



**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:** 04 May 2018

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Members on key human resources metrics for the period 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2018.

## 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 receives regular updates on Human Resources (HR) issues within the Service. This includes issues such as sickness absence, formal discipline, grievance, employment tribunal cases and staffing numbers. These issues are collectively referred to 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 2018 to 31 March 2018:

Target absence figures for 2017/18 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)

- 2.2 Absence across the workforce, excluding retained employees, decreased by 230 days (15.9%) during the review period. A comparative breakdown of figures by employment group are set out in Appendix C. This also represents a reduction compared to the same quarter of the previous year (2016-17) of 101.5 days (-7.7%).
- 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 2017-18. These show an increase of 112 days (+2.2%) on the previous financial year (2016/2017)

<b>Absence</b>	<b>Quarter 4 1 January – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018</b>	<b>Compared with previous quarter</b>	<b>Cumulative total days lost for 17/18</b>	<b>Cumulative average over last 12 months</b>
<b>Total workforce  (168 employees have been absent on 197 occasions during Q4, excluding retained*)</b>	1217.5 days lost  1.89 days per employee	1447.5 days lost  2.25 days per employee  15.9% decrease  (230 days)	5145.5 days lost	8.05 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 C).

2.4 Across the workforce a total of 1217.5 working days were lost in the final quarter of 2017/18. This is a decrease of 230 days (15.9%) on the previous quarter. Sickness absence figures have also decreased in comparison to the same period of 2017 (-101.5 days). This is shown in the table set out at Appendix A.

2.5 Long term absence equated to 52% of the total absence during this period. A full period commentary of Quarter 4 can be found at appendix C.

## **WHOLE YEAR REVIEW**

2.6 Across the workforce a total of 5145 working day were lost due to sickness absence during 2017/18, at an average of 8.05 days per employee. This means that the absence target of 6.25 days per employee has been missed.

2.7 In comparison to 2016-17, this represents an increase of 112 days (2.2%), and compares to a previous average of 7.63 days per employee.

2.8 When broken down by work group, the figures show that:

- Wholetime and control: 3248.5 working days lost, 6.75 days average per employee
- Support (non-uniformed): 1897 working days lost, 11.7 days average per employee

- 2.9 Of this, 68.6% of all absence was due to long term sickness i.e. 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 National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) 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 For Whole-time and Control (12i) the chart show that the Service ranked 9<sup>th</sup> of the 27 Services at 5.03 days per employee, and was below the sector sickness average of 5.91 days per employee. The lowest average was 4.16 days and the highest 8.76 days.
- 2.13 For whole workforce (12ii) the tables show that the Service, ranked 15<sup>th</sup> of the 27 Services at 6.13 days per employee, and was below the sector sickness average of 6.36 days per employee in quarter one. The lowest average was 4.08 days and the highest 9.62 days.

## **DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC**

2.14 Over the period 1 January 2018– 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018:

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

## **STAFFING NUMBERS**

2.15 During the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, 16 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
<b>Wholetime</b>	455 (455 FTE)	455 (454.08 FTE)	0 (-0.92)
<b>Retained</b>	192 units	258 persons (139 units) (Includes 59 dual contracts)	-53 units
<b>Non-Uniformed</b>	162 (150.32)	162 (151.79FTE)	0 (+1.47)
<b>Fire Control</b>	25 (25 FTE)	27 (26.25 FTE)	+2 (+1.25FTE)

2.16 There have been 17 leavers and 16 starters since the last report, which has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 902 (this includes 59 dual contractors). Leavers are broken down as follows: 3 Wholetime, 6 Retained, and 8 Support roles.

2.17 As at 31 March 2017 whole-time establishment stood at 455 operational personnel (454.08 fte) employees against an establishment of 455 posts (the WT approved establishment has been adjusted to account for the conversion of a Watch Manager post (Peripatetic Trainer) to Simulation Software Developer (support role) in the Learning and Development Department during 2017-18).

2.18 During the period the Service has appointed to 4 support roles (2 fixed term) and 12 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, workforce equality monitoring information is undertaken and reported separately to this 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. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

#### **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the contents of the report.

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

None.

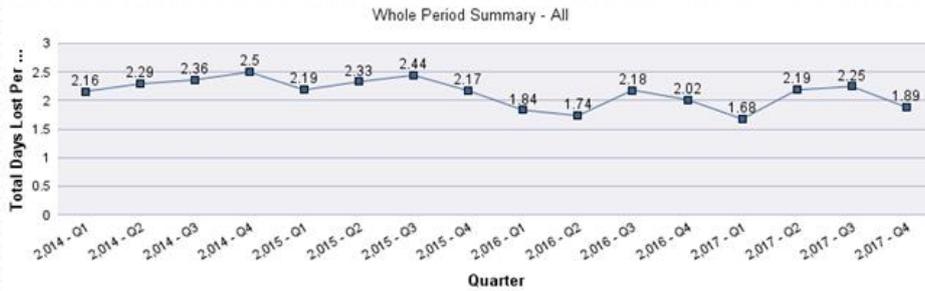
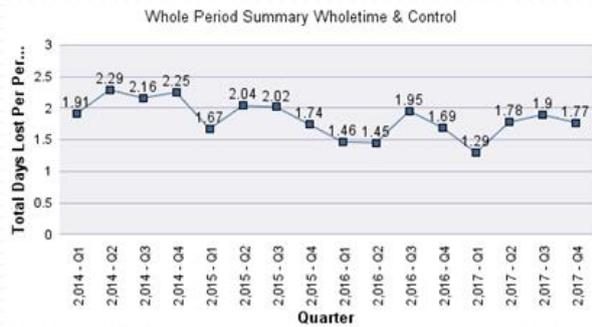
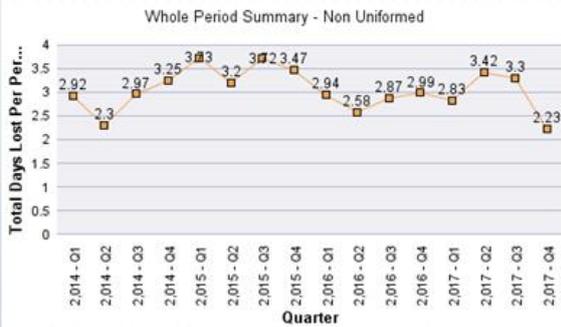
John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

# APPENDIX A

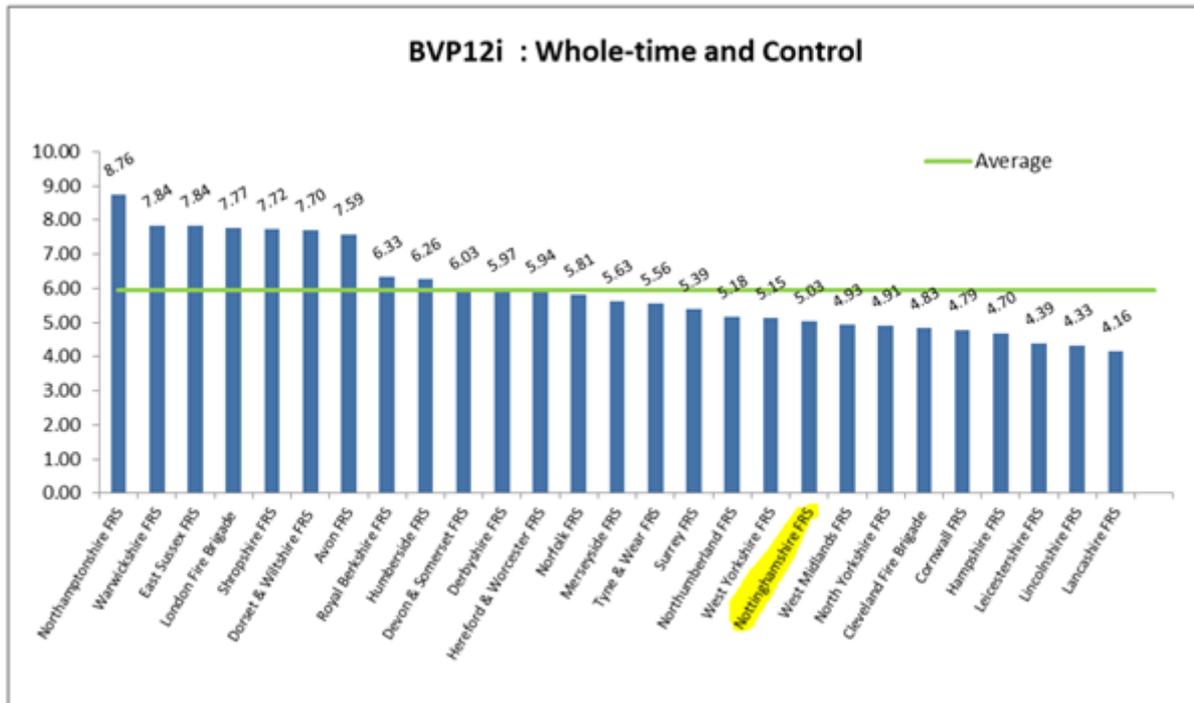
## Appendix - Reporting Period: 01/04/2014 to 31/03/2018

