



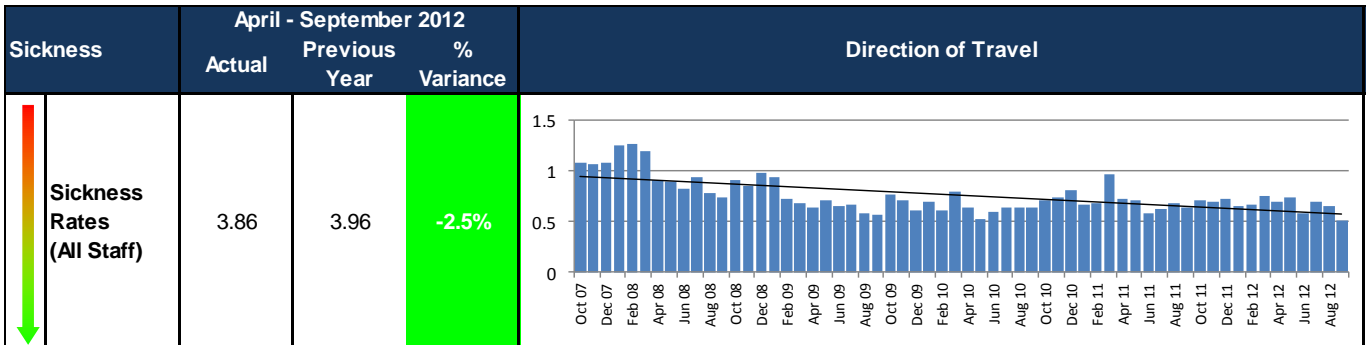
DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/12/9
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	15 NOVEMBER 2012
SUBJECT OF REPORT	ABSENCE MANAGEMENT & HEALTH OF THE ORGANISATION
LEAD OFFICER	Director of People and Organisational Development
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the data contents of this 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 at the half yearly point.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
EQUALITY RISK & BENEFITS ASSESSMENT	The Absence Management policy has had an equality impact assessment.
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

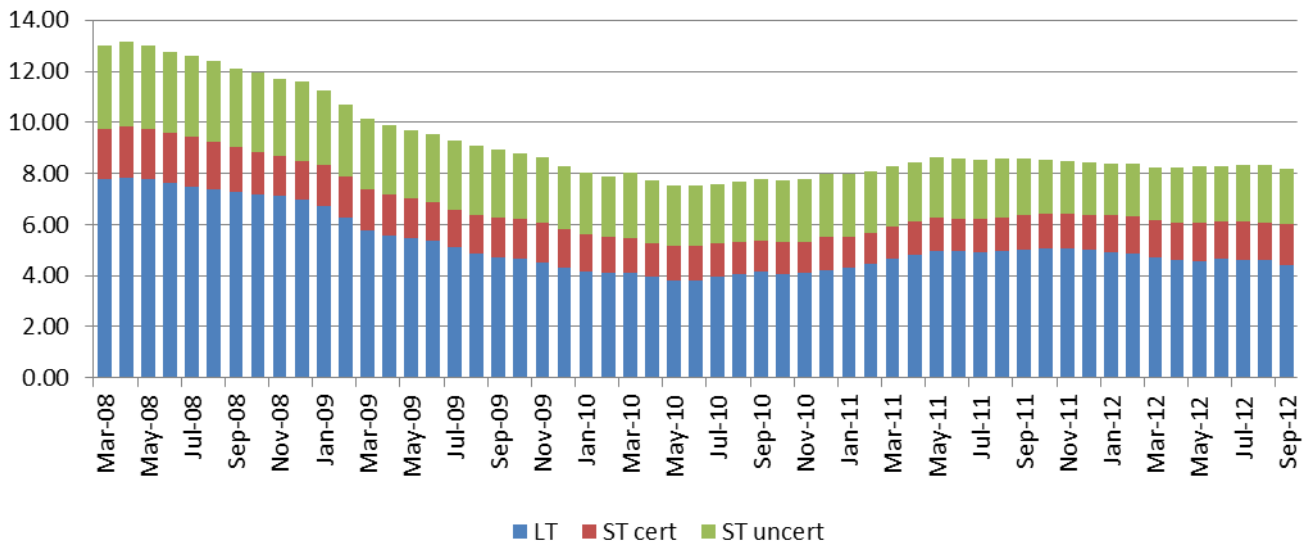
1. **INTRODUCTION**

2.1 At the HRMD committee in June 2012, it was agreed that for the purposes of this meeting, the Service would consider the detailed measures for the 'Health of the Organisation' on an annual basis. However, since the absence levels are a key measure as they affect the efficiency and the effectiveness of the Service, it was agreed that these should be reviewed half yearly. The format for these results is as per the performance report so that we can maximise the utilisation of the available data.

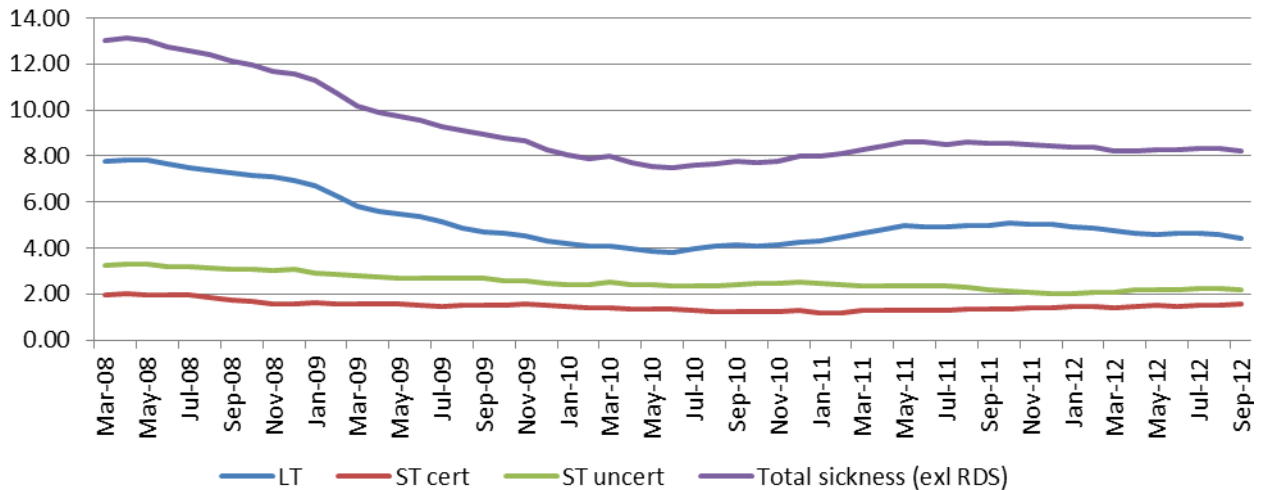
2. **2012/13 APRIL TO SEPTEMBER ABSENCE PERFORMANCE**



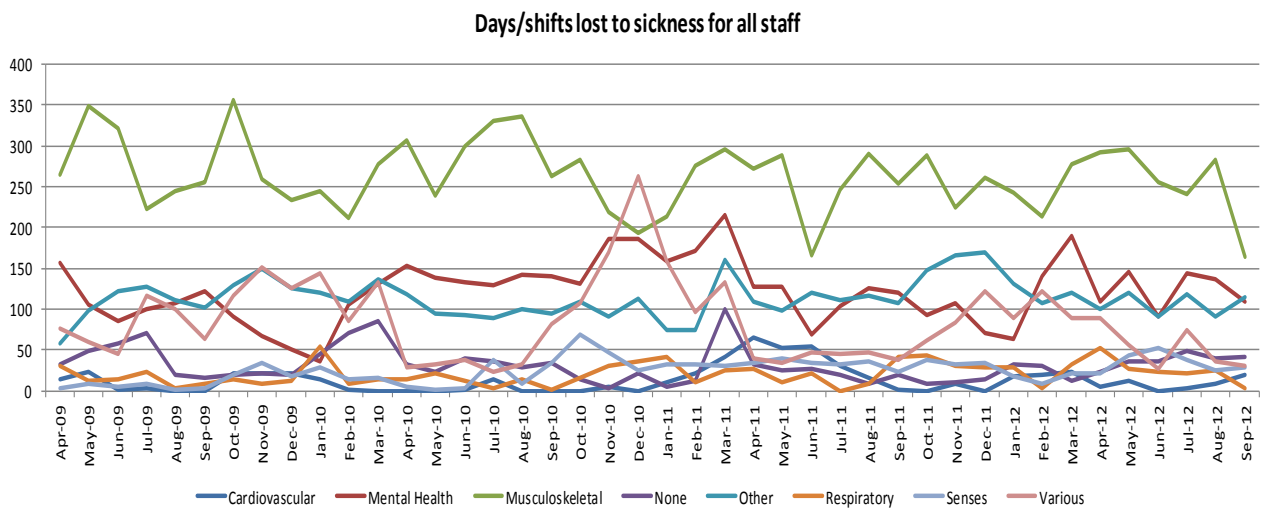
2.1 The graph above shows the monthly sickness rates for the last 5 years. It is good to see that for the first half of the year the rate is below the same time period in 2011/12, however, further analysis of the sickness rate using a rolling 12 month period shows that we have in effect remained at a rate of just over 8 days per person per annum since 2011. This is shown in the graph below.



2.2 When this graph is shown as a line graph, it can be clearly seen that the overall sickness level closely matches the profile of the long-term sickness line. In this same period short-term sickness (certified and uncertified) have been reducing. Uncertified sickness has reduced from 3.3 to 2.18 and certified sickness from 1.98 to 1.58 days.



2.3 This measure is one that the Service will continue to monitor and the Authority members are seeking year-on-year improvements. September, shows a significant reduction on previous months but reporting has not yet been completed for this period and so the final variance will probably not look as good as we are reporting at this time.



2.4 The graph above looks at sickness by type since April 2009. This is when we started to record absences by sickness type. Musculoskeletal continues to be the highest cause of sickness across the service, with the exception of December 2010 when there were a high number of flu cases which causes a significant increase in the 'various' category. Mental health continues to feature as the second highest cause of sickness.

Sickness rates by post type

Sickness Rates by post type April - September		Wholetime Station based staff			Wholetime Non Station staff		
		Actual	Previous Year	% Variance	Actual	Previous Year	% Variance
	Overall Sickness Rate	3.65	3.61	1.1%	4.65	2.55	82.4%
	Total # Days/shifts lost	1811	1808	0.2%	932	533	74.9%
	Sickness Rates - Long Term (over 28 calendar days)	2.30	2.32	-0.9%	3.37	1.19	183.2%
	# Days/shifts lost LT	1143	1165	-1.9%	675	248	172.2%
	Sickness Rates - ST Cert (8 - 28 calendar days)	0.54	0.56	-3.6%	0.79	0.78	1.3%
	# Days/shifts lost STcert	270	280	-3.6%	158	163	-3.1%
	Sickness Rates - ST Uncert (up to 7 calendar days)	0.80	0.72	11.1%	0.49	0.58	-15.5%
	# Days/shifts lost STuncert	398	363	9.6%	99	122	-18.9%

Sickness Rates by post type April - September		Control			Support staff		
		Actual	Previous Year	% Variance	Actual	Previous Year	% Variance
	Overall Sickness Rate	6.44	5.82	10.7%	3.24	5.41	-40.1%
	Total # Days/shifts lost	272	310	-12.3%	849	1400	-39.4%
	Sickness Rates - Long Term (over 28 calendar days)	3.24	2.55	27.1%	1.10	4.17	-73.6%
	# Days/shifts lost LT	141	136	3.7%	287	1080	-73.4%
	Sickness Rates - ST Cert (8 - 28 calendar days)	1.40	1.01	38.6%	0.87	0.34	155.9%
	# Days/shifts lost STcert	59	54	9.3%	229	89	157.3%
	Sickness Rates - ST Uncert (up to 7 calendar days)	1.70	2.25	-24.4%	1.27	0.89	42.7%
	# Days/shifts lost STuncert	72	120	-40.0%	333	231	44.2%

The tables above breakdown sickness rates between the different contract types as well as the length of sickness. The following observations can be made:

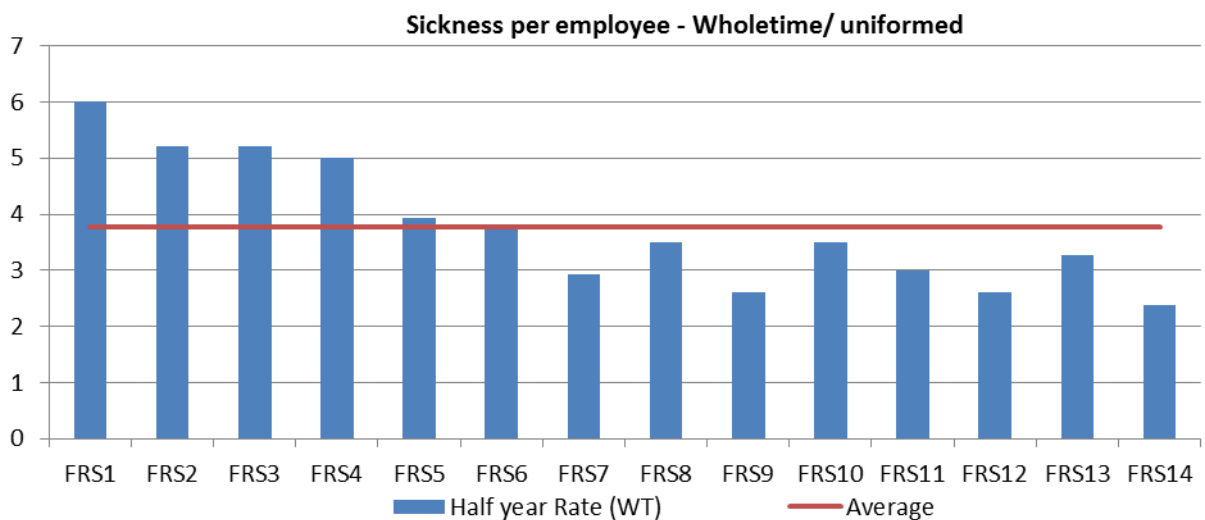
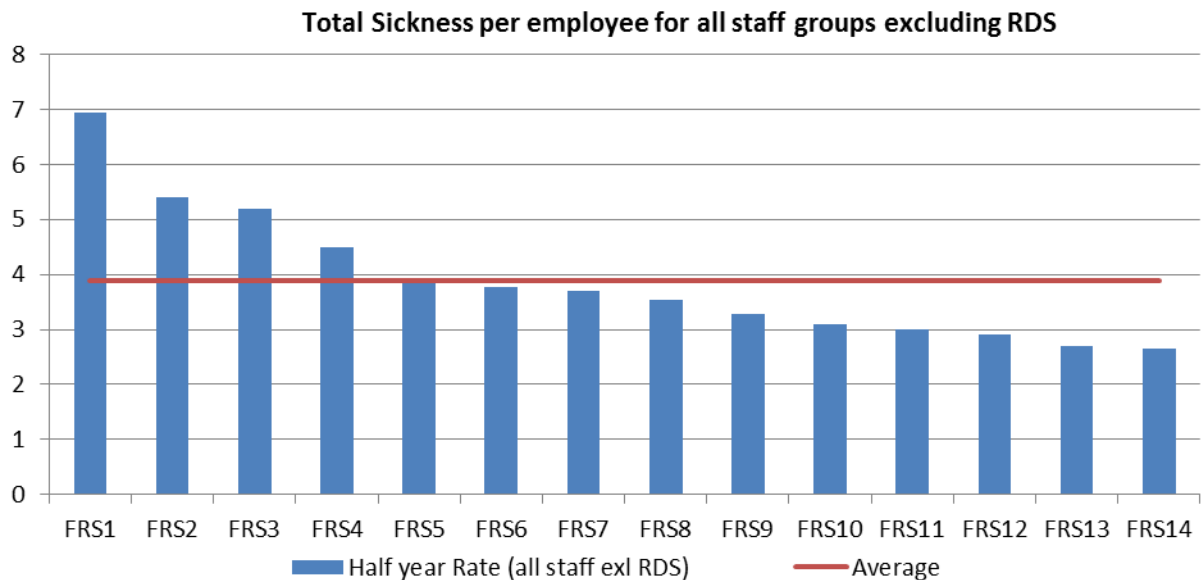
- Wholetime station based staff are showing a slight increase in short term uncertified sickness (up to 7 calendar days) which gives an overall slight increase to the same time last year.
- Wholetime non station based staff have had a significant increase in long term sickness which has increased the overall sickness rate, however it is good to see the decrease in short term uncertified sickness.
- Control have seen changes in staff numbers and therefore the numbers of days do not reflect an accurate comparison. By looking at the sickness rates per person the overall rate is up by 10%, however it is good to see a decrease in short term uncertified sickness.

