



**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:** 7 February 2014

**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 2 (1 July to 30 September 2013).

Absence	Quarter 1 1 Apr 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 (114 employees have been absent during Q2)</b>	785 days lost  1.09 days per employee	1090 days lost  1.5 days per employee  28% decrease (-305 days)	1035 days lost  1.47 days per employee  24% decrease (-250 days)	1875 days lost  1.3 days per employee	6.17 days per employee (below target)
<b>Uniformed (80 employees have been absent during Q2) excluding retained</b>	514.5 days lost  0.91 days per employee	667.5 days lost  1.18 per employee  23% decrease (-153 days)	820 days lost  1.46 days per employee  37.3% decrease (-305.5 days)	1182 days lost  1.04 days per employee	4.9 days per employee (below target)
<b>Non uniformed (34 employees have been absent during Q2)</b>	270.5 days lost  1.75 days per employee	422.5 days lost  2.7 days per employee  36% decrease (-152 days)	215 days lost  1.41 days per employee  25.8% increase (+55.5 days)	693 days lost  2.24 days per employee	10.75 days per employee (above target)

<b>Long term sickness (defined as 28 days or more)</b>	<b>Total Workforce</b>	13
	<b>Uniformed (excluding retained)</b>	9
	<b>Non Uniformed</b>	4

2.2 Absence rates have decreased by 28% across the workforce as a whole during quarter 2 (compared to the previous quarter). The average absence for the quarter (1.09 days) was 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 36% (-152 days) and met the target for the period. 60% 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, non-uniformed absence has increased by 55 days (+25.8%).

2.5 There were 37 separate periods of medically certified absence in quarter 2. Of these, 25 employees have subsequently returned to work during the review period. The graphs attached at Appendix A 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 6.17 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 (in terms of working lost) was certified as due to lower limb or shoulder injury (uniformed) and upper limb or non work related post traumatic stress (non- uniformed).

2.5 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.**

2.8 Over the period 1 October 2013 – 31 December 2013:

- Disciplinary 0
- Grievances 0
- Harassment and bullying 0

- Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy 1
- Dismissals including ill-health retirements 1
- Redundancy 4
- Redeployment 0
- ET cases 0

## STAFFING NUMBERS

2.9 During the period 1 October 2013 to 31 December 2013, 20 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 31 December 2013 are highlighted below.

	Approved	Actual	Variance
<b>Wholetime</b>	530	538 (537 full time equivalents)	+8 (+7 FTE)
<b>Retained</b>	216 units	272 persons (140.5 units) (includes 59 dual contracts)	- 77.5 units
<b>Non-Uniformed</b>	183	181 <i>Established Post – 168</i> <i>Fixed Term Non-Established Post –2</i> <i>Fixed Term in Established Post - 5</i> <i>Agency staff – 6</i>	-2
<b>Fire Control</b>	27	27.5 (FTE)	+0.5

2.10 There have been 16 leavers and 20 starters since the last report which has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 1018.5 employees. Leavers are broken down as follows: 3 whole-time, 10 retained, 1 control and 2 non-uniformed employees. Additionally, the Service employs 4 apprentices on 1 year fixed-term contracts, and 25 Contingency Crew Operatives on 0 hour contracts.

2.11 As at 31 December 2013 whole-time establishment stood at +7 FTE (538 FTE) employees against an establishment of 530 posts.

2.12 Fire-fighter roles are over-strength by 18 posts, with 9 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 an over-establishment of 18 fire-fighters. However, this is compensated for by under-establishment in other areas, resulting in an overall over-establishment of 7 FTE roles. This “front-loading” of trainee Fire-

fighter roles is part of succession planning for projected retirements during 2014-15, and the promotion of competent Fire-fighters into vacant supervisory roles.

