

**M. Pearson  
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY**

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**To: The 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)**

**Wednesday 23 July 2014**

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**

***PLEASE REFER TO THE NOTES AT THE END OF THE AGENDA LISTING SHEETS***

1. **Election of Chair**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 22 January 2014 attached (Page 4).
4. **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

Items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

**PART 1 – OPEN COMMITTEE**

5. **Election of Vice-Chair**
6. **Health and Safety Management Information System**  
Presentation by the Organisational Safety Assurance Manager.

7. **Absence Management and Health of the Organisation**

Report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/14/5) attached (page 7).

8. **Equality Strategy "Safer Lives, Brighter Futures" - Monitoring Report: April 2013 To June 2014**

Report of the Area Manager (Community Safety, Corporate Communications & Information, Community & Workplace Equalities) (HRMDC/14/6) attached (page 18).

9. **Retained Duty System (RDS) Leaver Analysis**

Report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/14/7) attached (page 25).

10. **Exclusion of the 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 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to individuals;
- Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information likely to reveal the identity of individuals; and
- Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with a labour relations matter between the Authority and representative bodies currently recognised by the Authority.

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

11. **Working With Trade Unions**

Report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/14/8) attached (page 30)

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

Membership:-

Councillors Bown, Brooksbank, Burridge-Clayton, Chugg, Horsfall, Knight and Smith.

<b>NOTES</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<p><b><u>Access to Information</u></b>  Any person wishing to inspect any minutes, reports or lists of background papers relating to any item on this agenda should contact the person listed in the "Please ask for" section at the top of this agenda.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b><u>Reporting of Meetings</u></b>  Any person attending a meeting may report (film, photograph or make an audio recording) on any part of the meeting which is open to the public – unless there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chairman - and use any communication method, including the internet and social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.), to publish, post or otherwise share the report. The Authority accepts no liability for the content or accuracy of any such report, which should not be construed as representing the official, Authority record of the meeting. Similarly, any views expressed in such reports should not be interpreted as representing the views of the Authority. Flash photography is not permitted and any filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible from a single fixed position without the use of any additional lighting; focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard also to the wishes of any member of the public present who may not wish to be filmed. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairman or the Democratic Services Officer in attendance so that all those present may be made aware that is happening.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b><u>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (Authority Members only)</u></b>  If you have any disclosable pecuniary interests (as defined by Regulations) in any item(s) to be considered at this meeting then, unless you have previously obtained a dispensation from the Authority's Monitoring Officer, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) disclose any such interest at the time of commencement of consideration of the item in which you have the interest or, if later, as soon as it becomes apparent to you that you have such an interest;</li> <li>(b) leave the meeting room during consideration of the item in which you have such an interest, taking no part in any discussion or decision thereon; and</li> <li>(c) not seek to influence improperly any decision on the matter in which you have such an interest.</li> </ul> <p>If the interest is sensitive (as agreed with the Monitoring Officer), you need not disclose the nature of the interest but merely that you have a disclosable pecuniary interest of a sensitive nature. You must still follow (b) and (c) above.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b><u>Part 2 Reports</u></b>  Members are reminded that any Part 2 reports as circulated with the agenda for this meeting contain exempt information and should therefore be treated accordingly. They should not be disclosed or passed on to any other person(s). Members are also reminded of the need to dispose of such reports carefully and are therefore invited to return them to the Committee Secretary at the conclusion of the meeting for disposal.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b><u>Substitute Members (Committee Meetings only)</u></b>  Members are reminded that, in accordance with Standing Order 35, the Clerk (or his representative) must be advised of any substitution prior to the start of the meeting. Members are also reminded that substitutions are not permitted for full Authority meetings.</p>

## **HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

22 January 2014

Present:-

Councillors Bown (Chair), Brooksbank, Burrige-Clayton, Chugg, Horsfall, Knight and J Smith

### **\*HRMDC/11. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2013 be signed as a correct record.

### **\*HRMDC/12. Learning and Development Strategy 2013-16**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/14/1) in respect of the new Learning and Development Strategy which defined the current context for training and development and how workforce competences needed to evolve in order to support the Service's broader strategic aims. The key considerations in setting this Strategy included the need to continue to ensure firefighter safety within a context of decreasing budgets year on year for the Service.

The Committee also received a presentation given by the Training Academy Manager that outlined:

- The context to the document and the need for change;
- The key objectives of the Strategy;
- Details of the procedures to be implemented in order to meet the objectives set out within the Strategy.

### **\*HRMDC/13. Absence Management & Health of the Organisation**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/14/2) that detailed the sickness absence statistics for the period April to September 2013, the monitoring of which was undertaken as part of the Service's internal performance measures. The report also set out the actions that had been taken by the Service to mitigate against sickness absence, including the introduction of counselling and physiotherapy services, access by managers to electronic sickness records and stress management training.

It was noted that there had been a reduction in sickness absence for Quarters 1 and 2 of 2013/14 as compared with the same period in 2012/13 and that this was maintaining a downward trend for the Service. A comparison had also been undertaken with other industry benchmarks and this showed that the national average was 7.4 days lost per person whilst the figure for the public services was 9.3 days lost per person. It was encouraging to see that the current performance for Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service at 7.8 days lost per person was moving towards the national all sector rate of 7.4 days lost per person.

The Committee congratulated the Service on this performance but stated that there was no room for complacency. It was requested that the information be included in future reports to the Committee in terms of the numbers of people off sick as it was felt that the percentage changes could be misleading.

**\*HRMDC/14. Firefighters' Pension Scheme Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/14/3) that sought guidance from the Committee in terms of how it wished to proceed with the determination of future IDRPs in the light of a request from the Fire Brigades' Union (FBU) to be able to represent appellants during a hearing.

The Director of People and Commercial Services confirmed that the Stage 2 IDRPs process was a written procedure normally in accordance with the guidance in Annex 12 of the Appeals Procedure relating to the IDRPs. Each case submitted was considered on an individual basis and the IDRPs Panel was able to request further information as necessary to determine a case. It was noted that FBU felt that it would be able to present a case more fully if it was able to represent an appellant at a hearing rather than it just being a written submission.

A discussion ensued and the view was expressed that not all cases would require a hearing or the FBU to present a case but the facility should be available in the event it was required. The point was also made that the appellant should also be present if a hearing was deemed necessary by the Panel and not just a representative. The Human Resources Manager clarified that if the appellant was given the opportunity to attend a hearing with a representative to present a case, this would make the process akin to a grievance hearing.

Following a full debate of the issues, Councillor J Smith **MOVED** (which was seconded by Councillor Burrige-Clayton):

“that, in future cases submitted under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP), the appellant should be given the option of attending a hearing at Stage 2 if they chose to with a representative”.

The motion was then put to the vote (6 for, 0 against, no abstentions), following which it was:

**RESOLVED** that, in future cases submitted under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP), the appellant should be given the option of attending a hearing at Stage 2 if they chose to with a representative.

**HRMDC/15. Redundancy Compensation Rates**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/14/4) that set out the background on how the redundancy multiplier was arrived at and which also set out details of the current multiplier in use by other fire and rescue services and local authorities within Devon and Somerset for comparative purposes.

Reference was made to the point that there was currently no statutory power for a fire and rescue service to enhance redundancy rates for its uniformed staff, although this was currently being reviewed at a national level. The Committee was invited to review the current multiplier in place for the Service taking into account budgetary and financial issues and the organisational workforce planning needs of the Service.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) That the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority be recommended to approve that there should be no change to the current redundancy compensation rates (a multiplier of 2), and;

- (b) That the Committee continues to monitor progress with reduction in staff numbers associated with the implementation of the Corporate Plan, and how the use of voluntary redundancies can support this, with a view to further reviewing the redundancy compensation rates in the next financial year.

**\*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 item of business on the grounds that it involved 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 and its employees.

**\*HRMDC/17. Industrial Action - Update**

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

The Director of People and Commercial Services updated the Committee on the current position in respect of the national dispute between the Government and the Fire Brigades' Union in respect of the proposed new Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015, together with details of the Service's business continuity arrangements for industrial action already taken and in the event of further industrial action.

**\* DELEGATED MATTERS WITH POWER TO ACT**

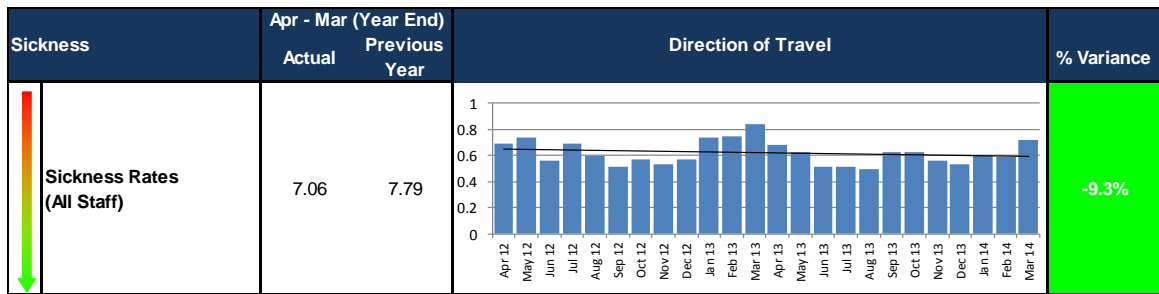
The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.45hours

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>HRMDC/14/5</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>23 JULY 2014</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>ABSENCE MANAGEMENT &amp; HEALTH OF THE ORGANISATION</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Director of People and Commercial Services</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	One of the key internal measures is that of sickness rates. This Committee has requested that it be kept informed of Service performance in this area by way of a 6 monthly "light touch" report followed by a detailed review at the year end. This paper addresses performance in this area for the 2013-14 financial year. The report also indicates absence to date between April to June of this year.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b>EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)</b>	The Service Absence Management policy is subject to an ERBA.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	A. Middleware Business Process Improvement
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	Nil.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

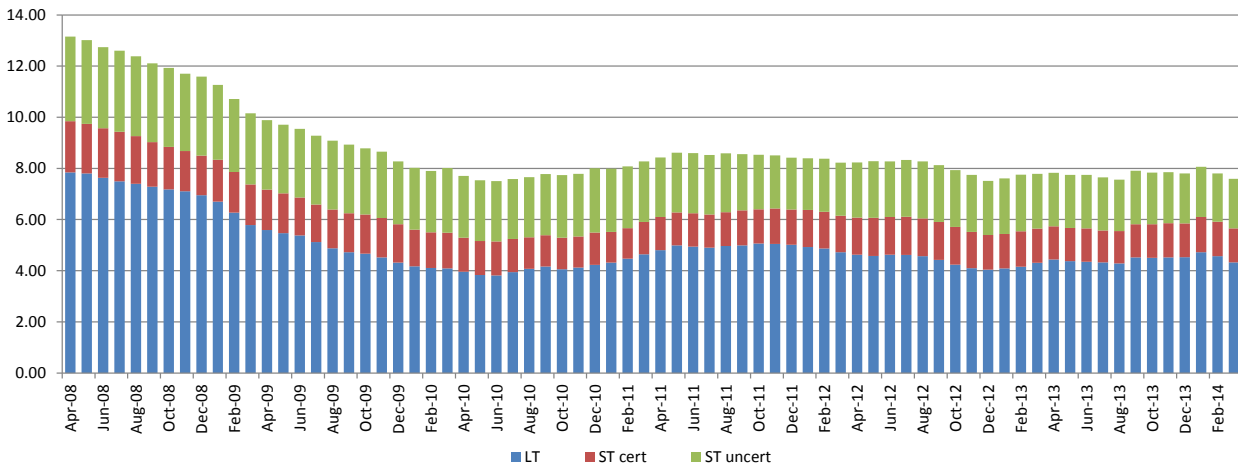
1.1 At its meeting on 25 June 2012, the Committee resolved, amongst other things, to consider the detailed measures for the 'Health of the Organisation' on an annual basis but with an additional half yearly review (Minute HRMDC/5 refers). The format for these full-yearly reviews are as per the quarterly performance report along with additional data. The Service is seeking to achieve year-on-year improvements in this measure.

**2. 2013/14 APRIL TO MARCH (YEAR END) ABSENCE PERFORMANCE**



**Fig 1: Sickness Direction of Travel**

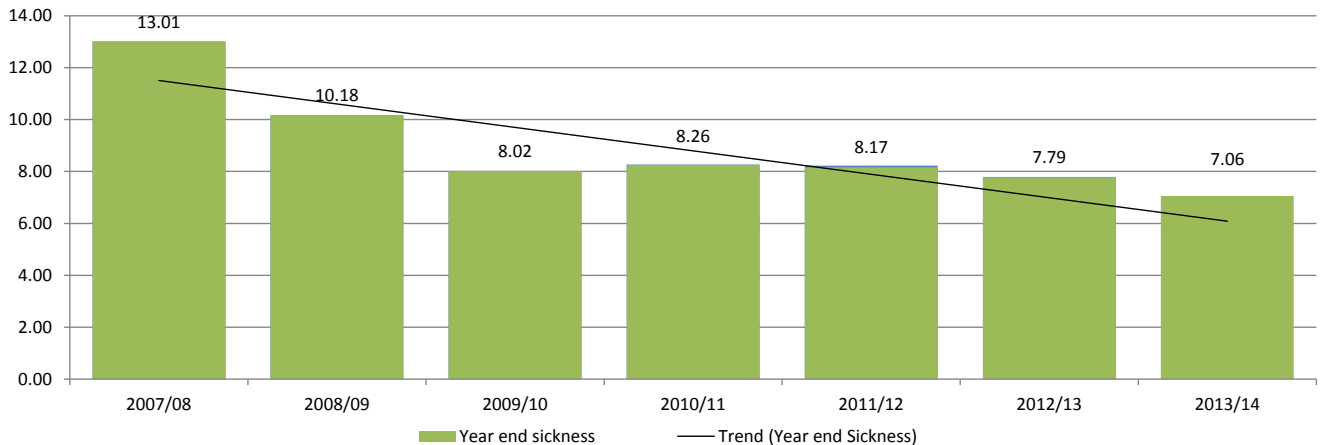
2.1 The graph above shows the monthly sickness rates for the last 2 years. With monthly peaks and troughs in sickness it is difficult to see the on-going improvement in the rates over this period. The graph below shows a rolling sickness rate and shows a much clearer downward trend in the first two years following combination. Over the past 4 years the Service has seen a steady downward trend, in 2012/13 sickness absence rates dropped below a rate of 8 days per year (7.79). This trend has continued into 2013/14 where the Service has seen another 9.3% decrease in the sickness rate to 7.06.



**Fig 2: 12 Month Rolling Sickness Rate**

2.2 The graph overleaf shows overall downward trend in annual sickness rates since combination.





**Fig 3: Service level Sickness Rate per Person**

2.3 The Service then considers the breakdown of sickness rates between the different contract types as well as the length of sickness. There are 4 contract types that we consider:

- Wholetime Station based staff
- Wholetime non station based staff
- Control Staff
- Support Staff

2.4 The length of sickness is considered under 3 categories:


- Short-term sickness – uncertified ie periods of sickness up to 7 days
- Short-term sickness – certified ie periods of sickness over 7 days for which a GP certificate is required
- Long-term sickness – for periods of over 28 days

2.5 The Service has seen decreases in the sickness rate in all areas apart from Wholetime station based short term certified.

Sickness Rates by post type April - March (Year End)	Wholetime Station based staff			Wholetime Non Station staff		
	Actual	Previous Year	% Variance	Actual	Previous Year	% Variance
<b>Overall Sickness Rate</b>	5.99	6.31	-5.0%	9.04	9.85	-8.2%
Total # Days/shifts lost	2690	3110	-13.5%	1826	1995	-8.5%
<b>Sickness Rates - Long Term (over 28 calendar days)</b>	2.91	3.28	-11.1%	7.00	7.04	-0.7%
# Days/shifts lost LT	1309	1616	-19.0%	1414	1427	-0.9%
<b>Sickness Rates - ST Cert (8 - 28 calendar days)</b>	1.23	1.07	14.8%	1.11	1.48	-24.9%
# Days/shifts lost STcert	551	527	4.6%	224	299	-25.1%
<b>Sickness Rates - ST Uncert (up to 7 calendar days)</b>	1.85	1.96	-5.8%	0.93	1.33	-29.9%
# Days/shifts lost STuncert	830	967	-14.2%	188	269	-30.1%

**Fig 4: Sickness rates by post type – Wholetime station based staff and non-station based staff**

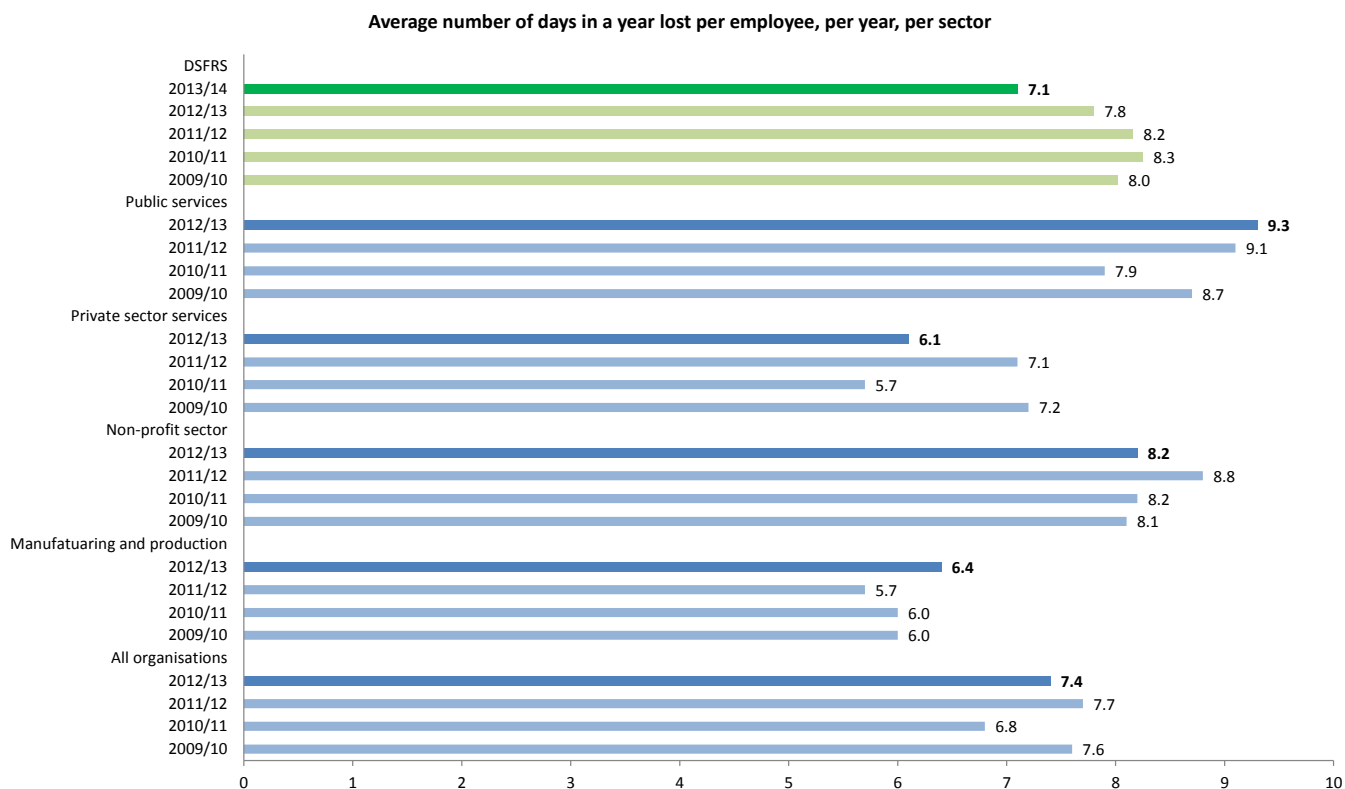
- Wholetime station based is the only post type that saw an increase in one area of sickness, short term certified. The overall sickness rate improved by 5% when compared to previous years.
- Wholetime non station based staff have seen decreases in all sickness types, with the biggest improvement in short term uncertified sickness where the rate fell by 29.9%. The overall sickness rate was down 8.2%.

Sickness Rates by post type April - March (Year End)		Control			Support staff		
		Actual	Previous Year	% Variance	Actual	Previous Year	% Variance
	<b>Overall Sickness Rate</b>	11.13	13.77	-19.2%	6.76	8.03	-15.8%
	Total # Days/shifts lost	434	574	-24.4%	1693	2127	-20.4%
	<b>Sickness Rates - Long Term (over 28 calendar days)</b>	6.62	8.11	-18.4%	3.22	3.55	-9.5%
	# Days/shifts lost LT	258	338	-23.7%	805	941	-14.5%
	<b>Sickness Rates - ST Cert (8 - 28 calendar days)</b>	1.33	2.06	-35.3%	1.33	1.59	-16.3%
	# Days/shifts lost STcert	52	86	-39.5%	334	422	-20.9%
	<b>Sickness Rates - ST Uncert (up to 7 calendar days)</b>	3.18	3.60	-11.6%	2.21	2.89	-23.3%
# Days/shifts lost STuncert	124	150	-17.3%	554	764	-27.5%	

**Fig 5: Sickness rates by post type – Control & Support staff**

- Control have seen a large overall improvement of 19.2% in the overall sickness rate, with short term certified sickness type having the biggest decrease of 35.3%. It is worth noting that control staff have the highest sickness rates in all 3 sickness categories.
- Support staff have seen an overall decrease of 15.8% in the sickness rate, with all 3 categories decreasing overall. The most significant decrease is in the rate of short term uncertified sickness with a 23.3% reduction.

### 3. SICKNESS ABSENCE – SECTOR BENCHMARKING



**Fig 6: Average number of days sickness per year per sector**

- 3.1 The graph above shows how the Service compare to different industries. The large improvement in sickness rates in 2013/14 has seen us move below the average public sector rates showing an opposing trend. The Service is now more in line with rates in the private sector and below the all organisations average.
- 3.2 The Service also participates in a national Fire & Rescue Service Occupational Health Performance report that facilitates comparison with 29 other fire & rescue services (FRSs).
- 3.3 This report includes the main causes of sickness across the UK by staff category and the results of the top 5 in each staff category are as follows:

#### Wholetime

Cause of Sickness Absence	No. of days/shifts lost	% of total days/shifts lost
Musculo skeletal - other	23,060	23%
Mental Health	18,417	19%
Musculo skeletal - lower limb	13,008	13%
Gastro-Intestinal	11,246	11%
Musculo skeletal - back/neck	9,955	10%

### Retained

Cause of Sickness Absence	No. of days/shifts lost	% of total days/shifts lost
Musculo skeletal - other	9,280	31%
Musculo skeletal - lower limb	5,003	17%
Other	2,924	10%
Mental Health	2,870	9%
Musculo skeletal - back/neck	2,658	9%

### Non-uniformed staff

Cause of Sickness Absence	No. of days/shifts lost	% of total days/shifts lost
Mental Health	10,626	33%
Musculo skeletal - other	4,683	14%
Respiratory/Chest infection	2,731	8%
Other	2,633	8%
Gastro-Intestinal	2,195	7%

### Fire Control

Cause of Sickness Absence	No. of days/shifts lost	% of total days/shifts lost
Mental Health	2,316	37%
Musculo skeletal - other	494	8%
Respiratory/Chest infection	399	6%
Other	398	6%
Gastro-Intestinal	380	6%

3.4 These results accord with what would be expected, with musculo-skeletal being a predominate cause for firefighter particularly when the different body parts are considered as a whole ie 44% for Wholetime firefighters and 57% for the Retained. For Control and Support Staff, mental health (including anxiety, stress and depression) is significant.

3.5 The table below compares the Service position with that of Avon and Gloucestershire in the league table of the 30 FRSs taking part:

Number of days/shifts lost per person

Wholetime	No. of days	Position in league of 30 (lower is better)
Devon & Somerset FRS	7.22	15
Avon FRS	7.77	10
Gloucester FRS	7.77	11

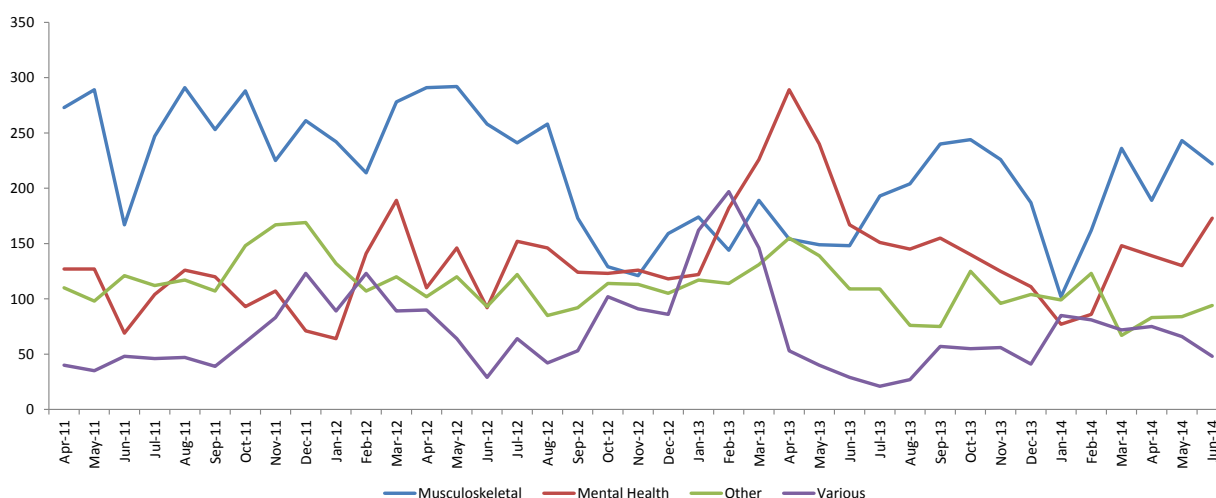
<b>Non uniformed</b>	No. of days	Position in league of 30 (lower is better)
Devon & Somerset FRS	7.03	23
Avon FRS	11.68	7
Gloucester FRS	13.64	2

<b>Control</b>	No. of days	Position in league of 30 (lower is better)
Devon & Somerset FRS	10.76	7
Avon FRS	9.94	11
Gloucester FRS	5.83	24

3.6 These figures suggest that it is the Control department is a particular area for focus by the Service as its rank position here is worse than that of Avon or Gloucestershire.

#### 4. **SICKNESS ABSENCE CATEGORIES**

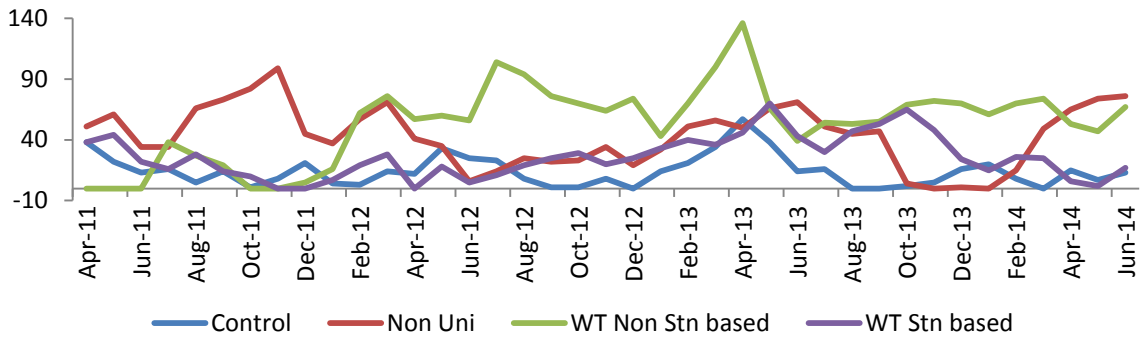
4.1 Having considered the national position for reasons for absence it is useful to return to the Service's own sickness categories. The top 4 are shown in the graph below, dating back to April 2011. It can be seen that musculo-skeletal and mental health are the highest categories, reflecting the national position.



**Fig 7: DSFRS Main reasons for sickness**

4.2 Exploring these by staff category for mental health, there are various peaks and troughs with the most notable across all staff categories around February to June 2013.

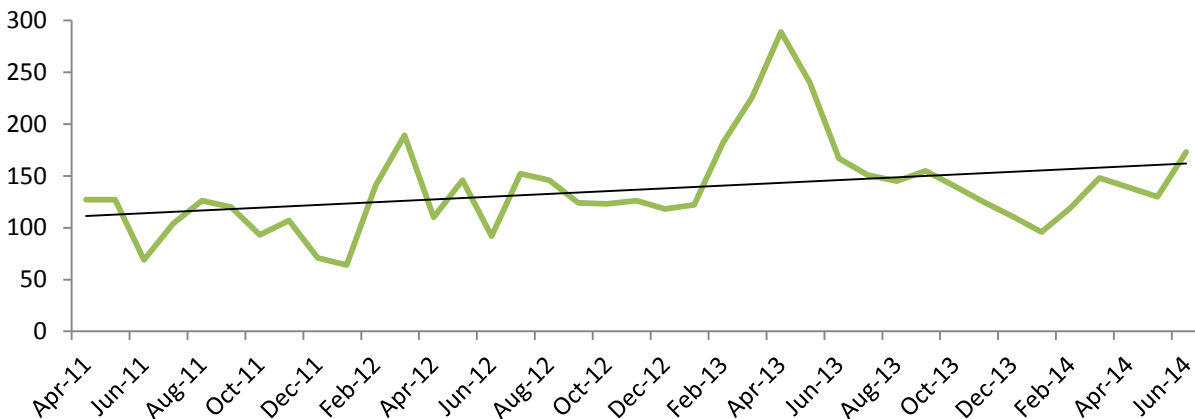
### Mental Health Shifts Lost - By staff type (Apr 11-Jun 14)



**Fig 7: Mental Health sickness by staff type**

4.3 The overall trend since April 2011 is for an increasing rate of absences related to mental health issues.

### Mental Health Shifts Lost - All Staff (Apr 11-Jun 14)



**Fig 8: Total Mental Health Sickness**

## 5. 2014-15 APRIL TO JUNE - ABSENCE PERFORMANCE

5.1 Using the same reporting methods for the first three months of this financial year, the Service has not performed as well as last year which is a concern and one which needs to be reviewed. Figures for wholetime and support staff are worse than the previous year whilst Control is marginally better and non-station staff are improved. However, this is in part related to the fact that the Wholetime and Support staff had such good results in the previous year. This is clearly a disappointing start to the year and the Service will be assessing what, if any impact the new sickness reporting process (sickness portal) may have had. The Service will also be drilling down into the data to seek to highlight any particular problem areas.

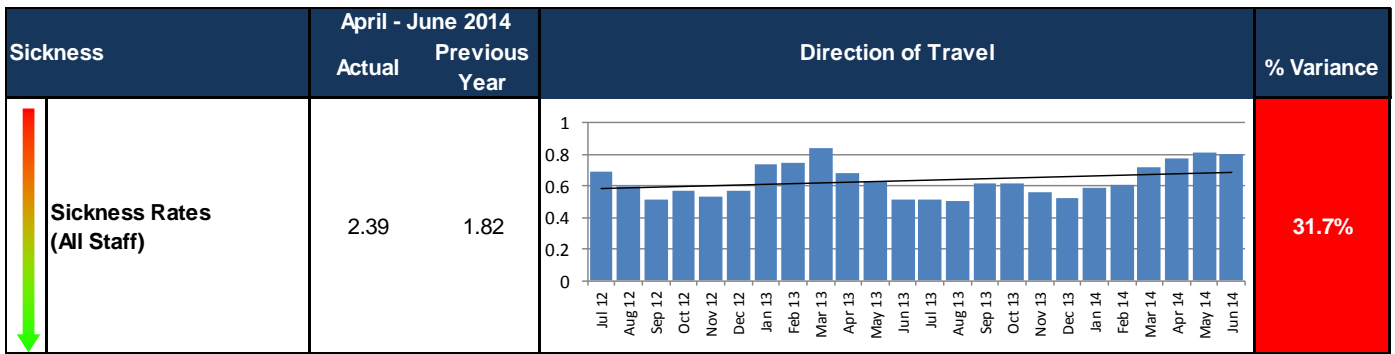


Fig 10: Sickness Direction of Travel 2014/15

Sickness Rates by post type April - June	Wholtime Station based staff			Wholtime Non Station staff (inc SHQ, STC, group support teams etc)		
	Actual	Previous Year	% Variance	Actual	Previous Year	% Variance
<b>Overall Sickness Rate</b>	2.13	1.43	48.5%	2.38	2.50	-4.9%
Total # Days/shifts lost	836	688	21.5%	454	508	-10.6%
<b>Sickness Rates - Long Term (over 28 calendar days)</b>	1.40	0.74	88.8%	1.87	2.12	-11.7%
# Days/shifts lost LT	550	356	54.5%	357	430	-17.0%
<b>Sickness Rates - ST Cert (8 - 28 calendar days)</b>	0.22	0.27	-18.9%	0.35	0.19	80.0%
# Days/shifts lost STcert	85	128	-33.6%	66	39	69.2%
<b>Sickness Rates - ST Uncert (up to 7 calendar days)</b>	0.51	0.42	20.4%	0.16	0.19	-15.5%
# Days/shifts lost STuncert	201	204	-1.5%	31	39	-20.5%

Fig 11: Sickness rates by post type – Wholtime station based staff and non-station based staff - 2014/15

Sickness Rates by post type April - June	Control			Support staff		
	Actual	Previous Year	% Variance	Actual	Previous Year	% Variance
<b>Overall Sickness Rate</b>	4.31	4.37	-1.6%	2.51	1.63	54.0%
Total # Days/shifts lost	183	167	9.6%	598	435	37.5%
<b>Sickness Rates - Long Term (over 28 calendar days)</b>	2.56	3.35	-23.5%	1.60	0.85	88.5%
# Days/shifts lost LT	109	128	-14.8%	382	227	68.3%
<b>Sickness Rates - ST Cert (8 - 28 calendar days)</b>	0.96	0.26	268.3%	0.35	0.29	20.6%
# Days/shifts lost STcert	41	10	310.0%	84	78	7.7%
<b>Sickness Rates - ST Uncert (up to 7 calendar days)</b>	0.78	0.76	2.2%	0.55	0.49	13.7%
# Days/shifts lost STuncert	33	29	13.8%	132	130	1.5%

Fig 12: Sickness rates by post type – Control & Support staff - 2014/15

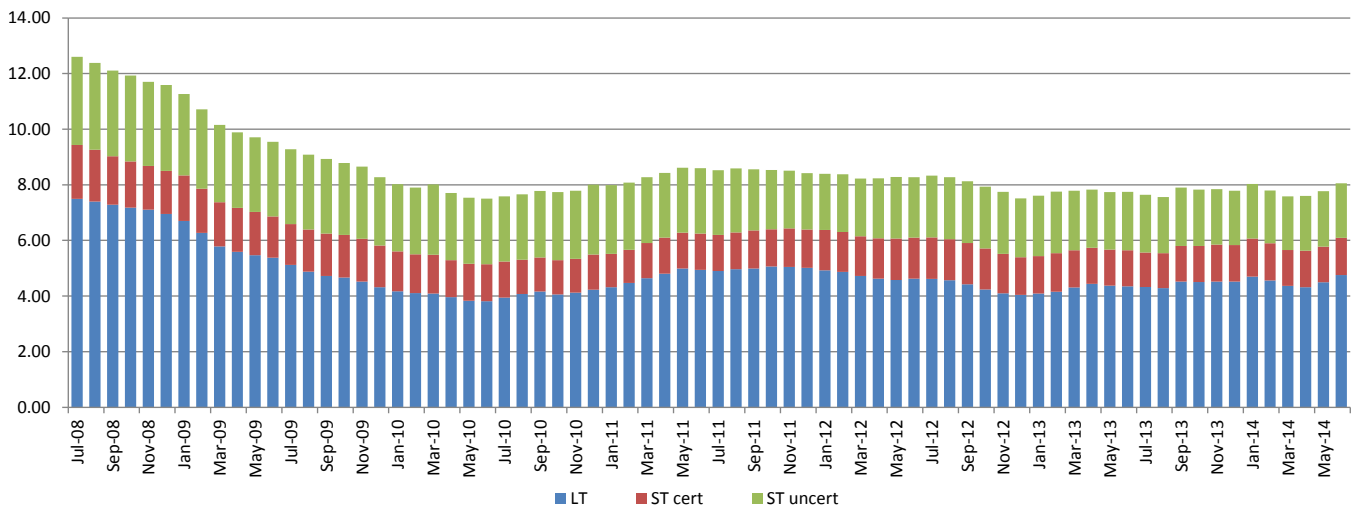


Fig 13: 12 Month Rolling Sickness Rate - 2014/15

- 5.2 It can be seen from figure 13 that on a rolling 12 month basis, we are seeing an increase in short-term absenteeism whilst long-term sickness and short-term certified sickness remain reasonably static.

