

Summary Report 8 February 2016

Survey: IRMP 2 Consultation Questions and Responses

2. The consultation document provides information through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, on the advantages and disadvantages of the 3 x 8 hour Metropolitan Shift System, Please detail any further advantages you would like to add to this analysis.

Count	Response
1	Can't see any
1	I feel the SWOT analysis if fair and I have nothing further to add
1	In my opinion there are no advantages to this shift system
1	Nil
1	No advantages to add.
2	None
1	None
1	None at all
1	The no advantages to this shift system

1	<p>I have ranked the four proposals but only in terms of least advantageous to most disadvantageous. I would rather the terms "preference" and "favoured" were not applied. There are no advantages to the 3 x 8 hour shift system, and it pays little or no regard to the work life balance and family friendly requirements of its Fire Control Staff. The indication of 2 rota days off is misleading, as I would have worked 7 hours of the first rota day (the average for most working adults) so the reality is that I will only have 1 complete day off with my family, where the norm for most people is 2 at the weekend, maximising contact with family and friends. Fire Control staff are already disadvantaged by working nights, weekends and Bank holidays (including Christmas) and this system would exacerbate that disadvantage enormously. The salary for Fire Control staff has been eroded over recent years so that it no longer compensates for the disadvantages of shifts (whichever is chosen) and any degradation to conditions of service will only serve to lower moral and could quite possibly lead to the loss of experienced operators.</p>
1	<p>Firstly, the order in which I placed the answers to Q1 is only because I could not skip the question. It is hard to say which one you would favour without knowing the finer details/rules of some systems. No advantages to '3 x 8' shift system. I have worked this system before in Police Control, and it has nothing to recommend it.</p>
1	<p>None. I do however disagree with strength number 5 on the SWOT Analysis: Health benefits achieved through reduced shift duration. Reducing the length of a night shift may seem like it would have health benefits on paper, but realistically this would not be the case. Whether the length be 14, 12 or 8 hours long, the fact is staff would still be working through the night. Irrelevant of the length of night shift, most parents of young children would have been up the entire day. Yes, the length of time at work would be reduced - but it's not the length of time at work that causes fatigue - it's the time without sleep. So I don't feel the shift length would have a direct affect on health. The same could be said for strength number 6 too.</p>
1	<p>This system may appear to have advantages to managerial staff but are no advantages to this shift system for control staff who would be working it.</p>

3. Please detail any further disadvantages of the 3 x 8 hour Metropolitan Shift System

Count	Response
1	None
1	Not at all Family Friendly. Childcare costs would increase - and I would never spend any time with my children.
1	You would require to attend work on an extra 76 occasions causing greater fuel costs and wear and tear to your vehicle. 8 hour shifts contrary to Grey Book.
1	no proper R&R time between shifts. Have to attend work on a lot more occasions therefore this is effecting the carbon footprint and traveling costs.
1	1 weekend in 8 off is not what you might call family friendly. Woould mean that staff would only get 1 full day off as on the first roat day the shift finishes at 06:00 so that day would be spent sleeping.
1	Weaknesses far outweigh the strengths on a personal level - therefore making this particular shift system unworkable for me.
1	I do not believe that sickness levels will improve with this system. 1 full day off out of 8 is not sufficient time to get over night shifts...regardless of the duration of the shift. Personally speaking, I would lose out on sleep, as I would find it difficult to sleep before or after the 'early' and 'night' shifts (whatever start/finish time of the 8 hours). Under the 'Staff Objectives' in the 'Attainment' table, 'Appropriate Work/Life Balance' has a '?' next to it...this should clearly be a 'x' (cross for no), as being at work for at least some period of 7 days out of 8 does not make for an appropriate work/life balance'.
1	With only 2 days off every 8 days and the first day off you have already worked a large portion as you are coming off nights - no thank you!!

1	Not family friendly at all. Staff would NOT get 2 rota days – 'as indicated on the rota' – as 7 hours of first rota day already worked. Lower morale of staff – caused by only having 1 full day off from the work place therefore staff attending work more often. Extra travel expenses – end result in your pocket – seen as a reduction in salary. Increased childcare costs. All of the above would result in low morale.
1	This system doubles our working days, halves our rest days, in fact only giving us 1.5 days off as part of the 1st day will be worked during the night shift prior to the rest day, it changes the start and finish times making it detrimental to work life balance and external commitments
1	This is not at all family friendly, it takes staff away from home at some point for 6 out of 7 days, only leaving staff with 1 completely clear day. For 4 nights on the run staff will be travelling at 22:00/23:00 hrs – no work/life balance. I don't feel this would improve sickness rates as there is virtually no recovery time from the night shifts. This pattern seriously affects the number of staff who will be available to cover staff shortages and if a member of staff is sick then 6 shifts need covering and not 4 as it is with the current pattern.
1	Personally I feel this is the most 'un family friendly' option. As a single parent this would directly impact on how many nights I could have my son, unfortunately I would need to consider alternative employment if this was to be introduced.
1	There are so many disadvantages but to clarify some of the many already listed: Not fewer weekends off – actually no weekends off except leave Not less rest days – only one per week With only 1 day off per week who is likely to provide cover for absences? Potentially less family friendly – not potentially but defiantly surely? In reality resilience is non existent
1	The disadvantages mentioned on the SWOT analysis are more than enough to rule out this system for Control staff.

4. The consultation document provides information through a SWOT analysis, on the advantages and disadvantages of the Self-Rostering Shift System, Please detail any further advantages you would like to add to this analysis.

