



Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters, Pirehill
DDI (01785) 898959
Please ask for Ora Yearwood

HUMAN RESOURCES AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

Thursday 3 December 2015
2.15 pm
Room 1
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,
Pirehill

(A Chairman/Vice-Chairman's Preview, for Mr S Sweeney and Mr G S Kallar has been arranged for 1.45 pm)

Howard Norris
Secretary to the Authority
24 November 2015

A G E N D A

PART ONE

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 September 2015**
4. **Discipline and Grievance Procedure Monitoring Report**
Report of the Director of People
5. **Absence Monitoring Report**
Report of the Director of People
6. **Retained Recruitment and Retention**
Presentation by Steve Marsh, WM Incident Command System and Tim Wareham,
Learning and Development Manager
7. **Fitness Assessments Update**
Presentation by Fiona Prew, Service Health, Fitness & Wellbeing Advisor

8. **Anticipated future items for consideration by the Committee**

For discussion:

- Firefighter Fitness Assessments – Further update
- Occupational Health Provision
- Further Training reports, as and when required
- Further Fire Control updates

9. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 15 March 2016

10. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman to move:-

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below”.

PART TWO

NIL

**MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES AND ETHICS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2015**

Present: Sweeney, S (Chairman)

Deaville, M A

Taylor, J W

Kallar, G S

Winnington, M J

Apologies: Chapman, FA; Woodward, Mrs SE; Mitchell, Ms C and Bowers, Miss SA

Also in Attendance: Mrs J Doran, Director of People, Mr H Norris, Secretary to the Authority and Mrs J A Edwards, Recruitment Advisor.

PART ONE

Documents referred to in these Minutes as schedules are not appended but will be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes. Copies, or specific information in them, may be available on request.

Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 June 2015

20. Mrs Doran referred to page 2 of the Minutes in reference to the discussion regarding discipline and grievance cases. In response to the question relating to informal action that was listed for both disciplinary and sickness against a member of staff, Members were advised that this related to two separate individuals and not one.

21. **RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 June 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**Notes of the Staff Consultation and Negotiating Forum held on
8 July 2015**

22. **RESOLVED** – That the Notes of the Staff Consultation and Negotiating Forum held on 8 July 2015 be received.

**Discipline and Grievance Procedure Monitoring Report
(Schedule 1)**

23. Mrs Doran updated Members on discipline and grievance cases and provided information on the usage and effectiveness of the disciplinary and grievance procedures. The information referred to cases during the period June 2015 to July 2015 which followed the last report that referred to cases up to the end of May 2015. Statistical data for this period was attached to the report for Members' information.

There were 17 incidents of informal action recorded in that period. Three of those incidents were related to sickness; one for wholetime staff, two for retained staff. There were no sanctions issued to support staff.

14 minor disciplinary offences had been committed which related to conduct by members of staff for a variety of reasons with the most common occurrence being for not completing mandatory pre-course learning. Nine of the notes were issued to retained staff and five for wholtime staff with no informal cases related to support staff. There were no informal cases related to capability reported in that period.

One case of formal discipline was heard during that period. This was for a retained member of staff and related to a conduct issue. There were no outstanding appeals.

With regards to grievances or capability cases, there were none heard during that period.

Overall there had been a significant drop in all formal cases for that period and a slight drop in the number of informal cases. This was however a consistent trend with that period over the last two years where low activity had been reported. It was explained that it was a peak holiday period.

In response to a Member's question regarding pre-course learning, Mrs Doran advised that this related to e-learning packages which were required to be completed before commencing a course at the Fire Headquarters

24. **RESOLVED** – That the Discipline and Grievance Monitoring report be noted.

Absence Monitoring Report (Schedule 2)

25. Mrs Doran updated Members on Absence levels within the Service and provided information on trends relating to reasons for absence due to sickness. The information referred to absences between May to July 2015 and was shown in comparison to the same period in 2014. The report also drew a comparison in relation to the reason for absence with the same period in 2013.

Sickness Absence by Employee Type – There had been approximately a 23% decrease in absence in 2015, compared with the same period in 2014. Most notably there had been a 98% decrease in uniformed absence levels; however there had also been an 11% decrease in Shift absence as well as a 7% decrease in support absence. Whilst a dip in absence levels is generally expected in the month of May, June also saw lower than expected absence levels. However there was a rise in absence in July, which was a 16% increase compared to the same period last year and showed a definite upward trend year on year since 2013.

