

**M. Pearson  
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY**

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

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

**Friday 21 January 2011**

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 B in Somerset House, Service Headquarters** to consider the following matters.

M. Pearson  
Clerk to the Authority

**AGENDA**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 November 2010 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. **Absence Management**

Report of the Director of People And Organisational Development (HRMDC/11/1) attached (page 3)

6. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

**RECOMMENDATION** 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 involves 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 any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

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

7. **Redundancy Compensation for Compulsory & Voluntary Redundancies**

Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development attached (page 11).

### **MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

Membership:-

Councillors Cann (Chair), Burridge-Clayton (Vice Chair), Bown, Boyd, Manning, Mrs. Nicholson and Turner

**Substitute Members**

Members are reminded that, in accordance with Standing Order 36, 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 November 2010

### Present:-

Councillors Cann (Chairman), Bown, Boyd, Burrige-Clayton and Manning.

### Apologies:-

Councillors Mrs. Nicholson and Turner.

### **\*HRMDC/18. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2010 be signed as a correct record.

### **\*HRMDC/19. Declarations of Interest**

Members of the Committee were asked to consider whether they had any personal/personal and prejudicial interests in items as set out on the agenda for this meeting and to declare any such interests at this time.

### **\*HRMDC/20. The Equality Act 2010 and Progress Report against the Single Equality Scheme "Making the Connections"**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/10/16) that gave a summary of the expected position in respect of the extended legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, together with details of the progress made against the Single Equality Scheme – Making the Connections” which was approved by the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority in May 2009.

The new Equality Act 2010 consolidated nine pieces of legislation and put into place a cross cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act created nine legally protected characteristics namely, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and finally, sexual orientation. The Act also created General Duties within the new Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The General Duty to be implemented from April 2011 is:

“A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage, meet people’s needs, take account of disabilities, encourage participation in public life;
- Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding).

Within the General Duty, a number of specific duties were also set out surrounding transparency, engagement and equality impact assessment. The Act did not, however, prescribe the need for a specific equality scheme and therefore a decision will need to be taken in the future once the new equality objectives have been set and guidance has been issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

**\*HRMDC/21. Absence Management**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/10/17) that set out the overall performance of the Service in relation to sickness absence management in 2010/11 and which highlighted the position in relation to long term absence levels in particular.

The Committee noted that, at this point in time, performance in 2009/10 was at an average of 3.83 days absence per person compared with the actual level of 3.64 days/shifts lost per person in 2010/11. This was an improvement of 15.4% on the target level for 2010/11. Whilst this was on track to meet the year end target of 9.0 days/shifts lost per person, the figures for August and September 2010 had shown an increase and the trend was for sickness to increase in the second half of the year with winter illnesses. The increase was linked to the point that the long terms sickness rate for non uniformed staff had increased since August 2010. There were two members of staff that had been off sick for over 2 months and this had impacted on the performance in this area. In terms of type of sickness, the incidence of mental health issues was showing an increase in the current year compared with 2009/10, although musculoskeletal injury was still the most significant cause of absence for the Service. Work was being undertaken in this area to determine whether musculoskeletal injuries were occurring as on or off duty and what action could be undertaken to mitigate this position.

Reference was made to the measures that were being taken to reduce the levels of absence, including Wellbeing at Work initiatives, a guide to assist staff to cope with stress and further work in respect of return to work interviews. The Chairman referred to the position in respect of the return to work interviews and enquired as to whether any progress had been made with this. The Human Resources Manager advised that he had not been able to progress the training for Line Managers that had been proposed previously but that this would be pursued.

The Chairman moved (and was seconded by Councillor Boyd) that:

“in addition to noting the report, an update on the progress made in respect of return to work interviews be submitted to the Committee at its next meeting”.

This was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) That an update on the progress made in respect of return to work interviews be submitted to the Committee at its next meeting;
- (b) That, subject to (a) above, report HRMDC/10/17 be noted.

