



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: 27 January 2017

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on key human resources metrics for the period 1 October – 31 December 2016.

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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 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 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 3: 1 October to 31 December 2016:

Target absence figures for 2016/17 are:

Wholetime & 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)

- 2.2 Absence levels have increased by 32% across the whole workforce over Quarter 3. A comparative breakdown of figures by employee group is set out in Appendix A.
- 2.3 It should be noted that the period covered by Quarter 3 is affected by seasonal illnesses, particularly respiratory infections, leading to generally higher levels of short-term absence. However, sickness absence figures have slightly reduced in comparison to the same period of 2015.

Absence	Quarter 3 1 October – 31 December 2016	Compared with previous quarter	Cumulative total days lost for 16/17	Cumulative average over last 12 months
Total workforce (151 employees have been absent on 166 occasions during Q3, excluding retained*)	1414.5 days lost 2.13 days per employee	1069 days lost 1.60 days per employee 32% increase (345.5 days)	3619.5 days lost	7.43 days per employee (target 6.25 days)

(*due to the on-call nature of the Retained Duty System, RDS absence is not reflected in the figures. These are shown separately at Appendix D)

- 2.4 Across the workforce a total of 1414.5 working days were lost in the third quarter of 2016/17. This is an increase of 345.5 days (32%) on the previous quarter. This is shown in the table set out at Appendix A.
- 2.5 Long term absence equated to 66% of the total absence during this period. A full period commentary of Quarter 3 can be found in Appendix C.

NATIONAL TRENDS

- 2.6 The Service contributes to the Chief Fire Officers Association sickness absence survey, which is undertaken quarterly and allows for comparison between contributing fire and rescue services. Appendix B reflects the national absence trends for Quarters 1 and 2 combined. The two charts reflect Whole-time and Control (12i) and whole workforce figures* (12ii).
- 2.7 For Whole-time and Control (12i) the chart show that the Service ranked 4th of the 24 Services and was below the sector sickness average of 3.90 days per employee.
- 2.8 For whole workforce (12ii) the tables show that the Service, ranked 9th of the 23 Services and was below the sector sickness average of 3.74 days per employee.

DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC

- 2.9 Over the period 1 October – 31 December 2016:
- Disciplinary: 0
 - Grievances: 0
Harassment and Bullying: 0
Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy: 0
Dismissals including ill health retirements: 2
 - Redundancy: 0
 - Redeployment: 0
 - Employment Tribunal cases: 1 (continuing)
 - IDRPs appeals: 0
 - Performance and capability: 0

STAFFING NUMBERS

- 2.10 During the period 1 October 2016 to 31 December 2016, 6 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 31 December 2016 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
Wholetime	476 (476 FTE)	471 (470.6 FTE)	-5 (-5.4 FTE)
Retained	192 units	259 persons (138.5 units) (includes 60 dual contracts)	-53.5 units
Non-Uniformed	165 (156.85 FTE)	167 (154.46 FTE)	+2 (-1.39)
Fire Control	25 (24.5 FTE)	27 (26.75 FTE)	+2 (+2.25 FTE)

2.11 There have been 24 leavers and 6 starters since the last report, which has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 926 (this includes 60 dual contractors -. made up of 56 WT/RDS, 2 Non-Uniform and 2 Control employees.)

Leavers are broken down as follows: 7 Wholetime, 15 Retained, and 2 support roles.

The numbers of Contingency Operatives stands at 31, with three people having left in this period.

2.12 As at 31 December 2016 whole-time establishment stood at 471 (470.6 fte) employees against an establishment of 476 posts.

2.13 During the period the Service has appointed to 5 Support roles and 1 Fire Control role.

EQUALITIES MONITORING

2.14 As a result of changes to the way that performance monitoring information is reported, the HR Update now contains data relating to workforce profile and recruitment by protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act).

2.15 The table set out at Appendix D shows the current profile of the workforce by gender, ethnic origin, LGB, disability, age and religion and compares it to the same quarter of 2015 for highlight any changes that have occurred.

2.16 The Service encourages employees to disclose personal information which is used for this analysis by allowing people to self-declare confidentially through the HR system employee portal. Over recent years, this has seen declaration rates increase but there are still employees who do not choose to

share their personal information, particularly around their sexual orientation (19.1%), religion (22.7%) or ethnic origin (6%). The Service will continue to work to encourage employees to declare this information in order to ensure that monitoring information is as complete as possible in order for analysis to be undertaken and reported.

