



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

SHIFT CHANGE TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP MINUTES

Report of the Chief Fire Officer and
Chair of the Shift Change Review Group

Agenda No:

Date: 18 December 2009

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the progress of shift change implementation.

CONTACT OFFICER

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Chief Fire Officer

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1. BACKGROUND

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service implemented revised shift patterns with effect from 1 January 2007 following the signing of a collective agreement before the Fire and Rescue Authority on 28 April 2006. To ensure that these revised patterns remained effective and continued to meet the expectations of the public, the Service and its employees, a Shift Change Task and Finish Review Group was established by Policy and Strategy Committee on 22 May 2006. It was agreed that the Task and Finish Review Group would be chaired by the lead opposition spokesperson.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Regular meetings of the Task and Finish Review Group, chaired by Councillor Penny Griggs, are taking place, and the minutes of the last meeting held on 8 October 2009 are attached to this report as Appendix A for reference. The next meeting of the Group is due to take place on 16 December 2009.
- 2.2 During the course of the group meetings, issues around the finer detail of implementation have been raised by both Management and the Fire Brigades Union, which are resolved as part of the ongoing process.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from the shift change itself, although issues such as IT platforms will require financial investment. The Fire and Rescue Authority has previously made arrangements within its budget process to support this.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As any amendments or developments to the working patterns of operational staff are contractual, there are specific human resources implications that relate to any changes. Local negotiations through the Review Group are ongoing and any changes will be reflected in a revised collective agreement.
- 4.2 With regard to learning and development it is anticipated that the flexibility being developed will lead to improved access to training courses and improved attendance on nominated courses due to less pressure on operational staff.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Service's Equality and Diversity Officer, Management and Trade Union have undertaken a full equality impact assessment on the shift change process. This has

formed the basis of any amendments made, ensuring that the Service's working patterns improve accessibility to all.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The successful transition and implementation of the new shift patterns is key to underpinning the Service's Community Safety ambitions. By effectively maintaining the revised arrangements emerging issues can be addressed and risks removed at any early stage. This ensures that the change process remains an effective and valid process.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS


That Members note the contents of this report.

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

- Fire and Rescue Authority Report of 28 April 2006 – Future Service Delivery Arrangements.
- Policy And Strategy Committee Report of 22 May 06 – Task and Finish Group for Shift Change Implementation.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Councillor Penny Griggs
CHAIR OF THE SHIFT CHANGE TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP

 <p>NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Fire & Rescue Service <i>Creating Safer Communities</i></p>	<p>SHIFT CHANGE TASK & FINISH REVIEW GROUP</p> <p>Thursday 16 October 2009 Fire & Rescue Service HQ</p>
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Present :	Councillor Penny Griggs (Chair) Fire & Rescue Authority Councillor Alex Foster Fire & Rescue Authority John Buckley Assistant Chief Fire Officer Phil Coates Fire Brigades Union Alan Coates Fire Brigades Union Bob Mould Fire Brigades Union Mark Healy Industrial Relations Officer Lea-Anne Abbiss Notes
Apologies :	Councillor Barrie Cooper Fire & Rescue Authority Frank Swann Chief Fire Officer

