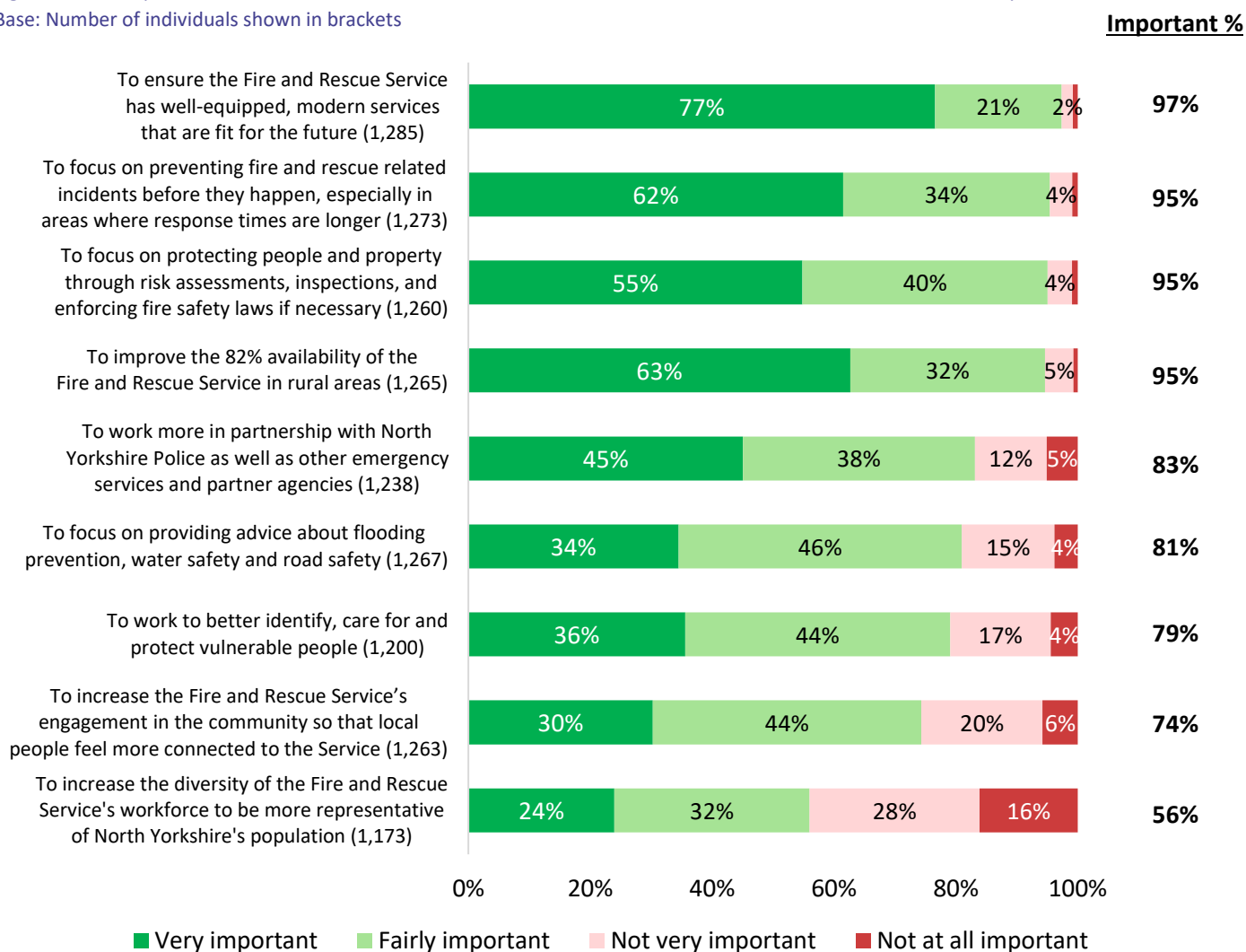| Statement	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important	Important %
To ensure the Fire and Rescue Service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future (1,285)	77%	21%	2%		97%
To focus on preventing fire and rescue related incidents before they happen, especially in areas where response times are longer (1,273)	62%	34%	4%		95%
To focus on protecting people and property through risk assessments, inspections, and enforcing fire safety laws if necessary (1,260)	55%	40%	4%		95%
To improve the 82% availability of the Fire and Rescue Service in rural areas (1,265)	63%	32%	5%		95%
To work more in partnership with North Yorkshire Police as well as other emergency services and partner agencies (1,238)	45%	38%	12%	5%	83%
To focus on providing advice about flooding prevention, water safety and road safety (1,267)	34%	46%	15%	4%	81%
To work to better identify, care for and protect vulnerable people (1,200)	36%	44%	17%	4%	79%
To increase the Fire and Rescue Service's engagement in the community so that local people feel more connected to the Service (1,263)	30%	44%	20%	6%	74%
To increase the diversity of the Fire and Rescue Service's workforce to be more representative of North Yorkshire's population (1,173)	24%	32%	28%	16%	56%

■ Very important   ■ Fairly important   ■ Not very important   ■ Not at all important

Differences by sub-group

4.21 Table 5 shows how the responses for this question vary across different sub-groups of the population who stated they think each of the priorities for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire are important in the next three years.

4.22 Female respondents are more likely to say that seven of the nine priorities are important, whereas male respondents are less likely to say five of the priorities are important.

Table 5: How important or not are each of these for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years? (Grouped responses by sub-group)

How important or not are each of these for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years?	More likely to think priority is <u>important</u>	Less likely to think priority is <u>important</u>
To ensure the Fire and Rescue Service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future (97%)	Live in Selby (100%)	-
To focus on preventing fire and rescue related incidents before they happen, especially in areas where response times are longer (95%)	Female (97%) Disability - limited a little (98%)	-
To focus on protecting people and property through risk assessments, inspections and enforcing fire safety laws if necessary (95%)	Aged 16-34 (99%) Female (97%) Disability - limited a little (98%)	-
To improve the 82% availability of the Fire and Rescue Service in rural areas (95%)	Live in Selby (98%) Aged 65+ (96%)	-
To work more in partnership with North Yorkshire Police as well as other emergency services and partner agencies (83%)	Female (90%) White British (86%) Live in a single adult household (89%)	Male (80%) Non-White British (71%)
To focus on providing advice about flooding prevention, water safety and road safety (81%)	Aged 16-34 (90%) Female (89%)	Live in Craven (69%) Aged 55-64 (76%) Male (76%)
To work to better identify, care for and protect vulnerable people (79%)	Female (87%) Disability - limited a little (85%) Concerns about mental health (86%)	Live in Ryedale (69%) Male (74%) No disability (78%)
To increase the Fire and Rescue Service's engagement in the community so that local people feel more connected to the Service (74%)	Live in Scarborough (84%) Aged 65+ (77%) Female (81%) White British (76%) Disability - limited a lot (84%)	Male (71%)

(Table continued overleaf)

How important or not are each of these for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years?	More likely to think priority is important	Less likely to think priority is important
To increase the diversity of the Fire and Rescue Service's workforce to be more representative of North Yorkshire's population (56%)	Live in York (65%) Live in Scarborough (65%) Female (67%) Concerns about mental health (66%) Live in a single adult household (62%)	Live in Harrogate (50%) Aged 55-64 (51%) Male (49%) No concerns about mental health (55%)

Additional Comments

Is there anything else important that you feel North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service should focus on over the next three years? Please explain what they are.

4.23 Respondents were asked if there is anything else important they feel North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service should focus on over the next three years.

4.24 197 respondents provided a response to this question, from which 244 separate comments have been classified according to a code frame. This approach helps ensure consistency when classifying different comments and the resulting codes represent themes that have been repeatedly mentioned in a more quantifiable manner. The various comments provided by a respondent to any single text question may present a number of different points or arguments, therefore in many cases the overall number of coded comments counted in a particular question can actually be higher than the number of people responding to that open-ended question.

4.25 The most common topic raised by respondents focussed the need to '*recruit more staff / crew and solve recruitment / retention issues*' (11%):

"NYFRS is dangerously short of crewing requirement, retained firefighters are a critical part of our local areas and an invaluable resource for North Yorkshire"

"Better recruitment for on call firefighters, need to improve conditions of service to make it more appealing to younger generation"

"Need to focus on how to recruit to rural areas, outside of retained contracts. Pay more and work with local organisations to find ways to work with them so they can be flexible to let employees work at fire service if needed"

"Settle fire station is fully operated by retained firefighters and has failed to raise a full crew several times recently and been unable to respond to emergencies. Even when they have good numbers of retained firefighters some of them leave to take up full time firefighter positions elsewhere which is admirable but leaves an ongoing recruitment problem at Settle and consequent inability to respond"

4.26   Another subject frequently referenced by respondents was the need to 'better educate the public / provide free fire safety advice / fire alarms and raise awareness' (9%):

> *"Help educate people, especially younger ones that it is not acceptable to abuse or obstruct crews of all emergency response units who are trying to help people in the community"*
>
> *"Continuing with educating the general public (e.g. through schools & charity/community groups) how they can protect themselves and their families, thereby reducing the need to call out fire and rescue services"*
>
> *"Educating the public regarding risk assessments via media such as newspapers/social media e.g. dangers of lithium batteries, hybrid cars etc."*
>
> *"Education for both children in schools and the public in general. Generally, people have lost respect for both police and F&RS... I think through visibility and liaising with the public would improve this"*

4.27   Other things commonly mentioned by respondents included:

Calls for the commissioner to resign / be sacked / negative comments about the commissioner (11%);

To ensure the Fire and Rescue Service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future. This includes making sure they have the right buildings, equipment, technology and vehicles to carry out their work, as well as maintenance of current equipment (8%);

More funding, resources and training (7%);

They do a good job / keep up the good work (7%);

Focus on core function of the Service – less work on social issues and issues covered by other services (7%); and

Increase the Fire and Rescue's engagement, visibility / accessibility and communication within the community, so that local people feel more connected to the Service (7%).

Views by type of respondent

4.28 As mentioned earlier, the vast majority (1,349) of individuals who responded to the engagement questionnaire were residents of North Yorkshire or York but 49 indicated they were an employee of North Yorkshire Police or North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, while a further 17 stated they work in North Yorkshire or York but live elsewhere. Given the sample size for those working in the area but living elsewhere is so small, it is difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions from the results, so comparisons will only be made between residents and employees of North Yorkshire Police/North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service in this section.

4.29 Interestingly, when compared to employees of North Yorkshire Police/North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, residents are more inclined to say they are satisfied with the Fire and Rescue Service in their local area (92% vs 89%).

4.30 For four of the six 'perceptions of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service' questions, there is very little difference in agreement between residents and employees. However, residents are more inclined to agree that the fire and rescue service 'reflect the diversity of their community' (77% vs 71%), whilst employees are more inclined to agree that the fire and rescue service 'protect and support vulnerable people in their community' (88% vs 80%).

4.31 In terms of the priorities for the fire and rescue service in the next three years, residents and employees top five priorities were very similar, both in terms of the priorities on each list and the order they appear (see Table 6 below). Interestingly, 93% of employees said that focusing 'on providing advice about flooding prevention, water safety and road safety' was important and this is 13 percentage points higher when compared with residents (80% of residents stated it is important).

Table 6: How important or not are each of these for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years? (Grouped responses by respondent type)

Rank	Residents	Employees of NYP / NYFRS
1	To ensure the Fire and Rescue Service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future (97%)	To ensure the Fire and Rescue Service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future (98%)
2	To focus on preventing fire and rescue related incidents before they happen, especially in areas where response times are longer (95%)	To focus on preventing fire and rescue related incidents before they happen, especially in areas where response times are longer (98%)
3	To focus on protecting people and property through risk assessments and inspections of commercial, public and high-rise buildings, and enforcing fire safety laws if necessary (95%)	To focus on protecting people and property through risk assessments and inspections of commercial, public and high-rise buildings, and enforcing fire safety laws if necessary (98%)
4	To improve the 82% availability of the Fire and Rescue Service in rural areas (95%)	To improve the 82% availability of the Fire and Rescue Service in rural areas (93%)
5	To work more in partnership with North Yorkshire Police as well as other emergency services and partner agencies such as the Councils in North Yorkshire and York (83%)	To focus on providing advice about flooding prevention, water safety and road safety (93%)

Organisations in the engagement questionnaire

4.32 Regarding the questions relating to perceptions of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service:

4.33 The majority of organisations reported that they are satisfied with the fire and rescue service in their local area (15 out of 16).

4.34 9 in 10 or more agreed that the fire and rescue service respond well to fires, road traffic collisions, floods and other emergencies (14 out of 15) and protect and support vulnerable people in their community (9 out of 10), whilst over four fifths agreed they would be there if they needed them (13 out of 15) and reflect the diversity of their community (9 out 11).

4.35 Around 7 in 10 also agreed that the fire and rescue service are sufficiently visible in their community (11 out of 15) and prevent fires and emergencies in their community (9 out of 13).

