



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/11/9
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	3 OCTOBER 2011
SUBJECT OF REPORT	ABSENCE MANAGEMENT
LEAD OFFICER	Director of People and Organisational Development
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The progress with Absence Management has been included as a standing item within the Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD) Committee agenda. This report includes an update of the Service performance for absence levels.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	There are ongoing resource implications in relation to absence management in terms of providing cover when required.
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	The Absence Management policy has had an equality impact assessment.
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

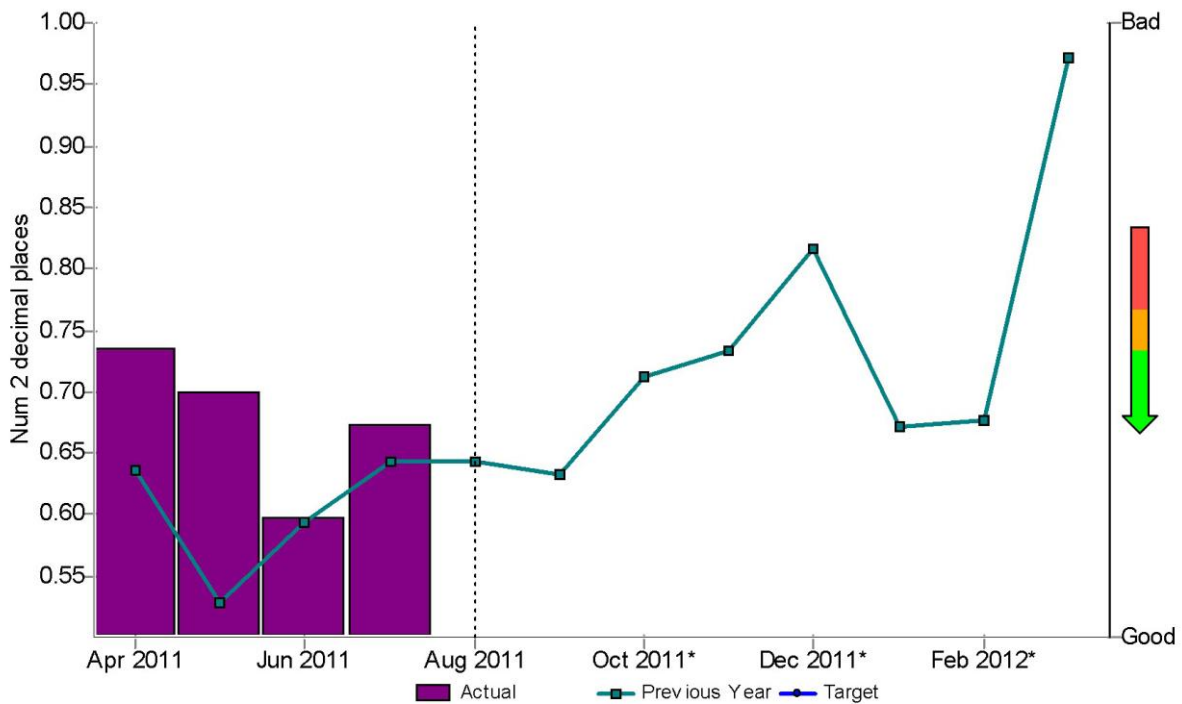
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Absence levels have previously been identified as a key measure as they affect the efficiency and the effectiveness of the Service. The Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD) Committee have therefore determined that this measure will be monitored and reviewed as a standing item.

