

**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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Date : 3 November 2011  
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**HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

**Friday 11 November 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

**A G E N D A**

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 3 October 2011 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 and Health of the Organisation**

Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/11/12) attached (page 5)

**6. Consultation on Changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme**

Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/11/13) attached (page 14)

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

Nil

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

Membership:-

Councillor Cann (Chair), Bown (Vice Chair), Boyd, Brooksbank, Burridge-Clayton, Horsfall and Wright.

**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)

3 October 2011

Present:-

Councillors Cann (Chairman), Boyd, Bown, Healey and Wright

Apologies:-

Councillors Burridge-Clayton and Horsfall

**\*HRMDC/11. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2011 be signed as a correct record.

**\*HRMDC/12. Declarations of Interest**

Members 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 declare any such interests at this time.

No interests were declared.

**\*HRMDC/13. Election of Vice Chair**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Anne Bown be appointed the Vice-Chair of the Committee until its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2012.

**\*HRMDC/14. Absence Management**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/11/9) that provided details of the Service performance for absence levels in 2011/2.

The level of absence between April to July 2011 was 2.70 days/shifts lost per person, a deterioration against the average of 2.40 days/shifts lost per person in the same period of the previous year. The report detailed further breakdowns on the absence in terms of uniformed and non-uniformed staff sickness rates; long and short-term sickness and length of service and age.

The Committee was informed that continuous action was being taken to improve sickness absence management. Initiatives included:

- sharing best practice with Bedfordshire and Luton FRS as part of the Middleware project;
- sharing best practice with CFOA regional HR group and the national HR group;
- Signing up to the mindful employer charter and the two ticks scheme; and,

- Consideration of the provision of stress management awareness training for line managers.

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

“in addition to noting the report, an update on the progress made with the Middleware project (in relation to sickness absence management process improvement) be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee and the Senior Management Board be informed that the Committee would be supportive of the introduction of stress management awareness training for line managers”.

This was put to the vote whereupon it was

#### **RESOLVED**

- (a) that an update on the progress made with the Middleware project in relation to sickness absence management process improvement be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee;
- (b) that the Senior Management Board be informed that this Committee would be supportive of the introduction of stress management awareness training for line managers; and,
- (c) that, subject to (a) and (b) above, report HRMDC/11/9 be noted.

#### **\*HRMDC/15. Equalities Framework Peer Assessment (EFPA)**

The Committee received for information a presentation by the Community and Workplace Equalities Manager which highlighted, amongst other things:

- A summary of the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 and the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework;
- The purpose of the mock assessment undertaken for the Service in 2010 and the subsequent areas of improvement;
- The replacement of Equality Impact Assessments by Equality Risks and Benefits Assessments (ERBA) designed to deliver improvements in the development and implementation of Service policy by embedding equality considerations in project business cases, process design and policy development; and,
- The full Peer assessment (which was not an inspection but an assessment by “critical friends”) which would commence in November 2011.

The Committee commended the Service on this excellent work and enquired as to how Members could engage with this. The Community and Workplace Equalities Manager advised that up to twelve Authority Members could volunteer to participate in the process. This information would be disseminated to the full Authority and Members encouraged to advise of their interest accordingly.

**\*HRMDC/16. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** 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 items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in:

- for Minute \*HRMDC/17, in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to the business affairs of the Authority; and
- for Minute \*HRMDC/18, 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 and its employees.

**\*HRMDC/17. Business Continuity**

(An item taken in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during consideration of which the press and public were excluded from the meeting).

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/11/10) providing further background to the potential for industrial action linked to proposed pensions reforms; the implications of any such action; and measures being taken by the Service to secure a level of business continuity in the event of any disruptive event such as industrial action.

**\*HRMDC/18. Fire Control Staffing Issues**

(An item taken in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during consideration of which the press and public were excluded from the meeting).

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Service Delivery (HRMDC/11/11) on proposals in relation to the staffing models that might be used in moving to a consolidated, single control room and the staffing levels recommended when in steady state. The consolidated control room project was necessitated by a number of factors (including cancellation of the national FiReControl project and the requirement for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service to vacate its Somerset control room at Hestercombe House by March 2012). The scope of the project was to:

- Establish the control function from one site;
- Mobilise resources using one mobilising system;
- Work on one set of policies and procedures; and
- Develop a staffing model appropriate for service delivery and without forced job losses.