		Action
1	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Barrie Cooper and CFO Frank Swann.</p>	
2	<p>WELCOME & INTRODUCTION</p> <p>In light of some changes to membership of the group, both in terms of Members of the Fire Authority and FBU, introductions were invited and welcome made to those new to the group.</p>	
3	<p>INITIAL THREE MONTH REVIEW REPORT</p> <p>ACFO John Buckley (JB) circulated the initial three month review report (appended to minutes for future reference) which had been previously considered and endorsed by the Corporate Management Board (CMB). JB outlined that the report drew together statistics from the first three months of all operational crews operating on self rostering principles. Whilst most of the information in the report was statistical, JB had emailed WMs and CMs in order to obtain a qualitative response. Overall the first three months had been very good from management's point of view and the majority of responses JB had received from WMs and CMs had been positive.</p> <p>The headline issues arising from the report were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Sickness Levels (three month's figures)</u> – overall, sickness had reduced in the Service within the ridership. Short term sickness had dropped 50% based on the same period last year. Short and long term sickness together had dropped by 32%. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Confidence Levels</u> – for the period April – June 2009 (reliant on RDS and WT attendances) the percentage of incidents where standards were met was 89%. Following on from this, WT appliance unavailability had reduced from 73hrs 48mins for the period January – March 2009, to 4hrs 3mins for April – June 2009. As it stood at today’s meeting this was down to approximately 3hrs. • <u>Travelling Expenses</u> – detachments have reduced and hence a resultant reduction in travelling expenses by 39%. • <u>Compassionate/Special Leave</u> – down 40%, which indicates staff are being able to deal with domestic arrangements by flexibility of working. • <u>Overtime</u> – overtime had been used to try and plug gaps in the ridership, with total management of overtime being done locally. The variance identified within the report, 4%, was well within ‘tolerance’ levels. This indicates that WMs are managing overtime effectively. Management recognised that much was being done on a good will basis. Currently 6 fire-fighter vacancies, which it was anticipated would be filled by Christmas. • <u>Workforce Perspective</u> – as mentioned earlier in meeting, the feedback had largely been positive, however JB updated on the negative comments which had been received. Management of overtime had been identified as time consuming, but it was hoped this would be resolved when the ridership is at full strength. A number of comments had been received regarding the IT solution to self-rostering, and it was recognised this had not been easy to use. A Ff at Carlton had been putting together a system which had been in use at a couple of stations. The latest iteration of this is now web based and the intention is to purchase from the Ff concerned and roll out from January onwards, with it being in use from April 2010. • <u>Summary</u> – in terms of management and from the statistics, all is very positive. From emails and visits to stations it would appear the workforce, in general terms, are happy. A further review will be done at the end of October/early November. <p>The FBU fed back to the meeting that they welcomed the figures presented in the report, and overall were very pleased. Councillor Griggs acknowledged that the Fire Authority recognises the work done by the unions, firefighters etc., to make it all work and the great benefits which have been achieved. Councillor Griggs also expressed that she hoped this positive work could continue for the future. Management confirmed they were happy for the FBU to share the information contained within the report. It was agreed that any future reports would be submitted to members of the Group ahead of the meeting. Councillors Griggs and Forster requested that they receive a brief/talk through of the IT system in the new year, when all is in place.</p>	<p>JB</p> <p>JB</p>
4	<p>NEW STARTERS & LEAVERS : PARTIAL CALCULATIONS</p> <p>A written methodology regarding how to work this out pro-rotas is required and hence JB will work something up and share with the FBU. The importance of getting this right was acknowledged.</p>	<p>JB</p>

<p>5</p>	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>The FBU wished to table three items for discussion:</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p><u>Pool</u> – the FBU outlined that if someone were to, for example, break a leg, they would be placed in the pool and lose their position at the station. The FBU felt there was potential to penalise people who are genuinely sick. The FBU suggested a dedicated pool of fit people who cover for others on station (ie: someone with a broken leg) until they are fit and then the pool person goes back. It was agreed this matter would be re-visited at the next meeting and that all would give thought as to how this could work. Management and FBU to work together in between meetings and bring a proposal to the next meeting.</p> <p><u>Shorter Working Day</u> – the FBU expressed a concern that some people with young children were finding it tough to manage domestically and it was thought that a shorter working day would address this issue. JB outlined that the collective agreement does not preclude this and that it is something which could be managed locally – though acknowledgement was made this may not be simple and links in to IT system use. To be discussed at the next meeting in terms of how this can be locally managed.</p> <p><u>Joint Statement on 28 Days</u> – the FBU sought clarity on how this is being done. Management outlined they are happy it goes through Crewing, who will source an answer. Discussion followed around the perception that decisions are being taken away from CMs and WMs, and the potential to give guidance to managers in order for them to make the decisions, but then retrospectively they must be prepared to be challenged on them if required. Discussion also of the potential to run this for three months, when it could then be reviewed.</p>	<p>Agenda</p> <p>Agenda</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p>	<p>Agreed as Wednesday 16 December 2009, 10:00, SMT Conference Room.</p>	