Count	Response
1	Flexibility of selecting shifts.
1	No advantages to 'self-rostering' system.
1	No advantages to add.
1	No advantages to this system
3	None
1	None, in addition to those listed.
1	I fail to see how this shift pattern will increase productivity? This option would be much more attractive if the 10 hr days and 14 hr nights remained.
1	Greater emphasis on team work (if people unable to pull together get rid). Under performing staff could benefit from working with more competent staff. Under weaknesses (number 5) I disagree with this statement as morale and performance can be damaged or hidden if working with the same watch for a period of years.
1	If all staff were accommodating and flexible there could be increased flexibility. This would work for me if shifts were programmed for a whole year to enable me to arrange childcare around my shifts.
1	This would enable staff to manage their own systems of work, this could be configured to accommodate the existing 2-2-4 favoured by the majority of staff and preferred to keep

5. Please detail any further disadvantages of the Self-Rostering Shift System

Count	Response
1	None
1	Would require greater cohesiveness between staff.
1	This system would cause resentment amongst staff as there will always be persons who would act selfishly when rostering shifts. It would affect morale. What happens at Christmas? This may be your first Christmas off in many years with all plans made but you owe the brigade a shift - would you be made to come in to work?
1	Threatens the dynamics of team work, i.e. I work well with the team I am currently with which is positive for the Fire Service. No consistency as not watch based. It takes time to build relationships. Needs to run on team work.
1	This system requires ALL staff to be flexible and prepared to do their fair share. This kind of system will make arranging child care, for my 10 month old baby, very difficult as there is no set pattern to shifts.
1	This system needs to be managed by someone not associated with Fire control as there are too many selfish people in there who would try and manipulate the rota to their own advantage leaving others with all the so called bad shifts
1	One of the main reason this system would not work for me personally is due to the lack of pattern - making it impossible to plan ahead. I understand that there would be an 8 week plan, and this could possibly be increased so that shifts are input for the entire 12 months. However due to the fact there is no fixed pattern, it would be impossible to plan child care arrangements. I would be very interested to see an IT solution that will fairly distribute shifts... In my mind the best and only way of doing this fairly would to have a fixed pattern to the days and nights worked, which in turn would negate the need for self-rostering.
1	This would need to be closely managed to ensure all staff were treated fairly. How would annual leave be allocated, would it be on a first come, first served basis?

1	<p>Although the report boasts the health benefits of reducing the night shifts it makes no mention of the adverse effects of increasing the day shift. Any 12 hour day will impact on family life, at present staff can be home at a reasonable time to spend the evening as they wish. If 12 hour shifts were introduced there would be no family time after days. I feel the fact over 35% of control staff are working mothers has been overlooked when deciding on alternative shift patterns. If I take myself as an example, I currently get up at 06:15 to be in work for 08:00, at present I get home at approx. 18:40 and have to start cooking tea, assisting with homework and ensuring uniform, PE kits etc are ready for the following day. I am lucky to be sat down by 21:00. If my day shift didn't finish until 20:00 because they were increased to a 12 hour day it would be 23:00 before I was ready to relax. I know that start times and finish times can be discussed and agreed upon however with travelling time and responsibilities at home it makes it a 16 hour day regardless of start time. Any decrease in the night shift hours is negligible as sitting around an extra 2 hours at home waiting to come to work doesn't have any benefit and in fact personally would make it more of a struggle. If staff are at work anytime between midnight and 06:00 they are going to suffer the effects of night shifts. I feel this would be very difficult to manage without a reliable IT product to distribute and manage the shifts, along with the relatively low staff savings I fail to see how this will save money.</p>
1	<p>1. 12 hour shifts. 2. No "Watch" based working. How will consistency be managed for tasks that are given to watches to comment on and complete? 3. Management of personnel that are under performing will be difficult as they will be working with different supervisors? 4. Managing IDR's and Training & Development will be more difficult as you will be possibly working with a different mix of people each shift.</p>
1	<p>Need to purchase IT system – further expense to the Brigade. We do not seem to have much luck with any IT systems we purchase – eg. Aquarius, Seeds etc. Feedback from another Brigade that actually work this system, is not good at all – lets listen to people who have actually tried and tested the system ! On Watch training is hard enough to complete on our current Watch based shift system. Self-Rostering would make this practically impossible. No consistency – with line management or work colleagues. I do not believe that this would be done fairly.</p>
1	<p>Hard work to try and manage around family and partners work - also childcare would be in-consistent.</p>
1	<p>It will need to have robust guidelines and management in place to prevent abuse of the system and some staff members having advantages over others, Changing to 12 hour shifts is NOT a desired option.</p>

1	<p>"An IT solution will be required to calculate and fairly distribute shifts requested by staff" very few, if any of the current IT solutions operating in Control are satisfactory so there is little confidence that this solution would be any better. Managing this would be a drain on resources and would detract from the intention to introduce more work into Control. For this to be acceptable it would require staff to be able to enter shifts for a 12 month period. Hereford and Worcester, our nearest comparator, only attempt to plan 3 months in advance, and in reality only manage a month at a time. Furthermore, only a minority of staff like the system, most others range from dislike to detest, and some actually try to emulate the 224 (actually 223, as the first supposed rota day of 4 an individual has worked 8 hours) pattern. The 224/223 pattern has been in existence for over 30 years and has been adopted by many other organisations during that time and continues to be adopted for many sound reasons. The Home Office Fire Research & Development Group report, commissioned specifically into the health of Fire Control staff and written by Dr Peter Buckle and Valerie Woods of the Robens Institute state that "the shift pattern of 'two days, two nights and four off' would appear preferable in terms of sickness absence to any other system". They also cited data that showed the mean absent days for member of staff being nearly six more for those not working this pattern.</p>
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6. The consultation document provides information through a SWOT analysis, on the advantages and disadvantages of the 4 Watch Optimum Crewing Model, Please detail any further advantages you would like to add to this analysis.

