

**Report of the Chief Constable to the Chair and Members
of the Policy & Resources Panel
16th February 2011**

Executive & Presenting Officer: Mrs Jacqui Cheer, Temporary Chief Constable

Status: For information

Sickness Absence Reporting

1. Purpose

1.1 To update Members on sickness absence levels up to 31st December 2011.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the contents of the report be noted.

3. Reasons

3.1 The average days lost per person since 2004/05 are shown below.

	Officers	Staff
04/05	7.50	9.12
05/06	8.83	11.79
06/07	8.59	11.04
07/08	6.79	9.38
08/09	6.41	8.21
09/10	5.66	7.45
10/11	6.02	7.22
Apr – Dec 2011	6.52	6.35

3.2 As reported previously the sickness figures in recent years have seen a positive reduction for both officers and staff. The final figures for 2010/11 saw an increase in the average days lost for police officers for the first time in four years. The improvement in police staff sickness continued with the reduction for the fifth year in a row. So far, for the current financial year, sickness is on the increase for both officers and staff.

- 3.3 There has been a significant amount of organisational change taking place within the Force during the past few years. The Force has been invoking Regulation A19 enforcing the compulsory retirement of police officers whilst undertaking a huge organisational change programme as part of Plan B. This has involved the reduction of a range of police officer posts throughout the Force. As a result many officers have been posted into different roles, some of which would not be of their choosing. Whilst many officers have managed the transition well others have found it more difficult with some levels of sickness being experienced. Organisational change has also had an impact on police staff including for example structural reviews and a force-wide review of shift patterns which resulted in reductions in allowances for most staff. Organisational change will continue for some time to come and will continue to have a direct impact on everyone within the Force.

- 3.4 The Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development and corporate healthcare provider Simplyhealth has published the results of their 2011 absence management survey. Overall employee absence levels have remained static at 7.7 days per employee per year. Public sector absence has decreased from 9.6 days per employee per year to 9.1 days and private sector absence has increased from 6.6 days in 2010 to 7.1 days. So, up to March 2011 the Force compared very well to the overall national picture and particularly when compared to the public sector.

- 3.5 The number of days of short term and long term sickness for the period to 30th September 2011 is also shown below for both Police Officers and Staff.

	Officers		Staff	
	Short term	Long term	Short term	Long term
04/05	2.18	5.32	3.83	5.29
05/06	2.74	6.09	3.89	7.90
06/07	2.51	6.08	3.64	7.40
07/08	2.66	4.13	3.51	5.87
08/09	2.30	4.11	3.55	4.66
09/10	2.26	3.40	3.62	3.83
10/11	2.42	3.60	4.22	3.00
Apr – Dec 2011	1.83	4.69	2.57	3.78

- 3.6 The Home Office produce data which is based on sickness rates (this is different to working days lost). The sickness rates show the percentage of people who are absent from work due to sickness. This information is now only being published on a six monthly basis. The most up-to-date information available is for the year ending March 2011. The published data shows that the sickness rate for Cleveland officers is 2.6% and the rate for police staff is 3.5%. This keeps Cleveland top (out of seven) of our Most Similar Force (MSF) group for officer sickness, and third out of seven for police staff. The police officer rate is also very good when compared to the national picture where there are only four Forces with a rate better than Cleveland during this

period. The national average for police officers was 3.4%. The police staff rate of 3.5% is below the national average of 3.8%.

- 3.7 Members have previously requested sickness information to be classified in respect of gender. The following table provides details of the percentage of working days lost by gender.

	Officers		Staff	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Days lost in 2007/08	71.1%	28.9%	36.6%	63.4%
Establishment at 31st March 2008	79.6%	20.4%	37.6%	62.4%
Days lost in 2008/09	75.0%	25.0%	25.0%	75.0%
Establishment at 31st March 2009	79.2%	20.2%	38.4%	61.6%
Days lost in 2009/10	74.3%	25.7%	36.7%	63.3%
Establishment at 31st March 2010	78.7%	21.3%	38.5%	61.5%
Days lost in 2010 /11	70.7%	29.3%	47.8%	52.2%
Establishment at 31st March 2011	77.9%	22.1%	44.9%	55.1%
Days lost April – Dec 11	66.2%	33.8%	36.6%	63.4%
Establishment at 31st December 2011	78%	22%	45.1%	54.9%

4. Implications

4.1 Finance

The costs to the Force associated with absence include the loss of time from both police officers and police staff. In some cases there are additional costs incurred through the temporary replacement of staff through the use of overtime or agency/temporary staff, although recently this rarely happens in practice. There are also the costs associated with the management of sickness. All costs are contained within existing budgets.

4.2 Diversity & Equal Opportunities

Absence levels will always have the potential to reduce front-line services and as a result can have an impact on the service we provide to the diverse communities of Cleveland.

4.3 Human Rights Act

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

4.4 Sustainability

Absence management has been robustly managed throughout the Force and is reported on through Service Unit MPRs. At the same time a range of services are provided through the occupational health unit and various initiatives in health promotion are carried out throughout the year. Absence levels are also integrated into a number of people procedures such as promotion and incremental pay awards. As a consequence of this holistic approach to attendance management we have experienced significant improvements in absence levels across both police officers and police staff for several years. Increased absence rates can have an adverse impact on service delivery, staff morale and could result in the Force gaining negative publicity.

4.5 Risk

Absence levels are continually measured, managed and monitored on a regular basis. It is important that there is effective and efficient use of the Force's people resources. Failure to effectively manage absence could result in being unable to effectively deliver against the Policing Plan.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The above data forms part of the Force's ongoing monitoring of sickness absence. The outturn figures for 2010/11 were again positive for police staff and whilst the increase for police officers was slightly disappointing it still remains that the Force has performed very well when compared to others. However, the increase in police officer sickness has continued during the first nine months of 2011/12 and police staff sickness is also increasing. Attendance management will continue to be given a high priority by service unit management teams and line manager MPRs.

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