4.36 Looking at the priorities for the fire and rescue service in the next three years, over 7 in 10 said that the following things are very important:

> To ensure the Fire and Rescue Service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future. This includes making sure they have the right buildings, equipment, technology and vehicles to carry out their work (12 out of 16); and

> To focus on preventing fire and rescue related incidents before they happen, especially in areas where response times are longer (12 out of 17).

Text comments provided by organisations

4.37 Only 4 comments were provided by organisations, but the comments provided tended to echo those expressed by individual respondents: for example, one organisation referenced the need for more staff:

> *"Update and more staff"*

4.38 Another organisation mentioned working more in partnership with other agencies and organisations:

> *"Reinforce the partnership working with other agencies including parish and town councils, to the benefit of all parties"*

4.39 And another noted the need to increase the fire and rescue service's engagement, visibility / accessibility etc. within the community:

> *"To work more with neighbourhood watch schemes"*

5. Residents' survey

Introduction

5.1 The purpose of the telephone survey was to achieve a broadly representative sample of telephone interviews with residents of North Yorkshire aged 16 and over. The survey was conducted using a quota sampling approach with targets set on the numbers of interviews required by age, gender, working status and district (more details on these targets is provided below).

5.2 ORS targeted 900 interviews (aiming to undertake at last 100 per District area) with residents between September and November 2021, using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) methodology, with interviews undertaken by ORS's social research call centre. The survey used primarily random digit dialling, supplemented by purchased mobile sample.

5.3 In total, ORS undertook 902 interviews between September 6th and November 8th, 2021.

Respondent profile

5.4 The extent to which results can be generalised from a sample depends on how well the sample represents the population from which it is drawn, as different types of people may be more or less likely to take part. Such 'response bias' is corrected by statistical weighting based on a comparison of the demographic characteristics of the respondents with data for the whole population.

5.5 In order to better understand how views differ between areas, equal numbers of interviews were targeted in each of the eight districts; this was taken into account in the weighting process, to give each district a proportional influence on the overall result relative to the size of its population. The remaining quotas (i.e. those for age, gender, working status and ethnicity) were designed to be representative of the overall population of North Yorkshire, based on the most recent available secondary data.

5.6 The achieved sample was compared against secondary data for district, urban/rural split, interlocked age and gender, working status, and ethnicity, and subsequently weighted by working status, district and interlocked age and gender. Weights were capped at 5 with the remainder apportioned across all cases, and a final district weight was applied. As a result of this process, the survey results should be broadly representative of the overall population of North Yorkshire to within around +/- 6 percentage points.

5.7 The table on the following page shows both the unweighted and weighted profile of respondents to the survey, compared with the resident population aged 16+ (based on Mid-Year Population Estimates 2020 and Census 2011 - with the exception of working status where the Annual Population Survey has been used).

Table 7: Response profile to the residents' survey, compared with the resident population

Characteristic	Unweighted Count	Unweighted Valid %	Weighted Valid %	Resident Population 16+ %
BY AGE				
16 to 34	152	17%	27%	26%
35 to 44	97	11%	10%	13%
45 to 54	193	21%	13%	16%
55 to 64	224	25%	19%	17%
65 or over	236	26%	30%	28%
Total valid responses	**902**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
BY GENDER				
Male	386	43%	50%	49%
Female	515	57%	50%	51%
Other	1	*	*	-
Total valid responses	**902**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
BY WORKING STATUS				
Working	539	60%	54%	56%
Retired	278	31%	32%	31%
Otherwise not working	84	9%	13%	13%
Total valid responses	**901**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Not known	*1*	-	-	-
BY ETHNIC GROUP				
White British	857	97%	96%	97%
Not White British	29	3%	4%	3%
Total valid responses	**886**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Not known	*16*	-	-	-
BY DISABILITY / LIMITING ILLNESS				
Activities limited a lot	82	9%	10%	9%
Activities limited a little	69	8%	18%	11%
No limiting illness/disability	725	83%	82%	80%
Total valid responses	**876**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Not known	*26*	-	-	-
BY URBAN / RURAL				
Urban	393	44%	53%	55%
Rural	509	56%	47%	45%
Total valid responses	**902**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
BY AREA				
York	122	14%	26%	26%
Selby	103	11%	11%	11%
Ryedale	105	12%	7%	7%
Scarborough	102	11%	13%	13%
Hambleton	125	14%	11%	11%
Harrogate	103	11%	19%	19%
Craven	117	13%	7%	7%
Richmondshire	125	14%	6%	6%
Total valid responses	902	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Interpretation of the data

5.9   The results of the residents survey are presented in a largely graphical format. The pie and bar charts (and other graphics) show the proportions (percentages) of residents making responses. Where possible, the colours of the charts have been standardised with a 'traffic light' system in which:

Green shades represent positive responses

Beige and purple/blue shades represent neither positive nor negative responses

Red shades represent negative responses

5.10   The bolder shades are used to highlight responses at the 'extremes', for example, strongly agree or strongly disagree

5.11   Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or multiple answers. Throughout the chapter an asterisk (*) denotes any value less than half of one per cent.

5.12   The number of valid responses recorded for each question (base size), are reported throughout. As not all respondents answered every question, these base sizes vary between questions. Every response to every question has been taken into consideration.

Main findings

Perceptions of North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the fire and rescue service in your local area?

5.13   Almost all (99%) residents reported that they are satisfied with the fire and rescue service in their local area, with around 7 in 10 (71%) claiming to be very satisfied. Only 1% said they were dissatisfied.

**Figure 5:** How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the fire and rescue service in your local area?
Base: All residents (812)

■ Very satisfied   ■ Fairly satisfied   ■ Fairly dissatisfied   ■ Very dissatisfied
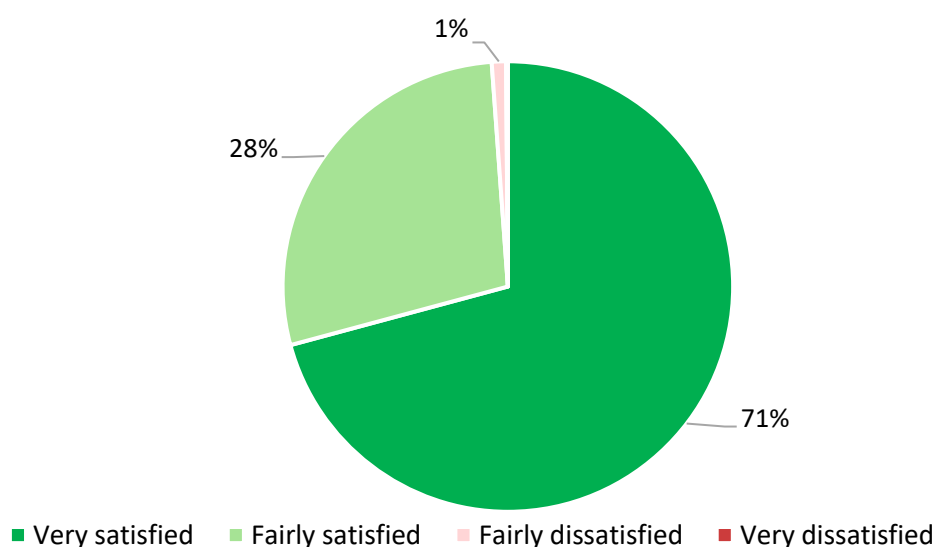
Differences by sub-group

