Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

Standards and Human Resources Committee

17March 2015

**Reasonable Adjustments Update**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact John Redmond,

Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Jonathan Hyams, Equality and Diversity Officer on 01743 260236.

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the reasonable adjustments, made to support employees in their work roles.

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|  | RecommendationsThe Committee is asked to note the content of this report. |

1. Background

The Equality Act 2010 requires Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled employees to carry out their work.

This report provides an overview of the number and types of adjustments that were made to support our disabled employees in the past year, and the associated costs.

1. Caseload

The Service currently has 67 reasonable adjustment cases, an additional 21 since March 2014, the majority of which are for dyslexic employees. The duration of cases varies according to an employee’s needs, with support lasting from a few months to the whole of someone’s employment.

1. Process

Depending on their needs, employees are referred to an appropriate expert for advice on adjustments to their work processes, and equipment may be provided to enable them to carry out their work role.

Initial referrals may include Occupational Health and Access to Work for specialist advice and/or potential funding for workplace support and equipment. Dyslexia accounts for some 80% of the Service’s cases. Employees, who self-refer or are referred to E&D, are assessed by a professional psychologist, who diagnoses whether they are dyslexic and, if so, the probable level and type of support and equipment they need.

Other cases have included back, neck and wrist problems, hearing and visual impairments and dyspraxia. These involve the provision of workplace equipment.

When an assessment is received the employee meets with the Equality and Diversity Officer and, where appropriate, with other officers to discuss and agree an action plan. Only those recommendations that are agreed as necessary are put in place, which may include combinations of equipment, tuition, training, support, ‘buddying’, mentoring and training.

1. Adjustments

The need for adjustments depends on individual circumstances. Among the more common are:

**Dyslexic employees**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Large PC monitor screens
* Changing text size and colour
* Changing the colour of the computer screen background to make it easier to read
* Using coloured paper instead of white
* Software, such as Read and Write Gold and Claro-reader, to help with spelling and grammar and with writing long documents
* Specialist dyslexia tuition to help with subjects including spelling, grammar, organisation skills, and memory techniques (mind mapping)
 | * Electronic dictionaries
* Dictation machines to help with memory and organisational skills
* Highlighter pens for important information
* Notebooks to write down key words and definitions
* Coloured overlays to help with reading
* Audio documents and headphones
* Documents, such as training presentations, provided in advance
* Adapting teaching styles to suit employees’ needs
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**Employees with hearing impairments**

* Specialist headsets
* Individual neck loops
* Hearing equipment

**Employees with other impairments**

* Computer equipment, such as a specialised mouse
* Specialised chairs and/or desks
* Additional equipment, such as document holders
* Touch-typing courses
* Changes in rest times and/or working hours
1. Costs

Every assessed employee is asked to contact Access to Work (ATW) to see if they can provide funding. ATW will only contribute towards tuition and similar costs, and do not support the cost of professional assessments, equipment or software packages. In the twelve months from to 28 February 2014 Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has spent £8,872.28 on reasonable adjustments for employees. The Service has been able to reclaim £4,119.00 from ATW, leaving a net cost of £4,753.28.

**Cost per employee for reasonable adjustments**

**(based on 12 completed cases)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total cost per employee | £1,742.91 |
| ATW funding tuition per employee  | £1.011.56 |
| Cost per employee to the Service | £731.35 |

These costs include:

* Professional diagnostic assessment
* Equipment, which can include workstation adjustments, such as chairs, large monitors, computer packages, coloured overlays, notebooks, dictaphones, headphones, and highlighters
* Professional support, including professional tutoring for dyslexia support, for which funding is currently received from Access to Work

**Year-on-year total costs of reasonable adjustment programme (excluding ATW funding)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Year*** | ***£p*** |  |
| ***2008 – 09*** | ***555.62*** |
| ***2009 – 10*** | ***3,146.33*** |
| ***2010 – 11*** | ***5,528.69*** |
| ***2011 – 12*** | ***6,612.94*** |
| ***2012 – 13*** | ***7,984.64*** |
| ***2013 – 14***  | ***9,088.73*** |
| ***2014 – 15 (up to*** ***28 Feb)*** | ***11,233.28******12,254.50 (annualised)*** |

1. Financial Implications

All financial implications have been considered as part of the business planning process. Any new actions will be considered at the time and either absorbed into current workloads or included within next year’s business plans.

