

# Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service

2019/2020



Department of  
**Finance**

An Roinn

**Airgeadais**

[www.finance-ni.gov.uk](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk)

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to:  
 Brian Quinn  
 (028) 9038 8441  
 Brian.Quinn@nisra.gov.uk

Human Resource Consultancy Services  
 NISRA  
 Colby House  
 Stranmillis Court  
 Belfast BT9 5RR

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This annual report provides a comprehensive analysis of sickness absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service in the 2019/2020 financial year and contains analyses of trends over the last five years as well as headline figures since 1999/2000.

**12.9**  
working days lost per  
staff year



**5.9%**  
of available  
working days lost



**£36.6**  
million in lost  
production

The headline absence figure for 2019/2020 was **12.9 days** (average days lost per staff year), an increase from 12.6 days in the previous year. The absence level for 2019/2020 is the second highest absence level for the last five years and was similar to that experienced 2 years ago in 2017/2018 (13.0 days).

The 12.9 days lost per staff year represented **5.9%** of the available working days in 2019/2020, a slight increase on the 5.8% days lost in 2018/2019. In salary terms, this equated to an estimated **£36.6 million** of lost production - equivalent to 3.9% of the total NICS pay bill in 2019/2020. This is an increase of £3.7 million on the cost of lost production in the previous year (2018/2019).

Just over half of staff (50.7%) had no recorded sick absence in 2019/2020 - the second highest rate for the last five years.

The level of absence within Departments varied from 9.3 days for the Executive Office (TEO) to 15.5 days for the Department of Justice (DoJ), with most of the Departments recording higher absence levels compared to 2018/2019.

The absence level for females (15.1 days) remained higher than that for males (11.0 days) with just under half of this difference being due to gender-specific conditions<sup>1</sup>.

Staff who had been in post for under two years had a much lower level of sickness absence (6.1 days) than staff who had been employed for two years or more (13.3 days).

Over one in eight staff (13.3%) had at least one spell of long-term absence - these spells lasted around three months on average. This accounted for over three quarters (77.0%) of all working days lost.

**Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses** was the absence reason that accounted for the greatest proportion of working days lost (37.4%) during 2019/2020. Within this category, work-related stress accounted for approximately a third of the days lost.

**COVID-19 (Coronavirus)** accounted for 0.12 working days lost per staff year in 2019/2020, which was the equivalent of 0.9% of all sickness absence days in the NICS for the period. All of these absences occurred between January 2020 and March 2020.

<sup>1</sup> Absences due to Pregnancy Related Disorders, gender-specific Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders and gender-specific Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers.





# KEY FACTS

	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020
<b>Proportion of Staff with No Recorded Spells of Absence (%)</b>	50.0	49.5	46.6	51.3	<b>50.7</b>
<b>Working Days Lost per Staff Year</b>	11.7	12.5	13.0	12.6	<b>12.9</b>
<b>Percentage of Available Working Days Lost (%)</b>	5.3	5.6	6.0	5.8	<b>5.9</b>
<b>Total Number of Working Days Lost</b>	277,855	270,458	279,996	268,334	<b>272,797</b>
<b>Estimated Lost Production<sup>1</sup> (£ Million)</b>	32.7	32.6	33.8	32.9	<b>36.6</b>
<b>Average Number of Spells per Staff Year</b>	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	<b>0.8</b>
<b>Proportion of Working Days Lost by Certification<sup>2</sup></b>					
Certified (%)	85.6	86.9	86.5	88.1	<b>87.6</b>
Self-Certified (%)	13.1	11.5	11.6	10.2	<b>10.1</b>
Uncertified/Missing (%)	1.4	1.6	1.9	1.7	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Long-term Absence</b>					
Proportion of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence (%)	73.8	76.1	74.7	77.6	<b>77.0</b>
Frequency Rate <sup>3</sup> (%)	12.5	13.5	14.0	13.9	<b>14.0</b>
Average Duration (Working Days)	60.2	62.5	62.0	63.1	<b>62.8</b>
<b>Short-term Absence</b>					
Average Number of Spells per Staff Year	0.69	0.68	0.72	0.63	<b>0.64</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Any information provided in this report that relates to lost production is calculated, where possible, on the basis of each individual's actual salary and the associated employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions.

<sup>2</sup> Certification data for 2015/2016 onwards have been revised – see Appendix 1 for further information.

<sup>3</sup> Frequency Rate is the average number of long-term spells per employee, expressed as a percentage. (No. of spells of long-term absence in the period/No. of employees) x 100



## CHAPTER 1

# Working Days Lost through Sickness Absence

**12.9** working days lost on average due to sickness absence

**5.9%** of available working days lost due to sickness absence

**£36.6** million lost production

# 1. WORKING DAYS LOST THROUGH SICKNESS ABSENCE

Absence levels vary by Department, grade level, gender, age group, and the length of service of staff. This chapter contains a look at trends across these variables over the last five years as well as comparative information from other public and private sector bodies. Supporting information can be found in Appendix 3.

## 1.1 Introduction

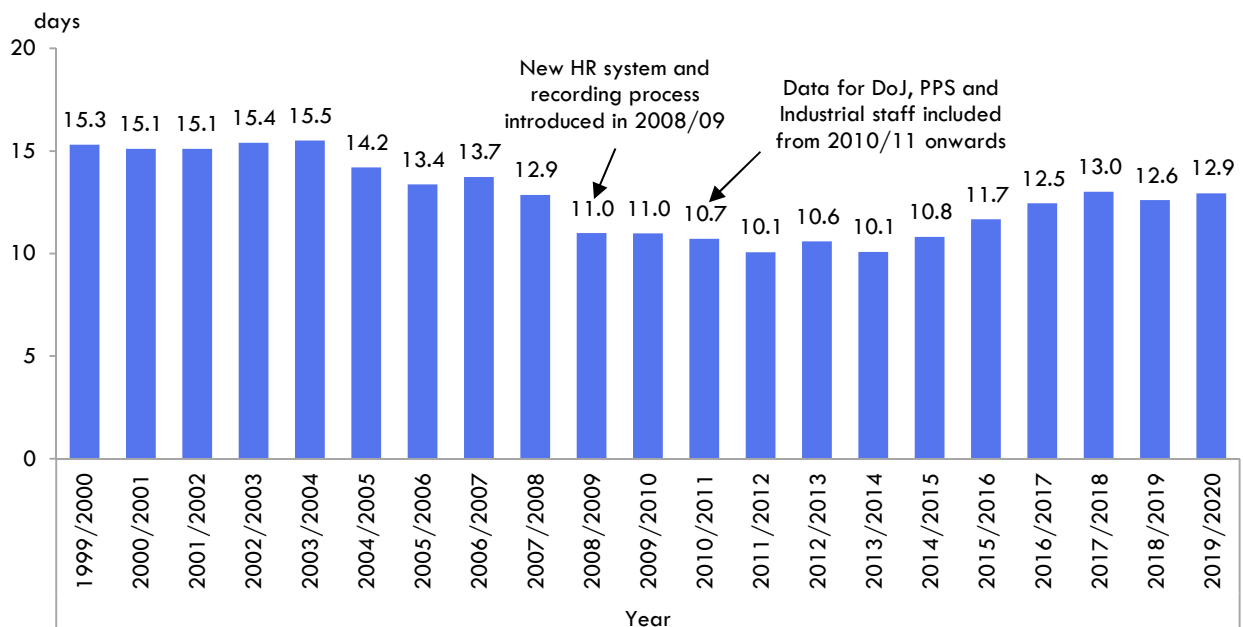
Staff in the NICS lost an average of 12.9 days to sickness absence in 2019/2020 - an increase from the previous year when staff lost 12.6 days.

In total, 5.9% of all available working days were lost due to sickness absence, equating to around £36.6 million in lost production<sup>1</sup>, equivalent to around 3.9% of the total NICS pay bill. This is an increase on the previous year when 5.8% of available working days were lost at a cost of £32.9 million.

All three main measures of sickness absence - working days lost per staff year, the percentage of available working days lost and estimated production - were higher than last year - the first time there has been an increase in the working days lost and absence rate since 2017/2018. Looking at longer trends Figure 1 below shows that during the early 2000s around 15.0-15.5 days were lost on average per staff year. This then dropped over subsequent years until 2011/2012 when it reached its lowest level of 10.1 days. In the eight years since then the absence level has risen to a high of 13.0 days in 2017/2018, still some 2.5 days lower than its peak of 15.5 days in 2003/2004.

**Figure 1**

Working Days Lost per Staff Year<sup>2</sup> in NICS (1999/2000 to 2019/2020)



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Staff who either retire early on medical grounds or are dismissed because of inefficiency due to excessive sickness absence are entitled to receive up to 13 weeks' notice. In line with Cabinet Office guidelines, any sickness absences during this notice period are included in the overall statistics. It is estimated that these absences added around 0.4 of a day to the overall absence level. If they were excluded, the headline figure of 12.9 days would reduce to 12.6 days<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Estimated lost production is calculated using direct costs alone and does not consider any associated costs such as for overtime and replacement staff. Any information provided in this report that relates to lost production is calculated, where possible, on the basis of each individual's actual salary and the associated employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions.

<sup>2</sup> One staff year is the equivalent of one full-time member of staff being in work for a full year. It takes account of staff leaving / joining as well as part-time working patterns.

<sup>3</sup> Due to rounding 0.4 of a day appears larger than the difference between the actual and adjusted headline figures.

## 1.2 Department

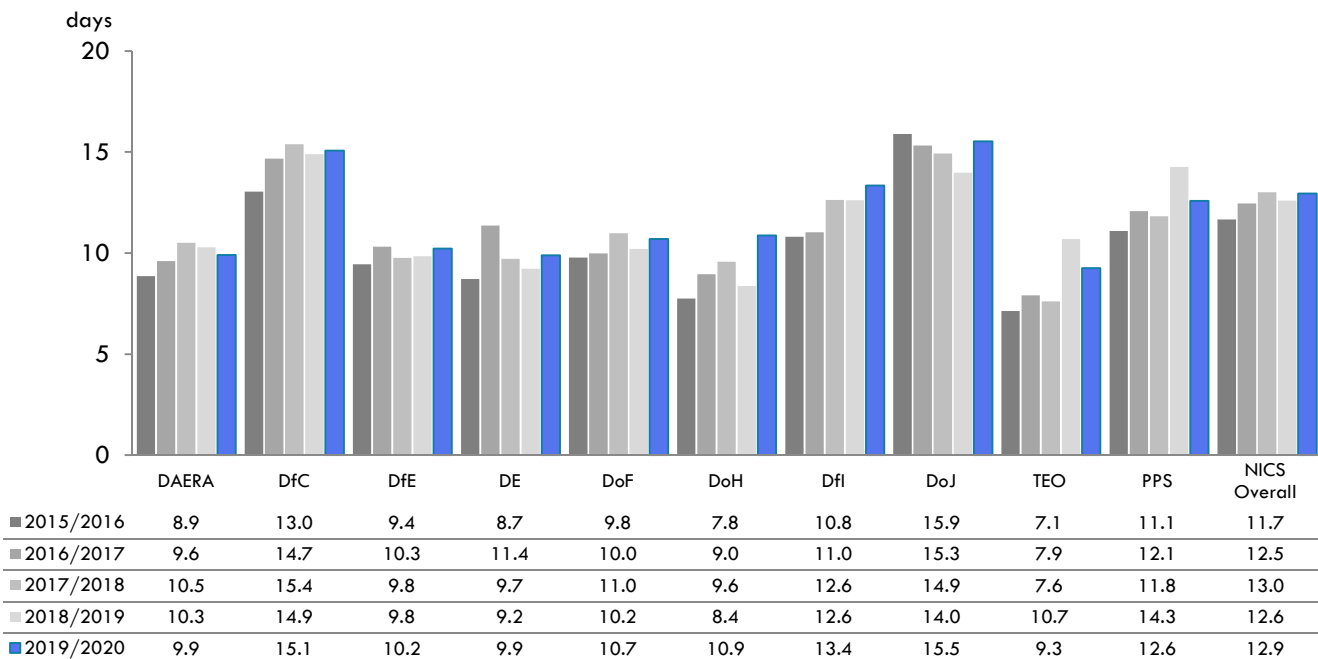
The average number of working days lost due to sickness absence in 2019/2020 ranged from 9.3 days for the Executive Office (TEO) to 15.5 days for the Department of Justice (DoJ).

Three Departments improved on their absence levels from last year - DAERA, TEO and PPS, with the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) experiencing the greatest reduction. In terms of the other Departments, the Department of Health (DoH) and Department of Justice (DoJ) saw notable increases.

DoJ while containing around 14.6% of NICS staff, had the biggest impact on the overall increase in absence level. Within DoJ all grade levels (other than AA) experienced an increase with AO, EOI and Prison Grade staff having the biggest impact on this increase. To view each Department's contribution to the overall absence level, see Table 9.1 in Appendix 9.

**Figure 2**

Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Department (2015/2016 to 2019/2020)<sup>1</sup>



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Departmental staffing profiles can have a major influence on relative absence levels. This needs to be considered when making Departmental comparisons. More appropriate like-for-like comparisons can be obtained in Appendix 5 which provides Departmental absence figures standardised to the age, grade and gender profile of the NICS as a whole in order to eliminate the impact of staffing factors. In the majority of Departments, standardised absence levels are lower than their unadjusted figure. DoJ's figures showed the greatest reduction, falling from 15.5 to 12.1 days lost through sickness absence.

<sup>1</sup> The NICS Departments were restructured from 9th May 2016. All Departmental figures for 2015/2016 represent a best estimate of those year's figures, had the new NICS structure been in place. For more information on the restructuring, see Appendix 1 and Appendix 12.

<sup>2</sup> Staff in HSENI and OAGNI are included in the NICS Overall figure only.

### 1.3 Grade Level

Within this report, non-industrial staff are separated into analogous grade levels, while Industrial and Prison Grade staff are reported separately.

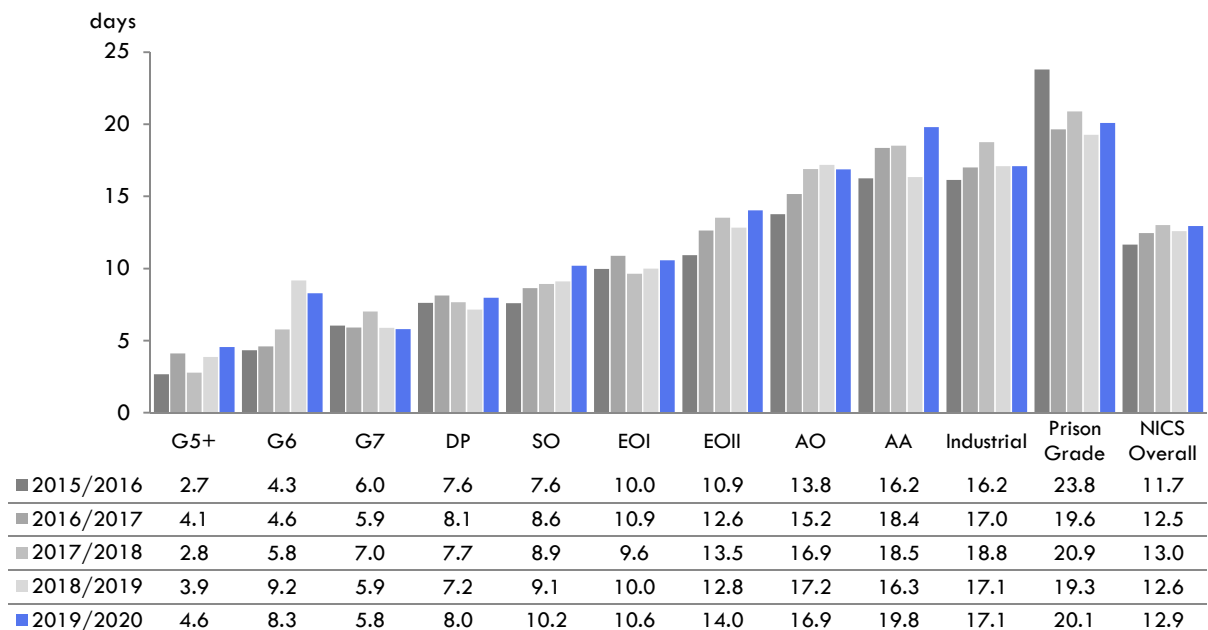
There is notable variation in absence levels across grade levels, although a general trend of decreasing levels of absence as grade level increases can be observed. The average number of working days lost in 2019/2020 ranged from 4.6 days for staff at Grade 5+ level to 20.1 days for Prison Grade staff.

Three of the eleven grade levels reported an improvement compared with 2018/2019 (G6, G7 and AO). Within the other grade levels, the AA staff had the largest increase.

The AO level encompassed the largest number of staff, representing just under one-quarter of the NICS, however staff at EOII level (who represent 18.0% of the NICS) had the biggest impact on the increase in the overall NICS absence level in 2019/2020, contributing 0.25 days to the 0.34 increase in working days lost. For detailed information on each grade level's contribution to the overall NICS absence level, see Table 9.2 in Appendix 9.

**Figure 3**

Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Analogous Grade Level (2015/2016 to 2019/2020)<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this analysis all former Northern Ireland Office staff at the Band C grade level have been classified as analogous to the EOII grade level.