5.14 Figure 6 below shows how the responses for this question vary across different sub-groups of the population who are satisfied with the fire and rescue service in their local area. Results for sub-groups which are significantly more likely than the overall score are highlighted in green, whilst results which are significantly less likely are highlighted in red.

5.15 Residents who live in Ryedale and Scarborough, are non-White British, have a disability which limits their activities a little and live in an urban area are significantly more likely to be satisfied with the fire and rescue service in their local area. In contrast, residents who live in a rural area are significantly less likely to say this.

Figure 6: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the fire and rescue service in your local area? (Grouped responses by sub-group)
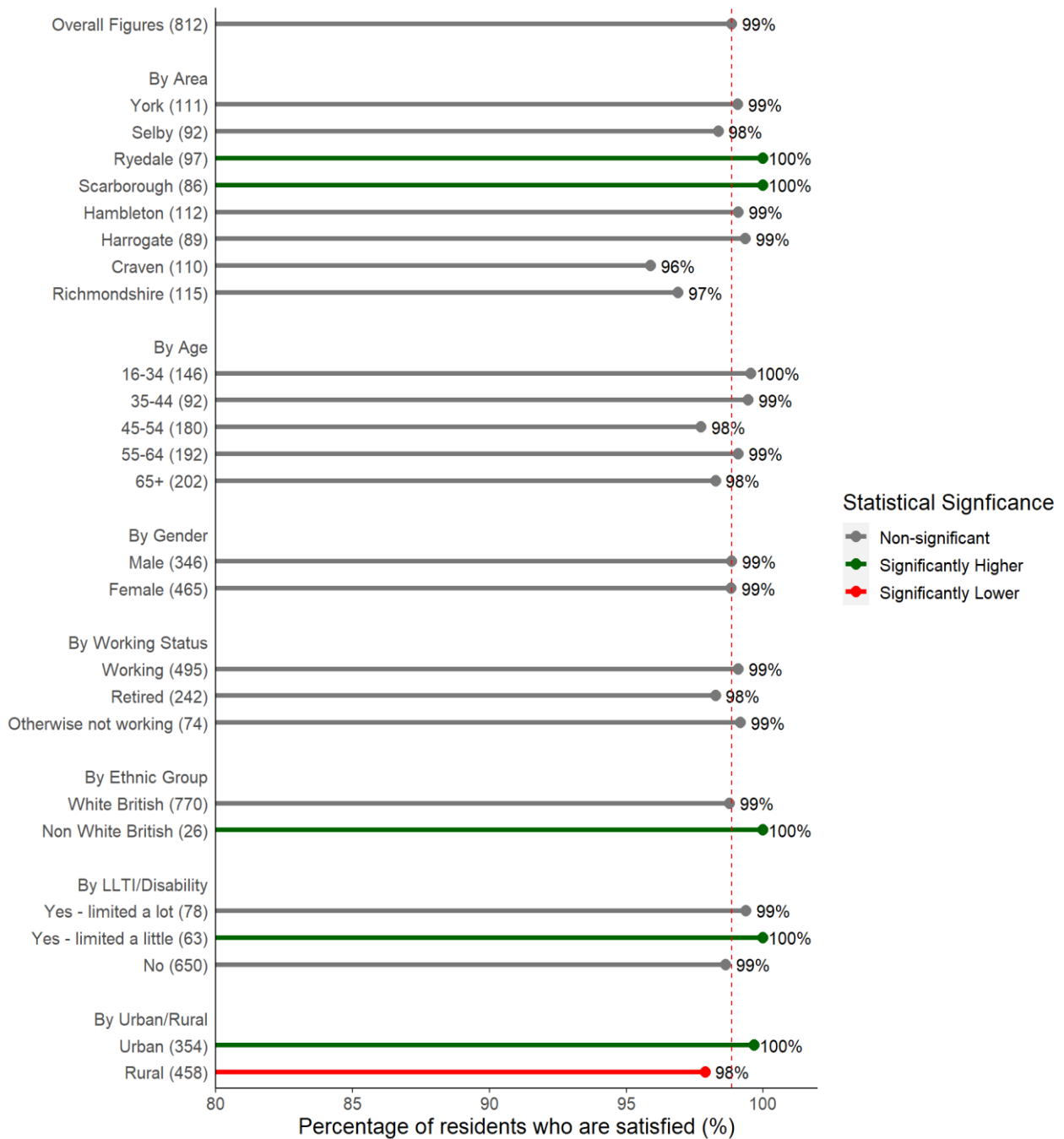
5.16   Almost all residents agreed that the fire and rescue service would be there if they needed them (98%) and respond well to fires, road traffic collisions, floods and other emergencies (98%).

5.17   Over 9 in 10 also agreed that the fire and rescue service protect and support vulnerable people (94%); prevent fires and emergencies in their community (93%); and reflect the diversity of their community (92%), whilst around four fifths agreed that they are sufficiently visible in their community (79%).

Figure 7: Thinking about the fire and rescue service in your local area, do you agree or disagree that the fire and rescue service…? Base: Number of residents shown in brackets
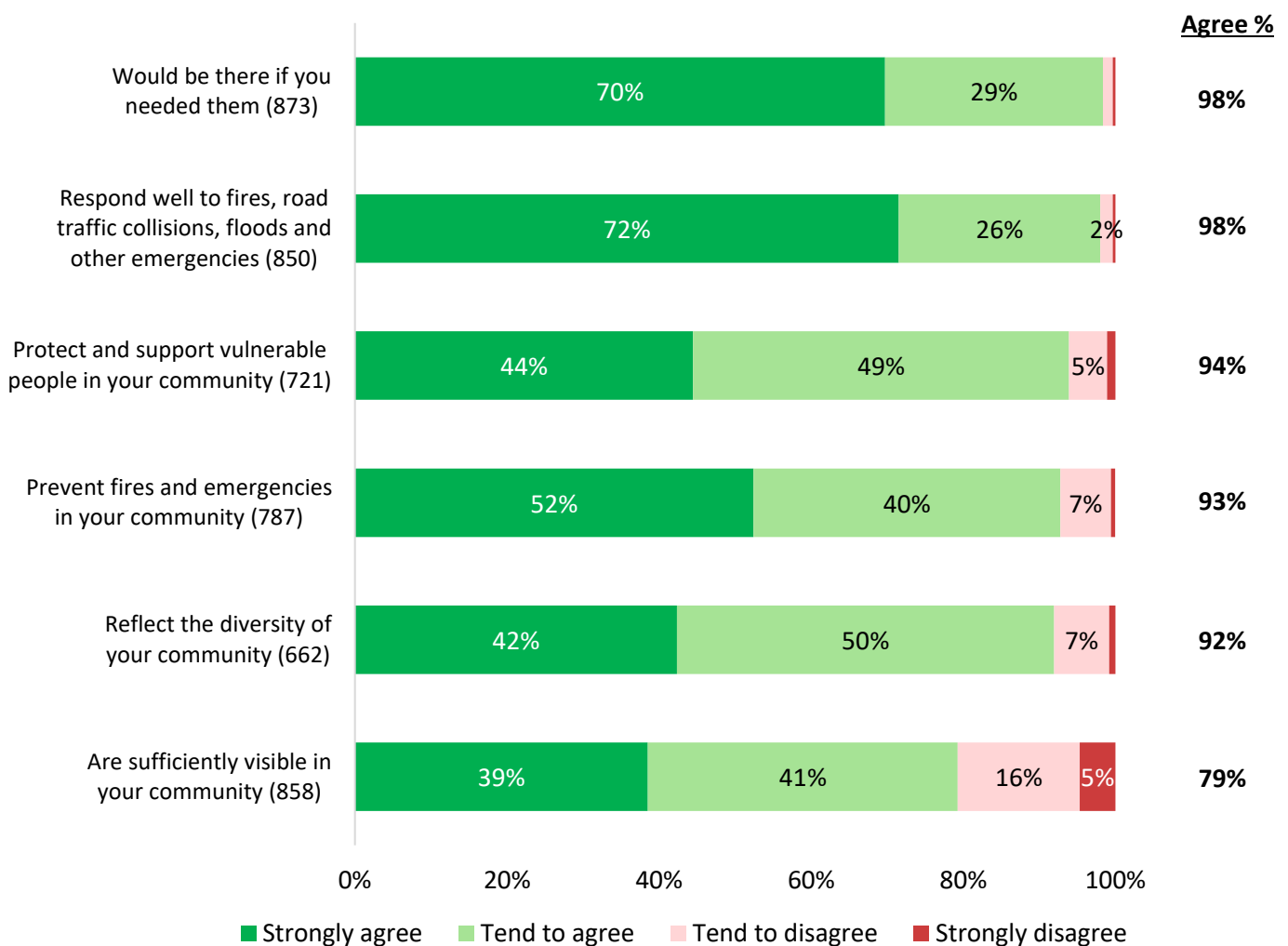
Differences by sub-group

5.18 Table 8 shows how the responses for this question vary across different sub-groups of the population who stated they are agree with a series of statements about the fire and rescue service.

5.19 Residents aged 55-64 are significantly less likely to agree with three of six statements about the fire and rescue service.

Table 8: Thinking about the fire and rescue service in your local area, do you agree or disagree that the fire and rescue service…? (Grouped responses by sub-group)

Thinking about the fire and rescue service in your local area, do you agree or disagree that the fire and rescue service…?	Significantly more likely to agree	Significantly less likely to agree
Would be there if you needed them (98%)	Live in Selby (100%) Live in Scarborough (100%) Aged 16-34 (100%) Working (99%) Non-White British (100%)	Aged 55-64 (96%) Live in a rural area (98%)
Respond well to fire, road traffic collisions, floods and other emergencies (98%)	Live in Selby (100%) Aged 65+ (100%)	Aged 55-64 (95%)
Protect and support vulnerable people in your community (94%)	Live in Scarborough (98%) Aged 65+ (98%) Female (96%) Retired (97%)	Aged 45-54 (89%) Male (91%)
Prevent fires and emergencies in your community (93%)	-	Live in Craven (87%) Aged 55-64 (87%)
Reflect the diversity of your community (92%)	Live in Scarborough (98%) Live in Hambleton (98%) Live in Richmondshire (99%) Live in a rural area (95%)	Live in Harrogate (81%) Live in an urban area (89%)
Are sufficiently visible in your community (79%)	Aged 35-44 (87%)	-

North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service Priorities

> *How important or not are each of these for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years?*

5.20 Residents were presented with a list of priorities for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire and asked to rate how important each is in the next three years. From the list, the top priorities for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years are:

To ensure the fire and rescue service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future (99%);

To focus on preventing fire and rescue related incidents before they happen, especially where response times are low (99%);

To focus on protecting people and property through risk assessments, inspections and enforcing fire safety laws if necessary (97%); and

To improve the 82% availability of the fire and rescue service in rural areas (97%).

Residents felt that increasing the diversity of the fire and rescue services' workforce to be more representative of North Yorkshire's population is the least important priority from this list (83%).

Figure 8: How important or not are each of these for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years?
Base: Number of residents shown in brackets

Important %

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important	Important %
To ensure the Fire and Rescue Service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future (891)	87%	12%			**99%**
To focus on preventing fire and rescue related incidents before they happen, especially in areas where response times are longer (885)	73%	25%			**99%**
To focus on protecting people and property through risk assessments, inspections, and enforcing fire safety laws if necessary (883)	75%	22%	2%		**97%**
To improve the 82% availability of the Fire and Rescue Service in rural areas (882)	69%	29%	2%		**97%**
To work more in partnership with North Yorkshire Police as well as other emergency services and partner agencies (871)	60%	36%	3%		**96%**
To work to better identify, care for and protect vulnerable people (865)	62%	31%	6%	2%	**92%**
To focus on providing advice about flooding prevention, water safety and road safety (881)	56%	35%	8%		**91%**
To increase the Fire and Rescue Service's engagement in the community so that local people feel more connected to the Service (880)	43%	43%	12%	2%	**86%**
To increase the diversity of the Fire and Rescue Service's workforce to be more representative of North Yorkshire's population (835)	44%	39%	12%	5%	**83%**

■ Very important　■ Fairly important　■ Not very important　■ Not at all important

5.21 Table 9 shows how the responses for this question vary across different sub-groups of the population who stated they think each of the priorities for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire are important in the next three years.

