



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/10/8
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	14 APRIL 2010
SUBJECT OF REPORT	ABSENCE MANAGEMENT
LEAD OFFICER	Director of People and Organisational Development
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The progress with Absence Management has been included as a standing item for the Human Resources Management & Development Committee for some time. This report includes an update of the Service performance for absence levels and also the long term absence levels.</p> <p>The report also includes a copy of the new 'fit' note which replaces the GP medical certificate from the 6 April 2010.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	As set out within this report.
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None indicated.
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1. **INTRODUCTION**

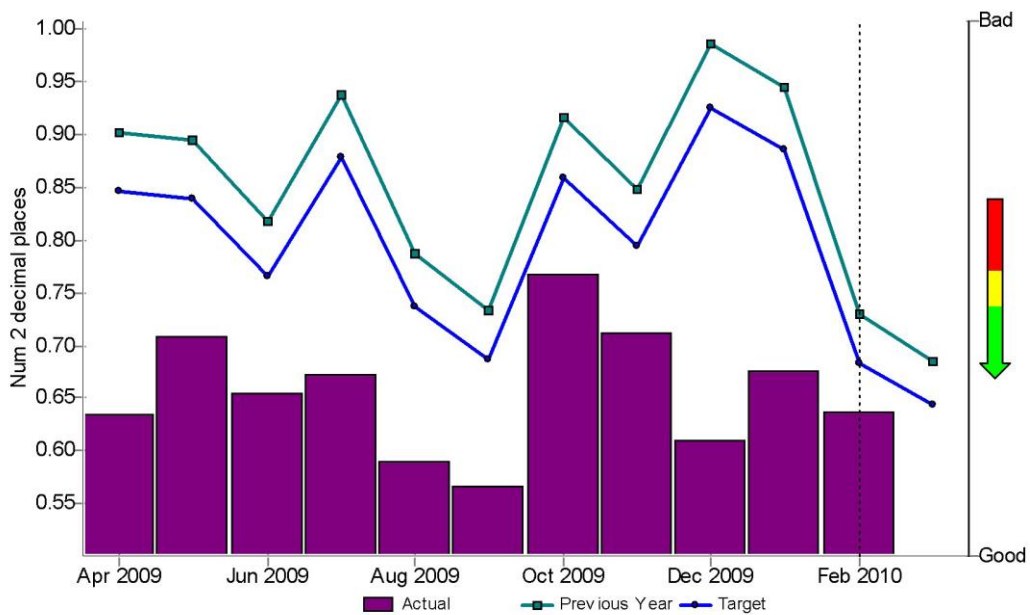
1.1 Absence levels have been identified previously as a key measure that the HRMD Committee will monitor and review as a standing item. Progress towards our target remains good and ahead of target as part of the Service Performance Reporting.

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 maintained into 2009/10. The Service has seen a 23.9% decrease in absence when compared with the same period last year. At this point in time, the previous year was at an average of 9.5 days absence per person compared with our actual level for 2009/10 of 7.23 days. This is 18.8% better than our target level of 8.9 days per person at this point in time.

All Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10

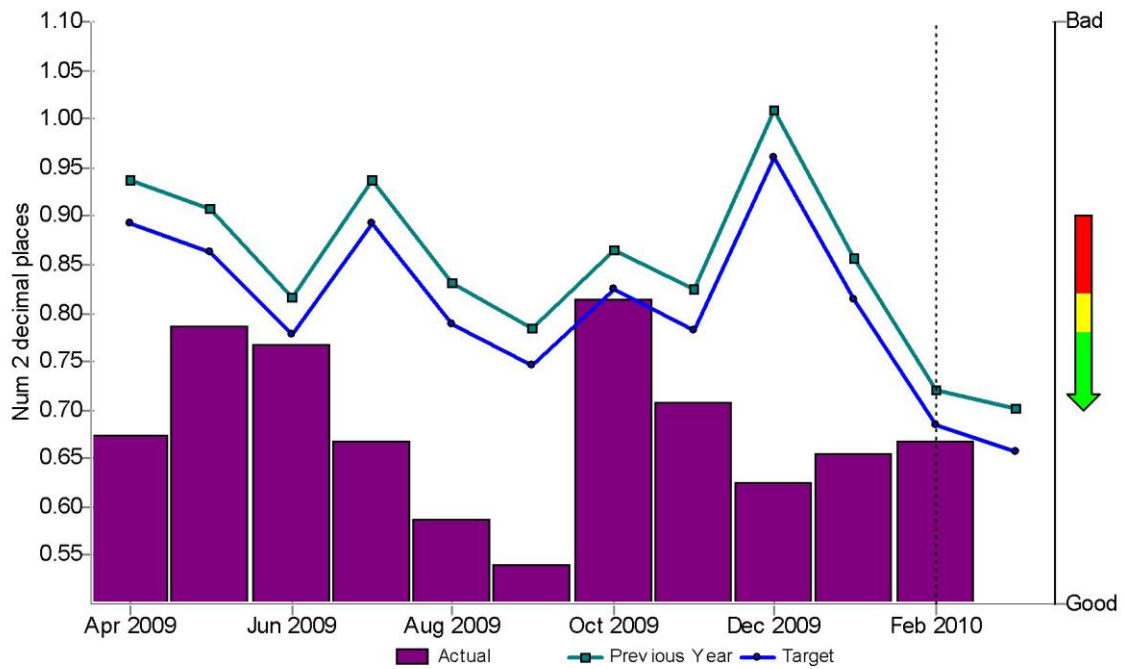


All Staff – Sickness Rates per Person – by Month

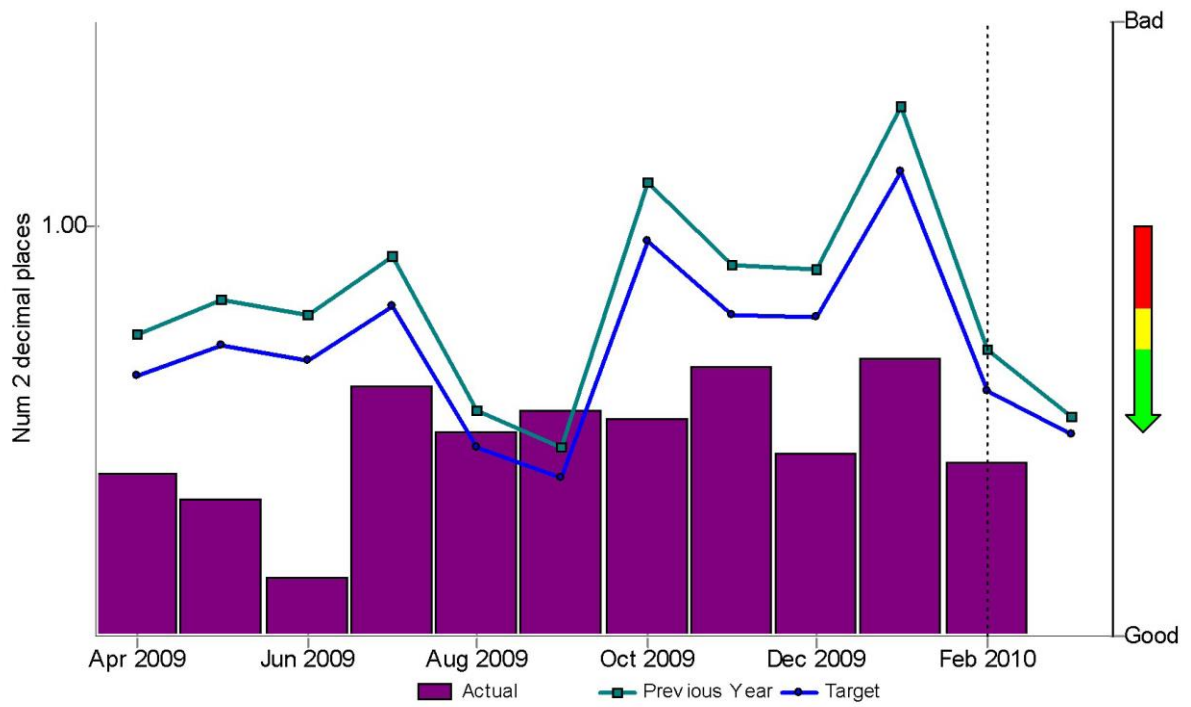
	Actual 09/10	Previous Year 08/09	% variance on previous year	% variance on target
Apr-09	0.64	0.90	-29.6%	-24.9%
May-09	0.71	0.90	-21.2%	-16.0%
Jun-09	0.66	0.82	-20.0%	-14.5%
Jul-09	0.68	0.94	-27.8%	-23.0%
Aug-09	0.6	0.79	-23.2%	-18.0%
Sept 09	0.57	0.73	-22.7%	-17.5%
Oct 09	0.77	0.92	-16.1%	-10.6%
Nov 09	0.71	0.85	-16.1%	-10.4%
Dec 09	0.61	0.99	-38.3%	-34.2%
Jan 09	0.68	0.94	-28.4%	-23.6%
Feb 09	0.64	0.73	-12.8%	-6.9%
YTD	7.23	9.5	-23.9%	-18.8%