- 2.17 The Service provides equalities training as part of its core training prospectus for all new starters with the Service, existing employees and managers, and has an e-learning training package which is compulsory for all employees. This training includes information about ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and awareness sessions on the diverse groups within our community.
- 2.18 The Service always offers the opportunity for individuals to complete an exit questionnaire and to undertake an exit interview as they leave employment, at which they are able to raise any issues regarding their employment. Information from exit processes is fed back to the Human Resources department and relevant departmental managers.
- 2.19 The work undertaken by the Service to promote a fair and equal workplace is reflected in our success in attaining the Excellent level of the Fire Service Equalities framework and ranking on the Stonewall employer's index.

CURRENT WORKFORCE

- 2.20 All dates are based on workforce numbers on 31 December 2016, unless otherwise stated:

Gender

- 2.21 Women made up 15.76% (136) of the workforce, even though there has been a reduction of 2 female employees in the review period, it actually reflects a slight increase of 0.24% due to a reduction in employees numbers overall.

Ethnic Origin

- 2.22 Employees from BME groups made up 3.48% (30) of the workforce (excluding employees who defined themselves as Irish and White Other) which compares to 3.79% (36) in December 2015. A reduction of 6 employees during the review period. Two employees left through retirement and 4 resigned (3 support staff and 1 RDS fire-fighter).

Disability

- 2.23 Thirty six employees have declared that they have a disability, which is a reduction of one employee since the previous report. Overall there has been a reduction of four people with disabilities in the review period. Two of these were due to retirement, one person chose to take voluntary redundancy and one left for other reasons.

Sexual Orientation

2.24 Twelve employees have declared that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual and this has not changed since the previous report. Two employees have left during the review period, one due to retirement and one resigned.

Age

2.25 Most employees are within the age range 46 and 55 years old and account for 37.8% (355) of the workforce. The next highest group are in the age range 36-45 (253). There are 57 people aged over 55.

2.26 Thirty seven people fall within the youngest band of employees (aged below 25) and account for only 4% of the workforce.

2.27 Overall these figures have hardly changed in the review period.

Religion

2.28 The largest number of employees declared as Christian (392 - 42.5%). However the majority of people chose not to specify their religion or declared that they have no religious belief (497 – 54%). Other religions account for 22 employees (or 2.4% of the workforce). This is slightly lower than in December 2015 when other religions accounted for 24 employees or 2.5% of the workforce.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment Monitoring (Support Staff Roles Only)

2.29 The table at Appendix E shows applicant data and success rates for the review period. Within this period the Service received 77 applications for two vacancies (Estates Manager and Systems Administrator).

2.30 Of these, 60 (78%) were from male applicants. Of the successful applicants, one was male and the other female.

2.31 Four applications (5%) were received from applicants from a BME background, of which one person was shortlisted for interview. In the event, two candidates from non BME backgrounds were appointed.

2.32 One applicant identified as being lesbian, gay or bisexual, however the applicant did not meet essential criteria and was therefore not shortlisted for interview.

2.33 One applicant identified as being disabled, however the applicant did not meet essential criteria and was therefore not shortlisted for interview.

2.34 The greatest number of applications were received from applicants in the age range 46-55 (32 – 41.6%), 3 were received from applicants in the age range 56-65. The successful applicants were in the age range 26-35 and 46-55.

- 2.35 Both the vacancies were open to external competition and were advertised on the Service's website, and on job boards. It is our policy to send vacancy details to various agencies and support groups as part of our positive action measures. These include the job advisory service, City Council employment hub, locals groups who support LGBT, disabled (including Portland College) and community groups, as well as the armed services website in line with the Service's commitment to the Armed Services Covenant.
- 2.36 In order to ensure fairness in the selection process, HR Business Partners are involved in all shortlisting and interview panels and all applicants are assessed against criteria set out in a person specification. All equalities monitoring information is removed from applications at the point of shortlisting – this includes information about gender, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation and age. Adjustments are made for those with may require them, for instance due to disability, and candidates with a disability are guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential criteria and opt into the guaranteed interview scheme.

