Review of the Work Relations Committee Agreement

A Nationwide Snapshot– January 2025

Survey Overview:

During the month of January 2025, SIPTU representatives from fire authorities nationwide participated in this survey. The survey aims to provide a snapshot of the current status of the WRC agreement's implementation, highlighting successes achieved and roadblocks still present.

Data Collection and Collation:

Conducted independently by SIPTU representatives on behalf of their respective fire authorities, this survey represents a collaborative effort to gather accurate and up-to-date information. Data was collected diligently in January 2025.

How Your Insights Underpin Progress

Purpose of the Survey:

The 2023 WRC agreement stipulated that its implementation progress be reviewed within six months. However, 17 months have passed since its publication, and no formal review has taken place. This delay has been a significant source of frustration for firefighters, undermining trust and accountability in the process. Such lapses cannot be ignored, either in this instance or in future agreed reviews.

The primary goal of this survey is to highlight the significant delays and persistent roadblocks in the implementation of the WRC agreement. By identifying these barriers, the findings emphasize the need for all stakeholders—including County Councils, the LGMA, and Fire Service Management—to take immediate and decisive action. Chief Fire Officers must assume a leadership role, driving the fire service into its new structure and demonstrating a commitment to fulfilling the promises outlined in the agreement.

These delays not only impact firefighters but also hinder the modernization and revitalization of the fire service nationwide. The time for action is now, and it is the shared responsibility of all involved to deliver on this agreement, ensuring a stronger and more cohesive fire service for the future.

Hope for the Future:

The findings are not merely observations; they represent a call to action. Our collective aspiration is that these insights will compel all invested parties—including County Councils, the LGMA, and Chief Fire Officers—to prioritise the timely and effective implementation of the WRC agreement. We hope this will galvanise Fire Service Management into providing the leadership required to ensure the successful realisation of the agreement across all 201 retained stations, setting a foundation for a stronger and more cohesive fire service.

Survey Response

This survey was distributed to the county SIPTU representatives covering all 26 Fire Authorities impacted by the 2023 WRC agreement.

24 SIPTU Reps responded.

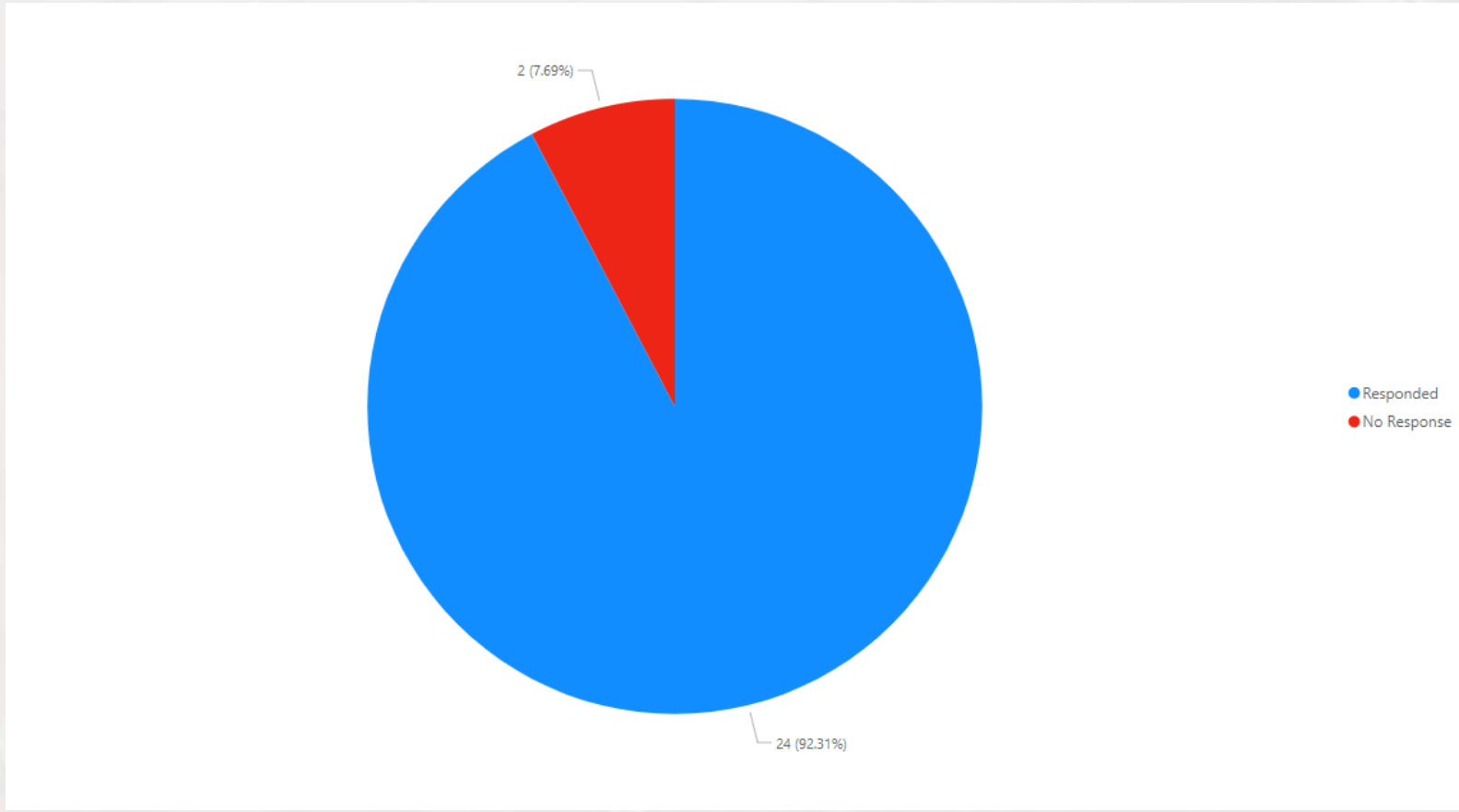
2 SIPTU Reps did not respond.

0 Retained Fire Stations survey was spoiled.

The survey represents 92.31% of all Fire Authorities in Ireland.

The survey was managed through JotForms. This allowed the survey be conducted online.

Note: Survey questions in slide20 for reference.