Short Term Absence by Reason – Musculoskeletal absences remained the most prominent reason for short term absence with the second most prominent reason being miscellaneous absence which occurred when HR and Payroll had not received the relevant paperwork at the time of the report. The third most prominent reason related to stomach and abdominal conditions. Colds, flus and chest infections were the fourth most prominent reason for absence when compared to 2014 when it was the fifth most prominent. Head conditions were now the fifth most prominent whereas in 2014 this category accounted for a much smaller proportion of the short term absence within the Service. Worthy of note was that mental health related

absences were no longer in the top five contributors, which indicated a further downward trend in this area.

Long Term Absence by Reason – Musculoskeletal and mental health related absences have remained the top two reasons for long term absence (respectively), which was comparative to the same period last year. In 2014 colds, flu and chest infections were the third highest contributor (one pneumonia case); in 2015, the third highest contributor was miscellaneous absence. HR have been actively working with delivery groups and departments to chase any outstanding sickness documentation prior to payroll closing in order to minimise such occurrences, however it is clear that this has not always been successful, hence the appearance of miscellaneous absence within the Service's absence figures. Skin conditions, urinary or genital related and hospital and general screening were the joint fourth highest contributors. Urinary or genital related absence was also the fourth highest contributor during the same period last year.

In relation to the musculoskeletal absence, there appeared to be a slight trend towards lower limb and back conditions. The majority of musculoskeletal cases related to employees in their 40's and almost all cases related to male employees. This was seen to be largely representative to the demographics of the workforce. All cases are being actively managed through the Service's Occupational Health Provider.

Absence due to an Injury at Work – During this reporting period there had been an increase in absence attributed to an injury at work. The Service had lost 62 days during that period, which could be attributed to two cases, one of which had been ongoing since summer 2014. Both cases are being managed through the Occupational Health Provider and whilst they are both musculoskeletal cases, there was no link between the cases (one being upper limb and the other back related). In comparison to the same period in 2014, the Service lost no days to absences relating to an injury at work.

Members held a brief discussion on the data shown and commented that overall the absence levels were very good. Mrs Doran advised that the department was working hard to get the miscellaneous category reduced as some of those absences recorded could relate to other reasons such as mental health. A Member enquired on action taken to reduce long term musculoskeletal and mental health related absences. Mrs Doran advised that more pro-active measures through Occupational Health were taking place such as early intervention from the physiotherapy and counselling services. In response to a question relating to absence due to injury at work, Mrs Doran stated that the injury could be a result of attending an incident or whilst training.

26. **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

Updated Pay Policy Statement 2015/16
(Schedule 3)

27. Mrs Doran referred to the 2015 Pay Policy which had been amended in line with the Service's decision to pay the Living Wage to its employees. The Living Wage is

an independently set hourly rate which is calculated according to the UK cost of living and takes into account what households need in order to have a minimum acceptable standard of living. It has been set at £7.85 per hour, which was more than the National Minimum Wage (currently £6.50 per hour for over 21s). Payment of the Living Wage would provide benefits to both the individuals concerned and to the Service in terms of enhancing reputation as an employer of choice. Paying the Living Wage was on a voluntary basis and was not a legally enforceable minimum level of pay. This increase however would not apply to wages paid to Apprentices. Members were asked to endorse the amendment that was inserted at point 11.4 of the current Pay Policy Statement 2015/16 and to recommend that the Fire Authority approve the revised Pay Policy Statement 2015/16. A Member enquired if the Service had liaised with other Fire and Rescue Services regarding payment of the Living Wage. Mrs Doran advised that other Fire and Rescue Services had not been contacted.

In response to a question asked relating to point 2.4 of the Pay Policy Statement, Mrs Doran advised that currently, vehicles did not have an impact on the pensions benefits of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director or the Secretary/Monitoring Officer.

28. **RESOLVED** – That the amendment to the Pay Policy Statement 2015/16 regarding the ‘Living Wage’ be endorsed.

29. **RECOMMENDATION TO THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY - That the updated Pay Policy Statement (attached as an Appendix to the Minutes) as endorsed by the Human Resources & Ethics Committee be considered for approval.**

Overview of Apprenticeship Recruitment and Scheme

30. Mrs Julie Ann Edwards, Recruitment Advisor delivered a presentation to the Committee which provided an overview of the Apprentice Recruitment and the success of the Scheme to date.

- The Service has supported over 30 Apprenticeships to date in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent College as the Learning Provider.
- There are three entry levels: Level 1 – No qualifications required; Level 2 Interim - 5 GCSEs (A-C) and Level 3 Advanced – 2 A Levels or an NVQ Diploma.
- There were currently 6 Apprentices nearing the end of their programme. Two completing their Motor Vehicle Apprenticeships and four in Business Administration.
- 83% of Apprentices had already achieved the qualification.
- 21 out of 30 have secured permanent or temporary contracts with the Service.
- The salary paid for the first 12 months was £110 per week which was above the National Apprentice wage. This would then revert to the national wage for the individual's age.

Previously the Service had found it difficult to recruit the calibre that was required to some of the posts. Candidates did not fully grasp what some of the Fire Service specific roles entailed, such as Home Fire Risk Checks. Following consultation with the Learning Provider a different approach was developed by way of a Recruitment Event. A more basic Application Form was used to gather information and contained: personal information, CV structure, a few straightforward questions and an opportunity to register for the Event. To promote the Event a Press Release was issued with social media also utilised to great effect.

The format for the Annual Recruitment Event consisted of:

- An Information Session
- An Apprentice Showcase and Market Place
- An opportunity for an initial interview

Mrs Edwards reported that the Recruitment Event held in March was hailed as a success. 126 people attended on the day (which included parents and grandparents) and 79 candidates were interviewed. The top 31 candidates were processed through the Assessment Centre where aptitude tests were carried out in English and Maths and half day Work Trials were also provided in 10 areas of the Service, based on their areas of interest. The Work Trials provided an excellent opportunity for the Selectors to assess their skills and abilities and also enabled the candidates to make an informed decision.

Worthy of note was that there were a number of potential female and ethnic minority candidates that attended whereas previously very few applications were received from females and none from ethnic minorities. An assessment sheet was devised and completed with positive feedback received from candidates and managers.

There were 14 vacancies in the following areas of the Service:

- Business Administration (7 vacancies)
- Community Safety (3 vacancies)
- Catering, ICT, Communications & Marketing and Project Support (4 vacancies)

Future vacancies would include three posts as a Motor Vehicle Technician and one post as a Property Maintenance Technician.

Mrs Edwards emphasised that this was a good news story in the current economic climate and cuts in public spending. She was pleased to report that although they started with 14, they were now supporting 20 Apprenticeships which consisted of 10 at the Intermediate level and 10 at the Advanced level. Two candidates were almost at the end of their college qualification and it was agreed with the Colleges that they could join the Scheme on a part time basis whilst completing their qualification and then commence their full apprenticeship. Members were informed that the Service had now appointed to all the positions and the successful candidates had commenced their roles across the Service from May to September.

Members commented on the information received and were in full agreement on the success of the Scheme with 31 applicants for 20 positions of high calibre most encouraging. In response to a question asked relating to securing employment Mrs Edwards advised that all Apprentices who completed their programme with the

Service gained employment within the Service last year with the exception of two students from the area of catering who were successful in finding employment outside of the organisation. A Member enquired as to any potential involvement further afield with other sections of the community such as 'Looked after Children'. Mrs Doran advised that there were links with the Princes Trust and applications had been received from contacts through the Princes Trust.

Members thanked Mrs Edwards for her presentation. They requested information on how the Service formally publicised their success stories and details of any involvement with the 'Looked after Children' area in the community.

31. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the presentation be noted.

(b) That further information be received at a future meeting of the Committee regarding publicity of the Apprenticeships and connecting with the 'Looked after Children' area of the community.

Anticipated future Items for consideration by the Committee

32. Mrs Doran advised that Fiona Prew, Fitness Consultant would be invited to the next meeting to provide an update on Firefighter Fitness Assessments. Members were asked to note the following items that would be tabled at future meetings of the Committee.

- Firefighter Fitness Assessments – Further update
- Occupational Health Provision
- Further Training reports such as Management Training
- Further Fire Control updates

33. **RESOLVED** - That the Items for future meetings be noted.

Date of the next Meeting

34. Members were advised that the next Meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held on Thursday 3 December 2015 at 2.15 pm.

Exclusion of the Public

Upon the motion of the Chairman it was:-

35. **RESOLVED** – That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below.

Exempt Notes of the Staff Consultation and Negotiating Forum held on 8 July 2015 (exemption paragraph 4)

36. **RESOLVED** – That the Exempt Notes of the Staff Consultation and Negotiating Forum held on 8 July 2015 be received.

CHAIRMAN

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Human Resources and Ethics Committee

3 December 2015

Discipline and Grievance Monitoring Report

Report of the Director of People

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to keep members updated on discipline and grievance cases and provide information on the usage and effectiveness of the disciplinary and grievance procedures. This information refers to cases during the period August 2015 to October 2015, following the last report which referred to cases up to the end of July 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

Financial Implications

No financial implications

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications at the present time from the content of this report.

Equality and Diversity

There are no specific equalities implications at this time arising from this report.

Risk Implications

The potential risk implications of not following the current procedures may be increased litigation and cost to the Service, however, training and specialist advice and guidance in line with our procedures will reduce the impact.

Consultation and Engagement undertaken

None applicable to this period.

Other implications

None

BACKGROUND

As part of the ongoing process, this report updates and summarises the period 1 August 2015 to 31 October 2015. Advice and guidance continues to be provided to support line managers. Statistical data for this period is attached for Members' information.

Informal Action

17 incidents of informal action were recorded in this period.

6 of these were related to sickness, 1 for wholetime, 2 for retained staff and 3 for support staff.

11 minor disciplinary offences were committed relating to conduct by members of staff – these were for a variety of reasons, the majority of which were issued to retained staff and related to issues in respect of timely response to call alerters or a failure to follow Service procedures appropriately. 10 of the notes were issued to retained staff and the remaining one to a wholetime colleague.

No informal cases relating to capability were reported in this period.

Formal Action

4 cases of formal discipline was heard in this period, of which 3 were issued to retained members of staff and related to a conduct issue. The remaining case was for a member of the wholetime establishment. There are no outstanding appeals.

2 grievances were heard during this period. One case was raised by a retained member of staff who felt it appropriate to challenge a Service decision regarding a requested change to his declaration. An element of his grievance was upheld but the original decision made was found to be appropriate. One case was raised in relation to a recruitment decision and this was rejected but some learning points were identified for the manager in relation to the feedback to the unsuccessful candidate.

Trends

There is no trend identified as the number of cases is similar to the previous period. There is a slight increase in the number of formal cases but this does cover a longer reference period which may account for this.

Report Author: - S.Wilkinson

Telephone: - 01785 898961

Email:- s.wilkinson@staffordshirefire.gov.uk

Formal Discipline

Role	WT/RT	Subject	Outcome
FF	RT	Conduct	Final written warning extended
FF	RT	Conduct	Final written warning extended
FF	RT	Conduct	Written Warning - 12 months
FF	WT	Conduct	Written Warning - 12 months

Grievance		Subject	
FF	RT	Failure to agree declaration	Upheld in part
FF	WT	Recruitment process	Rejected

Capability			
No cases reported this period			

Informal

Role	WT/RT	Subject	Reason
Support	WT	Absence	Failure to reach attendance standard
Support	WT	Absence	Failure to reach attendance standard
Support	WT	Absence	Failure to reach attendance standard
CM	WT	Absence	Failure to reach attendance standard
CM	RT	Absence	Failure to reach attendance standard
FF	RT	Absence	Failure to reach attendance standard
FF	WT	Conduct	Absent without proper notification or authorisation
FF	WT/RT	Conduct	Unacceptable conduct
CM	RT	Conduct	Breach of Service procedure
FF	RT	Conduct	Carelessness resulting in damage to Service property
FF	RT	Conduct	Failure to follow Service procedure
FF	RT	Conduct	Failed and late turnouts
FF	RT	Conduct	Carelessness resulting in damage to Service property
FF	RT	Conduct	Failed and late turnouts
FF	RT	Conduct	Failure to follow Service procedure in relation to course attendance
FF	RT	Conduct	Inappropriate behaviour, failure to complete declaration
FF	RT	Conduct	Failed and late turnouts

Key:

WT/RT = Wholtime/Retained FF = Firefighter CM = Crew Manager
 WM= Watch Manager

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Human Resources and Ethics Committee

3 December 2015

Absence Monitoring Report

Report of the Director of People

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to keep Members updated on absence levels within the Service and provide information on trends relating to reasons for absence due to sickness. The information refers to absences between August and October 2015 and compares it to the same periods in 2014. In relation to the reason for absence, the report also draws a comparison with the same period in 2013.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

Financial Implications

There are no additional financial implications for the Committee to be aware of, however there is an associated cost to sickness absence both directly (occupational sick pay) and indirectly (covering the position during the postholder's absence).

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

Equality and Diversity

It is possible that there may be equality and diversity implications as there could be links between a protected characteristic and absence levels (for example disability). At present, we do not have the ability to report on protected characteristics in relation to sickness absence although this will be available when Firewatch is fully implemented.

Risk Implications

There are no risk implications.

Consultation and Engagement undertaken

None applicable to this period.

Other implications

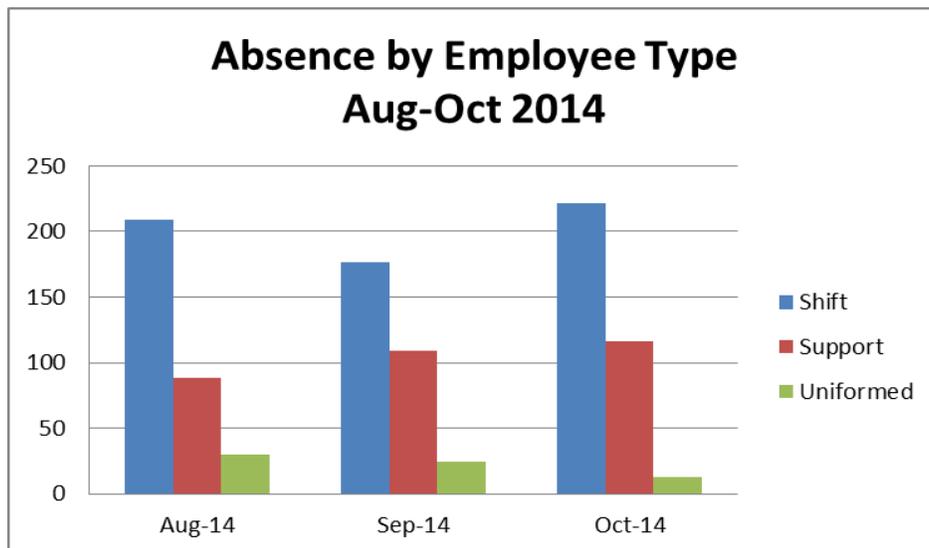
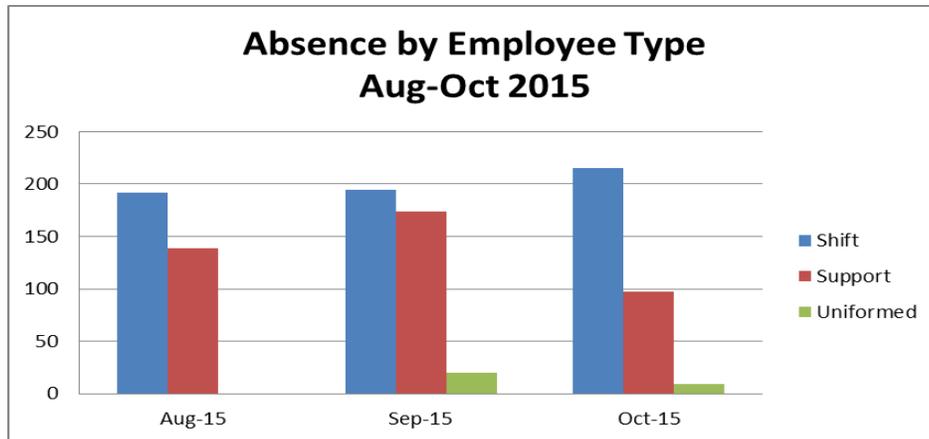
None

BACKGROUND

This report updates and summarises the period 1 August to 31 October 2015 and identifies whether there are any trends. Statistical data for this period can be found below for Members' information.

NB Uniformed indicates operational personnel at Station Manager Level and above, Shift indicates operational personnel at Firefighter to Watch Manager level and Support refers to non-operational (green book) employees.