Recruitment Monitoring (Retained Roles Only)

- 2.37 The selection tests comprise of: an initial screening based on location and availability; a written test; job related physical tests and interview. Appointment is subject to satisfactory references and a medical.
- 2.38 The table at Appendix F shows applicant data and success rates for three recent RDS campaigns undertaken in February (completed), June (completed) and October (progressing). Within this period the Service received 182 applications in total.
- 2.39 Of these, 12 (6.6%) were from female applicants. From these, one applicant progressed to interview, although she was unsuccessful. Of the other applicants, four failed at the initial screen stage; two failed at the job related test stage and one failed the written tests. The four other applicants chose not to progress with the process.
- 2.40 Seven applications (3.85%) were received from applicants from BME backgrounds. Five failed to progress beyond the initial screening stage and two failed the job related tests.
- 2.41 Three applications (1.65%) were received from applicants declaring as gay, lesbian or bisexual. Two failed at the initial screening stage and one failed the written test.
- 2.42 Four applications (2.2%) were received from applicants declaring a disability. Two failed at the initial screening stage, one withdrew from the process and one application is on hold.
- 2.43 The greatest number of applications were received from applicants under the age of 25 (24 – 73%), and one application was received from an applicant who was aged over 65, however he was unsuccessful at the job related test stage. It is fair to say that applications for RDS roles tend to attract younger applicants due to the nature of the role.

Review of Monitoring

- 2.44 A review has recently been undertaken by the Equalities Support Officer into applications received between July 2015 and July 2016 to identify any disparities in applications and success rates for those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act, and the outcomes from this review are reported separately within the agenda.
- 2.45 Due to the relatively low level of recruitment activity undertaken by the Service, it is proposed that future equalities monitoring reports are reported to this committee on a half yearly basis. This will provide a more comprehensive picture of workforce changes and recruitment activity over a longer review period and therefore make it easier to identify any specific trends or issues. If this proposal is adopted, the next equalities report will be considered at the meeting scheduled for autumn 2017.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Authority's pay budgets cover the cost of the workforce, and these include budgets for overtime to cover sickness absence where operational cover is affected. The actual numbers of employees in post compared to the establishment can cause budgetary variances and these are reported to the Finance and Resources Committee.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Human Resources and Learning and Development implications are set out in the report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

As this review does not impact upon policy or service delivery, no equality impact assessment has been undertaken. However, equality monitoring information is contained within the body of the report.

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 human resources ensures that the Service and the Authority are aware of any developing workforce issues.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 9.1 Members endorse the report.
- 9.2 Future equalities monitoring information is provided on a half yearly basis.

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

None

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

APPENDIX A

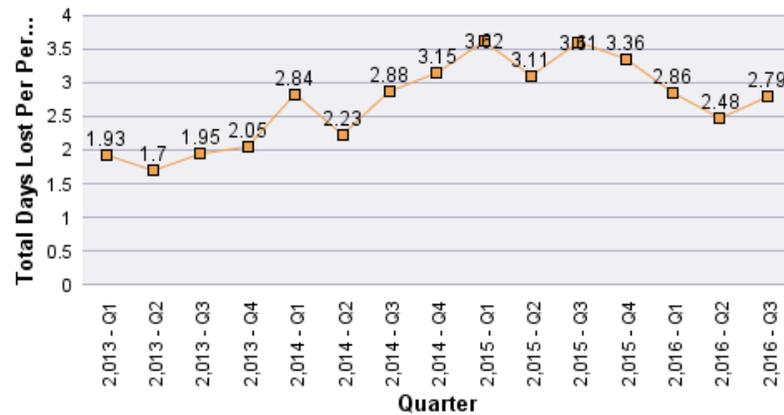
Appendix - Reporting Period: 01/04/2013 to 31/12/2016

Quarter Breakdown by Month	October		November		December	
	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost
Non Uniformed	0.73	121.0	1.04	173.0	1.02	169.5
Wholetime & Control	0.53	264.0	0.72	357.0	0.66	330.0
Sum:	0.58	385.0	0.8	530.0	0.75	499.5

