



# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

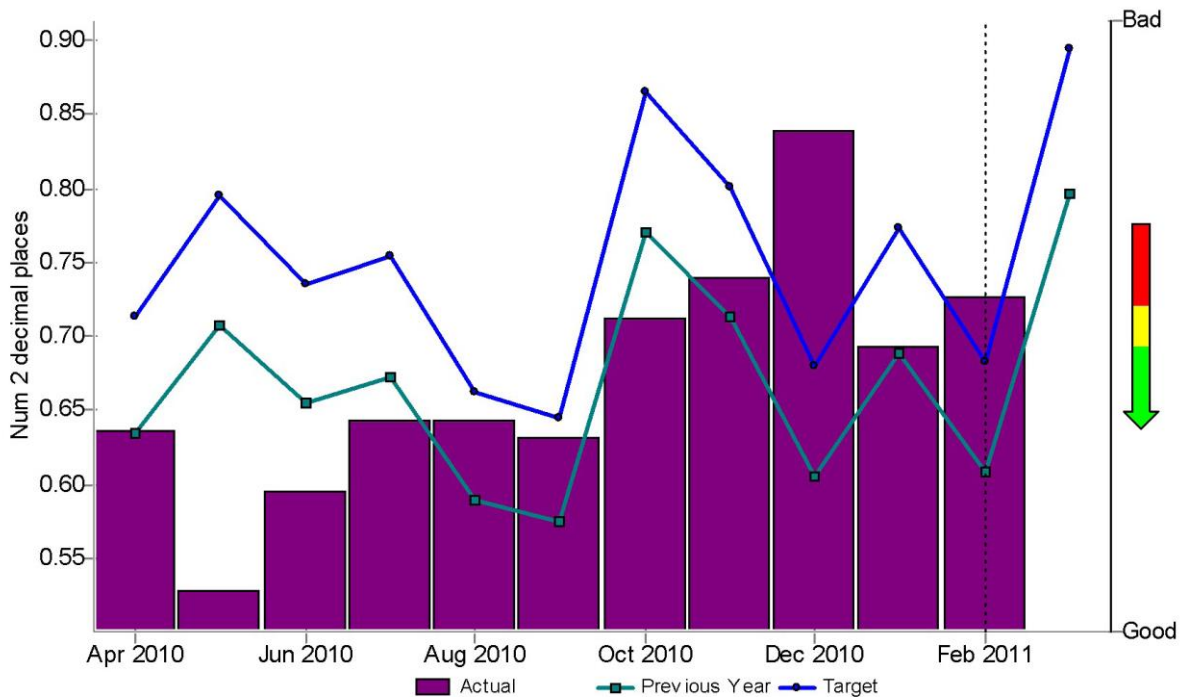
<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	HRMDC/11/3
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	11 APRIL 2011
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>ABSENCE MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Director of People and Organisational Development</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<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 Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD) agenda. 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 Human Resources Management and Development (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, the actual level for 2010/11 is 7.38 days/shifts lost per person compared with the previous year when it was as at an average of 7.22 days per person. This is 8.9% better than the target level at this point in the year but 2.3% worse than last year. At this point, whilst the Service remains on track to be below the year end target of 9 days/shifts it is likely to be at a similar absence level to 2009/10 when it was 8.02 days.