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.00hours



# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	HRMDC/11/1
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	21 JANUARY 2011
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>ABSENCE MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Director of People and Organisational 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 within the agenda for the Human Resources Management and Development Committee. This report includes an update of the Service performance for absence levels.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	There are ongoing resource implications in relation to absence management in terms of providing cover when required.
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	The Absence Management policy has had an equality impact assessment.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	None
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	None

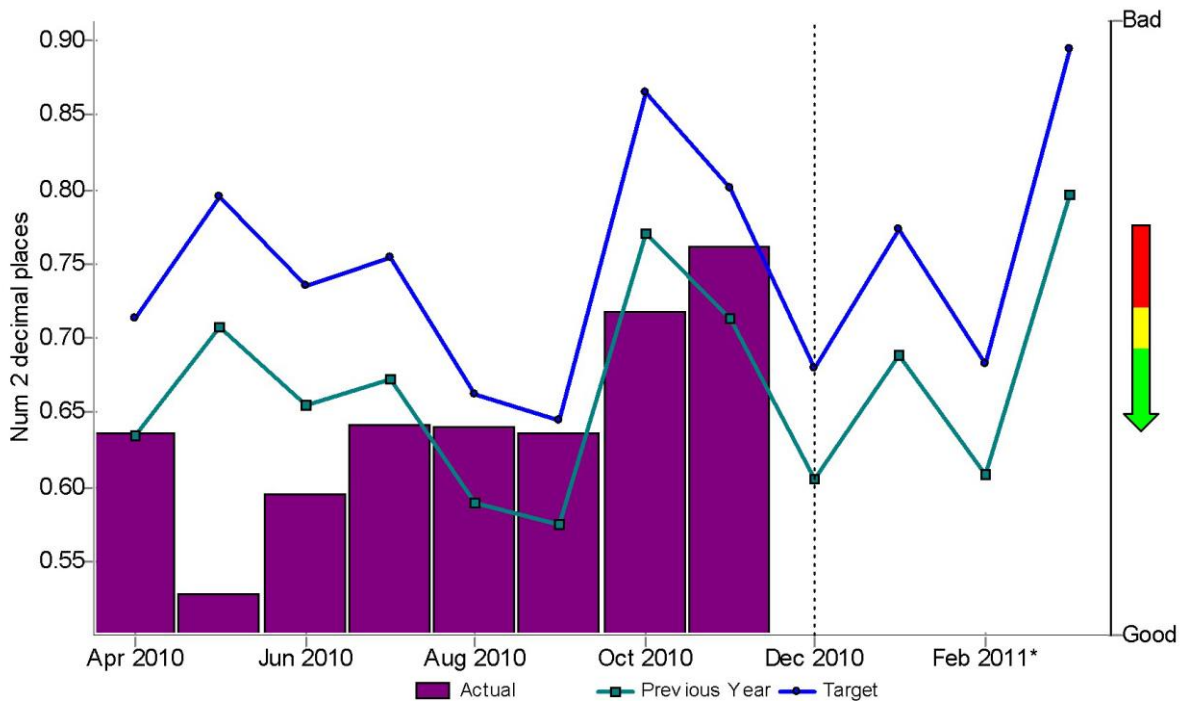
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Absence levels have previously been identified as a key measure that the HRMD Committee will monitor and review as a standing item. The target for 2010/11 is an average rate of 9.0 days/shifts lost per person.

2. **2010/11 PERFORMANCE**

2.1 At this point in time, our actual level for 2010/11 is 5.15 days/shifts lost per person compared with the previous year when it was as at an average of 5.32 days per person. This is 13.7% better than our target level at this point in the year but only 3.1% less than last year. Whilst we remain on track to be below the year end target of 9 days/shifts we are unlikely to make any significant improvement on the absence level for 2009/10 of 8.02 days.

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



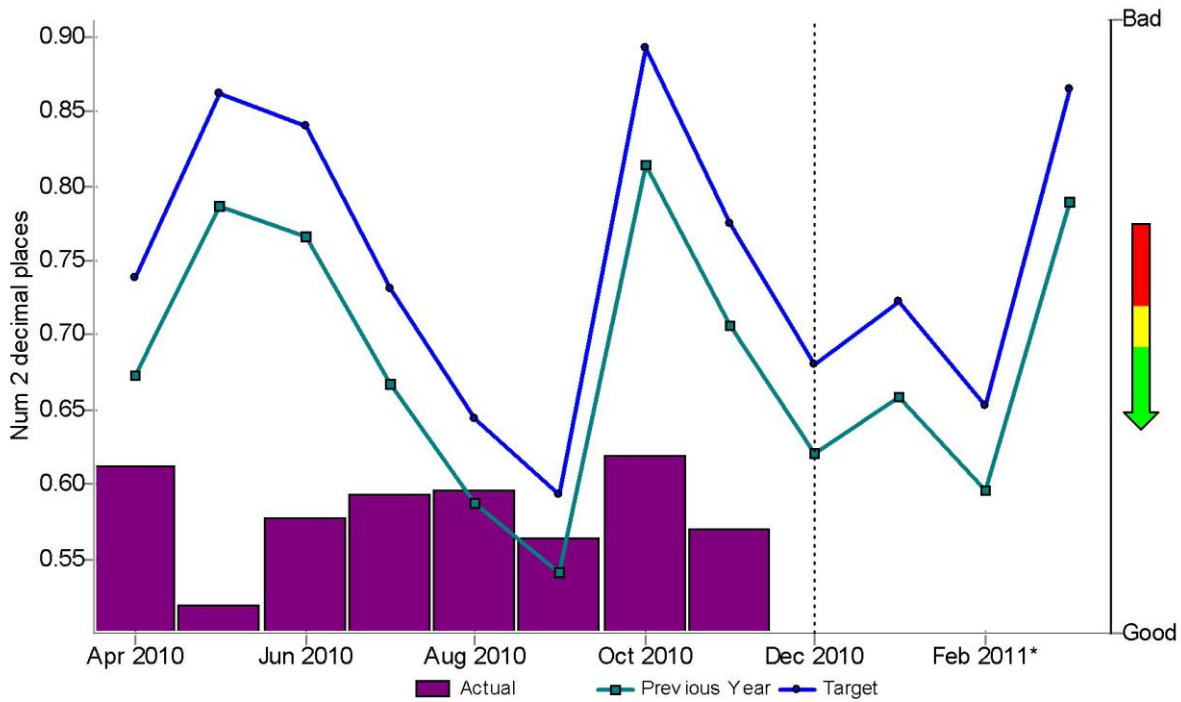
	<b>Actual 10/11</b>	<b>Previous Year 09/10</b>	<b>% variance on previous year</b>	<b>% variance on target</b>
<b>Apr-10</b>	0.64	0.64	0.0%	-10.9%
<b>May-10</b>	0.53	0.71	-25.5%	-33.6%
<b>Jun-10</b>	0.58	0.66	-9.2%	-19.2%
<b>Jul-10</b>	0.63	0.67	-5.9%	-16.2%
<b>Aug-10</b>	0.64	0.59	8.1%	-3.7%
<b>Sep-10</b>	0.62	0.57	7.6%	-4.2%
<b>Oct-10</b>	0.72	0.77	-6.9%	-17.1%
<b>Nov-10</b>	0.76	0.71	6.7%	-5%
<b>YTD</b>	5.15	5.32	-3.1%	-13.7%