2. **2011/12 PERFORMANCE**

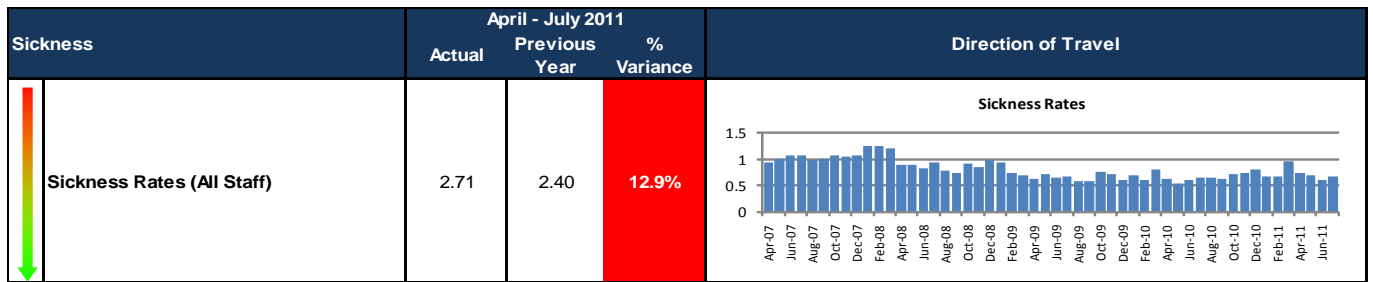
2.1 The current actual level for 2011/12 is 2.70 days/shifts lost per person compared with the previous year when it was as at an average of 2.40 days per person. This equates to 12.7% worse than at this time last year.

All Staff – Sickness Rates per Person – by Month



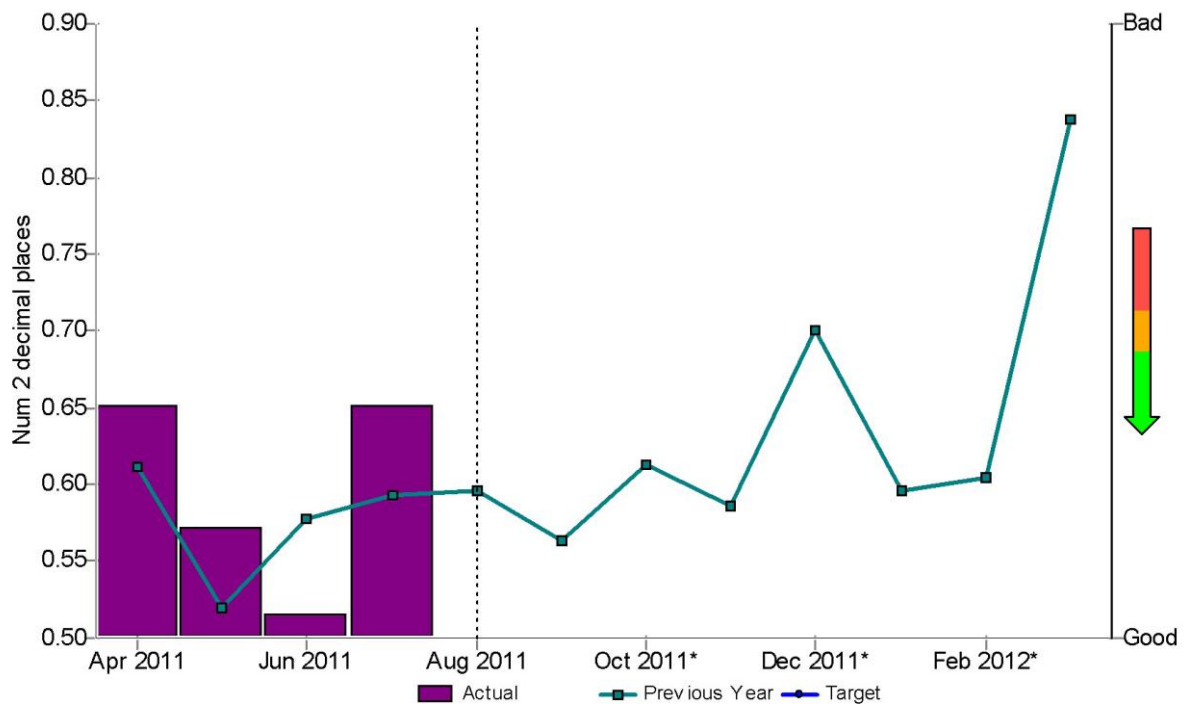
	Actual 11/12	Previous Year 10/11	% variance on previous year
Apr-11	0.73	0.64	(15.6%)
May-11	0.70	0.53	(32.6%)
Jun-11	0.60	0.59	(0.5%)
Jul-11	0.67	0.64	(4.7%)
Aug-11		0.64	
Sep-11		0.63	
Oct-11		0.71	
Nov-11		0.73	
Dec-11		0.82	
Jan-12		0.67	
Feb-12		0.68	
Mar-12		0.97	
YTD	2.70	2.40	(12.7%)

