

8. IRMP 2009/10 Implementation Update

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Authority with a progress report on the implementation of management efficiencies.
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Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.

Background

2. Our 2009/10 IRMP action plan committed to delivering efficiencies whilst ensuring that we maintain our levels of operational response.
3. A significant component of this commitment involved reducing the Firefighter establishment by 12 posts while simultaneously developing and implementing the following improved business practices to ensure service provision was not affected:
 - Centralised co-ordination of crewing;
 - Centralised co-ordination of training to ensure crewing availability;
 - Additional training capacity to provide locally delivered training;
 - Comprehensive arrangements to manage and monitor attendance; and
 - New arrangements for water rescue training.

Progress Report

Firefighter Establishment

4. The establishment has been reduced by 12 posts with effect from 1 April by reducing from eight to seven the total number of personnel employed on each of the four shifts at Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Redditch. This has been achieved through normal reductions in staff numbers such as retirements.

Centralised Crewing Hub

5. A centralised crewing hub, located within the Operational Intervention team, was launched on 1 April. This provides dedicated staff and processes to monitor and manage operational cover by ensuring minimum station crewing levels for both Officers and Firefighters, incorporating leave management; a resilience register, training co-ordination and temporary promotions.

Additional Training Capacity

6. Training capacity has been increased by 4 instructors (66%) sourced through the watch manager development programme and dedicated to peripatetic (i.e. on site) training. A revised training strategy supporting the improved business practices is scheduled for full implementation in April 2010.

Attendance Management and Monitoring

7. Revised absence management policies and procedures have been introduced with associated robust monitoring systems. Operational managers and equivalent non-uniformed managers have been trained in these new procedures. Over the period July - September 2009, the number of wholetime shifts lost to sickness reduced to 551.5 compared with 869 during the same period in 2008. Total days/shifts (wholetime and non-uniform) lost to sickness represented the lowest second quarter figure since 2006.

Arrangements for Water Rescue Training

8. The Service's IRMP consulted on the options for the future delivery of water rescue training in order to reduce the pressure on front-line crewing. A final decision will be made by the Authority in December 2009.

Summary - Initial Impact of Improved Business Practices

9. Over the four month period April - July 2009, following the introduction of the new practices including the Service's Resilience Register, crewing on wholetime stations fell below standard levels on only 5 shifts out of a total of 244 (2.05%). In comparison, over the same period in 2008, crewing fell below standard levels on 52 shifts out of a total of 244 (21.3%).
10. This initial impact represents close to a ten fold performance improvement, suggesting that the new systems are significantly enhancing our ability to maintain effective crewing levels. However, it is still early days in this evaluation process and we will continue to monitor progress carefully through our performance management systems into the future.

Supporting Information

Appendices

None

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