DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

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REPORT REFERENCE NO.	**HRMDC/08/8**
MEETING	**HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**
DATE OF MEETING	**14 NOVEMBER 2008**
SUBJECT OF REPORT	**ABSENCE MANAGEMENT**
LEAD OFFICER	**Steven Pope – Human Resources Manager**
RECOMMENDATIONS	*That the report be noted.*
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The progress with Absence Management has been included as a standing item within the HRMD agenda. This report includes an update of the Service performance for absence levels and also the long term absence levels.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	
APPENDICES	
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 At the last HRMD meeting on the 12 September 2008, the HRMD Committee were given a comprehensive update on progress with absence management. This item is now appearing with a 'green' colour code within the Service Performance Report indicating that the Service is within the target level. The matter is therefore no longer within the exception reporting of our performance. Despite this continuing progress it is important that we do not become complacent and therefore it is important that this matter continues as a standing item.

2. **CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

2.1 The Service has a corporate target to reduce the levels of sickness absence to the regional average rate of 9.0 days/shifts lost per person by 2010/11.

2.2 The target absence level was not achieved in 2007/8 but we continue to see a good improvement through Q1 and Q2 of 2008/9 in which we have seen a 13.7% decrease in absence when compared with the same period last year. At this point the previous year was 6.07 days absence compared with a target of 5.42 for 2008/9 and the actual level being at 5.24 days. It should be noted that the data for September is taken part way through the month and therefore this final figure will be higher than shown below.
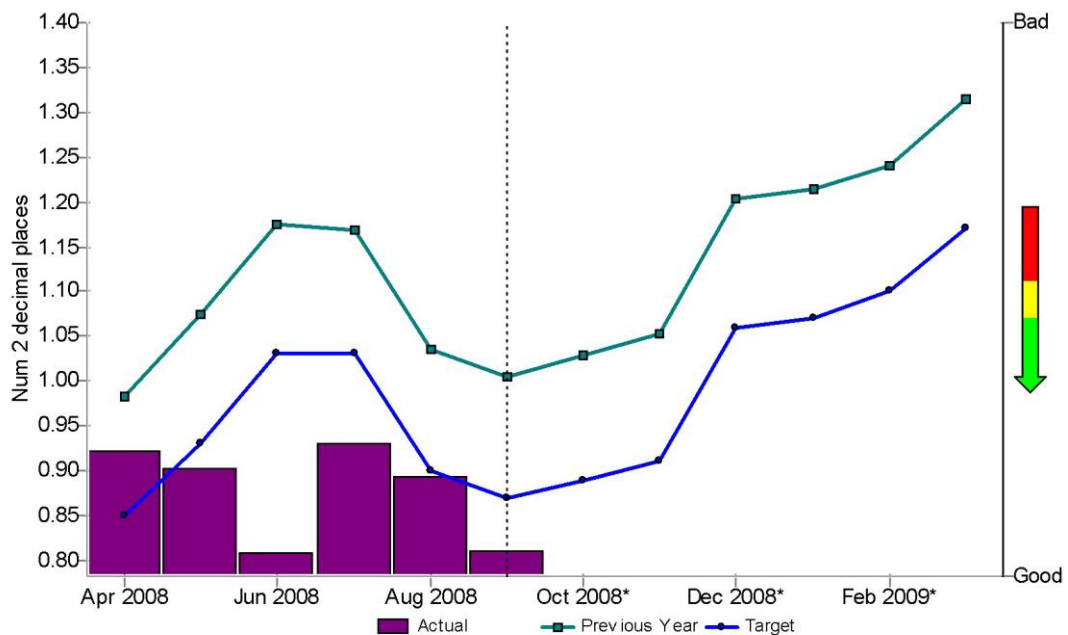
All Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2008/09
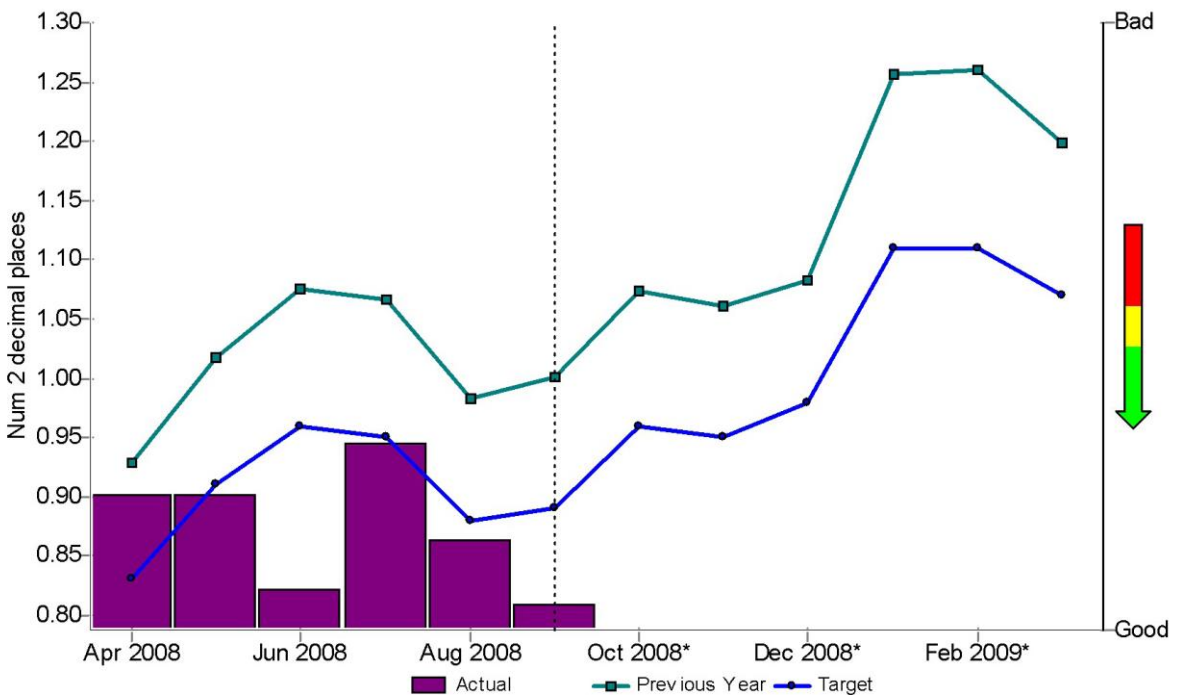
All Staff – Sickness Rates per Person – by Month