In addition to the staffing models highlighted in the report, it was indicated that further changes might be achievable following introduction of a new mobilising system in the future.

At this time it was not possible to give precise funding implications associated with the proposals as these were dependent on a number of other factors. Once finalised, the financial implications would be submitted to the Resources Committee as part of normal financial performance reporting.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations as set out in report HRMDC/11/11 and relating to staffing models for the consolidated control function be endorsed for the purpose of holding discussions with affected staff and representative bodies.

**\*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/11/12
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	11 NOVEMBER 2011
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>ABSENCE MANAGEMENT &amp; HEALTH OF THE ORGANISATION</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) Committee agenda. This report includes an update of the Service performance for absence levels. In addition the Committee should consider wider aspects which could be inextricably linked to the overall health of the organisation.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<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 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.

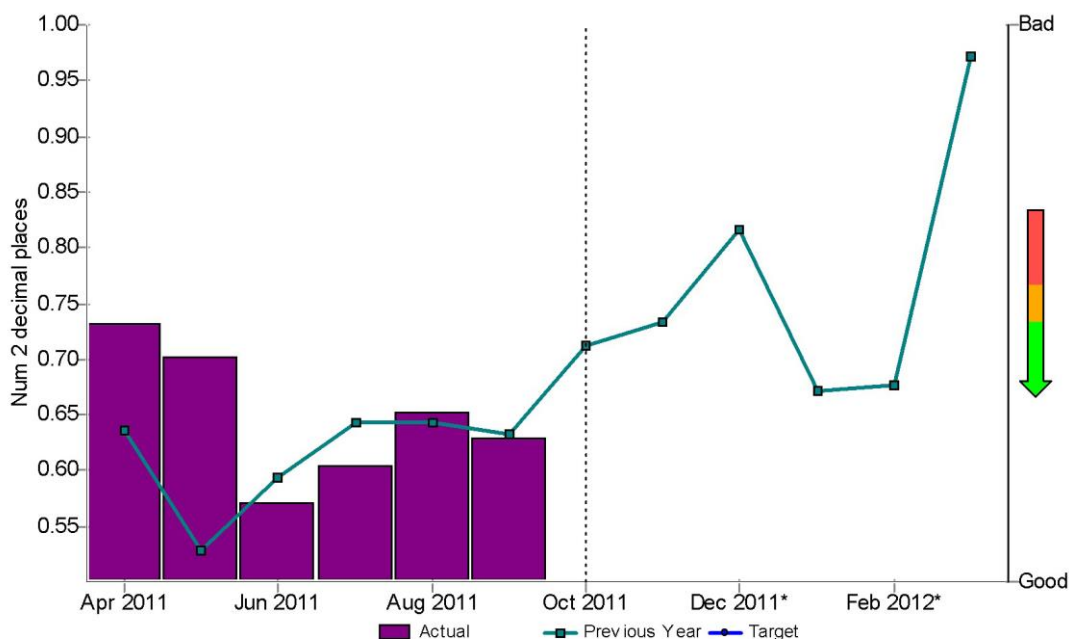
1.2 The '*Health of the Organisation*' relates to the wider health of the organisation as a means of monitoring people aspects which could be inextricably linked. The key aspects of consideration are the safety event rates, the levels of discipline and grievances cases, any trends in bullying and harassment, the turnover of staff, the levels of stress and referrals to counselling and the collective relationships with unions. The health of the organisation encompasses the 'psychological' safety of the organisation. 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 as to why 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.

## 2. 2011/12 ABSENCE PERFORMANCE

2.1 The current actual level for 2011/12 is 3.89 days/shifts lost per person compared with the previous year when it was as at an average of 3.67 days per person. This is an improvement from the last report when we reported that we were 12.7% worse than at this time last year. This has now reduced to 5.8% worse than the same time last year. This improvement has been due to lower levels of absences within the Support Staff, Control and non-station based Uniformed staff.

