



**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:** 25 October 2013

**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 absence figures for Quarter 1: 1 April to 30 June 2013.

Absence	Quarter 1 1 April to 30 June 2013	Compared with previous quarter	Compared with same quarter of 2012	Cumulative total days lost for 13/14	Cumulative average over last 12 months
<b>Total workforce (149 employees have been absent during Q1)</b>	1090 days lost  1.5 days per employee	1260.5 days lost  1.75 days per employee  13.5% decrease (-170.5 days)	961 days lost  1.38 days per employee  13.4% increase (+129 days)	1090 days lost  1.5 days per employee	6.55 days per employee (above target)
<b>Uniformed (92 employees have been absent during Q1) excluding retained</b>	667.5 days lost  1.18 days per employee	789.5 days lost  1.39 per employee  15.5% decrease (-122 days)	697.5 days lost  1.29 days per employee  4.3% decrease (-30 days)	667.5 days lost  1.18 days per employee	5.45 days per employee (below target)
<b>Non uniformed (57 employees have been absent during Q1)</b>	422.5 days lost  2.7 days per employee	471 days lost  3.1 days per employee  10.3% decrease (-48.5 days)	263.5 days lost  1.7 days per employee  60.3% increase (+159 days)	422.5 days lost  2.7 days per employee	10.51 days per employee (above target)

<b>Long term sickness (defined as 28 days or more)</b>	<b>Total Workforce</b>	21
	<b>Uniformed (excluding retained)</b>	14
	<b>Non Uniformed</b>	7

- 2.2 Absence rates have decreased by 13.4% across the workforce as a whole during Quarter 1 (compared to the previous quarter). The average absence for the quarter (1.5 days) was slightly below the target of 1.56 days per person.
- 2.3 Absence for non-uniformed employees, which has been a cause for concern in previous reports, reduced by 10.3% (-48.5 days) although this is still above the target figure. However 55% of this absence was long term in nature i.e. for continuous period of more than 28 days, which generally indicates a serious medical condition.
- 2.4 Compared to the same period in 2012, there has been an overall increase in absence of 129 days (+13.4%).
- 2.5 There were 45 separate periods of medically certified absence in quarter 1. Of these 33 employees have subsequently returned to work, and 2 have left the Service, during the review period. The graphs attached at Appendix 1 give a clearer idea of how absence has been affected over a longer period of time and give a more representative view.
- 2.6 The total cumulative average taken over the last 12 months is 6.25 days per employee) and compares favourably to the average public sector average of 6.5 days but is higher than the private sector average of 5.8 days (*Source: Absence management 2012- annual survey report of the CIPD and Simply Health*).
- 2.7 In terms of reasons for absence, the majority of sickness absence was certified as due to lower limb injury (uniformed) and anxiety and depression (non- uniformed).
- 2.8 Target absence figures for 2013/14 have remained the same as for 2012-13:

Wholetime & Control: 6 days  
 Non-Uniformed: 7 days  
 Whole Workforce: 6.25 days\*  
 (\*the average is affected by the numbers of employees in each work group)

## **DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC**

- 2.9 Over the period 1 July 2013 – 30 September 2013:
- Disciplinary: 0
  - Grievances: 2

- Harassment and Bullying: 0
- Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy: 2
- Dismissals including ill health retirements: 1
- Redundancy: 0
- Redeployment: 0
- ET cases: 0

## STAFFING NUMBERS

2.10 During the period 1 July 2013 to 30 September 2013, 34 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 30 September 2013 are highlighted below.

	Approved	Actual	Variance
<b>Wholetime</b>	530	541 (539.5 full time equivalents)	+11 (+9.5 FTE)
<b>Retained</b>	216 units	278 persons (149.5 units) (includes 63 dual contracts)	- 66.5 units
<b>Non-Uniformed</b>	176	166 <i>Established Post – 156</i> <i>Fixed Term Non-Established Post – 1</i> <i>Fixed Term in Established Post - 3</i> <i>Agency staff – 6</i>	-10
<b>Fire Control</b>	27	27 (FTE)	0

2.11 There have been 23 leavers and 34 starters since the last report which has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 1012 employees. Leavers are broken down as follows: 10 whole-time, 10 retained, 0 control and 3 non-uniformed employees.

2.12 As at 30 September 2013 whole-time establishment stood at +9.5 FTE (539.5 FTE) employees against a reduced establishment of 530 posts. The Whole-time establishment has been reduced by 10 posts (8 Fire-fighters and 2 Crew Managers) as a result of the Authority's decision to remove the second appliance at West Bridgford.

