

Safest People, Safest Places

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

11 SEPTEMBER 2019

SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE

01 APRIL 2019 – 30 JUNE 2019

REPORT OF HEAD OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on sickness absence performance for the first 3 months of the reporting year.




Background

2. The effective management of absence is a key performance issue for any organisation. This is particularly important when operating in a climate of reduced financial and human resources.
3. The Service places significant emphasis on the effective management and reporting of sickness absence and Members have an important role to play in providing an overview of the arrangements that are in place and the performance that is achieved.

Summary of Sickness Statistics






4. The sickness statistics for the period 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019 are calculated as average shifts/days lost per person.
5. The Service compares sickness levels to the targets that have been set for the year and to previous year's performance to provide a rounded view of sickness performance, and to help to identify any trends in particular areas.
6. Table 1 overleaf sets out the sickness statistics against three key performance indicators. These indicators were measures previously used to measure performance within the best value framework and the Service continues to use these measures to enable national comparisons to be undertaken at year end.

Table 1 Key Sickness Statistics by Best Value Indicators

Performance Indicator	Apr 19 to Jun 19	Apr 19 to Jun 19 Target	Variance	Apr 18 to Jun 18	Direction of Travel
Working shifts/days lost for all staff	1.54	1.5	+0.04	1.77	
Working shifts/days lost due to sickness for all Wholetime, Control and Non- Uniformed	1.69	1.5	+0.19	1.10	
Working shifts/days lost due to sickness for all Wholetime and Control	2.11	1.5	+0.61	1.30	

7. All KPIs for sickness are above target at this point in the year and performance has regressed in comparison with last year for two of the indicators. The dynamics of the indicators has changed in comparison with last year where we saw the wholetime and control indicator was within target due to the low absence levels seen within the FDO/DD and control categories and the all staff indicator was above target due to the high levels of absence within the RDS category. This year we are seeing the opposite effect. These performance indicators can be further broken down in relation to the individual staff groups within the Service. This breakdown can assist in identifying trends.
8. Table 2 below shows a further breakdown over the specific staff groups that are employed by the Service.

Table 2 Sickness by Staff Group

Performance Indicator	Apr 19 to Jun 19	Apr 19 to Jun 19 Target	Variance	Apr 18 to Jun 18	Direction of Travel
Wholetime Riders (WT)	1.92	1.25	+ 0.67	1.44	
Flexi Duty (FDO) / Day Duty Officers	3.44	1.125	+2.315	0.88	
Control	1.76	2	-0.24	0.76	
Retained Duty System (RDS)	1.80	2.25	-0.45	3.96	
Corporate	0.30	1.25	-0.95	0.36	

9. Absence within the FDO and DD category of staff has increased significantly. This level of absence is expected to continue into Q2 with three ongoing cases of long-term absence. WT absence is also higher than the same reporting period last year with high levels of long-term absence being recorded. Control, RDS and corporate categories are all performing well and within the target for this point in the year.

Breakdown of Sickness Statistics

Wholetime Station Based Firefighters (Riders)

10. The detailed sickness information relating to WT riders is summarised below.

Description	Days/cost
Total shifts lost to 30/6/2019	479
Long term sickness	311 (65%)
Short term sickness	168 (35%)
Approximate cost of sickness	£85,270

11. The WT rider category has seen an increase in absence by approximately 30% when compared to the same period 2018-19. This has been predominately due to long term absence in relation to MSK upper limb and knee operations as well as absence due to on-going mental health issues. Looking ahead, the service has received notice of further personnel who will be going absent early in Q2 to have planned operations which will further impact on the absence figures for Q2.
12. Short term absence throughout Q1 has also seen an increase by approximately 48% when compared to the same period in 2018-19. These have been due to multiple personnel being absent due to gastrointestinal, dermatological, cold and flu issues as well as some short term MSK issues. This category is above target for this point in the year.