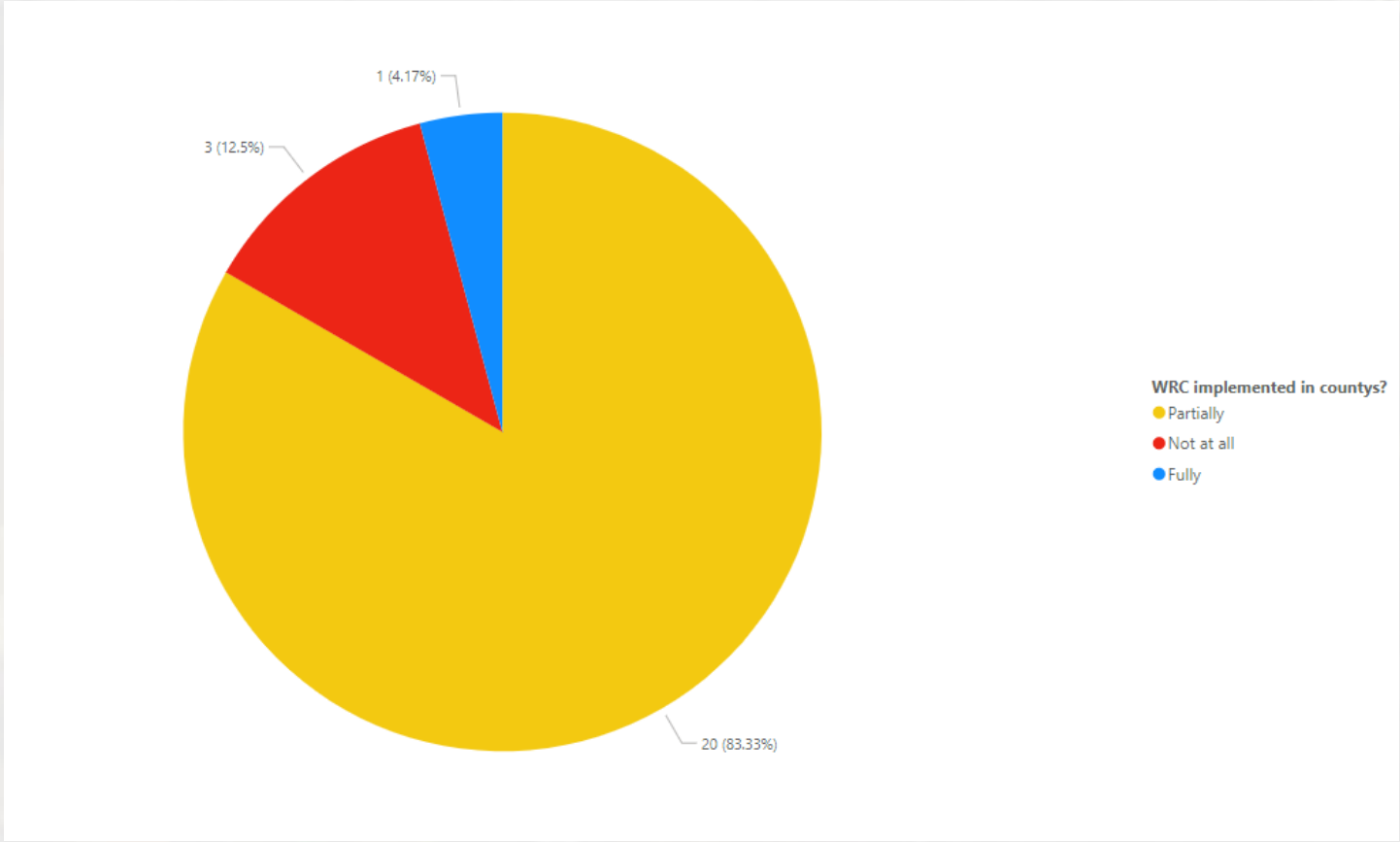


Has the 2023 WRC agreement been implemented

1 Fire Authority (Cork) has reported that the 2023 WRC agreement has been implemented.

3 Fire Authorities are reported that the 2023 WRC agreement is not in anyway implemented.

20 Fire Authorities are reported as partially implemented.



Fire Authorities working Week On Week Off

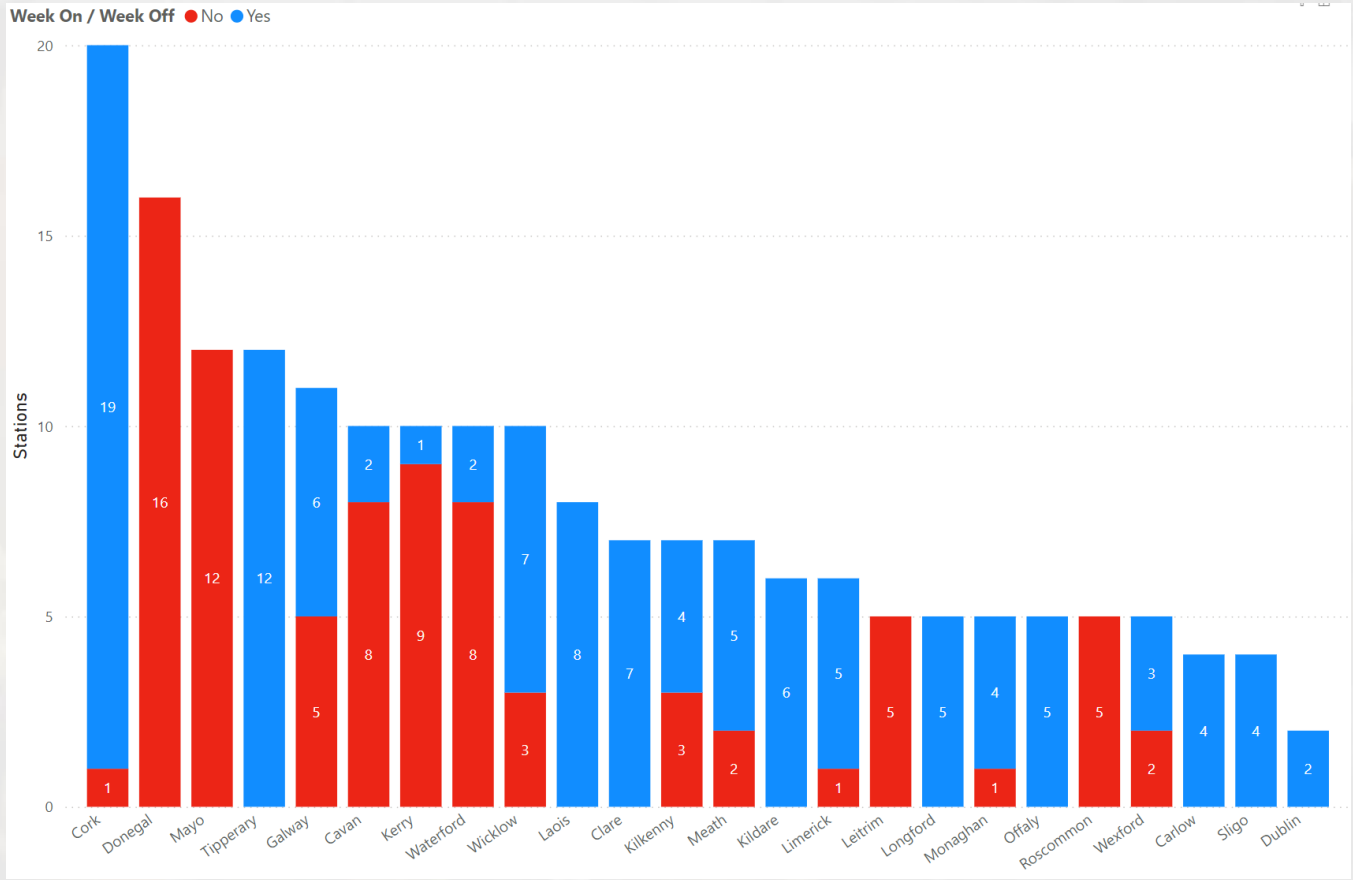
4 Fire Authorities are reported as not implementing week on / week off at all

