

**M. Pearson
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY**

**To: The Chair and Members of the
Human Resources Management and
Development Committee
(see below)**

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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

Friday 14 November 2008

A meeting of the Human Resources Management and Development Committee will be held on the above date, **commencing at 10:00 hours in Conference Room A in Somerset House, Service Headquarters** to consider the following matters.

M. Pearson
Clerk to the Authority

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 12 September 2008 attached (Page 1).
3. **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

Items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to consider whether they have any **personal/personal and prejudicial interests** in items as set out on the agenda for this meeting and declare any such interests at this time. *Please refer to the Note 2 at the end of this agenda for guidance on interests.*

PART 1 – OPEN COMMITTEE

5. Work Programme for the Committee

The Committee, at its meeting on 14 September 2007, agreed a range of themes linked to the key objectives in the Corporate and Department Plans that it was felt could be explored and progressed with Members and which could be incorporated within the agenda for meetings over a twelve month period.

These themes included:

- Workforce development
- The Health of the Organization
- The Equalities Framework
- HRMD function and value for money.

Many of these themes have been progressed and new initiatives have also been introduced as the Corporate and Department Plans have evolved. It would therefore seem appropriate for the Committee to review the progress made at this stage.

6. Staff Survey - Initial Results

Report of DCFO Neil Gibbins (HRMDC/08/7) attached (page 4)

7. Absence Management

Report of the Human Resources Manager (HRMDC/08/8) attached (page 7)

PART 2 – ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Nil

MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Membership:-

Councillors Cann (Chair), Mrs. Parsons (Vice Chair), Ford, Manning, Parker, Shadrick, Viney

Substitute Members

Members are reminded that, in accordance with Standing Order 30, the Clerk (or his representative) MUST be advised of any substitution prior to the start of the meeting.

NOTES

1. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to inspect any minutes, reports or lists of background papers relating to any item on this agenda should contact Sam Sharman on the telephone number shown at the top of this agenda.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

What Interests do I need to declare in a meeting?

As a first step you need to declare any personal interests you have in a matter. You will then need to decide if you have a prejudicial interest in a matter.

What is a personal interest?

You have a personal interest in a matter if it relates to any interests which you must register, as defined in Paragraph 8(1) of the Code.

You also have a personal interest in any matter likely to affect the well-being or financial position of:-

- (a) you, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association;
- (b) any person/body who employs/has employed the persons referred to in (a) above, or any firm in which they are a partner or company of which they are a director;
- (c) any person/body in whom the persons referred to in (a) above have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
- (d) any body of which you are a Member or in a position of general control or management and which:-
 - you have been appointed or nominated to by the Authority; or
 - exercises functions of a public nature (e.g. a constituent authority; a Police Authority); or
 - is directed to charitable purposes; or
 - one of the principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

more than it would affect **the majority** of other people in the Authority's area.

Anything that could affect the quality of your life (or that of those persons/bodies listed in (b) to (d) above) either positively or negatively, is likely to affect your/their "well being". If you (or any of those persons/bodies listed in (b) to (d) above) have the potential to gain or lose from a matter under consideration – to a **greater extent** than **the majority** of other people in the Authority's area - you should declare a personal interest.

What do I need to do if I have a personal interest in a matter?

Where you are aware of, **or ought reasonably to be aware of**, a personal interest in a matter you must declare it when you get to the item headed "Declarations of Interest" on the agenda, or otherwise as soon as the personal interest becomes apparent to you, **UNLESS** the matter relates to or is likely to affect:-

- (a) any other body to which you were appointed or nominated by the Authority; or
- (b) any other body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g. membership of a constituent authority; other Authority such as a Police Authority);

of which you are a Member or in a position of general control or management. In such cases, provided you do not have a prejudicial interest, you need only declare your personal interest if and when you speak on the matter.

Can I stay in a meeting if I have a personal interest?

You can still take part in the meeting and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a prejudicial interest.

What is a prejudicial interest?