2.2 The direction of travel for the sickness rates since combination are shown below from the April – July 2011 Performance Report:

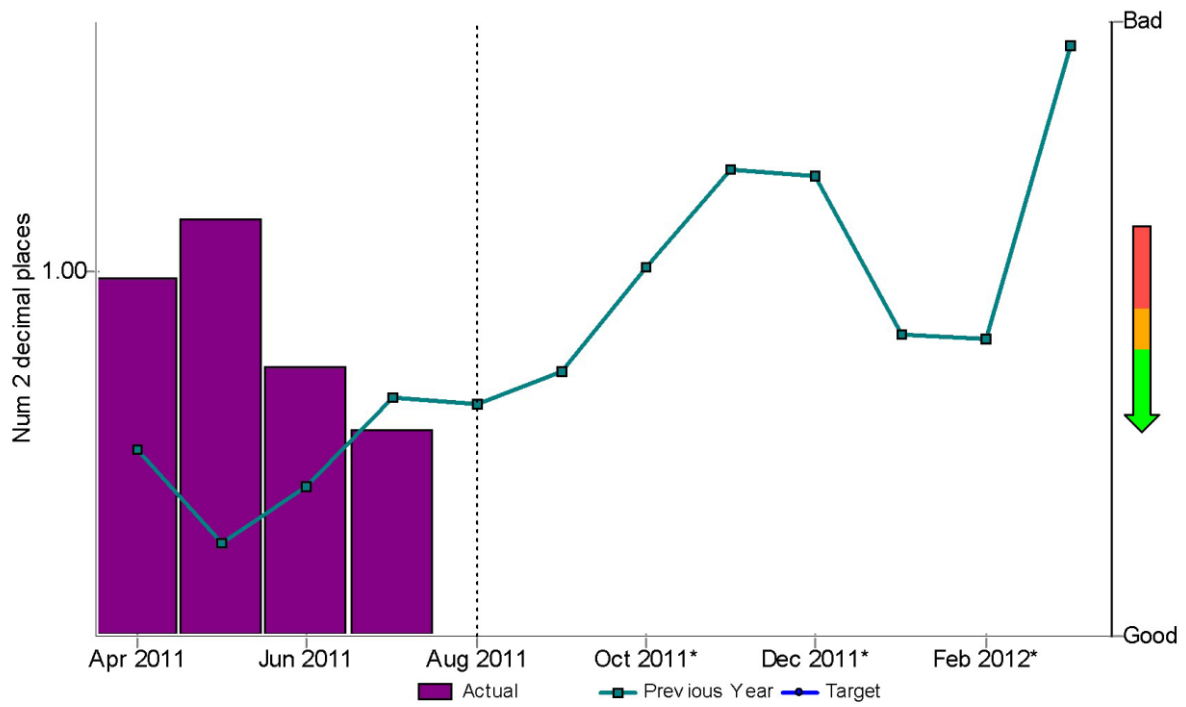


2.3 The Service can break down the figures by staff category and the rates for uniformed, control and non-uniformed are shown below.

