



# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>HRMD/09/13</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>27 OCTOBER 2009</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>ABSENCE MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Head of Human Resources Management and Development</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i>That the report be noted</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	The progress with Absence Management has been included as a standing item on the agenda for each meeting of this Committee. This report provides the most recent information available on Service performance in relation to monitoring and controlling both short- and long-term absence levels.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	The resource implications associated with sickness absence are as indicated in this report
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	An initial assessment has revealed that there are no equality issues arising from this report.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	None
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	None

**1. INTRODUCTION**

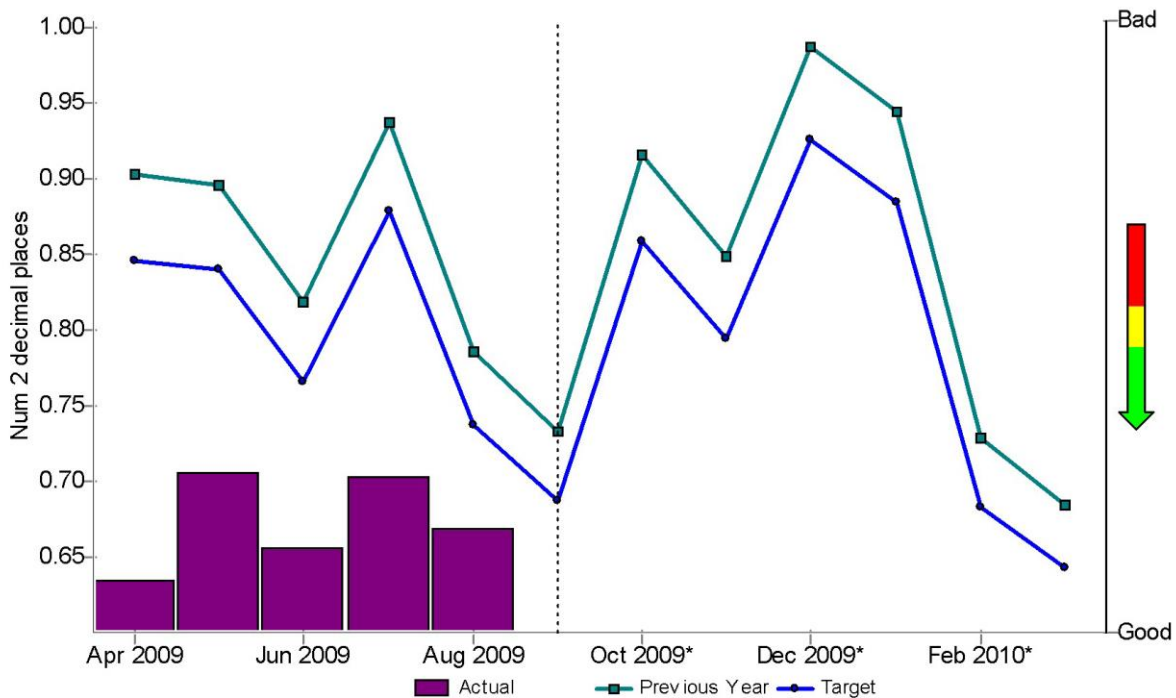
1.1 Absence levels have previously been identified as a key measure for this Committee to monitor and review as a standing item. Progress towards our target remains good and on line.

**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. The target for 2009/10 is 9.6 days per person.

2.2 The absence levels for 2008/9 were lower than the target level and this overall good performance has been continued into 2009/10. The Service has seen a 22% decrease in absence when compared with the same period last year. At this point in time, the previous year was at an average of 4.34 days absence per person compared with the actual level for 2009/10 of 3.37 days. This is 17% better than the target level.