Your personal interest will also be a **prejudicial** interest if **all** of the following conditions are met:-

- (a) the matter is not covered by one of the following exemptions to prejudicial interests in relation to the following functions of the Authority:-
 - statutory sick pay (if you are receiving or entitled to this);
 - an allowance, payment or indemnity for members;
 - any ceremonial honour given to members;

- setting council tax or a precept; **AND**
- (b) the matter affects your financial position (or that of any of the persons/bodies as described in Paragraph 8 of the Code) or concerns a regulatory/licensing matter relating to you or any of the persons/bodies as described in Paragraph 8 of the Code); **AND**
- (c) a member of the public who knows the relevant facts would reasonably think your personal interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

What do I need to do if I have a prejudicial interest?

If you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting, you must declare that you have a prejudicial interest (and the nature of that interest) as soon as it becomes apparent to you. You should then leave the room unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter by statutory right or otherwise. If that is the case, you can also attend the meeting for that purpose.

You must, however, leave the room **immediately after you have finished speaking (or sooner if the meeting so decides)** and you cannot remain in the public gallery to observe the vote on the matter. Additionally, you must not seek to **improperly influence** a decision in which you have a prejudicial interest.

What do I do if I require further guidance or clarification on declarations of interest?

If you feel you may have an interest in a matter that will need to be declared but require further guidance on this, please contact the Clerk to the Authority – preferably before the date of the meeting at which you may need to declare the interest. Similarly, please contact the Clerk if you require guidance/advice on any other aspect of the Code of Conduct.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

12 September 2008

Present:-

Councilors Cann (Chairman), Ford, Parker and Shadrick

Apologies:-

Councillors Mrs. Parsons and Viney

***HRMDC/11. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the special meeting held on 22 August 2008 be signed as a correct record.

***HRMDC/12. Informal Meetings**

(An item taken in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Chair determined that this matter should be determined at this meeting in order to facilitate the convening of a meeting to discuss the options available for engaging with Chairs of the four committees on a more regular basis.

The Chair stated that he would like a meeting to be convened as soon as possible with the Clerk and the other three chairs of committees to discuss the issues he had raised recently. It was noted that this matter would be pursued with the Clerk.

***HRMDC/13. Declarations of Interest**

Members of the Committee were invited to declare any personal/personal and prejudicial interests they may have in item(s) to be considered at the current meeting in accordance with the Authority's approved Code of Conduct.

No interests were declared.

***HRMDC/14. Absence Management**

The Committee received for information a report of the Human Resources Manager (HRMDC/08/4) that set out the position in respect of sickness absence with particular reference to the costs of absence, long term absence and the reasons behind this and on the findings of the National Fire and Rescue Service absence management working group.

Reference was made to the following points:

- That sickness absence had improved significantly in the first quarter of 2008/09 with a reduction overall by 15% when compared with the same period in 2007/08;

- The target for absence was 9 days/shifts lost per person by 2010/11 and the service was down to almost 10 days currently;
- The greatest reduction had been in long term sickness absence with a reduction of 16.8% when compared with the same period in 2007/08;
- The cost of sickness absence was £348,785 for the first quarter of 2008/09;
- The findings of the national report commissioned by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Communities and Local Government (CLG) found that there were 3 overarching factors for successful attendance management and these were set out in the report. It was noted that much of the work undertaken within the service was comparable with the findings of the national research.

The Chief Fire Officer drew attention to the point that there was scope for the costs of sickness absence to be misrepresented but he stressed that it was important not to do this. The Human Resources Manager added that there had been a lot of work undertaken to address sickness and that the working party would be releasing its draft absence management policy shortly for consultation. It was noted that regular reports would be submitted to this Committee to keep it apprised of the action being taken.

***HRMDC/15. Firefighter Recruitment**

The Committee received for information a report of the Human Resources Manager (HRMDC/08/5) that set out the proposals in relation to staff transferring from the Retained Duty System to Wholetime, information in respect of workforce planning and details of the National Firefighter Selection process.

The Chief Fire Officer commented that, although the service was not pursuing a graduate entry scheme at this stage, it was waiting for the outcome of the scheme undertaken by the London Fire Brigade with interest. He added that such a scheme may be a way of addressing equality issues such as attracting more women into the service in due course.