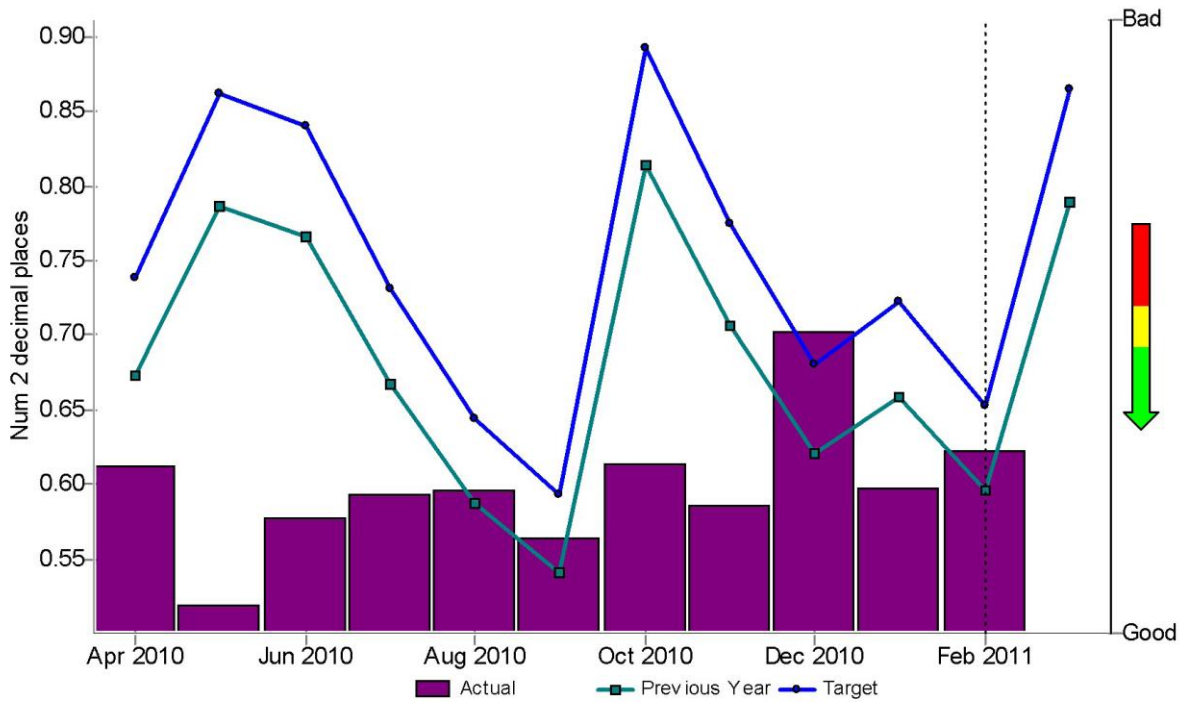
***All Staff – Sickness Rates per Person – by Month***

	<b>Actual 10/11</b>	<b>Previous Year 09/10</b>	<b>% variance on previous year</b>	<b>% variance on target</b>
Apr-10	0.64	0.64	0.0%	-10.9%
May-10	0.53	0.71	-25.5%	-33.6%
Jun-10	0.58	0.66	-9.2%	-19.2%
Jul-10	0.63	0.67	-5.9%	-16.2%
Aug-10	0.64	0.59	8.1%	-3.7%
Sep-10	0.62	0.57	7.6%	-4.2%
Oct-10	0.72	0.77	-6.9%	-17.1%
Nov-10	0.76	0.71	6.7%	-5%
Dec-10	0.84	0.61	-38.6%	-23.5%
Jan-11	0.69	0.69	0.6%	10.4%
Feb-11	0.73	0.61	-19.5%	-6.4%
<b>YTD</b>	<b>7.38</b>	<b>7.22</b>	<b>-2.3%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>