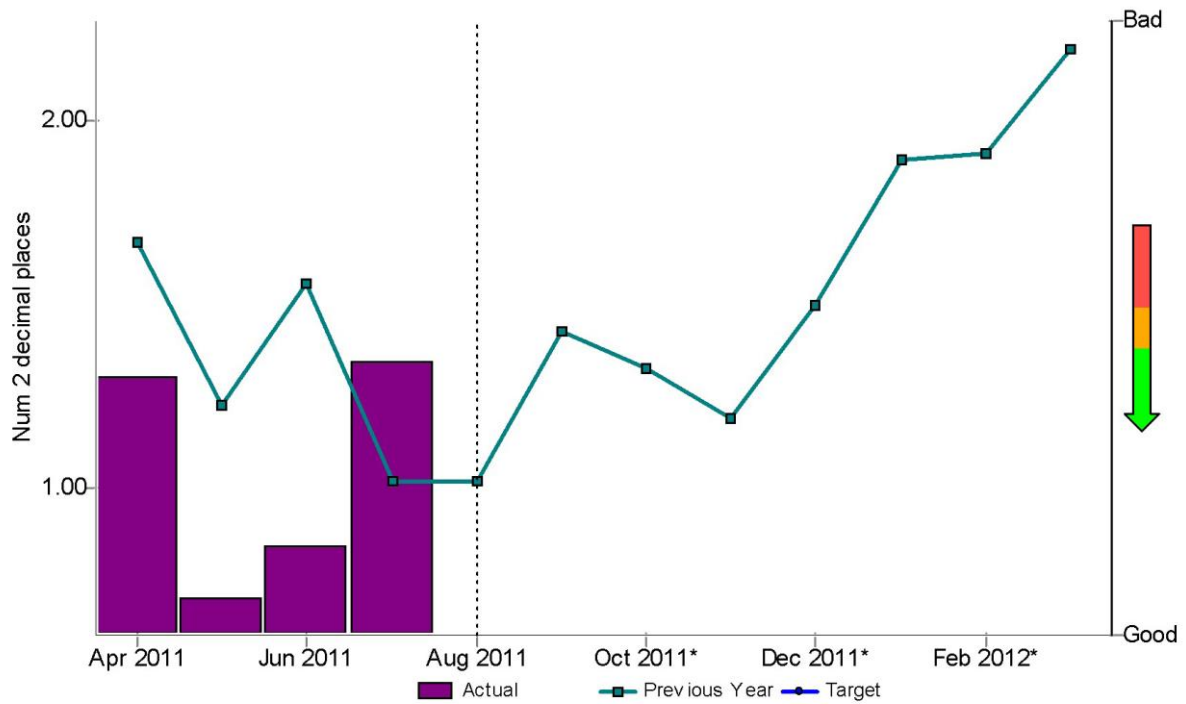
Uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2011/12



Non-uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2011/12



Control Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2011/12

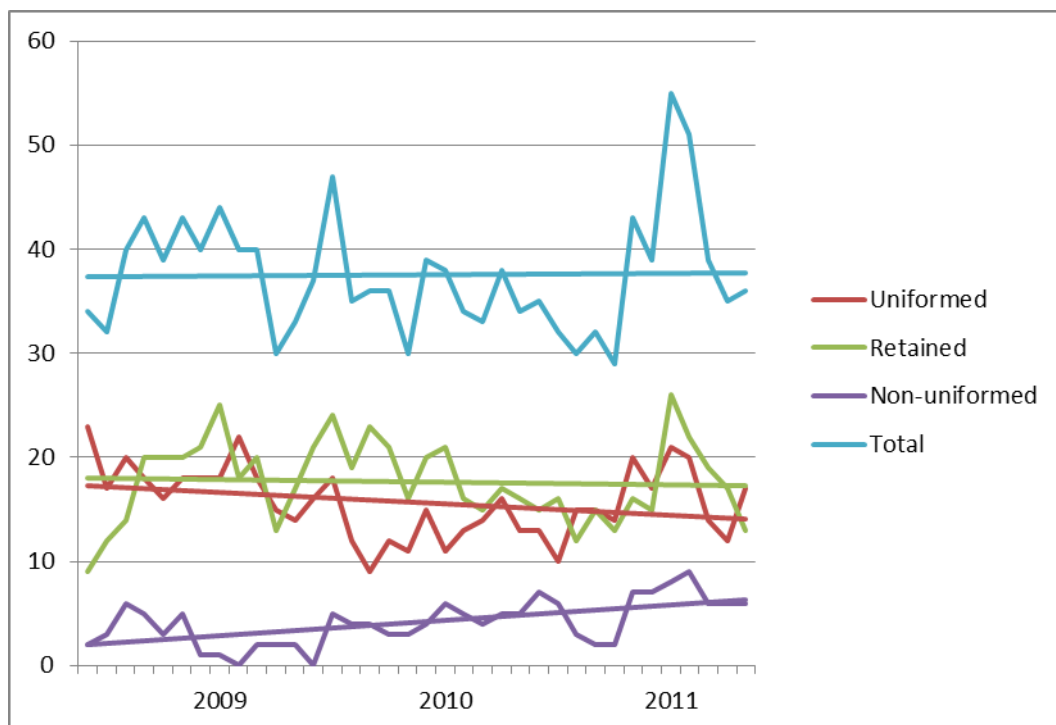


3. **DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF LONG TERM SICKNESS**

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. There has been a significant increase in Long term sickness levels over the period March to May 2011 and these represent the highest levels since April 2008. However, these levels have again dropped from June and are more typical of our long-term sickness levels.

