

**Report of the Chief Constable to the Chair and Members  
of the Policy & Resources Panel  
21<sup>st</sup> April 2011**

**Executive & Presenting Officer: Mr Derek Bonnard, Deputy Chief Constable**

**Status: For information**

**Sickness Absence Reporting**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 To update Members on sickness absence levels up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010.

**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.

	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Staff</b>
<b>04/05</b>	7.50	9.12
<b>05/06</b>	8.83	11.79
<b>06/07</b>	8.59	11.04
<b>07/08</b>	6.79	9.38
<b>08/09</b>	6.41	8.21
<b>09/10</b>	5.66	7.45
<b>1/4/10 – 31/12/10</b>	4.18	5.70

3.2 As reported previously the sickness figures in recent years have seen a significant reduction for both officers and staff. If the 2010/11 financial year rates continued for the last three months then the improvements which were recorded last year will have been maintained.

3.3 The number of days of short term and long term sickness for the period to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 is also shown below for both Police Officers and Staff.

	Officers		Staff	
	Short term	Long term	Short term	Long term
<b>04/05</b>	2.18	5.32	3.83	5.29
<b>05/06</b>	2.74	6.09	3.89	7.90
<b>06/07</b>	2.51	6.08	3.64	7.40
<b>07/08</b>	2.66	4.13	3.51	5.87
<b>08/09</b>	2.30	4.11	3.55	4.66
<b>09/10</b>	2.26	3.40	3.62	3.83
<b>1/4 - 31/12/10</b>	1.74	2.44	2.47	3.23

3.4 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 September 2010. The published data shows that the sickness rate for Cleveland officers is 2.7% and the rate for police staff is 3.8%. 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 two Forces with a rate better than Cleveland during this period. The national average for police officers was 3.4%. The police staff rate of 3.8% is below the national average of 4.0%.

3.5 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
<b>Days lost in 2007/08</b>	71.1%	28.9%	36.6%	63.4%
<b>Establishment at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008</b>	79.6%	20.4%	37.6%	62.4%
<b>Days lost in 2008/09</b>	75.0%	25.0%	25.0%	75.0%
<b>Establishment at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009</b>	79.2%	20.2%	38.4%	61.6%
<b>Days lost in 2009/10</b>	74.3%	25.7%	36.7%	63.3%
<b>Establishment at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010</b>	78.7%	21.3%	38.5%	61.5%
<b>Days lost Apr – Dec 10</b>	71.0%	29%	50%	50%
<b>Establishment at 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2010</b>	78.3%	21.7%	44.7%	55.3%

## **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. If this is not sustained this could result in increased absence rates which can have an adverse impact on service delivery, staff morale and result in the Force gaining a poor reputation as an employer.

### **4.5 Risk**

If absence levels are not continually measured, managed and monitored absence levels may start to increase. 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 2009/10 were again very positive and the first nine months of 2010/11 indicate that these figures could be maintained for the full year. Attendance management continues to be given a high priority by service unit management teams and is managed through MPRs with their line managers.

Sean Price  
Chief Constable

Report Author: David Bradley  
HR Business Partner