## 1.4 Gender

The absence level increased for males and females in 2019/2020, with males experiencing an average of 11.0 days and females an average of 15.1 days.

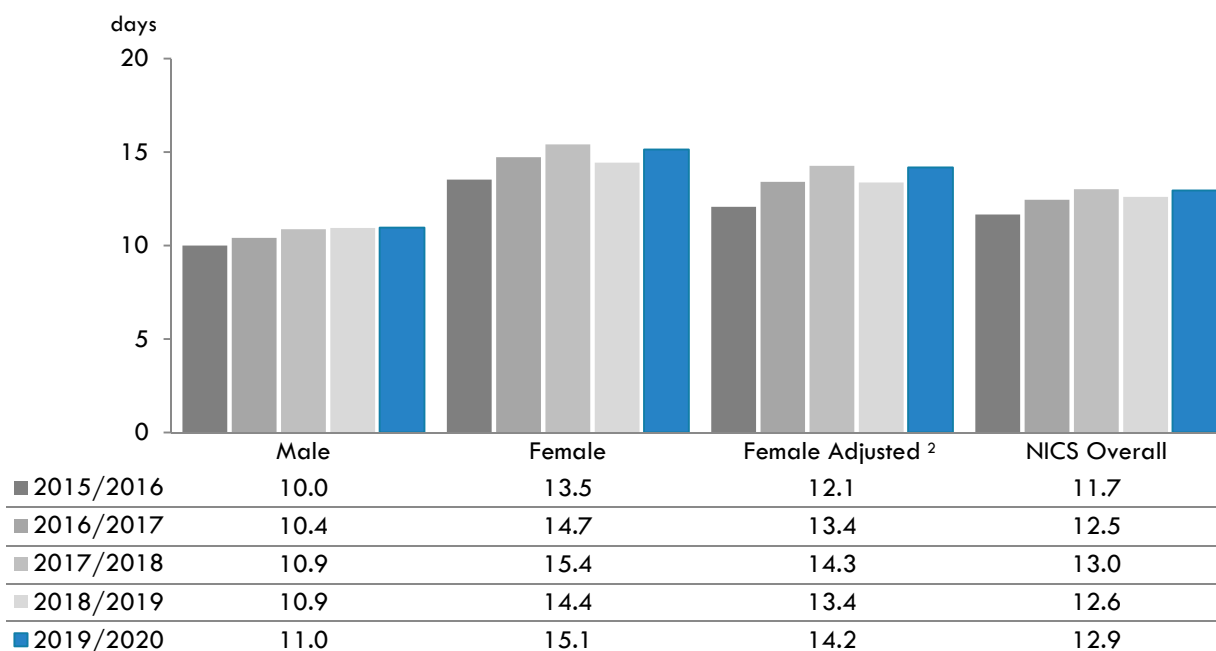
Female staff have historically had a higher level of absence than males, with a difference of around 4 days observed in recent years. In 2019/2020 this difference was 4.1 days, the size of the gap having increased by 0.6 of a day from 2018/2019. However there are other factors to take into account when comparing the difference between genders.

The largest cause of the difference was *Pregnancy Related Disorders*. If this cause was excluded, the adjusted absence level for females fell from 15.1 days to 14.2 days. If all gender-specific absences<sup>1</sup> were excluded from the absence figures the difference between male and female absence would fall to 2.3 days (13.1 days for females and 10.8 days for males).

To view the contribution of each gender to the overall NICS absence level, see Table 9.3 in Appendix 9.

**Figure 4**

Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Gender (2015/2016 to 2019/2020)



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<sup>1</sup> Absences due to *Pregnancy Related Disorders*, gender-specific *Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders* and gender-specific *Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers*.

<sup>2</sup> Excludes absences due to *Pregnancy Related Disorders*.

## 1.5 Length of Service

Staff with less than two years' service in NICS lost an average of 6.1 days through sickness absence in 2019/2020. This was over seven days less than the average number of days lost (13.3 days) by staff with more than two years of service.

The lower level of sickness absence among new staff was a likely consequence of the one year probationary period each staff member undergoes immediately after joining NICS. The probation regime includes more stringent conditions concerning the management of sickness absence compared to those not in probation. For probationary staff, each absence spell leads to a review and the consideration of potential inefficiency action.

**Table 1**

Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Length of Service (2015/2016 to 2019/2020)

Length of Service	Working Days Lost per Staff Year				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Less than 1 year	3.1	2.1	4.4	5.0	3.6
1 to less than 2 years	5.1	5.7	7.1	8.9	8.3
<b>Less than 2 years</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>
2 to less than 3 years	9.2	6.8	7.9	12.3	13.0
3 to less than 4 years	12.2	12.4	10.1	14.4	16.1
4 to less than 5 years	8.6	11.4	11.6	13.0	11.5
5 years or more	11.9	12.7	13.4	12.8	13.2
<b>2 years or more</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>13.3</b>
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.9</b>

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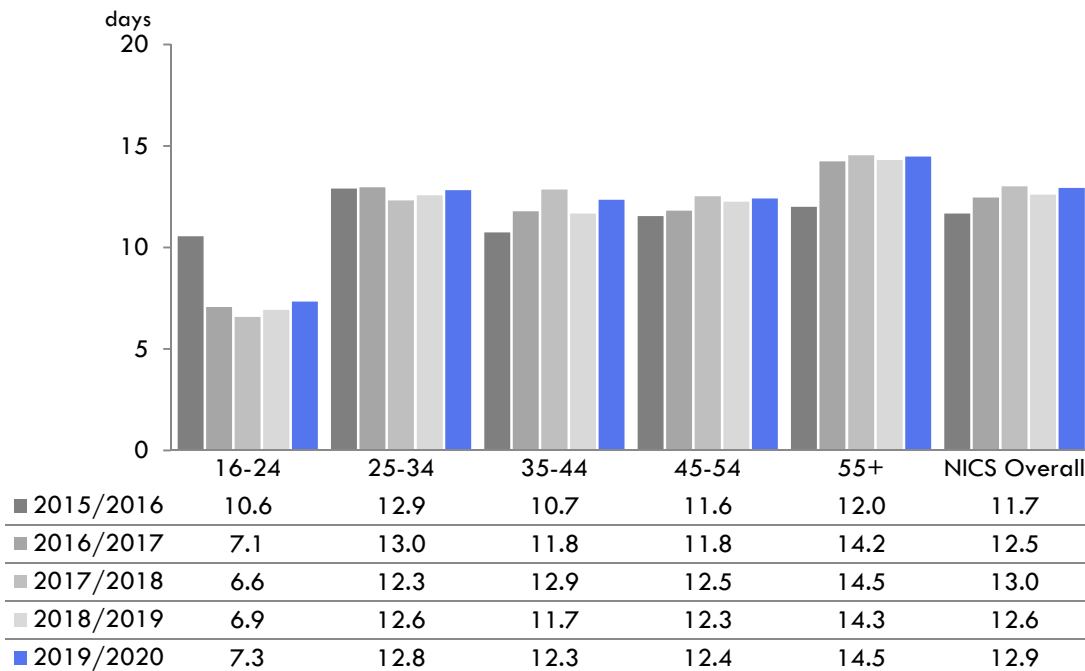
## 1.6 Age Group

The average number of working days lost ranged from 7.3 days for staff aged 16-24 to 14.5 days for staff aged 55+. It should be noted, however, that the youngest age group (16-24) accounted for less than 1% of NICS staff.

Staff in all age groups experienced an increase in absence levels, with those staff in the 35-44 age group experiencing the largest increase. To see the age comparisons in greater detail, see Table 6.4 in Appendix 6.

**Figure 5**

Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Age Group (2015/2016 to 2019/2020)



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## 1.7 Comparison with other Organisations

Care should be taken when making comparisons with sickness absence figures produced by other organisations. Methods of data collection/reporting is likely to vary among organisations and some may not be as robust as others.

For instance, some organisations report on a "per person/employee" method while the NICS reports on a "per staff year<sup>1</sup>" basis, as per Cabinet Office guidelines, which methodologically tends to return a higher figure.

Typically the number of staff years will be less than the headcount of staff as it takes part-time staff into account. An organisation's Working Days Lost per Staff Year figure will therefore tend to be higher than their Working Days Lost per Person figure. The magnitude of this difference will depend on the proportion of part-time staff and the level of staff turnover in the organisation.

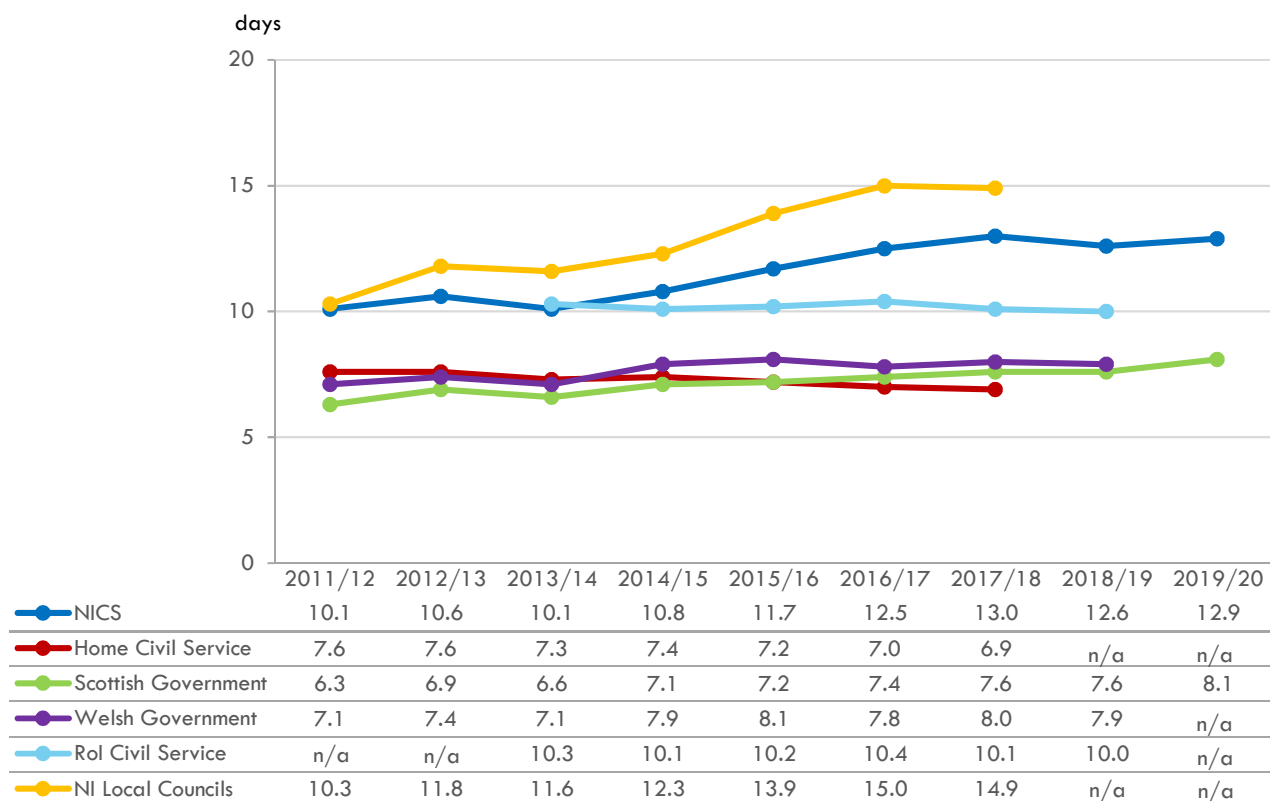
### Comparison with other Civil Service Sickness Absence Statistics/Local Councils (2011/2012 to 2019/2020)

Each public sector organisation listed below varies in how they report sickness absence statistics. Like the NICS, the Home Civil Service, Scottish Government and Welsh Government report on a per Staff Year basis although other steps in the recording differ from that of the NICS. Without detailed, published methodologies from these organisations it is not possible to assess comparability of these figures to the NICS. The Republic of Ireland Civil Service reports absence on a per full time equivalent basis and NI Local Councils report on a per employee basis.

For more detailed information and links to each organisations sickness absence statistics, see Appendix 11.

#### Figure 6

Average Working Days Lost per Staff Year<sup>1</sup> in UK/Rol Civil Service and Local Councils (2011/12 to 2019/20)<sup>2,3</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> One staff year is the equivalent of one full-time member of staff being in work for a full year. It takes account of staff leaving/joining as well as part-time working patterns.

<sup>2</sup> n/a: No figures published/available.

<sup>3</sup> Rol Civil Service figures are for calendar years from 2013 to 2018.

## Comparison with the Private Sector

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) commission a survey each year that reports on levels of sickness absence across the various UK labour market sectors. Make UK<sup>1</sup> carry out a similar survey for UK manufacturers.

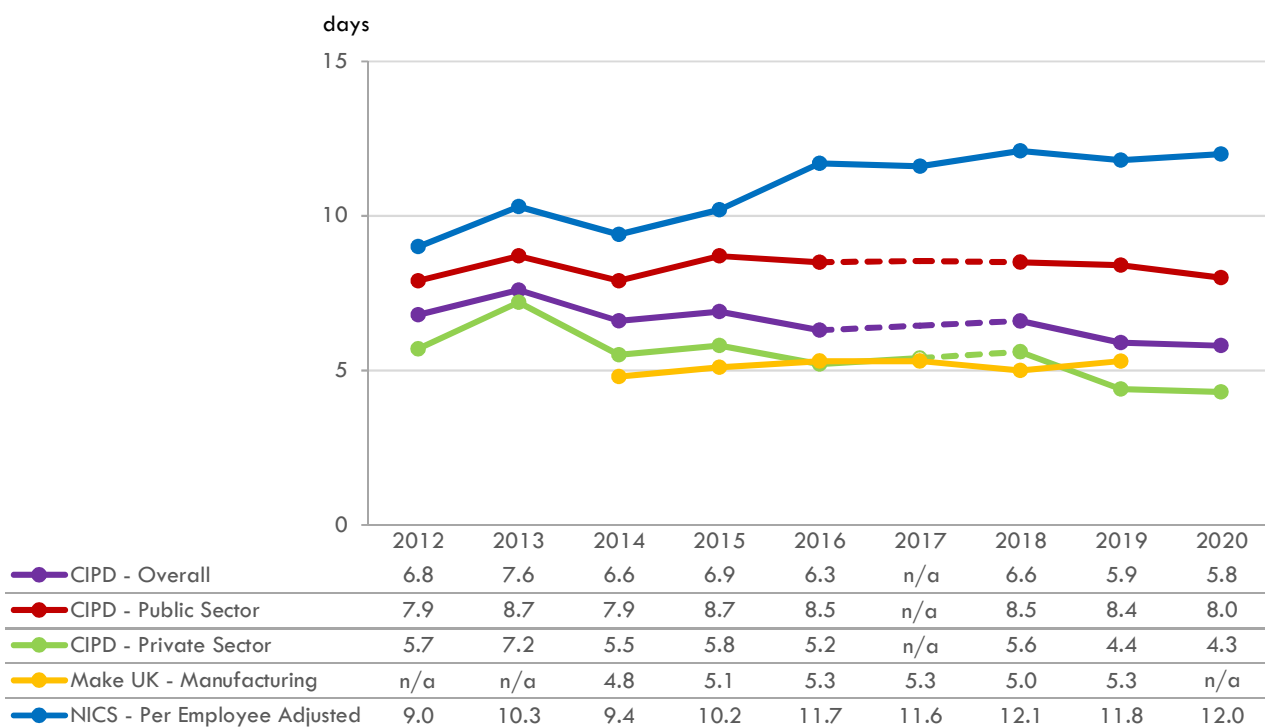
As their figures are based on survey returns they can be affected by response bias. For example, firms with solid methods of data collection and more robust/acceptable figures to report may be the ones most likely to send in their figures.

The NICS Working Days Lost per Employee figure (as opposed to per Staff Year<sup>2</sup>) has been included below to provide a more direct comparison with the private sector. However it is again worth noting care should be taken when comparing these figures due to differing methods of data collection/reporting.

For more detailed information and links to each organisations sickness absence statistics, see Appendix 11.

### Figure 7

Average Working Days Lost per Employee CIPD/Make UK<sup>3</sup> (2012 to 2020)<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Make UK is the National Manufacturers Association in the UK (formerly known as EEF).

<sup>2</sup> One staff year is the equivalent of one full-time member of staff being in work for a full year. It takes account of staff leaving/joining as well as part-time working patterns.

<sup>3</sup> CIPD figures are based on an annual survey with between 342 (2014) and over 1,000 (2020) responses. The figures also exclude the top and bottom 5% of responses and are reported on a "per employee" basis – a methodology that tends to report a lower level of absence than a "per Staff Year" approach. The figures reported by CIPD for 2020 relate to their survey undertaken in October/November 2019. The Make UK figures are presented in a similar manner above while the NICS per Employee Adjusted figures for 2020 relate to the 2019/2020 financial year for comparison purposes.

<sup>4</sup> n/a: No figures published/available.



## CHAPTER 2

# Spells of Sickness Absence

**50.7%** of staff had **no** sickness absence

**64.0%** of absence spells lasted five working days or less

**87.6%** of working days lost were covered by a medical certificate

## 2. SPELLS OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

This chapter looks at the number and duration of sickness absence spells and how they were certified. Supporting information can be found in Appendix 6.