- 2.13 In the last quarter, the Service has run a Station Manager and Watch Manager selection process to fill vacancies at this level.
- 2.14 Fourteen RDS recruits commenced training in November and will be posted to various vacancies throughout the county.
- 2.15 In terms of support roles (non- uniformed posts) there has been a significant amount of recruitment during quarter 3, with 10 appointments to vacancies.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The overall over-establishment of 7 FTE wholetime posts referred to in paragraph 2.12 is only an issue for the latter part of the year and is covered by 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 four apprenticeship roles referred to in paragraph 2.10 are funded by vacancies in the non-uniformed establishment in the current year. For next year, they have been budgeted for pending a decision about whether or not the roles will continue.

### **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. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken because this review does not impact upon policy or service function.

### **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.

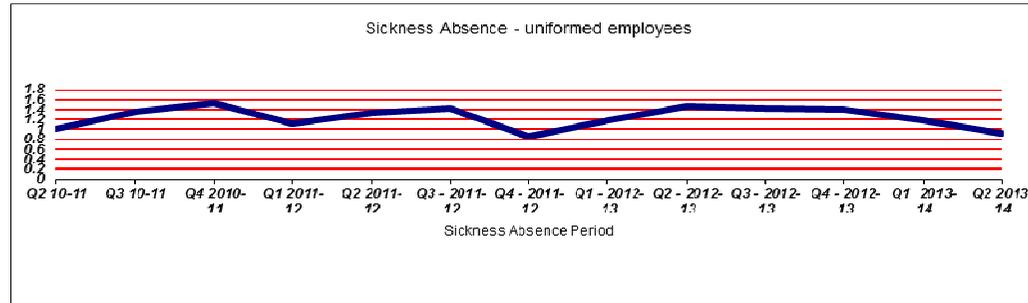
## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

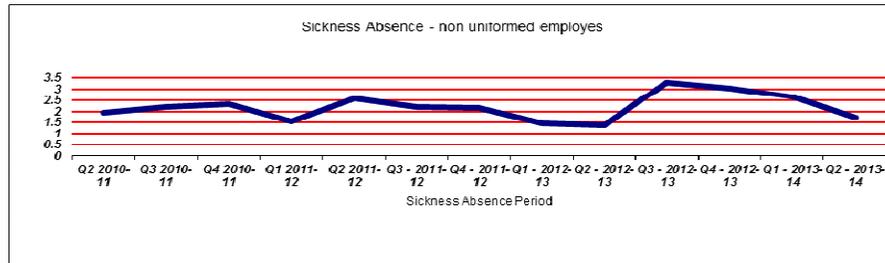
Frank Swann  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

BREAKDOWN OF ABSENCE Q2 JULY – SEPTEMBER 2013

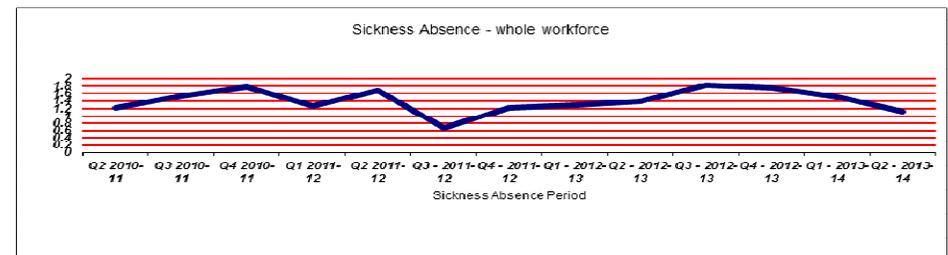
WORK GROUP	Jul				Aug				Sept				SUMMARY OF QUARTER 2			
	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Jul 2012 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Aug 2012 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Sept 2012 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Q2 2012 days lost	% difference
UNIFORMED (inc Control)	0.26	148	332	55.42	0.30	169	255	33.73	0.36	206.5	233	11.37	0.93	523.5	820	36.16
NON UNIFORMED	0.56	87	63	-38.10	0.77	119	77	-54.55	0.41	64.5	75	14.00	1.73	270.5	215	-25.81
TOTAL WORKFORCE	0.33	235	395	40.51	0.41	288	332	13.25	0.37	271	308	12.01	1.11	794	1035	23.29



UNIFORMED ABSENCE



NON-UNIFORMED ABSENCE



TOTAL ABSENCE