

## **County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Human Resources Committee** held at Fire HQ on **Thursday 23 May 2024** at **1000 hours**.

**Present:** Cllr A Batey in the Chair

**Durham County Council:** Cllrs C Marshall and J Quinn

**Darlington Borough Council:** D Ray

**Officers:** K Metcalfe  
J Parry (for items 4 only)

### **Part A**

#### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs C Martin and J Cairns.

#### **2 Minutes of previous meeting – 20 February 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

#### **3 Sickness Absence Performance Quarter Four 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

K Metcalfe introduced the report which provided an update on sickness absence performance for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

K Metcalfe noted that following her action from the last meeting mental health absence data had been added to the report.

C Ray queried the background to sickness relating to work related stress. K Metcalfe noted that there were no absences directly linked to workload, it was mainly linked to performance and conduct issues.

C Ray queried the support provided to staff. K Metcalfe noted that everyone was allocated a welfare officer, they also had access to occupational health, the employee assistance programme, Beneden Health, therapeutic services and when returning to the work place a stress risk assessment is undertaken as part of the reintroduction.

C Ray also queried neurodivergent issues, K Metcalfe noted that currently no staff had presented any issues although agreed it was something which required consideration.

J Quinn queried the support for mental health, K Metcalfe noted that support was provided via Beneden Health, occupational health and the employee assistance programme.

A Batey noted the cost of living crisis and this could easily be masked within statistics, K Metcalfe noted that the family related stress category was helpful in these circumstances to note the stressor.

The Committee **noted** the report.

#### **4 Health and Safety Performance Quarter Four 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

J Parry introduced the report which provided Members with a summary of the Service's health and safety performance for 2023/24 reporting year.

J Parry noted that the narrative for P173 had not been amended but a note would be made on any that over ran the 28 day period.

A Batey queried maneuvering fire appliances in tight spaces, was size of vehicles taken into consideration at the planning stage.

The committee **noted** the report.

#### **5 Additional Health Care Benefit**

K Metcalfe introduced the report which updated the committee on the implementation of the trial of an additional workforce healthcare benefit.

The committee **noted** the report.

#### **6 Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services Spotlight Action Plan Update**

K Metcalfe introduced the report which provided an update on the progress made towards completion of the Action Plan relating to HMICFRS Values and Culture Report and the recommendations made.

The Committee **noted** the report.

### **Part B**

#### **9 Employee Relations Update**

K Metcalfe introduced the report which provided details of informal and formal complaints received by the Service from its workforce as well as the instigation of any disciplinary action for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Members commented on the information.

The Committee **noted** the report.