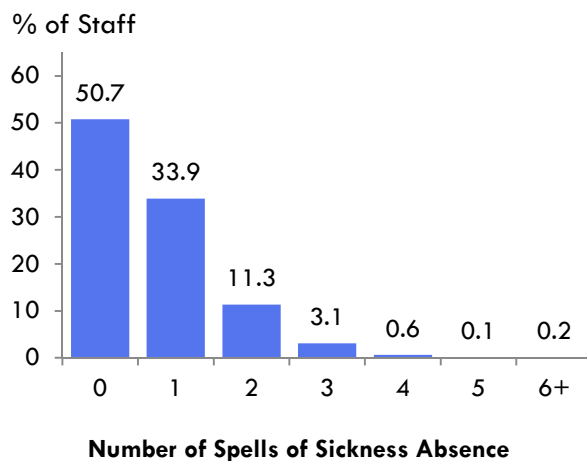
### 2.1 Number of Absence Spells

Figure 8 shows that in 2019/2020, over half of all staff (50.7%) had no spells of sickness absence - a slight decrease from the previous year when 51.3% of staff had none. One spell of absence was recorded for 33.9% of staff, 11.3% had two spells, while the remaining 4.0% of staff were absent on three or more occasions.

The proportion of staff with no absence varied markedly between Departments from 42.6% in DfC to 61.8% in TEO (see Table 6.10 in Appendix 6).

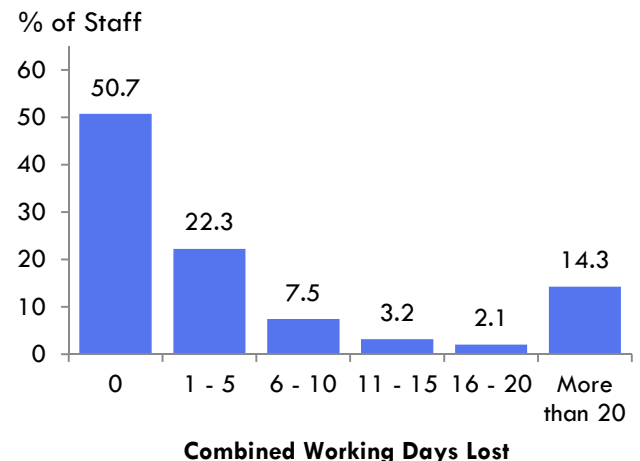
Figure 9 shows that over a fifth (22.3%) of staff were absent for between one and five days in total during 2019/2020. Meanwhile, the percentage of staff who were absent for a total of more than 20 days during the year rose to 14.3% - a slight increase on last year's figure of 14.1% (see Table 6.8 in Appendix 6).

**Figure 8**  
Number of Absence Spells



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**Figure 9**  
Combined Working Days Lost<sup>1</sup>



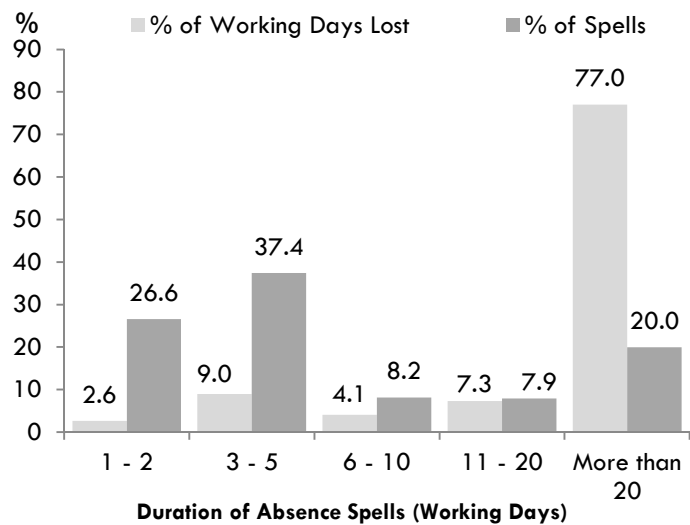
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<sup>1</sup> The total number of working days lost for an individual, counted across all their absence spells, during the financial year.

## 2.2 Duration of Absence Spells

Around 16,800 sickness absence spells were recorded in 2019/2020, over 100 more than in the previous year. The majority of spells were relatively short - 64.0% of all absence spells lasted five working days or less. Such absences, however, only accounted for 11.6% of the total working days lost to sickness absence (see Figure 10). In total, short-term absences (those lasting 20 working days or less) accounted for 80.0% of all spells.

**Figure 10**  
Duration of Absence Spells

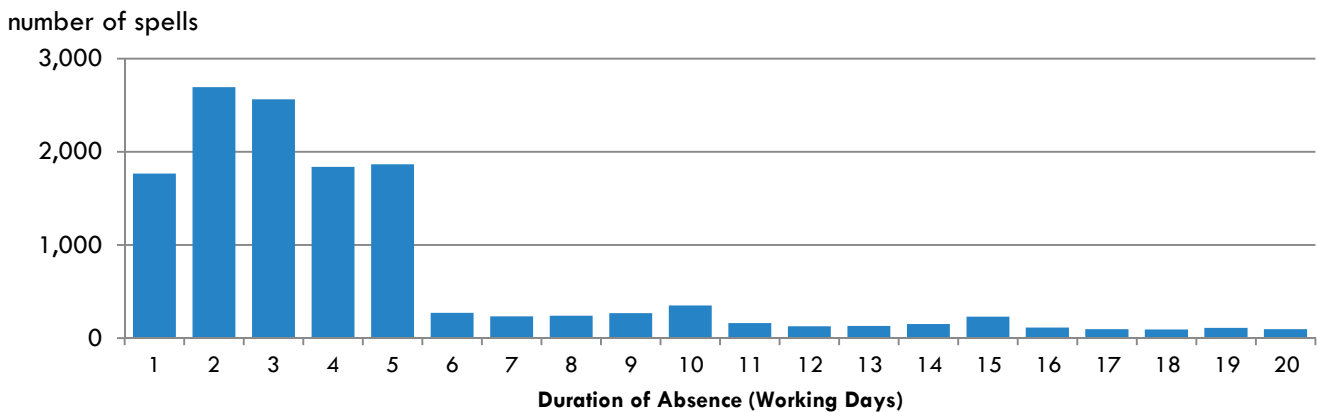


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Long-term absences (those lasting more than 20 days) made up the vast majority of all working days lost. Although they represented just 20.0% of spells, they accounted for 77.0% of all the working days lost.

**Figure 11**

Number of Spells by Duration - Short-term Absences



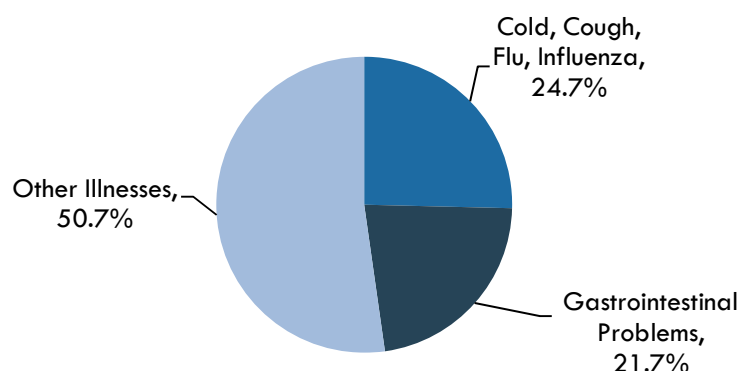
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Just under 2,700 spells of absences lasted for two working days - the most frequent duration of all absences (see Figure 11).

Short-term absence spells were predominately due to *Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza* (24.7%) or *Gastrointestinal Problems* (21.7%).

An analysis of long-term absences can be found in Chapter 4.

**Figure 12**  
Short-Term Absences - % of Spells by Reason



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### 2.3 Absence Certification

All NICS staff are required to have their spells of sickness absence certified. For absences of seven calendar days or less staff are able to self-certify whereas, for longer absences, a Medical Certificate from a medical practitioner or hospital is required. Given the short duration of many absences, it is not surprising that the majority (55.2%) of spells were self-certified with medically certified absences making up a further 35.6% of the total.

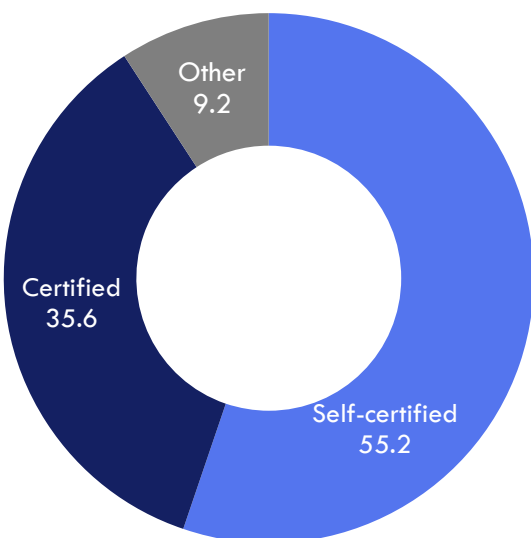
Absences which were uncertified or missing a certification have been classified here as 'other' and accounted for 9.2% of absence spells. A proportion of this figure would relate to absences where the certification had yet to be processed at the end of 2019/2020. Due to restrictions put in place in late March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 crisis many line managers will not have had access to HRConnect and COMPASS systems in order to update certification information in the normal timely manner.

As would be expected, self-certified absences did not last as long as certified absences. On average, self-certified absences lasted 3.0 days while certified absences lasted 40.0 days (see Table 6.1 in Appendix 6).

The majority of working days lost were certified by a doctor or hospital. Absences certified in this manner accounted for 87.6% of the total working days lost, equating to 11.3 days lost per staff year or 5.1% of the available working days (see Table 3.3 in Appendix 3). Self-certified absences accounted for a further 10.1% of the working days lost while 'other' absences made up the remaining 2.3%.

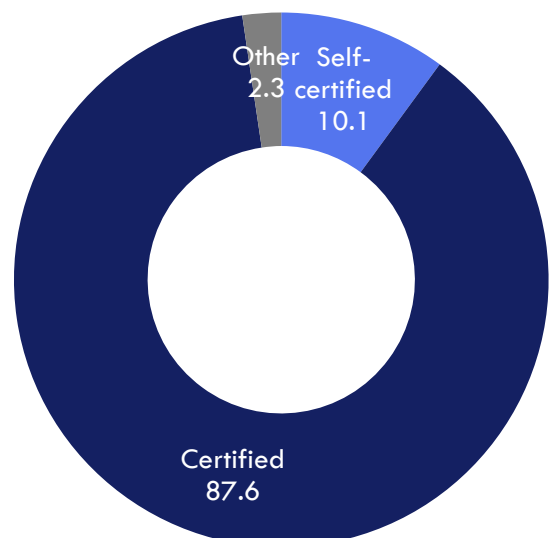
Further information about absence certification (including a Departmental breakdown) is available in Tables 6.1 to 6.4 in Appendix 6.

**Figure 13**  
% of Absence Spells by Certification



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**Figure 14**  
% of Working Days Lost by Certification



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## CHAPTER 3

# Reason for Sickness Absence

The main reason for absence was

**Anxiety/Stress/Depression/  
Other Psychiatric Illnesses**

accounting for **over 1 in 3** working days lost

## 3. REASON FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE

This chapter looks at the reasons for sickness absence. More analyses are presented in Appendix 7.

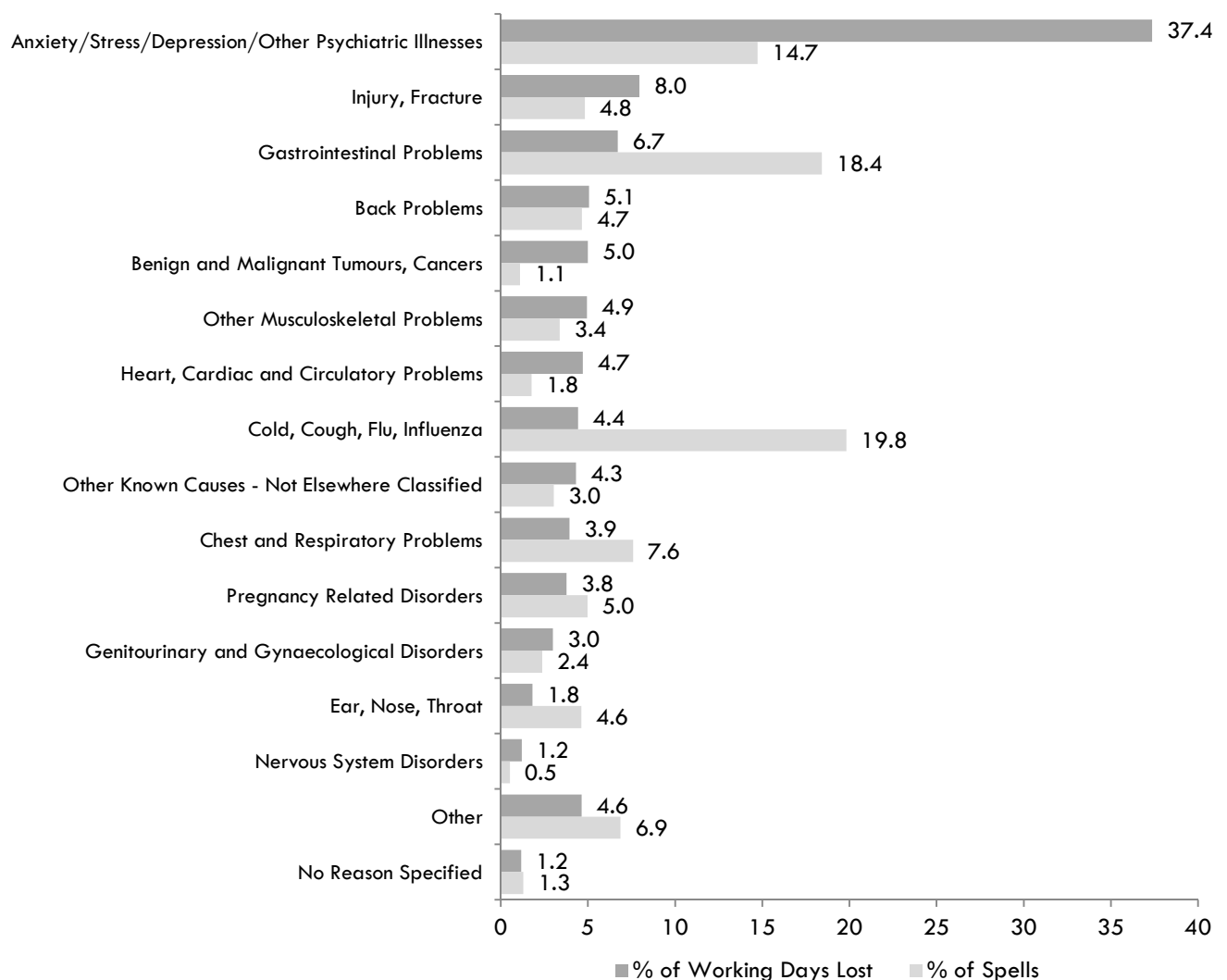
### 3.1 NICS Overall

Absences recorded as *Gastrointestinal Problems* or *Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza* accounted for 38.2% of all absence spells in 2019/2020. However as such illnesses tend to be short-term in nature they did not account for the highest proportion of working days lost.

As in previous years, *Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* remained the reason behind the highest proportion of working days lost. This reason accounted for 37.4% of the total working days lost. Over one third of the working days lost in this illness category were recorded as work-related stress (see Table 7.4 in Appendix 7). To view each absence type's contribution to the overall NICS absence level, see Table 9.5 in Appendix 9.

Sickness absences due to *COVID-19 (Coronavirus)* are categorised under *Chest and Respiratory Problems* throughout these analyses. For specific analysis of *COVID-19 (Coronavirus)* absences see section 3.5.

**Figure 15<sup>1,2</sup>**  
Reason for Absence



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<sup>1</sup> The category 'Other' contains any absence with a reason that accounted for less than 1% of the working days lost.

<sup>2</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

The average duration of an absence is linked to the nature and severity of the illness involved.

Absences caused by *Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers* had the longest average duration at 73.4 working days. These absences, however, were quite rare and only accounted for 1.1% of absence spells. By contrast, absences due to *Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* not only had the third highest average duration (41.3 working days) but also accounted for 14.7% of spells.

At the other end of the scale, absences due to *Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza* had the shortest average duration at 3.6 days. For a detailed breakdown of absence reason by spells, see Table 7.2 in Appendix 7.

**Table 2<sup>1,2</sup>**

Average Duration of Absence by Reason

	Working Days
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	73.4
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	43.5
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	41.3
Nervous System Disorders	37.2
Substance Abuse	36.2
Injury, Fracture	26.9
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	25.4
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	23.8
Blood Disorders	23.2
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	23.1
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	20.5
Back Problems	17.6
Infectious Diseases	15.9
Eye Problems	15.7
Skin Disorders	12.8
Pregnancy Related Disorders	12.3
Asthma	9.6
Chest and Respiratory Problems	8.5
Ear, Nose, Throat	6.4
Gastrointestinal Problems	5.9
Headache/Migraine	5.5
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	4.7
Dental and Oral Problems	4.1
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	3.6
No Reason Specified	14.6

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<sup>1</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

<sup>2</sup> The analysis only takes account of the working days lost by each absence during the specific financial year.