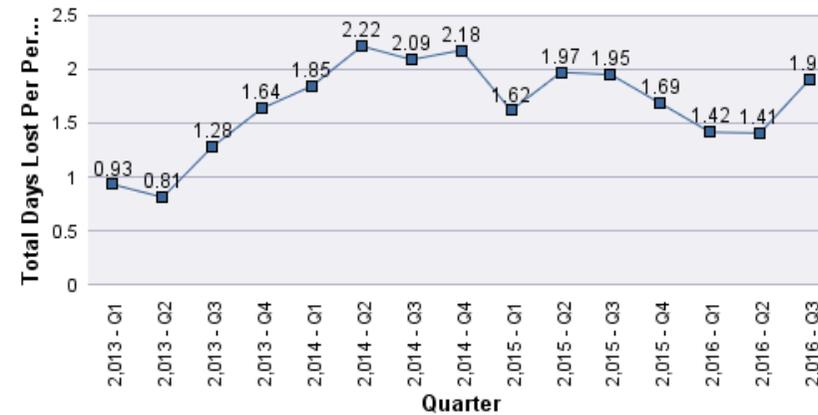
Current Q vs Previous Q	2,016 - Q2		2,016 - Q3	
	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost
Non Uniformed	2.48	411	2.79	463.5
Wholetime & Control	1.41	702	1.91	951
Sum:	1.68	1,113	2.13	1,414.5