|	Actual 08/09	Previous Year 07/08	% variance on previous year
Apr 2008	0.9	0.93	-2.9%
May 2008	0.9	1.02	-11.3%
Jun 2008	0.82	1.08	-23.6%
Jul 2008	0.94	1.07	-11.4%
Aug 2008	0.86	0.98	-12.3%
Sept 2008-11-04	0.81	1.00	-19.1%

2.3   Although the overall level has improved when we analyse the results by staff category a slightly different picture emerges. The breakdown for uniformed, control and non-uniformed are shown below. The uniformed levels have been below the previous year consistently within 2008/9. For non-uniformed we have seen an improvement in Q2 over the previous year. The Control Rooms, however, continue to be over target and over the previous year. This is an area where the Service will need to undertake more detailed analysis and to provide further managerial support in the management of absence.
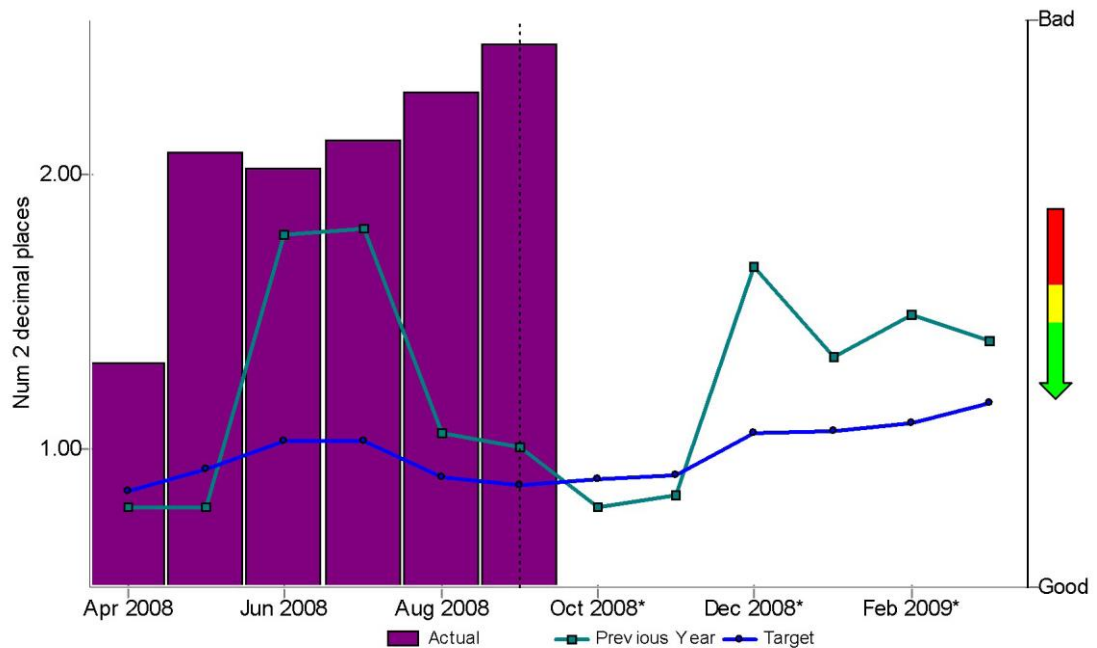
Uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2008/09