The following three tables show the percentage of total working days lost by grade level, gender and age group. Shading denotes the reason for the largest proportion of working days lost for each subgroup.

### 3.2 Grade Level

*Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* accounted for the highest percentage of working days lost at all grade levels. Only staff at DP, Industrial and Prison Grades experienced an increase in the proportion of working days lost to this reason compared with 2018/2019. Industrial staff experienced the most notable change, which saw the proportion rise from 18.7% to 28.1%.

Prison Grade and Industrial staff had a noticeably higher proportion of working days lost to *Injury, Fracture* than staff in other grade levels, while Industrial staff also experienced higher levels of *Back Problems*. This situation is likely to reflect the type of work undertaken by these grades.

**Table 3<sup>1,2,3</sup>**  
Reason for Absence by Grade Level

	% of Working Days Lost								
	G7+	DP	SO	E0I	E0II	A0	AA	Industrial	Prison Grade
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	36.0	35.3	35.3	32.8	38.1	38.6	40.6	28.1	45.1
Asthma	-	-	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.5	-	-
Back Problems	4.4	1.8	4.0	5.2	4.9	5.3	4.7	12.8	4.5
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	9.3	7.6	3.9	6.6	3.1	5.4	10.4	2.0	3.0
Blood Disorders	-	-	0.9	0.5	0.7	0.6	-	0.8	n/a
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	-	n/a	-	n/a	-	0.0	n/a	-	-
Chest and Respiratory Problems	5.5	4.2	4.8	5.0	3.8	3.7	1.6	4.4	2.5
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	6.1	5.7	5.1	5.3	5.0	4.5	3.4	2.5	1.1
Dental and Oral Problems	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3	-	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.5	2.8	2.2	2.2	1.6	2.1	0.6	0.3	1.3
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	-	1.0	-	0.6	0.7	0.6	-	n/a	0.3
Eye Problems	1.2	0.3	1.0	1.1	0.8	0.9	0.2	1.5	0.5
Gastrointestinal Problems	6.2	6.6	6.3	7.0	8.0	7.6	3.7	3.0	4.8
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.7	2.7	4.4	3.8	2.9	3.1	3.1	2.6	0.8
Headache/Migraine	0.4	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.6	1.1	1.1	0.9	0.3
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	6.0	3.0	4.7	5.0	6.5	3.1	7.6	8.5	3.5
Infectious Diseases	-	1.1	0.3	0.9	0.9	0.5	0.4	1.9	0.9
Injury, Fracture	5.3	7.9	7.6	6.7	6.1	5.0	4.4	21.0	18.4
Nervous System Disorders	-	1.3	1.2	0.5	1.2	1.6	2.4	-	-
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	4.6	8.4	5.8	4.4	3.9	3.3	2.4	1.6	5.3
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	4.0	3.8	5.3	5.4	4.9	5.6	6.5	4.8	2.8
Pregnancy Related Disorders	2.6	3.1	3.6	3.7	3.5	5.3	5.2	n/a	2.1
Skin Disorders	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.4	-	-	0.3
Substance Abuse	n/a	n/a	-	0.1	0.3	0.3	n/a	n/a	n/a
No Reason Specified	0.6	1.6	0.9	1.0	1.5	0.8	0.2	1.5	2.0
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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<sup>1</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

<sup>2</sup> n/a: No cases recorded.

<sup>3</sup> Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-).

### 3.3 Gender

As has been the case for over 10 years *Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* was the reason behind the highest percentage of working days lost for both males and females.

The second highest reason for males was *Injury, Fracture*, accounting for 10.1% of their working days lost. *Pregnancy Related Disorders* was the second highest reason for females, accounting for 6.8% of their working days lost.

**Table 4**<sup>1,2,3</sup>  
Reason for Absence by Gender

	% of Working Days Lost	
	Male	Female
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	36.9	37.8
Asthma	0.1	0.2
Back Problems	7.1	3.4
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	3.3	6.4
Blood Disorders	0.4	0.6
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.0	0.0
Chest and Respiratory Problems	4.3	3.7
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	5.1	3.9
Dental and Oral Problems	0.2	0.2
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.5	2.1
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.2	0.9
Eye Problems	1.0	0.8
Gastrointestinal Problems	6.9	6.6
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	1.7	4.0
Headache/Migraine	0.7	1.0
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	7.6	2.4
Infectious Diseases	0.7	0.7
Injury, Fracture	10.1	6.3
Nervous System Disorders	0.7	1.6
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	4.1	4.5
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	5.3	4.6
Pregnancy Related Disorders	n/a	6.8
Skin Disorders	0.8	0.3
Substance Abuse	0.3	0.1
No Reason Specified	1.0	1.3
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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<sup>1</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

<sup>2</sup> n/a: No cases recorded.

<sup>3</sup> Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-).

### 3.4 Age Group

*Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* accounted for the highest percentage of working days lost for all age groups.

The only other absence reasons to exceed 12% of working days lost in any age group were *Injury, Fracture* among the 16-24 age group, which accounted for 14.0% of their working days lost and *Pregnancy Related Disorders* in the 25-34 age group, which accounted for 12.3% of their working days lost.

**Table 5**<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Reason for Absence by Age Group

	% of Working Days Lost				
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	31.3	37.7	41.6	40.0	30.3
Asthma	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.2
Back Problems	-	5.4	5.1	4.5	5.6
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	n/a	3.0	2.1	5.3	8.4
Blood Disorders	n/a	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.5
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	-	-	0.0	-	-
Chest and Respiratory Problems	1.3	3.4	3.2	3.8	5.0
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	7.3	4.6	5.5	4.0	3.6
Dental and Oral Problems	n/a	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
Ear, Nose, Throat	0.6	2.1	2.1	1.8	1.5
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	-	1.3	0.5	0.4	0.5
Eye Problems	-	0.4	0.5	1.2	1.1
Gastrointestinal Problems	10.7	8.1	6.9	6.6	6.1
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	-	1.9	2.9	3.5	2.9
Headache/Migraine	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.0	0.6
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	-	1.6	2.8	4.6	7.9
Infectious Diseases	-	0.9	0.5	0.8	0.8
Injury, Fracture	14.0	8.2	5.6	7.9	10.2
Nervous System Disorders	n/a	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.0
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	3.0	2.5	4.1	5.2	4.3
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	-	2.0	3.6	5.2	7.1
Pregnancy Related Disorders	4.8	12.3	8.3	0.1	-
Skin Disorders	n/a	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.4
Substance Abuse	n/a	-	0.3	-	0.2
No Reason Specified	3.3	0.8	0.6	1.5	1.5
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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<sup>1</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

<sup>2</sup> n/a: No cases recorded.

<sup>3</sup> Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-).

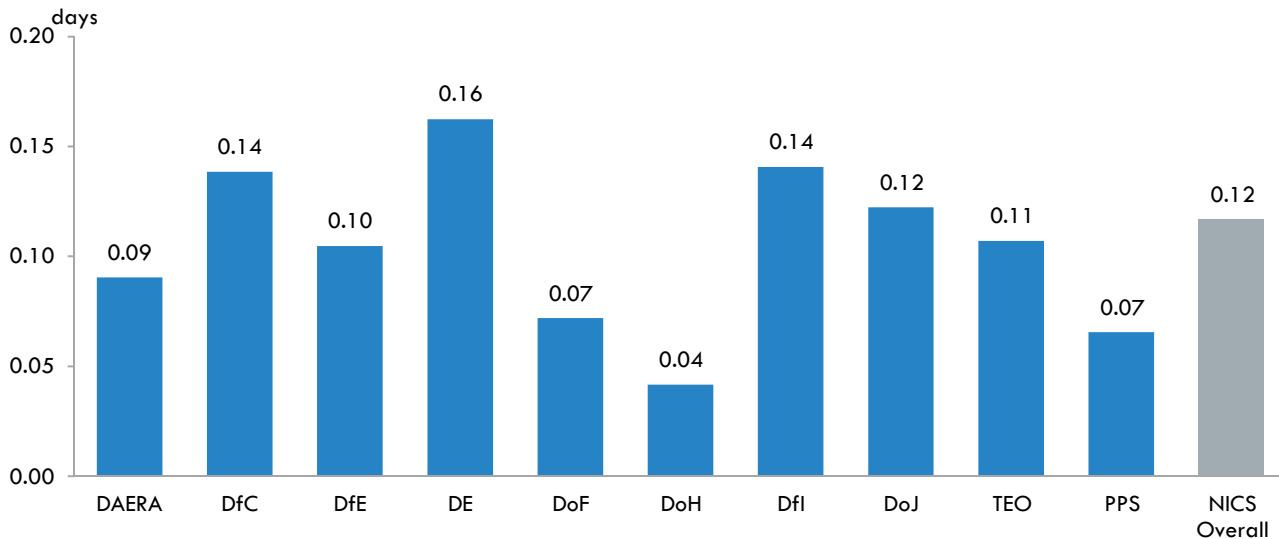
### 3.5 Sickness Absence due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

In the 2019/2020 reporting year there were 381 spells of COVID-19 in the NICS, amounting to 2,462 working days. This equated to 0.12 working days lost per Staff Year or 0.05% of all available working days. All of these spells occurred between January 2020 and March 2020 and represented 0.9% of all sickness absence days that occurred in 2019/2020.

Across Departments the level of absence ranged from 0.04 days per Staff Year in the Department of Health (DoH) to 0.16 days in the Department of Education (DE). This equated to 1.6% of all sickness absence days in DE and 0.07% of all available days. For further information on COVID-19 Absences by Department see Table 7.7 in Appendix 7.

**Figure 16**

Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Department due to COVID-19



Staff who work in Industrial grades had the highest level of COVID-19 sickness absence with 0.17 days lost per Staff Year, with staff at EOI, EOII and AO grades experiencing similar high levels. More information on the COVID-19 Absences by Grade Level can be found in Table 7.8 in Appendix 7.

Males and Females experienced similar levels of COVID-19 sickness absence although COVID-19 accounted for 1.1% of all Male absence in 2019/2020 and 0.7% of all Female absence (see Table 7.9 in Appendix 7). Across different Age Groups those aged 25-34 had the highest level of COVID-19 Absence with 0.18 days per Staff Year and staff in the youngest age bracket experienced the lowest with 0.05 days (see Table 7.10 in Appendix 7).





## CHAPTER 4

# Long-term Sickness Absence

**13.3%** of staff had at least one long-term absence

Long-term absences accounted for **77.0%** of the total working days lost

A long-term average duration of **62.8** working days

**23.2%** of Prison Grade staff had a long-term absence

## 4. LONG-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

A long-term absence is defined as any spell of absence that lasted more than 20 consecutive working days during the financial year. Additional information can be found in Appendix 8.

### 4.1 Prevalence of Long-term Absence

In 2019/2020, over one in every eight staff (13.3%) had a long-term absence; this is the same proportion of staff with a long-term absence as in the previous year.

These 3,170 staff each had at least one absence spell that lasted anywhere from more than one month to the full year (see Figure 17). The average length of these 3,347 spells was around three calendar months (62.8 working days<sup>1</sup>).

Long-term absences accounted for 77.0% of all working days lost, which was a decrease on the proportion recorded in 2018/2019. This level of long-term absence would, by way of illustration, be equivalent to the loss of around 951 full-time staff for an entire year.

**Table 6**  
Number of Long-term Absence Spells

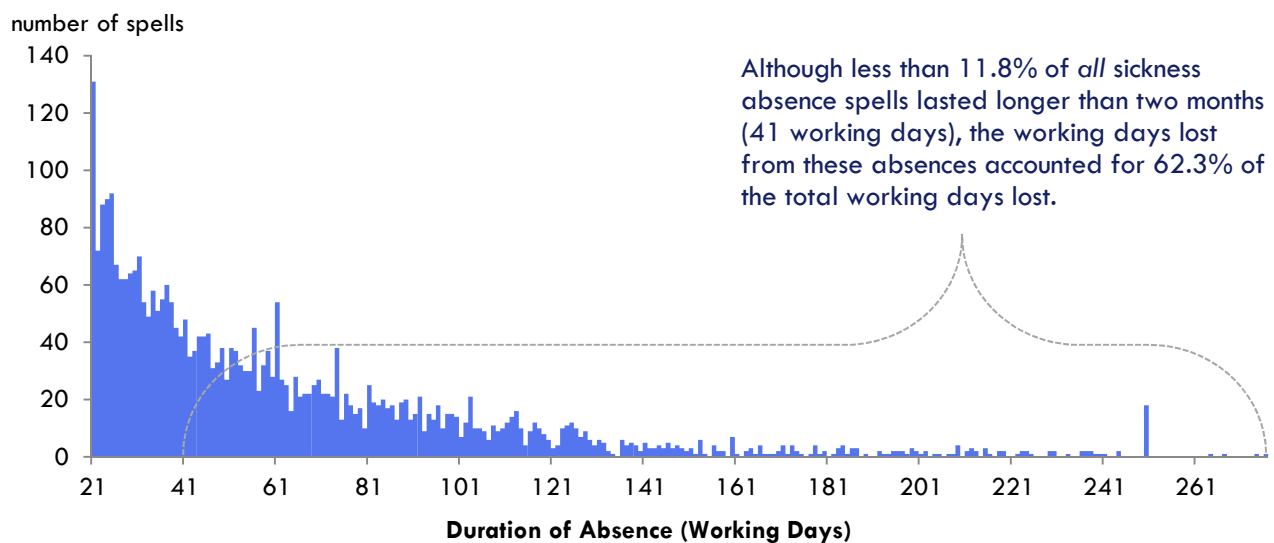
Number of Long-term Absence Spells	Number of Staff	% of Staff
0	20,656	86.7
1	3,002	12.6
2	160	0.7
3+	8	0.0
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>23,826</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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Meanwhile, the Frequency Rate<sup>2</sup> - the number of long-term spells per employee - increased slightly from 13.9% to 14.0%.

**Figure 17**

Number of Spells by Duration - Long-term Absences (more than 20 working days)



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<sup>1</sup> The figure of 62.8 working days is the mean duration. The median (the middle value of all the long-term absence durations) is 49.0 working days, which equates to nearly 2½ months. These figures only take account of the days lost during the specific financial year. For context, long-term absences that ended during 2019/2020 lasted for an average of 70.1 working days (approximately 3½ months).

<sup>2</sup> Frequency Rate is the average number of long-term absences per employee, expressed as a percentage. (No. of spells of long-term absence in the period/No. of employees) x 100

## 4.2 Grade Level

Prison Grade staff had the highest incidence of long-term sickness absence - with over one in five (23.2%) staff having a long-term absence spell in 2019/2020. This was an increase on the 2018/2019 figure of 22.4%. The only grade levels to show a decrease in long-term sickness absence spells were G6, G7, AO and Industrials.

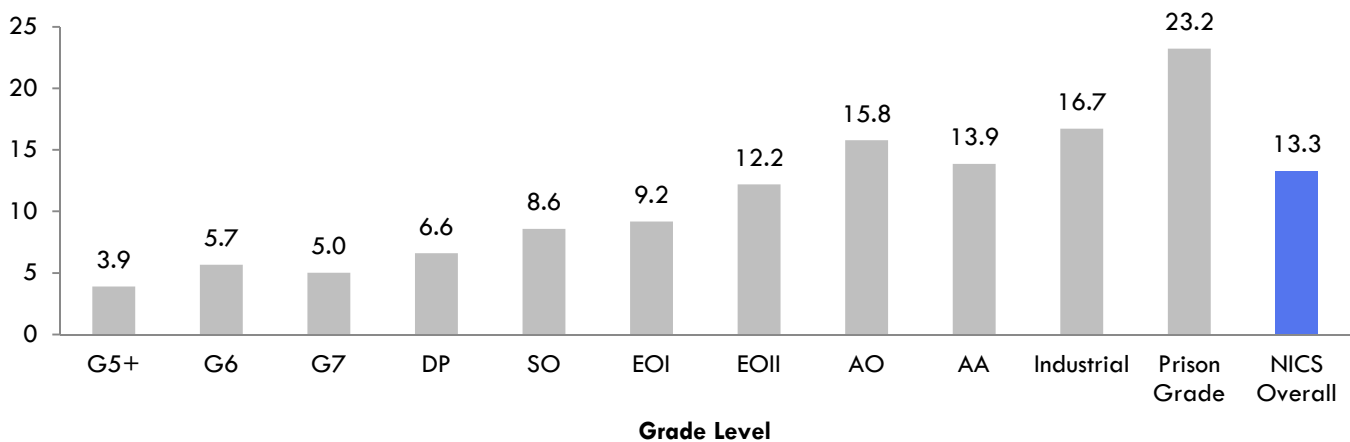
The average duration of Prison Grade absences was 65.6 working days, which was higher than the overall NICS average (62.8 working days). In total, 85.8% of all working days lost by Prison Grade staff were due to long-term absences – the highest percentage of any grade level (see Table 8.2 in Appendix 8).

In the non-industrial grades, the incidence of long-term absence tended to decrease as grade level increased. For example, 15.8% of the AO grade staff had a long-term absence compared with 3.9% of G5+ staff.

