



**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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**Agenda Item No:**

**Date:** 22 July 2011

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Members on human resources issues within the Service

## 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 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

### HR METRICS - SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 2.1 The following represents a reflection of the absence figures for Quarter 4: 1 January 2011 – 31 March 2011.

Absence	Quarter 4 1 Jan to 31 Mar 2011	Compared with previous quarter	Compared with same quarter of 2010	Cumulative total days lost for 2010/11	Cumulative average over last 12 months
<b>Total workforce (166 employees have been absent during Q4)</b>	1328.5 days lost 1.79 days per employee	1203 days lost  1.54 days per employee 10.4%	851.5 days lost  1.08 days per employee 56% increase (+477 days)	4160 days lost	5.33 days per employee
<b>Uniformed (112 employees have been absent during Q4) <i>excluding retained</i></b>	914 days lost 1.54 days per employee	810 days lost  1.35 per employee 12.8%	639 days lost  1.06 days per employee 43% increase (+275 days)	2853 days lost	4.76 days per employee
<b>Non uniformed (54 employees have been absent during Q4)</b>	414.5 days lost 2.33 days per employee	393 days lost  2.18 days per employee 5.5%	212.5 days lost  1.2 days per employee 95% increase (+202 days)	1307 days lost	7.24 days per employee
<b>Long term sickness (defined as 28 days or more)</b>	<b>Total Workforce</b>		29		
	<b>Uniformed (excluding retained)</b>		18		
	<b>Non Uniformed</b>		11		

- 2.2 Whilst the absence figures for the previous six months have shown an increase in absence rates, it should be borne in mind that the Service has achieved its target of 7.5 days per employee for the year as a whole and has seen a reduction in absence of 564 days (-13.5 %) compared to 2009/10.
- 2.3 The increase has been largely due to an increase in medically certified absence, with 29 employees being “signed off” by their GP for a continuous period of more than 28 days.
- 2.4 Across the Service short term absence is considerably less in comparison to the previous reporting year (2009/10). However, long term absence is significantly higher in 2010/11.
- 2.4 For benchmarking purposes Fire and Rescue Services are grouped with similar Services. For this indicator, the Service’s absence has remained consistently below the group average throughout the reporting quarters. The UK average is 9.6 days per person (source: CIPD).
- 2.5 The majority of sickness absence was certified as gastrointestinal (sickness and diarrhoea), musculoskeletal (eg: leg/arm) or anxiety and depression. Relating this to the data; gastrointestinal absence, although often for a short period can be very infectious and result in a number of people being off for short periods of time thus having a significant impact on absence statistics. Conversely, anxiety and depression and musculoskeletal absences are often longer term absences which affect a small number of people but for a significant period of time and therefore cause peaks in absence.
- 2.5 The Service has a robust absence management policy and monitors absence continuously. HR Business Partners work closely with line managers to address absence issues.
- 2.6 The Occupational Health team work with individuals to ensure a return to work at the earliest opportunity, this support includes rehabilitation, fitness, counselling and access to diagnostic and therapy treatments via its membership of the Westfield Health Scheme.
- 2.7 Target absence figures for 2011/12 have been reduced from an average of 7.5 days to 6.5 days per employee, broken down as follows.

Wholetime & Control: 6.5 days

Non-Uniformed: 7 days

Whole Workforce: 6.5 days\*

(\* the average is affected by the numbers of employees in each work group)

## **DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC**

- 2.8 Over the period 1 April 2011 – 30 June 2011

- Disciplinary: 2
- Grievances: 5

- Harassment and Bullying: 2
- Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy: 2
- Dismissals including ill health retirements: 0
- Redundancy: 6 (1 voluntary)
- ET cases: Disability Discrimination: 1  
Equal Treatment under Part-time Regulations: 2

## STAFFING NUMBERS

2.9 During the period 1 April 2011 – 30 June 2011, 0 employees commenced employment, and 20 left the Service. Establishment levels at 30 June 2011 are highlighted below.

	Approved	Actual	Variance
<b>Wholetime</b>	559	544 (543.5 full time equivalents)	- 15 (-15.5 FTE)
<b>Retained</b>	252 units	351 persons (186.5 units)	- 65.5 units
<b>Non-Uniformed</b>	179	176 <i>Established Post – 173</i> <i>Fixed Term Non-Established Post -0</i> <i>Externally Funded Post – 2</i> <i>Agency staff - 1</i>	-3
<b>Fire Control</b>	26.5	27(FTE)	+0.5 FTE

2.10 It should be noted that there are a number of vacancies across the establishment, most notably within the whole-time workforce. The level of vacancies is likely to increase based upon the retirement profile of the workforce over the coming year. The situation is being actively managed and monitored. It is likely that the Service will need to undertake fire-fighter recruitment during 2012-13 to maintain its operational capability.

2.11 The whole-time establishment has reduced from 567 posts to 559 posts during 2010-11. This is likely to be further revised as part of the implementation of the Fire Cover Review.

2.12 A review of non-uniformed support roles will form part of on-going budgetary reductions.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The vacancy level represents an under-spend against budget.

### **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. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

There are no adverse equality impacts arising from the report.

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

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

### **7. 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.

### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

None.

Frank Swann  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**BREAKDOWN OF ABSENCE Q4 (Jan - Mar 11)**

WORK GROUP	Jan				Feb				Mar				SUMMARY OF QUARTER 4			
	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Jan 2010 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Feb 2010 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Mar 2010 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Q4 2010 days lost	% difference
UNIFORMED (inc Control)	0.55	324	185	-75.14	0.51	303	227	-33.48	0.48	287	227	-26.43	1.54	914	639	-43.04
NON UNIFORMED	0.78	138.5	112	-23.66	0.75	133	46.5	-186.02	0.80	143	54	-164.81	2.33	414.5	212.5	-95.06
TOTAL WORKFORCE	0.62	462.5	297	-55.72	0.59	436	273.5	-59.41	0.58	430	281	-53.02	1.79	1328.5	851.5	-56.02