2.3 As usual, the figures can then be further broken down by staff category and the rates for uniformed, control and non-uniformed are shown below.

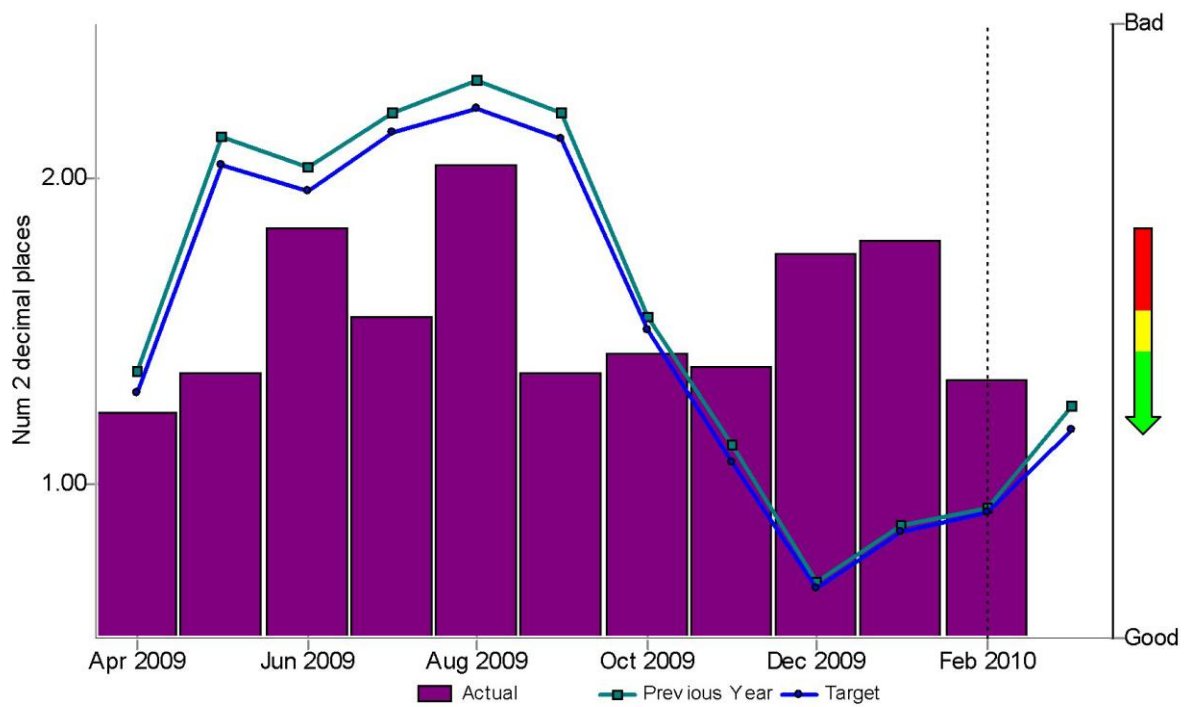
Uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10



Non-uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10



Control Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2009/10



3. COST OF ABSENCE

- 3.1 The cost of absence is part of the provided data although it is recognised that the Service 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 eg flexi-duty.