***HRMDC/16. Corporate Equality Scheme**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/08/6) that set out details of work being undertaken on the development of a single equality scheme for the Authority in accordance with the requirements of the National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 to 2018 and the National Framework Document 2008 to 2011. In addition, the report set out the proposals for a corporate identity for the Equality Scheme.

The Equality and Diversity Advisor gave a presentation at the meeting in respect of the requirements under the Equality and Diversity Strategy and the 6 equality strands identified within this, together with information in respect of how the Corporate Equality Scheme would be developed.

Councillor Cann proposed (and was seconded by Councillor Shadrick) “that Councillor Pat Parker should be nominated as the representative to work with the Equality and Diversity Team on the development and implementation of this scheme”.

RESOLVED

- (a) To endorse the title of the Corporate Equality Scheme as “Making The Connections”;
- (b) That Councillor Pat Parker be nominated as the member of the Committee identified to work with the Equality & Diversity team on the development and implementation of this Scheme;
- (c) That, subject to (a) and (b) above, to note the contents of this report.

***HRMDC/17. Staff Survey**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated the Committee on the position in respect of the recent Staff Survey that had been undertaken, which was the first ever Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service employee survey. To ensure that the survey was independent, Opinion Research Services (ORS), the contractor providing consultation services to the Fire Services Consultation Association (FSCA), had been commissioned to undertake the survey. 647 responses had been received which represented a significant response for the organisation in statistical terms. A Group had been established to work on analysis of the results and it was anticipated that a further report would be submitted to the Committee at its next meeting in November 2008.

***HRMDC/18. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to consultations and negotiations in connection with a labour relations matter between the Authority and its employees.

***HRMDC/19. Job Evaluation**

The Human Resources Manager gave an update on the progress being made in respect of the Job Evaluation exercise for non uniformed staff.

*** DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The meeting started at 10.00 and finished at 11.35 hours



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/08/7
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	14 NOVEMBER 2008
SUBJECT OF REPORT	STAFF SURVEY – INITIAL RESULTS
LEAD OFFICER	DCFO Neil Gibbins
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>(a) That the HRMD Committee assumes oversight of the programme of projects to be established to deliver agreed improvement activities; and</p> <p>(b) That, subject to recommendation (a) above, the report be noted.</p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The survey was carried out between 18 February 2008 and 21 March 2008 a response rate of 30% was achieved. Following initial statistical analysis of the results, a working group was established to identify any key issues. This work formed the basis of the information contained in the newsletter sent out to all staff at the end of October.</p> <p>This initial analysis has already identified some key areas for further work and action but it is also recognised that it is important to involve staff groups so that improvement actions deliver changes that employees will recognise as improving the position from their perspective. To this end, initial meetings have been held with representative bodies and they have indicated a willingness to work together with management in identifying the priority areas for improvement action.</p> <p>A project team will be established to complete this work and the main project deliverable will be a clearly defined set of improvement activities, including an assessment of resourcing requirements, which will then be incorporated within the relevant service plans.</p>
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	None at this stage.
APPENDICES	Staff Survey Newsletter – October 2008
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 It was considered important to conduct a survey to establish of how staff felt about being employees of the Service and to identify any issues that may require improvement. Given the significant amount of change that has taken place, (combination, rank to role and job evaluation being some of the major ones) the survey would provide an important baseline to be used in any future assessment.
- 1.2 The survey was carried out between 18 February 2008 and 21 March 2008. Every member of staff was given the opportunity to complete the survey and 647 were returned. With a total workforce of 2165 this represents a return rate of 30%, which is considered a good response for surveys of this kind.
- 1.3 Statistical analysis of the survey returns began in August and a working group was established in September with a view to identifying the key issues arising from the results. The working group was chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and included both uniformed and non-uniformed managers from HRM, training, qualities & diversity, operations support and communications. It was planned that a newsletter would be sent out to all staff at the end of October to provide initial feedback on the survey results and to begin the process of wider staff engagement in identifying key improvement actions.
- 1.4 The newsletter was issued to staff in accordance with the planned timeframe and meetings have been held with representative bodies to begin the process of engagement and involvement with work to identify key improvement actions. The full survey results will be published on the Service Intranet by the end of November. This is regarded as an important step in demonstrating openness and transparency over the results and that nothing is being covered up.