40% of stations nationwide are NOT on week on / week off

The importance of providing a structure of time off for the retained fire service was pivotal in the negotiations leading to the 2023 WRC agreement.

This slide represents the number of stations that have adopted week on / week off in each Fire Authority.

Implementing rostered time off as outlined in the 2023 WRC agreement is pivotal in repairing the recruitment and retention issues in the Fire Service.

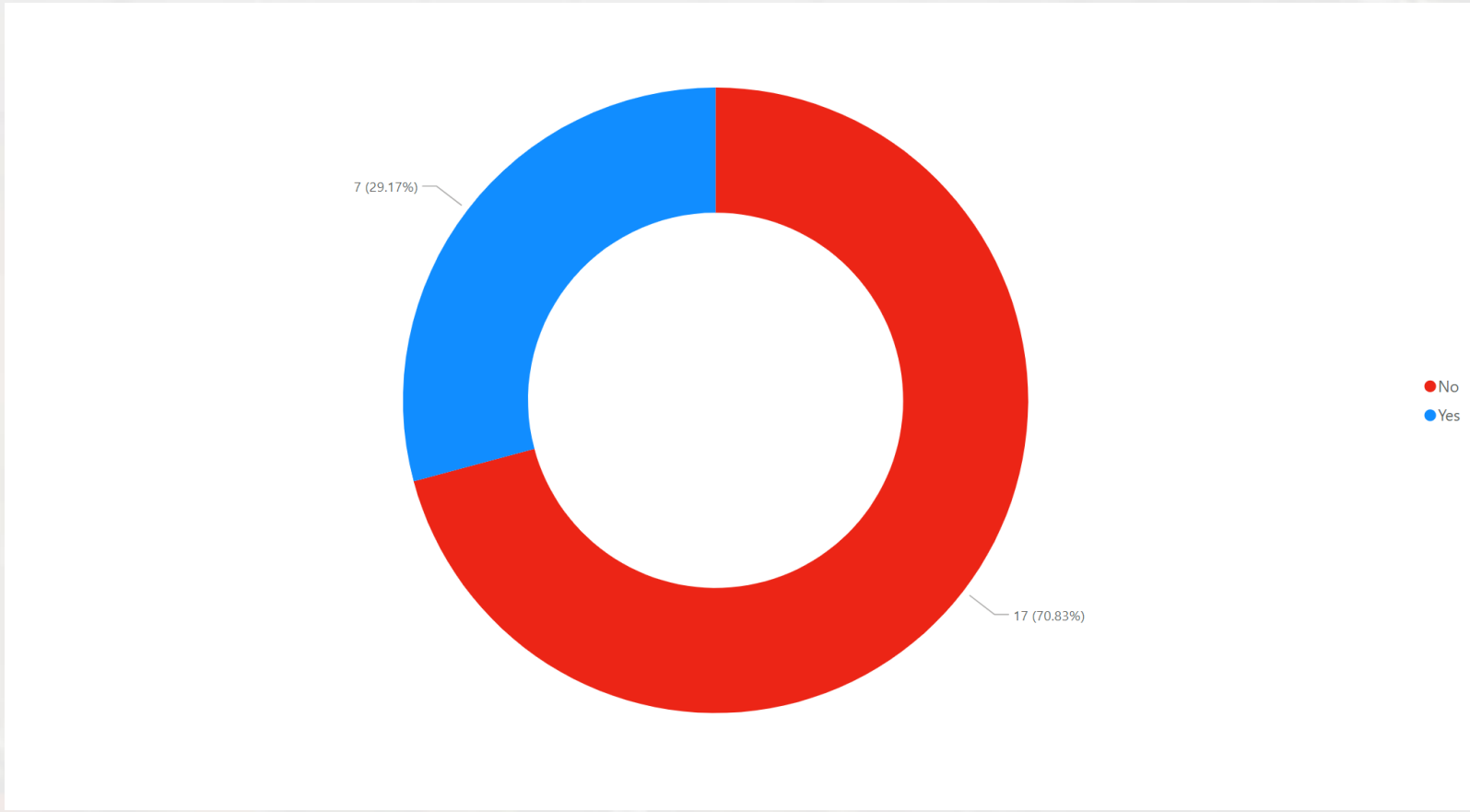


Fortnightly Payroll Total

Only 7 Fire Authorities are reported as being on the agreed payroll timelines set out in the 2023 WRC agreement.

These fire authorities are, for the most part, in test mode or just launched in the last 2/3 months.

Albeit there are external partners involved in the transition from quarterly pay to fortnightly pay, it is the responsibility of the local councils to partner with external agencies capable of delivering a basic payroll management, one that all other local government employees currently have.