Count	Response
1	Like the idea of staying as a watch. Training days would be an advantage
1	Nil
1	None
1	The advantage of this system, for me personally, is the fixed pattern. Although, the rostered days off would be difficult to manage - overall, having a fixed pattern to when you're working would assist greatly with childcare arrangements. Of the four propositions, this would be the only one that was workable for me.
1	I feel the advantages listed are a fair representation. Staff would know their shifts/ stand by days for a 12 month period which is easier to make arrangements outside of work. eg childcare, holidays
1	Similar system to what is already being worked, people know there is a pattern to the work cycle,
1	12 hour night shifts will allow more time with family life. There is more time in-between nights before back in on shift.
1	I feel this shift pattern is the best option providing we could retain 10 hr days and 14 hr nights. I see no financial savings for changing the length of the shifts and as explained in my previous answer to question 5. The benefits of a shorter night make very little difference if staff work between midnight and 06:00 however the disadvantages of a longer day have much more of a negative impact. The new exchange of duty trial which is currently underway on the operational watches accepts that a shift is a shift regardless of whether it is a 9 hour day or 15 hour night, therefore I feel there is no need to change to 12/12 hrs. In comparison to the other suggestions this is the easiest option to manage with the consistency of keeping the watches and the management structure within a watch. Having looked at the SWOT analysis for all 4 options this has the least weaknesses and those weakness don't increase if 10/14 hr shifts were retained. There is a question mark next to family friendly and work/life balance on the Attainment of Scope and Objectives sheet.

	However with certain changes regarding hours of work and period of notice to do shifts etc, this would be the least disruptive change to staff. It is very similar to the current pattern and staff have built their lives, childcare, family life around 2,2,4 with 10 hour days and 14 hour nights.
1	Keeping the 2-2-4 system that people like and are used to. Flexibility between staff to arrange cover. Keeping watch based moral and consistency.
1	Of all the options the 4 Watch Optimum Crewing Model offers the best solution of the four offered by far. Firstly it was put forward as an alternative by the Fire Control staff themselves and therefore has a degree of "buy in" already. It maintains the four watch system and shift pattern which has many advantages over the other suggested systems particularly in regard to training and management and provides the highest level of resilience of all the systems by in effect replacing overtime cover with shifts previously taken as rota days. This system will reduce costs by removing some if not all the requirement for paid overtime whilst at the same time increasing potential for training opportunities which will increase firefighter and public safety. Staff, particularly those with caring responsibilities, will be able to plan care for dependants in advance due to the predictable structure (as it remains close to the existing structure). The payback of shifts could be managed quite simply by using the current overtime system, except this time staff would be mindful of the shifts they owe when being requested to cover shortfalls.
1	This system at least keeps the preferred 2-2-4 system favoured by the majority of fire control staff
1	This system is closest to the current pattern, which is by far the option that is most preferable to majority of the staff in Fire Control. This system gives most notice of when a member of staff is due to work or be off.
1	This option appears to the nearest to what we work at the moment, obviously with a few tweaks. Consistency – Watch based working. Consistency – line management. Training easier to organise involving the Watch. Will reduce overtime – however not eliminate. Training days – easier to organise. Easier to plan childcare – (with the exception of 'rostered off' days and pay back days)

7. Please detail any further disadvantages of the 4 Watch Optimum Crewing Model

Count	Response
1	12 hour shifts
1	Changing to 12 hour shifts is NOT a desired option.
1	None
1	None, in addition to those listed.
1	12 hour shifts do not suit most, if not all, of the current control staff. 12 hours nights may be 2 hours shorter but this is not enough to make a difference to staff. 12 hours days will make a long day much longer.
1	Present system of 2-2-4 too rigid - gives an opportunity for staff to stagnate or 'pull up the drawbridge to protect their own team which is often misguided. You would still have 4 teams instead of 1.
1	If you owed shifts at the end of a 12 month period, how would you pay these back? Fairness on staff if some have been called in more than others. The impact on peoples' personal life as being unable to plan to do things out of work when on a 'stand by' day
1	Potentially, the main disadvantage is the proposed change to the current 10 hour day shift and 14 hour night shift as this will detract from the family friendly / carer friendly element of the system as the evidence of improved health etc. is based on old evidence gathered about manual workers in the construction industry. In addition, I think it is misleading not to include our rest periods from the risk / fatigue calculation as I can find no evidence in the HSE documentation, that although they are not guaranteed, they should be excluded from the calculation. There also seems to be no appetite for a change to 12 hour shifts from the staff, in fact the most positive response I have heard is "I will work them if I must. Contrast that with a couple of staff who would seriously consider leaving as it would make their caring responsibilities almost impossible. I for my part go with the majority, that the current 10 hour day and 14 hour night make the most of having to work a shift system. This gives me the maximum time with my family and the two hour less on a night shift is irrelevant in my opinion from a risk / fatigue standpoint.