2. **SURVEY RESULTS**

- 2.1 Following the initial analysis of the survey results, a summary of the main 'high spots' and 'hot spots' was produced together with a brief commentary regarding specific sections. This formed the basis of the newsletter that was issued to all staff, a copy of which is attached to this report as an Appendix for information.
- 2.2 This initial analysis has already identified some key areas for further work and action but it is also recognised that it is important to involve staff groups so that improvement actions deliver changes that employees will recognise as improving the position from their perspective. The focus of analysis is clearly on the 'hot spots' and that is entirely proper because the whole purpose of conducting the survey was to identify things that need to be done better.
- 2.3 The work with the staff groups must be allowed to identify the specific actions that will deliver most impact but even at this early stage it is evident that action is required around the perception of senior management, recognition, communication, levels of consultation and the incidence of bullying. The existing Corporate Plan and supporting Departmental Service Plans already contain some development activities that address some, or part of, the issues identified by the survey responses. Consequently, an important part of the next stage will be to focus on the key areas of improvement that will make a real difference to the issues identified by the survey responses. Improvement action overload is a potential barrier to effecting meaningful change and this must be avoided. This does not mean that areas that need to be addressed will be forgotten, but it does mean that we will have to realistic about what can be achieved within the resources available.

3. **NEXT STEPS**

- 3.1 Initial meetings have been held with representative bodies and they have indicated a willingness to work together with management in identifying the priority areas for improvement action. A project team will be established to complete this work and the main project deliverable will be a clearly defined set of improvement activities, including an assessment of resourcing requirements, which will then be incorporated within the relevant service plans.
- 3.2 Once approved and incorporated into service plans, the improvement activities will be managed as a programme of projects and it is suggested that the HRMD Committee assumes oversight of the programme. The Committee is invited to comment on these proposed arrangements and the initial feedback provided in the newsletter.

NEIL GIBBINS
Deputy Chief Fire Officer

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



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	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
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**

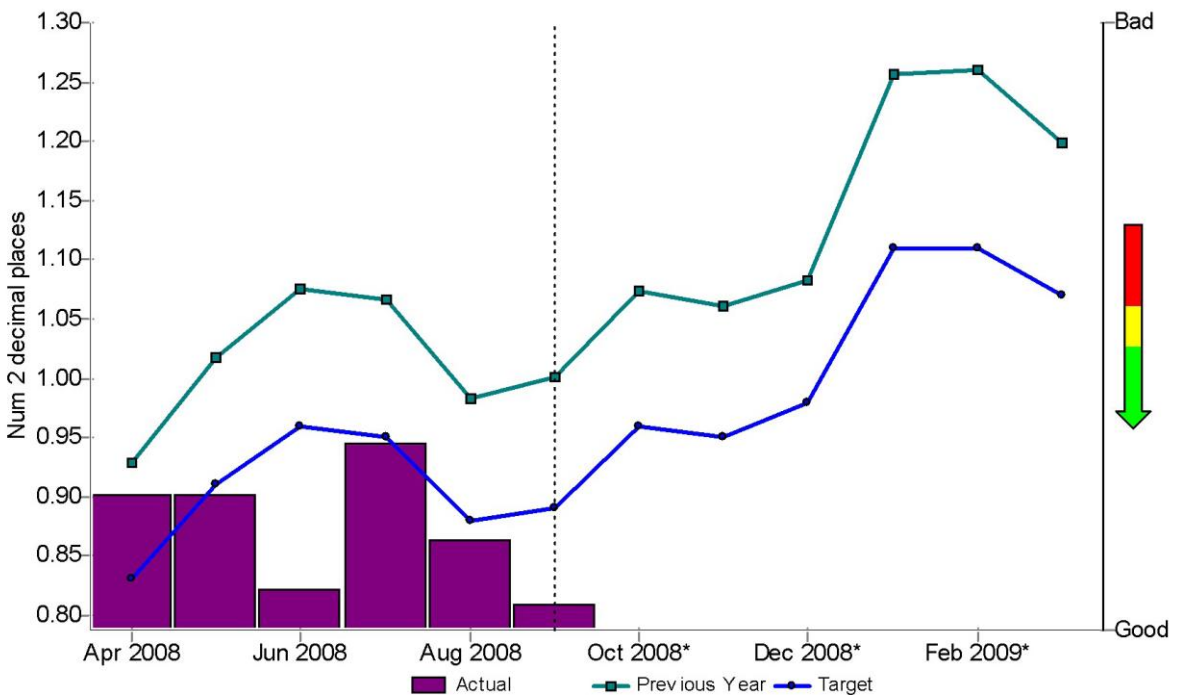
1.1 At the last HRMD meeting on the 12 September 2008, the HRMD Committee were given a comprehensive update on progress with absence management. This item is now appearing with a 'green' colour code within the Service Performance Report indicating that the Service is within the target level. The matter 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