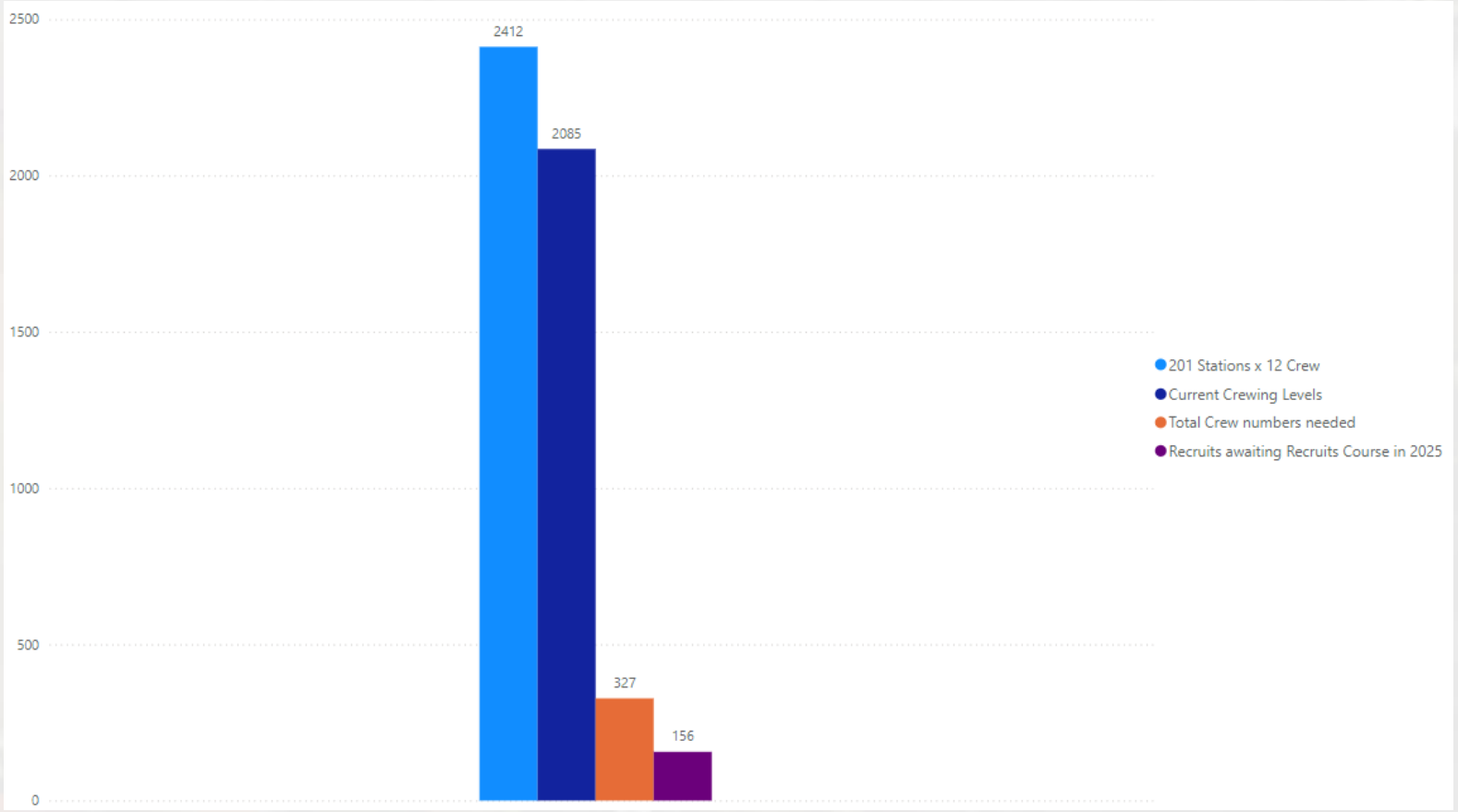
Crew Levels

The 2023 WRC agreement has resulted in the biggest recruitment drive the fire service has seen. Taking an average of 12 personal per station (some stations have more than 12 personal) we can extrapolate some recruitment information.

Currently we are short 13.5% of what is required, i.e. 327 new recruits.

There are 156 recruits waiting on courses to be delivered.

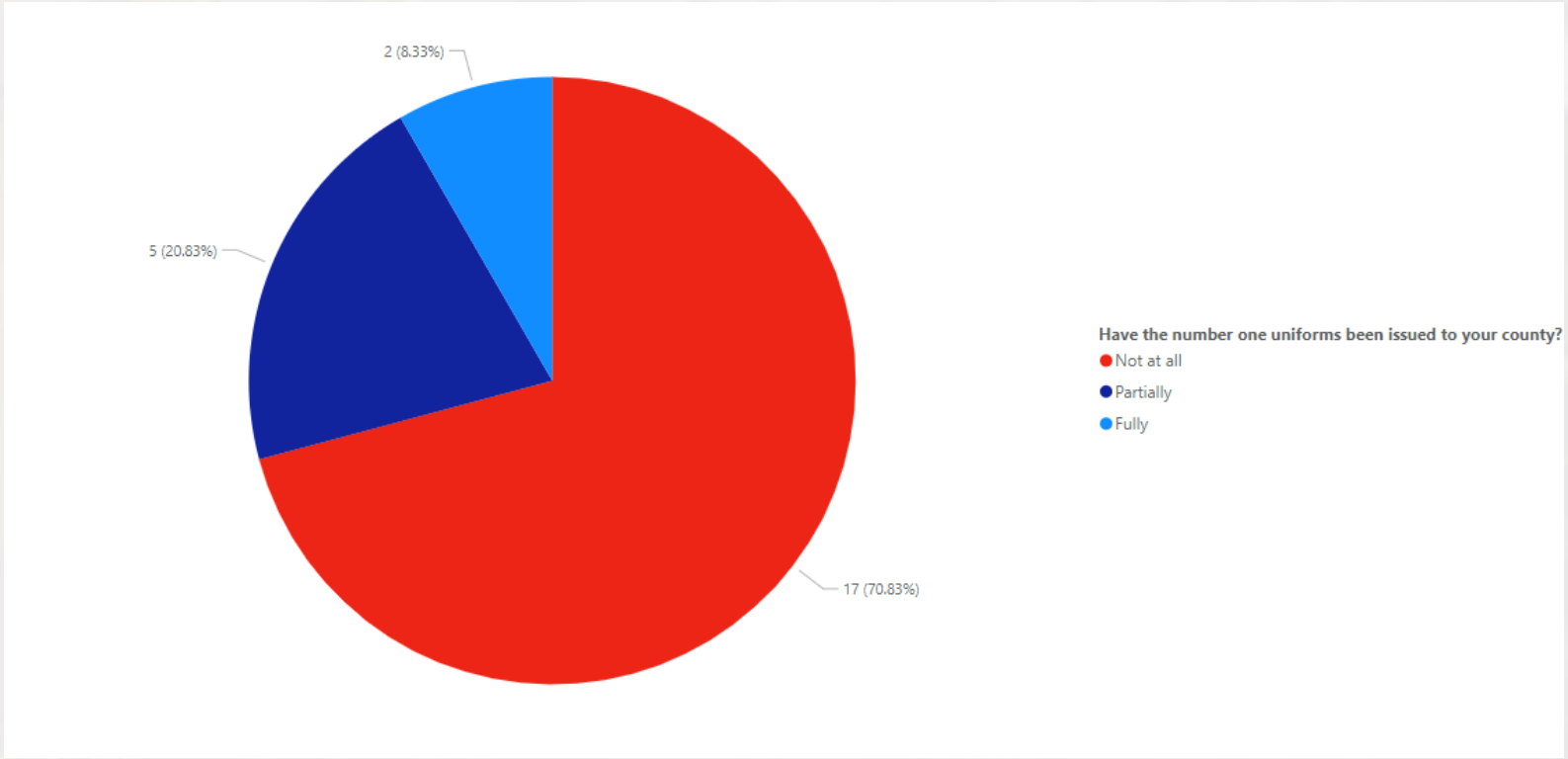
It is confirmed that recruits that have been selected through the recruitment process have yet to get a recruits course allocated. They applied for the position in June last year, 7 months ago.