2011/12

Number of staff	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Uniformed	21	20	14	12	17							
Retained	26	22	19	17	13							
Non-uniformed	8	9	6	6	6							
Total	55	51	33	38	34							



Long-term Sickness 2008 to 2011 – Number of Staff

3.2 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 previously by the HRMD Committee. These have been reported at the last 5 HRMD committee meetings. The performance has been good in this area with the number of cases having reduced from 16 in August 2010 to 8 in August 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

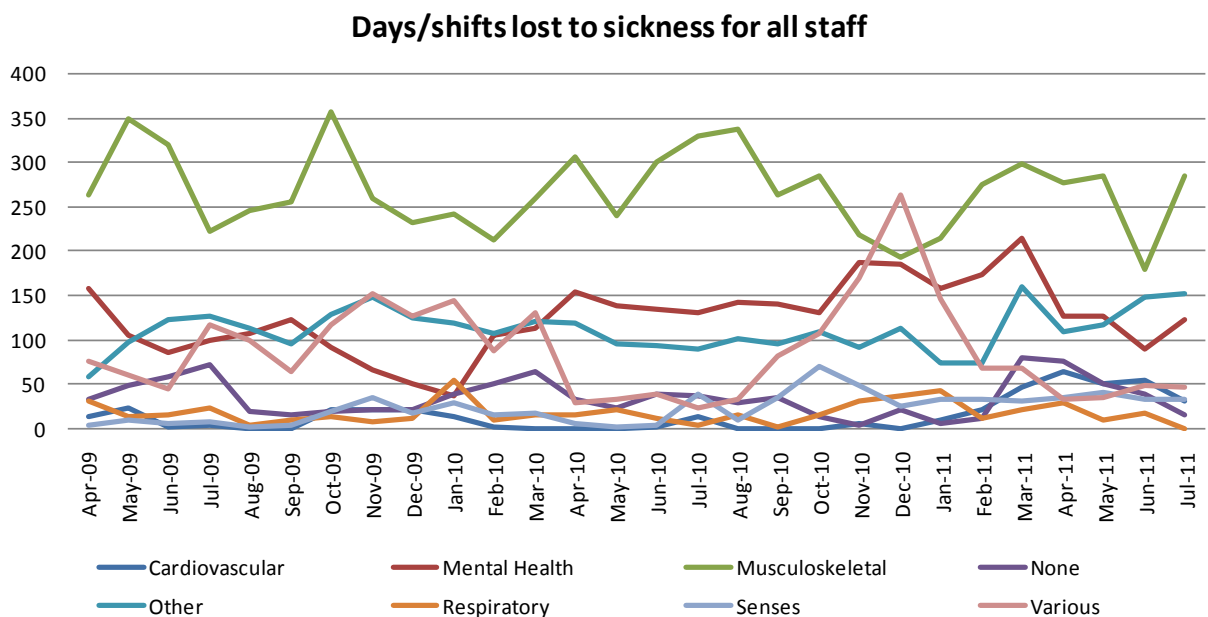
Aug-11

Number of staff	>6 mths	>12 mths	>18 mths	>24 mths	Total
Uniformed	1	0	0	0	1
Retained	4	0	0	1	5
Non-uniformed	2	0	0	0	2
Total	7	0	0	1	8

4. CAUSES OF ABSENCE

- 4.1 The graph overleaf shows the number of days lost to each type of sickness absence since April 2009.

- Looking at the longer term trend, sickness due to musculoskeletal problems has seen a slight decrease in the last few months; however it still remains the overall highest cause of absence across the Service.
- Sickness due to mental health is showing a decrease compared to levels of this type of sickness in the same periods for previous years.
- The 'various' type of sickness is showing a significant increase in the period from October 2010 to January 2011. This sickness category includes colds/flu/dental/sore throats etc; there is a tendency for a seasonal trend however levels were particularly high this winter.



