



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

Date: 16 October 2015

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on key human resources metrics for the period 1 July – 30 September 2015.

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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 receives regular updates on human resources (HR) issues within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS). 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 Human Resources Committee to keep informed of ongoing issues and offer their guidance and scrutiny.

2. REPORT

HR METRICS - SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 2.1 The following represents absence figures for Quarter 2: 1 July to 30 September 2015
- 2.2 Target absence figures for 2015/16 are:

Wholetime and Control: 6 days per person
Non-Uniformed: 7 days per person
Whole Workforce: 6.25 days per person
(the average is affected by the numbers of employees in each work group and the average work shift)

Total Workforce

Absence	Quarter 2 1 July – 30 Sept 2015	Compared with previous quarter	Cumulative total days lost for 15/16	Cumulative average over last 12 months
Total workforce (169 employees have been absent during Q2, excluding retained*)	1476 days lost 1.39 days per employee	1416.5 days lost 1.33 days per employee 4% increase (+59.5 days)	2892.5 days lost	7.02 days per employee (target 6.25 days)

(*Due to the on-call nature of the Retained Duty System days lost are recorded not shifts)

There has been a slight increase in the level of absence across the whole workforce of 4% in Quarter 2 in comparison with Quarter 1. This is accounted for by an increase in wholetime and control absence, off-set by reductions in support (non-uniformed) absence.

Long term absence equated to 41.5% of the total absence during this period.

In the comparable period of 2014, 1480 days were lost to sickness absence. A decrease of 4 days (0.3%).

National Trends

The Service contributes to the Chief Fire Officers Association sickness absence survey, which is undertaken quarterly and allows for comparison between 26 contributing fire and rescue services. Appendix C reflects national absence trends in the previous quarter (Q1) and this shows that NFRS which had an average absence of 1.99 days per employee during the period, was below the sector sickness average of 2.02 days per employee.

National figures reflect an average absence of 7.9 days per employee in the public sector, and 6.6 days per employee in the private sector. Based on 12-month cumulative absence of 7.02 days per employee, NFRS is currently below the public sector average but above the private sector average.

DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC

2.3 Over the period 1 July – 30 September 2015:

Disciplinary	0
Grievances	0
Harassment and Bullying	1
Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy	0
Dismissals including ill health retirements	2
Redundancy	1
Redeployment	0
Employment Tribunal cases	0
IDRP appeals	0
Performance and capability	0

STAFFING NUMBERS

2.4 During the period 1 July to 30 September 2015, 15 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 30 September 2015 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
Wholetime	510 (510 FTE)	508 (507.58 full time equivalents)	-2 (-2.4 FTE)
Retained	192 units	250 persons (134 units) (includes 54 dual contracts)	- 58 units
Non-Uniformed	174 (161.31 FTE)	161 (149.57fte)	-13 (11.74 FTE)
Fire Control	24 (23.5 FTE)	28 (27.3 FTE)	+4 (3.8 FTE)

- 2.5 There have been 22 leavers and 15 starters during this quarter. Leavers are broken down as follows: 8 wholetime, 11 retained, 0 control and 3 non-uniformed employees. The total actual workforce is 947 personnel (includes 54 dual contractors)
- 2.6 As at 30 September 2015 the wholetime establishment stood at -2 (-2.4 fte) employees against an establishment of 510 posts, due to retirements during the review period. As previously predicted this has addressed the temporary over-establishment referred to in previous reports. The outcomes from the Fire Cover Review and measures proposed to reduce workforce numbers as part of the budget management process are likely to impact upon the number of established posts going forward, and therefore there are no plans to recruit to trainee fire fighter roles in the next financial year.
- 2.7 During the period NFRS has appointed to 1 support role and 12 retained trainee fire fighter roles. This takes the total number of new retained duty system appointments to 24 during 2015. In addition, NFRS has appointed to an apprenticeship role in the Corporate Communications Team.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Paragraph 2.4 shows that, with the exception of Control, all sections of the workforce are now under-established. Earlier in the year the number of whole-time employees was above the establishment level so the current position will help to offset the overspends which accrued in the first half of the year.
- 3.2 The non-uniformed pay budget has been underspending throughout the year due to vacancies held whilst posts have been at risk, and redundancy costs

will be funded by an earmarked reserve if the pay budget saving is not sufficient to cover the additional one-off cost.

- 3.3 The overall pay budget financial position is reported to the Finance and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis.

