



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: 11 July 2014

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on Human Resources issues within the Service

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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 4: 1 January to 31 March 2014.

Absence	Quarter 4 1 Jan – 31 Mar 2014	Compared with previous quarter	Compared with same quarter of 2013	Cumulative total days lost for 13/14	Cumulative average over last 12 months
Total workforce (166 employees have been absent during Q4)	1254 days lost 1.71 days per employee	1092.5 days lost 1.49 days per employee 14.8% increase (+161.5 days)	1260.5 days lost 1.75 days per employee 0.48% decrease (-6.5 days)	4271 days lost 5.8 days per employee	5.8 days per employee
Uniformed (116 employees have been absent during Q4) <i>excluding retained</i>	904.5 days lost 1.59 days per employee	779 days lost 1.37 days per employee 16.1% increase (+125.5 days)	789.5 days lost 1.39 days per employee 14.5% increase (+115 days)	2888.5 days lost 5.09 days per employee	5.09 days per employee
Non uniformed (50 employees have been absent during Q4)	349.5 days lost 2.1 days per employee	313.5 days lost 1.88 days per employee 11.5% increase (+36 days)	471 days lost 3 days per employee 25.8% decrease (-121.5 days)	1382.5 days lost 8.61 days per employee	8.61 days per employee
Long term sickness (defined as 28 days or more)	Total Workforce		33		
	Uniformed (excluding retained)		26		
	Non Uniformed		7		

- 2.2 Absence rates have increased by 14.8% (161.5 days) across the workforce as a whole during Quarter 4, compared to the previous quarter. However it has slightly decreased compared to the same quarter of 2013. The average absence for the period was 1.75 days per employee, which is above the target of 1.56 days.
- 2.3 There were 57 separate periods of medically certified absence in Quarter 4. Of these, 38 employees have subsequently returned to work or left the service. The graphs attached as Appendix 1 give a clearer idea of how absence has been affected over a longer period of time and sets out a more representative view of absence over the year.
- 2.4 Quarter 4 represents the end of the reporting period for 2013-14 and this provides an opportunity to review the whole year. Compared to 2012-13, absence overall has fallen from 4560 days to 4271 days, a reduction of 289 days (-6.3%). The average absence per employee has fallen from 6.39 days to 5.8 days.
- 2.5 This figure is below both the public sector (8.7 days) and private sector (7.2 days) national averages (*Source: Absence Management 2013 – annual survey report of the CIPD and Simply Health*).
- 2.6 560 employees had no sickness absence at all during 2013-14.
- 2.7 Compared to national sickness absence statistics, which are compiled by CFOA, Nottinghamshire FRS is in the top 4 services for % of time lost to absence for Whole-time Fire-fighters at 2.66%. This compares to 8.25% (highest) and 2.13% (lowest) of the 31 Fire and Rescue Services who take part the survey.
- 2.8 In terms of reasons for absence, the majority of sickness absence during 2013-14 (in terms of working time lost) was certified as due to lower limb or shoulder injuries (uniformed), anxiety/depression or Respiratory conditions (Control) and anxiety/depression or Other senses (non- uniformed). Work will be undertaken by the Occupational Health Manager to review these reasons and establish any patterns, or areas where we could provide further support.
- 2.9 The CFOA survey shows that mental illness is the main cause of sickness absence for all staff categories in the 31 Fire and Rescue Services surveyed. This is reflected in absence at Nottinghamshire FRS for non-uniformed and Control employees, but not for Wholetime absence where lower limb and shoulder injuries are the main causes of absence from work .
- 2.10 Target absence figures for 2014/15 will remain the same as for 2013-14:

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

2.11 Over the period 1 January 2014 – 31 March 2014:

- Disciplinary: 2
- Grievances: 1
- Harassment and Bullying: 1
- Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy: 0
- Dismissals including ill health retirements: 0
- Redundancy: 3
- Redeployment: 6
- ET cases: 0
- IDRPs appeals: 0

STAFFING NUMBERS

2.12 During the period 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014, 14 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 31 March 2014 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
Wholetime	530	536 (535.5 full time equivalents)	+6 (+6.5 FTE)
Retained	204 units	261 persons (135 units) (includes 58 dual contracts)	- 69 units
Non-Uniformed	183	174 <i>Established Post – 166</i> <i>Fixed Term Non-Established Post – 1</i> <i>Fixed Term in Established Post - 5</i> <i>Agency staff – 2</i>	-9
Fire Control	27	27 (26 FTE)	-1

2.13 There have been 22 leavers and 14 starters since the last report which has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 998 employees. Leavers are broken down as follows: 11 whole-time, 6 retained, 1 control and 4 non-uniformed employees. Additionally, the Service employs 4 Apprentices on one year fixed-term contracts, and 19 Contingency Crew Operatives on zero hour contracts.