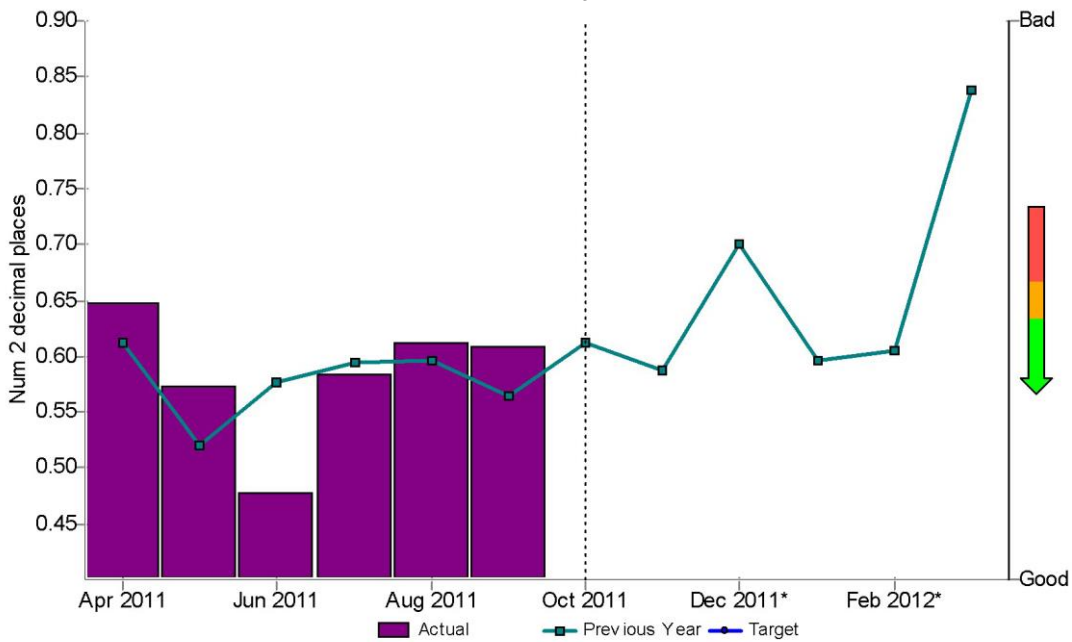
### ***All Staff – Sickness Rates per Person – by Month***



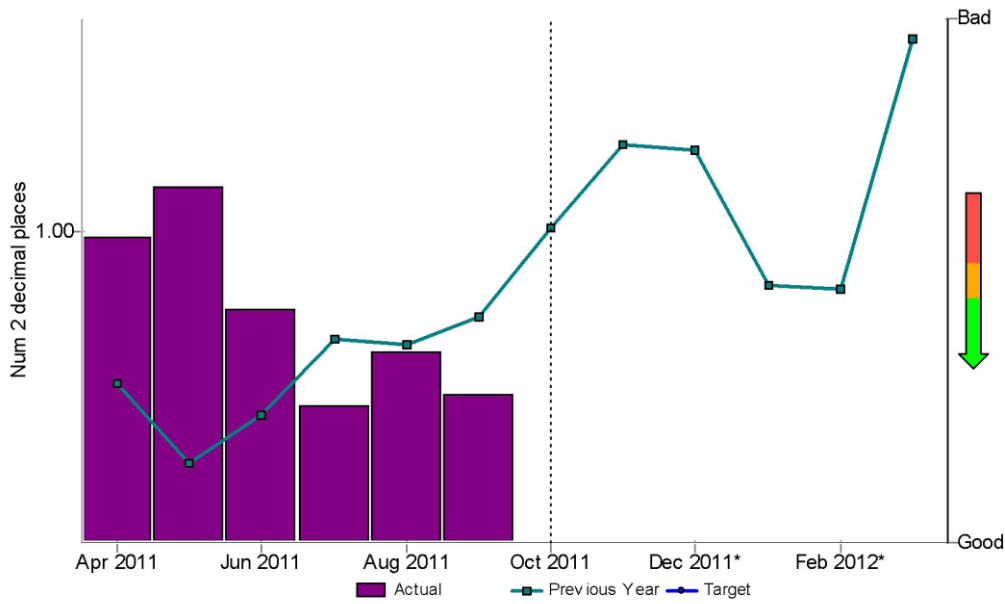
	<b>Actual 11/12</b>	<b>Previous Year 10/11</b>	<b>% variance on previous year</b>
Apr-11	0.73	0.64	(15.6%)
May-11	0.70	0.53	(32.6%)
Jun-11	0.57	0.59	(0.5%)
Jul-11	0.60	0.64	(4.7%)
Aug-11	0.65	0.64	
Sep-11	0.63	0.63	
Oct-11		0.71	
Nov-11		0.73	
Dec-11		0.82	
Jan-12		0.67	
Feb-12		0.68	
Mar-12		0.97	
<b>YTD</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>(5.8%)</b>