Non-uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2008/09
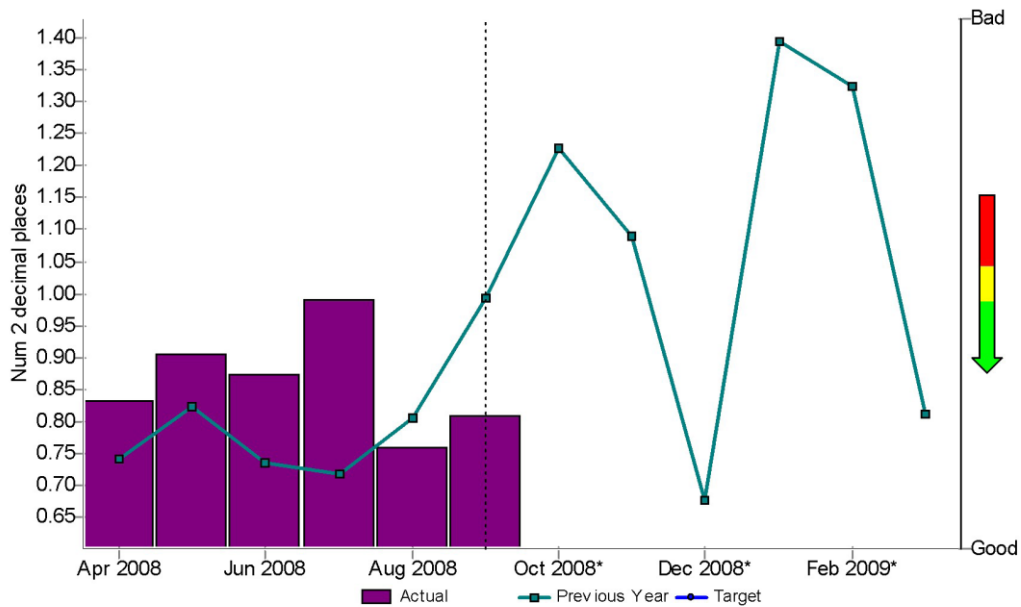
Control Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2008/09

3. **COST OF ABSENCE**

3.1   The cost of absence was provided at the last meeting and at the time of producing this report the figures are not yet available for Q2. It is anticipated that these can be provided at the meeting.

4. **DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF LONG TERM SICKNESS**

4.1 The monitoring of long term sickness ie those over 28 days is reported on a monthly basis and includes those who are long term sick and those on restricted duties.

The number of long term sick over the last 8 months has been as follows:

Number of staff	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
Uniformed	27	28	23	23	19	19	20	23	17
Retained	14	17	10	10	8	10	8	9	12
Non-uniformed	3	6	6	7	6	2	4	2	3
Total	44	51	39	40	33	31	32	34	32

4. **PROGRESS WITH ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

4.1 The first draft of the absence management policy has been completed and is currently out for consultation. As yet the Service has not received feedback from the Representative Bodies.

5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 The Service has seen a significant improvement during Q1 and Q2 n the absence levels and is continuing to progress with the production of quality absence management data and more robust procedures.

JANE SHERLOCK
Head of Human Resources Management and Development