

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/10/12
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	17 JUNE 2010
SUBJECT OF REPORT	HEALTH OF THE ORGANISATION
LEAD OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE & ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The 'Health of the Organisation' is a new measure being developed by Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service as a means of monitoring people aspects of the organisation which could be inextricably linked to the overall health of the organisation. This includes the levels of discipline and grievances cases, any trends in bullying and harassment, the turnover of staff, the levels of stress and referrals to counselling and the collective relationships with Trade Unions.</p> <p>The health of the organisation is also an agenda item for the Joint Safety Committee to enable such aspects as 'psychological safety' to be discussed. This report will consider the data that the Service holds in relation to these aspects. These measures will also link with the EFQM Excellence Model that the Service has used to assist with our Service Strategy.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	There are ongoing resource implications in relation to the turnover of staff and absence through mental health.
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	Paragraph 3.1 and 3.2 of the report refers.
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The '*Health of the Organisation*' is a measure being developed by Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service as a means of monitoring people aspects of the organisation which could be inextricably linked. This is a wider view than that of absence measurement and can take in a range of measures. Currently the key aspects of consideration are the levels of discipline and grievances cases, any trends in bullying and harassment, the turnover of staff, the levels of stress and referrals to counselling and the collective relationships with Trade Unions. The staff survey will also contribute to this measure once the results from our second survey are collated.

1.2 The health of the organisation has been added to the Joint Safety Committee to enable such aspects as 'psychological safety' to be discussed. A psychologically safe workplace can be defined as one that does not permit the harm to employees' mental health in a careless, negligent, reckless or intentional way. There are critical reasons employers should address the psychological safety of their workplace and work to minimise the risk factors. These are:

- Ensuring that we meet our legal and moral responsibility for our staff.
- The financial impact of enhancing psychological health in the workplace.
- The impact of workplace factors on employee mental health.

1.3 This report will consider the data that the Service holds in relation to these aspects. These measures will also link with the EFQM Excellence Model that the Service has used to assist with our Service Strategy. This model is provided through the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM).

2. **MENTAL HEALTH (STRESS)**

2.1 During 2009/10 there was a considerable reduction in Mental Health sickness as reported within the Absence Management standing item. This decrease by 53% is an impressive result. The reduction was from 2416 sick days in 2008/09 to 1143 sick days in 2009/10. There was a reduction in the number of times someone is was off with mental health sickness from 74 to 58 instances in 2009/10 but also staff are returning to work quicker. In 2008/09 the average mental health sickness absence lost 32.6 shift days; however in 2009/10 this has reduced to only 19.7 shift days.

2.2 The Service has counselling contracts in place which are currently with the NHS for Somerset staff and wellbeing@work through Devon County Council for Devon staff. With Somerset the number of referrals is shown below. The figure for 2010/11 is year to date.

	No of Cases
2007/8	176
2008/9	143
2009/10	153
2010/11	42

2.3 In Devon the number of referrals is shown below:

	No of Cases
2007/8	32
2008/9	29
2009/10	33
2010/11	

2.4 There is clearly a huge difference in the number of cases and the classification will need to be checked.

2.5 The Service's Welfare Officer will also have welfare cases and in the period July to December 2009 there were 24. Some of these may have also received counselling. Of the 24 cases, 11 avoided a period of absence with the support of the Welfare Officer. The Staff Supporter network have had 8 recorded referrals since 1 April 2009 and the new mediation contract through Devon County Council has had 4 referrals since March 2010.

3. **STAFF TURNOVER**

3.1 The level of turnover is monitored in relation to staff leaving the organisation. Whilst a reasonable level of turnover demonstrates a degree of good organisational health if it becomes too high then it will cause organisational issues e.g. if those leaving have specific skills that are lost from the organisation.

3.2 There are a number of costs associated with staff turnover. The obvious ones are time and money, but there are also hidden costs. When a member of staff leaves, there may be costs associated with leaver administration, covering a vacancy until it's filled, e.g. through the use of temporary staff or overtime payments, advertising for a replacement or using a agency worker, dealing with recruitment and selection processes and the induction and training of the successful applicant. Hidden costs include higher levels of stress-related absence, interruptions to workflow and missed deadlines, a reduction in capacity or a drop in staff morale.

3.2 The characteristic pattern of employee turnover is high for new starters, then decreasing. This pattern will vary in any single organisation and is known as the 'survival curve'. The Service is seeking to introduce an exit interview policy to provide more information to assist the Service in analysing the reasons for staff turnover.

3.3 Turnover levels vary between sectors. The Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (CIPD) found the highest levels of turnover (16.8%) was in private sector organisations. Successive surveys of staff turnover show that the highest levels are typically found in retailing, hotels, catering and leisure, call centres and among other lower paid private sector services groups. Turnover stands at 16.4% in voluntary, community and not-for-profit organisations and the public sector has an average turnover rate of 12.6%.

3.4 The current levels of turnover within DSFRS are as follows:

	2007/08			2008/09			2009/10			Average 07-10
	Employed on April 1st	Leavers during year	%	Employed on April 1st	Leavers during year	%	Employed on April 1st	Leavers during year	%	Leavers per year
Non-Uni	252	34	13.49	250	25	10.00	278	26	9.35	28
Control	54	5	9.26	57	8	14.04	57	6	10.53	6
Retained	1210	93	7.69	1209	87	7.20	1226	62	5.06	81
Wholetime	735	22	2.99	724	40	5.52	711	23	3.23	28
Total	2251	154	6.84	2240	160	7.14	2272	117	5.15	144

3.5 The turnover of non-uniformed staff has reduced each year since combination from 13.49% to 9.35%. In Control we have seen a rising level of turnover possibly due to the increase in temporary staff and with the RCC project. Retained turnover has reduced and this will reduce our training costs. Turnover in the Wholetime has been traditionally low and this remains the case.

4. **DISCIPLINE & GRIEVANCE CASES**

4.1 The levels of Grievance and Discipline cases are shown on the next page. In 2009/10 there was a marked reduction in the number of grievances within the Service which is a good improvement. There is no real trend in the number of discipline cases and even though the level of both grievances and discipline cases is low for 2010/11, insufficient time has passed to give any reliable forecast for the remainder of the year.

	Grievances	Discipline
2007/8	24	27
2008/9	30	21
2009/10	10	30
2010/11	1	1

4.2 Of these cases the number relating to bullying and harassment are as follows:

	Grievances	Discipline
2007/8	5	5
2008/9	3	0
2009/10	1	3
2010/11	0	0

4.3 The numbers are too small to be significant but there has been a reduction in the number of grievances and greater direct disciplinary action has been taken.

5. **COLLECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

5.1 These are generally good and improving. There has been one matter referred to the national employers as a formal dispute with all other matters being resolved locally.

6. **CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The Health of the Organisation is a new aspect of self-assessment and one that we will continue to review. It will also be linked with the EFQM Excellence Model.

JANE SHERLOCK
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