2.3 The Service can break down the figures by staff category and the rates for uniformed, control and support staff are shown below. It is encouraging to see that in Control, absence levels have consistently been lower than the previous year and that we are seeing improvements in the support staff levels.

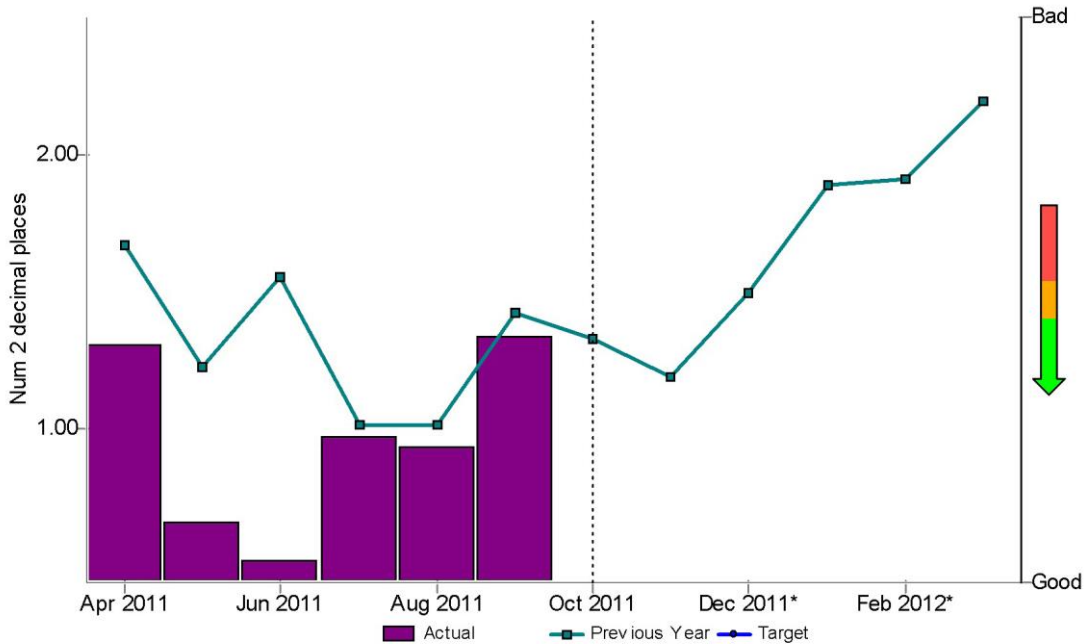
**Uniformed Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2011/12**



### Support Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2011/12



### Control Staff Sickness Rates by Month 2011/12



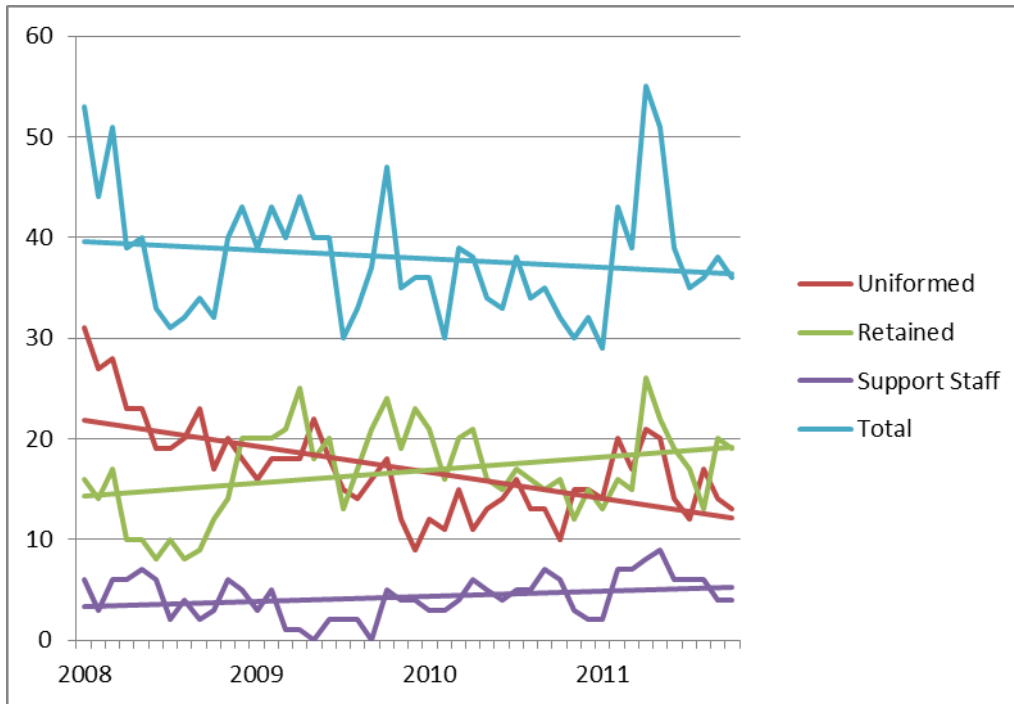
### 3. DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF LONG TERM SICKNESS

- 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 had been a significant increase in long term sickness levels over the period March to May 2011 which represented the highest levels since April 2008. However, these levels have again dropped from June 2011 and have remained at our more typical rate for 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	14	13					
Retained	26	22	19	17	13	20	19					
Support Staff	8	9	6	6	6	4	4					
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>					

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



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

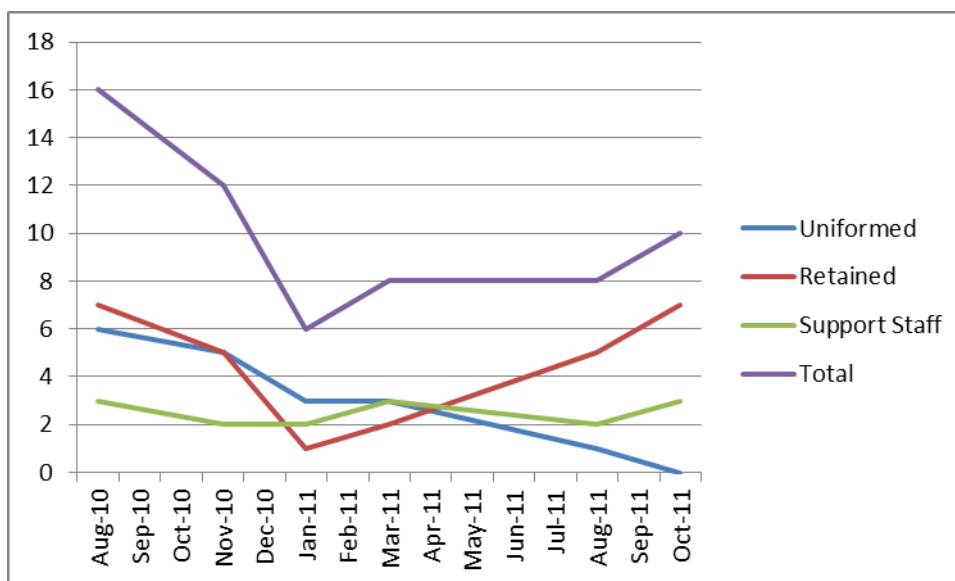
3.2

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 6 HRMD committee meetings. The performance has been good in this area with the number of cases having reduced from 16 in August 2010 to 10 in October 2011. Currently there are no Wholetime uniformed staff with more than 6 months absence. The overall numbers are also represented graphically on the next page.

**Oct-11**

Number of staff	>6 months	>12 months	>18 months	>24 months	Total
Uniformed	0	0	0	0	0
Retained	5	1	0	1	7
Support Staff	2	1	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>

## Long-term Sickness – Number of Staff with greater than 6 months sickness



## 4. SAFETY EVENTS – PERSONAL INJURIES

- 4.1 Safety events are those that require a formal investigation. Such events could have resulted in a personal injury which could lead to lost sickness days. Below are the number of personal injuries and lost days for this financial year and the same period over the last financial year. The overall figures show a decrease in personal injuries from 79 to 60 representing a drop of 24%. Similarly the personal injuries resulting in days lost dropped from 25 to 12 representing a drop of 48%. However, although there has been a reduction in the number of personal injuries this year when compared to the same period last year, the number of sickness days has increased from 341 to 368.