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Corporate Management Board

INITIAL THREE MONTH REVIEW OF SELF ROSTERING

Report of Assistant Chief Fire Officer Risk Reduction

Date: 07 September 2009

Purpose of Report:

To update CMB Members on the outcomes of the first three months of all operational crews operating on self rostering principles.

Recommendations:

That CMB note the contents of this report, and commission a further report to take place in October 2009.

CMB LEAD OFFICER

Name : ACFO John Buckley

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 During 2008 extensive trials of self rostering arrangements took place at West Bridgford, Newark, Mansfield and Stockhill fire stations, together with the Specialist Rescue Team operating over three separate locations.
- 1.2 The trials were extremely positive with benefits for the Service and staff being identified. The trials ceased on 31 December 2008 as all relative learning had been gained, and management and employee representatives were in a position to move forward and negotiate a formal collective agreement.
- 1.3 At the meeting of the Fire Authority on 20 February 2009 a collective agreement was signed by management and the Fire Brigades Union, agreeing to implement self rostering on 01 April 2009.
- 1.4 As part of the implementation process regular reviews will take place to ensure that the collective agreement is meeting the expectations of both the Authority and the representative bodies, and this report considers the first three months, 01 April to 30 June 2009, under self-rostering working arrangements.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 It has been a long term objective of the Authority to have in place rostering arrangements that provide optimum opportunity for productivity and afford flexibility for employees. The changes to the pre-existing shift system in 2006 removed the 15-hour night shifts and the requisite stand-down period, furthermore crewing principles known as 'Amber Call' and 'Pool' were introduced to assist the Service in dealing with the impact of sickness absence and fluctuations in the establishment.
- 2.2 The latest collective agreement regarding self-rostering, implemented in April 2009, maintained all of these original concepts and enhanced the flexibility of employees further by placing the management of rosters at the station level, therefore empowering local managers to deploy the resources they supervise to best meet local needs of the organisation and staff alike.
- 2.3 This report is the first review of the self rostering arrangements since total roll-out across the Service and presents quantitative and qualitative data to provide an overview of how well the new arrangements are working from both management and employee perspectives.
- 2.4 What must be bourn in mind is that this data is limited to 3 months, and a more accurate picture will be emerge as time progresses, which will require subsequent reviews to take place in the future.

Sickness Absence

2.5 The table below represents the sickness absence of all operational shift based staff. The first three months of self rostering are benchmarked against the same period last year where approximately 25% of the operational ridership was undertaking the self rostering pilot, and the preceding three month period where the pilots had been ceased.

Sickness Absence				
Time Period		Short Term Days Lost	Long Term Days Lost	Total Days Lost
01/04/08 to 30/06/08 25% on trial	Actual	323	559	882
	Per person	0.75	1.4	2.1
01/01/09 to 31/03/09 Trial ceased	Actual	406	490	896
	Per Person	0.94	1.1	2.1
01/04/09 to 30/06/09 New agreement	Actual	184	415	599
	Per Person	0.42	1	1.4
Average variance over Quarter 1		-50%	-20%	-32%

2.6 As can be seen there has been a recognisable reduction in the amount of shifts lost due to sickness under the new agreement equating to approximately one third. This would equate to less than 6 days per person for the whole year if the trend continues.