5.22 Female residents are significantly more likely to say that five of the nine priorities are important, whereas male residents are significantly less likely to say five of the priorities are important.

Table 9: How important or not are each of these for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years? (Grouped responses by sub-group)

How important or not are each of these for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years?	Significantly more likely to think priority is important	Significantly less likely to think priority is important
To ensure the Fire and Rescue Service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future (99%)	Live in Ryedale (100%) Live in Harrogate (100%) Aged 35-44 (100%) Aged 55-64 (100%) Non-White British (100%)	-
To focus on preventing fire and rescue related incidents before they happen, especially in areas where response times are longer (99%)	Live in Harrogate (100%) Aged 16-34 (100%) Non-White British (100%) Disability - limited a little (100%) Live in an urban area (100%)	Live in a rural area (98%)
To focus on protecting people and property through risk assessments, inspections and enforcing fire safety laws if necessary (97%)	Live in York (99%) Disability - limited a lot (99%) Live in an urban area (99%)	Live in a rural area (96%)
To improve the 82% availability of the Fire and Rescue Service in rural areas (97%)	Aged 16-34 (99%) Female (99%) Otherwise not working (100%) Non-White British (100%)	Male (96%)
To work more in partnership with North Yorkshire Police as well as other emergency services and partner agencies (96%)	Live in Scarborough (99%) Aged 16-34 (99%) Non-White British (100%)	Aged 45-54 (92%) White British (96%)
To better identify, care for and protect vulnerable people (92%)	Live in Richmondshire (96%) Female (94%) Working (94%) Disability - limited a little (98%)	Male (90%) No disability (91%)
To focus on providing advice about flooding prevention, water safety and road safety (91%)	Live in Selby (95%) Female (94%) Disability - limited a lot (96%)	Aged 35-44 (84%) Male (88%)
To increase the Fire and Rescue Service's engagement in the community so that local people feel more connected to the Service (86%)	Female (90%) Disability - limited a lot (93%) Disability - limited a little (94%)	Aged 35-44 (78%) Aged 45-54 (79%) Male (82%) No disability (84%)

(Table continued overleaf)

How important or not are each of these for the fire and rescue service in North Yorkshire in the next three years?	Significantly more likely to think priority is <u>important</u>	Significantly less likely to think priority is <u>important</u>
To increase the diversity of the Fire and Rescue Service's workforce to be more representative of North Yorkshire's population (83%)	Female (89%) Disability - limited a lot (90%)	Male (76%) No disability (81%)

Additional Comments

> *Is there anything else important that you feel North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service should focus on over the next three years? Please explain what they are.*

5.23 Residents were asked if there is anything else important they feel North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service should focus on over the next three years.

5.24 160 residents provided a response to this question, from which 239 separate comments have been classified according to a code frame. This approach helps ensure consistency when classifying different comments and the resulting codes represent themes that have been repeatedly mentioned in a more quantifiable manner. The various comments provided by a respondent to any single text question may present a number of different points or arguments, therefore in many cases the overall number of coded comments counted in a particular question can actually be higher than the number of people responding to that open-ended question.

5.25 The most common topic raised by residents focussed the need to 'increase the Fire and Rescue Service's engagement, visibility/accessibility, and communication within the community, so that local people feel more connected to the Service' (17%):

> *"A bit more visibility and more involvement with the community e.g. more community events, more educational events, especially for young people"*
>
> *"Increase visibility, just so we know they are there if they are needed"*
>
> *"Maybe more community work, I know they do, but it's very good and more help. More information on prevention, more active roles in the community. Know they can be busy. Appreciate that they do this work already"*
>
> *"More community engagement. Better communication, engagement with youths and women. More personal aid and personally delivered information. Explain more about fire services"*
>
> *"The opportunity to engage the community when carrying out activities. Be more visible. Educate people about things like flooding situations and risk assessments"*

5.26   Another subject frequently referenced by residents was the need to '*recruit more staff / crew and solve recruitment / retention issues*' (13%):

> *"Increase firemen and 24-hour watch crewing"*
>
> *"More of them as there's only one station here with two fire engines in my area. Could do with more for rural areas"*
>
> *"More staff as it looks like you could do with a few more firefighters and more women firefighters"*
>
> *"Recruiting more fire fighters and opening up more rural fire stations, so there's more on call"*
>
> *"The amount of fire fighters are low and insufficient. These should be increased"*

5.27   Other things commonly mentioned by residents included:

They do a good job / keep up the good work (11%);

Better educate the public / provide free fire safety advice / fire alarms and raise awareness (11%);

More funding, resources and training (10%);

To ensure the Fire and Rescue Service has well-equipped, modern services that are fit for the future. This includes making sure they have the right buildings, equipment, technology and vehicles to carry out their work (10%); and

To focus on preventing fire and rescue related incidents before they happen, especially in areas where response times are longer (10%).

6. Stakeholder/partner engagement

Introduction

6.1   The following findings are based an online discussion with members of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel[7]; two online focus groups with stakeholders/partners with an interest in fire and rescue issues, an in-depth discussion with the Fire Brigades Union, and two written submissions.

6.2   The discussions were held in October and November 2021 and were broadly designed to gather participants' views on:

- The main fire and rescue issues in/for North Yorkshire and the extent to which they differ from regional and national issues; and

- Current and future fire and rescue priorities.

6.3   The views expressed across all meetings and submissions were similar, and so have been reported together below.

Main findings

FRS response resourcing needs addressing

6.4   Ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of NYFRS' response function was thought to be a key priority by several stakeholders/partners.

6.5   The recruitment, retention and availability issues within the on-call service were fully recognised, mainly as a result of long-term societal changes, whereby people no longer live and work in the same place. It was again acknowledged that the issue is especially acute in rural areas near urban centres, as people from the rural communities are drawn to those centres for work.

> *"The retained fire services; I can't fault them … but I think they have a problem with recruitment … that's one of their significant issues … that is a problem particularly in an ageing community and people are travelling further afield if they are younger for work and don't stay in and around those villages that have those stations"*

6.6   The impact of this on wholetime cover was noted by a couple of respondents, who suggested that fire engine availability is a significant issue across the whole Service. The main reasons given for this were that:

- Wholetime cover is being reduced to plug gaps in on-call

- The Operational Staffing Reserve (OSR) is plugging gaps in both wholetime and on-call - and the OSR *"steals on-call from their local station reducing availability [which is] robbing Peter to pay Paul"*; and

---

[7] About the Police, Fire and Crime Panel

- The Tactical Response Vehicles (TRVs) at Harrogate and Scarborough are regularly off the run to cover on-call.