Flexible Duty Officers and Day Duty Staff

13. The detailed sickness information relating to FDO and day duty staff is summarised below.

FDO

Description	Days/cost
Total shifts lost to 30/6/2019	113
Long term sickness	113 (100%)
Short term sickness	0 (0%)
Approximate cost of sickness	£28,658

Day Duty

Description	Days/cost
Total shifts lost to 30/6/2019	54
Long term sickness	54 (100%)
Short term sickness	0 (0%)
Approximate cost of sickness	£8,790

14. Sickness within this category is all due to long term absence. Within the DD category there has been one case of long-term sickness and within the FDO category two cases, all of which have spanned over the full reporting period. Two of these cases have since been resolved in Q2 however one is still ongoing. On a positive note, there has been no short-term absence. This category is above target for this point in the year.

Control Staff

15. The detailed sickness information relating to Control staff is summarised below.

Description	Days/cost
Total shifts lost to 30/6/2019	30
Long term sickness	13 (43%)
Short term sickness	17 (57%)
Approximate cost of sickness	£3,647

16. Control absence has seen an increase when compared to the same period in 2018-19, although levels are still relatively low. The majority of shifts lost were due to 2 members of staff absent due to bereavement, both have now returned to full duties. The remainder of shifts lost were short term. Control absence is remains below target at this point in the year.

Non- Uniformed Staff

17. The detailed sickness information relating to non-uniformed staff is summarised below.

Description	Days/cost
Total shifts lost to 30/6/2019	28
Long term sickness	28 (0%)
Short term sickness	28 (100%)
Approximate cost of sickness	£23,603

18. Non-uniformed absence levels have remained the same in comparison with the same period last year. Absence this year has been all due to short term for various reasons. Corporate absence is remains below target at this point in the year.

Retained Duty System Staff

19. The detailed sickness information relating to RDS staff is summarised below.

Description	Days/cost
Total shifts lost to 30/6/2019	239
Long term sickness	204 (85%)
Short term sickness	35 (15%)
Approximate cost of sickness	£5,795

20. Shifts lost within this category of staff for Q1 are approximately 56% lower when compared to Q1 2018-19. This is predominately due to personnel returning to full operational duties. The majority of absence remains long term attributing to 85% of within this category. RDS absence is remains below target at this point in the year