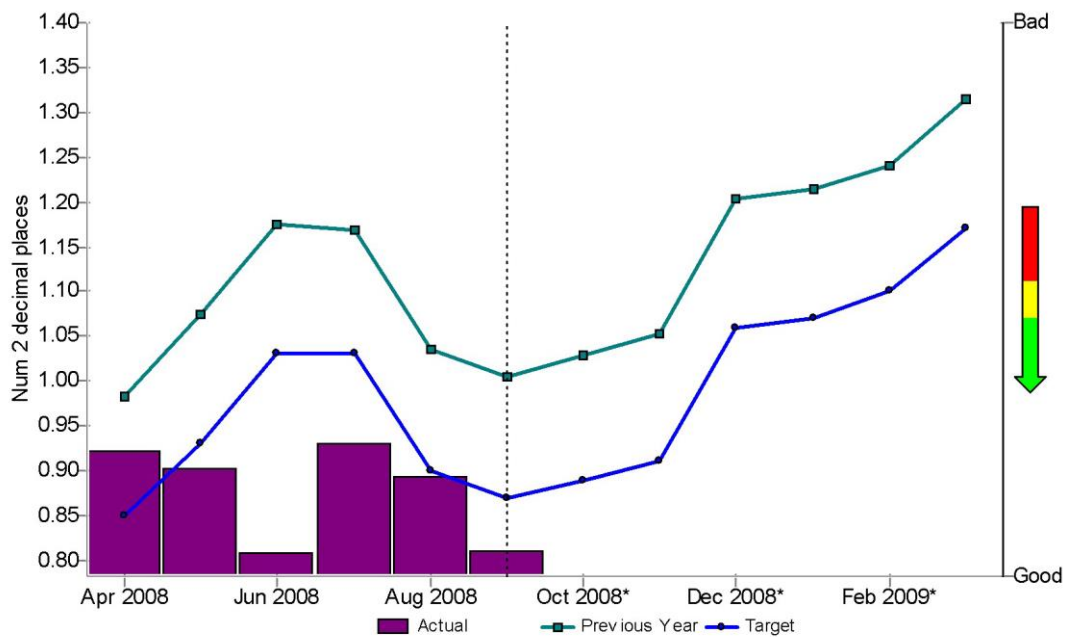
All Staff – Sickness Rates per Person – by Month