6.7   The forthcoming Risk and Resource Model will, it was hoped, seek to address some of these issues; though it was anticipated that the Model is likely to be controversial in what it proposes given the emotiveness of making changes to fire cover within communities.

> *"Clearly the emerging Risk and Resource Model is a priority, given that we know it's a pretty tough financial settlement for fire. What that might actually mean for communities I think is going to be a hotly discussed topic when …we see what that looks like on the ground … the controversy is if you have to remove pumps or even stations from communities …"*

Prevention activity requires more focus

6.8   The Prevention work undertaken by NYFRS (often in partnership with other organisations) was highly valued: maintaining and developing it was considered a key priority for the forthcoming Plan.

> *"We've done events on safety with fire and rescue services … demonstrations in very public areas. We do Crucial Crew as well and that, again, is multi-service where everybody's in one room for one day and we get nearly every eight-year-old in the district through … that's started again this year … and it's incredibly important to us"*
>
> *"Partnership working and the development of prevention work at a place-based area [is a priority]. There is an ageing population in North Yorkshire and home safety and road safety will be vital"*

6.9   However, better recording was thought to be needed to evidence activity and benefit.

> *"Evaluation and targeting of our activities is problematic. Effective targeting would help us reach those most at risk to fire. Data quality and recording is an issue that requires improvement"*

6.10 Participants also noted the need to better communicate the benefits of Prevention (and indeed Protection) to members of the public, who tend to underestimate the value of it, instead prioritising response.

> *"I think it's widely recognised amongst people who know. Whether the general public know that or not … I remember raising an eyebrow when they said they were going to give away free chip pans … until I then realised the number of fires that were being caused by people having old-fashioned chip pans on the top of their stoves … "*

A long-term sustainable plan is needed for Protection activity

6.11 Although not raised as frequently as Prevention as a priority for NYFRS, there was a definite sense that Protection activity will require renewed focus over the life of the forthcoming plan as a result of legislation following the Grenfell Tower inquiry.

> *"Building and fire safety as those bills go through. We don't have comparatively the high rises that other areas do, but nonetheless I think taking on new responsibilities as they come through and making sure we keep communities safe is going to be a big topic over the next twelve months"*

NYFRS's assets (i.e., buildings, fleet and equipment) are outdated and need modernising – but fairer funding is needed to achieve this

6.12 One of NYFRS's main challenges is finance: it was said to have been chronically under-funded for many years, leading to under-investment in assets such as buildings, fleet, technology and equipment.

> *"Modernisation of facilities is needed: quite a lot of the stations and equipment is pretty outdated"*

6.13 As such, securing fairer, sustainable funding was considered the top priority by some inasmuch as:

> *"The achievement of the other priorities largely hinges on this. We can't modernise or invest when we have a £850k deficit and poor funding"*
>
> *" … the overarching priority has got to be sorting the finances out because otherwise everything else will fail"*

Diversifying NYFRS's workforce is important in ensuring it reflects the society it services – but ensuring an inclusive culture is equally important

6.14 It was acknowledged that the NYFRS workforce is unrepresentative of the communities it serves, and that diversification is needed to ensure it can better understand and meet the needs of those communities. Better recruitment strategies were thought to be key to this, as well as ensuring the inclusivity of Service (and particularly watch) culture.

> *"All public services need to reflect the diversity of our communities to ensure we are equitable and fair to all and can understand all our community's needs"*
>
> *"If you think about the culture of the fire service and in particular the watches, and if you think about the way they sort of work in 'bubbles', I think you can then start to see why it's important and why having a more diverse workforce and having different types of people in and amongst those watches will begin to help make sure that those new challenges in the communities are better understood"*

> *"In terms of the Service as a whole, I would say culture and diversity is a massive challenge for the service nationally, but in particular places like North Yorkshire … how can we continue to do better in terms of recruitment, but also the culture of the service?"*

6.15   With particular regard to FRS culture, there was some sense that the drive for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) within NYFRS has focused too much on increasing the diversity of the workforce, and not enough on the need for wholesale culture change. This has not only resulted in some negativity among the male workforce, who apparently feel devalued as a result of the drive to increase female firefighter numbers – but also in losing sight of the widespread and strategic changes needed to ensure the Service is suitably inclusive not only on a practical level, but also in welcoming those who may not fit the 'traditional firefighter' mould.

> *"Diversity needs to be wrapped up in culture. [NYFRS needs to] to strive for an inclusive culture, addressing the barriers to increasing diversity … to look at policies and processes, buildings, kit, equipment. The current wording breeds negativity in the workforce; it infers [the Service is] only interested in increasing the number of women in the Service and that males are not valued. There's an over focus on recruitment. The Service isn't actually ready/fit for purpose for a 50% female workforce so it's about improving inclusivity so that everyone is welcome and feels they can be themselves, treated equally and included. There is still at times a male/boys club culture and that needs addressing"*

6.16   Moreover, it was said that ensuring diversity of opinion within the organisation is just as important as ensuring diversity by personal characteristics in preventing it becoming an 'echo chamber' where the same voices and views are continuously heard.

> *"I think it's a key thing … it's important to give the platform to the different voices and perspectives. To be able to strengthen and share … through diverse backgrounds and professions … That diversity is needed"*
>
> *"I don't think it's necessarily about diversity of gender. It's about having diversity within your team. Like it or not, we do all think differently … and the more difference you can have particularly within a leadership team … then, first of all … people are more likely to join that service and second of all, it's just that diversity of thought – bringing different opinions and different views and not just having a very one-sided view … it's any kind of diversity"*

Staff welfare must be considered and prioritised

6.17   It was noted that NYFRS is currently running on a predominantly temporary structure, including at senior leadership team level. This, it was said, is unsettling for staff and creates uncertainty. Moreover, stress levels were thought to be high throughout the organisation, with employees *"often double hatting two full-time jobs"*.

6.18   The impact of the latter was thought to be particularly acute at the middle manager role and above, and addressing workloads and their impact on personal resilience at that level was thought to be key in terms of both individual wellbeing, and enabling managers to drive positive change.

enableNY is a priority, but isn't as effective as it might be currently

6.19 Ensuring the delivery of an effective range of support services via enableNY was thought to be a key priority. It was argued that the collaboration is not delivering the required level of service currently, and that the business case must be reviewed urgently to evaluate its benefits and value for money, and identify further improvement areas. Specifically, IT was said to require significant investment, as the NYFRS and NYP systems *"do not talk to each other"*.