Appendix E

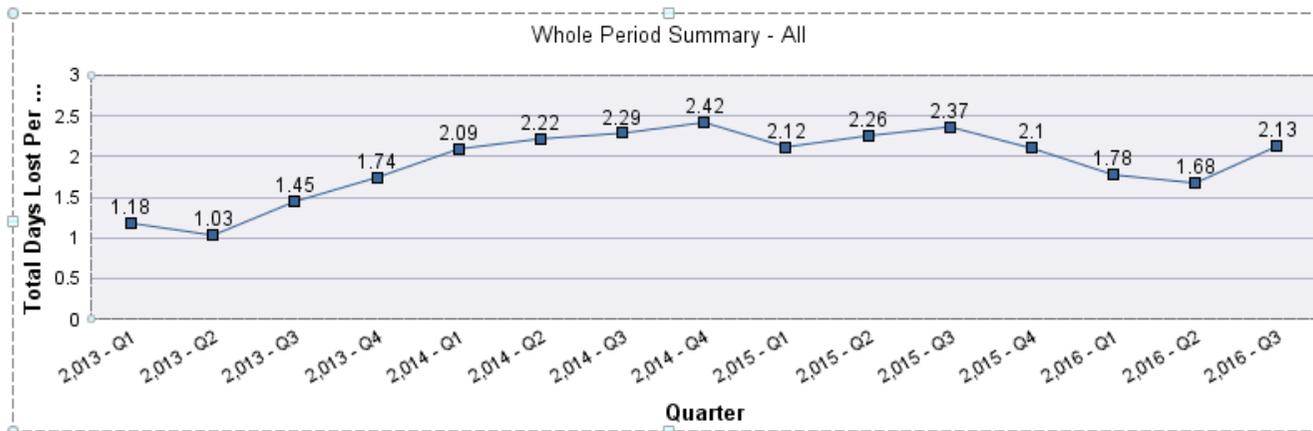
Whole Period Summary - Non Uniformed



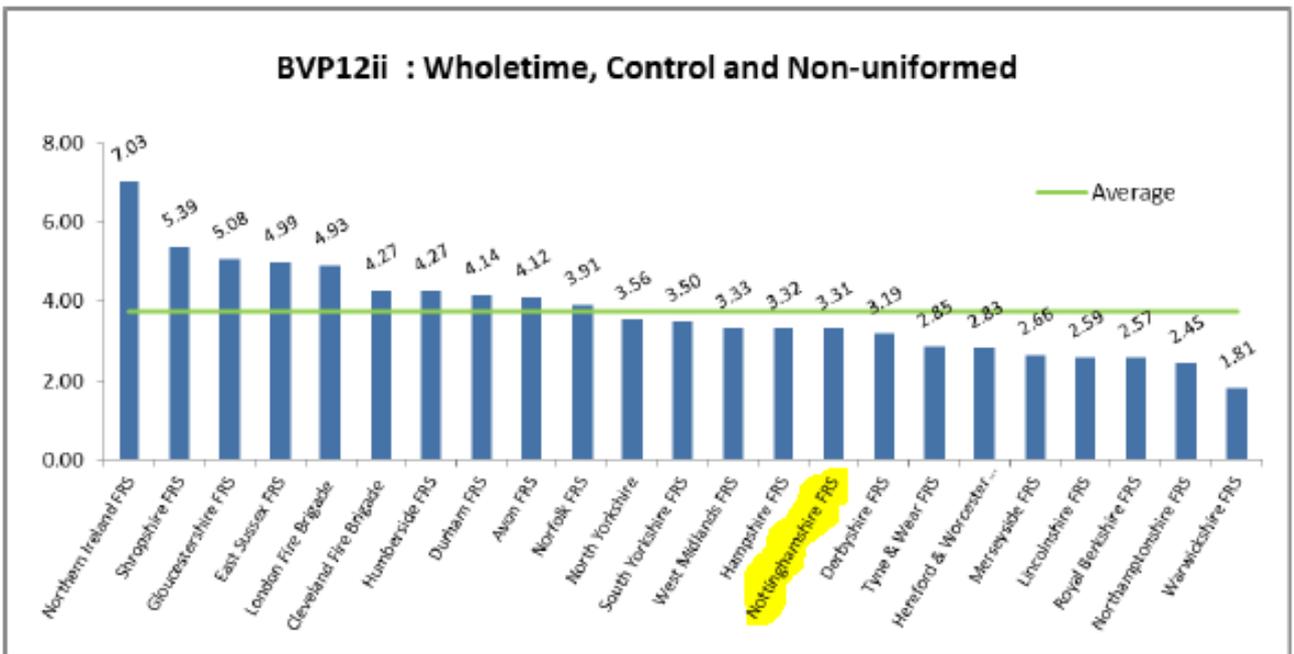
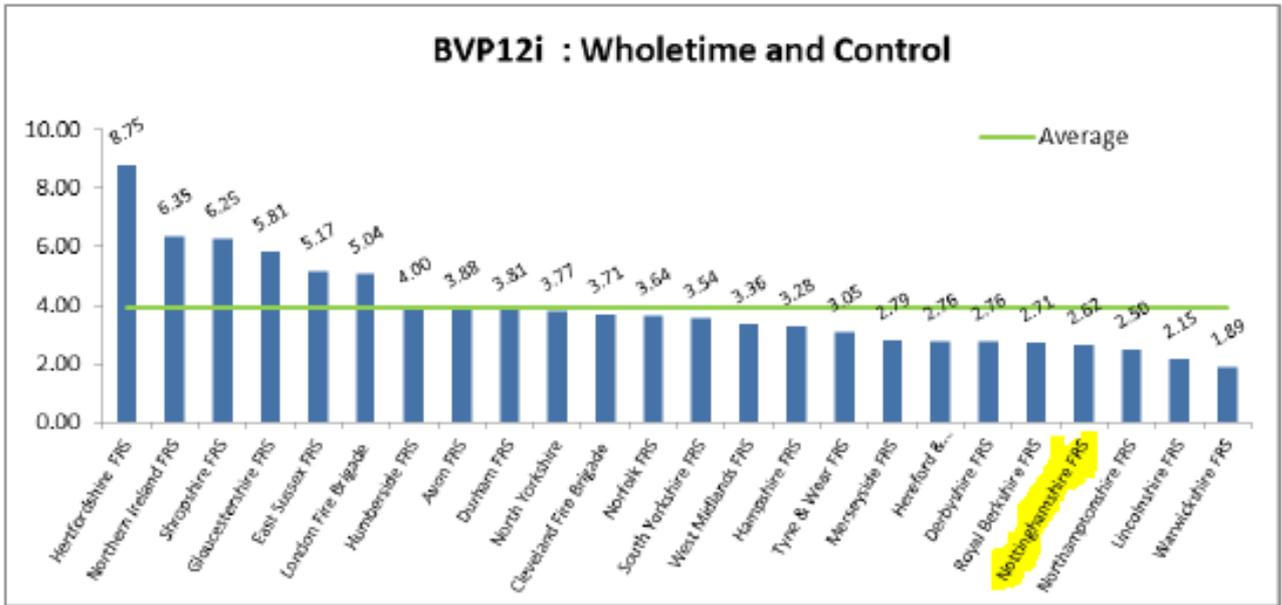
Whole Period Summary Wholetime & Control



Whole Period Summary - All



APPENDIX B



Q3 - Wholetime

In total 867 working days were lost due to sickness during this quarter. Of this, 577 days were lost to long-term absence (28+ day’s absence) and 290 days were lost due to short term absence. This represents an increase of 235 days (37%) on the previous quarter.