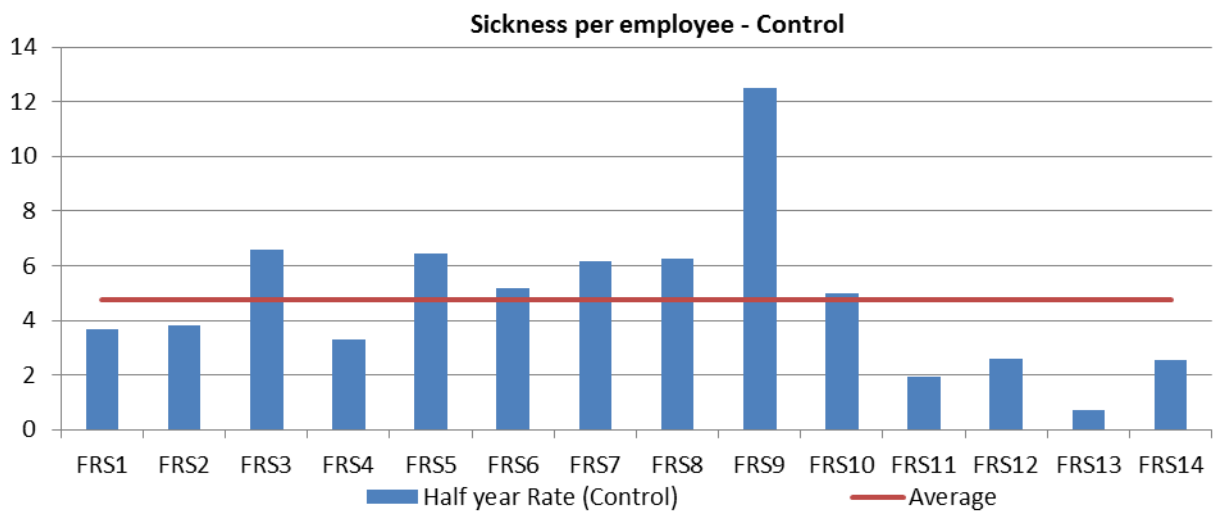
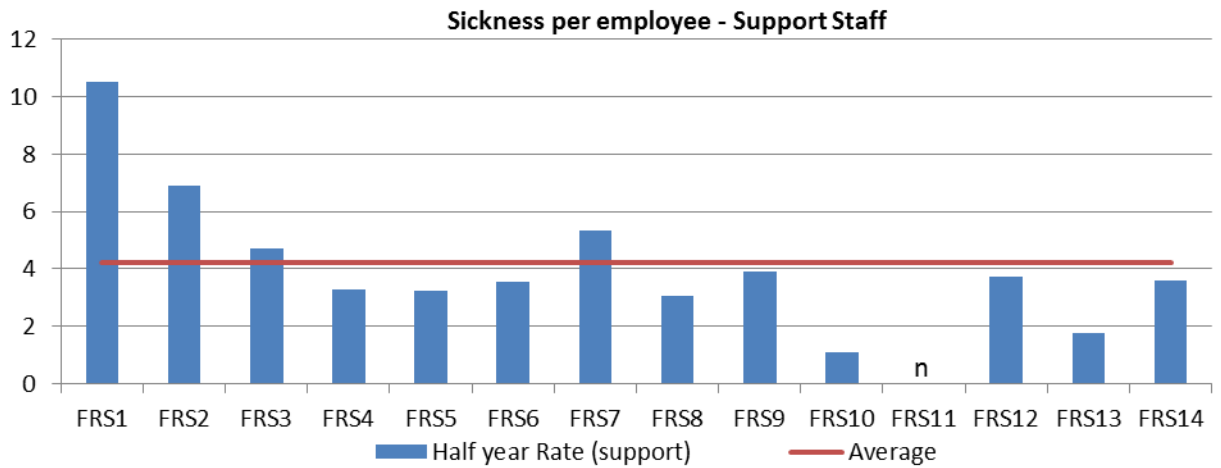
- Support staff are showing an overall drop of 40% with a major decrease in long term sickness. However there are increases in both short term certified (8 to 28 days) and short term uncertified (up to 7 days) sickness.

2.5 The Service then also considers the sickness rates by location/department and ranks them by the level of short term uncertified sickness. Short-term sickness is up to 7 days where no doctor's fit note is required and is managed locally and so this information is useful for performance management.

3. **2012/13 APRIL TO SEPTEMBER NATIONAL COMPARISONS WITHIN THE FIRE SERVICE**

3.1 The Service has also undertaken benchmarking with other Fire & Rescue Services in the UK and the comparative data for 2012/13, for Q1 and Q2 are shown below. The names of the other FRS have been removed as per the data sharing agreements we have in place and at the time of writing this report the data is still provisional. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service are FRS5.





10. CONCLUSION

10.1 For the first half of 2012/13, the Service absence levels were slightly lower than the previous year. The Service is around the average level when compared with other Fire & Rescue Services within the UK.

JANE SHERLOCK
Director of People and Organisational Development