In fact the HSE document 'The Development of a fatigue / risk index for shift workers' states on page 18 "there was no effect on absenteeism and incident rates when miners moved from 8-hour pattern to a 12-hour pattern (Baker et al, 2003)". In the same document on page 57 it states "For shifts longer than 12h, this involved extrapolation beyond the range of the available data". In other words an "educated guess". The document as a whole is not particularly relevant to Fire Control as we are not manual workers in the mining and construction industry which where most of the data was taken from. It is difficult to understand the rationale behind the proposal of reducing the night shift length of Fire Control staff due to the perceived detriment of the extra 2 hours beyond the "safe" 12 hour shift, when a new rota proposed for officers that was to be introduced on 18/01/2016 would see continuous duty between 11 and 18 days. In fact in one case continuous duty for over a month. Changes to start and finish times will also cause difficulties for staff with school and nursery age children and for the expectation of family friendly working conditions. Again the start and finish times have evolved to take into account opportunities for time with family and socialising after days which are regarded as valuable as two nights are lost as well as weekends and Bank Holidays which most other workers enjoy. From an operational and productivity point of view, starting at 08:00 allows staff to absorb handover information as well as relevant e-mails and other important pieces of information, before the operational watches are passing staffing and the daily work starts. Similarly by starting at 18:00 most of the same advantages exist as well as for drill night's that start at 19:00, staff being prepared for retained station tests fault reporting drills and exercises. All in all, any changes to start and finish times for 12 hour shifts has the effect of either getting young children out of bed very early to get them to child minders (if any are open early in the morning) or getting home later and young children being in bed, not a situation I am very comfortable with as it directly affects me. The argument that 12 hour shifts are easy to manage and are fair and equitable based on their equal length is presumably based on the experience of staff who have not worked nights in the control environment. In reality a night shift in Fire Control is very different to a day shift and whatever the length staff view them very differently. Whatever length is chosen, a mechanism to "pay back" an equal number of days and nights will require agreement. Anecdotal evidence regarding problems arising due unequal "pay back" of shifts in other Brigades, probably refer to West Midlands, where the issue is about the implementation being left to individual Watch Managers, with no guidance or consultation, leading to issues about managing the system not the system or shift lengths themselves. In reality most staff view a lengthened day with no enthusiasm whatsoever, and see no value in sitting at home waiting to come to work for up to 4 hours extra, as having no significant advantage at all. Leaving the shift length of 10 hour days and 14 hour nights, and introducing a clear framework, whilst developing meaningful guidance, therefore leaving the management of the system to Fire Control staff, offers the best way forward to both manage day to day staffing in Fire Control down to the minimum of 3 at all times. Additionally,

	introducing a realistic and workable method of covering shortfalls with rota days owed by staff, will ensure that the system will achieve the aim of resilience coupled with a reduction in cost via savings in overtime costs.
1	The days when staff are rostered to work but are expected to take it off need to be managed in the right way, staff need to know the parameters of what happens if they are not required for cover of courses are they likely to have pay stopped or are the brigade going to take the hit
1	Day shift has 2 hours extra which currently I am drained after a 10 hour day in Control. 2 hours will be lost from daily family life. Depending on start time of day shift it could mean I am unable to attend fitness classes at my local gym. I go to sessions before work as I find the effects of exercise before work has a positive impact on my working day. As a parent I am unable to attend evening classes.
1	12 hour shifts - why not stick to what we already do now? 12 hour shifts would mean less time with family and also difficulty with childcare as afterschool clubs and nursery's open at 7:30am and close at 6pm.
1	12 hour shifts – will make no difference knocking 2 hours off our current 14 hour night shift – a difference of '-2' hours would make no difference at all to fatigue. 12 hour shift – days too long. 12 hour shift - difficult to organise childcare – Nurseries and childminders tend NOT to start really early or stay open really late. 12 hour shift – not family friendly – unable to see the children in the morning or the evening. Management possibly believe that making all shifts 12 hours – would make it easier for paying shifts back. However, we have recently started a new system, albeit a trial, with the operational watches (exchange of duties) where staff can swap a day for a night and vice versa – days currently being shorter than the nights – this appears to be acceptable. Rostered off days (grey days) – Cannot say if I would like to work this shift system until there are more definite rules in place and explained. For instance, I believe that I could be rostered off – as 4 on duty – however the Brigade could still phone me up and request I come in. Whilst I understand that I owe you a shift – some people are saying that you would HAVE to come in as you were originally rostered on. This for me appears to be very unfair, as I would have to arrange childcare just in case I was called in (meaning I would still have to pay the child minder even if I wasn't called in and didn't use her. Also, using this scenario – I have already paid the childminder for a day which I didn't actually use her for (as staffing was ok) but I still have to pay her for another day at some point – as I still owe the Brigade a shift. This obviously would have a financial impact – unless of course the Brigade are going to pay me to be on standby from home awaiting a possible call on the day I was rostered off, which I suspect not. I have no problem at all owing the Brigade a shift, and totally understand the process, but would appreciate knowing what dates I am

	<p>expected to work in order to pre-plan childcare etc. What I object to is semi being committed to the Brigade, for no financial recompense, on the day which I have been 'rostered off' for. Personally, I decided to take a pay cut and go part-time in order to manage my childcare and strike a home/work life balance. If clear and fair rules were applied to this suggestion, it would make it more favourable.</p>
1	<p>12 hours shifts – the Brigade actively encourages women into the fire service, and have recently offered women's only open days however I feel they are alienating the ones that already work here and have given their loyalty and commitment to the brigade for years by changing shift patterns and causing problems with childcare and work/life balance. 12 hour shifts saves no money, the control room still needs to be staffed 24/7, 365 days a year and in my opinion changing the shifts will have no impact on lowering sickness levels. Again I feel I need to strongly mention the disadvantages of a 12 hour day over a 10 hour day – I feel this has been very much overlooked in this review.</p>
1	<p>With proper management, it would NOT be necessary to change to 12 hour shifts. 12 hour shifts will mean that days are longer at leave staff less time to do things with their families, which impacts on work/life balance. There is no evidence that 12 hour shifts will reduce sickness levels...the same number of hours are still being worked as current system.</p>

8. The consultation document provides information through a SWOT analysis, on the advantages and disadvantages of the 5 Watch (Cambridge) Model, Please detail any further advantages you would like to add to this analysis.

