

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority Human Resources Committee

19th September 2007

Open for the purposes of FOI

Report of Chris Haselden, Director of Human Resources

Attendance Management

Recommendation(s):

- (i) To approve the revised reporting format for Attendance Management**
- (ii) To note the findings of the report and the Force Improvement Plan in place to address the key issues.**

Introduction / Summary

1. During the previous meeting of the Police Authority Human Resources Committee it was agreed that the reporting format for Attendance Management should be further improved. Therefore a meeting was held with the HR Advisor for the Police Authority on 3rd August 2007 to discuss the reporting requirements. Further detail is provided within the Background Information section as to the considerations in developing the revised reporting format. A summary has also been provided to facilitate consideration of the statistical analysis.
2. This report is the first revised report submitted for consideration by the Police Authority HR Committee thus providing the benchmark data for analysis, and as detailed above the Committee is asked to approve the revised reporting format.
3. This report seeks to provide the Committee with an update on absence levels within the Force for Police Officers and Staff for April to June 2007, detailing any significant trends or issues, as well as outlining the steps that the Human Resources Department has put in place to improve all aspects of managing attendance.
4. The sickness data in this report is based on the quarter April to June for 2005, 2006 and 2007, together with the two quarters October to December 2006 and January to March 2007 to enable emerging and longer term trends to be identified.
5. The key issues identified within the statistical analysis are as follows:
6. There is significant commonality in respect of the reasons for absence for both staff groups over the three year period with the majority of absence reported as due to psychological disorders and musculo-skeletal illnesses.
7. In respect of Police Officers the reported levels of absence in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly BCU and South and West Devon BCU were above the force average during 4 of the 5 quarters reported. South and West Devon BCU have recently experienced a downward trend falling from a peak of 2.6 average days lost in October to December 2006 to 2.0 average days lost in April to June 2007 which is below the Force average of 2.0. However, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly BCU have experienced an increasing trend rising from 1.7 average days lost in April to June 2005 to 2.9 average days lost in April to June 2007. This increasing trend is largely due to a substantial increase in long term absence rising from 0.9 average days lost in April to June 2005 to 2.1 average days lost in April to June 2007.
8. The year on year position in respect of Police Officers analysis reflects a increasing trend in average days lost due to absence and this is largely due to long term absence increasing from 0.7 days in April to June 2005 to 1.4 days in April to June 2007.

9. The current year trend regarding Police Officer absence from October 2006 to June 2007 reflects a reduction in average days lost which is primarily due to a reduction in short term absence.
10. In respect of Police Staff there is clear evidence of a downward trend with absence levels falling to a three year low of 2.2 days absence in April to June 2007 which corresponds with a reduction in Long Term absence and increasing Police Staff numbers.
11. This statistical analysis enables the Force to focus on the key issues in respect of managing attendance to seek to achieve further improvements in attendance levels. This activity is co-ordinated by the HR Department through the Force Improvement Plan - Improving Attendance Management.
12. The key focus of the Improvement Plan is to target key causes of absence through a range of specialist interventions such as a well being programme including a stress audit, further support for specialist groups, working in partnership with GPs.
13. Furthermore it is intended that there will be more robust use of trigger points by line managers to review individual attendance issues through an Attendance Support Meeting which would involve providing support for the individual and developing individual action plans to achieve a successful return to health and full duties.
14. Force policy and guidance notes are being revised with consideration to best practice used in other forces including the Metropolitan Police, Sussex, Dorset and the City of London Police. It is intended that the revised policy will provided greater clarity as to the responsibilities of individuals, line managers, HR and Occupational Health to provide a robust framework for the effective management of attendance.
15. Furthermore the Management Development programme will be developed for roll out across the Force to assist managers in undertaking their responsibility for effective management of attendance.