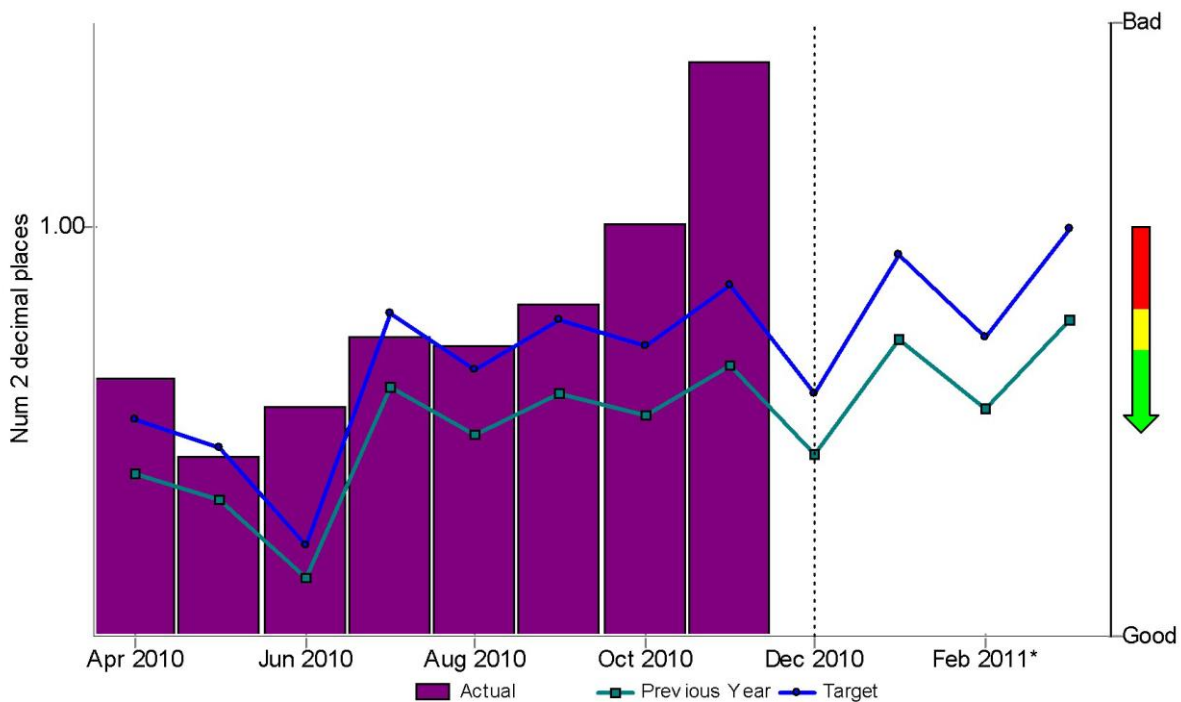
2.2

As usual, we can then break down the figures by staff category and the rates for uniformed, control and non-uniformed are shown below. The uniformed rates show an excellent reduction compared with last year but this is not reflected in the overall performance due to the levels of absence in Control and Non-uniformed staff. Non-uniformed staff have seen an increase over several months and Control remain beyond our target levels.

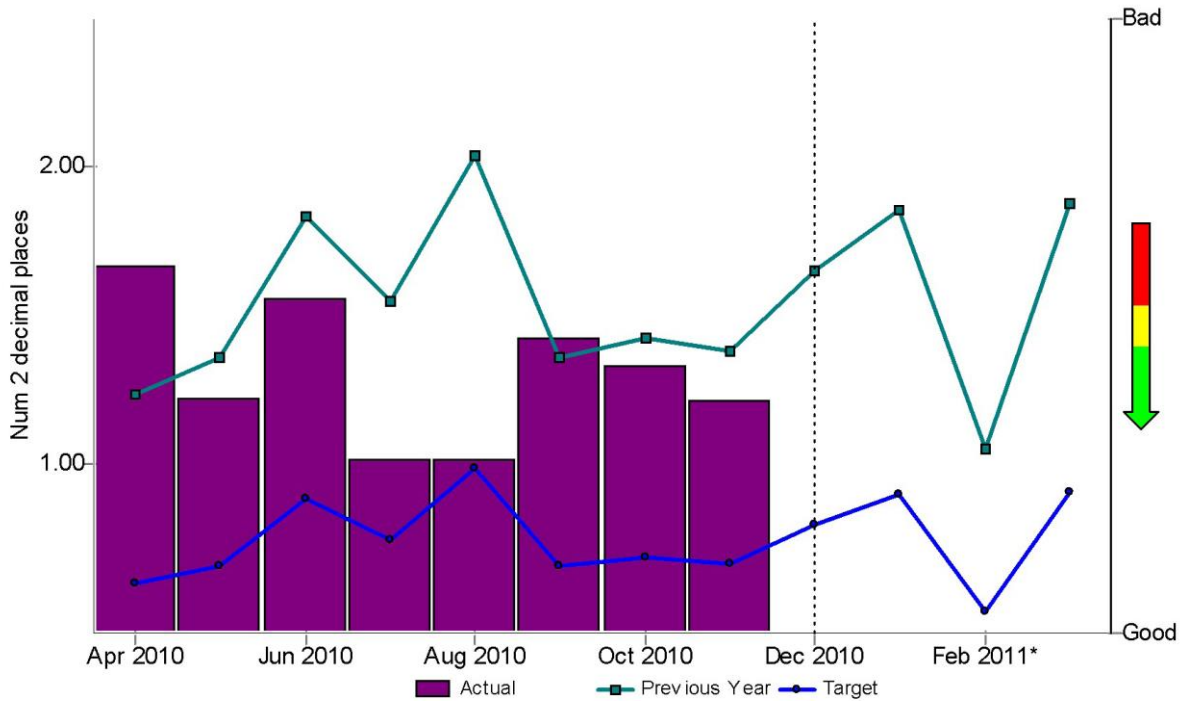
**Uniformed Staff Sickiness Rates by Month 2010/11**