The average absence per employee was 1.84 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

67% of sickness absence in this quarter was due to long term absence. There were 31 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 18 of which were classified as long term sickness. At the end of the period 19 employees had returned to work.

There are three wholetime employees who have been sick for longer than 6 months and support processes in place for these individuals, including monitoring by the HR Business Partners, occupational health and line management.

Reasons for absence

Main reasons for sickness absence for the Wholetime are Musculo Skeletal issues (24 instances, 267 days) and Mental Health (6 instances, 165 days). These were also the top reasons for Long Term Absences. For short term absences musculo skeletal, hospital/post-operative and gastro-intestinal also featured highly.

Wholetime

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	24	267
Mental Health	6	165
Hospital/Post Operative	11	150
Gastro-Intestinal	25	54
Respiratory - Chest Infection	2	50
Cancer and Tumours	1	46
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	17	41
Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	32
Ear, Nose, Throat	2	24
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	22

Short Term Absences

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	18	98
Hospital/Post Operative	8	65
Gastro-Intestinal	25	54
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	17	41
Unknown causes, not specified	5	10
Mental Health	2	5
Virus/Infectious Diseases	1	5
Respiratory - Chest Infection	1	4
Blood Disorders	1	2
Ear, Nose, Throat	1	2
Skin Condition	1	2

Long Term Absences

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	6	169
Mental Health	4	160
Hospital/Post Operative	3	85
Cancer and Tumours	1	46
Respiratory - Chest Infection	1	46
Virus/Infectious Diseases	1	27
Ear, Nose, Throat	1	22
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	22

Control Absence

In total 84 working days were lost due to sickness absence during this quarter. Of this 72 days were lost due to long term absence and 12 days were lost due to short-term absence, at an average of 3.11 days per employee.

This represents an increase of 67 days (236%) on the previous quarter.

There were 2 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration) during the review period, one of these individuals remains on long term sickness and the other has since returned to work.

Due to the level of absence, and to protect confidentiality, no analysis has been made of reasons for absence in this report.

Retained absence

It must be borne in mind that attendance for on-call fire-fighters does not reflect shifts lost as they do not have standard working hours, instead it reflects calendar days lost e.g. availability to attend incidents or training periods and absence is predicated over a 7-day availability pattern (compared to 4 days for whole-time employees).

In Q3, 904 days were unavailable due to sickness, broken down into 720 days of long-term absence (28+ days) and 184 days of short-term absence. This equates to an average of 3.5 “days” of unavailability per employee.

Compared to Q2, when 692 days were lost to sickness absence, this reflects an increase of 212 available days (31%).

There were 18 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 13 of which were classified as long term sickness. At the end of the period 7 employees had returned to work with 11 still absent.

Reasons for absence

The 2 main conditions leading to long-term absence for RDS employees in Q3 were Musculo-Skeletal issues (18 instances, 477 days) and mental health issues (4 instances, 132 days).

Retained

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	18	477
Mental Health	4	132
Hospital/Post Operative	2	95
Headache/Migraine/Neurological	1	92
Unknown causes, not specified	2	43
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	8	25
Gastro-Intestinal	11	22
Respiratory - Chest Infection	3	15
Ear, Nose, Throat	1	3

Short Term Absences

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	10	83
Mental Health	2	30
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	8	25
Gastro-Intestinal	11	22
Respiratory - Chest Infection	3	15
Ear, Nose, Throat	1	3
Hospital/Post Operative	1	3
Unknown causes, not specified	1	3

Long Term Absences

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	8	394
Mental Health	2	102
Headache/Migraine/Neurolog	1	92
Hospital/Post Operative	1	92
Unknown causes, not specified	1	40

Non-Uniformed (support) absence

In total 463.5 working days were lost due to sickness absence for non-uniformed personnel during the quarter. This breaks down into 280 days due to long term sickness absence (28+ continuous days absent) and 184 working days due to short

term absence. This represents an increase of 51.5 days (12.5%) on the previous quarter.

The average absence per employee was 2.8 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

There were 12 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 6 of which were classified as long term sickness. At the end of the period 6 employees had returned to work with 6 still absent.

