

For publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
28 March 2024

SUBJECT: New Operational Response Standards

Author and contact: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER (DCFO)

Background Papers: Members development day workshop on Response standards delivered on 4 October 2023.
Public consultation paper presented to the FRA on December 15th 2023.

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
N/A		

Implications

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and/or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Financial Implications	No	No material issues
Risk Management	Yes	Risk to reputation re: public perception of lessening standards. Mitigated by public consultation explaining the redrafting seeks to surface actual performance and drive improvement.
Legal Implications	No	Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 and the National Framework document lay the legal framework for the CRMP. The Response standards are the promise to the public and are determined as part of the process laid out in this paper.

Privacy and Security Implications		N/A
Duty to Collaborate		N/A
Health and Safety Implications	No	Risk assessments and PDA for all incident types to remain in place - unchanged.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No	No material issues
Environmental Sustainability		N/A
Consultation and Communication	No	Full public consultation has been conducted as part of the change recommended.

PURPOSE:

To provide Members with the outcomes of the public consultation on operational response standards and to reach agreement on the proposed changes so they may be embedded into the service performance measures for 2024/25.

RECOMMENDATION:

Members are asked to:

- 1 Consider the output of the public consultation and provide Officers with feedback.
- 2 Agree to the proposed changes to response measures as listed below.
- 3 Agree to the changes being published in the new CRMP document

New operational response performance measures:

- Mobilise to primary fires within 120 seconds 85% of the time.

- First fire engine to arrive in 12 minutes to primary fires on 80% of occasions, measured from time of call. (incorporating the existing time of alert measure with the new call handling measure).
- Second fire engine mobilised to a primary fire as part of the initial attendance will arrive in 16 mins on 80% of occasions, from time of call.
- RTCs, we will arrive in 15 minutes on 80% of occasions, measured from time of call. (incorporating the existing time of alert measure with the new call handling measure).
- For secondary fires one fire engine will arrive in 20 minutes on 96% of occasions, measured from time of call.
- The removal of old descriptors that do not follow the national recording and benchmarking definitions e.g. a move from 'critical incidents' to 'primary and secondary fire'.
- The removal of the old control measure to answer 90% of 999 calls in 7 seconds or less, as this will now be superseded by the control measure above.
- The removal of '5 riders' being part of any performance measure due to the limiting nature of such a measure when maximising the amount of fire engines available to the whole County.

1. Executive Summary






- 1.1 Following a meeting of the Fire Authority on December 15th 2023 Officers published the agreed consultation online. The consultation was supported by press releases, social media activity and direct marketing to service database contacts. As well as sharing the electronic survey all communications released by the service included a written description and a video to explain the changes and the reasons for making the changes. The service also released internal communications and held a number of meetings with internal stakeholders.
- 1.2 The consultation lasted 8 weeks, during which time the service and its partners, such as the local authorities, promoted participation in the consultation. At the end of the consultation period the service had received 335 responses.

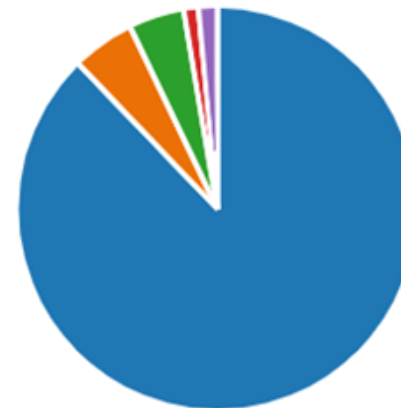
- 1.3 The majority position on all questions was either supportive or no material view. There were no questions where the majority response was negative.
- 1.4 The only area of concern seen in the consultation related to crewing a fire engine with less than 5 firefighters. The direct feedback to the relevant question, regarding flexibly using staff to maximise fire engine availability, was still majority positive but it is important to acknowledge and address the comments.
- 1.5 Officers have been clear throughout that the policies for crewing fire engines safely will not change through this process. It is therefore accepted practice that 4 firefighters are acceptable to crew a fire engine. The same number of wholetime firefighters are still available across the service and that is not affected by this work. This means that, where crewing is available, fire engines may still crew with five firefighters, but the service has the option to make more fire engines available should there be a need or opportunity.
- 1.6 There were no material ED&I issues raised through the consultation.

2. Background

2.1 The responses to the survey were as follows:

Q1. What is your connection to Bedfordshire?

	I am a resident of Bedfordshire	294
	I work in Bedfordshire	17
	My relative lives in Bedfordshire	15
	I have no connection to Bedfordshire	4
	Other	5

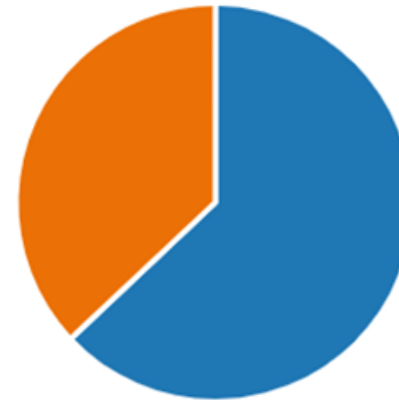


Q2. Would you like BFRS to change the way it reports to align with other fire and rescue services so it can compare data?

● Yes	160
● No	119
● No opinion	56



Q3. Do you support BFRS in changing the call handling standard to combine all control room measures into one standard of: We will mobilise and fire engine to primary fires within 120 second of taking a 999-emergency call, 85 per cent of the time.

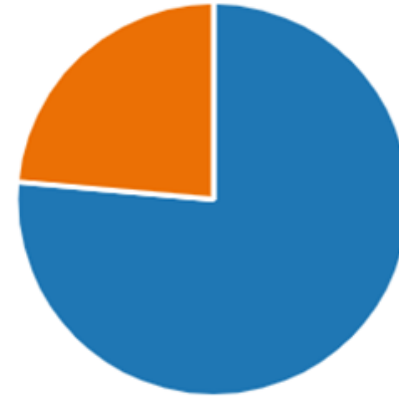


Q4. Currently, BFRS publishes performance figures that start from when a fire engine is sent (mobilised) to an incident until it arrives. Would you support changing the published standard to include the time the 999 call is received so you know accurately how long it takes us to respond to your 999 call?



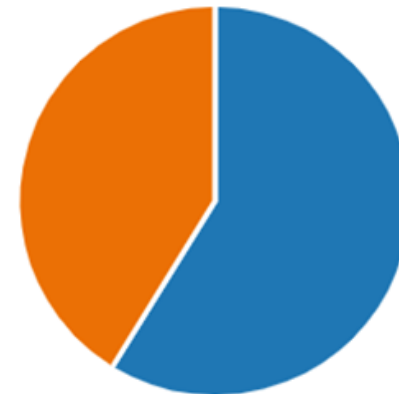
Q5. Would you support BFRS in also reporting the time it takes for the second fire engine to arrive?

● Yes 256
● No 79



Q6. Would you like us to maximise the number of fire engines available to get the quickest response to you?

● Yes 197
● No 138



3. Summary and next steps

- 3.1 The response to the survey supports the service proposals to modernise and align our measures to national measures, as well creating flexibility to maximise our operational cover to meet our promise to the public. Any issues raised have been responded to and policies considered to maintain the service to the public.
- 3.2 Work has been undertaken to build the new measures so the service can go-live in the new reporting year, subject to FRA approval.
- 3.3 The service will continue to monitor and drive performance improvements and will provide Members with updates throughout the reporting year. At the end of the year performance measures will be further scrutinised should these measure need adjusting to drive further improvements.

CHRIS BIGLAND
DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER