



**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

---

**Agenda Item No:**

**Date:** 20 March 2009

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Members on progress over the last three months in implementing the Human Resources Action Plan.

## CONTACT OFFICER

**Name :** Andrew Beale  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer

**Tel :** 0115 967 0880

**Email :** [andrew.beale@notts-fire.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.beale@notts-fire.gov.uk)

**Media Enquiries Contact :** Elisabeth Reeson  
(0115) 967 5889 [elisabeth.reeson@notts-fire.gov.uk](mailto:elisabeth.reeson@notts-fire.gov.uk)

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of its remit, the Human Resources Committee of Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority receive 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 HR Committee to analyse ongoing issues and offer their guidance and scrutiny where applicable.

## 2. REPORT

### HUMAN RESOURCES ACTION PLAN

- 2.1 To ensure that the Service continually makes progress within the HR department, an action plan has been produced. Managed by the HR Managers (Operations/Corporate) the analysis of progress and future activities are outlined below.

Item & Objective	Progress to Date	Future Plans
1. Review the use of HR support and expertise.	Patterns and magnitude of use of external HR support established. Policy to be drawn-up and implemented regarding use of external support throughout NFRS.	Audit undertaken by Finance Section.  Pending consideration by Strategic Management Team.
2. Review and update all HR policies and procedures.	The majority of HR policies and procedures have now been reviewed and updated. There are currently 2 policies in the formal consultation process, and 6 in draft awaiting consultation.	The main body of work on updating HR policies will be at an end. Continued work will need to be undertaken on an ongoing basis to review and update the policies in line with changes to legislation or national/local agreements.  The development of new HR policies will be built into future HR Business Plans.  The CFA Personnel Handbook (orange book) requires a limited review of certain sections, some of which fall within the L&D and Occupational Health remit. Work will be undertaken to transfer unchanged sections of the Handbook to the intranet.

Item & Objective	Progress to Date	Future Plans
<p>3. Formulate process for efficient and effective dealing with discipline and grievance cases.</p>	<p>No progress has been made since the last report on agreeing a local discipline and grievance procedure which covers all Service employees. Consultation is still ongoing with representative bodies.</p>	<p>The imminent changes to the statutory disputes procedure (within the Employee Relations Act) which are expected to come into force from April 2009 will impact upon grievance and disciplinary procedure, with resolution through mediation a cornerstone of the new requirements. A report to Committee on the way in which the Service will implement the changes will be submitted once details of the ERA have been finalized</p>
<p>4. Formulate guidance for dealing with sickness absence and ill-health retirement.</p>	<p>Formal review of the new management of sickness absence policy and procedure has taken place with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). Revisions are in progress.</p> <p>Discussions still ongoing to establish protocols regarding the management of ill health. Further discussion required in relation to capability issues.</p> <p>HR has provided input to the current Communities and Local Government review of the pensions situation.</p>	<p>Pending confirmation of national guidance on this issue in relation to pensions benefits, establish jointly agreed protocols with FBU and other representative bodies.</p>
<p>5. Optimise relationship with all Trade Unions (FBU, Fire Officers Association (FOA), Retained Firefighters Union (RFU), Unison).</p>	<p>Regular informal meetings take place with all the recognised Trade Unions to ensure meaningful early engagement on all employee related matters.</p> <p>All internal and external briefings to be shared with the representative bodies prior to release.</p>	<p>Panel minutes will be placed on the intranet for all employees to view.</p> <p>ACAS to provide employee relations "health checks" during 2008/09.</p>

In summary, progress continues to be made in all of the above workstreams.

## HR METRICS SICKNESS ABSENCE

2.2 The following represents a reflection of the absence figures for the Quarter 3: 1 October – 31 December 2008. Please also see Appendix A for additional detail.

Absence	Quarter 3 1 Oct – 31 Dec 2008	Compared with last quarter	Compared with same quarter of 2007	Cumulative total for 2008/09	Cumulative average over last 12 months
<b>Total workforce (309 employees)</b>	1353.5 shifts lost (1.75 average)	1359 shifts lost Reduction 5.5 days -0.4%	2104 shifts lost Reduction 750.5 days -35.7 %	4304 shifts lost	7.9 days average
<b>Uniformed (248 employees) excluding retained</b>	996 shifts lost (1.75 average)	1025 shifts Reduction 29 days -2.8 %	1629 shifts lost Reduction 633 days -39 %	3261 shifts lost	7.42 days average
<b>Non uniformed (61 employees)</b>	357.5 shifts lost (2.1 average)	334 shifts lost Increase 23.5 days +7%	475 shifts lost Reduction 117.5 days -24.7%	1043 shifts lost	9.59 days average
<b>Long term sickness</b>	Number of employees on long term sickness (defined as 28 days or more) between 1 October 2008 – 31 December 2008 = 27				

## DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC

2.3 Over the period 1 December 2008 – 28 February 2009

- Disciplinary: 3
- Grievances: 1
- Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy: 0
- Dismissals including ill health retirements: 2
- Medical Appeals: 1 upheld
- Current Employment Tribunal cases:
- One individual has raised 2 cases, one for discrimination on grounds of his sexual orientation dated 13 October 2006 and one for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, disability and sex by association dated 13 May 2008 and
- Disability discrimination and unfair dismissal
- Breach of Contract - Crown Court (16 July 2008) - withdrawn

## STAFFING NUMBERS

2.4 During the period 1 December 2008 – 28 February 2009, 9 employees commenced employment, and 27 left the Service. Establishment levels at 28 February 2009 are highlighted below.