5. LENGTH OF SERVICE AND AGE

5.1 We have looked at sickness in relation to both age of the employee and time they have worked for DSFRS from April 2010. As the table below shows, employees are less likely to have sickness absences within their first year of employment. Thereafter the sickness levels are on average above 8 days per person.

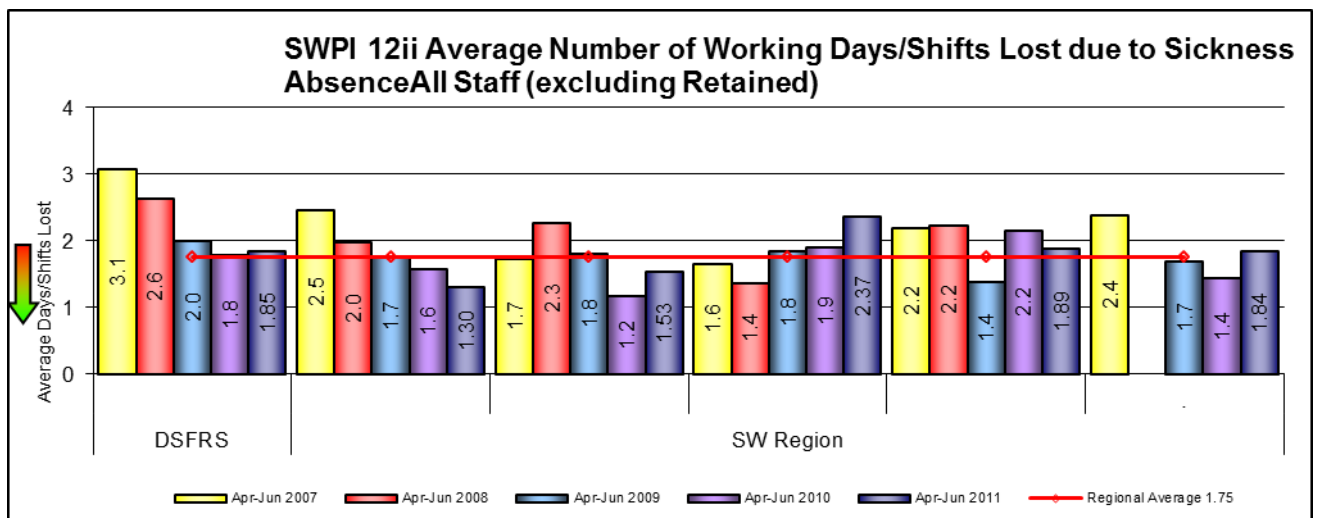
Length of Service	Long Term	ST Cert	ST Uncert	Total
year 1	1.00	0.55	1.19	2.73
2 - 5	4.84	1.63	2.62	9.09
6 - 10	4.01	1.66	3.15	8.82
11 - 20	6.39	1.70	2.80	10.89
over 20	6.53	1.08	2.35	9.96

5.2 As can be seen from the table below, the number of days lost due to sickness is more likely to increase with the age of employee.

Age of Employee	Long Term	ST Cert	ST Uncert	Total
under 30	1.74	0.66	1.52	3.92
31 - 39	3.79	1.42	2.54	7.75
40 - 49	5.28	1.53	2.79	9.60
50 - 59	5.02	1.47	2.62	9.11
over 60	25.59	3.21	4.67	33.47

6. REGIONAL SICKNESS LEVELS

- 6.1 The Service is able to get sickness data from other South West, Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) on a quarterly basis and therefore this information relates to the period from April to June 2011. Currently DSFRS is above the SW regional average of 1.75 with 1.85 days being lost due to a sickness absence (excluding Retained).



7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 For the year to date, the Service has seen a deterioration in the sickness absence compared with the same period last year. The Service continues to monitor and manage sickness levels. As part of the Middleware Project in partnership with Cambridgeshire FRS and Bedford and Luton FRS the Service will be seeking process improvements in the sickness absence process.

JANE SHERLOCK
Director of People and Organisational Development