**Non-uniformed Staff Sickiness Rates by Month 2010/11**



### Control Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2010/11



- 2.3 The overall performance levels that are reported through the Service Improvement Group are shown below and these reflect the higher absence levels amongst Non-uniformed staff.

Sickness & Ill Health		Actual	Previous Year	% Variance
	<b>Sickness Rates - Long Term - All Staff</b>	2.95	2.94	<b>0.4%</b>
	# Days/shifts lost LT - All Staff	3058	2938	<b>4.1%</b>
	<b>Sickness Rates - ST Cert - All Staff</b>	0.75	0.85	<b>-11.3%</b>
	# Days/shifts lost STcert - All Staff	778	846	<b>-8.0%</b>
	<b>Sickness Rates - ST Uncert - All Staff</b>	1.45	1.53	<b>-5.5%</b>
	# Days/shifts lost STuncert - All Staff	1501	1532	<b>-2.0%</b>
	<b>Uniformed Sickness Rate</b>	4.65	5.54	<b>-16.1%</b>
	# Days/shifts lost - Uni total	3606	4180	<b>-13.7%</b>
	<b>Sickness Rates - Non Uniformed</b>	6.64	4.62	<b>43.7%</b>
	# Days/shifts lost - Non Uni	1731	1136	<b>52.4%</b>

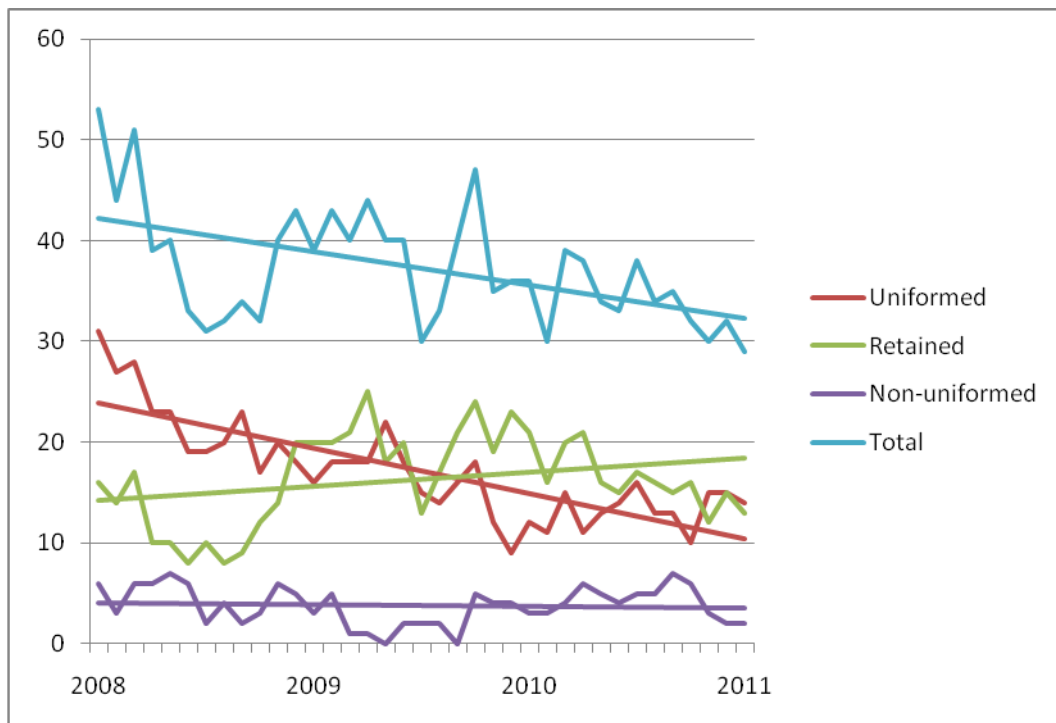
### 3. DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF LONG TERM SICKNESS