2.7 Although Sickness absence levels are encouraging there is an increasing number of staff on long term sickness at any one time. At the time of writing the report 20 members of staff were in the Reserve Pool, and this is the highest number at any one time since the pool concept was adopted in 2006. This is not having a dramatic impact on the actual statistics at this time as most of the absences are around 6 to 8 weeks in duration, and not longer term, but this is an area which will require careful monitoring going forward.

Confidence Levels

2.8 Utilising the existing capability of MIS to report on BVPI 145a (Confidence Levels) a comparison can be made regarding the effectiveness of crewing arrangements. However what must be borne in mind is that this also covers Retained mobilisations, and the data is relative to discontinued Standards of Fire Cover attendance times, and weight of attack.

2.9 The table below presents the data as recorded within the MIS, and as can be seen under the new agreement this has slightly improved compared with previous performance.

<u>BVPI 145a – Confidence Levels</u>	
Date Range	% of incidents were standards were met
Jan – Mar 08	88.3%
Apr – Jun 08	86.8%
Jul – Sep 08	85%
Oct – Dec 08	82.5%
Jan – Mar 09	87.5%
Apr – Jun 09	89%

- 2.10 A more robust mechanism of measuring the effectiveness of crewing arrangements can be drawn from comparing the amount of time wholetime appliances have been unavailable. This generally occurs at the changeover of shift and is caused when detachments arrive late/leave early, or where sickness is reported with little warning, and covers cannot be immediately secured.
- 2.11 Under the self rostering arrangements 7 of the 11 stations have not been unavailable at all, and the remaining 4 have only collated 4hrs compared to 73hrs for the previous quarter.

<u>Wholetime Appliance Unavailability</u>			
Stations	Jan – March Off run in Mins	April – June Off run in Mins	Variance
1	130	0	-130
5	285	86	-199
8	118	0	-118
12	0	0	0
16	106	0	-106
18	957	0	-957
19	1168	108	-1050
20	543	0	-543
21,22,29	1003	0	-1003
26	118	32	-76
27	0	17	+17
Total	4428 mins, or 73hrs, 48mins	243 mins, or 4hrs, 3 mins	-4185 mins, or -69hrs, 45mins

Travelling Expenses

- 2.12 Under the previous centrally controlled rostering arrangements, where Service wide resources are utilised to cover any deficiencies, travelling expenses are incurred to ensure optimum appliance availability. Locally managed self rostering reduces the need to detach staff to cover shortfalls at other locations as rosters are managed at the individual station level.
- 2.13 Where this fails to provide adequate resources detachments are still used from other stations within the group, but this has reduced significantly with the consequential reduction in travelling expenses. The table below identifies all travelling expenses generated from detached duties, which have reduced by approximately 39%.

<u>Detached Duties Travelling Expenses</u>	
Date Range	Cost
Apr – Jun 08	£28507
Jul – Sep 08	£26776
Oct – Dec 08	£28693
Jan – Mar 09	£28616
Apr – June 09	£17172
Average Variance	-39%

Compassionate / Special Leave

- 2.14 Compassionate and Special leave is granted for a number of reasons, including personal emergencies, sports leave, military service etc. This type of leave is usually requested where other options have been exhausted and are an indicator of the flexibility inherent in any rostering system.
- 2.15 Encouragingly the first quarter under the new arrangements has demonstrated the lowest number of abstractions compared to the previous 12 months. Another interesting element is that the first quarter of 2009 where all self rostering trials had ceased, was substantially higher than any other within the year. See table below.