Quarter Breakdown by Month	January		February		March	
	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	1.18	189.5	0.67	108.5	0.38	61.0
Wholetime & Control	0.62	299.0	0.59	282.0	0.57	272.5
Sum:	0.76	488.5	0.61	390.5	0.52	333.5

Current Q vs Previous Q	2,017 - Q3		2,017 - Q4	
	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost
Non Uniformed	3.3	531.5	2.23	359
Wholetime & Control	1.9	914	1.77	853.5
Sum:	2.25	1,445.5	1.89	1,212.5



APPENDIX B



## APPENDIX C

### Q4 - Wholetime

In total 774 working days were lost due to sickness during this quarter. Of this, 389 days were lost to long-term absence (28+ days absence) and 385 days were lost due to short term absence. This represents a decrease of 77 days (9%) on the previous quarter.

The average absence per employee was 1.70 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

50.2% of sickness absence in this quarter was due to long term absence. There were 30 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 19 of which were classified as long-term sickness. At the end of the period 17 employees had returned to work with 13 still absent.

### **Reasons for absence**

Main reasons for sickness absence for the Wholetime are Musculo Skeletal issues (19 instances, 218 days) and Mental Health (9 instances, 179 days). The main long-term absence reasons were Mental Health (5 instances, 152 days) and Musculo-skeletal (3 instances, 120 days).

<u>Wholetime</u>			<u>Short Term Absences</u>			<u>Long Term Absences</u>		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	19	218	Musculo Skeletal	16	98	Mental Health	5	152
Mental Health	9	179	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	27	86	Musculo Skeletal	3	120
Other known causes (not specified in list)	4	87	Other known causes (not specified in list)	3	32	Mental Health - Other	2	62
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	27	86	Respiratory - Chest Infection	8	31	Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	55
Mental Health - Other	3	65	Unknown causes, not specified	8	31			
Respiratory - Chest Infection	8	31	Mental Health	4	27			
Unknown causes, not specified	8	31	Ear, Nose, Throat	3	23			
Ear, Nose, Throat	3	23	Virus/Infectious Diseases	8	22			
Virus/Infectious Diseases	8	22	Gastro-Intestinal	8	13			
Gastro-Intestinal	8	13	Hospital/Post Operative	2	12			

### Control Absence

In total 84.5 working days were lost due to sickness absence during this quarter. Of this 36 days were lost due to long term absence at an average of 3.1 days per employee.

This represents an increase of 24.5 days (40.83%) on the previous quarter.

There were 4 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 1 of which were classified as long-term sickness. At the end of the period all 4 employees had returned to work.

A significant proportion of this absence is due to one period of long term absence Due to the level of absence, and to protect confidentiality, no analysis has been made of reasons for absence.

**Retained absence**

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 Q4, 836 days were unavailable due to sickness, broken down into 547 days of long-term absence (28+ days) and 289 days of short-term absence. This equates to an average of 3.2 “days” of unavailability per employee.

Compared to Q3, when 580.5 days were lost to sickness absence, this reflects an increase of 255.5 available days (44%).

There were 17 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 8 of which were classified as long-term sickness. At the end of the period 8 employees had returned to work with 9 still absent.