6.20 It was also said that the decision-making made through enableNY channels (and indeed by the Service more widely) is not always as transparent as it might be, nor are proper consultation principles with representative bodies always applied when making workforce decisions. Also, the bulletins sent out to both organisations are apparently no longer read by many NYFRS staff as *"they are no longer relevant with too much focus on the Police".*

6.21 The Estates Strategy being developed through enableNY was raised by one respondent, who felt it doesn't have enough of a sustainability focus. In fact, the same respondent was of the view that the Service as a whole is lacking in a Green Strategy to reduce its carbon footprint, which should be in place as a priority.

> *"It should be a priority in terms of being fit for the future. It should have a long-term strategy to include the introduction of electric vehicles/appliances. All new infrastructures should be sustainable, which should be reflected in the Estates Strategy"*

Wider partnership working is essential, but must also be targeted to achieve best effect

6.22 Effective partnership working between all relevant statutory and voluntary sector partner organisations was thought to be critical, particularly if NYFRS is to achieve best effectiveness in terms of its prevention activity. The Service was praised by several stakeholders for its proactive and important work in this regard.

> *"This is vital if the fire and rescue service is going to work on prevention, they need to work with others i.e., housing, health social care, police and community teams"*
>
> *"Our relationship with them is around fire risk checks for our clients and they are very, very responsive … the Fire and Rescue Service in Scarborough is talking about finding a safe place for victims to come and make calls to [support services] in their station … "*

6.23 There was also support for more joint working in response to incidents, and for reducing the apparent bureaucracy involved in doing so.

> *"I'd like to think it's almost business as usual, services working together, training together … but, unfortunately, every time there's a big incident … what you find once again is the three services haven't worked effectively together. We all know that's the right thing to do but actually embedding that into services and making that part of your everyday is more difficult"*

> *"For me (and it's a controversial issue, I know) … first responders on the scene are normally the police, the fire brigade, the ambulance. The bureaucracy of working together is so complex, there needs to be joined-up thinking in my view, more streamlined so that maybe there are areas where the services can do more"*

The positives that have emerged as a result of COVID-19 must be harnessed

6.24 Some positive joint working practices have developed out of the COVID-19 pandemic that should, it was said, be maintained moving forward. For example, partnership working with Yorkshire Ambulance Service, North Yorkshire County Council and local healthcare organisations was thought to have improved considerably as a result of necessary collaboration – and there was a strong desire for this to be maintained and developed. Specifically, it was noted that firefighters have stepped outside their usual role maps to successfully assist the COVID effort, and that maintaining that wider role could be considered moving forward.

> *"I think during the pandemic, we've seen how great the different services (police, fire, councils, health) can work together and I think there is, if we can get through with the unions, a real way of the fire service contributing to a lot of that work and changing and widening their role that they do"*

6.25 However, it was said that care must be taken to ensure such activity is properly targeted and resourced - and that NYFRS maintains its distinct brand and identity.

> *"Partnership work is essential but [NYFRS needs] to work with other agencies where there is a shared and appropriate purpose and where [it has] the right skills and investment to do so … "*

NYFRS must make better connections with its communities

6.26 It was recognised that public knowledge of NYFRS is limited, and that better community engagement and 'PR' is needed to raise not only its profile generally, but also of its evolving role, remit and activity.

> *"It's become probably more diverse in its role … but they are still very much thought of as firemen"*
>
> *"We need to better promote the brand of NYFRS which will lead to improved community engagement … "*

6.27 Indeed, while water and road safety - and the Service's rescue and preventative role more widely - were considered by many stakeholders/partners to be an integral part of the modern firefighter role (as demonstrated by the comments below), there was a definite sense that public perception of that role remains centred around firefighting.

> *"There's something around road safety … there's actually not very many fires anymore"*

> *"The fire service has been a vital agency in our response to flooding ... helping with pump deployment and undertaking vulnerable people welfare checks when other service couldn't reach people. Without their help and assistance, we would not have had such a good response"*
>
> *"How can we make sure that the service can respond to new challenges, particularly for the City of York in terms of flooding"*

6.28 Visibility was thought to be key in enhancing community knowledge and engagement, and while NYFRS was thought to have improved considerably in this regard pre-pandemic, it was said to have retreated back 'into itself' over the past 18 months. This was, of course, understood to be necessary during the lockdown periods, but there was a sense that the Service now needs to 'get back out there' within the bounds of any remaining restrictions.

> *"It's one thing that's really struck me since moving down here was how much more visible the fire service were in regards to going out and doing college visits and doing education work, doing prevention … but over this last year or so, obviously with Covid regulations, they went much more into themselves in not going out doing that prevention work. I don't know where they are in terms of going back out … It seems to have gone back into silo with Covid and they don't seem to be quite out there again yet so that is certainly something I'd like to see them do"*
>
> *"The visibility is in the prevention. It's in the simple bits of education that they were doing … Going into people's houses, going into properties, going into businesses, and just making buildings fire safe was having a big knock-on effect on less callouts. It was quite impressive, but we are just not seeing that just now … "*
>
> *"Fire & Rescue [needs to be] doing more place-based working; key prevention initiatives to raise fire safety awareness, road safety awareness. Being part of the community response i.e., Operation Ambience[8]"*

6.29 As for activity designed to raise NYFRS's profile, the introduction of a Public Safety Officer[9] trial in Craven District will, it was hoped, do so there – and ultimately in other areas if the initiative is extended.

> *"I'm very keen on this approach … where you actually have a combination of roles in one person, so you have a police responder, who is also a retained firefighter and is also a special constable. I think that has worked well elsewhere… I think we are trying it in two parts of Craven, and I think that is a way forward"*

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[8] A multi-agency approach using visible patrols to help to build confidence and trust in the community to report ASB.
[9] Public safety officers serve as on-call firefighters as well as emergency first responders for Yorkshire Ambulance Service. They are also part of the local policing team providing early intervention and monitoring antisocial behaviour.

6.30 Finally, it was considered essential that any attempts to raise NYFRS's profile within communities must ensure its 'brand' is seen as separate to the police, as the two services are so different in their purpose.

> *"We need to maintain our own, distinct identity from the Police as a brand and in our engagement and comms … As a Service we have a completely different and distinct purpose and needs"*

List of tables and figures

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