

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service: Making the Move to a More Embedded 360



"The 360 report guides you from the big picture down to the detail – and its flexibility means that there are many possible start points to allow us to tailor the conversation."

Sue Mottershead, Senior Training Manager, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Fire and Rescue Service

The context: Upgrading 360 within the Service

360-degree feedback already had a place in Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service on the management development programmes of its more junior officer levels. However, it used a quite basic, paper-based format to gather the opinions of others.

The trigger for wider adoption across the service, including the senior leadership team, was the HMICFRS Report.

However, if 360 was to be used across the Service, there needed to be a more relevant, robust and attractive questionnaire – and the ability to scale without more paperwork!

The solution: Adopting the fire-service specific 360 and working out how to best manage this

Head Light's Fire Edition of its 360 tool is based on the leadership framework for fire services. It means it has the credibility and relevance of being designed specifically for fire services and focuses on the core behaviours. It is delivered and managed through Head Light's online talent platform.

The team at Hertfordshire chose to collaborate with colleagues from Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service to exchange feedback facilitators for some of the more sensitive senior leadership feedback. For the most senior of leaders, individual feedback was facilitated by consultants from Head Light, focusing on not only understanding the feedback received but examining how to apply their skills to the environment.

The report generated from the 360 results is configurable and provides a range of different formats for results. Sue Mottershead, Senior Training Manager, Hertfordshire County Council, comments: date, no-one has come to the team to say that they do not understand the report.

"What we love about the report is how easy it is to see who a person is most likely to demonstrate a specific behaviour towards – and that makes the report for us."

"It focuses attention and helps the participant plan to take action. It's structured and guides you from the big picture down to the detail. The flexibility of the report means that there are many possible start points so we can really tailor the conversation."



"360 – the report and the feedback conversation – is seen as a very positive experience. People are finding it really useful."

"The training we received from Head Light helped us not only to frame the feedback sessions but also how best to read the report alongside a participant."

"One format that has been very useful is the chart that highlights the differences between the groups of feedback providers and suggests how certain groups may or may not recognise the skills or behaviours that others do."

As a Service, Hertfordshire invested in training to create a group of feedback managers who could help participants understand the report and the feedback they have received. Sue comments: *"The training we received from Head Light helped us not only to frame the feedback sessions but also how best to read the report alongside a participant."*

"We chose, as a Service, to release the report to the individual prior to the feedback session so that any initial reaction is tempered. It means the feedback conversation starts to explore the detail and the implications."

Following the feedback meeting, the participant is encouraged to share and discuss the feedback with their manager – and to indicate where development needs are. For Sue, a measure of success will be the number of requests for development post-360, be it coaching or some other intervention.

The outcome: A positive and valuable experience

Keen to keep the momentum going and build on what has been achieved, the team are now proposing to continue to use the 360 on an annual basis.

Furthermore, there is more to explore at a combined group level, looking at overall, amalgamated scores from, for example, the heads of service cohort.

Sue sums up: *"360 – the report and the feedback conversation – is seen as a very positive experience. People are finding it really useful and we hope it continues to grow in its use across the Service."*

Takeaways

Be clear that the 360 programme is not the end point.

It can be easy to trip up by seeing the 'administration' and 'completion rates' as the goals. Keep reminding others that the 360 informs development and helps to make meaningful behavioural and cultural change.

Collaborate with – and learn from – others.

Training courses and feedback resources can be shared with other Services. Collaboration and connection are built from the network of other Head Light Fire and Rescue Services' clients and joining Head Light's Blue Light User Group.

Bring in an external feedback facilitator if needed.

For more senior leaders, consider bringing in experienced and independent feedback facilitators who can add a new perspective and discuss how to apply skills.

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