There are two people who have been off sick for greater than 6 months. One of which returned to work towards the end of the quarter.

Reasons for absence

The two main reason for non-uniformed long-term absence were Mental Health issues (5 instances, 152 days), Musculo Skeletal (5 instances, 76 days) and Post-Operative/Hospital admission (3 instances, 67 days).

Non Uniformed

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health	5	152
Musculo Skeletal	5	76
Hospital/Post Operative	3	67
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	17	54
Skin Condition	1	36
Gastro-Intestinal	11	24
Ear, Nose, Throat	2	19
Unknown causes, not specified	3	9
Respiratory - Chest Infection	2	8
Headache/Migraine/Neurological	3	6
Virus/Infectious Diseases	3	6

Short Term Absences

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	17	53.5
Mental Health	2	26
Gastro-Intestinal	11	23.5
Ear, Nose, Throat	2	19
Hospital/Post Operative	2	14
Musculo Skeletal	4	11
Unknown causes, not specified	3	9
Respiratory - Chest Infection	2	8
Headache/Migraine/Neurological	3	6
Virus/Infectious Diseases	3	6

Long Term Absences

Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence	Days Lost
Mental Health	3	126
Musculo Skeletal	1	65
Hospital/Post Operative	1	53
Skin Condition	1	36

APPENDIX D

Equalities Data - Current Workforce

	31 st Dec 2015			31 st Dec 2016	
Women	138		15.52%	136	15.76%
Men	751		84.48%	727	84.24%
Total	889		100%	863	100%
Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)	Local comparator 11.2%	36	4.05%	30	3.48%
Ethnicity declaration	92.6%			94.03%	
Women in operational roles	26		2.92%	26	3.01%
LGB	National Comparator 6%	14	1.57%	12	1.39%
Sexual orientation declaration	78.3%			89.72%	
Disability	National Comparator 16%	40	4.5%	36	4.17%
Declaration rate overall	91%			95.93%	
Age	<25	33	3.71%	37	4.29%
	26-35	227	25.53%	202	23.41%
	36-45	235	26.43%	242	28.04%
	46-55	340	38.25%	326	37.78%
	56-65	52	5.85%	54	6.26%
	+66	2	0.22%	2	0.23%
Religion	Christian (all denominations)	380	42.74%	366	42.41%
	Other religions*	25	2.81	22	2.55%
	No religion	265	29.81%	271	31.40%
	Not Specified	219	24.63	204	23.64%

*Includes individuals identifying as Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and other religions.

APPENDIX E

Recruitment monitoring (Support staff roles only)

	Application	%	Interview	%	Successful	%
Total Applicants	77	100%	10	12.99%	2	20%
Women	17	22.08%	5	50%	1	50%
Men	60	77.92%	5	50%	1	50%
Black and Minority ethnic (BME)	4	5.19%	1	10%	0	0%
Sexual Orientation – LGB	1	1.29%	0	0%	0	0%
Disability	1	1.29%	0	0%	0	0%
Age	<25	3	3.90%	0	0%	0%
	26 – 35	18	23.37%	3	30%	50%
	36 – 45	16	20.78%	2	20%	0%
	46 – 55	32	41.56%	4	40%	50%
	56 – 65	8	10.39%	1	10%	0%
	>66	0	0%	0	0%	0%

APPENDIX F

Recruitment monitoring (retained roles only)

		Application	%	Interview	%	Successful	%
Total Applicants		182	100%	37	20.33%	13	35.14%
Women		12	6.59%	1	2.70%	1	7.70%
Men		170	93.31%	36	97.3%	12	62.30%
Black and Minority ethnic (BME)		7	3.85%	0	0%	0	0%
Sexual Orientation – LGB		3	1.65%	0	0%	0	0%
Disability		4	2.20%	1	2.70%	0	0%
Age	<25	83	45.60%	13	35.1%	5	38.5%
	26 – 35	65	24.73%	18	48.6%	6	46.2%
	36 – 45	24	13.2%	4	10.80%	1	7.70%
	46 – 55	7	3.85%	2	5.40%	1	7.70%
	56 – 65	2	1.10%	0	0%	0	0%
	>66	1	0.55%	0	0%	0	0%

*Please note some of the outcomes to the October RDS campaign may be duplicated from the Septembers HR committee report though it shows the progression of applicants through the process.