



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: 21 April 2017

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on key Human Resources metrics for the period 1 January – 31 March 2017.

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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 4: 1 January 2017 to 31 March 2017:

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 decreased by 6.75% across the whole workforce over Quarter 4. A comparative breakdown of figures by employee group are set out in Appendix A. At the time of publishing this report the final appendices were not available, but will be published as soon as possible and provided at the meeting.
- 2.3 As this represents the final quarter of the reporting year, analysis has also been undertaken of total sickness absence figures for the financial year 2016-17. These show a reduction of 805 days on the previous financial year (2015/2016).

| Absence | Quarter 4 1 January – 31 st March 2017 | Compared with previous quarter | Cumulative total days lost for 16/17 | Cumulative average over last 12 months |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Total workforce (168 employees have been absent on 197 occasions during Q4, excluding retained*) | 1319 days lost 1.99 days per employee | 1414.5 days lost 2.13 days per employee 6.75% decrease (95.5 days) | 5033 days lost | 7.63 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 1319 working days were lost in the final quarter of 2016/17. This is a decrease of 95.5 days (6.75%) on the previous quarter. Sickness absence figures have also decreased in comparison to the same period of 2016 (-62 days). This is shown in the table set out at Appendix A.
- 2.5 Long term absence equated to 55% of the total absence during this period. A full period commentary of Quarter 4 can be found in Appendix C.

Whole Year Review

- 2.6 Across the workforce a total of 5033 working days were lost due to sickness absence during 2016/17, at an average of 7.63 days per employee. This means that the absence target of 6.25 days per employee has been missed.
- 2.7 In comparison to 2015-16, this represents a decrease of 805 days, and compares to an average of 8.57 days per employee.
- 2.8 When broken down by work group, the figures show that:
 - Wholetime and control: 3185 working days lost , 6.47 days average per employee;

- Support (non-uniformed): 1848 working days lost, 11 days average per employee;
- All work groups: 5033 working days lost, 7.63 average per employee.

- 2.9 Of this, 66% of all absence was due to long term sickness – ie: absence of more than 28 days in duration.
- 2.10 The main reasons for sickness absence are: musculo skeletal, mental health issues and hospital/post-operative absence

National Trends

- 2.11 The Service contributes to the CFOA 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 - 3 combined. The two charts reflect whole-time and Control (12i) and whole workforce figures* (12ii).
- 2.12 This shows that for Quarter 3 (period ending 31 December 2016):
- (i) Whole-time and Control (12i) the Service ranked 8th of the 26 Services at 4.72 days per employee, and was below the sector sickness average of 5.82 days per employee. The lowest average was 3.7 days and the highest 9.91 days.
 - (ii) Whole workforce (12ii) the tables show that the Service, ranked 13th of the 26 Services at 5.57 days per employee, and was below the sector sickness average of 5.95 days per employee in quarter one. The lowest average was 3.66 days and the highest 10.42 days.

DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC

- 2.13 Over the period 1 January – 31 March 2017:

- Disciplinary: 0
- Grievances: 0
- Harassment and Bullying: 0
- Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy: 0
- Dismissals including ill health retirements: 3
- Redundancy: 0
- Redeployment: 0
- Employment Tribunal cases: 1 (continuing)
- IDRP appeals: 0
- Performance and capability: 0

STAFFING NUMBERS

2.14 During the period 1 January 2017 to 31 March 2017, 8 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 31 March 2017 are highlighted below:

| | Approved | Actual | Variance |
|----------------------|------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Wholetime | 472 (472 FTE) | 465 (464.58 FTE) | -7 (-7.42 FTE) |
| Retained | 192 units | 251 persons (135 units) (Includes 58 dual contracts) | -57 units |
| Non-Uniformed | 165 (156.85 FTE) | 169 (156.34 FTE) | +4 (-0.51) |
| Fire Control | 25 (24.5 FTE) | 27 (25.5 FTE) | +1 (+1 FTE) |

2.15 There have been 20 leavers and 8 starters since the last report, which has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 912 (this includes 58 dual contractors).

Leavers are broken down as follows: 7 Wholetime, 6 Retained, and 7 support roles.

The numbers of Contingency Operatives stands at 31, reflecting 4 leavers during the period.

2.16 As at 31 March 2017 whole-time establishment stood at 465 operational personnel (464.58 fte) employees against an establishment of 472 posts.

2.17 During the period the Service has appointed to six support roles and two Retained Trainee Firefighter roles.

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

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report as it seeks to provide Members with the ability to monitor and scrutinise human resources metrics for the period 1 January – 31 March 2017.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members endorse the report.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER