

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

At a meeting of the **Human Resources Committee** held at the CDDFRS Headquarters on **Tuesday 24 May 2022 at 1000 hours.**

Present: Cllr L Mavin in the Chair

Durham County Council: Cllrs C Marshall, J Quinn and K Shaw (substitute for Cllr A Batey)

Darlington Borough Council:

Officers: K Metcalfe

Part A

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr A Batey and Cllr J Cairns

2 Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Mavin welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2022 were agreed as a true record. It was noted that an update on actions would be considered under item 4.

4 Sickness Absence Performance Quarter Four: 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

K Metcalfe provided members with an update on sickness absence performance for the period 1st April 2021 – 31 March 2022.

KM noted that overall, there has been an 67.5% increase on shifts lost in comparison with quarter 4 of 2020/21. C-19 symptomatic and confirmed positive cases have still contributed significantly and equate to almost 30% of total absences. Long term sickness absence remains an issue also, accounting for approximately 59% of the service absence during this period.

Cllr Quinn asked if the vaccination status was known for those staff currently absent with long covid. KM advised that she did not have this specific data at the meeting.

Cllr Quinn queried if a period of self-isolation is classed as being off sick. KM confirmed that it wasn't.

Cllr Quinn queried what percentage of the RDS workforce are over 50 and if this is the main contributing factor to the MSK sickness absence figure. KM explained that there are xx over the age of 50, with the highest number of RDS staff being within the 40-49 age group.

Cllr Quinn asked if the service had experienced any issues with false sickness reporting over the pandemic due to low morale. KM explained that she was not aware of any cases. Managers would be expected to deal with any issues and report any incidents of this nature.

Cllr Marshall asked if the service have plans in place in the event of future health pandemics to ensure resilience. KM explained that a pandemic plan is in place. C-19 has put the service in a better position having been through a pandemic already. COVID has tested plans, enabling us to learn lessons and adapt. The service's plan is reviewed each time following a major incident.

The Committee **noted** and **commented** on the report.

5 Health and Safety Performance Quarter Four 2021/22

K Metcalfe introduced the report providing members with a summary of the Service's health and safety performance to the end of the fourth quarter 2021/22 reporting period.

An overview of the 2021/2022 performance reported 13 personal accidents and 18 vehicle accidents. Over a five year period; numbers continue to fall for both incident type.

Cllr Shaw highlighted concerns regarding the high number of personal accidents that have occurred during training exercises.

Cllr Quinn commented that the very low number of operational incidents is a real positive.

ACTION: KM to investigate training personal accidents further; providing information at the next meeting regarding type of accident and who was involved.

The Committee **noted** and **commented** on the report.

6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Action Plan

KM introduced the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan created to support the work of the EDI Strategy.

The Action Plan comprises 5 areas of focus:

- Leadership, Partnership and Service Commitment
- Effective Service Delivery
- Community Knowledge and Engagement
- Employment, Health and Wellbeing
- Recruitment, Training and Selection

KM provided an update on progress of actions set out within each area.

Cllr Quinn asked if there was an increase in female firefighters within cohort 6. KM noted that a low number of overall applications were received which increased the proportion of female applicants.

The Committee **noted** the report

8 Application for Flexible Retirement

KM presented an application for flexible retirement submitted by a Control staff member.

The Committee **noted** and **approved** the application.