*All Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10*



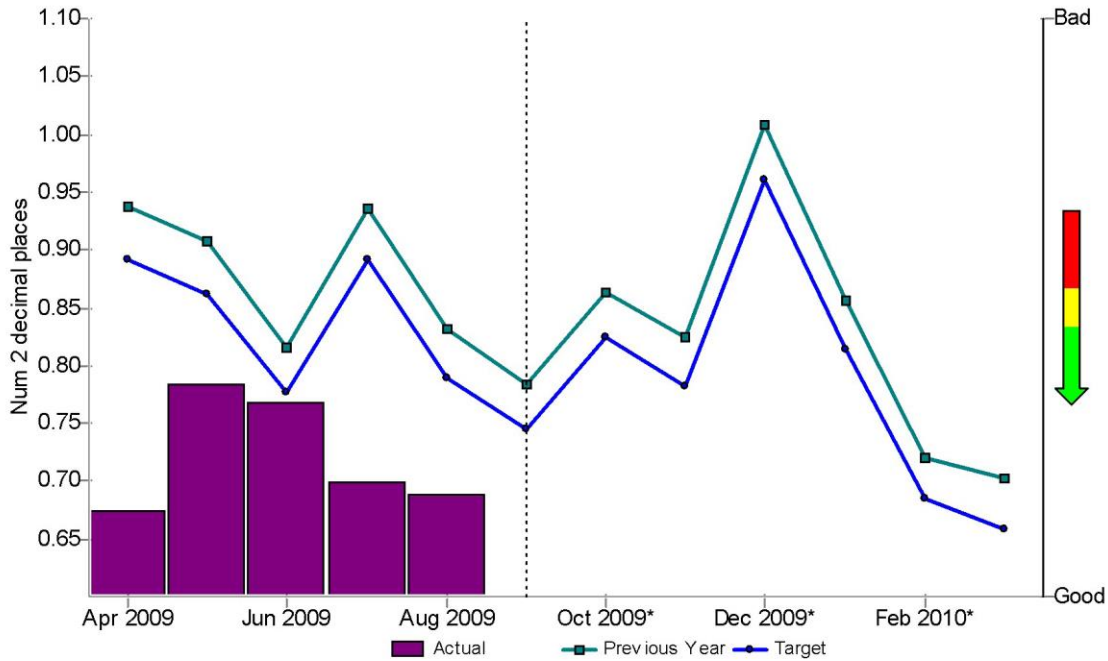
*All Staff – Sickness Rates per Person – by Month*

	Actual 09/10	Previous Year 08/09	% variance on previous year	% variance on target
Apr-09	0.64	0.90	-29.6%	-24.9%
May-09	0.71	0.90	-21.2%	-16.0%
Jun-09	0.66	0.82	-19.8%	-14.4%
Jul-09	0.70	0.94	-25.0%	-20.0%
Aug-09	0.67	0.79	-15.0%	-9.4%
Year to Date	3.37	4.34	-22.4%	-17.4%

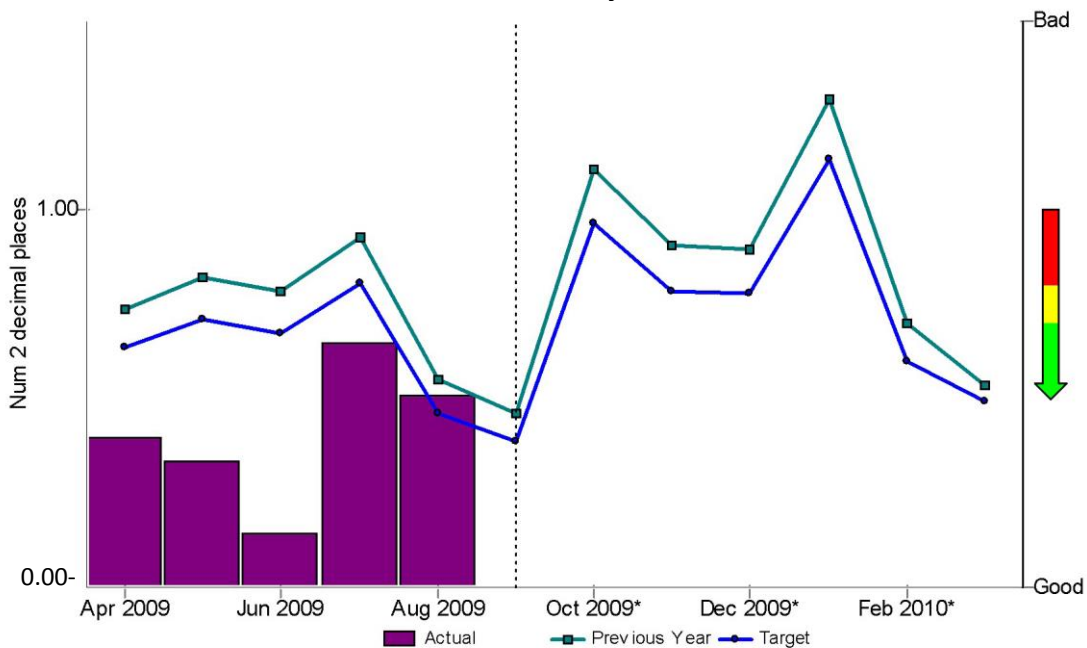
2.3 The figures can be broken down by staff category and the rates for uniformed, control and non-uniformed are shown below. The uniformed levels have remained below the previous year and below the target level.

2.4 For non-uniformed staff and Control the August sickness levels have seen deterioration in the absence levels. Non-uniformed had a 5.4% lower rate than the previous year but was 6.4% higher than the target level, whilst in Control the levels were 4.3% higher than the previous year and 8.3% higher than the target level. The sickness levels in Control appear to be on a general increase having previously seen a marked improvement in the latter part of 2008/9 and more information will be sought from this area.