2.14 As at 31 March 2014 whole-time establishment stood at +6.5 FTE (536 FTE) employees against an establishment of 530 posts.

2.15 Fire-fighter roles are over-strength by 19 posts, with 14 vacancies at Supervisory level. 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.

- 2.16 In the last quarter, the Service has run an Area Manager selection process to fill vacancies at this level from July 2014. A Group Manager process will run in July to fill the vacancies left by internal promotions.
- 2.17 The Service is in the final stages of RDS recruitment , which will culminate in a trainee fire-fighter course in September.
- 2.18 The Service is also in the process of recruiting further contingency operatives to supplement the current group, selection and training will take place during June and July.
- 2.19 In terms of support roles (non uniformed posts), there has been five appointments to vacancies.

ILL HEALTH RETIREMENTS

- 2.20 There were no retirements on the grounds of permanent ill-health during 2013-14.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The level of the establishment particularly in relation to the approved budgeted establishment can have a significant impact on budget performance overall. The Medium Term Financial Strategy shows that approximately 75% of the revenue budget relates to staffing and therefore careful management of the establishment is essential. Both HR and Finance staff work together to understand the establishment figures and to plot likely outcomes against the budget and the workforce plan.

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

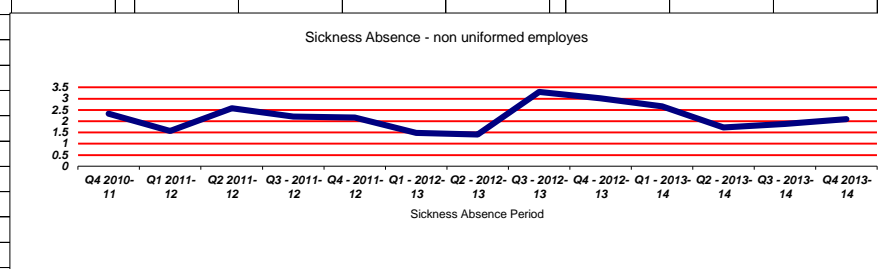
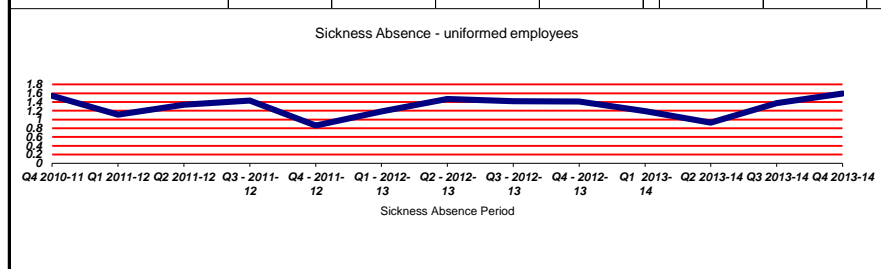
It is recommended that Members endorse the report.

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

None.

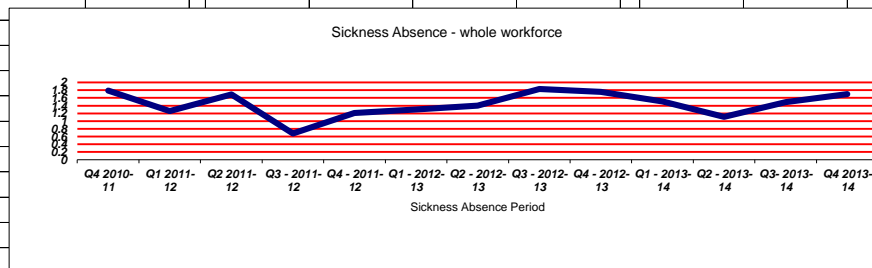
John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

BREAKDOWN OF ABSENCE Q4 (Jan - Mar 14)																
WORK GROUP	Jan				Feb				March				SUMMARY OF QUARTER 3			
	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Jan 2013 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Feb 2013 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	March 2013 days lost	% difference	Average (days per person)	Total work days lost	Q4 2013-14 days lost	% difference
UNIFORMED (inc Control)	0.61	344	272.5	-26.24	0.46	260	264	1.52	0.53	300.5	253	-18.77	1.59	904.5	789.5	-14.57
NON UNIFORMED	0.81	134.5	184	26.90	0.49	81	156	48.08	0.80	134	131	-2.29	2.09	349.5	471	25.80
TOTAL WORKFORCE	0.65	478.5	456.5	-4.82	0.46	341	420	18.81	0.59	434.5	384	-13.15	1.70	1254	1260.5	0.52



UNIFORMED ABSENCE

NON UNIFORMED ABSENCE



TOTAL ABSENCE