**Figure 18**

One or More Long-term Absence by Grade Level

% of staff



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## 4.3 Gender

Females had a higher incidence of long-term absence than males, even after absences due to *Pregnancy Related Disorders* were excluded.

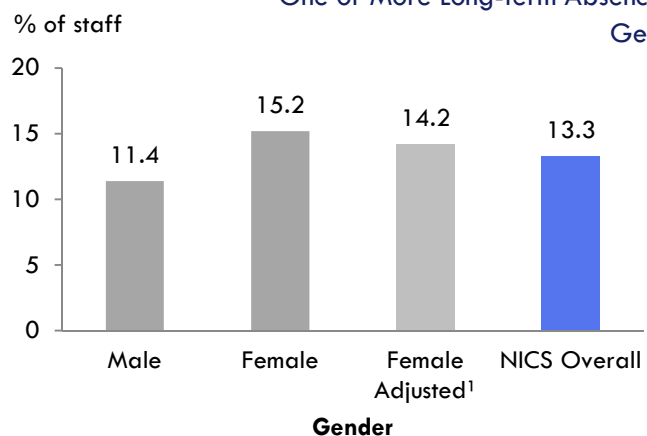
On the other hand, the average duration of their long-term absences (60.7 days) was shorter than those of males (65.6 days).

For further information, see Table 8.3 in Appendix 8.

**Figure 19**

One or More Long-term Absence by Gender

Gender

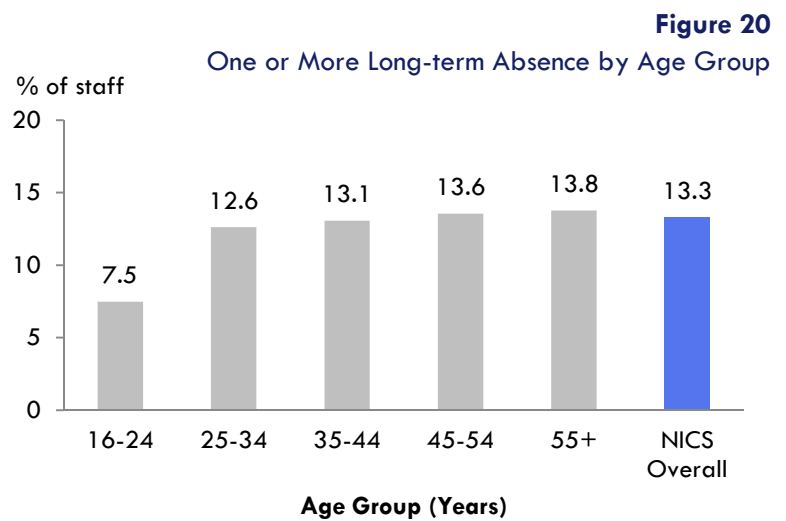


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<sup>1</sup> Excludes absences due to Pregnancy Related Disorders.

#### 4.4 Age Group

Aside from a considerably lower incidence of long-term absence among staff aged 16-24 (7.5%) and a higher incidence among staff aged 55+ there was no obvious absence trend by age group. However, the average duration of the long-term absences did increase with age group (see Table 8.4 in Appendix 8).



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#### 4.5 Reason for Long-term Absence

*Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* accounted for the largest proportion of long-term absences in terms of both the spells (43.3%) and the working days lost (44.1%).

The second most significant reason was *Injury, Fracture*, which accounted for 8.7% of the long-term working days lost and 9.1% of the long-term absence spells.

**Table 7**

Reason for Long-term Absence<sup>1,2</sup> (% of Long-term Working Days Lost and Long-term Spells)

	% of Long-term Working Days Lost	% of Long-term Spells
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	44.1	43.3
Injury, Fracture	8.7	9.1
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	6.3	4.1
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	5.7	4.7
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	5.3	5.3
Back Problems	5.0	5.0
Gastrointestinal Problems	4.5	5.1
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	4.5	5.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	3.2	3.8
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	3.1	3.3
Chest and Respiratory Problems	1.9	2.6
Nervous System Disorders	1.4	1.1
Other	5.2	6.1
No Reason Specified	1.1	1.3
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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<sup>1</sup> The category 'Other' contains any absence with a reason that accounted for less than 1% of the long-term working days lost.

<sup>2</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any long-term absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

## 4.6 Long-term Frequency<sup>1</sup>

DoJ had the highest frequency of long-term absences in 2019/2020 at 18.0%, which was an increase on the previous year's figure of 16.5%. TEO had the lowest frequency at 9.2%.

Three Departments reported a reduction in their long-term frequency rate, with the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) experiencing the greatest improvement - a frequency rate decrease from 15.6% to 13.1%.

**Table 8**

Long-term Frequency by Department (2015/2016 to 2019/2020)<sup>2,3</sup>

Department	Long-term Frequency Rate (%)				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
DAERA	9.9	10.5	11.2	11.2	9.7
DfC	13.8	15.2	15.8	15.8	16.1
DfE	9.1	10.5	9.5	9.7	11.2
DE	9.4	11.2	10.1	9.6	10.0
DoF	9.8	10.4	10.3	10.0	10.3
DoH	7.4	8.0	10.0	8.9	10.3
DfI	11.3	12.0	14.1	13.3	13.9
DoJ	18.1	17.2	16.6	16.5	18.0
TEO	7.5	7.7	6.6	9.3	9.2
PPS	11.5	13.6	12.3	15.6	13.1
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>14.0</b>

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## 4.7 Long-term Duration<sup>4</sup>

In 2019/2020, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) had the longest average duration of long-term absence spells at 70.9 working days while the shortest average was 54.5 working days in the Department for the Economy (DfE). Five Departments showed an increase in average duration compared with 2018/2019; with DfC, DfE, DfI, TEO and PPS reporting a decrease.

The most notable increase was in the Department of Health (DoH), where the average duration rose by 13.8 days to 67.2 days. Overall the long-term duration of absence spells in the NICS decreased by 0.3 of a day.

**Table 9**

Long-term Duration by Department (2015/2016 to 2019/2020)<sup>2,3</sup>

Department	Long-term Duration (working days)				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
DAERA	57.2	62.4	61.2	64.3	67.1
DfC	57.0	62.0	61.4	62.1	59.6
DfE	62.5	61.2	57.4	59.9	54.5
DE	54.8	64.4	58.4	58.2	61.6
DoF	58.1	55.2	61.6	60.6	63.9
DoH	54.6	63.4	57.3	53.4	67.2
DfI	66.4	66.5	64.6	71.1	70.9
DoJ	65.7	66.3	63.3	61.9	62.7
TEO	50.4	56.0	61.6	73.5	55.0
PPS	57.9	56.4	58.6	60.7	60.1
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>60.2</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>62.0</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>62.8</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Frequency Rate is the average number of long-term spells per employee, expressed as a percentage.

<sup>2</sup> The figures shown for 2015/2016 represent a best estimate of what the figures would have been, had the new NICS structures been implemented for the entire year. For more information on the restructuring, see Appendix 1 and Appendix 12.

<sup>3</sup> Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this report, the duration of absence relates only to days lost in the specific financial year.



# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Data Quality

**Relevance:** *The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content.*

This report covers sickness absences that were recorded on HRConnect (the main HR system used by the NICS) for industrial and non-industrial staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The report also includes sickness absence information for staff in the Department of Justice that were not held on HRConnect, namely: the Northern Ireland Prison Service (data taken from their COMPASS system). Data prior to 2016/2017 for Youth Justice Agency staff were taken from their Simply Personnel system.

Absence information is presented by Department, grade level, gender, age group, length of service and reason for absence. Some comparisons with figures for the previous four financial years were also included.

**Accuracy and Reliability:** *The proximity between an estimated result and the unknown true value.*

Absences that were entered, or closed, on the HR systems retrospectively may be missed if the data were downloaded before this happened. To minimise the impact of this the data for all staff held on HRConnect and COMPASS were extracted three to five weeks after the end of the financial year reporting period; this allowed for the updating of absence records and personnel moves. Absence records from the Simply Personnel system were extracted on a monthly basis a week after the end of each month of the financial year.

Any information provided in this report relating to lost production is calculated, where possible, on the basis of each individual's actual salary and the associated employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions.

There is no means of verifying if line managers have entered absences incorrectly, or not at all. Misdiagnosis of symptoms may lead to some self-certified absences being recorded under the wrong reasons. However, Departments regularly remind line managers and staff concerning their roles and responsibilities which are also detailed in Personal Performance Agreements. HRConnect also contains guidance in this regard.

Users should note that some figures may not add to the totals due to rounding.

**Timeliness and Punctuality:** *Timeliness refers to the time gap between publication and the reference period. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates.*

The annual datasets cover the financial year from 1st April to 31st March. The processes used in producing this report are continually being streamlined while at the same time maintaining or improving the accuracy of the data.

Report Year	Date Published	Report Year	Date Published	Report Year	Date Published
2019/2020	25/06/2020	2015/2016	22/09/2016	2011/2012	29/11/2012
2018/2019	20/06/2019	2014/2015	10/09/2015	2010/2011	02/12/2011
2017/2018	26/09/2018	2013/2014	16/10/2014		
2016/2017	20/09/2017	2012/2013	30/10/2013		

The reports for 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 were both delayed beyond October for reasons as detailed in their respective Data Quality sections.

**Accessibility and Clarity:** *Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.*

No issues relating to accessibility or clarity were received during internal user consultations held in June and August 2018, nor in a wider customer survey in March 2018, the results of which can be found at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/official-statistics/hrcs-customer-survey-report>. The report contains contact details for further information and is available to download through the NISRA, DoF and gov.uk websites along with the reports from previous years. In 2013 the report was scrutinised as part of an internal NISRA peer review process, with generally very positive feedback. The data presented in the report are also available in OpenDocument Spreadsheet (ODS) format through links below each table or chart.



## Appendix 1: Data Quality

**Coherence and Comparability:** *Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but refer to the same topic, are similar. Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.*

Analyses prior to 2008/2009 were based on data extracted from HRMS (the previous HR system used by the NICS). Sickness absence information was entered onto this system by Departmental HR staff based on manually completed weekly sick returns. Under the new system it is the responsibility of line managers to record sickness absence information on HRConnect. This change in recording practices coincided with an increase in the proportion of staff with no absences and should be taken into consideration when analysing historical trends.

In December 2016, HR information, including historic sickness absence information, relating to staff in the Youth Justice Agency was moved from their Simply Personnel system onto HRConnect (the main HR system used by the NICS). This should improve the data's comparability further, from 2016/2017 onwards. Similarly, Non-Prison Grade staff in the Northern Ireland Prison Service have moved their HR information from the COMPASS system onto HRConnect from 1st April 2017.

The HRConnect, Simply Personnel and COMPASS databases use similar definitions and methodology to record sickness absence. As part of the data verification process the variables in the datasets are checked to ensure that they are comparable prior to the datasets being merged into one overall financial year file.

On the 9th May 2016 new Departmental structures came into effect within the NICS, with the number of Ministerial Departments being reduced from twelve to nine [Note: The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) is a Non-Ministerial Department], and various functional areas being transferred to accommodate this (see Appendix 12 for an overview of the changes).

For the comparative 2016/2017 Departmental analyses in this report, data for the period 1st April 2016 to 8th May 2016 have been recoded to best reflect the Departmental structures that came into effect on the 9th May 2016. In addition, any Departmental analyses presented for 2015/2016 have also been reworked to represent a best estimate of the position as if the restructuring had actually taken effect from 1st April 2015. Given staff moves/transfers and the normal ongoing restructuring that occurs within Departments it has not, however, been practical to attempt to estimate historical Departmental figures, based on the new NICS structure, prior to 2015/2016.

Between September 2015 and May 2016 almost 3,000 full-time and part-time staff left the NICS on a Voluntary Exit Scheme leading to some 2,100 less staff years of work being available in 2016/2017 than in 2015/2016.

HRCS became aware that certification data was being incorrectly recorded on HRConnect by a relatively small number of NICS line managers or staff. This meant that the certification data for around 2% of all sickness absence spells were mistakenly being reported as uncertified or missing. Through the use of related medical certificate data, also held on HRConnect, it has been possible for 2017/2018 to improve the quality of the reported data and correctly identify these spells as being certified. This process has been retrospectively applied to NICS sickness absence data for 2015/2016 onwards and headline figures are presented in the Key Facts section of this report.

The recording of the reason for absence uses the Sickness Absence Recording Tool (SART) - details of which can be found at <http://www.iom-world.org/sicknessabsence/index.htm>. These were developed by the Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM) for the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Where practical, the Cabinet Office guidelines on the calculation of sickness absence are followed. The headline sickness absence figures can be compared to the GB Civil Service (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-sickness-absence>). However, in-depth comparisons cannot be made as they do not publish figures beyond their headline rate. The headline figures would achieve a grade D on the 4 Nations Comparability Scale (Comparing Official Statistics Across the UK) given that they are produced from separate sources of data but the methods and standards are broadly comparable.

In Scotland the sickness absence statistics for the Scottish Government workforce are reported quarterly (on a rolling 12-month basis) at <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/workforce-information/>, along with explanatory notes. They are produced on a "per staff year" basis. The Welsh Government includes headline sickness absence figures in their annual Consolidated Accounts, available at <https://gov.wales/about/civilservice/how-we-work/facts-figures/ourfinance/welsh-government-consolidated-accounts/?lang=en>. They are produced on a "per staff year" basis also. In the Republic of Ireland (RoI), sick leave statistics for the Public Service are published annually at <https://hr.per.gov.ie/sick-leave/>. These are on a "per full-time equivalent" basis.

## Appendix 1: Data Quality

Care should also be taken when making comparisons with the sickness absence reports produced by CIPD or CBI, which are often quoted in the press. These are based on survey returns which can be affected by response bias. For example, firms with solid methods of data collection and that have 'good' figures to report may be the ones most likely to send in their figures. These organisations also report on a "per person" method while the NICS reports on a 'per Staff Year' basis, as per Cabinet Office guidelines, which methodologically tends to return a higher figure. In particular, using the 'per person' method can markedly underreport the absence levels of organisations with a high proportion of part-time staff and/or high levels of staff turnover.

The "per Staff Year" method takes account of the hours a member of staff actually works whereas the "per person" method uses the number of staff employed but disregards their working patterns. The Staff Year value is a better reflection of the real working time available because it takes into consideration both the contracted hours worked and the proportion of the year for which staff were employed. This enables more meaningful comparisons to be made with external organisations and between/within Departments.

Typically the number of Staff Years is less than the headcount of staff and therefore an organisation's Working Days Lost per Staff Year figure will tend to be higher than their Working Days Lost per Person figure. The magnitude of this difference will depend on the proportion of part-time staff and the level of staff turnover in the organisation. For example, in the GB Civil Service the difference has been estimated to be about one day.

**Output Quality Trade-offs:** *Trade-offs are the extent to which different aspects of quality are balanced against each other.*

No trade-offs applied.

**Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions:** *The processes for finding out about users and uses and their views on the statistical products.*

Internal user consultations were undertaken in June and August 2018, and a wider customer survey carried out in March 2018, the results of which can be found at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/official-statistics/hrcs-customer-survey-report>. An internal peer review in 2013 also provided positive feedback on the annual publication.

**Performance, Costs and Respondent Burden:** *The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical product.*

There is no respondent burden since the data are held on administrative systems and extracted using an automated process. The annual operational cost (staff time) of producing the report is approximately £24,000.

**Confidentiality, Transparency and Security:** *The procedures and policy used to ensure sound confidentiality, security and transparent practice.*

All staff involved are trained on the protocols for protecting and maintaining the confidentiality of the data. NISRA follows the 'National Statistician's Guidance: Confidentiality of Official Statistics' in the collection and dissemination of this report. The guidance can be found at: <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/national-statisticians-guidance-confidentiality-of-official-statistics/>

Data are held on a network that is only accessible to the few statisticians who need access. Printouts containing individual records or small cell sizes are locked away and shredded as soon as possible.

Standard disclosure control methodology is applied to the data. This ensures that information attributable to an individual is not identifiable in any published outputs and that the outputs are only seen by authorised staff prior to their publication. Suppression is applied where the number of individuals in a cell is less than three. Suppression is also applied, where necessary, to the next lowest valued cell in order that identification by subtraction is not possible.

The pre-release access list for the report is reviewed on an annual basis. The named individuals are checked to ensure that they are the correct contact and that they are available on the day before the release of the report (if they are not then they can nominate a deputy). A guidance document is also sent to those on the revised list explaining to them their obligations about data disclosure prior to the publication of the report.

## Appendix 2: Calculations

Absence levels are presented in a number of ways throughout the report and are defined as follows:

$$\text{\% of Available Working Days Lost} = \frac{\text{Number of Working Days Lost}}{\text{Number of Available Working Days}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Working Days Lost per Staff Year} = \frac{\text{Number of Working Days Lost}}{\text{Number of Staff Years}}$$

$$\text{Spells per Staff Year} = \frac{\text{Number of Absence Spells}}{\text{Number of Staff Years}}$$

The "Working days lost per staff year" approach was recommended by the Cabinet Office in the review *"Managing Attendance in the Public Sector (1998)"*. This approach replaced 'working days lost per person' which does not always permit valid comparisons to be made between or within organisations that differ in their proportions of part-time staff and/or their levels of staff turnover. In particular, it can misrepresent the absence rate in organisations that have a high proportion of part-time staff and/or high levels of staff turnover. For the majority of people, a staff year is approximately **220** working days, but clearly this depends on date of entry and/or date of leaving, and annual leave entitlement which varies by grade, length of service, and work pattern. For each individual a 'staff year' was therefore calculated taking all of these factors into account. The following simple example highlights the rationale for the methodology used by the Cabinet Office.