Dress Uniforms Issued?

70.83% of fire authorities are reported as making no progress in delivering a dress uniform to their emergency service personnel in the Fire Service.

8.33% - 2 Fire Authorities – have delivered on this part of the 2023 WRC agreement.

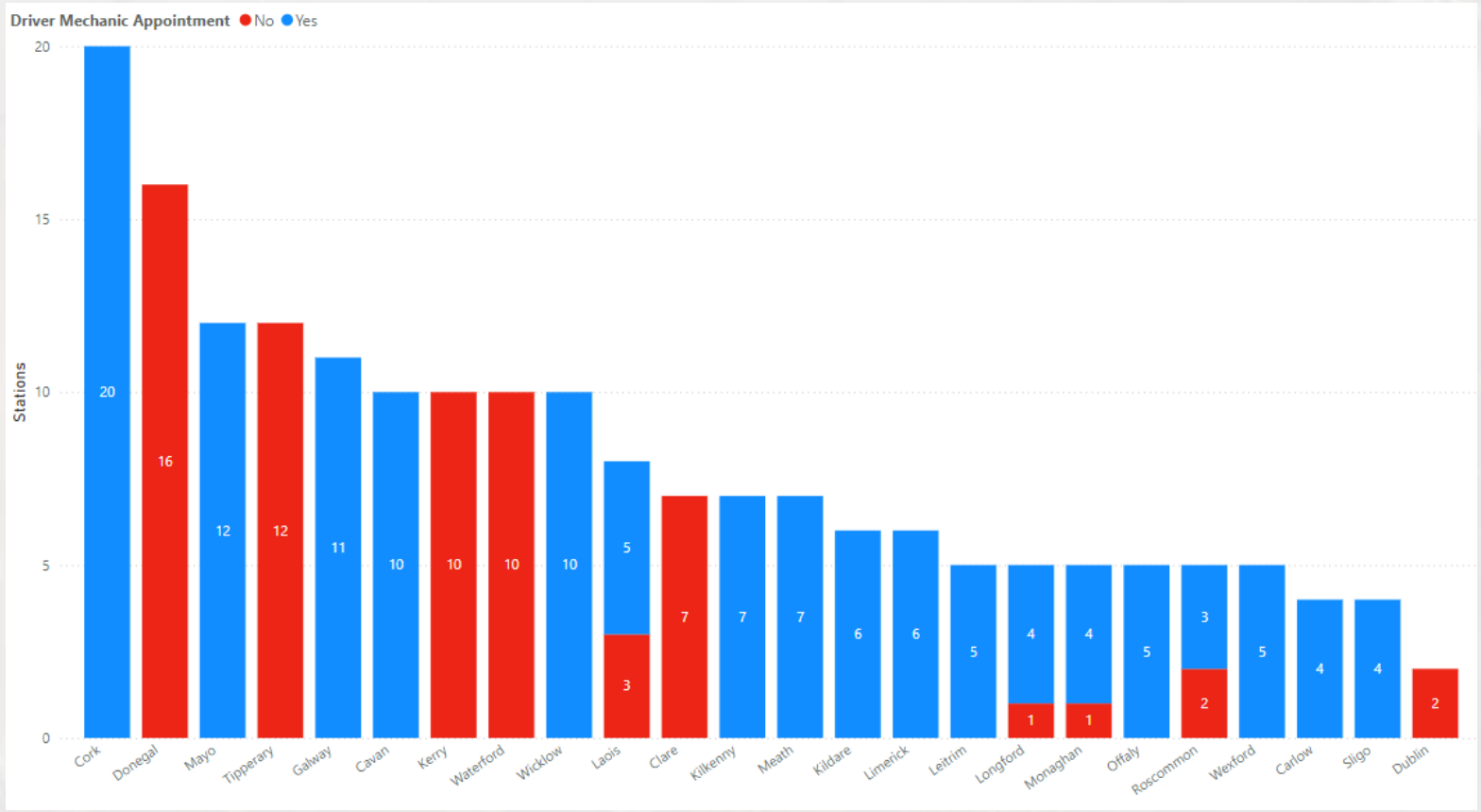


Have Driver Mechanics been appointed

Driver Mechanics roles were a pivotal part of the 2023 WRC agreement.

To date 6 Fire Authorities are noted as not delivering at all on this.

32% of Driver Mechanic Roles are not filled, that equates to 34 positions of promotion that have not been filled.