## **6. 2014/15 CURRENT PRIORITIES**

- 6.1 With the increase in absence due to mental health, the Service is continuing to look at what more it can do to support its staff. One aspect for further consideration is an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) similar to that introduced by Devon County Council this year. EAPs provide a range of services to support staff including confidential telephone-based assistance on a range of work-related and personal issues, fast-track access to counselling and other support services as appropriate following an early assessment by telephone, support and guidance to line managers to help them manage workers with difficult work issues or personal problems and management information (e.g. usage and the types of issues raised with the EAP) which can aid the development of effective wellbeing management practices. The Service already has a number of wellbeing resources including a Welfare Officer, counselling services, staff supporters and such a scheme would complement these. The Service will be seeking feedback from Devon County Council on the benefits of the scheme and cost-benefit analysis which may then result in a business case being developed to seek to introduce a scheme for the Service.
- 6.2 As reported at the last meeting, an electronic, workflow-based system for reporting sickness using Middleware has been introduced. This went live across the whole Service from the 31 March 2014, having been trialled in a number of departments. This makes sickness absence management easier, more efficient and uses less resources. There are also other benefits with Improved information security, improved information and data quality and better reporting and statistical opportunities. This was one of the first applications for which the Service has used middleware. The efficiency improvements are shown in Appendix A.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The Service saw an improvement in its performance in 2013-14 when compared to the previous year and one which was considerably better than other public sector organisations. The first quarter of 2014/15 has been disappointing and the Service will be seeking to ensure that positive measures taken to improve this situation.

**JANE SHERLOCK**  
**Director of People and Commercial Services**



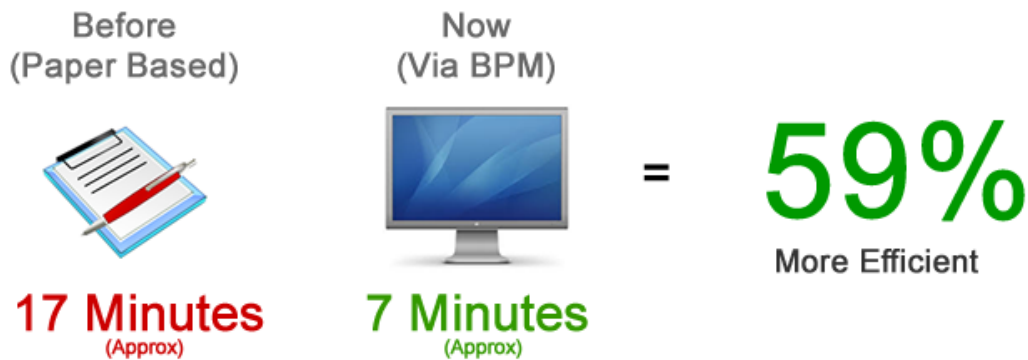
Middleware Business Process Improvement

**Sickness Absence Process Efficiencies**

New BPM process has managed 224 sickness absences since 31st March 2014

**Time taken to complete a sickness absence process**

(Actual time taken on average not including return to work interview)



Time Saved Since Go Live

**37.3 Hours**

Projected Annual Time Saving

**181.6 Hours**

**HR time to process each sickness absence**



Time Saved Since Go Live

**37.3 Hours**

Projected Annual Time Saving

**181.6 Hours**

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	HRMDC/14/6
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	23 JULY 2014
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>EQUALITY STRATEGY – ‘SAFER LIVES, BRIGHTER FUTURES’ - MONITORING REPORT: APRIL 2013 TO JUNE 2014</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Area Manager (Community Safety, Corporate Communications &amp; Information, Community &amp; Workplace Equalities)</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<p><i>(a) that the Authority be invited to adopt the Core Values and Behavioural Framework appended to this report, and referred to in Section 3 of this report;</i></p> <p><i>(b) that, pending (a) above, the Clerk be authorised to amend the accountabilities, roles and responsibilities of Members of the Devon &amp; Somerset Fire &amp; Rescue Authority constitutional governance framework document to reflect adoption of the new Core Values and Behavioural Framework; and</i></p> <p><i>(b) that, subject to (a) and (b) above, the report be noted.</i></p>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	Implementation of the Equality Strategy, Safer Lives, Brighter Futures, helps to ensure that the Service is meeting its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Strategy is regularly monitored by the corporate Equality Steering Group. There have been of a number of successes recently including development of new core values and a behavioural framework, awards for Fire Pride and the hosting of a women’s development day.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	No additional resource implications
<b>EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)</b>	There is no requirement to carry out an ERBA on this report, however information on the ERBA process is contained within the report.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	A. Core Values Behavioural Framework
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	Equality Strategy 2012-2016 ‘Brighter Lives, Safer Futures’

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”) provides legal protections for people based on their ‘protected characteristics’ which are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 1.2 The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty which, in relation to the protected characteristics, requires the Service to give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people.
- 1.3 The Service’s Equality Strategy 2012-2016, Safer Lives, Brighter Futures, sets out the objectives and action plan that enables it to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Strategy is also helping the Service work towards achieving the ‘Excellent’ level of the national Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework. Later this year a review will be undertaken of progress by the Service against the criteria in the Framework and agree the best time to request an assessment.
- 1.4 The Equality Strategy is regularly monitored by the cross-functional Equality Steering Group which has a membership of fifteen employees and includes the representative bodies and a member of the Fire Pride (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) network and WANDS (Women’s Action Network).
- 1.5 Externally, the Service consults and seeks advice on the strategy from Community Advisory Groups through facilitated discussions with members of community and voluntary sector organisations in north Devon, Taunton, Exeter and Plymouth.
- 1.6 This report provides an update on four areas of the Equality Strategy:
- Equality Risks and Benefits Analysis
  - The new Core Values and behavioural framework
  - Fire Pride network
  - Women’s Action Network (WANDS)

## **2. EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS**

- 2.1 As referred to above, the Service has a legal responsibility to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and demonstrate that it has given ‘due regard’ to potential equality impacts in its service delivery and employment practices. To do this, the Service uses a process called Equality Risks and Benefits Analysis (ERBA) when developing or reviewing projects and policies (some local authorities use the expression Equality Impact Assessments). This helps policy developers to think about how proposals might impact on people with one or more of the protected characteristics and what actions can be taken to mitigate the risks of potentially negative impacts.
- 2.2 Importantly, the ERBA process is also used when considering strategic decisions about different ways of operating that may impact on communities and employees e.g. the Corporate Plan proposals, approved by the Authority in July 2013, were each subject to an individual ERBA. As any further new ways of working are researched and developed, ERBAs will be carried out to ensure equalities-related risks are minimised for communities and employees and that the Service complies with its legal duties.

### **3. THE NEW CORE VALUES AND BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1 New core values and an associated behavioural framework have recently been agreed following extensive employee engagement. The previous core values were the national values for fire and rescue services and, whilst they were perfectly valid, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service employees were not involved in their development and so felt little 'ownership' of them. It was agreed to involve employees in discussions aimed at creating a new set of values and a behavioural framework.
- 3.2 The discussion groups encouraged employees to think about and record the behaviours and ways of working that illustrate three standards – ideal, expected and unacceptable. Four broad themes emerged from the feedback, which now form the core values:
- Honesty, clarity and accountability
  - Respect for each other
  - Working together to improve
  - A 'can do' attitude.
- 3.3 Many of the very practical examples of behaviours and ways of working that were recorded in the discussion groups have been included in a wider behavioural framework (Appendix A). This helps to clarify what the values mean in practice and brings them to life. The framework sets out what the Service stands for and what matters most to employees and the organisation. It also allows staff and managers at all levels to know what is expected of them and what they can expect in return.
- 3.4 The new values are now being used across the Service, for example in team meetings, on drill nights, following incidents and in one-to-one meetings. The Service is also looking at how it ensures these important principles underpin all of its activities and the way in which the Service operates. This includes reviewing some Service processes and procedures in the light of the new framework to reinforce the values and example behaviours. The Service is reviewing the content of its one-day equalities training course for managers to ensure that the core values are used regularly with their teams and that managers "role model" the expected behaviours.
- 3.5 Helping to develop the core values was a very positive experience for many employees. There was clear feedback that staff do want to be involved and have ideas they wish to share on how the Service can improve and develop. The Service intends to follow up on this by carrying out more employee engagement in other areas in future.
- 3.6 Finally, in addition to having the required Members Code of Conduct under the Localism Act 2011, Authority Members previously agreed to adopt the former, nationally-developed core values. Given that these have now been replaced in the Service by more bespoke, internally-generated values, the Authority is invited to adopt the new Core Values and Behavioural Framework and to reflect this by an amendment to the Roles and Responsibilities of Members of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority document that forms part of the Authority's constitutional governance framework.

