



**Northern Ireland  
Fire & Rescue Service**



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## **CASE STUDY:**

**A Q&A with Northern  
Ireland Fire & Rescue  
on their experience of  
using AMBIT surveys**



## 01. OBJECTIVES.

### What benefits were you hoping/ expecting to receive?

We wanted to have a more **in depth** look at the **experiences of employees** across different aspects of organisational life that is sometimes difficult to analyse using the normal Employee Engagement (EE) Surveys as we have a large multi-disciplined organisation that has a wide geographical spread with 68 sites across Northern Ireland.

We felt that there was EE survey 'fatigue' in our organisation and even the term Employee Engagement wasn't well received across the service so we think using new terminology for the survey was advantageous in achieving a higher response rate.

Why NIFRS chose Ambit  
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## 02

## 02. WHY CHOOSE AMBIT?

**Your knowledge and awareness of AMBIT surveys?**

**NIFRS have been members of Skills for Justice (SFJ) for a number of years so we are always updated on what's on offer and how they can support our workforce development needs. When we heard of AMBIT it was a no brainer to take advantage of the offer through our SFJ membership as employee engagement and other surveys can carry quite a high cost. This means that we can now offer more development for our organisation.**

**What were the key factors in supporting your decision to use AMBIT?**

The AMBIT survey is delivered by SFJ, who are the sector skills council for public emergency services, so we felt an immediate gravitation towards this for our survey.

Mainly time and cost were also the big factors. We wanted the survey to be carried out at a certain time and we availed of the SFJ benefits of Level 1 being free to members. Another factor is that we wanted more in depth information that's why we opted for the Level 1 & Level 2 Report which provides further analysis and a deeper dive into the results. We also needed something that

worked for our organisation – some employee engagement providers use a framework that is set in stone and cannot be amended. AMBIT allowed us to create a bespoke survey completely aligned to our organisation. This meant that the drivers being measured were completely applicable to our organisation.

**Any concerns or internal obstacles to overcome in choosing AMBIT?**

No obstacles as such we just needed approval from our Executive Leadership Team to move away from the normal EE Survey approach to the AMBIT tool which focusses on all aspects of organisational life.

Features & benefits?  
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## 03. FEATURES &amp; BENEFITS?

## What platform or provider did you use before?

We used a **well-established company based in London that specialises in carrying out Employee Engagement Surveys for public and private sector organisations across the UK.**

“The research team were incredibly knowledgeable...”

### Any additional features/benefits AMBIT offered compared to previously used platform(s)?

Yes, the ability to change/add/remove questions and terminology from the survey and to reduce the length of the survey really helped and this was reflected in the high response rate.

### Knowledge, skills and understanding of team members and level of support offered.

Excellent – The research team were incredibly knowledgeable and were fantastic in guiding us through the process. It didn't hurt that they were very approachable and friendly! – This made for a great collaborative experience! The SFJ Team offer an impressive Customer experience.

Did Ambit deliver?  
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## 04. DID AMBIT DELIVER?

### Did you amend or revisit your OD goals/objectives before setting out?

**Yes, one of the many business objectives we had to deliver in the same year was to achieve our *Investors in People re-accreditation* so we were able to revisit the recommendations of our previous IIP assessment and work to align AMBIT around this to help with the upcoming re-accreditation.**

#### Did AMBIT deliver to your goals/expectations?

Any particular stage of the journey which outperformed your expectations?  
Any disappointments?

Yes absolutely, we had regular meetings with the SFJ team and all the objectives were agreed at the outset. No disappointments as any obstacles were quickly rectified. Quite the opposite in fact as we had the highest response rate that we've ever had compared to our normal EE Surveys! It was also the highest response rates that Skills for Justice have had using AMBIT.

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# 04

## 04. DID AMBIT DELIVER?

**Absolutely, SFJ worked closely with us to develop AMBIT for our Service so that our specific needs were addressed. The support from the SFJ team has been fantastic and they were always very patient and solution focussed when we wanted something changed or presented in a different way.**

The Skills for Justice statisticians were able to tailor the questions to be more fitting for our organisation. There was also a degree of flexibility when adding/removing items that we wanted to measure in the survey. The research team were happy to make these amendments for us. They were also able to advise and guide on employee engagement and survey best practices so the knowledge they were able to impart in this process was crucial for us.

### Are any of the benefits measurable?

Yes, the results have given us lots to consider when putting together our EE action plan and implementing specialist OD interventions for our workforce based off the results. The qualitative responses were especially valuable in gaining an insight to views on different areas.

Overall impact & improvements.  
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“ The support from the SFJ team has been fantastic...”



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## 05. OVERALL IMPACT & IMPROVEMENTS

### Was the overall impact and performance of AMBIT as expected?

We are **delighted** with the work that we have done with SFJ to develop this. There are some changes that we will make but we will definitely be using the Ambit Tool going forward as we are always wanting to **continually improve** our approach.

#### What is the key strengths/ USPs of AMBIT?

The USP is that it is free of charge (level 1) so it is a real cost saver but also the ability to change the tool and design it according to your needs also was a game changer, we promoted it as an organisational development survey and this helped with buy-in as employees genuinely want to see real improvements in the Service that we deliver to the people of Northern Ireland.

#### Would you like to see any additional AMBIT capabilities/benefits developed?

We would definitely change a few things for the next survey and we are looking closely at the reasons why employees started the survey but didn't complete it so assessing the abandonment rate is something we can now track year on year. Accessibility is also an issue for us as half our work force is On-Call employees that are harder to engage than our Whole-time employees. It would be great to work closely with a specialist marketing professional at SFJ to develop the campaign and promotional products to help increase the response rate year on year.

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## 06. Recommended? **Your comments about Skills for Justice as a partner?**

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“Professional, knowledgeable, flexible and customer focussed.

What would you say to anyone thinking about using AMBIT as an employee survey tool?

“Definitely have a look at it, using the survey can only do good for your organisation. Speak to the team and give it a go!



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Thank you for your time.

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