	Approved	Actual	Variance
<b>Wholetime</b>	567	547 (546.15 full time equivalents)	-20 (-20.85 FTE) (excluding 8 secondments)
<b>Retained</b>	252	208.25 (378 persons)	- 43.75
<b>Non-Uniformed</b>	186	182 <i>Established Post – 165</i> <i>Fixed Term Non-Established Post – 2</i> <i>Externally Funded Post – 4</i> <i>Agency staff - 11</i>	- 4
<b>Fire Control</b>	26.5	41 (39.5 FTE) <i>Established post - 26.5</i> <i>Funded post - 11</i> <i>Secondments – 2</i>	+ 11 (excluding 2 secondments)

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The two pending employment tribunal will have financial implications in terms of legal costs. It is unknown as to whether any additional costs will emanate from the claims tabled.
- 3.2 The additional 11 posts within Fire Control are receiving funding. 10 posts are funded by the Regional New Burdens grant to facilitate the initial staffing pool and 1 post is funded by Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service's New Burdens grant.

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

There are no human resources and learning and development implications arising from this report.

### 5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial impact assessment has revealed no specific equality issues (attached at Appendix B) from within the report, however each element of the HR Action Plan, revised policies and other actions will be subject to individual equality impact assessment.

## **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 issues and are agile enough to react appropriately to mitigate risks of employment tribunals and other claims against the organisation.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members endorse the report and note the progress made to date.

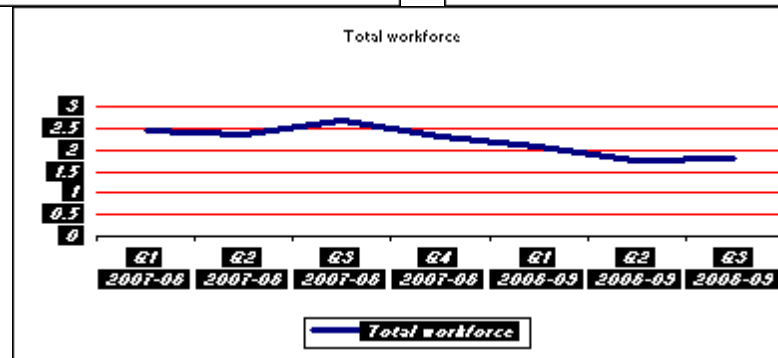
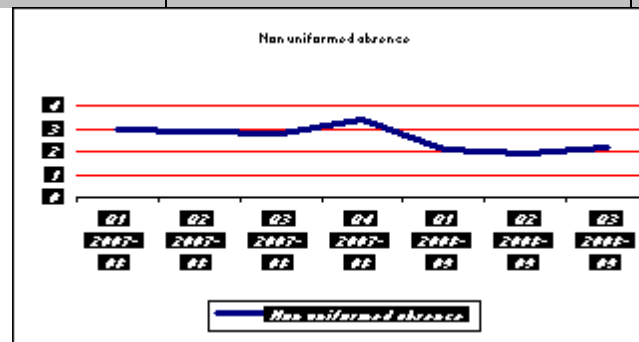
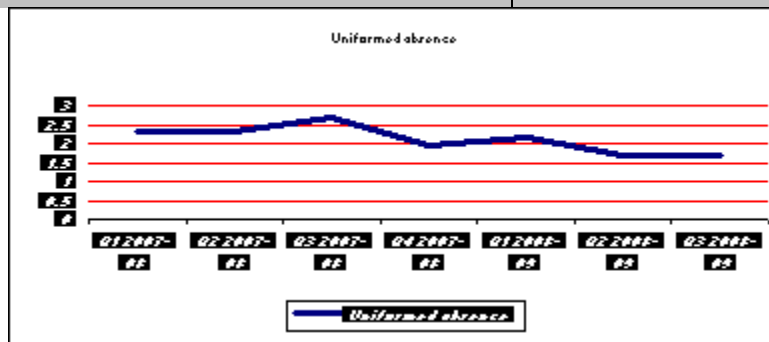
## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

Frank Swann  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

BREAKDOWN OF ABSENCE - QUARTER 1 (Oct-Dec 2008)

WORK GROUP	Oct-08				Nov-08				Dec-08				SUMMARY OF QUARTER 3			
	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Oct 2007 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Nov 2007 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Dec 2007 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Q3 2007 2007 days lost	% difference
UNIFORMED (inc Control)	0.50	300	564	46.81	0.57	346	541	36.04	0.59	350	524	33.21	1.75	996	1629	38.86
NON UNIFORMED	0.76	127	143	11.19	0.65	112.5	145	22.41	0.68	118	187	36.90	2.07	357.5	475	24.74
TOTAL WORKFORCE	0.55	427	707	39.60	0.59	458.5	686	33.16	0.61	468	711	34.18	1.75	1353.5	2104	35.67



## Appendix B

### Initial Equality Impact Assessment Questionnaire

This questionnaire will enable you to decide whether or not the new or proposed policy or service needs to go through a full Equality Impact Assessment.

<b>HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE</b>						
Name of Employee completing assessment: <b>DCFO ANDREW BEALE</b>				Department and Section: <b>STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT SUITE</b>		
1. State the purpose and aims of the policy or service.  <b>To update the Human Resources Committee on progress within the HR function.</b>						
2. Who is responsible for implementing it?  <b>Human Resources Department.</b>						
3. Who is likely to be disproportionately affected by the proposal? People from which of the equality strands? (please tick)						
Age	Disability	Family Status	Gender	Race	Sexual Orientation	Religion or Belief
4. If no boxes are ticked – there is no need to continue the EIA						