



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority  
Human Resources Committee

# HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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**Date:** 22 January 2016

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Members on key Human Resources metrics for the period 1 October – 31 December 2015.

## CONTACT OFFICER

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of its remit, the Human Resources Committee of Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority receives regular updates on Human Resources (HR) issues within the Service. This includes issues such as sickness absence, formal discipline, grievance, health and safety, employment tribunal cases and staffing numbers. These issues are known as HR metrics.
- 1.2 Reports are on a quarterly basis and allow the Human Resources Committee to keep informed of ongoing issues and offer their guidance and scrutiny.

## 2. REPORT

### HR METRICS - SICKNESS ABSENCE

2.1 The following represents absence figures for Quarter 3: 1 October to 31 December 2015

2.2 Target absence figures for 2015/16 are:

Wholetime & Control: 6 days per person

Non-Uniformed: 7 days per person

Whole Workforce: 6.25 days per person

(the average is affected by the numbers of employees in each work group and the average work shift)

### Total Workforce

Absence	Quarter 3 1 October – 31 December 2015	Compared with previous quarter	Cumulative total days lost for 15/16	Cumulative average over last 12 months
<b>Total workforce (156 employees have been absent during Q3, excluding retained*)</b>	1564.5 days lost  2.25 days per employee	1476 days lost  1.39 days per employee  6% increase (+88.5 days)	4457 days lost	7.83 days per employee (target 6.25 days)

(\*Due to the on-call nature of the Retained Duty System days lost are recorded not shifts)

Across the workforce a total of 1564.5 working days were lost in the third quarter of 2015/16. This is a very slight increase of 88.5 days (+6%) on the previous quarter. This is attributed to the increase support staff absence.

Long term absence equated to 66% of the total absence during this period.

In the comparable period of 2014/15, 1534.5 days were lost to sickness absence. A difference of 30 days (+2%).

Graphical representation of Quarter three sickness can be found in Appendix A and a full period commentary in Appendix B.

### **National Trends**

The Service contributes to the CFOA sickness absence survey, which is undertaken quarterly and allows for comparison between contributing Fire and Rescue Services. Appendix C reflects cumulative national absence trends in the previous two quarters (Q1 and Q2). The table reflects whole workforce figures\* in 12ii it shows that the Service, which had an average absence of 4.14 days per employee during the periods, ranked 18 of the 29 Services and was slightly above the sector sickness average of 3.81 days per employee.

National figures reflect an average absence of 7.9 days per employee in the public sector, and 6.6 days per employee in the private sector. Based on 12-month cumulative absence of 7.83 days per employee, the Service is currently just below the public sector average but above the private sector average.

### **DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC**

- 2.3 Over the period 1 October – 31 December 2015:
- Disciplinary: 2
  - Grievances: 0
  - Harassment and Bullying: 0
  - Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy: 0
  - Dismissals including ill health retirements: 0
  - Redundancy: 3
  - Redeployment: 0
  - Employment Tribunal cases: 0
  - IDRPs appeals: 1
  - Performance and capability: 0

### **STAFFING NUMBERS**

- 2.4 During the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015, 14 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
<b>Wholetime</b>	510 (510 FTE)	501 (500.58 full time equivalents)	-9 (-9.4 FTE)
<b>Retained</b>	192 units	257 persons (137.5 units) (includes 55 dual contracts)	- 58 units
<b>Non-Uniformed</b>	171 (160.85 FTE)	159 (147.1fte)	-12 (13.75 FTE)
<b>Fire Control</b>	25 (24.5 FTE)	28 (27.5 FTE)	+3 (3 FTE)

2.5 There have been 23 leavers and 14 starters during this quarter since the last report which has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 945 (this includes 55 dual contractors). Leavers are broken down as follows: 6 whole-time, 8 retained, 0 control and 7 non-uniformed employees and 2 contingency operatives.

The Service currently have 22 contingency operatives.

2.6 As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 whole-time establishment stood at -9 (-9.4 fte) employees against an establishment of 510 posts. As previously predicted this has addressed the temporary over-establishment referred to in previous reports. The outcomes from the Fire Cover Review and measures proposed to reduce workforce numbers as part of the budget management process are likely to impact upon the number of established posts going forward, and therefore there remains no current plans to recruit to Trainee Fire-fighter roles in the next financial year.