Background Information

1. It was agreed that the revised format would be based on a quarterly report to the Police Authority containing analysis of Attendance Management trends for Police Officer and Police Staff groups across the Basic Command Units and Departments within the Force.
2. To enable trend analysis by drawing comparisons over different time periods it was agreed that average days lost would form the basis of the analysis. Attendance Management data would be made available for the most recent quarter, in this case April to June 2007 along with the two previous quarters, in this case October to December 2006 and January to March 2007 to enable emerging trends to be identified. Furthermore data would be available for the same quarter for the previous two years to enable longer term trends to be identified, in this case April to June 2005 and April to June 2006.
3. The Home Office categories for absence will be used for the purposes of analysing duration of absence. The categories are:

Short Term absence -	Up to 7 days
Medium Term absence -	8 to 28 days
Long Term absence -	29 days and over
4. It is intended that, subject to approval, this reporting format will also be used to service all Force Strategic Meetings such as Chief Officers Group, Performance Improvement Tasking Group and the HR Strategic Group.

Contact: for further information

Agenda No 7

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Sponsored by Chris Haselden, Director of Human Resources

Summary of Statistical Analysis

Appendix 1

Police Officers

Overall Trends

The main reasons for police officer absence identified across all quarters are as follows:

Long Term Absence	Medium Term Absence	Short Term Absence
Musculo-skeletal	Musculo-skeletal	Coughs/Colds/Flu
Psychological Disorders		Digestive Disorders
		Musculo-skeletal
		Miscellaneous

In terms of absence levels across the five quarters, the following BCUs and Departments were found to be above the Force average on a majority of occasions:

Total Duty Days	Long Term Absence	Medium Term Absence	Short Term Absence
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly BCU	Cornwall & Isles of Scilly BCU	Cornwall & Isles of Scilly BCU	South & West Devon BCU
South & West Devon BCU	Human Resources	South & West Devon BCU	Operations
	Professional Standards & Performance	Human Resources	
		Operations	

Year on Year Trends

Total average duty days lost to absence in April to June for the three years have increased steadily from 1.6 days in 2005 to 2.1 days in 2007. Long Term absence is largely responsible for this increasing trend having doubled from 0.7 days in April to June 2005 to 1.4 days in the corresponding quarter for 2007/08. This is due to the length of absence as opposed to an increase in occasions of long term absence.

Last 3 Quarters' Trends

The total average duty days lost during the last three quarters reflects a positive trend having decreased from 2.4 days to 2.1 days. This has been due to a significant drop in the amount of Short Term absence seen in the last quarter which may in part be reflect the impact of seasonal factors during the winter months.

Police Staff

Overall

The main reasons for absence amongst police staff during the periods are:

Long Term Absence	Medium Term Absence	Short Term Absence
Psychological Disorders	Musculo-skeletal	Coughs/Colds/Flu
Miscellaneous		Digestive Disorders
Musculo-skeletal		Headache/Migraine
		Miscellaneous
		Ear/Eye
		Genito-urinary/ Gynaecological

The following BCUs and Departments were found to be regularly above the Force average for each category on a majority of occasions during the periods:

Total Duty Days	Long Term Absence	Medium Term Absence	Short Term Absence
North & East Devon BCU	Call Management & Comms	Call Management & Comms	Call Management & Comms
Call Management & Comms	Operations		Transport Services
Operations	Transport Services		
Transport Services	Commercial Services		

Year on Year Trends

The Force average duty days lost peaked in April to June 2006 at 2.7 days but this has reduced to a three year low of 2.2 days in 2007/08. There are two primary reasons for this; firstly there was an increase in average long term absence for the quarter in 2006/07 peaking at 1.3 days and secondly, the reduction in Long Term average absence for the same quarter in 2007/08 (falling to 1.1 days) coupled with an increase in police staff numbers (growth of 227 police staff from 2005/06 to 2007/08).

Last 3 Quarters' Trends

Average absence levels for police staff have fallen across all categories during the periods (with the exception of Short Term absence in January to March 2007, due in the main to seasonal factors). The total average days lost has fallen significantly from 3.2 days in October to December 2006 to 2.2 days in the quarter April to June 2007.

Short Term average absence peaked in January to March 2007 at 1.1 days but has subsequently dropped to a three quarter low of 0.7 days in April to June. Long Term absence has fallen in consecutive quarters from 1.7 days in October to December 2006 to 1.1 days in April to June this year.

Agenda No 7