Action Taken

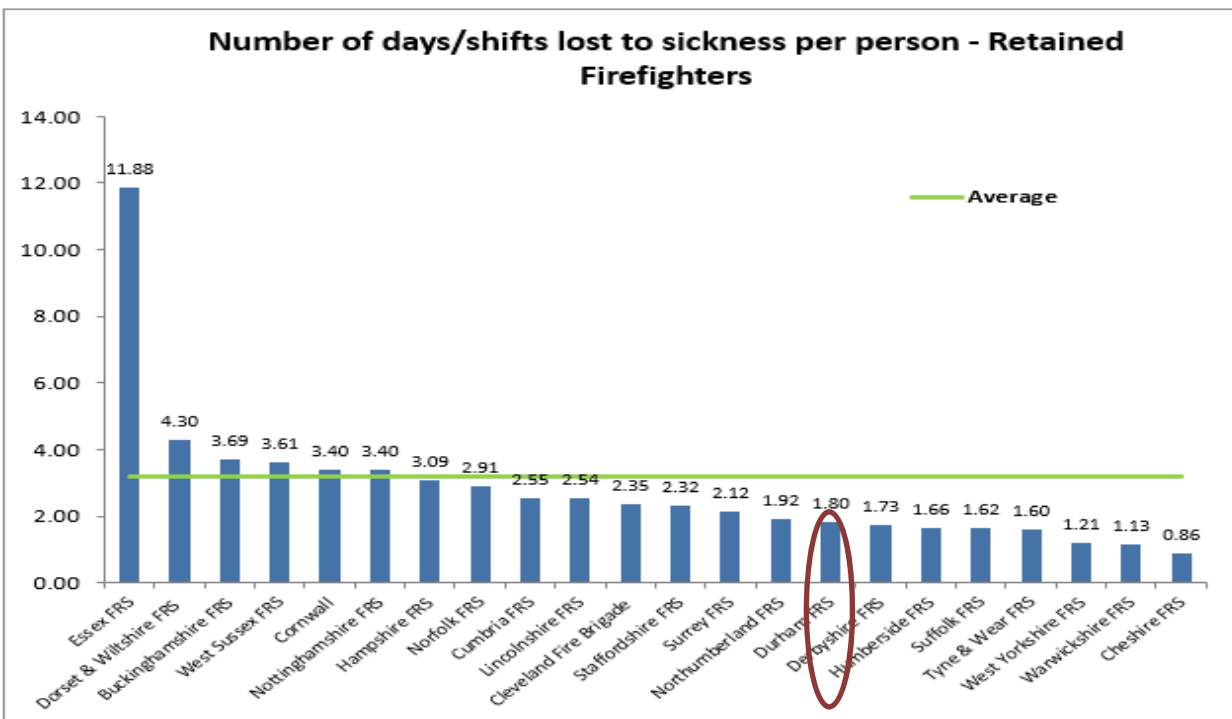
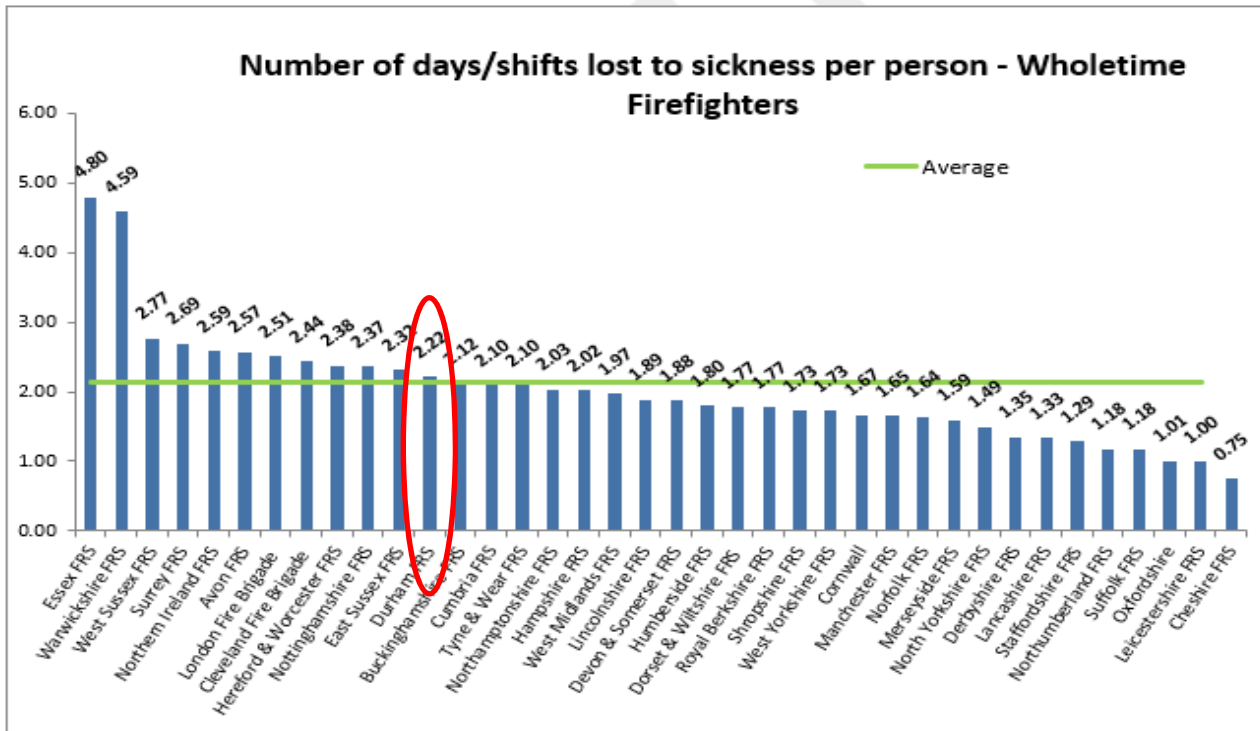
21. Sickness levels will continue to be monitored closely with regular analysis for any trends and patterns and instigation of the attendance management triggers where appropriate.
22. The HR team continue to liaise with line managers to support personnel to return to work as soon as possible through regular welfare visits, occupational health advice, additional support such as physiotherapy or counselling and encouraging discussions around the potential of modified duties once a return to work date is in sight.