Sickness Absence by Employee Type



The data demonstrates a slight rise in absence overall when comparing 2015's figures with the previous year. Whilst there has been a decrease in operational absence (both shift and uniformed) there has been a rise in support absence. There have been slight fluctuations in short term support absence; although the increase appears to be largely attributed to long term absence with a small number of cases (a mixture of physical conditions and mental health related absence)

Short Term Absence (Days) by Reason

Aug-15	Sep-15	Oct-15	Reason	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13
0	32	15	Mental (stress, anxiety, depression)	7	14	5	32	10	14
5	2	0	Skin	2	0	0	0	0	0
21	2	13	Head conditions (Eyes, Ears, Dental)	4	17	9	28	9	9
153	64	64	Musculoskeletal	66	36	53	57	60	38
7	12	5	Urinary or Genital Related	0	2	4	0	0	12
9	11	26	Cold, Flu, Chest Infections	24	13	27	21	20	12
41	12	13	Stomach/Abdominal Conditions	13	25	23	31	15	67
8	0	0	Blood Conditions	0	0	0	2	1	5
0	0	1	Poisoning/Reaction to medication	0	0	0	1	1	3
0	13	0	Pregnancy Related	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	19	4	Surgery/General Screening	9	7	14	0	0	15
6	0	0	Disease (Cancer etc)	0	11	4	14	11	0
27	33	29	Miscellaneous	38	11	38	35	20	28

Musculoskeletal related absences remain the most frequent reason for short term absence, which is a consistent trend with the previous two years' data. Miscellaneous absence, whereby we have not received any sickness documentation at the time of payroll cutoff for entry is the second highest category. Naturally this will have some impact on the data provided as we are unable to categorise all of the absence; however we are continuing to work with all areas of the Service to ensure timely completion of documentation. The third and fifth reasons for absence are stomach and abdominal conditions and cold, flu and chest infections. This appears to remain a trend, as it has done in previous years, and is particularly seasonal with the new school year beginning during this period. Mental health is the fourth highest contributor to short term absence. As the figures are taken monthly, it is likely that whilst this has appeared in the short term figures for a certain month, some cases then turn into long term absences (similarly to musculoskeletal absences), which is discussed below.

Long Term Absence (Days) by Reason

Aug-15	Sep-15	Oct-15	Reason	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13
148	44	7	Mental (stress, anxiety, depression)	21	60	28	35	14	16
62	21	7	Skin	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	Head conditions (Eyes, Ears, Dental)	0	0	10	21	21	9
157	77	67	Musculoskeletal	73	104	121	83	95	95
0	0	0	Urinary or Genital Related	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	Cold, Flu, Chest Infections	6	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	Stomach/Abdominal Conditions	19	10	0	0	0	15
0	0	0	Blood Conditions	10	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	Poisoning/Reaction to medication	0	0	0	0	0	0
31	0	0	Pregnancy Related	0	0	0	0	0	0
31	47	54	Surgery/General Screening	20	0	15	0	20	23
31	0	16	Disease (Cancer etc)	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	Miscellaneous	15	0	0	0	14	0

The trend continues for musculoskeletal and mental health related absences to be the most common contributors, despite the proactive work we are doing with Occupational Health to provide early intervention when somebody books sick for either of these reasons, as well as fitness promotion and testing with our Health & Fitness Advisor, or Wellbeing initiatives. Comparing the figures with last year, we can see that both categories have increased in the number of days lost to absence.

There appears to be a trend towards back conditions, which make up around 50% of long term musculoskeletal absence.

Surgery and general screening remains the third highest contributor; in fact the total days lost has also increased. Unlike the absence categories above this, we are limited in terms of the prevention work that we can do to avoid these absences in some

cases, however we continue to work with employees following their screening/surgery to support them back to work at the appropriate time.

Interestingly, the fourth and fifth highest contributors to long term absence are skin conditions and diseases such as cancer, which have not featured in the previous two years.

All cases are being managed through our Occupational Health Provider.

Absence due to an Injury at Work

During this period, the Service has lost 61 days to absences attributed to an injury at work, in stark contrast to the same period in 2014, where the Service did not lose any days to an injury at work.

The absences can be attributed to two injuries – one individual returned to work within this period, therefore at the end of this reporting period, the absence due to an injury at work can now be attributed to just one individual.

As detailed in the August report, there were no links between the causes of the injuries at work and both cases were actively monitored with Occupational Health.

Report Author: - Corrine Ward – HR Business Partner

Telephone: - 01785 898686

Email:- corrine.ward@staffordshirefire.gov.uk