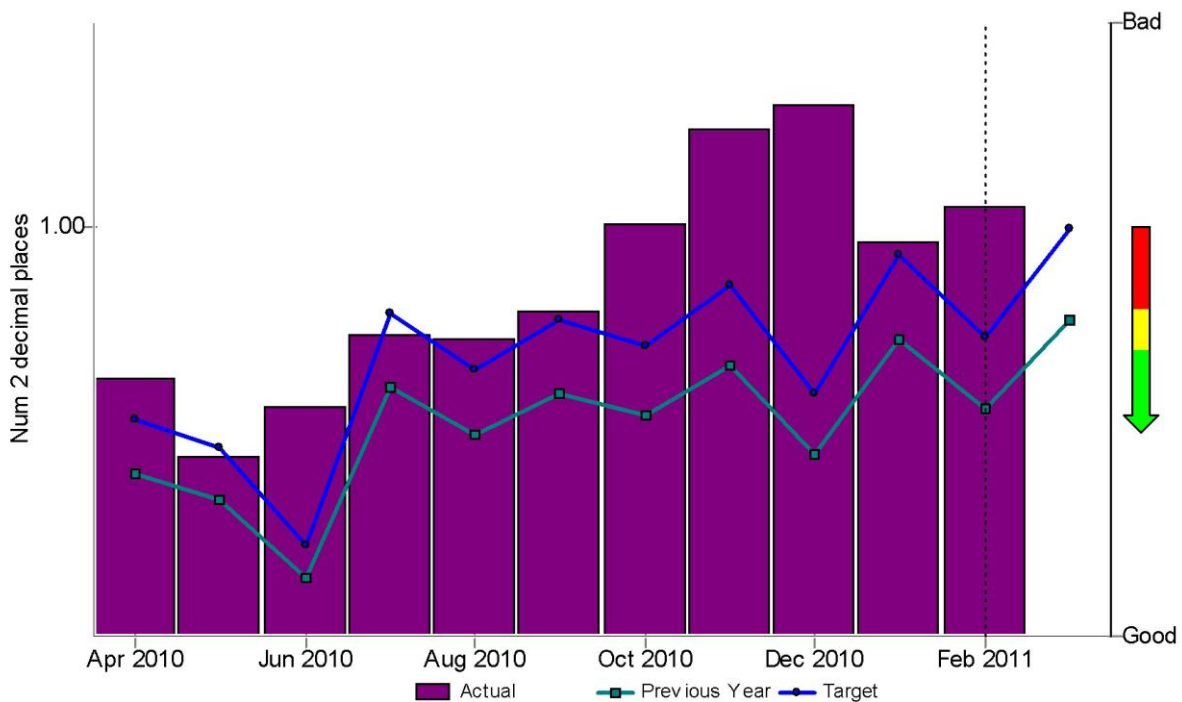
2.2

The Service can then break down the figures by staff category and the rates for uniformed, control and non-uniformed are shown below. The uniformed rates shows an overall good 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 significant increase over the year and Control remain beyond our target levels but have reduced since the previous year.

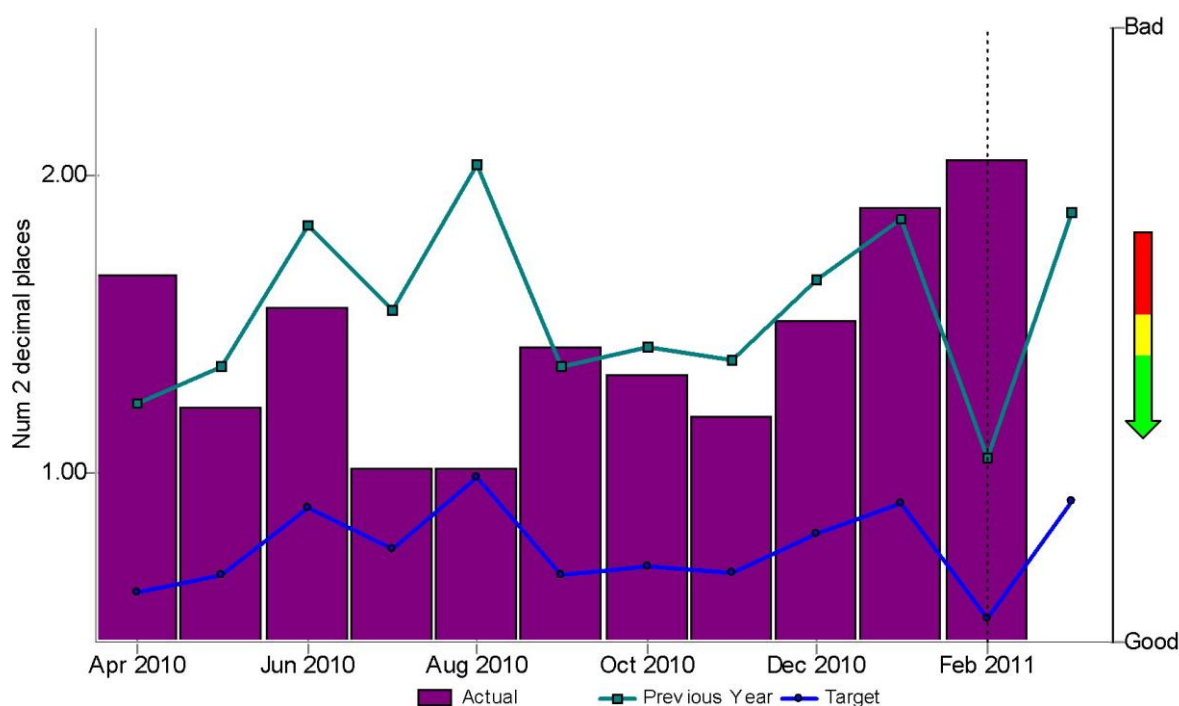
**Uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2010/11**