Count	Response
1	I feel the SWOT analysis if fair and I have nothing further to add
1	In my opinion there are no advantages to this system
1	Nil
1	No advantages at all, little if anything to recommend it.
1	No advantages to '5 watch Cambridge Model'.
1	No advantages to add.
4	None
1	None.
1	Still watch based
1	There are no advantages for the people who would work this system.
1	none

9. Please detail any further disadvantages of the 5 Watch (Cambridge) Model

Count	Response
1	1. 12 hour shifts 2. Unable to choose annual leave
1	Again rigidity of 2-2-4
1	No additional disadvantages to add AT THIS TIME.
1	No time off in school holidays - difficult when partner is a teacher and I have two children.
1	None
1	no structure to it
1	Too prescriptive in shifts worked – 8 with no break and leave only in pre-determined places. This can only work by unfairly adjusting leave hours down to 8.5 whilst we work 10 hour days and 14 hour nights. Even if 12 hour shifts were introduced the leave does not equal the duty time. I know of no other organisation that would "steal" leave from its employees in this way. If this were not enough staff are expected to make themselves available on their rota days between their 8 duty blocks for the times in weeks 9 and 10 when they are not on leave, courses or providing cover. Whilst I have been proud to work for SFRS for the last 38 years, I do not wish to be owned by the organisation, and in a civilised country I would expect to have some uninterrupted time off to compensate for shift work in an emergency environment. This would only be acceptable to me if an agreement could be reached for this Flexible duty element in line with Officer colleagues – a 20% enhancement to pay, access to a subsidised lease vehicle and if I was called out to provide cover that I would be compensated at the rate of 1 positive duty hour to 4 leave hours (to be taken in weeks 9 and 10)
1	This is extremely restrictive compared to the other shift systems, I feel there would be more sickness due to the lack of flexibility for leave, appointments etc. Also I would need time off in the school holidays and this would not be guaranteed or workable with my watch members, as leave would be dictated. Would it be possible to introduce a 'Exchange of duty' system which is on trial with the operational watches? This would increase flexibility

1	Restrictive on leave. Negative impact on family life. Could be no opportunity for leave periods in summer school holidays. Not child family friendly.
1	Would not be happy making myself available to work on my rota days (see previous comments re childcare) – if not enough staff on duty. When I am at home, I am at home. When I am at work, I am at work. The Emergency Services working environment is stressful enough as it is. I feel that this shift system would only result in an increase in sickness levels caused by stress.
1	Very complicated to understand and difficult to manage all to save 1 post. This is too difficult for working parents to be able to build some kind of structure around. This very heavily dictates where staff will take leave (during weeks 9 and 10), this takes away any flexibility for staff.
1	Although this system does appeal due to the fixed patterns of work, which would assist with planning - the fact that staff are forced to take leave at certain times of the year would deem it unworkable for me personally. It is of no use having leave at a time when children are at school. Linked in with this it may be that sickness may be increase due to staff not being able to take leave when they want/need it, and therefore booking sick may be considered an alternative option.
1	This system is totally inflexible, not family friendly and could mean with courses, meetings and cover days that you don't have a proper 'leave'.
1	This system will be detrimental to work life balance working more days than we do now, Changing to 12 hour shifts is NOT a desired option.

13. Evidence shows that the number of operational incidents reduces overnight. Do you think that the Service should review its current operating model to reduce the number of staff on duty in Fire Control at certain times overnight, to better match this demand?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	7.1%	1
No	92.9%	13
Total		14

14. Please explain the reasons for your answer to Q13 above

Count	Response
1	If the staffing is reduced further it will not allow for essential comfort breaks when required
1	We are a quiet brigade and have been very lucky up to now when staffing is down to 2. Any call above a standard attendance puts undue pressure on 2 people. Have a look at the SIP for make pumps 4, in addition to the initial call and any repeat calls, radio messages or admin calls, there are 9 actions to be carried out.
1	During a busy night shift, 2 staff in Fire Control (without the option of calling in a 3rd from their rest period), will seriously impact the Service's ability to respond professionally and within a reasonable time. During a busy period, only 2 staff will find it difficult to get a break, even just a short one, to have food/time away from P.C. During busy periods, staff will find it difficult to have short breaks away from their VDU - "Breaking up long spells of DSE work helps prevent fatigue, eye strain, upper limb problems and backache." - source; HSE.gov.uk leaflet 'Working with display screen equipment (DSE)'. During a busy night shift, 2 staff in Fire Control (without the option of calling in a 3rd from their rest period), will seriously impact the Service's ability to respond professionally and within a reasonable time. During a busy period, only 2 staff will find it difficult to get a break, even just a short one, to have food/time away from P.C. During busy periods, staff will find it difficult to have short breaks away from their VDU - "Breaking up long spells of DSE work helps prevent fatigue, eye strain, upper limb problems and backache." - source; HSE.gov.uk leaflet 'Working with display screen equipment (DSE)'.
1	No because if we are down to two people and a large incident occurs there isn't enough people to do the work involved. Breaks are required therefore if its left to one person and they need a toilet break its impossible? also if an 999 call comes in that the person needs to question there is no-one to ask?
1	Operational incidents do reduce overnight however the severity of an incident cannot be determined by the time of day. 2 staff may be sufficient on a routine night however when a large incident does occur all three staff are required as the workload would be too much for 2 staff, even a make pumps 4 incident creates a lot of work in the control room. During a persons reported fire the operator taking the call stays on the line to obtain information and offer fire survival advice until the appliance arrives on scene, the last one I did I was on the phone to the caller for 25 mins, yet during this time there is a lot for other operators to do, one just wouldn't be enough to: take multiple calls, contact ambulance, contact police, do text alerts, move icon on mapping, page officers, update crews with information, take all radio messages and mobilisations plus mobilise to any other incidents that comes in at the time. Due to the nature of the work it wouldn't work on this occasion to have staff on call as unless they lived minutes away they wouldn't be able to offer timely support.