	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%

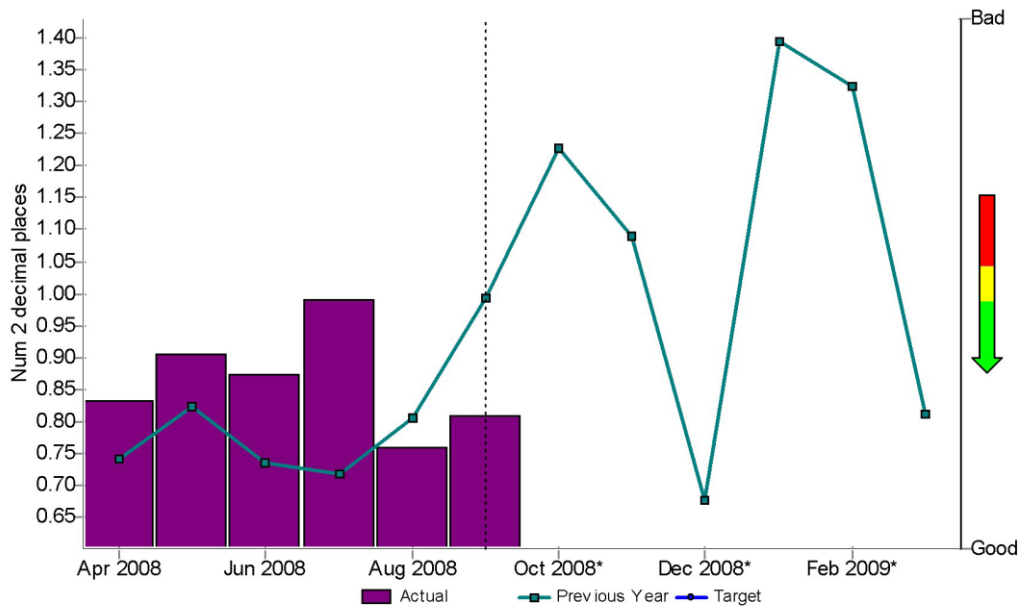
2.3

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.

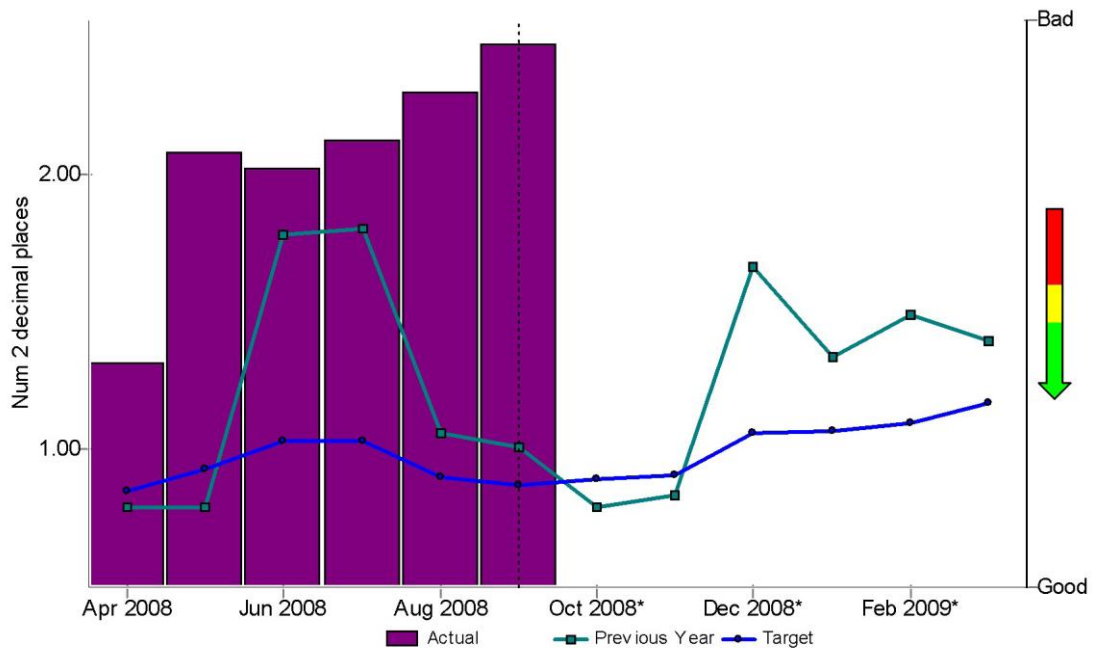
Uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2008/09



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 in the absence levels and is continuing to progress with the production of quality absence management data and more robust procedures.

STEVE POPE
Human Resources Manager