### Example

- A. Worked Full-time all year (hence 1 staff year), and
- B. Worked Full-time for ½ year (hence ½ staff year)

If **A** was absent for 20 working days and **B** was absent for 10 working days, then the number of working days lost per staff year are calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total Number of working days lost} &= 30 \\ \text{Total Number of Staff Years} &= 1 + 0.5 = 1.5 \\ \text{Working Days Lost per Staff Year} &= \frac{30}{1.5} = 20 \end{aligned}$$

According to the other approach, the number of days lost per person would be:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total Number of working days lost} &= 30 \\ \text{Total Number of People} &= 2 \\ \text{Working Days Lost per Person} &= \frac{30}{2} = 15 \end{aligned}$$

which overlooks the fact that one of the staff was only employed for six months.



## Appendix 3: Tables Relating to Chapter 1

### Working Days Lost through Sickness Absence

[Download Appendix 3 data](#)

Table 3.1: Department by Grade Level<sup>1</sup>

When assessing the variation in days lost per staff year in the table below it should be noted that the number of staff involved can be relatively small. Even a small number of long-term absences can therefore strongly influence the overall level of absence in these groupings.

Department	Working Days Lost per Staff Year								
	G7+	DP	SO	EOI	EOII	AO	AA	Industrial	Prison Grade
DAERA	5.1	7.2	10.3	9.2	9.6	17.0	25.2	9.1	n/a
DfC	6.7	8.1	9.7	11.7	15.2	18.6	27.3	15.9	n/a
DfE	4.0	6.8	10.8	11.3	15.0	13.3	17.5	n/a	n/a
DE	7.0	11.1	8.0	5.8	12.5	14.4	6.9	n/a	n/a
DoF	8.1	8.6	10.8	7.9	12.1	14.8	13.6	5.6	n/a
DoH	2.2	10.1	13.8	14.9	20.7	8.0	30.6	n/a	n/a
DfI	6.2	6.0	10.2	10.9	14.5	14.7	16.1	20.1	n/a
DoJ	3.9	9.4	8.7	13.1	12.3	16.4	17.8	9.4	20.1
TEO	6.6	8.4	8.4	7.6	13.7	11.9	26.1	n/a	n/a
PPS	7.3	7.4	12.3	8.1	10.7	22.7	8.2	n/a	n/a
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>20.1</b>

Table 3.2: Absence Levels by Occupational Grouping<sup>2</sup>

Occupational Groupings (with more than 200 staff)

Occupational Grouping	Working Days Lost per Staff Year				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Prison Grade	23.8	19.6	20.9	19.3	20.1
Industrial	16.2	17.0	18.8	17.1	17.1
Support Grade Staff	11.9	13.2	10.5	13.1	16.9
Planning	6.9	4.7	7.7	9.2	15.0
General Service	11.9	13.0	13.6	13.0	13.6
Driving Examiner	11.8	11.4	12.6	16.9	13.6
Drawing Officer	7.8	8.3	17.4	12.4	10.7
Secretarial/Typing	12.2	13.3	16.0	14.9	10.7
Other	7.4	9.2	8.7	8.9	9.1
Statistician	5.8	7.3	5.6	7.3	8.4
Scientific Officer	7.4	8.1	9.3	6.7	8.0
Civil Eng (inc assistants)	5.2	6.1	5.0	6.2	7.6
Agricultural Inspector	6.6	8.7	7.2	10.1	7.4
Computing	5.0	6.4	7.7	6.7	6.4
Casual	4.1	2.6	7.2	21.6	2.3

<sup>1</sup> n/a: No cases recorded.

<sup>2</sup> Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.

## Appendix 3: Tables Relating to Chapter 1

Table 3.3: Certification by Department<sup>1</sup>

Department	Working Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
DAERA	0.9	8.8	9.9	0.4	4.0	4.5
DfC	1.8	12.9	15.1	0.8	5.8	6.8
DfE	1.3	8.8	10.2	0.6	4.0	4.6
DE	1.1	8.4	9.9	0.5	3.8	4.5
DoF	1.4	9.1	10.7	0.6	4.1	4.8
DoH	1.0	9.7	10.9	0.4	4.4	4.9
DfI	1.1	12.1	13.4	0.5	5.5	6.0
DoJ	1.0	14.0	15.5	0.5	6.4	7.1
TEO	1.0	8.1	9.3	0.4	3.7	4.2
PPS	1.1	11.3	12.6	0.5	5.1	5.7
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>

Table 3.4: Certification by Grade Level<sup>1</sup>

Grade Level	Working Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
G5+	0.4	4.1	4.6	0.2	1.8	2.1
G6	0.8	7.3	8.3	0.3	3.3	3.7
G7	0.7	5.0	5.8	0.3	2.3	2.6
DP	1.0	6.9	8.0	0.4	3.1	3.6
S0	1.2	8.8	10.2	0.5	4.0	4.6
EOI	1.3	9.0	10.6	0.6	4.1	4.8
EOII	1.7	12.0	14.0	0.7	5.4	6.3
A0	1.8	14.8	16.9	0.8	6.7	7.6
AA	1.3	18.0	19.8	0.6	8.1	8.9
Industrial	0.9	16.1	17.1	0.4	7.2	7.7
Prison Grade	0.8	18.4	20.1	0.3	8.6	9.4
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>

Table 3.5: Certification by Gender<sup>1</sup>

Gender	Working Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
Male	1.2	9.4	11.0	0.6	4.3	5.0
Female	1.4	13.4	15.1	0.6	6.1	6.9
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>

Table 3.6: Certification by Age Group<sup>1</sup>

Age Group	Working Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
16-24	1.3	5.4	7.3	0.6	2.4	3.3
25-34	1.8	10.5	12.8	0.8	4.7	5.8
35-44	1.6	10.4	12.3	0.7	4.7	5.6
45-54	1.1	11.1	12.4	0.5	5.0	5.6
55+	1.0	13.2	14.5	0.5	6.0	6.6
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>

## Appendix 3: Tables Relating to Chapter 1

Table 3.7: % of Available Working Days Lost by Department<sup>1,2</sup>

Department	% of Available Working Days Lost				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
DAERA	4.1	4.3	4.8	4.7	4.5
DfC	6.0	6.6	7.0	6.8	6.8
DfE	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.6
DE	4.0	5.1	4.5	4.2	4.5
DoF	4.5	4.5	5.0	4.7	4.8
DoH	3.5	4.0	4.4	3.8	4.9
DfI	4.9	5.0	5.8	5.8	6.0
DoJ	7.3	6.9	6.9	6.4	7.1
TEO	3.3	3.6	3.5	4.9	4.2
PPS	5.1	5.4	5.4	6.5	5.7
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>

Table 3.8: % of Available Working Days Lost by Grade Level<sup>2</sup>

Grade Level	% of Available Working Days Lost				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
G5+	1.2	1.8	1.3	1.8	2.1
G6	2.0	2.1	2.6	4.2	3.7
G7	2.8	2.7	3.2	2.7	2.6
DP	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.3	3.6
S0	3.5	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.6
E0I	4.6	4.9	4.4	4.6	4.8
E0II	5.0	5.7	6.2	5.9	6.3
A0	6.3	6.8	7.7	7.9	7.6
AA	7.4	8.2	8.5	7.5	8.9
Industrial	7.4	7.6	8.6	7.8	7.7
Prison Grade	11.0	8.9	9.6	9.0	9.4
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>

Table 3.9: % of Available Working Days Lost by Gender<sup>2</sup>

Gender	% of Available Working Days Lost				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Male	4.6	4.7	5.0	5.0	5.0
Female	6.2	6.6	7.1	6.6	6.9
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>

Table 3.10: % of Available Working Days Lost by Age Group<sup>2</sup>

Age Group	% Available of Working Days Lost				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
16-24	4.6	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.3
25-34	5.9	5.8	5.6	5.7	5.8
35-44	4.9	5.3	5.9	5.4	5.6
45-54	5.3	5.3	5.7	5.6	5.6
55+	5.5	6.4	6.6	6.5	6.6
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> The NICS Departments were restructured from 9th May 2016. All Departmental figures for 2015/2016 represent a best estimate of those year's figures, had the new NICS structure been in place. No comparable figures are available for years prior to 2015/2016. For more information on the restructuring, see Appendix 1 and Appendix 12.

<sup>2</sup> Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.





## Appendix 4: Seasonal Effects on the Onset of Absence

[Download Appendix 4 data](#)

The following tables examine seasonal effects on the onset of sickness absence.

**Table 4.1: Onset of Absence by Month**

Month	% of Spells Starting in Month		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
April	7.4	7.6	<b>7.4</b>
May	6.4	7.5	<b>6.7</b>
June	6.3	6.6	<b>6.3</b>
July	5.3	6.8	<b>5.8</b>
August	5.9	6.5	<b>6.0</b>
September	8.1	7.8	<b>8.0</b>
October	10.6	8.7	<b>9.8</b>
November	12.4	9.4	<b>11.1</b>
December	11.9	7.6	<b>10.1</b>
January	10.4	10.8	<b>10.4</b>
February	7.9	9.8	<b>8.5</b>
March	7.4	11.0	<b>9.9</b>

**Table 4.2: Onset of Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses by Month**

Month	% of Spells Starting in Month
April	7.4
May	7.2
June	7.0
July	6.7
August	6.4
September	7.5
October	9.6
November	9.2
December	7.2
January	10.1
February	9.9
March	11.7

**Table 4.3: Onset of Absence by Weekday**

Weekday	% of Spells Starting on Weekday		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
Sunday	0.2	0.6	<b>0.4</b>
Monday <sup>1</sup>	33.6	34.1	<b>33.6</b>
Tuesday	24.1	20.6	<b>22.4</b>
Wednesday	18.2	17.2	<b>18.1</b>
Thursday	15.0	15.5	<b>15.2</b>
Friday	8.3	10.7	<b>9.4</b>
Saturday	0.5	1.3	<b>0.8</b>

<sup>1</sup> It could be noted that absences that actually started on a Saturday or Sunday, and then continued into the working week, may have been recorded as if they had started on a Monday.



## Appendix 5: Standardised Departmental Absence Levels

[Download Appendix 5 data](#)

The following figures show the extent to which a Department's staffing profile can influence its overall absence level. In Figures 5.1 and 5.2 below, the staffing profile of each Department has been standardised by grade level, gender and age group to that of the NICS as a whole.

It should be noted that in reports prior to 2011/2012, DFP (DoF) was used as the staffing profile against which all other Departments were standardised. However, this is no longer a suitable staffing profile to use as there are no Prison Grade staff in DFP (DoF). A similar approach to that used by the GB Civil Service has therefore been adopted for this illustration, and the staffing profile of the NICS as a whole is being used.

Figure 5.1: Working Days Lost per Staff Year - Observed and Standardised

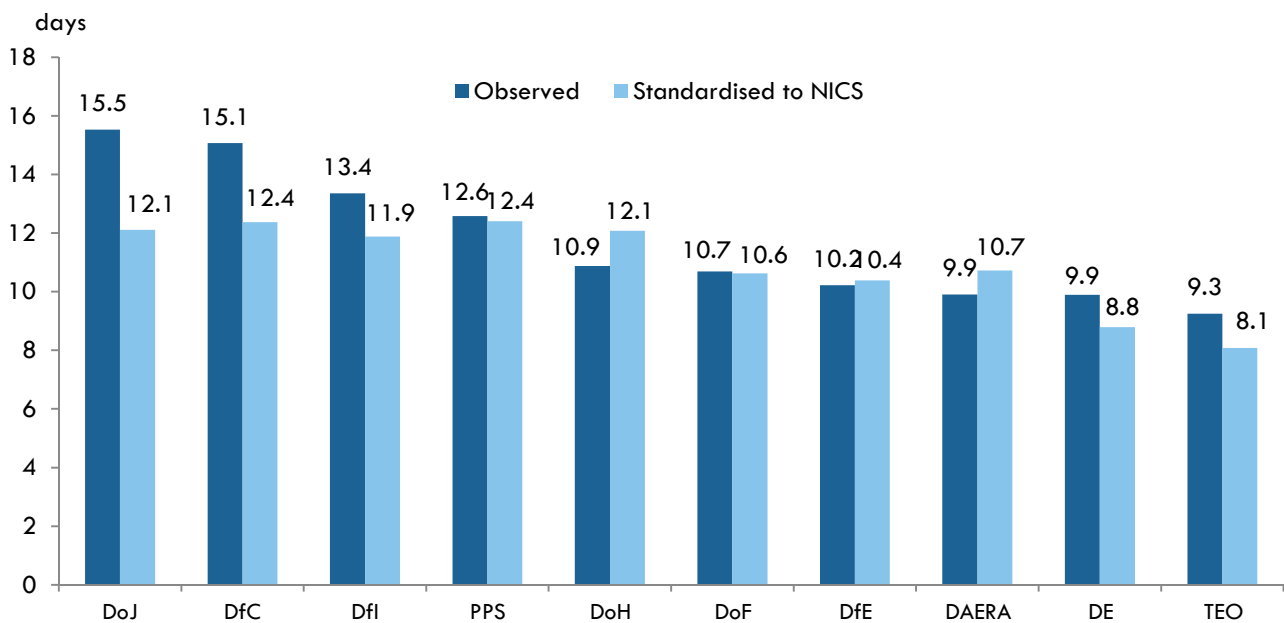
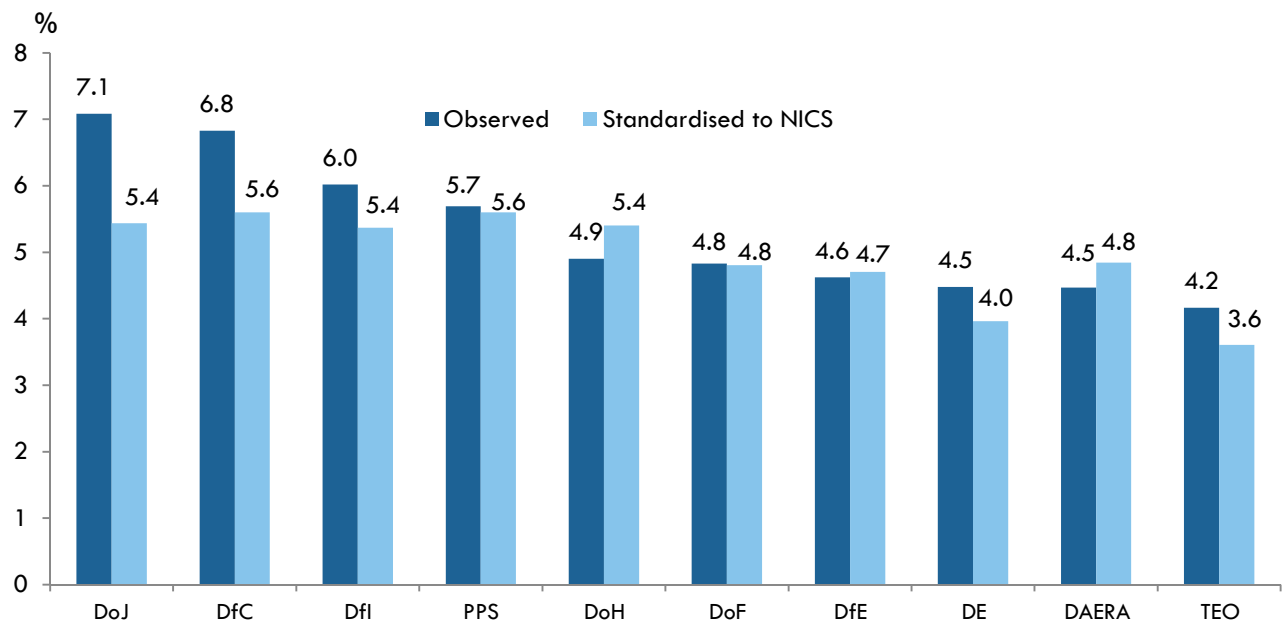


Figure 5.2: % of Available Working Days Lost - Observed and Standardised





## Appendix 6: Tables Relating to Chapter 2

### Spells of Sickness Absence

[Download Appendix 6 data](#)

Table 6.1: Average Duration and Number of Spells by Certification and Department

Department	Self-Certified Absences		Certified Absences		Overall	
	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration
DAERA	0.3	2.9	0.2	39.0	0.6	17.1
DfC	0.6	3.0	0.3	38.9	1.0	14.5
DfE	0.4	2.8	0.3	33.2	0.8	13.6
DE	0.4	3.0	0.2	37.2	0.7	14.3
DoF	0.5	2.8	0.2	37.8	0.8	13.5
DoH	0.4	2.8	0.2	40.8	0.6	17.1
DfI	0.3	3.4	0.3	45.6	0.6	21.9
DoJ	0.3	3.1	0.3	43.9	0.8	20.3
TEO	0.4	2.8	0.3	32.1	0.6	14.6
PPS	0.4	2.9	0.3	34.8	0.7	16.9
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>16.3</b>