1	Where incidents may be shown to reduce, chances and statistics will prove higher fire related injury and death during sleeping hours
1	I don't feel the appropriate contingencies are in place in the event of a major incident. This goes against the minimum 3 staff
1	If robust back up from another Fire Control was in place it would release staff for other functions (either to cover other staffing shortfalls, cover courses, short term emergency leave, detachments and recruit training.
1	Reducing staffing down to 2 at nights is in my opinion unacceptable for a number of reasons:- a) No other Brigade to my knowledge accepts the risk of such a low staffing level b) Whilst call levels may have dropped for now, even a reasonably low level incident would put staff under pressure – for example a persons reported trapped in fire and being assisted by Fire Control would have 1 operator giving direct support to the trapped person and the other relaying the information to oncoming crews whilst attempting to deal with everything else including other calls leading to compromised safety of crews and members of the public. c) Any large incident would stretch the two staff and again could lead to compromised safety of crews and members of the public. d) The MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) between SFRS, Hereford & Worcester and Cleveland depends on mutual support, if we reduce our night staffing we could either be undermining the support we give to the other two Brigades or rely on the other two Brigades tax payers to support us in an uneven relationship, or indeed both. e) Welfare issues for the 2 staff left on duty with regard to rest and increased stress during busy periods. f) Reduced resilience as staff would be less willing to cover on nights for the above reasons and the reduction in staff by 4 posts would reduce the pool of staff to draw from. g) Less opportunity to bring more tasks into Fire Control – in fact some may have to be removed at night.
1	With reference to reducing staffing levels to '2' at night. Calls may well drop when looking at stats displayed in graphs and tables etc etc . However, it only needs one call – 'persons reported trapped in fire' – one operator committed on the phone – leaving the other operator to back up the main alerts with texts, and possible tertiary (just in case the main alert fails). Inform the Police and Ambulance. Keep an eye on the system to make sure the appliances book out in the given time (by the way no audible alert – you need to watch your screen !) Keep half listening and watching the log for any updates from the operator who is speaking to the person trapped in fire, in order to pass onto the attending crews via radio. Deal with any other incidents which happen to be ongoing and answer any additional incoming calls – some of which could be duplicates and some not (we are not always quiet !).

	<p>Possibly answer the radio from an 'over the border' Brigade attempting to pass a fire call over the radio (as they have taken our overspill). Take calls from appliances enroute to the incident either by radio or phone, who are requiring directions – possibly due to MDT failure. Putting 'Over the Border' appliances into the equation – one operator committed talking to the trapped person – the other attempting to do all of the above after ordering the OTB appliances by phone. This could mean 2 telephone calls just to mobilise pumps - eg. one to North Wales – one to Mid and West Wales. So that's 4 telephone calls for one operator to do – Ambulance, Police, North Wales and Mid and West Wales, whilst at the same time responding to radio traffic and other 999 calls – not possible! This surely is not putting the People of Shropshire, public and firefighter safety first ! Whilst the number of emergency calls may decrease at night, the severity of the calls increases due to the time of night. This would obviously be very stressful on both operators – and over time could again result in an increase in sickness due to stress. This may result in staff being less willing to cover the night shift.</p>
1	<p>The number of incidents may drop but the severity of incidents increases as fire have more time to develop before being reported</p>
1	<p>Potentially an operator could be left in the Control room on their own whilst another is having a comfort break. Goes against the IRMP as states minimum of 3 on duty at all times. Greater potential for mistakes to happen with large incidents and Spate Conditions.</p>
1	<p>Firefighter safety - You need 3+ Operators in Fire Control when a Fire Call is received. One to take the call. The second to liaise with relevant partners - Police, Ambulance etc. The third to liaise with the Crews. If this was to drop to 2 Operators then the RISK of something being missed or delayed which would have the knock on effect and put FF safety and members of the public at heightened risk. The question is - what is the cost of a life? What happens if there were 2 operators and one was on a comfort break - it doesn't bare thinking about?? The amount of time I spend my stand down period between 00:00-07:00 doing paperwork such as IPDR's, development programme's, assessment programme's, IDR's etc. As its the only time you are not constantly interrupted by phone calls and people coming into control with queries. I feel that this part of my job is never seen.</p>
1	<p>Doing so would have negative knock on affects to firefighter safety and the service SFRS provide to the public. During busy times, or larger incidents, it can be a struggle to complete all task efficiently and effectively - even with three staff on duty. To decrease this number would cause delays in tasks being completed. There are patterns to the volumes of calls, but no patterns to when certain high risk incident types occur (i.e. larger incidents).</p>

	<p>To only have two staff on duty when a large incident is ongoing would be extremely difficult to deal with to a high standard of service. Task completion would be delayed, there is no doubt about it. And depending on what those tasks are, the results may be catastrophic. High risk incidents are the time when the service needs to run smoothly and without delay; to preserve life - there need to be sufficient staff on duty to enable this - two would simply not be enough.</p>
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15. What additional areas of Service improvement do you think Fire Control can best support?