National Fire Service Data Comparison (Appendix 1)

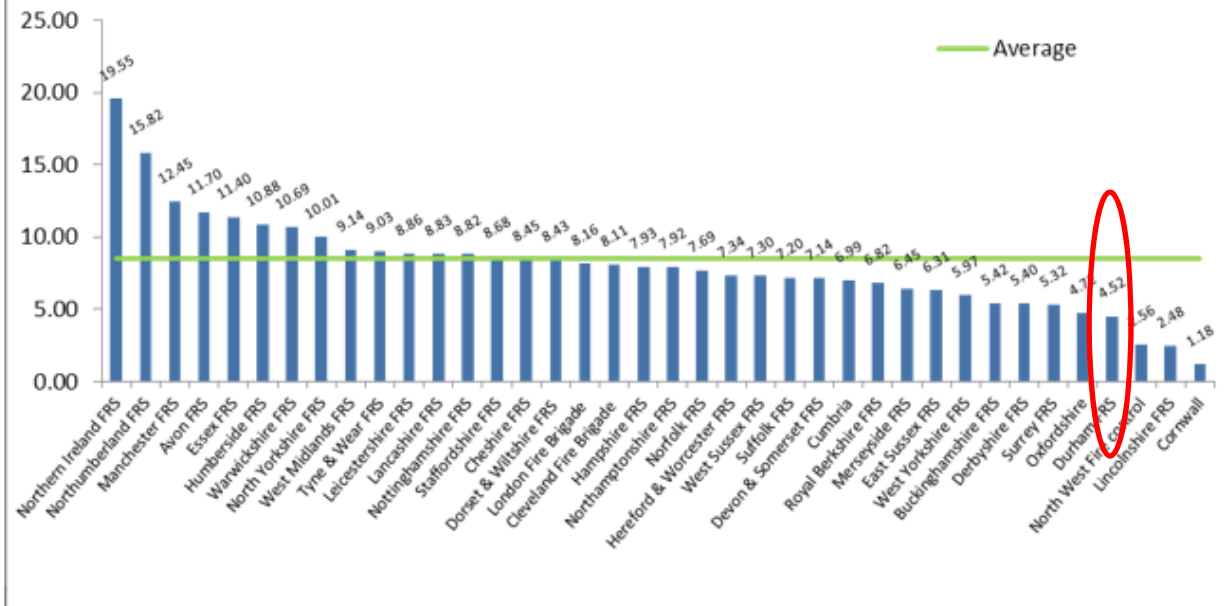
23. This data is supplied via the National Occupational Health Performance Report which is compiled by Cleveland Fire Brigade. All fire and rescue service's (FRS) are asked to supply data for the main categories of employees; WT, Control, RDS and non-uniformed. There is a set calculation which all FRS's supplying information must adhere to, to ensure the data can be used to give an accurate comparison, however this varies to our own reporting. The data helps our Service benchmark against other FRS's in terms of sickness absence rates. The data range is from April 19 to June 19.
24. Performance for control, RDS and non-uniformed are all below the national average. Unfortunately, WT (which is inclusive of WT riders, flexi duty and day duty officers) is slightly above the national average and in the upper range of shift lost compared to other Services.

Recommendation

25. Members are asked to **note** and **comment** the contents of this report.



Number of days/shifts lost to sickness per person Green Book staff



Number of days/shifts lost to sickness per person - Fire Control