2.7 During the period the Service has appointed to 4 support roles and 10 Retained Trainee Firefighter roles. This takes the total number of new RDS appointment to 34 during 2015.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Paragraph 2.4 shows that, with the exception of Control, all sections of the workforce are now under-established. Earlier in the year the number of whole-time employees was above the establishment level so the current position will help to offset the overspends which accrued in the first half of the year.

- 3.2 The non-uniformed pay budget has been underspending throughout the year due to vacancies held whilst posts have been at risk, and redundancy costs will be partially funded by an earmarked reserve and partially by pay budget savings where employees have left during the year.
- 3.3 The overall pay budget financial position is reported to the Finance and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis.

#### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The Human Resources implications are set out in the report, and there are no learning and development implications.

#### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

As this review does not impact upon policy or service function, no equality impact has been undertaken.

#### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

A regular reporting system on the management of HR ensures that the Service and the Authority are aware of any developing workforce issues.

#### **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members endorse the report.

#### **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

# APPENDIX A

## Appendix - Reporting Period: 01/04/2013 to 31/12/2015

Quarter Breakdown by Month	October		November		December	
	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost
Non Uniformed	1.11	184.5	1.09	181.5	1.35	224.5
Wholetime & Control	0.58	308.0	0.70	372.5	0.55	293.5
Sum:	0.71	492.5	0.8	554.0	0.75	518.0

Current Q vs Previous Q	2,015 - Q2		2,015 - Q3	
	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost
Non Uniformed	3.11	517	3.56	590.5
Wholetime & Control	1.88	983.5	1.84	974
Sum:	2.18	1,500.5	2.25	1,564.5

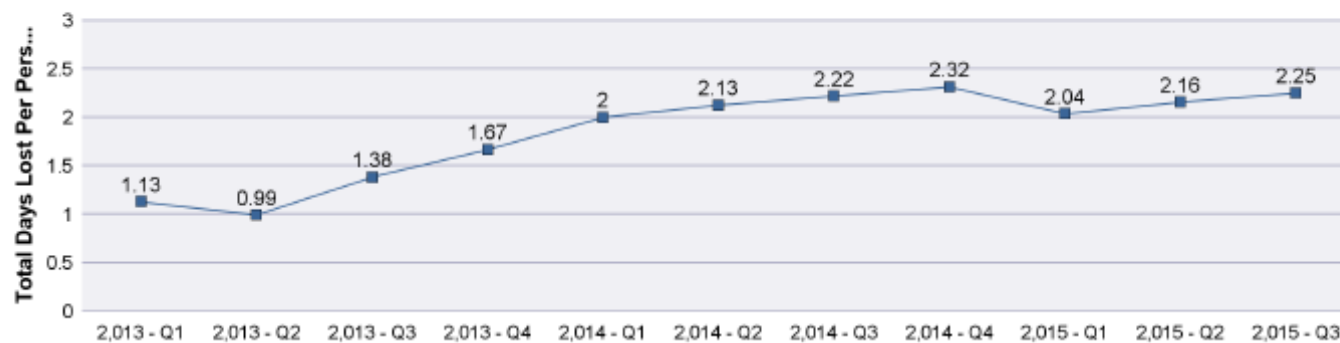
Whole Period Summary - Non Uniformed



Whole Period Summary Wholetime & Control



Whole Period Summary - All



## APPENDIX B

### Wholetime employees

Absence	Quarter 3 Oct - Dec	Compared with previous quarter	Cumulative total days lost for 15/16	Cumulative average over last 12 months
<b>Wholetime</b>	915 days lost  1.83 days per employee	921.5 days lost  1.81 days per employee  0.1% decrease (-6.5 days)	2641 days lost	7.22 days per employee (target 6 days)

In total 915 working days were lost due to sickness during quarter two. Of this, 576 days were lost to long-term absence (28+ days absence) and 339 days were lost due to short term absence. This represents a decrease of 6.5 days (-0.1%) when compared to the previous quarter. There has been a 56% increase in long term absence compared to the previous quarter.

There are 501 Wholetime personnel, of these 99 individual had sickness absence during this period on 108 separate occasions. 80% of this workgroup had no sickness absence during this quarter.

The average absence per employee was 1.83 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

There were 71 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 39 of which were classified as long term sickness. At the end of the period 42 employees had returned to work. There is one person who has been absent for more than 6 months.

### **Reasons for absence**

The top reasons for absence in this work group were musculo skeletal (387 shifts) and mental health (185 shifts) both of these were prevalent reasons in both short and long term absences. Respiratory absences were also within the top five reasons for short term absences as would be anticipated at this time of year.

Short Term Absences			Long Term Absences		
Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Day s Los	Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Day s Los
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	13	198	Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	9	50
Mental Health - Stress	4	126	Musculo Skeletal - Back	12	46
Cause Known, but not specified	11	98	Gastro-Intestinal	22	44
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	4	90	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	12	38
Mental Health - Depression	1	59	Cause Known, but not specified	9	34
Respiratory - Chest Infection	9	54	Respiratory - Chest Infection	8	31
Musculo Skeletal - Upper Limb	2	53	Mental Health - Stress	2	14
Musculo Skeletal - Back	12	46	Genitourinary/Gynecological/Reproductiv	1	12
Gastro-Intestinal	22	44	Unknown causes, not specified	1	11
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	12	38	Ear, Nose, Throat	3	10
			Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	2	10
			Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	4	148
			Mental Health - Stress	2	112
			Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	2	80
			Cause Known, but not specified	2	64
			Mental Health - Depression	1	59
			Musculo Skeletal - Upper Limb	1	44
			Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	30
			Respiratory - Chest Infection	1	23
			Ear, Nose, Throat	1	16

## Retained employees

Absence	Quarter 3 Oct - Dec	Compared with previous quarter	Cumulative non availability ( days) during 15/16	Cumulative average over last 12 months
<b>Retained</b>	962 calendar days lost  3.74 calendar days lost per employee	653 calendar days lost  2.61 calendar days per employee  47% increase (+309 days)	2514.5 calendar days lost	12.6 days per employee (target 10.5 days)

Due to the on-call nature of the retained duty system, absence levels reflect number of days of non availability rather than total working/shift days lost. Absences are calculated as consecutive calendar days not working time lost.

In Q3, 962 days were unavailable due to sickness, broken down into 769 days of long-term absence (28+ days) and 193 days of short-term absence. This equates to an average of 3.74 “days” of unavailability per employee.

Compared to Q2, when 653 days were lost to sickness absence, this reflects an increase of 309 available days (-47%).

There are 257 retained personnel, of these 35 individual had sickness absence during this period on 36 separate occasions. 86% of this workgroup had no sickness absence during this quarter.

There were 19 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 11 of which were classified as long term sickness. At the end of the period 9 employees had returned to work with 10 still absent. There are two people in this work group who have been absent for more than 6 months.

### ***Reasons for absence***

The top reasons for absence in this work group were musculo skeletal (11 occasions), mental health (5 occasions) and gastro-intestinal (4 occasions) all of these were reasons in the top ten of both short and long term absences.



### Short Term Absences

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health - Depression	3	191
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	4	148
Mental Health - Stress	2	102
Gastro-Intestinal	4	100
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	6	97
Cancer and Tumours	1	92
Hospital/Post Operative	1	64
Cause Known, but not specified	3	46
Musculo Skeletal - Other	1	28
Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	27

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	5	51
Musculo Skeletal - Other	1	28
Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	27
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	2	19
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	3	18
Unknown causes, not specified	1	15
Ear, Nose, Throat	2	13
Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	13
Cause Known, but not specified	2	11
Mental Health - Stress	1	10

### Long Term Absences

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health - Depression	3	191
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	2	129
Cancer and Tumours	1	92
Gastro-Intestinal	1	92
Mental Health - Stress	1	92
Hospital/Post Operative	1	64
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	1	46
Cause Known, but not specified	1	35

### Control employees

Absence	Quarter 3 Oct - Dec	Compared with previous quarter	Cumulative total days lost for 15/16	Cumulative average over last 12 months
<b>Control</b>	59 shifts lost  2.1 shifts per employee	36 shifts lost  1.28 shifts per employee  64% increase (+23 days)	100 shifts lost	3.82 shifts per employee (target 6 days)

In total 59 working days were lost due to sickness absence during this quarter. Of this 37 days were lost due to long term absence and 22 days were lost due to short-term absence, at an average of 2.1 days per employee.

This represents an increase of 23 days on the previous quarter. Due to the small number of personnel in Control (28) the absences of a few can impact the figures significantly. 9 different personnel had an absence in this period.