#### **4. FIRE PRIDE**

- 4.1 Fire Pride, the Service's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) support network, has received national recognition for the important role it plays. The network was set up two years ago to provide support and guidance to individual employees and to the organisation on LGBT issues. The work of the network helps to increase the number of employees who feel able to be themselves at work and be open about their sexual orientation, if they choose.
- 4.2 Earlier this year, Fire Pride was recognised as a 'star performer' network by Stonewall, the national LGB campaign and support organisation. Fire Pride has also made a major contribution to the Service's continuing improvement in Stonewall's annual workplace equality index which sets the standard for employers who want to provide the best possible working environment for their gay staff and promote workplace equality in its wider sense. This year the Service leapt up to 54th place in the index – an improvement of 37 places on last year - making the Service one of the UK's leading organisations for LGBT equality. 369 employers entered the index from across the public, private and third sectors.
- 4.3 More recently, Fire Pride was awarded 'highly commended' in the employee network category at the enei (Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion) awards. The enei awards recognise the commitment of organisations to achieving diverse and inclusive workplaces and celebrate the teams and individuals who are really making a difference.
- 4.4 Fire Pride was shortlisted alongside employee networks from some large and well-known public and private sector organisations. The winners of the same category were the Home Office and Ernst & Young also received highly commended.
- 4.5 Fire Pride was recognised for their significant levels of employee engagement and influence with the leadership team; evidence of how they have contributed to the organisation's objectives and evidence of how they have improved the working environment for staff.

#### **5. WANDS – THE WOMEN'S ACTION NETWORK**

- 5.1 WANDS was set up in recognition of the fact that women are in a significant minority in the organisation, in particular in operational roles where they make up less than 4% of employees. In addition, very few senior operational roles are filled by women. WANDS helps to identify the issues that arise for women in the workplace and how the Service might address them. This includes looking at all aspects of employment - recruitment, induction, training, working in role, development and progression.
- 5.2 In May, WANDS held a development day at Service Headquarters with delegates from across Devon and Somerset and neighbouring services. The theme of the day was 'challenging perceptions' and delegates were inspired to reflect on this theme by three speakers - Dany Cotton, Assistant Commissioner, London Fire Brigade, Mandy McBain, client account manager at Stonewall (following a career in the Royal Navy) and Claire Harvey, captain of the GB women's seated volleyball team at the 2012 Paralympics and ex-prison governor.

5.3 Several discussion groups considered ideas for resolving issues for women based around three broad themes of recruitment, working in role and progression. The ideas put forward will form the basis of an action plan aimed at reducing the gender imbalance. Following this event, nine women from the Service attended the national Women in the Fire Service training and development weekend at the Fire Service College. This gave the operational women the opportunity to test themselves in more complex multi-agency scenarios while the women in support roles learned more about the firefighter role through 'be a firefighter' workshops.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

6.1 Implementation of the Equality Strategy, Safer Lives, Brighter Futures, helps to ensure that the Service is meeting its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. One of the main methods of discharging this duty is through the Equality Risks and Benefits Analysis process which is routinely applied to new and reviewed policies and will be completed alongside any new proposals for different ways of working.

6.2 The Equality Strategy is regularly monitored by the corporate Equality Steering Group. There have been a number of successes recently including development of new core values and a behavioural framework (now commended to the Authority for adoption), awards for Fire Pride and the hosting of a women's development day.

**PHIL MARTIN**

**Area Manager (Community Safety, Corporate Communications & Information,  
Community & Workplace Equalities)**

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>HRMDC/14/7</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>23 JULY 2014</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM (RDS) LEAVER ANALYSIS</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Director of People and Commercial Services</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i>That the report be noted,</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>Turnover rates provide a measure of the health of an organisation. The Service introduced an exit interview policy so that it could obtain feedback from outgoing staff. The Service has been reducing the number of wholtime and support staff as part of its outcomes from the 2013 Corporate Plan and consequently the Service focus for monitoring staff turnover has been on the On-call (Retained Duty System). This has typically been an area of higher turnover and one where the time to recruit and to achieve full competency will be from 12 to 24 months. Another area of interest for the Service was whether there had been and change in turnover rates between males and females (previously, the turnover rate was higher for women). The difference in the proportion of leavers is now much closer but the numbers are too small to indicate whether this is statistically significant.</p>
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Not applicable.
<b>EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)</b>	The Service Leavers and Exit Interview policy has been subject to an ERBA.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	A. Turnover by Gender and Reason Categories
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	Nil.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Turnover rates provide a measure of the health of an organisation and whilst it is healthy to have some turnover, if the levels are excessive then it could suggest that there are underlying issues within the organisation. This can result in loss of skills and can mean that the Service is incurring increased recruitment and development costs.
- 1.2 The Service introduced an exit interview policy as part of its actions in response to the biannual Staff Survey, its corporate objective to be an Employer of Choice and its Equality Plan, *Safer Lives, Brighter Futures*.
- 1.3 In carrying out the exit interview policy, the Service aims to improve retention and recruitment levels through strategic analysis of data received from exit interviews, along with improving services to employees. The exit interview allows all employees leaving the Service to raise any concerns or issues they feel are important or need addressing and provides the Service with an ideal opportunity to gather feedback on the organisation. Employees may be positive about their employment and express satisfaction and fulfilment in their jobs and the organisation, however, there may also be areas of dissatisfaction.
- 1.4 The Service has been reducing the number of Wholetime and Support Staff as part of the outcomes of our 2013 Corporate Plans. The focus for monitoring staff turnover has, therefore, been on the On-call (Retained Duty System). The Service has been monitoring the rate of turnover and reasons for leaving the organisation since this has typically been an area of higher turnover and one where the time to recruit and to achieve full competency will be from 12 to 24 months.
- 1.5 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'. The Service had previously identified that the leaver rate for on-call staff was on the increase in 2010/11 and an exit leaver process was introduced to examine this in more detail. The exit interview process is voluntary but staff can choose to have the interview with their line manager or alternatively another manager, a Human Resources officer or they can complete a questionnaire.

**2. RETAINED TURNOVER RATES**

- 2.1 From 2007 our on-call leaver rates have typically been 7.7%, however the turnover rates have increased through 2012/13 to 2013/14 with total turnover at 8.64% and 9.31% as shown in the table below.

	<b>2011/12</b>			<b>2012/13</b>			<b>2013/14</b>		
	Employed on 1/4/11	Leavers during year	%	Employed on 1/4/12	Leavers during year	%	Employed on 1/4/13	Leavers during year	%
Male	1207	89	7.37	1171	96	8.20	1186	110	9.27
<b>Female</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14.58</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20.45</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10.53</b>
Total	1255	96	7.65	1215	105	8.64	1224	114	9.31



- 2.2 The Service has reviewed the leaver data in January 2012, but although more information was available than previously, the majority of the leavers had left for personal reasons or not actually given a specific reason. At that time feedback from the Service Delivery Group had suggested that there had been a number of leavers due to the introduction of the Gartan availability system (which was introduced for performance management purposes). Work-life balance was also understandably another key reason.
- 2.3 Another concern at that time was that there had been a disproportionate increase in the number of female firefighter leavers. The Service therefore determined to revisit the categories that used for recording leaver data to see if the feedback that received could be improved.
- 2.4 As can be seen from the table above, the proportion of women leavers remains higher than for men but is much closer for 2013/14 when it was 10.53% for women and 9.27% for men.