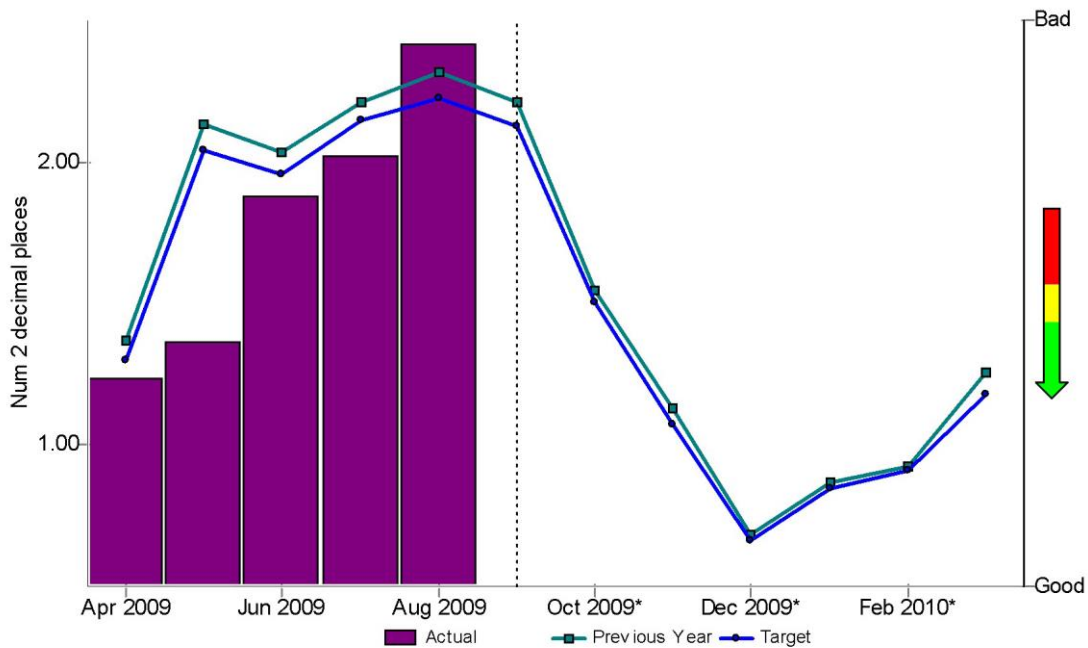
*Uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10*



*Non-uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10*



Control Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10



2.5 The number of days lost due to sickness can also be considered by location and these are shown in Appendix A. This is the total lost days and further analysis would be beneficial in terms of league tables and a breakdown between short-term and long-term sickness to assist in targeting the support given to managers in absence management.

3. **COST OF ABSENCE**

3.1 The Service already has a ridership factor applied at station level to account for absences including annual leave, training and sickness. So, when a member of station based staff is absent, it does not necessarily mean that a further cost has been incurred.

3.2 The costs that have been calculated relate to direct salary costs only and do not take into account any indirect costs or allowances e.g. flexi-duty.

Period	Salary Cost
Apr	£86,969
May	£99,935
Jun	£95,389
Jul	£95,304
Aug	£91,422

Of the total:

- 57% of this cost is due to long-term sickness
- 18% of this cost is due to certified sickness
- 25% of this cost is due to uncertified sickness

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

The monitoring of long term sickness i.e. 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 sickness absence since 2008 is shown below. The new Absence Management policy has introduced some new aspects to give support to staff in returning to work including home visits after 3 months and the use of the sickness review panel.

2008												
Number of staff	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Uniformed	31	27	28	23	23	19	19	20	23	17	20	18
Retained	16	14	17	10	10	8	10	8	9	12	14	20
Non-uniformed	6	3	6	6	7	6	2	4	2	3	6	5
Total	53	44	51	39	40	33	31	32	34	32	40	43

2009												
Number of staff	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Uniformed	16	18	18	18	22	18	15	14	16			
Retained	20	20	21	25	18	20	13	17	21			
Non-uniformed	3	5	1	1	0	2	2	2	3			
Total	39	43	40	44	40	40	30	33	40			

#### 5. **PANDEMIC FLU**

- 5.1 There have been a small number of suspected and reported swine flu cases and the Service is monitoring this situation. The Service has Business Continuity plans in place to ensure that the Service is able to continue to operate in the event of a more widespread outbreak.

#### 6. **CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The Service has seen an overall improvement over the previous year at a level better than targeted for 2009/10.

**JANE SHERLOCK**  
**Head of Human Resources Management and Development**