Period	Salary Cost
Apr	£87,587
May	£101,148
Jun	£96,004
Jul	£92,069
Aug	£78,357
Sep	£72,569
Oct	£108,758
Nov	£98,452
Dec	£84,379
Jan	£89,943
Feb	£86,707

Of the total:

- 52.3% of this cost is due to long-term sickness
- 17.4% of this cost is due to certified sickness
- 30.4% of this cost is due to uncertified sickness

4. DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF LONG TERM SICKNESS

- 4.1 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 sick since 2008 is shown below. These are also shown graphically with trendlines. Both uniformed (Wholetime and Control) and non-uniformed show a downwards trend whilst the Retained Duty System has been on the increase. Overall the trend is downwards.

2008

Number of staff	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	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

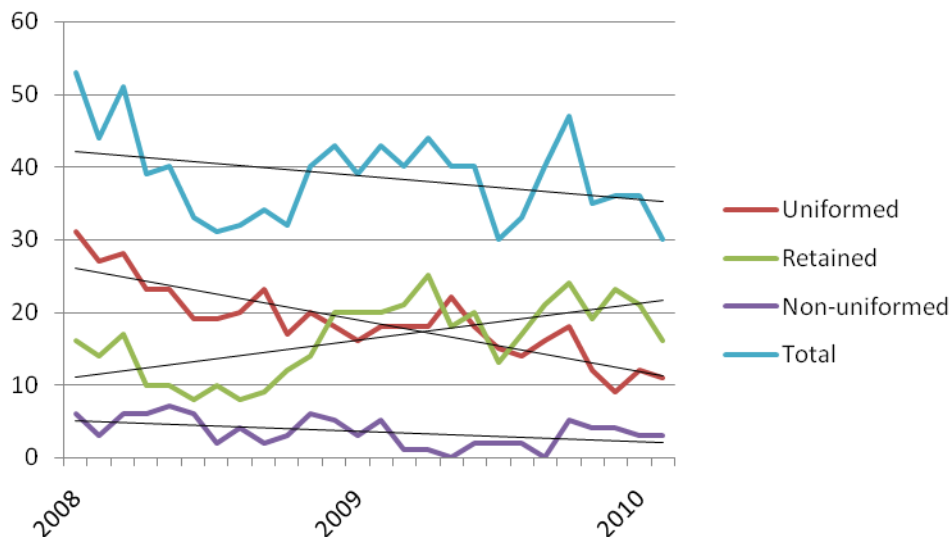
2009

Number of staff	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Uniformed	16	18	18	18	22	18	15	14	16	18	12	9
Retained	20	20	21	25	18	20	13	17	21	24	19	23
Non-uniformed	3	5	1	1	0	2	2	2	3	5	4	4
Total	39	43	40	44	40	40	30	33	40	47	35	36

2010

Number of staff	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Uniformed	12	11										
Retained	21	16										
Non-uniformed	3	3										
Total	36	30										

Long-term Sickness 2008 to 2010 – Number of Staff



5. NEW 'FIT' NOTES TO REPLACE 'SICK' CERTIFICATES

5.1 From the 6 April 2010, the format of General Practitioners' medical certificates or sick notes will change. The new 'fit' note is intended to assist both employees and employers by helping people back to work as soon as possible. The main changes will mean:

- A GP will be able to say if they think an employee is 'not fit for work' or 'may be fit for work';
- A GP can add advice to the note for an employer on how simple changes to the job may allow an employee to return to work earlier
- There will be fewer kinds of medical statements forms issued by GPs

5.2 These changes will link in with our sickness policy and contribute to the work we do with employees, their GP's and Occupational Health to facilitate the return to work of employees as soon as it is safe for them to do so.

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 People and Organisations