### **3. ANALYSIS OF LEAVER REASONS**

- 3.1 Since refining the interview documentation to derive more specific information, the reasons given are as per the tables in Appendix 1. While every effort is made to perform the interviews, or for a questionnaire to be completed, there is still a high proportion who decide not to give a reason (23% for both males and females).
- 3.2 None of the reasons for leaving are particularly surprising. The number leaving due to a management problem (including problems with colleagues) is, however, relatively small. There was an increase in the number of people leaving due to work-life balance - particularly females in 2011/12 - but this has dropped off since. Relocating and Career/Employment changes remain disproportionately high for females but the numbers are much too small for this to be a firm trend.

### **4. FUTURE REVIEW OF ON-CALL**

- 4.1 As part of the preparations for the next corporate plan, the Service is reviewing the on-call working and contractual arrangements and intends to engage with staff as to how this can improve the working life for on-call staff. This should also improve the Service's ability to recruit and retain on-call staff. The Retained Firefighters Union (RFU) has also undertaken a national survey of its members into recruitment and retention and this information is also beneficial to the Service.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The Service has previously introduced an exit interview process and has subsequently improved this to support a more detailed analysis of the reasons for leaving. The results are not surprising but it has been useful to make the comparative assessments of the male and female population. The Service recognises that in future, it is likely to be considering how it uses new technology and this will potentially have an influence on the working arrangements for on-call staff as well.

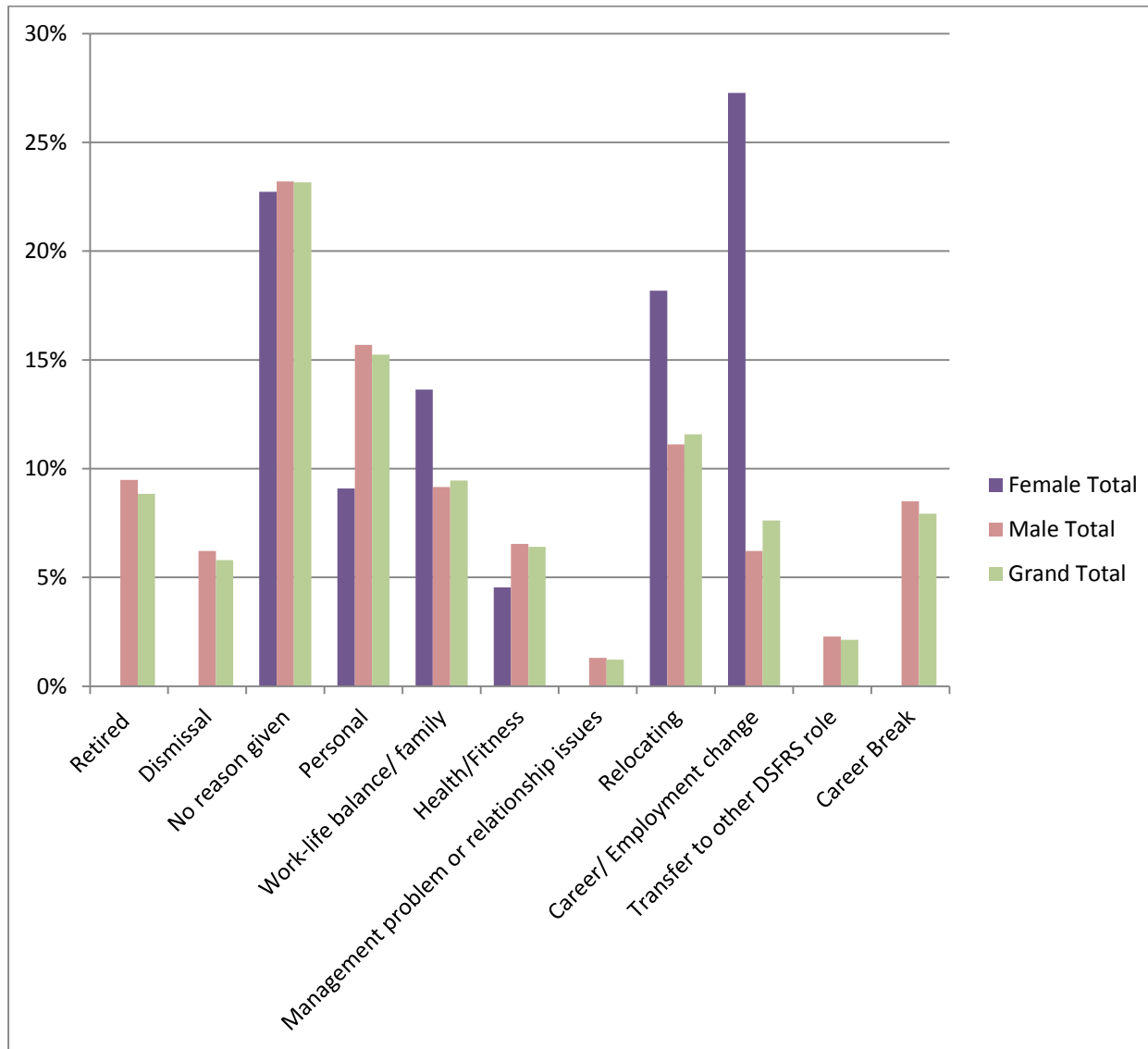
**JANE SHERLOCK**  
**Director of People and Commercial Services**

**APPENDIX A TO REPORT HRMDC/14/7**

**Turnover by Gender and Reason Categories**

<b>Actual Numbers</b>	<b>Retired</b>	<b>Dismissal</b>	<b>No reason given</b>	<b>Personal</b>	<b>Work-life balance/ family</b>	<b>Health/Fitness</b>	<b>Management problem or relationship issues</b>	<b>Relocating</b>	<b>Career/ Employment change</b>	<b>Transfer to other DSFRS role</b>	<b>Career Break</b>	<b>Deceased</b>	<b>Total</b>
Female 2011/12	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	9
Female 2012/13	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	9
Female 2013/14	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
<b>Female Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>
Male 2011/12	11	7	19	28	5	3	0	9	5	0	7	0	94
Male 2012/13	7	5	26	5	10	11	1	10	7	4	13	0	99
Male 2013/14	11	7	26	15	13	6	3	15	7	3	6	1	113
<b>Male Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>328</b>

<b>Percentages</b>	<b>Retired</b>	<b>Dismissal</b>	<b>No reason given</b>	<b>Personal</b>	<b>Work-life balance/ family</b>	<b>Health/Fitness</b>	<b>Management problem or relationship issues</b>	<b>Relocating</b>	<b>Career/ Employment change</b>	<b>Transfer to other DSFRS role</b>	<b>Career Break</b>	<b>Deceased</b>	<b>Total</b>
Female 2011/2012	0%	0%	11%	0%	33%	0%	0%	22%	33%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Female 2012/2013	0%	0%	44%	0%	0%	11%	0%	11%	22%	0%	0%	11%	100%
Female 2013/2014	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<b>Female Total</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Male 2011/2012	12%	7%	20%	30%	5%	3%	0%	10%	5%	0%	7%	0%	100%
Male 2012/2013	7%	5%	26%	5%	10%	11%	1%	10%	7%	4%	13%	0%	100%
Male 2013/2014	10%	6%	23%	13%	12%	5%	3%	13%	6%	3%	5%	1%	100%
<b>Male Total</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>



Turnover by Gender showing Reason Categories by Percentages – 2011/12 to 2013/14