	1 April 2010 – 30 Sept 2010	Sickness days lost	1 Apr 2011 - 30 Sept 2011	Sickness days lost
Personal injuries resulting in days lost	25	341	12	368
Personal injuries resulting in no days lost	54	0	48	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>368</b>

## 5. MENTAL HEALTH

- 5.1 It is recognised that there is a close link between wellbeing and personal performance. People who feel well will generally perform better than people who do not feel well. Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (CIPD) annually produce a national Absence Management Survey and stress is now the most common cause of long-term absence in the UK. Half of the public sector organisations have been reporting an increase in stress-related absence over the last year.
- 5.2 Within DSFRS, we categorise the causes of sickness and mental health has regularly been second only to musculoskeletal as the highest cause of absence.

- 5.3 The Service has counselling contracts in place and the number of sessions is shown below. An individual will have multiple sessions to assist them with their mental health issue.

**Devon Counselling**

	No of Sessions
2007/8	134
2008/9	180
2009/10	237
2010/11	261

**Somerset Counselling**

	No of Sessions
2007/8	176
2008/9	143
2009/10	145
2010/11	304

- 5.4 The Service also has a Welfare Officer who will have welfare cases and is typically helping and supporting around 28 employees at any one time. In addition the Service has a well@work team consisting of volunteers from throughout the Service who have an interest in the wellbeing of our staff. The objectives of the team are to raise awareness of stress, remove the stigma attached to stress, and to promote solutions for the management of stress, including creating a healthy work-life balance for employees of DSFRS.
- 5.5 The well@work team have worked with the International Stress Management Association to obtain advice and guidance in dealing with stress. The team have also recently attended a course in Understanding Stress and Mental Ill-Health. The team are promoting the National Stress Awareness day on Wednesday 2 November 2011. This is the third consecutive year, that the well@work team have supported this event. Members of the well@work group have agreed to hold short sessions at various workplaces on Wellbeing and Resilience at Work. The sessions will involve a short presentation on stress and wellbeing, followed by a discussion.

**6. STAFF TURNOVER**

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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'.
- 6.3 Turnover levels vary between sectors and with the economy. During times of economic uncertainty and higher unemployment staff are likely to be more cautious about leaving an organisation and so turnover levels are likely to fall. From the CIPD survey on Resourcing and Talent Planning, within public services the levels of staff turnover have dropped from 7.6% in 2009, to 5.8% in 2010 and to 3.4% in 2011.
- 6.4 The current levels of turnover within DSFRS are set out within the table following:

**Levels of turnover within DSFRS from 2007/08 to 2010/11**

	<b>2007/08</b>			<b>2008/09</b>			<b>2009/10</b>			<b>2010/11</b>			<b>Ave 07-10</b>
	Employed on 1/4/07	Leavers during year	%	Employed on 1/4/08	Leavers during year	%	Employed on 1/4/09	Leavers during year	%	Employed on 1/4/10	Leavers during year	%	Leavers per year
Support	252	34	13.49	250	25	10.00	278	26	9.35	293	21	7.17	<b>27</b>
Control	54	5	9.26	57	8	14.04	57	6	10.53	59	5	8.47	<b>6</b>
Retained	1210	93	7.69	1209	87	7.20	1226	62	5.06	1280	98	7.66	<b>93</b>
Wholetime	735	22	2.99	724	40	5.52	711	23	3.23	733	14	1.91	<b>25</b>
Total	2251	154	6.84	2240	160	7.14	2272	117	5.15	2365	138	5.84	<b>151</b>



6.5 The turnover of non-uniformed staff has reduced each year since combination from 13.49% to 7.17%. In Control we saw an increase in turnover possibly due to the increase in temporary staff and with the RCC project. This is now once more reducing. Turnover in the Retained had reduced in 2009/10 but has remained around 7% over the 4 year period. Turnover in the Wholetime has been traditionally low and this remains the case.