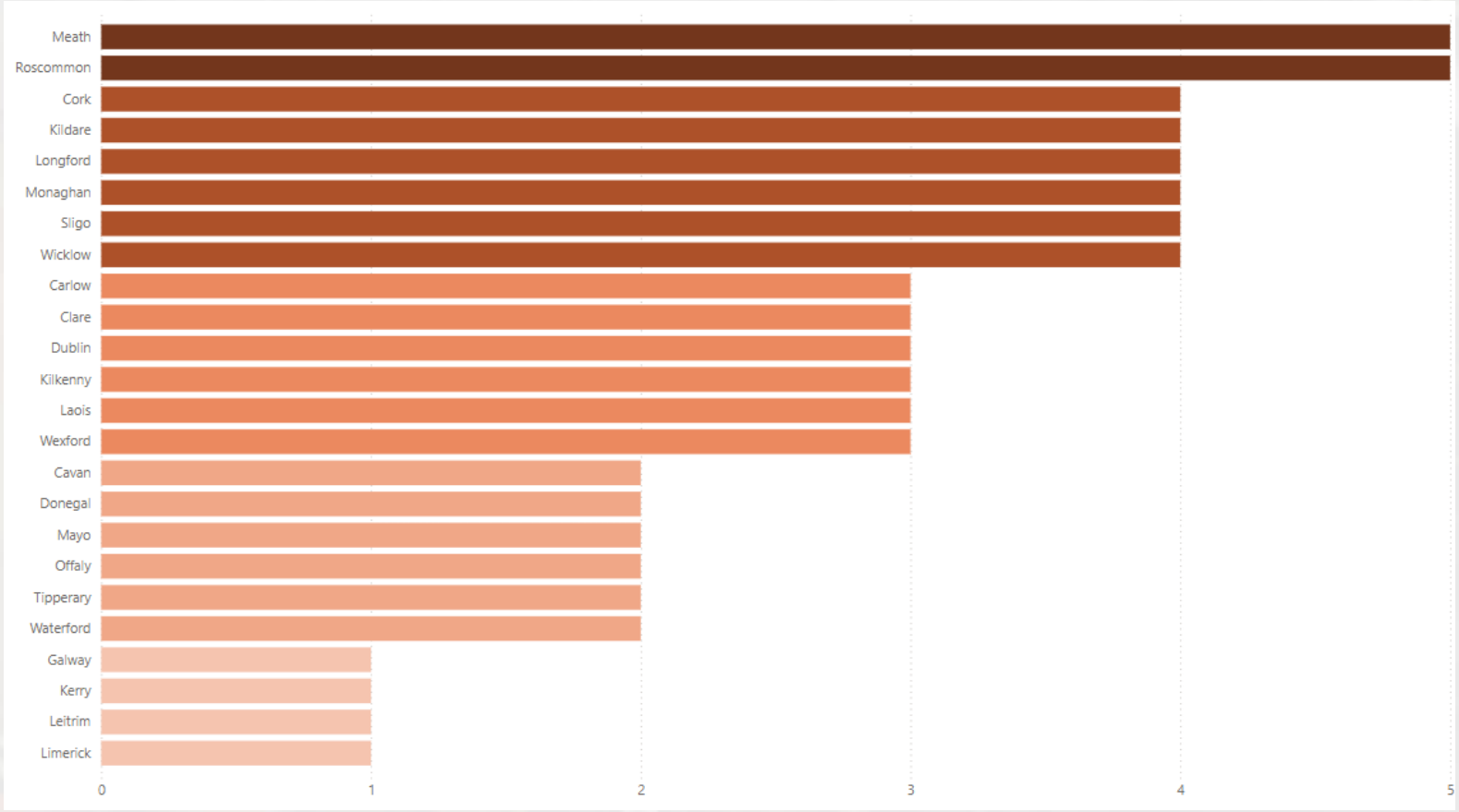
Committee meetings

The importance of meeting and developing a working relationship after the industrial action cannot be underestimated.

The following chart details the number of meetings held with the implementation committees that should be made up of Retained Firefighters, County Council representatives and Fire Service senior management (CFO).

This is a collective responsibility.

A consideration would be to standardise the times and frequency of these meetings.