Table 6.2: Average Duration and Number of Spells by Certification and Grade Level

Grade Level	Self-Certified Absences		Certified Absences		Overall	
	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration
G5+	0.1	2.9	0.1	47.0	0.2	18.5
G6	0.3	2.8	0.2	46.9	0.5	18.2
G7	0.2	2.8	0.1	34.7	0.4	13.8
DP	0.3	2.8	0.2	36.5	0.6	14.1
S0	0.4	2.9	0.2	39.5	0.7	15.1
E0I	0.4	3.0	0.2	36.3	0.7	14.3
E0II	0.6	3.0	0.3	37.9	1.0	14.4
A0	0.6	3.0	0.4	38.2	1.1	15.9
AA	0.5	2.7	0.4	46.4	1.0	20.8
Industrial	0.3	3.5	0.3	48.5	0.6	27.7
Prison Grade	0.2	3.8	0.4	49.3	0.8	26.1
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>16.3</b>

Table 6.3: Average Duration and Number of Spells by Certification and Gender

Gender	Self-Certified Absences		Certified Absences		Overall	
	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration
Male	0.4	3.1	0.2	42.6	0.7	16.2
Female	0.5	2.8	0.4	38.2	0.9	16.3
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>16.3</b>

## Appendix 6: Tables Relating to Chapter 2

Table 6.4: Average Duration and Number of Spells by Certification and Age Group

Age Group	Self-Certified Absences		Certified Absences		Overall	
	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)
16-24	0.5	2.4	0.2	30.0	0.9	7.9
25-34	0.6	2.9	0.3	34.5	1.0	12.2
35-44	0.5	3.0	0.3	38.0	0.9	14.0
45-54	0.4	3.1	0.3	41.9	0.7	18.1
55+	0.4	3.0	0.3	42.6	0.7	20.2
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>16.3</b>

Table 6.5: Number of Absence Spells - % of Staff

Number of Absence Spells	% of Staff				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
0	50.0	49.5	46.6	51.3	50.7
1	33.3	33.9	35.4	33.4	33.9
2	12.4	12.2	13.4	11.4	11.3
3	3.2	3.2	3.5	2.9	3.1
4	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6
5	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1
6+	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2

Table 6.6: Duration of Absence Spells - % of Spells

Duration of Absence (Working Days)	% of Spells				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
1-2	29.8	29.5	27.7	28.0	26.6
3-5	38.3	37.6	38.9	37.3	37.4
6-10	7.8	7.5	8.0	7.3	8.2
11-20	7.1	7.1	7.5	7.6	7.9
More than 20	17.1	18.2	17.9	19.8	20.0

Table 6.7: Average Duration of Short-term Absence Spells - Working Days<sup>1,2</sup>

Department	Average Duration (Working Days)				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
DAERA	4.5	4.6	5.2	4.8	5.0
DfC	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.4
DfE	4.2	4.2	4.5	4.3	4.6
DE	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.7
DoF	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4
DoH	4.0	4.1	3.8	4.2	4.9
Dfi	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.6
DoJ	4.9	4.7	4.9	5.0	5.0
TEO	4.2	4.0	4.6	4.2	5.0
PPS	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.9	5.5
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.7</b>

<sup>1</sup> The NICS Departments were restructured from 9th May 2016. All Departmental figures for 2015/2016 represent a best estimate of those year's figures, had the new NICS structure been in place. No comparable figures are available for years prior to 2015/2016. For more information on the restructuring, see Appendix 1 and Appendix 12.

<sup>2</sup> Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.

## Appendix 6: Tables Relating to Chapter 2

Table 6.8: Distribution of Working Days Lost

Cumulative Number of Working Days Lost	% of Staff				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
0	50.0	49.5	46.6	51.3	50.7
1-5	24.0	23.7	24.6	22.5	22.3
6-10	8.1	8.3	8.9	7.4	7.5
11-15	2.9	2.8	3.4	2.8	3.2
16-20	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.9	2.1
More than 20	12.9	13.7	14.4	14.1	14.3

Table 6.9: Duration of Absence in Working Days Lost

Duration of Absence (Working Days)	% of Working Days Lost				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
1-2	3.4	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.6
3-5	10.6	9.7	10.2	8.9	9.0
6-10	4.5	4.0	4.5	3.7	4.1
11-20	7.7	7.1	7.6	7.1	7.3
More than 20	73.8	76.1	74.7	77.6	77.0

Table 6.10: Number of Absence Spells by Department <sup>1,2</sup>

Department	% of Staff						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
DAERA	61.5	29.6	6.9	1.5	0.3	-	-
DfC	42.6	36.8	14.4	4.6	0.9	0.2	0.4
DfE	55.8	31.4	9.4	2.9	0.2	-	-
DE	54.1	34.4	10.0	1.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
DoF	52.9	32.0	11.6	2.7	0.5	0.1	0.1
DoH	60.1	30.0	7.9	1.4	-	-	n/a
DfI	58.1	31.8	8.0	1.5	0.3	-	-
DoJ	51.9	33.4	10.6	3.2	0.6	-	-
TEO	61.8	30.1	6.5	1.6	n/a	n/a	n/a
PPS	52.7	34.2	11.3	-	-	n/a	n/a
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>50.7</b>	<b>33.9</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.2</b>

<sup>1</sup> Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-).<sup>2</sup> n/a: No cases recorded.





## Appendix 7: Tables Relating to Chapter 3

### Reason for Sickness Absence

[Download Appendix 7 data](#)

Table 7.1: Certification by Reason for Absence<sup>1</sup>

Reason for Absence	% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	0.0	2.2	2.2
Asthma	0.0	0.0	0.0
Back Problems	0.0	0.3	0.3
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.0	0.3	0.3
Blood Disorders	0.0	0.0	0.0
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.0	0.0	0.0
Chest and Respiratory Problems	0.1	0.1	0.2
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	0.2	0.1	0.3
Dental and Oral Problems	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ear, Nose, Throat	0.0	0.1	0.1
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.0	0.0	0.0
Eye Problems	0.0	0.0	0.1
Gastrointestinal Problems	0.1	0.2	0.4
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.0	0.2	0.2
Headache/Migraine	0.0	0.0	0.1
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	0.0	0.3	0.3
Infectious Diseases	0.0	0.0	0.0
Injury, Fracture	0.0	0.4	0.5
Nervous System Disorders	0.0	0.1	0.1
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	0.0	0.2	0.3
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	0.0	0.3	0.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	0.0	0.2	0.2
Skin Disorders	0.0	0.0	0.0
Substance Abuse	0.0	0.0	0.0
No Reason Specified	0.0	0.1	0.1
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

## Appendix 7: Tables Relating to Chapter 3

Table 7.2: % of Absence Spells by Reason for Absence<sup>1</sup>

Reason for Absence	% of Spells				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	11.5	12.5	12.5	14.4	14.7
Asthma	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Back Problems	5.4	5.1	4.7	5.5	4.7
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.2	1.1
Blood Disorders	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Chest and Respiratory Problems	5.3	5.2	5.5	5.3	7.6
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	22.0	20.3	25.7	19.1	19.8
Dental and Oral Problems	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.9
Ear, Nose, Throat	5.1	4.6	4.1	4.7	4.6
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4
Eye Problems	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9
Gastrointestinal Problems	18.5	20.8	18.3	19.3	18.4
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.7	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.4
Headache/Migraine	2.9	2.6	2.5	2.8	2.6
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.8
Infectious Diseases	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7
Injury, Fracture	5.2	5.0	4.9	5.2	4.8
Nervous System Disorders	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	2.4	2.7	2.5	2.9	3.0
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	3.2	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.4
Pregnancy Related Disorders	7.5	7.0	5.8	5.8	5.0
Skin Disorders	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7
Substance Abuse	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
No Reason Specified	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.3	1.3
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

## Appendix 7: Tables Relating to Chapter 3

Table 7.3: % of Working Days Lost by Reason for Absence<sup>1</sup>

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	33.9	35.2	36.4	38.7	37.4
Asthma	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Back Problems	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.7	5.1
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	4.0	4.3	3.5	5.2	5.0
Blood Disorders	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.5
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
Chest and Respiratory Problems	3.7	3.5	4.0	3.3	3.9
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	5.8	5.1	7.1	4.5	4.4
Dental and Oral Problems	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Ear, Nose, Throat	2.6	2.2	1.7	2.0	1.8
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.6
Eye Problems	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9
Gastrointestinal Problems	7.0	7.1	6.7	6.2	6.7
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.6	3.0
Headache/Migraine	0.9	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.9
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	4.2	4.2	3.7	4.0	4.7
Infectious Diseases	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7
Injury, Fracture	9.5	8.7	8.1	8.4	8.0
Nervous System Disorders	1.0	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.2
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	3.5	3.7	3.8	4.4	4.3
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	4.7	5.5	4.9	4.1	4.9
Pregnancy Related Disorders	6.2	5.3	4.5	4.3	3.8
Skin Disorders	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.5
Substance Abuse	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2
No Reason Specified	1.2	1.2	1.8	0.9	1.2
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

## Appendix 7: Tables Relating to Chapter 3

Table 7.4: Breakdown of Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses

Sub-reason for Absence	% of Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses Working Days Lost				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Anxiety	16.1	14.1	15.2	14.0	15.2
Depression - Not Pregnancy Related	16.9	13.8	12.1	9.6	9.5
Stress - Not Work Related	28.0	30.7	31.8	36.5	34.0
Stress - Work Related	32.2	33.3	34.2	31.9	34.2
Other <sup>1</sup>	2.4	2.4	2.5	3.5	2.5
No Reason Specified <sup>2</sup>	4.5	5.6	4.3	4.5	4.7
<b>Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 7.5: Breakdown of Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses

Sub-reason for Absence	% of Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses Spells				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Anxiety	17.1	16.5	17.1	16.4	16.8
Depression - Not Pregnancy Related	13.2	11.7	10.1	9.4	8.3
Stress - Not Work Related	36.1	36.4	38.8	40.5	40.7
Stress - Work Related	25.3	26.1	26.0	25.1	25.5
Other <sup>1</sup>	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.1
No Reason Specified <sup>2</sup>	5.3	6.3	5.0	5.2	5.5
<b>Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> The category 'Other' contains any absence with a sub-reason that is not shown elsewhere in the analysis.

<sup>2</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

## Appendix 7: Tables Relating to Chapter 3

Table 7.6: Average Duration by Reason for Absence<sup>1,2</sup>

Reason for Absence	Average Duration (Working Days)				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	41.0	42.3	43.1	43.2	41.3
Asthma	6.1	7.8	9.5	9.6	9.6
Back Problems	13.9	16.4	17.3	16.7	17.6
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	68.9	72.0	58.7	72.3	73.4
Blood Disorders	18.3	26.5	31.6	29.6	23.2
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	7.8	9.2	8.2	7.4	4.7
Chest and Respiratory Problems	9.6	10.1	10.8	9.9	8.5
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	3.7	3.7	4.1	3.8	3.6
Dental and Oral Problems	4.5	4.8	4.4	5.0	4.1
Ear, Nose, Throat	7.2	7.0	6.2	6.8	6.4
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	20.5	21.2	21.2	21.8	25.4
Eye Problems	12.6	15.9	16.7	13.3	15.7
Gastrointestinal Problems	5.3	5.1	5.4	5.2	5.9
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	14.1	17.0	17.8	16.1	20.4
Headache/Migraine	4.5	4.2	4.2	6.0	5.5
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	39.5	41.2	38.4	38.0	43.5
Infectious Diseases	9.4	11.1	12.6	12.7	15.9
Injury, Fracture	25.7	26.1	24.2	25.8	26.9
Nervous System Disorders	29.7	30.3	32.5	25.9	37.2
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	20.7	20.8	22.4	24.7	23.1
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	20.4	25.8	25.1	21.4	23.8
Pregnancy Related Disorders	11.5	11.4	11.5	11.7	12.3
Skin Disorders	12.9	13.9	12.5	14.2	12.8
Substance Abuse	46.9	28.1	21.5	19.2	36.2
No Reason Specified	13.3	12.6	16.0	11.0	14.6

<sup>1</sup> Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.

<sup>2</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

## Appendix 7: Tables Relating to Chapter 3

Table 7.7: Breakdown of *COVID-19 (Coronavirus)* Sickness by Department

Department	Working Days Lost to COVID-19 per Staff Year	% of Available Working Days Lost to COVID-19	% of Sickness Days Attributable to COVID-19
DAERA	0.09	0.04	0.9
DfC	0.14	0.06	0.9
DfE	0.10	0.05	1.0
DE	0.16	0.07	1.6
DoF	0.07	0.03	0.7
DoH	0.04	0.02	0.4
DfI	0.14	0.06	1.1
DoJ	0.12	0.06	0.8
TEO	0.11	0.05	1.2
PPS	0.07	0.03	0.5
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.9</b>

Table 7.8: Breakdown of *COVID-19 (Coronavirus)* Sickness by Grade Level

Grade Level	Working Days Lost to COVID-19 per Staff Year	% of Available Working Days Lost to COVID-19	% of Sickness Days Attributable to COVID-19
G5+	0.03	0.01	0.6
G6	0.10	0.04	1.1
G7	0.05	0.02	0.9
DP	0.06	0.03	0.8
S0	0.09	0.04	0.9
EOI	0.15	0.07	1.4
EOII	0.16	0.07	1.1
AO	0.14	0.07	0.9
AA	0.05	0.02	0.2
Industrial	0.17	0.07	1.0
Prison Grade	0.05	0.02	0.3
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.9</b>

Table 7.9: Breakdown of *COVID-19 (Coronavirus)* Sickness by Gender

Gender	Working Days Lost to COVID-19 per Staff Year	% of Available Working Days Lost to COVID-19	% of Sickness Days Attributable to COVID-19
Male	0.12	0.05	1.1
Female	0.11	0.05	0.7
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.9</b>

Table 7.10: Breakdown of *COVID-19 (Coronavirus)* Sickness by Age Group

Age Group	Working Days Lost to COVID-19 per Staff Year	% of Available Working Days Lost to COVID-19	% of Sickness Days Attributable to COVID-19
16-24	0.05	0.02	0.7
25-34	0.18	0.08	1.4
35-44	0.12	0.05	0.9
45-54	0.11	0.05	0.9
55+	0.09	0.04	0.6
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.9</b>

## Appendix 8: Tables Relating to Chapter 4

### Long-term Sickness Absence

[Download Appendix 8 data](#)

Table 8.1: Long-term Absence by Department

Department	No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Average Duration (Working Days)	Long-term Absence
			% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence
DAERA	11.3	67.1	76.6
DfC	19.1	59.6	75.6
DfE	13.6	54.5	72.5
DE	11.7	61.6	73.0
DoF	12.2	63.9	72.7
DoH	12.5	67.2	77.2
DfI	15.3	70.9	81.0
DoJ	20.3	62.7	81.9
TEO	12.1	55.0	72.2
PPS	15.5	60.1	74.3
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>77.0</b>

Table 8.2: Long-term Absence by Grade Level

Grade Level	No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Average Duration (Working Days)	Long-term Absence
			% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence
G5+	4.8	75.7	79.2
G6	7.8	82.6	77.9
G7	6.8	61.3	72.5
DP	9.4	62.1	73.1
S0	12.2	62.8	75.5
EOI	13.0	59.0	72.7
EOII	17.5	59.9	74.6
AO	21.6	60.0	76.9
AA	22.2	73.4	82.3
Industrial	19.1	75.3	84.3
Prison Grade	26.2	65.6	85.8
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>77.0</b>

## Appendix 8: Tables Relating to Chapter 4

Table 8.3: Long-term Absence by Gender

Gender	No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Average Duration (Working Days)	Long-term Absence
			% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence
Male	12.8	65.6	76.5
Female	19.3	60.7	77.5
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>77.0</b>

Table 8.4: Long-term Absence by Age Group

Age Group	No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Average Duration (Working Days)	Long-term Absence
			% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence
16-24	11.5	41.3	64.7
25-34	15.9	56.6	69.9
35-44	15.7	58.5	74.2
45-54	15.3	64.1	78.8
55+	17.0	68.7	80.8
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>77.0</b>



## Appendix 8: Tables Relating to Chapter 4

Table 8.5: Long-term Absence by Grade Level<sup>1</sup>

Grade Level	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
G5+	51.6	69.9	54.0	70.5	79.2
G6	62.4	68.2	66.4	84.3	77.9
G7	71.2	73.1	69.3	74.3	72.5
DP	72.1	74.3	67.5	72.1	73.1
S0	68.4	71.7	69.2	75.3	75.5
E0I	73.1	77.2	69.1	74.7	72.7
E0II	69.9	73.1	73.4	75.6	74.6
A0	70.7	74.1	74.5	77.0	76.9
AA	71.8	77.8	78.7	77.1	82.3
Industrial	84.8	85.1	83.7	86.8	84.3
Prison Grade	89.0	86.1	86.9	86.7	85.8
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>73.8</b>	<b>76.1</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>77.6</b>	<b>77.0</b>

Table 8.6: Long-term Absence by Gender<sup>1</sup>

Gender	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Male	74.7	76.1	73.8	78.1	76.5
Female	73.0	76.0	75.4	77.1	77.5
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>73.8</b>	<b>76.1</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>77.6</b>	<b>77.0</b>

Table 8.7: Long-term Absence by Age Group<sup>1</sup>

Age Group	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
16 - 24	70.1	59.2	52.5	62.4	64.7
25 - 34	66.9	68.4	67.6	70.6	69.9
35 - 44	69.6	73.0	72.3	73.6	74.2
45 - 54	77.9	78.7	76.9	79.4	78.8
55+	78.7	81.7	78.6	82.6	80.8
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>73.8</b>	<b>76.1</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>77.6</b>	<b>77.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.