## **7. DISCIPLINE & GRIEVANCE CASES**

7.1 The levels of Grievance and Discipline cases are shown below. 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 but we typically have around 30 per year.

	Grievances	Discipline
2007/8	32	27
2008/9	30	20
2009/10	9	29
2010/11	4	30

7.2 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	1	2

## **8. COLLECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

8.1 Despite the threat of national industrial action as a result of proposed pension changes the collective relationships are generally good. There have been no matters in this financial year which have required referral to the national employers.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

9.1 For the year to date, the Service absence levels are higher compared with the same period in the previous year. However the levels of absence have been improving over the last few months. The Health of the Organisation continues to be an important aspect of the wider issues that should be considered by the Service and Authority on our journey to excellence.

**JANE SHERLOCK**

**Director of People and Organisational Development**



# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	HRMDC/11/13
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	11 NOVEMBER 2011
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME AND THE NEW FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME.</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director of People and Organisational Development
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i>That, subject to incorporation of any comments made at the meeting, the Director of People and Organisational Development be authorised to respond on behalf of the Authority to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) consultation on the changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme as set out in Appendix A to this report.</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>The Department for Communities and Local Government issued a consultation document recently in relation to changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme. This consultation relates to the following proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased levels of employee contribution rates, effective from 1 April 2012;</li> <li>• The introduction of tiered contribution levels, so that higher earners will pay a higher rate of contribution;</li> <li>• Different levels of increase for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (1992) and New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (2006);</li> <li>• The specific handling of contributions for retained and part-time firefighters.</li> </ul> <p>A draft response to the consultation is contained within Appendix A to this report for consideration.</p>

<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	As indicated.
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	Not applicable.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Appendix A – DSFRA draft response to the consultation on the changes to the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme and the New Firefighters’ Pension Scheme.
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Service has received a consultation document from the Communities & Local Government in relation to changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme. The consultation is in relation to proposed increases in the employee contribution rates which will be effective from 1 April 2012. This consultation relates to the following proposals:

- Increased levels of employee contribution rates, effective from 1 April 2012;
- The introduction of tiered contribution levels, so that higher earners will pay a higher rate of contribution;
- Different levels of increase for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (1992) and New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (2006);
- The specific handling of contributions for retained and part-time firefighters.

1.2 The consultation will run for 12 weeks from the 9 September 2011 through to 2 December 2011. The consultation is primarily aimed at fire and rescue authorities, members of the firefighters' pension schemes, and key employer and employee representative bodies.

1.3 As such, the Service intends to make a formal response. The consultation sets 5 questions to respond to, the proposed response to which is set out at Appendix A overleaf for consideration by the Committee.

**JANE SHERLOCK**  
**Director of People and Organisational Development**

*Question 1: Do the proposed tiered contributions meet the objectives set out by the Government in the Spending Review?*

Yes in that lower earners do not see an increase in contributions and those earning from £15K up to £21K have a reduced increase. Since part-time staff and Retained Duty System (RDS) staff are both based on a reference salary equivalent to wholetime staff this in reality has no impact at all as there are no staff in this pay band. The high earners do see an increase and this is below the 2.4% point cap in 2012-13. However, at this stage there is no further information on the changes for year 2 and 3 and it would have been more useful to see the complete proposals.

*Question 2: Are there any consequences of the proposed contribution tiers that you consider have not been addressed?*

The lower increases for the New Firefighter Pension Scheme (NFPS) seem sensible given the reduced employer costs for this scheme.

*Question 3: Do you consider that there are equality issues that will result in any individual groups being disproportionately affected by the proposed contribution tiers? If so, what do you consider to be the nature and scale of that disproportionate effect?*

It would seem that part-time workers including RDS are disproportionately affected by this change since their pension contribution is based on the full-time equivalent as a reference.

*Question 4: Is there a tariff which you think will help to further minimise any opt outs from the firefighters' pension schemes?*

The proposed levels are unlikely to result in staff opting out from the schemes as they remain very attractive when you consider the employer contribution which would not be available under a private pension scheme.

*Question 5: Is the treatment under the proposals of part time workers and retained firefighters clear?*

Yes although in the FAQ document, it does not mention the tax relief and therefore does not make existing members fully aware of the impact upon their salary.