Count	Response
1	C&C development and administration. Operations Department assistance.
1	More integrated with the Ops Dept.
1	No issues
1	Out of scope work may be undertaken to increase productivity subject to operational commitments
1	this is currently under review
1	There is a lot of out of scope work already carried out by fire control, they should be more integrated into the ops dept and become more like a staff office, they could be more involved in ops planning , and risk management, and not just data input clerks although doing this would save the brigade money by being able to reduce the number of non-uniformed staff employed to do this work
1	I feel there is capacity and skills in Control that should be used better. Project work may give staff something to focus on.
1	As Steve Jones and I proposed at the public meetings in 2015, Fire Control could best support the service by integrating fully into the Operations department both organisationally and physically. This potentially would give us the opportunity to be fully involved in enhancing firefighter safety by assisting with risk information 72d, MDT, contingency planning etc. and other forms of information that we can contribute to and manage as well as working on Brigade Orders and briefing notes. This "vision" would see Fire Control working in the same office with the Operational staff and undertaking emergency work in an adjacent area (behind a glass screen for example).
1	Ops Department - Working alongside the updating of the Brigade Orders so that they all read the same - better understanding.

1	Control is still very much the middle man between crews and other departments. I think we could be more productive if we updated some of the procedures involving control. One example is defect reporting, unless it has an impact on mobilising the stations could report direct to tech services, workshops or IT. This frees up control staff for other tasks and creates a direct link between the station and other departments. Control staff could be trained to a higher level in IT, in particular the C&C so they are able to deal with IT problems more efficiently. This happened in the Navy back in the early 90's the Radar Operators retrained as Operator Maintainers which meant as well as being highly skilled at operating their equipment they were just as qualified to fix any faults - I believe this branch is still in place today. If we were trained to a high standard in IT this would negate the need to pay IT staff to be on call 24 hours and problems could be fixed quicker.
1	Additional work load/other roles that Fire Control Staff can reasonably incorporate into their role, without affecting their ability to perform their primary role, and maintain their competency within their role.
1	Operations (FF safety), 72d's, become more integrated with Ops department in becoming an Operational and Command/Control centre.
1	Working alongside the Operations Departments, getting more involved with contingency planning, 72d and operational liaison. Also taking on – any typing tasks – use the skills of people in Control – many are touch typists.
1	Fire control staff are happy and willing to take on any additional work that is directly associated with our current practices, ie geographical updates.

16. Implementation of optimum crewing and any of the identified crewing models will require new ways of covering short, medium and long term absences. These may include rostering in, the use of specialist day duty staff, fixed term contracts for suitably trained and qualified staff (to include Retained Duty System), staff bank, secondments and transferees as well as the current fallback arrangements with Hereford & Worcester and Cleveland Fire and Rescue Services. Are there any other options that you think we should consider?

Count	Response
1	I cannot think of any other possible options, AT THIS TIME.
1	I have nothing to add
1	No
1	None
1	n/a
1	No. I trust the Brigade to only introduce a new shift system if they are positive it will work and is better than the one which we are already operating. Therefore, I am sure that they would have already thought of all options.
1	RDS opportunities should be advertised outside of the organisation - presently they are only open to a small section of SFRS staff and the competency and retention of the vast majority of staff has been very poor.
1	Make the RDS Control more sustainable and useable. At the moment I think the money could be used more wisely.
1	The current retained duty system doesn't work as there are not enough people to ensure cover, it is not cost effective, and causes resentment with RDS staff who have to be available at very short notice. The system should be changed to bank staff who only get paid when they turn in.

1	To look at so many alternative ways of supporting the new shift pattern may indicate a lack of confidence in the propositions. If the 4 watch Optimum Crewing Model were to be adopted with sensible and equitable agreements, other methods of providing cover may not be required at all.
1	If RDS are to be used then the same rules must apply as for the Operational staff if they are on call and receive a text they must respond. Also if Brigade personnel are going toused then their managers must understand that when staff are required in Control they should be relaeased, much the same as the Brigade expects other employers to do.
1	I think by choosing the right shift pattern the covering of shifts by retained staff will no longer be required. This will no doubt save money.