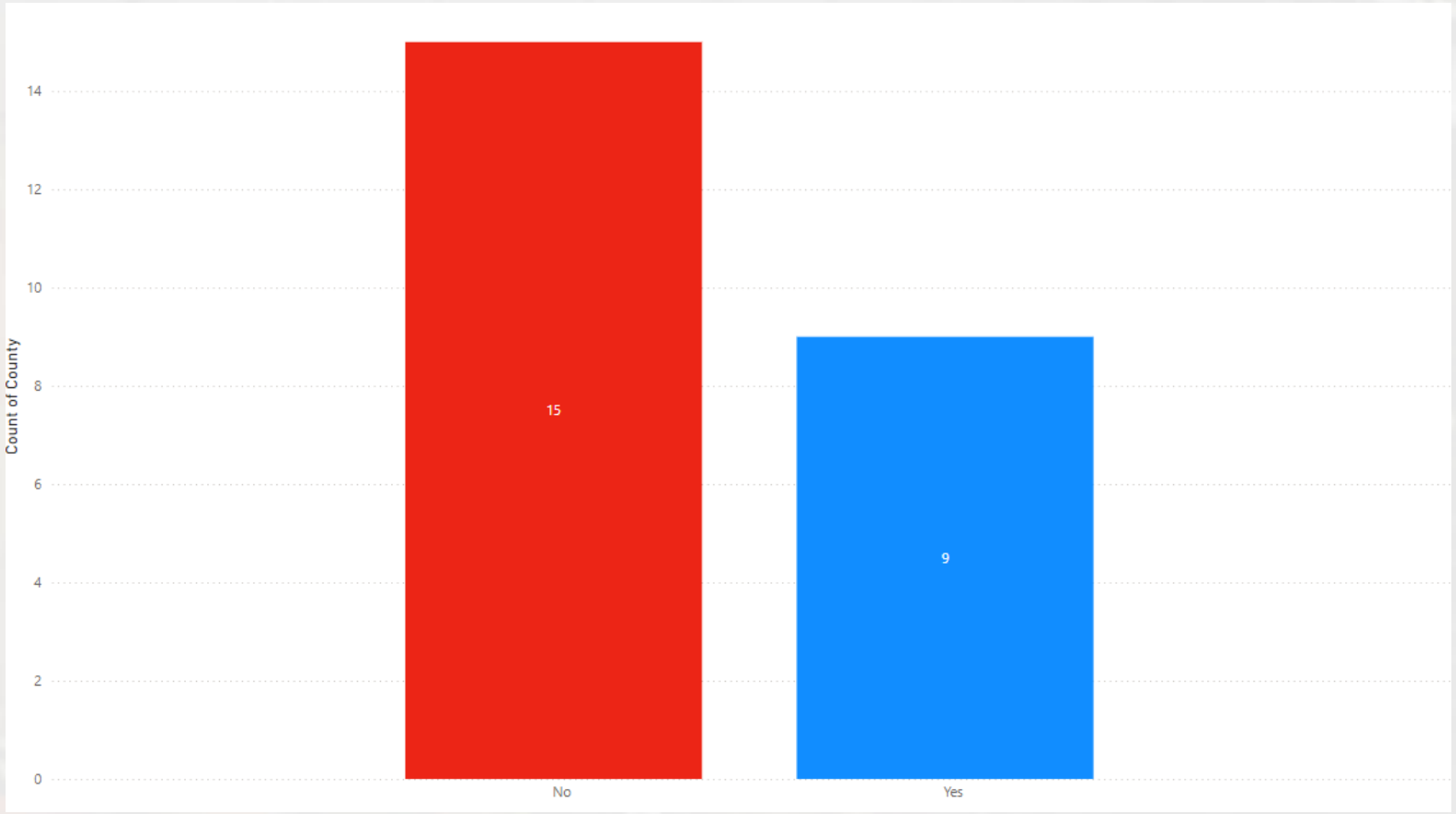


HR Standardized

HR within the County Councils are pivotal in the success of the 2023 WRC agreement.

Part of the agreement was that Firefighters Nationally would be made aware of the benefits within the council that they should be able to avail of if needed, such as maternity benefit, etc.

Of those surveyed it is reported that 62.5% of HR departments have not engaged on this part of the 2023 WRC agreement.



Tables

We asked the County representatives to note what is the issues that are most obstructive whilst trying to implement the 2023 WRC agreement.

The reply to this question highlights that the most obstructive issue to implementing the 2023 WRC agreement across the country is as follows;

Most Obstructive

1. Chief Fire Officers
2. Local Station Issues
3. Training

Chief Fire Officer	Countys
Most Obstructive	9
Least Obstructive	6
Less Obstructive	5
Neutral	3
Second Most Obstructive	1

Local Station issues	Countys
Most Obstructive	6
Least Obstructive	5
Less Obstructive	5
Second Most Obstructive	5
Neutral	3

County Councils	Countys
Neutral	9
Second Most Obstructive	6
Least Obstructive	5
Most Obstructive	2
Less Obstructive	2

Recruitment	Countys
Neutral	9
Least Obstructive	5
Less Obstructive	4
Most Obstructive	3
Second Most Obstructive	3

Training	Countys
Least Obstructive	7
Less Obstructive	5
Neutral	5
Most Obstructive	4
Second Most Obstructive	3

Comments received from the County SIPTU Reps tasked with representing firefighters with local authorities and fire service management

What support or resources would help over come current challenges implementing the WRC Agreement in your county?

A definitive & precise schedule for WRC doc to be implemented, & point by point to be implemented as the doc is so vague & open to interpretation by each CFO & local authority. They are manipulating the doc to suit themselves. I think all SIPTU talk about LGMA disciplining local authorities for not implementing the doc must be acted on and an example be made of these CFOs nationally

Stronger union representation some stations don't even reply to messages in regards to implementation group meetings it seems to be the same handful driving everything and everyone else sits back and is happy to accept whatever is coming down the line which is very infuriating

If all local authorities would implement the agreement uniformly instead of each CFO doing their own thing.

Quickly Replace & increase Carrickmacross crew to 12

For fortnightly pay to be fully implemented & be sorted out by Gartan. Then to have sick pay, holiday pay, etc fully up & running. Whatever resources are needed to facilitate this

The standard of recruits is very poor in some county's. It's looking like they rushed into filling positions .with result some crews are under more pressure now than before.

Swifter implementation of the fortnightly pay for firefighters as this is an issue that is dragging out....

Challenge Comments

What support or resources would help over come current challenges implementing the WRC Agreement in your county?

There are ongoing and unresolved issues with senior officers in Wicklow Fire Service, which have led to a breakdown in trust and an increasingly unworkable environment. Numerous complaints have been filed against senior officers, yet these remain unaddressed by the County Council, further exacerbating tensions within the service.
The reported concerns include instances of inappropriate behaviour, allegations of bullying and harassment, and actions perceived as targeting individuals involved in past industrial actions. Additionally, complaints from both within and outside the county have not been acted upon, reflecting a concerning lack of accountability.
In Bray station particularly, the environment has become untenable, with staff feeling unsupported and frustrated by the inaction of the County Council. Senior leadership appears unwilling to fully implement the WRC agreement and instead has fostered an environment of frustration and mistrust.
These issues highlight an urgent need for intervention and oversight to restore trust, accountability, and a respectful workplace culture across the county.

The recruits that are in just need spots on BA courses we have a few acting positions that need to be interviewed and filled properly and just need to pin down the 40 community hrs that the council need to do a plan for them they think those hrs are optional and only need to be offered in theory

Dedicated full time siptu rep to go to all implementation meetings to outline what has to be done what has been done in other county's and to make the wrc proposal as uniform across all county councils.

A national rep provided by Union to over see implementation in every county, who would back regional and county reps at each county WRC meeting.

The Fire Chief is just putting all obstacles in the way and making his own changes without consultation. I think we need a team to every implementation meeting and everyone is in the same boat

Hope the latest recruitment campaign will get the staff in to fill all stations

Better Communication with senior management, deal with small issues before they become big ones, sort out the stuff that has already been agreed and get it implemented as soon as possible

Challenge Comments

What support or resources would help over come current challenges implementing the WRC Agreement in your county?

We need WRC agreement in more detail, and expert SIPTU guidence in local meetings as to what is applicable, as management here are using this change in terms to implement there own idea of WRC agreement, up to and including cut and paste sections from KCS document which was never ratified.

"Quicker recruitment, more courses.More from the LGMA and Clarification on the running order of 2x pump stations especially those with special appliances etc. in terms of target crewing levels and how they purpose to implement week on week off...!!??Joint oversight task force between SIPTU and LGMA set up to issue guidance to all local authorities to establish a unified approach across all counties on implementing the agreement conditions along with other public sector employee conditions."

"Improving the correct Recruitment numbers in all stations including 2 pump stations.More appropriate training courses for new recruits, along with completing all the new Fetac courses in full. Multiple local issues need to be resolved, although they are not directly related to the National WRC Agreement"

The week on week off is not fully in place in all stations but each station has some type of system example 6 weeks on 4 weeks off, etc.