The above analysis of year-on-year costs for the reasonable adjustments programme suggests that, as the programme attracts more employees, costs are likely to rise. Should ATW funding be withdrawn in future, costs of meeting the Authority’s statutory obligations will rise further.

1. Legal Comment

This is a summary of action taken and does not require legal comment.

1. Initial Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

1. Equality Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Equality Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

1. Appendix

Equipment and tuition for current cases

1. Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

**Appendix** to report on Reasonable Adjustments Update

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

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**Equipment and tuition for current cases**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Case no.** | **Staff category** | **Impairment** | **Support measures** |
| 37 | RDS | Dyslexia | * Preliminary self-assessment adult checklist complete
* Completed a professional diagnostic assessment
* Meeting complete to discuss assessment
* ATW to be contacted
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| 39 | RDS | Dyslexia | * Completed a professional diagnostic assessment
* Meeting complete to discuss assessment
* ATW contacted next step workplace assessment for equipment and tuition
 |
| 40 | WT | Dyslexia | * Gold Read and Write package with training complete
* To request tuition from ATW
* Professional support tutor in place
 |
| 46 | RDS | Dyslexia | * Professional diagnostic assessment complete
* Meeting to discuss report & reasonable adjustments complete
* Self-registered with ATW for tuition and computer packages
* Professional support tutor
 |
| 48 | RDS | Dyslexia | * Professional diagnostic assessment complete
* Meeting to discuss report & reasonable adjustments complete
* In process of self-registering with ATW for tuition and computer packages
 |
| 49 | RDS | Dyslexia | * Initial checklist completed
* Fire Brigades Union assessment done, as not strong indication of dyslexia on checklist
* Assessment showed indication of dyslexia
* Professional diagnostic assessment completed
* Meeting to discuss report and reasonable adjustments complete
* Self-registered with ATW for tuition and computer packages
 |
| 52 | WT | Dyslexia | * Professional diagnostic assessment complete
* Meeting to discuss report and reasonable adjustments complete
* Self-registered with ATW for tuition and computer packages
* Professional support tutor
* Gold read and write package and training
* Professional support tutor
 |
| 54 | RDS | Dyslexia | * Professional diagnostic assessment complete
* Meeting to discuss report and reasonable adjustments to be arranged
 |
| 56 | RDS | Dyslexia  | * Initial checklist completed
* Professional diagnostic assessment to be arranged
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|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Case no.** | **Staff category** | **Impairment** | **Support measures** |
| 58 | RDS | Dyslexia  | * Professional diagnostic assessment complete
* Meeting to discuss report and reasonable adjustments complete
* Self-registered with ATW for tuition and computer packages
* Gold read and write package and training
* Professional support tutor
 |
| 59 | RDS | Dyslexia  | * Professional diagnostic assessment complete
* Meeting to discuss report and reasonable adjustments done
* Self-registering with ATW for tuition and computer packages
* Professional support tutor
 |
| 60 | RDS | Possible Dyslexia | * Initial checklist sent
* Initial checklist completed
* Fire Brigades Union assessment done, as not strong indication of dyslexia on checklist
 |
| 61 | WT | Back pain | * Occupational Health requested referral to ATW to assess workplace adjustments
* ATW assessment complete
* Chair and keyboards in place
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| 62 | SY HQ | Dyslexia  | * Initial checklist completed
* Fire Brigades Union assessment done, as not strong indication of dyslexia on checklist
* Assessment showed indication of dyslexia
* Professional diagnostic assessment completed
* Meeting to discuss report and reasonable adjustments done
* Self-registering with ATW for tuition and computer packages
 |
| 63 | WT | Dyslexia | * Initial checklist completed
* Professional diagnostic assessment complete
* Meeting to discuss report and reasonable adjustments completed
* Self-registering with ATW for tuition and computer packages
 |
| 64 | RDS | Dyslexia | * Initial checklist completed
* Professional diagnostic assessment complete
* Meeting to discuss report and reasonable adjustments done
* Self-registering with ATW for tuition and computer packages
 |
| 65 | RDS | Dyslexia | * Initial checklist completed
* Fire Brigades Union assessment to be arranged, as not strong indication of dyslexia on checklist
* Assessment showed indication of dyslexia
* Professional diagnostic assessment to be arranged
 |
| 66 | RDS | Dyslexia | * Initial checklist completed
* Professional diagnostic assessment to be arranged
 |
| 67 | RDS | Dyslexia | * Initial checklist completed
* Professional diagnostic assessment to be arranged
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