- 3.1 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. Long term sickness has shown an improvement over the year particularly with the Retained staff. The overall number of staff who have been long term sick going back to 2008 shows a downward trend. Uniformed (Wholetime and Control) show a downwards trend whilst the Non-uniformed shows a flat-line trend. The Retained show an increase in the trend line.

**2010/11 Long-term Sickness**

Number of staff	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Uniformed	12	11	15	11	13	14
Retained	21	16	20	21	16	15
Non-uniformed	3	3	4	6	5	4
Total	36	30	39	38	34	33

Number of staff	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Uniformed	16	13	13	10	15	15	14
Retained	17	16	15	16	12	15	13
Non-uniformed	5	5	7	6	3	2	2
Total	38	34	35	32	30	32	29



**Long-term Sickness 2008 to 2011 – Number of Staff**

3.3

The Long term sickness can then be further broken down for staff with absences that have been ongoing for a period longer than 6, 12, 18 and 24 months as requested by members. These are shown below for August and November 2010 and January 2011 which is when we have had previous HRMD Committees. The performance has been good in this area with the number of cases reducing from 16 to 12 to 6.

Aug-10

Number of staff	>6 mths	>12 mths	>18 mths	>24 mths	Total
Uniformed	4	0	0	2	6
Retained	2	1	1	3	7
Non-uniformed	2	0	0	1	3
Total	8	1	1	6	16

Nov-10

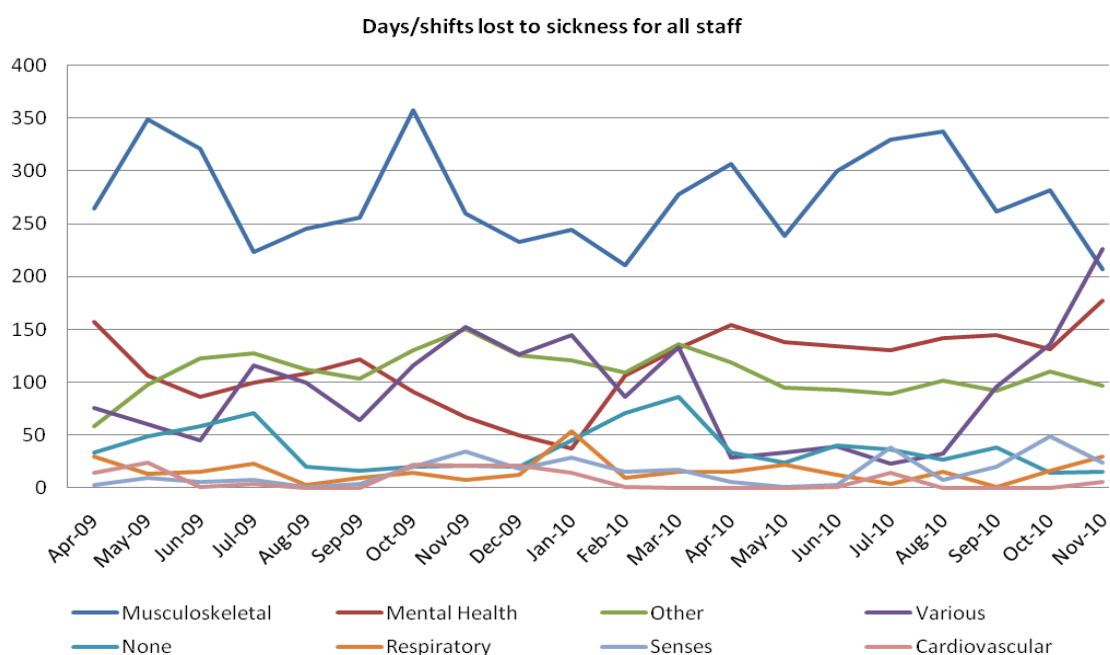
Number of staff	>6 mths	>12 mths	>18 mths	>24 mths	Total
Uniformed	2	1	0	2	5
Retained	1	1	2	1	5
Non-uniformed	2	0	0	0	2
Total	5	2	2	3	12