17. In the options laid out, are there any other risks or opportunities that you feel we should consider?

Count	Response
1	NO
1	None
1	Blue Watch came up with a Shift Option that worked based on the 4 watch optimum crewing suggestion. I really liked this idea and have sat down and think it would work well with MY life and also keep the morale and spirits high in Fire Control.
1	I am very concerned that by changing something so important as the current shift patterns, will have a great impact on control and people will be very negative, and I do not believe this will improve sickness levels. I feel that this questionnaire does not reflect my true answers as I have been made to pick a preferred option whereas I would prefer the shift pattern to stay the same.
1	Comments on Q11 – I would not expect to work anymore unsociable hours than I do already. When I signed up to the job – I took into account the unsociable hours - v – the salary. Staying on the same salary – but more unsociable hours would not seem fair at all. In some other organisations you are paid a basic salary and it is topped up by claiming for your unsociable hours. SFRS, at the time of contract, outlined your top salary – and you knew what unsociable hours you are expected to work. Also, now getting a little confused with 'annualised hours' and 'self rostering'. Comments to Q12 - None of the 'start' 'finish' times are favourable - this is due to them being 12 hour shifts. Did not feel comfortable with Questions 1, 10, 11 and 12 as no opportunity to comment. Was unable to proceed and submit the form unless answered. The words 'favoured' and 'preference' obviously indicates that you prefer one more than another – when in fact you may not favour either. In my opinion, the answers to these questions should not be included in the overall outcome/conclusion/results, as it would not give a true reflection on staff opinion – due to staff having no option but to rank them in some order. Furthermore, Point 1.58 The last three years average levels of sickness absence are 15.4 (18.75 in 2014/2015) shifts per person, per year. This is significantly higher than Wholetime firefighters who average 4.67 shifts per person (3.94 in 2014/2015). This is significantly affecting the efficiency of Fire Control. I understand that you have averaged the figures out. However, I feel that my sickness

	<p>record is fairly good and that more time should be spent investigating the cause of sickness in Control. Control staff do not have the opportunity to work from home and not book sick, like some staff do.</p> <p>Even a sore throat resulting in loss of voice – means we cannot answer the phone or radio effectively (the core functions of our role map) we could however, be capable of other tasks that don't involve speaking, rather than just booking sick. Why do people stay off for so long? Are people stressed – if so why? Thank you for the opportunity to express my views.</p>
1	<p>This whole process is a huge cause for concern to staff members as it threatens our work life balance and the current system we are all used to working and have done since we started with the service and therefore is affecting morale, staff are willing to be flexible if that courtesy is returned in the deciding of the shift patterns, duration and hours to be adopted. The majority will tell you they do NOT wish to change from the system, duration and hours worked now.</p>
1	<p>The questionnaire has left very little room for comment other than to a direct question, therefore I am using this section to convey my concerns. I find the questionnaire very guided, I have no option but to choose a preference order to the questions even if I am completely against it - ie. Question 1 - given the choice I would have only selected choice 1 and 2 - I am strongly against 3 and 4. Question 12 - I would have only selected choice 1 to 3 strongly against 4 and 5. Regarding the Staff Consultation Presentation - I find the bar chart on page 5 very misleading. I don't understand why the chart doesn't start at zero? The chart only needs to go up to 3.4 so there is plenty of space to fit in the whole bar. Starting at 2.2 (in very small font) misleads the reader making it look as though the percentage of O/T and RDS is higher than it actually is. For example 11/2014 - it appears as though there were equal staff on O/T as watch members when this wasn't the case. If visual aids are to be used they need to give an accurate picture. I feel the cost of this project, any set up costs, IT costs for a reliable system, the additional management time of some of these options will outweigh any savings, I also feel if some of these changes were to go ahead it would seriously affect staff morale. In conclusion, my preference would be 4 watch optimum crewing on 10 hr days and 14 hr nights.</p>
1	<p>I hope that the Service really considers which system is best, not only for SFRS and monetary savings, but for the staff too. I genuinely believe that if certain shift systems are introduced, some members of the department will have no choice but to leave, due to their personal circumstances. I have been asked to make a choice which shift system I prefer. I have done as requested, however, please note that my preferred option would be to stay on the current shift system. I have also been asked to state my preferred start and finish time for 12 hours shifts. I have done this, as requested. However, I really have no preference - if 12 hour shifts were adopted, no matter what the start and finish</p>

	times - they would negatively impact on how frequently I would have my sons and make childcare arrangements extremely difficult.
1	I thoroughly enjoy my job and feel there could be some exciting opportunities. All the proposed shift changes with negatively impact on my personal life in some way, but I hope I will be able to accommodate them whilst putting my family's life first.
1	In the options laid out I feel the lack of opportunity to provide comment on 10, 11 and 12, lead to a risk that the project team and the Fire Authority may believe in ranking them, that it gives them some sort of credence, where in fact in my own case (and that of most if not all Fire Control staff) they would not be a consideration for the reasons I have attempted to incorporate in other comments. In fact if Fire Control were to move to Telford Central, as some suggest, it would make changes to shift times and start and finish times even worse as most staff would have a longer distance to travel and therefore an even earlier start
1	12 hour shifts will have a huge impact on my life and would give me very little work/life balance and would quite possibly push me to leave the job. For example for 06:00-18:00 I would have to be up at 04:10 and leaving my house at 04:45. Finishing at 18:00 will still enable me to have dinner with my family. For a 07:00-19:00 I would have to be up at 05:10 leave the house at 05:45 and when I get home at 20:00 it will be too late to have dinner with my family. For a 08:00 - 20:00 I would be up the same time as I am now for shift but won't be home until 21:00 again too late to do anything like gym etc and too late to have dinner with my family. For the 09:00 and 10:00 start times I will have to leave 1hour 30min commute time in the morning due to rush hour traffic. Making my days approx. 14/15 hour days?! Sickness is heavily highlighted in this document as a huge negative. Unfortunately when Control staff are ill we have to book sick. We have no facility to "work from home" or leave early which Officers and Support Staff can do.
1	I think that it should be considered that none of these options are guaranteed to reduce sickness levels in Fire Control. It should also be considered that, having a reasonable work/life balance is detrimental to staff health and welfare.
1	SFRS control to become a day control ie. 0800-2000 which could result in salary savings and although the workforce would be smaller it would have the potential to be more professional