There were 3 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration) during the review period all three people returned to work before the end of the quarter.

Due to the low level of absence, and to protect confidentiality, no analysis has been made of reasons for absence.

## Support employees

Absence	Quarter 3 Oct - Dec	Compared with previous quarter	Cumulative total days lost for 15/16	Cumulative average over last 12 months
<b>Non uniformed</b>	590.5 days lost  3.6 days per employee	519 days lost  3.08 days per employee  14% increase (+71.5 days)	1716.5 days lost	13.21 days per employee (target 7 days)

In total 590.5 working days were lost due to sickness absence for non-uniformed personnel during the quarter. This represents an increase of 71.5 days (+14%) on the previous quarter. This breaks down into 421 days due to long term sickness absence (28+ continuous days absent) and 170 working days due to short term absence. This represents an increase (93%) in long term absence and a decrease (-44%) in short term absences.

There are 166 support employees, of these 48 had sickness absences in this period on 59 separate occasions in the reporting period. 71% of this work group had no sickness during this quarter.

The average absence per employee was 3.6 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

There were 16 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 11 of which were classified as long term sickness. At the end of the period 7 employees had returned to work with 9 still absent. There is one person who had been absent for more than 6 months however they have since left the organisation on voluntary redundancy.

### ***Reasons for absence***

The main reason for non-uniformed long-term absence was Mental Health issues (5 instances, 138 days) and short term due to Musculo Skeletal (8 occasions) other reasons were unique to small numbers of individuals and therefore are not reported to maintain confidentiality.

			<b>Short Term Absences</b>			<b>Long Term Absences</b>		
Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Day s Los	Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Day s Los	Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health - Stress	4	138	Musculo Skeletal - Back	4	33	Mental Health - Stress	3	135
Musculo Skeletal - Back	5	85	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	9	29	Pregnancy Related Disorder	1	66
Pregnancy Related Disorders	1	66	Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	4	27	Musculo Skeletal - Back	1	52
Cause Known, but not specified	8	53	Cause Known, but not specified	7	15	Cause Known, but not spec	1	38
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	5	50	Headache/Migraine/Neurological	8	15	Unknown causes, not spec	1	37
Unknown causes, not specified	3	40	Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	11	Eye Problems	1	24
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	9	29	Virus/Infectious Diseases	1	9	Mental Health - Anxiety	1	24
Mental Health - Anxiety	2	26	Gastro-Intestinal	4	7	Musculo Skeletal - Lower Li	1	23
Eye Problems	1	24	Musculo Skeletal - Other	1	5	Mental Health - Depression	1	22
Mental Health - Depression	1	22	Other known causes (not specified in list	2	5			

**APPENDIX C**

		Actual number of days/shifts lost to sickness	
		BV12i	BV12ii
1	Leicestershire FRS	1.02	1.38
2	Cheshire FRS	1.90	1.65
3	Hereford & Worcester FRS	2.20	2.68
4	Manchester FRS	2.30	2.86
5	Derbyshire FRS	2.90	3.10
6	Staffordshire FRS	2.84	3.12
7	West Midlands FRS	3.24	3.16
8	Tyne & Wear FRS	3.06	3.24
9	Buckinghamshire FRS	3.54	3.26
10	North Yorkshire	3.46	3.33
11	West Yorkshire FRS	3.48	3.48
12	Cleveland Fire Brigade	3.14	3.48
13	Durham FRS	4.13	3.66
14	South Yorkshire FRS	3.85	3.77
15	Northumberland FRS	3.52	3.79
16	East Sussex FRS	4.00	4.05
17	Avon FRS	4.07	4.09
18	Nottinghamshire FRS	3.34	4.14
19	Dorset FRS	4.40	4.22
20	Lincolnshire FRS	3.79	4.38
21	Essex FRS	4.55	4.40
22	Humberside FRS	4.28	4.50
23	Royal Berkshire FRS	4.43	4.53
24	Gloucestershire FRS	3.72	4.57
25	Suffolk FRS	4.22	4.63
26	London Fire Brigade	4.89	4.76
27	Northamptonshire FRS	4.60	4.96
28	Devon & Somerset FRS	4.97	5.02
29	Northern Ireland FRS	5.63	6.23
<b><u>Average</u></b>		<b><u>3.64</u></b>	<b><u>3.81</u></b>