Jan-11

Number of staff	>6 mths	>12 mths	>18 mths	>24 mths	Total
Uniformed	1	0	0	2	3
Retained	0	0	1	0	1
Non-uniformed	2	0	0	0	2
Total	3	0	1	2	6

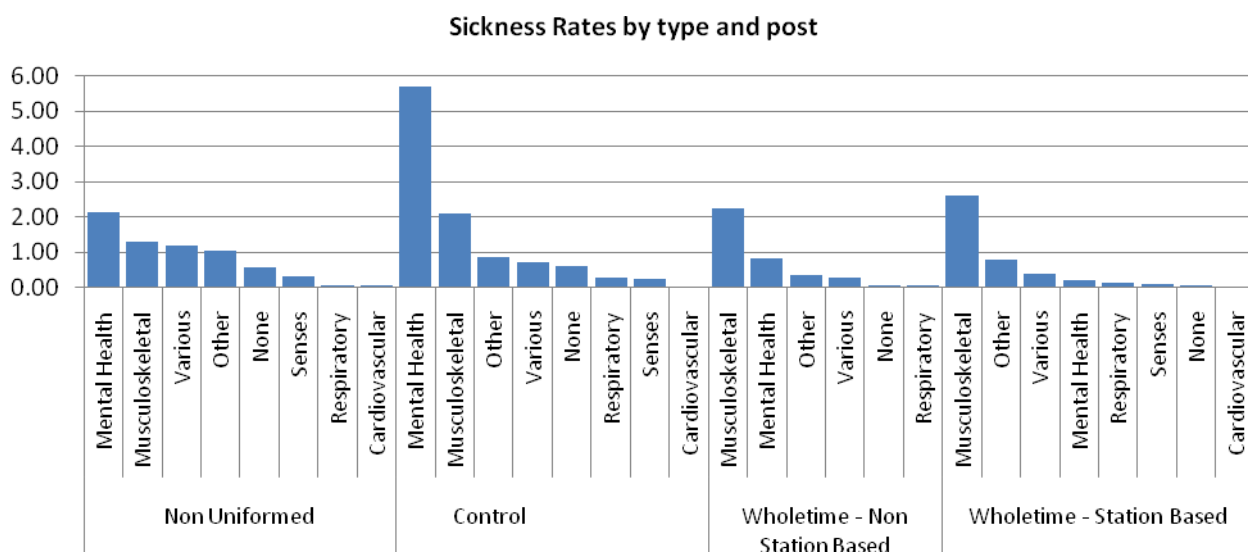
#### 4. CAUSES OF ABSENCE

4.1 The main causes of absence remain due to Musculoskeletal problems and include a variety of problems including back, knee, shoulder pain. Mental Health problems continue to show an increase as does the 'various' category. The 'various' category includes colds, flu, dental and sore throats.