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. 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. 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 workforce issues.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the report.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

APPENDIX A

Appendix - Reporting Period: 01/04/2013 to 30/09/2015

Quarter Breakdown by Month	July		August		September	
	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost
Wholetime	0.62	316.0	0.62	313.5	0.57	292.0
Non Uniformed	1.08	184.0	0.92	156.0	1.04	177.0
Control	0.46	13.0	0.57	16.0	0.25	7.0

Quarter 4 Quarter Breakdown by Month	April		May		June	
	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost
Total	0.74506	527.5	0.66314	469.5	0.58969	417.5

Current Q vs Previous Q	2,015 - Q1		2,015 - Q2	
	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost
Wholetime	1.57045	802.5	1.80333	921.5
Non Uniformed	3.54971	607	3.02339	517
Control	0.17857	5	1.28571	36
Quarter 4 vs Quarter 3	1		4	
	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost
Total	1.97832	1414.5	2.25105	1609.5

APPENDIX B

Wholetime employees

Absence	Quarter 2 1 July – 30 Sept 2015	Compared with previous quarter	Cumulati ve total days lost for 15/16	Cumulative average over last 12 months
Wholetime (91 employees have been absent during Q2)	921.5 days lost 1.81 days per employee	804.5 days lost 1.56 days per employee 15% increase (+117 days)	1726 days lost	7.36 days per employee (target 6 days)

During Q2, there was an increase in absence for whole-time employees of 117 days (15%). Of this, 40% of absence was due to long-term medical conditions (369 days) i.e. absence which lasted for more than 28 days. There were 41 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence lasting longer than 8 days), and 29 of these employees have returned to work during the period.

The average absence was 1.81 days per person, which is above the target of 1.6 days per person.

The majority of days lost relate to musculo-skeletal in nature (Lower limb – 23 instances) and mental health issues (stress – 9 instances).

The Occupational Health team continues to work with operational employees with long term conditions to provide support and access to treatment.

Reasons for Absence

Wholetime

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	D ay s
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	23	##
Mental Health - Stress	9	##
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	9	##
Musculo Skeletal - Back	12	95
Cause Known, but not specified	11	77
Respiratory - Other	1	37
Gastro-Intestinal	8	26
Musculo Skeletal - Upper Limb	3	23
Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	16
Respiratory - Chest Infection	2	15
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	5	15

Short Term Absences

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Da ys Lo
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	20	142
Mental Health - Stress	6	134
Cause Known, but not specified	11	77
Musculo Skeletal - Back	9	41
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	4	35
Gastro-Intestinal	8	26
Musculo Skeletal - Upper Limb	3	23
Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	16
Respiratory - Chest Infection	2	15
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	5	15

Long Term Absence

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	3	103
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	5	95
Mental Health - Stress	3	68
Musculo Skeletal - Back	3	54
Respiratory - Other	1	37

Retained employees

Absence	Quarter 2 1 July – 30 Sept 2015	Compared with previous quarter	Cumulative non availability (days) during 15/16	Cumulative average over last 12 months
Retained (23 employees have been absent during Q1)	653 calendar days lost 2.61 calendar days lost per employee	899.5 calendar days lost 3.6 calendar days per employee 27% decrease (-246.5 days)	1552.5 calendar days lost	11.11 days per employee (target 10.5 days)

Due to the on-call nature of the retained duty system, absence levels reflect number of days of non availability rather than total working/shift days lost. Absences are calculated as consecutive calendar days not working time lost.

During Q2, absence levels have decreased (-246.5 days) compared to Q1 and reflect an average of 2.61 calendar days per person. Of this, 23% of absence was due to long-term medical conditions (151 days) i.e. absence which lasted for more than 28 days. There were 17 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence lasting longer than 8 days), and 10 of these employees have returned to work during the period.

Short-term absence accounted for the majority of all absence (77%).

The majority of days lost are related to musculo-skeletal in nature (Shoulder – 2 instances) and mental health issues (stress – 4 instances).

Retained

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health - Stress	4	208
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	2	139
Cancer and Tumours	1	63
Musculo Skeletal - Back	3	63
Gastro-Intestinal	1	35
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	2	27
Musculo Skeletal - Upper Limb	1	25
Mental Health - Depression	1	20
Respiratory - Other	1	16
Virus/Infectious Diseases	1	14

Short Term Absences

Absence Reason	Uniqu e Absen	Days Lost
Mental Health - Stress	2	140
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	1	92
Cancer and Tumours	1	63
Musculo Skeletal - Back	3	63
Gastro-Intestinal	1	35
Musculo Skeletal - Upper Limb	1	25
Mental Health - Depression	1	20
Virus/Infectious Diseases	1	14
Cause Known, but not specified	2	11
Musculo Skeletal - Other	1	10

Long Term Absence

Absence Reason	Uniqu e Absen	Days Lost
Mental Health - Stress	2	68
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	1	47
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	1	20
Respiratory - Other	1	16

Control employees

Absence	Quarter 2 1 July – 30 Sept 2015	Compared with previous quarter	Cumulative total days lost for 15/16	Cumulative average over last 12 months
Control (3 employees have been absent during Q1)	36 shifts lost 1.28 shifts per employee	5 shifts lost 0.18 shifts per employee 620% increase (+31 days)	41 shifts lost	2.03 shifts per employee (target 6 days)

There was an increase of 31 days in absence during the review period, 25 days of which are accounted for by one period of long-term absence. The high % increase reflects the fact that only 5 days were lost in Q1. Details about reasons for absence are shown below:

Control

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	1	25
Cause Known, but not specified	1	7
Confidential	1	4

Short Term Absences

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Cause Known, but not specified	1	7
Confidential	1	4

Long Term Absence

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	1	25

Support employees

Absence	Quarter 2 1 July – 30 Sept 2015	Compared with previous quarter	Cumulative total days lost for 15/16	Cumulative average over last 12 months
Non uniformed (52 employees have been absent during Q2)	519 days lost 3.08 days per employee	607 days lost 3.59 days per employee 15% decrease (-88 days)	1126 days lost	12.46 days per employee (target 7 days)

There was a decrease of 88 days (-15%) in support employee absence levels during quarter 2. Of this, 42% of absence was due to long-term medical conditions (218 days) i.e. absence which lasted for more than 28 days. There were 18 periods of absence covered

by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence lasting longer than 8 days), and 12 of these employees have returned to work during the period.

The majority of days lost relate to mental health issues (depression – 3 instances) and pregnancy related disorders (2 instances).

The Occupational Health team are reviewing the reasons for absence within this work group to identify and address any work related issues which may be contributing to mental health issues (such as stress), or other health conditions . The Service has, and will continue, to focus support to employees experiencing mental health issues and to build awareness and resilience in individuals to deal with such issues when they arise. In many cases these issues are not directly related to work, however they may manifest themselves in performance or behavioural problems at work and in the development of stress related symptoms. This can be a complex set of circumstances which can often only be resolved by professional counselling, which is available to employees through a number of channels.

Reasons for absence are set out below:

Non Uniformed

Absence Reason	Unique Absence	Days Lost
Mental Health - Depression	3	146
Pregnancy Related Disorders	2	83
Other known causes (not specified in list)	4	63
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	4	53
Mental Health - Stress	3	41.5
Gastro-Intestinal	11	39
Unknown causes, not specified	8	33
Musculo Skeletal - Back	4	18
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	1	11
Cause Known, but not specified	4	8

Short Term Absences

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Pregnancy Related Disorders	2	83
Mental Health - Depression	1	66
Gastro-Intestinal	11	39
Mental Health - Stress	2	25.5
Unknown causes, not specified	7	19
Musculo Skeletal - Back	3	12
Musculo Skeletal - Shoulder	1	11
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	2	9
Cause Known, but not specified	4	8
Ear, Nose, Throat	2	6.5

Long Term Absence

Absence Reason	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health - Depression	2	80
Other known causes (not specified in list)	2	58
Musculo Skeletal - Lower Limb	2	44
Mental Health - Stress	1	16
Unknown causes, not specified	1	14
Musculo Skeletal - Back	1	6

APPENDIX C

12i (WT & Control)			12ii (WT, Control & Support)		
FRS	Score	Rank	FRS	Score	Rank
Cheshire FRS	0.85	1	Cheshire FRS	0.77	1
Manchester FRS	1.13	2	Staffordshire FRS	1.16	2
Staffordshire FRS	1.21	3	Manchester FRS	1.52	3
North Yorkshire	1.43	4	Derbyshire FRS	1.54	4
Derbyshire FRS	1.48	5	North Yorkshire	1.55	5
Nottinghamshire FRS	1.49	6	Buckinghamshire FRS	1.58	6
Lincolnshire FRS	1.55	7	Durham FRS	1.65	7
Cleveland Fire Brigade	1.61	8	Lincolnshire FRS	1.77	8
Buckinghamshire FRS	1.62	9	Cleveland Fire Brigade	1.80	9
Hampshire FRS	1.71	10	West Yorkshire FRS	1.82	10
West Yorkshire FRS	1.78	11	Merseyside FRS	1.82	11
Tyne & Wear FRS	1.86	12	South Yorkshire FRS	1.87	12
Merseyside FRS	1.91	13	Dorset FRS	1.93	13
Durham FRS	1.92	14	Tyne & Wear FRS	1.98	14
Suffolk FRS	1.95	15	Nottinghamshire FRS	1.99	15
South Yorkshire FRS	1.98	16	East Sussex FRS	2.02	16
East Sussex FRS	2.01	17	Royal Berkshire FRS	2.02	17
Royal Berkshire FRS	2.03	18	Avon FRS	2.04	18
Avon FRS	2.07	19	London Fire Brigade	2.07	19
Humberside FRS	2.07	20	Hampshire FRS	2.10	20
Essex FRS	2.08	21	Essex FRS	2.13	21
Dorset FRS	2.09	22	Humberside FRS	2.23	22
London Fire Brigade	2.11	23	Devon & Somerset FRS	2.43	23
Devon & Somerset FRS	2.55	24	Suffolk FRS	2.59	24
Northern Ireland FRS	2.69	25	Northern Ireland FRS	2.94	25
Gloucestershire FRS	4.76	26	Gloucestershire FRS	5.31	26
Average	1.92		Average	2.02	