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



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

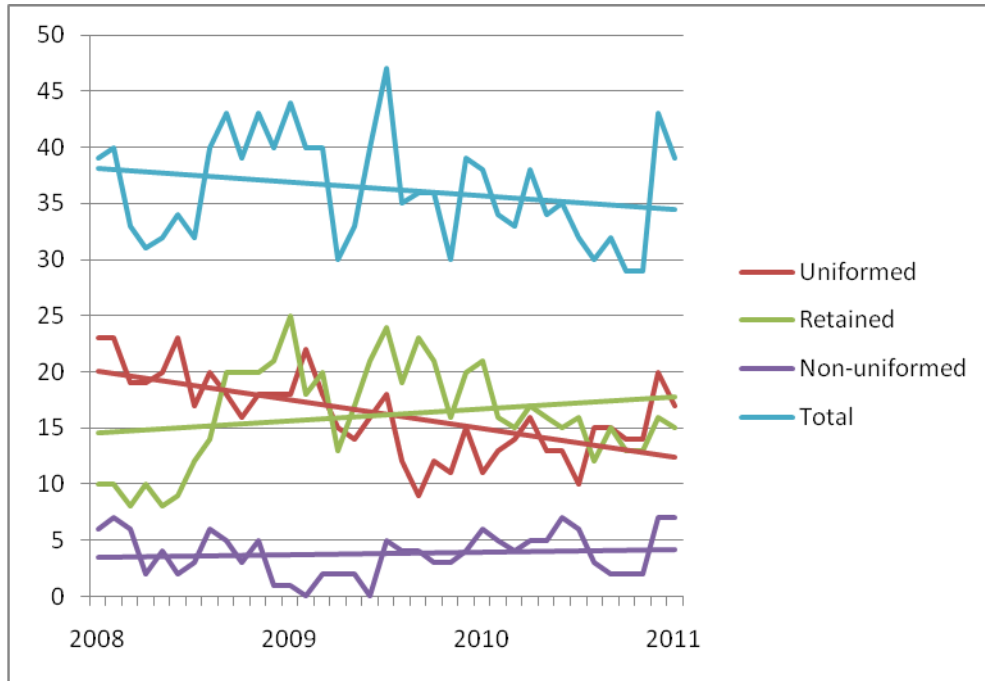


### 3. DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF LONG TERM SICKNESS

3.1 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. Long term sickness had previously shown an improvement but has increased from February 2011. However, the overall numbers of staff who have been long term sick going back to 2008 still shows a downward trend. Uniformed (Wholetime and Control) show a downwards trend whilst the Non-uniformed and the Retained show an increase in the trend line.

2010/11

Number of staff	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Uniformed	11	13	14	16	13	13	10	15	15	14	20	17
Retained	21	16	15	17	16	15	16	12	15	13	16	15
Non-uniformed	6	5	4	5	5	7	6	3	2	2	7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>39</b>



### 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 have been reported at the last 4 HRMD committee meetings. The performance has been good in this area with the number of cases reducing from 16 to 6 in January but with an increase to 8 in March 2011.

#### 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

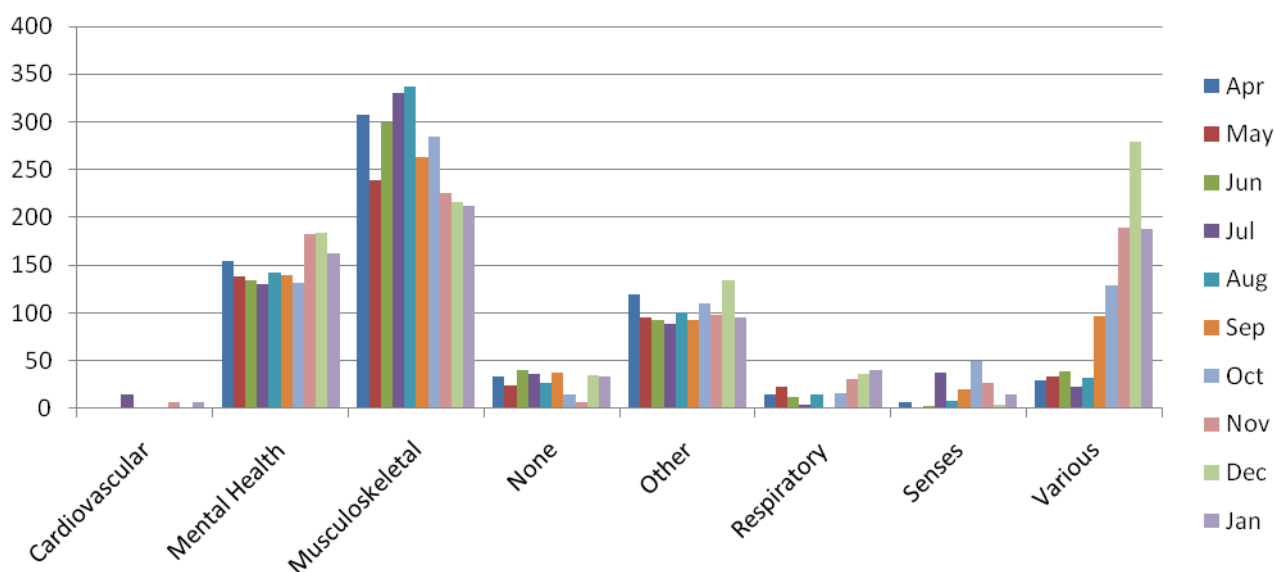
Number of staff	>6 mths	>12 mths	>18 mths	>24 mths	Total
Uniformed	1	0	0	2	3
Retained	0	0	1	0	1
Non-uniformed	2	0	0	0	2
Total	3	0	1	2	6

### Mar-11

Number of staff	>6 mths	>12 mths	>18 mths	>24 mths	Total
Uniformed	2	0	0	1	3
Retained	1	0	0	1	2
Non-uniformed	2	1	0	0	3
Total	5	1	0	2	8

## 4. CAUSES OF ABSENCE

### Sickness breakdown by type



4.1 The peak in sickness in December related to a high number of flu cases which was seen across the country; these absences tend to be short to medium term and it was good to see them drop again in January. Musculoskeletal sickness absences are showing a decrease but mental health sickness absence has started to increase and they have a tendency to result in long term sickness.

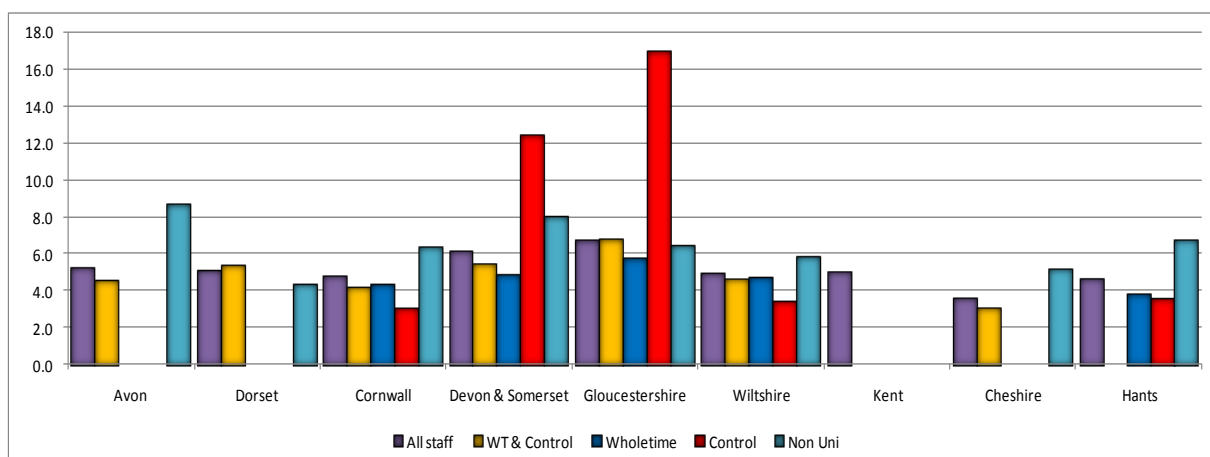
4.2 The main causes of absence remain due to Musculoskeletal problems and include a variety of problems including back, knee, shoulder pain. Mental Health problems continue to show an increase as does the 'various' category. The 'various' category includes colds, flu, dental and sore throats.

## 5. REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SICKNESS LEVELS

5.1 The Service is only able to get sickness data from other Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) on a quarterly basis therefore this information relates to the period April to December 2010.

	Avon	Dorset	Cornwall	DSFRS	Gloucs	Wiltshire	Kent	Cheshire	Hants
All staff	5.3	5.1	4.8	6.1	6.7	5.0	5.0	3.6	4.6
WT & Control	4.5	5.4	4.2	5.5	6.8	4.6		3.0	
Wholetime			4.3	4.9	5.8	4.7			3.8
Control			3.0	12.5	17.0	3.4			3.6
Non Uni	8.6	4.4	6.4	8.0	6.4	5.8		5.2	6.7

### Sickness by Post Type for Quarter 1 to Quarter 3.



5.2 Not all data is available for each of the services, however for sickness rates for 'all staff'. The Service is second highest in the region and higher than three of the top performing FRSs in the country. The sickness rates for all staff were at 6.1 days lost per person for the first three quarters of the year.

5.3 One of the biggest impacts on sickness is the uncertainty and stress that can be caused by change. This can be identified within Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS), with impacts in both of the Control rooms following changes initially with the creation of the Regional Control Centre (RCC) and subsequently, with the new uncertainty as a result of this project being closed down.

5.4 Non Uniformed sickness is high for all of the services and has seen an increase. Again this has some relation to staff dealing with change and coping with the pressure and stress this can cause.

### 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 To date, the Service has maintained on track to be below the year end target of 9 days/shifts but has not performed as well as last year.

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