<u>Compassionate / Special Leave Abstractions</u>	
Date Range	Number of Shifts
Apr – Jun 08	51
Jul – Sep 08	45
Oct – Dec 08	36
Jan – Mar 09	67
Apr – June 09	30
Average Variance	-40%

Overtime

- 2.16 Due to the current deficiencies in the ridership establishment overtime has been deployed to cover shortfalls. This has had the positive impact of maintaining appliance availability but has had a consequential affect on how Watch Managers have managed the rostering systems. In essence overtime adds additional flexibility to the system which can be used as and when required, and this may mean that Managers find issues going forward when the allocation of overtime is replaced by an actual person.
- 2.17 Another issue is that it is extremely difficult to predict and manage the amount of overtime being used, as each station has local discretion within certain parameters. The table below shows that there is a variation between what has been actually allocated to each station and what has actually been used, however as data is collected on where an individual is based, this may not be a true reflection of where the cover was provided.
- 2.18 Overall, across all 11 stations, 4% more overtime was used than allocated and this equates to a cost of £6,645, which when considering the complex nature of the rostering system would appear to be acceptable, but worthy of ongoing scrutiny.
- 2.19 The total expenditure on overtime during the three month period is £166,161, which equates to the quarterly salary of 19 qualified Firefighters, inclusive of on costs.

<u>Overtime Shift Covers</u>			
Stations	3 month Allocation	3 months Actual	Relative Variance
1	60	30	-30
5	35	29	-6
8	23	21	-2
12	23	19	-4
16	0	32	+32
18	142	168	+26
19	36	28	-8
20	108	97	-11
26	0	15	+15
27	35	28	-7
29	132	151	-19
Total	594	618	+24

Workforce Perspective

2.20 As part of the research for this report Watch and Crew Managers across all stations were asked to provide any comments that they wished to be considered as part of the review, and discussions have taken place through numerous station visits.

2.21 Anecdotal themes have emerged which have generally been positive about the new arrangements:

- Riding 5/9 is generally the norm with only a few occasions where short term notice of sickness or the transfer of staff have caused situations which couldn't be covered;
- Staff can generally get the time off and leave that they require and there is a sense of everyone working together to help each other out with shift swaps/covers being part of normal life;
- Flexibility within the system has been used to enable staff to accommodate child/dependant care needs without resorting to Special Leave requests;
- Staff are starting to gain a greater understanding of how self rostering and annualised hours work, and this assists in the management of the systems in place;
- Surplus core hours have been used to assist Retained availability, community safety events, exercises and managerial work;
- Most staff seem to be happier under the new arrangements compared to the previous centralised crewing system;
- The management of the rostering can be quite time consuming, and the lack of rigid rules can lead to extensive debate about issues;
- The management of overtime is time consuming, and not always easy to get cover for weekends etc;
- An electronic system that is linked to the attendance register is essential to cut down duplication of effort;
- Some form of IT solution is required to assist in station to station shift covers, as at the moment it is all done through e-mails and phone calls which can be time consuming and not always successful;
- 1 pump stations need to be a little more flexible and provide some of their surplus core hours to help out the 2 pump station in the group.

Summary

2.22 In general terms the overall changes have been positive and has resulted in a decline of absence, increased appliance availability and a reduction in the cost of travelling expenses. However, extensive overtime has been used to support vacancies in the establishment and this may well have impacts on these factors.

2.23 From the comments received from station based staff operating on the new system the general view is that it is working well and they are happy with the arrangements.

- 2.24 Finally, this report only presents three months data and should only be used as an initial indicator. Further analysis over longer periods of time, with normal establishment levels in place, will be required before a true picture can be gained.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Base budgets may be affected if sustained savings are made over the longer term and this will need to be considered going forward.
- 3.2 The high levels of overtime being used to support the deficiencies in the establishment will require temporary viaments within the pay budgets.
- 3.3 In recognition that the use of overtime is managed at the local level, ongoing monitoring is required to ensure that this is carefully scrutinised. Processes and procedures are in place and the Finance Department are collating robust data which will assist in monitoring.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

If improvements in attendance levels can be sustained for the longer term, locally set targets for absence may require review for the future.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial equality impact assessment has identified no specific aspects relating to a disproportionate effect in respect of the key equality strands.

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

There are no Risk Management implications arising from this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That CMB note the contents of this report, and commission a further report to take place in October 2009.

John Buckley
Assistant Chief Fire Officer