2.13 Fire-fighter roles are over-strength by 20 posts, with 8 vacancies at Supervisory level and 1 at Station Manager level. The Trainee Fire-fighter programme which commenced in September 2013 saw an intake of 15 trainees and 3 RDS employees migrated to the whole-time establishment at the same time, resulting in the over-establishment of 20 Fire-fighters. However this is compensated for by under-establishment in other areas, resulting in an overall over-establishment of 11 roles. This "front-loading" of trainee Fire-fighter roles

is part of succession planning for projected retirements during 2013-15, and the promotion of competent Fire-fighters into vacant supervisory roles.

- 2.14 The Service is currently running a Station Manager and Watch Manager selection process to fill vacancies at this level.
- 2.15 A retained recruitment campaign during the summer has resulted in 14 RDS recruits, who will commence training in November, and be posted to various vacancies throughout the county.
- 2.16 In terms of support roles (non uniformed posts) there has been a significant amount of recruitment during quarter 2, with 18 appointments to vacancies. As some of these new appointees will not commence employment until October, these are not shown within the above figures.
- 2.17 The Service has also undertaken recruitment to new apprenticeship roles during this period. These are 12 month fixed term appointments for young people between the ages of 17 and 24, and Central College have worked with the service to recruit 2 people to ICT roles and 2 to administrative roles. Central College will provide training, in addition to on-the-job development, to support these young people to gain work experience and qualifications which should help them to obtain full-time employment in the future.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The 11 wholetime posts reported as being above the establishment in paragraph 2.9 are not expected to result in an overspend against the pay budget because the budget for the 2013/14 financial year includes the 10 posts relating to the West Bridgford second appliance. In addition there is a "buffer" built into the wholetime pay budget to allow for periods of temporary over-establishment following recruitment of fire-fighter trainees.
- 3.2 The non-uniformed pay budget is projected to underspend this year as a result of the vacancies in the establishment from the start of the year until now. An updated position on this pay budget is reported quarterly to the Finance and Resources Committee.
- 3.3 The new apprenticeship roles referred to in paragraph 2.17 will be funded by vacancies in the non-uniformed establishment in the current year. For next year, a vacancy factor will be applied to the non-uniformed pay budget and the savings released by this will fund the apprenticeship posts until the end of their terms.

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

4.1 The human resources implications are set out in the report,

4.2 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. 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.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members endorse the report.

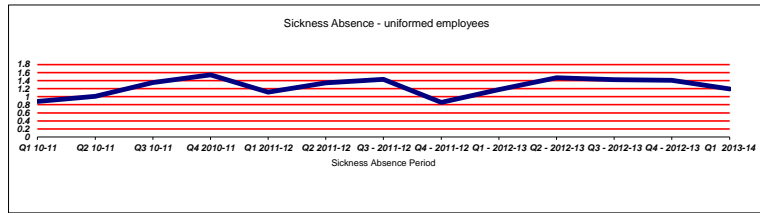
#### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

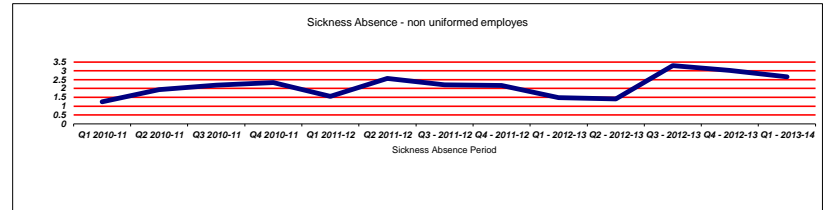
Frank Swann  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**BREAKDOWN OF ABSENCE Q1 (Apr - Jun 13)**

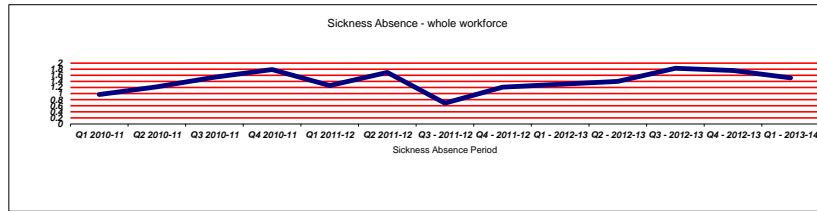
WORK GROUP	Apr				May				June				SUMMARY OF QUARTER 4			
	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Apr 2012 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	May 2012 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	June 2012 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Q1 2012 days lost	% difference
UNIFORMED (inc Control)	0.41	231	174	-32.76	0.45	258	254	-1.57	0.31	178.5	269.5	33.77	1.19	667.5	697.5	4.30
NON UNIFORMED	1.03	159	95.5	-66.49	0.91	140.5	97	-44.85	0.75	116	71	-63.38	2.66	415.5	263.5	-57.69
TOTAL WORKFORCE	0.55	390	269.5	-44.71	0.56	398.5	351	-13.53	0.41	294.5	340.5	13.51	1.51	1083	961	-12.70



UNIFORMED ABSENCE



NON UNIFORMED ABSENCE



TOTAL ABSENCE