Trying to get all fire fighters united is the hardest part some are only interested in what they can get and it's leave the rest of us,

They seem to be implementing everything bar the community hours and dm positions. DFB management said they are waiting on direction from the LGMA for the com hours, (we possible have been paid for them in the last wages, waiting on a break down) Driver mechanic positions are acting in both stations and need to be implemented , with help from SIPTU hopefully

Fortnightly Pay Comments

What has your experience been with the implementation of fortnightly pay?

We have always operated the fortnightly pay for a long time so nothing new for us here.

Very slow & all sorts of problems implementing

Disaster haven't got paid for a 2 full weeks yet and now they say the work load is to much they can't give us an activity report anymore

A real struggle we are not customers of Gartan we are on a different system so it's going to take time

We are currently paid fortnightly for calls & quarterly retainer. We are now getting drills on our fortnightly payment too

No progress to date, but have been contacted by individuals who would like it to be optional, as it suits some for it to remain quarterly and are some who are unemployed to want it fortnightly.

It's been hit and miss some issues in regards to hours been paid and issues with revenue where mistakes were made submitting wages

Only one station in Wicklow has been put on it. That station has had issues with wages being incorrect and payslips not matching up and wage slips also don't have a clear breakdown of payments on them. Very badly run. They seemed fine before they changed the individual who was doing the wages.

A lot easier to budget now. Its been very helpful.

It's been implemented on April the 18th 2025.

We have been told it will be in place in the 2/3 quarter!

Fortnightly Pay Comments

What has your experience been with the implementation of fortnightly pay?

We have been told it will be in place in the 2/3 quarter!

We were told it would happen beginning of 2024, at the last meeting we were informed it woyod earliest Q2 2025. The whole room laughed at this including management at this!!

"Very good No problems for vast majority of firefighters Some delays with waiting for a forwarded email about a fire calls before they can be logged onto system"

Its supposed to be up and running feb 25

Keep kicking the can down the road

No push from firefighters on it. CFO has said it could be in place mid 2025

Not implemented yet

We been on fortnightly paid for 2 years

Still on monthly pay, waiting on gartan

Conclusion

Seventeen months after the WRC agreement was established, we find ourselves at a critical juncture. While progress has been made in some areas, significant delays and roadblocks remain, leaving a national agreement that was meant to energize and modernize our fire service far from fully implemented.

This situation is not only unfair to Retained Firefighters who have been waiting too long for these changes but also to the communities we serve. The responsibility to deliver lies with all parties involved—County Councils, Chief Fire Officers, and the LGMA. It is imperative that the LGMA takes a more active role in ensuring uniform implementation across all fire authorities and holds all stakeholders accountable for meeting their obligations.

The path ahead demands strong leadership and collaboration. County Councils must take decisive action to drive this process forward, ensuring their Chief Fire Officers actively support the implementation of the agreement. This is not merely about fulfilling a document—it is about creating a better, more sustainable fire service for the entire country.

We cannot afford further delays. Now is the time for action, accountability, and a renewed commitment to delivering the change that was promised and agreed upon.

Disclaimer

This survey and its accompanying report have been conducted and compiled independently by a small group of Retained Firefighters. The information provided reflects the perspectives and feedback of SIPTU County Representatives nationwide concerning the implementation of the WRC agreement. It should be emphasized that this document does not represent the official position of the Retained Fire Service, Senior Management, or Local Fire Authorities.

The purpose of this survey was to create a snapshot of the status nationwide, aiming to empower Retained Firefighters to advocate for the agreed-upon changes that are yet to be implemented. The findings are presented in various charts and will be shared with all Retained Firefighters, as well as anyone interested in reviewing the information.

It is acknowledged that the content may not align with the perspectives of Senior Management within the Retained Fire Service and Local Fire Authorities. This report serves as an initiative to foster awareness and discussion within the Retained Firefighting community.

Readers are encouraged to interpret the information with the understanding that it does not carry official endorsement. Any concerns or discrepancies with the data should be addressed to the individuals responsible for the survey, rather than being attributed to the official stance of the Retained Fire Service or Local Fire Authorities.

This disclaimer aims to clarify the context and origin of the information presented in the report, emphasizing its unofficial nature and the personal capacity in which it was compiled.

Survey Questions



National Executive Committee

Review of the WRC Agreement January 2025. Delivering on the WRC Agreement issued on the 24th of August 2023

Name *

First Name

Last Name

Are you the SIPTU county rep *

Please Select

County *

Carlow

Carlow Stations Crew Numbers *

	Total crew numbers	How many candidates have been selected for recruitment in 2025?
Carlow Town Station		
Bagenalstown Station		
Tullow Station		
Hacketstown Station		

As the county SIPTU reprehensive have you established an implementation committee with a selected number of fellow Firefighters from your county? *

- Yes
- No

As an implementation committee how often did you meet with senior management and county council to implement the WRC Agreement in 2024? *

Please Select

Are the WRC agreed working arrangements implemented in your county? *

- Fully
- Partially
- Not at all

Have the number one uniforms been issued to your county? *

- Fully
- Partially
- Not at all

Has fortnightly pay being implemented in your county? *

- Yes
- No

What has your experience been with the implementation of fortnightly pay?

If you have implemented fortnightly pay

Carlow Stations Week On / Week Off *

	Have you fully implemented Week On / Week off
Carlow Town Station	
Bagenalstown Station	
Tullow Station	
Hacketstown Station	

Carlow Stations Driver Mechanic Appointment *

	Have driver Mechanic roles be appointed?
Carlow Town Station	
Bagenalstown Station	
Tullow Station	
Hacketstown Station	

Have training and resources been provided to allow for new recruits and new DMs to be fully trained and functional? *

- Yes
- No

Has your county developed and implemented standardized HR policies as required by the Agreement? Specifically, are policies for sick leave, maternity leave, and parental leave in place? *

- Yes
- No

As a county representative, are you satisfied that all Firefighters in your county have been offered the optional 40 hours of additional community work in 2024? *

- Yes
- No

As the county SIPTU reprehensive are you receiving full support from senior management to implement the WRC Agreement? *

- Yes
- No

What are the main challenges or barriers to implementing the WRC agreement in your county? Rate each option below on a scale of 1 to 5, Where 1 = Most Obstructive and 5 = Least Obstructive *

	1 (Most Obstructive)	2	3	4	5 (Least Obstructive)
Chief Fire Officer					
County Councils					
Recruitment					
Training					
Local Station issues					

What support or resources would help over come current challenges implementing the WRC Agreement in your county?

Submit

References

This report has been submitted to SPITU on the 14/01/2025.

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