**Reasons for absence**

The 2 main conditions leading to long-term absence for RDS employees in Q4 were Mental Health issues (6 instances, 324 days) and Musculo-Skeletal issues (10 instances, 202 days).

<u>Retained</u>			<u>Short Term Absences</u>			<u>Long Term Absences</u>		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health	6	324	Other known causes (not specified in list)	5	76	Mental Health	5	305
Musculo Skeletal	10	202	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	13	63	Musculo Skeletal	2	152
Cancer and Tumours	1	90	Musculo Skeletal	8	50	Cancer and Tumours	1	90
Other known causes (not specified in list)	5	76	Respiratory - Chest Infection	3	36			
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	13	63	Mental Health	1	19			
Respiratory - Chest Infection	3	36	Ear, Nose, Throat	2	18			
Ear, Nose, Throat	2	18	Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	12			
Virus/Infectious Diseases	2	12	Gastro-Intestinal	3	10			
Gastro-Intestinal	3	10	Cause Known, but not specified	1	3			
Cause Known, but not specified	1	3	Unknown causes, not specified	1	2			

**Non-Uniformed (support) absence**

In total 359 working days were lost due to sickness absence for non-uniformed personnel during the quarter. This breaks down into 204 days due to long-term sickness absence (28+ continuous days absent) and 155 working days due to short

term absence. This represents a decrease of 177.5 days (33.1%) on the previous quarter.

The average absence per employee was 2.23 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

There were 10 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 5 of which were classified as long-term sickness. At the end of the period 8 employees had returned to work with 2 still absent.

**Reasons for absence**

The two main reasons for non-uniformed long-term absence were Musculo Skeletal issues (1 instance, 65 days) and Virus/Infectious Diseases (1 instance, 44 days).

<u>Non Uniformed</u>			<u>Short Term Absences</u>			<u>Long Term Absences</u>		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absen	Days Lost
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	23	73.5	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	23	73.5	Musculo Skeletal	1	65
Virus/Infectious Diseases	6	69	Virus/Infectious Diseases	5	25	Virus/Infectious Diseases	1	44
Musculo Skeletal	3	67	Other known causes (not specified in list)	2	15	Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	35
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1	35	Gastro-Intestinal	6	11	Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	1	32
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	1	32	Ear, Nose, Throat	2	9	Mental Health	1	28
Mental Health	2	30.5	Hospital/Post Operative	1	6			
Other known causes (not specified in list)	2	15	Headache/Migraine/Neurological	4	5			
Gastro-Intestinal	6	11	Myocardial infarction	1	5			
Ear, Nose, Throat	2	9	Mental Health	1	2.5			
Hospital/Post Operative	1	6	Musculo Skeletal	2	2			

**Whole Year Review**

Excluding Retained, a total of 5145.5 working days were lost due to sickness absence during 2017/18, at an average of 8.05 days per employee. This means that the absence target of 6.25 days per employee has been missed.

In comparison to 2016-17, this represents an increase of 112 days, and compares to an average of 7.63 days per employee.

When broken down by work group, the figures show that:

- **Wholetime:** 3040 working days lost, 6.7 days average per employee. Of this, 67% of all absence was due to long term sickness i.e. absence of more than 28 days in duration.

The main reasons for sickness absence are: Musculo Skeletal, Mental Health issues and Hospital/Post-Operative absence.

- **Control:** 208.5 working days lost, 7.7 days average per employee. All absence was due to long term sickness i.e. absence of more than 28 days in duration.

A significant proportion of this absence is due to one period of long-term absence. Due to the small reference group, reasons for sickness absence have not been detailed to protect confidentiality.

- **Retained:** 2627 working days lost, 10.2 “days” of unavailability per employee. Of this, 75% of all absence was due to long-term sickness i.e. absence of more than 28 days in duration.

The main reasons for sickness absence are: Musculo Skeletal, Mental Health issues and Hospital/Post-Operative absence.

- **Non-Uniformed (Support):** 1897 working days lost, 11.7 days average per employee. Of this, 76% of all absence was due to long-term sickness i.e. absence of more than 28 days in duration.

The main reasons for sickness absence are: Musculo Skeletal, Mental Health and Hospital/Post-Operative issues.