- 4.2 The Service has also done some further analysis to break down the types of sickness by the different post types. As the number of staff for each post type is very different, the graphs have been produced using the sickness rates (number of days/shifts lost per full time equivalent (FTE)). This gives the ability to look at Non-uniformed, Control, Wholetime Station based staff and Wholetime Non-station based staff (includes staff based at SHQ, Service Training Centre, Group Support Teams etc).
- 4.3 When looking at the following graph below it identifies that Control have had a particularly high level of Mental Health absences, this is actually 12 occurrences but as Mental Health often becomes long term sickness the rate is higher at 5.68 days/shifts per FTE. Musculoskeletal absences for control have a rate of only 2.1, however there have been 21 occurrences.
- 4.4 For Non-uniformed staff again Mental Health is highest with a rate of 2.13 days per FTE and 18 occurrences, compared to the musculoskeletal rate of 1.29 but 43 occurrences.
- 4.5 For Wholetime staff the picture is the opposite, with station based staff having a rate of 2.61 days and 157 occurrences for musculoskeletal absences and mental health having a rate of 0.2 and only 11 occurrences. Non-station based staff also have high musculoskeletal absences with a rate of 2.25 and 21 occurrences, however mental health is higher than station based staff with a rate of 0.83, however there has only been 5 occurrences.

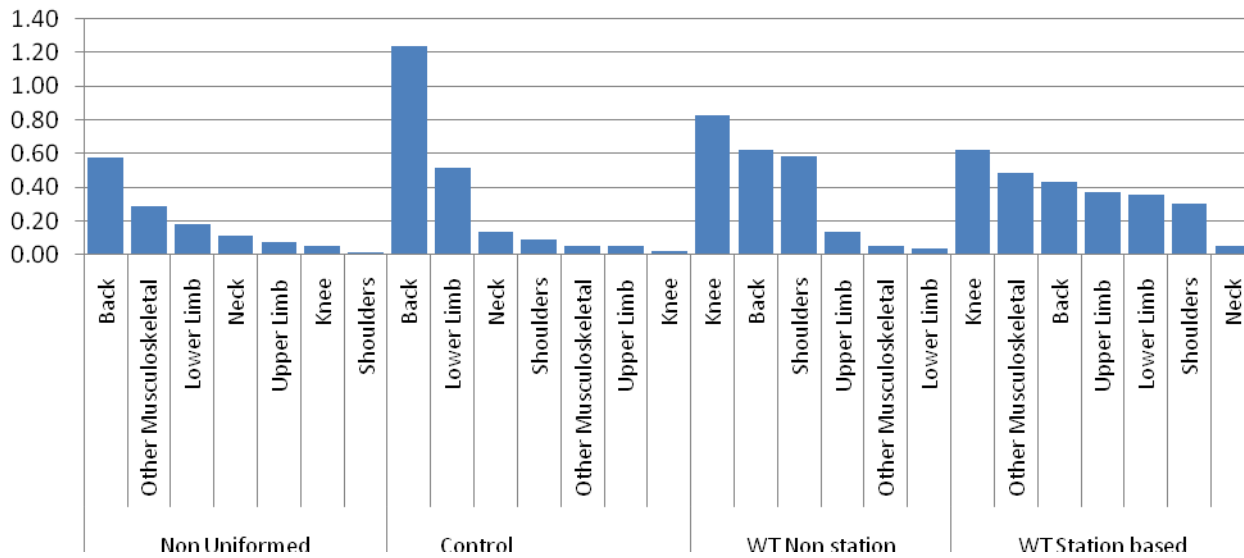
**Long Term Sickness by type of Sickness**



- 4.6 When looking at the Musculoskeletal absences a further breakdown identifies again a difference in the trend between more office based roles and those that are on stations. The more office based roles (Non-uniformed and control) both have back problems as the biggest cause for absence, there have been 11 Non-uniformed absences due to back problems and 9 in control.

- 4.7 For Wholetime station based staff knee injuries tend to have longer term impacts so although there are 22 occurrences compared to 35 absences due to back problems this comes out as the highest rate, although all types of musculoskeletal problems are high. For the non-station based wholetime staff the same pattern shows with only 3 knee problems causing the higher rate of 0.83 compared to the 9 absences due to back injury with a rate of 0.62.
- 4.8 Only 3.6% of all sickness is recorded as work related. Only 2.4% of musculoskeletal sickness is recorded as work related.

Rates of Musculoskeletal absence by type and posts



## 5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 To date, the Service has maintained an overall absence level just below last year. The Service continues to monitor and take management action to ensure that we remain below the target level and the 2009/10 absence level.

**Jane Sherlock**  
**DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**