## Appendix 8: Tables Relating to Chapter 4

Table 8.8: Long-term Absence by Reason for Absence<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Reason for Absence	% of Long-term Working Days Lost				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	41.8	42.5	44.8	45.8	44.1
Asthma	-	0.1	0.2	-	-
Back Problems	5.0	5.4	5.6	5.5	5.0
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	5.2	5.5	4.5	6.5	6.3
Blood Disorders	0.4	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.5
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	-	0.1	-	-	n/a
Chest and Respiratory Problems	2.5	2.4	2.9	2.2	1.9
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.3
Dental and Oral Problems	-	0.1	0.1	-	-
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.6	1.2	0.7	1.1	1.0
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.6
Eye Problems	0.7	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.8
Gastrointestinal Problems	4.4	4.1	4.1	3.7	4.5
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.6	3.1
Headache/Migraine	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.6
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	5.2	5.1	4.5	4.7	5.7
Infectious Diseases	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.6
Injury, Fracture	10.8	9.5	8.9	9.0	8.7
Nervous System Disorders	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.4
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	3.7	3.8	4.1	4.6	4.5
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	5.0	6.1	5.5	4.4	5.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	5.6	4.5	3.8	3.6	3.2
Skin Disorders	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4
Substance Abuse	0.4	0.3	-	0.1	0.2
No Reason Specified	1.1	1.1	1.8	0.7	1.1
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

<sup>2</sup> Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-).

<sup>3</sup> Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.

## Appendix 8: Tables Relating to Chapter 4

Table 8.9: % of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence by Department<sup>1,2</sup>

Department	% of Staff with 1 or more Long-term Absence				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
DAERA	9.6	10.2	10.8	10.4	9.4
DfC	13.1	14.3	14.9	15.0	15.2
DfE	8.7	9.9	9.4	9.5	10.7
DE	9.1	10.7	10.1	8.9	9.9
DoF	9.2	10.0	9.8	9.5	9.8
DoH	7.4	8.0	9.6	8.4	9.5
DfI	10.9	11.5	13.3	12.8	13.1
DoJ	17.0	16.3	15.6	15.5	16.8
TEO	7.5	7.4	6.6	8.7	8.9
PPS	10.7	12.4	11.5	14.6	12.5
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>13.3</b>

Table 8.10: % of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence by Grade Level<sup>2</sup>

Grade Level	% of Staff with 1 or more Long-term Absence				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
G5+	2.5	3.7	3.8	2.4	3.9
G6	3.3	4.1	5.2	7.2	5.7
G7	5.3	5.1	6.6	5.2	5.0
DP	6.7	6.9	6.6	6.3	6.6
S0	7.2	7.9	7.9	7.5	8.6
E0I	9.0	10.4	7.9	8.5	9.2
E0II	9.9	11.0	11.7	11.4	12.2
A0	13.5	14.4	15.4	16.0	15.8
AA	14.8	16.6	15.6	11.1	13.9
Industrial	15.2	17.0	18.0	17.6	16.7
Prison Grade	28.2	22.9	23.5	22.4	23.2
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>13.3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The NICS Departments were restructured from 9th May 2016. All Departmental figures for 2015/2016 represent a best estimate of those year's figures, had the new NICS structure been in place. No comparable figures are available for years prior to 2015/2016. For more information on the restructuring, see Appendix 1 and Appendix 12.

<sup>2</sup> Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.

## Appendix 8: Tables Relating to Chapter 4

Table 8.11: % of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence by Gender<sup>1</sup>

Gender	% of Staff with 1 or more Long-term Absence				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Male	10.1	10.8	11.0	11.3	11.4
Female	13.7	14.8	15.5	14.9	15.2
Female Adjusted*	12.0	13.4	14.2	13.8	14.2
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>13.3</b>

Table 8.12: % of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence by Age Group<sup>1</sup>

Age Group	% of Staff with 1 or more Long-term Absence				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
16-24	7.7	4.5	3.9	7.0	7.5
25-34	13.0	12.9	12.4	13.1	12.6
35-44	11.4	12.5	13.0	12.4	13.1
45-54	12.2	12.8	13.4	13.1	13.6
55+	11.3	13.4	14.2	14.1	13.8
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>13.3</b>

<sup>1</sup> Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.

\* Excludes absences due to *Pregnancy Related Disorders*.

## Appendix 9: Contribution to overall Working Days Lost

[Download Appendix 9 data](#)

The tables presented in this Appendix show the main components of absence (Department, grade level, gender, age group, reason and duration) and how these components have contributed to the overall level of absence in the NICS. It also shows how the contribution of these components has changed when compared with the previous year.

This analysis takes account of the absence level of each component and also its size in relation to the NICS. For example, a high absence level for a large group of staff, such as the AO grade level, makes for a larger contribution to the overall NICS absence level than a small group of staff with a higher absence level, such as Prison Grade staff.

**Table 9.1: Contribution of each Department to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year<sup>1</sup>**

Department	Working Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2018/2019	2019/2020	Change
DAERA	1.31	1.34	0.03
DfC	4.74	4.52	-0.22
DfE	0.45	0.50	0.05
DE	0.22	0.24	0.02
DoF	1.54	1.63	0.10
DoH	0.15	0.21	0.06
DfI	1.73	1.82	0.09
DoJ	2.00	2.27	0.27
TEO	0.14	0.12	-0.01
PPS	0.29	0.25	-0.04
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>0.34</b>

**Table 9.2: Contribution of each Grade Level to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year<sup>1</sup>**

Grade Level	Working Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2018/2019	2019/2020	Change
G5+	0.04	0.05	0.01
G6	0.12	0.12	0.00
G7	0.32	0.35	0.03
DP	0.76	0.91	0.15
S0	1.16	1.35	0.19
E0I	1.33	1.44	0.10
E0II	2.28	2.53	0.25
AO	4.33	3.92	-0.41
AA	0.45	0.39	-0.06
Industrials	0.65	0.65	0.01
Prison Grade	1.17	1.25	0.07
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>0.34</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Change figures in this table are calculated from unrounded figures.

## Appendix 9

Table 9.3: Contribution of each Gender to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year<sup>1</sup>

Gender	Working Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2018/2019	2019/2020	Change
Male	5.76	5.76	-0.01
Female	6.84	7.18	0.35
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>0.34</b>

Table 9.4: Contribution of each Age Group to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year<sup>1</sup>

Age Group	Working Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2018/2019	2019/2020	Change
16-24	0.03	0.05	0.02
25-34	1.61	1.44	-0.16
35-44	3.40	3.67	0.28
45-54	4.10	4.05	-0.05
55+	3.46	3.72	0.26
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>0.34</b>

Table 9.5: Contribution of each Reason to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year<sup>1,2</sup>

Reason for Absence	Working Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2018/2019	2019/2020	Change
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	4.87	4.83	-0.04
Asthma	0.02	0.02	0.00
Back Problems	0.71	0.65	-0.06
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.65	0.65	0.00
Blood Disorders	0.09	0.07	-0.02
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.01	0.00	0.00
Chest and Respiratory Problems	0.41	0.51	0.10
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	0.57	0.57	0.00
Dental and Oral Problems	0.03	0.03	0.00
Ear, Nose, Throat	0.25	0.24	-0.02
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.07	0.07	0.00
Eye Problems	0.10	0.11	0.01
Gastrointestinal Problems	0.79	0.87	0.08
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.33	0.39	0.06
Headache/Migraine	0.13	0.11	-0.02
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	0.51	0.61	0.10
Infectious Diseases	0.07	0.09	0.02
Injury, Fracture	1.06	1.03	-0.03
Nervous System Disorders	0.12	0.16	0.04
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	0.56	0.56	0.00
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	0.52	0.64	0.12
Pregnancy Related Disorders	0.54	0.49	-0.05
Skin Disorders	0.06	0.07	0.00
Substance Abuse	0.02	0.02	0.00
No Reason Specified	0.11	0.15	0.04
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>0.34</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Change figures in this table are calculated from unrounded figures.

<sup>2</sup> The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

## Appendix 9

Table 9.6: Contribution of each Grade Level, within Department, to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year<sup>1,2</sup>

Department	Grade Level	Working Days Lost per Staff Year			Department	Grade Level	Working Days Lost per Staff Year		
		2018/2019	2019/2020	Change			2018/2019	2019/2020	Change
<b>DAERA</b>	G7+	0.08	0.08	0.01	<b>DoH</b>	G7+	0.01	0.01	0.00
	DP	0.11	0.14	0.03		DP	0.03	0.05	0.01
	SO	0.29	0.31	0.02		SO	0.03	0.06	0.03
	EOI	0.24	0.22	-0.03		EOI	0.01	0.02	0.01
	EOII	0.17	0.17	0.00		EOII	0.03	0.05	0.02
	AO	0.26	0.29	0.03		AO	0.02	0.01	0.00
	AA	0.05	0.05	-0.01		AA	0.01	0.01	0.00
	Industrial	0.09	0.08	-0.02		Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a		Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
	<b>DAERA Overall</b>	<b>1.31</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>DoH Overall</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.06</b>	
<b>DfC</b>	G7+	0.05	0.06	0.01	<b>DfI</b>	G7+	0.03	0.04	0.01
	DP	0.10	0.12	0.02		DP	0.07	0.08	0.01
	SO	0.22	0.25	0.04		SO	0.12	0.17	0.04
	EOI	0.38	0.41	0.03		EOI	0.23	0.23	0.00
	EOII	1.51	1.60	0.09		EOII	0.08	0.15	0.07
	AO	2.31	1.89	-0.41		AO	0.61	0.56	-0.06
	AA	0.17	0.16	-0.02		AA	0.04	0.04	0.01
	Industrial	0.01	0.02	0.01		Industrial	0.54	0.55	0.01
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a		Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
	<b>DfC Overall</b>	<b>4.74</b>	<b>4.52</b>	<b>-0.22</b>	<b>DfI Overall</b>	<b>1.73</b>	<b>1.82</b>	<b>0.09</b>	
	G7+	0.03	0.03	-0.01	<b>DoJ</b>	G7+	0.02	0.03	0.00
	DP	0.07	0.07	-0.01		DP	0.07	0.10	0.03
	SO	0.10	0.10	0.00		SO	0.09	0.10	0.00
	EOI	0.08	0.11	0.03		EOI	0.17	0.24	0.07
	EOII	0.07	0.09	0.02		EOII	0.10	0.12	0.02
	AO	0.08	0.09	0.01		AO	0.32	0.39	0.07
	AA	0.01	0.02	0.01		AA	0.04	0.04	0.00
	Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a		Industrial	0.00	0.01	0.01
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a		Prison Grade	1.17	1.25	0.07
	<b>DfE Overall</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>DoJ Overall</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>0.27</b>	
<b>DE</b>	G7+	0.03	0.04	0.01	<b>TEO</b>	G7+	0.02	0.02	0.00
	DP	0.01	0.05	0.03		DP	0.03	0.03	0.00
	SO	0.03	0.03	0.00		SO	0.01	0.02	0.01
	EOI	0.02	0.01	-0.01		EOI	0.01	0.01	0.00
	EOII	0.05	0.05	0.00		EOII	0.03	0.03	0.00
	AO	0.06	0.06	0.00		AO	0.04	0.02	-0.02
	AA	0.02	0.01	-0.02		AA	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a		Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a		Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
	<b>DE Overall</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>TEO Overall</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>-0.01</b>	
<b>DoF</b>	G7+	0.15	0.17	0.02	<b>PPS</b>	G7+	0.06	0.03	-0.03
	DP	0.19	0.23	0.04		DP	0.04	0.03	-0.01
	SO	0.25	0.30	0.05		SO	0.00	0.01	0.01
	EOI	0.16	0.17	0.01		EOI	0.01	0.01	0.00
	EOII	0.21	0.25	0.04		EOII	0.03	0.02	-0.01
	AO	0.51	0.46	-0.05		AO	0.11	0.13	0.02
	AA	0.07	0.04	-0.02		AA	0.03	0.01	-0.02
	Industrial	0.00	0.00	0.00		Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a		Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
	<b>DoF Overall</b>	<b>1.54</b>	<b>1.63</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>PPS Overall</b>	<b>0.29</b>	<b>0.25</b>	<b>-0.04</b>	
					<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>0.34</b>	

<sup>1</sup> The Change figures in this table are calculated from unrounded figures.<sup>2</sup> n/a: No cases recorded.

## Appendix 9

Table 9.7: Contribution of Long-term and Short-term absence to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year<sup>1</sup>

Duration	Working Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2018/2019	2019/2020	Change
Short-term absence	2.83	2.97	0.15
Long-term absence	9.77	9.97	0.20
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>0.34</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Change figures in this table are calculated from unrounded figures.



## Appendix 10: Departmental Analysis: Industrial, Non-Industrial and Prison Grade

[Download Appendix 10 data](#)

Table 10.1: Departmental Analysis<sup>1,2</sup>

Department	Working Days Lost per Staff Year				
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
DAERA	8.9	9.6	10.5	10.3	9.9
DAERA Industrial	15.4	12.6	12.2	11.2	9.1
DAERA Non-Industrial	8.4	9.4	10.4	10.2	10.0
DfC	13.0	14.7	15.4	14.9	15.1
DfC Industrial	8.1	7.7	8.6	8.9	15.9
DfC Non-Industrial	13.1	14.7	15.4	14.9	15.1
DFE	9.4	10.3	9.8	9.8	10.2
DE	8.7	11.4	9.7	9.2	9.9
DoF	9.8	10.0	11.0	10.2	10.7
DoF Industrial	1.9	5.6	5.2	6.0	5.6
DoF Non-Industrial	9.8	10.0	11.0	10.2	10.7
DoH	7.8	9.0	9.6	8.4	10.9
DfI	10.8	11.0	12.6	12.6	13.4
DfI Industrial	17.2	19.3	21.9	20.0	20.1
DfI Non-Industrial	9.2	9.1	10.4	10.8	11.7
DoJ	15.9	15.3	14.9	14.0	15.5
DoJ Industrial	12.0	9.8	8.0	3.7	9.4
DoJ Non-Industrial	10.6	12.3	10.6	10.1	12.2
DoJ Prison Grade	23.8	19.6	20.9	19.3	20.1
TEO	7.1	7.9	7.6	10.7	9.3
PPS	11.1	12.1	11.8	14.3	12.6
<b>NICS Overall</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.9</b>
Industrial Overall	16.2	17.0	18.8	17.1	17.1
Non-Industrial Overall	10.7	11.8	12.3	12.0	12.3
Prison Grade Overall	23.8	19.6	20.9	19.3	20.1

<sup>1</sup> The NICS Departments were restructured from 9th May 2016. All Departmental figures for 2015/2016 represent a best estimate of those year's figures, had the new NICS structure been in place. No comparable figures are available for years prior to 2015/2016. For more information on the restructuring, see Appendix 1 and Appendix 12.

<sup>2</sup> Staff in HSENI and OAGNI are included in the NICS Overall figures only.



## Appendix 11: Links to other Organisations Sickness Absence Statistics

### Comparisons with other Civil Service Sickness Absence Statistics/Local Councils

The Cabinet Office publish quarterly headline sickness absence statistics (on a rolling 12-month basis) in the form of a tabular report with no accompanying text or explanation (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-absence-data>). These quarterly reports provide headline absence figures broken down by geographical area, gender, age group and grade level.

Headline figures since 1999 for the Home Civil Service overall are also published quarterly (on a rolling 12-month basis) at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-sickness-absence> along with some limited commentary. However, in-depth comparisons cannot be made as they do not publish figures beyond the headline rate. The headline figures would achieve a grade D on the 4 Nations Comparability Scale (Comparing Official Statistics Across the UK) given that they are produced from separate sources of data but the methods and standards are broadly comparable.

In Scotland the sickness absence statistics for the Scottish Government workforce are reported quarterly (on a rolling 12-month basis) at <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/workforce-information/>, along with explanatory notes. They are produced on a “per staff year” basis.

The Welsh Government includes headline sickness absence figures in their annual Consolidated Accounts, available at <https://beta.gov.wales/welsh-government-consolidated-annual-accounts>. They are produced on a “per staff year” basis also.

In the Republic of Ireland (RoI), sick leave statistics for the Public Service are published annually (on a calendar year basis) at <https://hr.per.gov.ie/supports/leave/#sick%20leave>. These are on a “per full-time equivalent” basis.

The NI Audit Office publish a Local Government Auditor’s Report (<https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/local-government-auditors-report-2019>) each year that includes information on sickness absence levels in the local councils. These are presented on a “per employee” basis.

### Comparisons with the private sector

Across the wider labour market the Office for National Statistics undertakes a quarterly Labour Force survey that contains information on sickness absence (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/articles/sicknessabsenceinthelabourmarket/2016>). This survey is also replicated in Northern Ireland, with a sickness absence table appearing in their Quarterly Supplement (<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/labour-force-survey>).

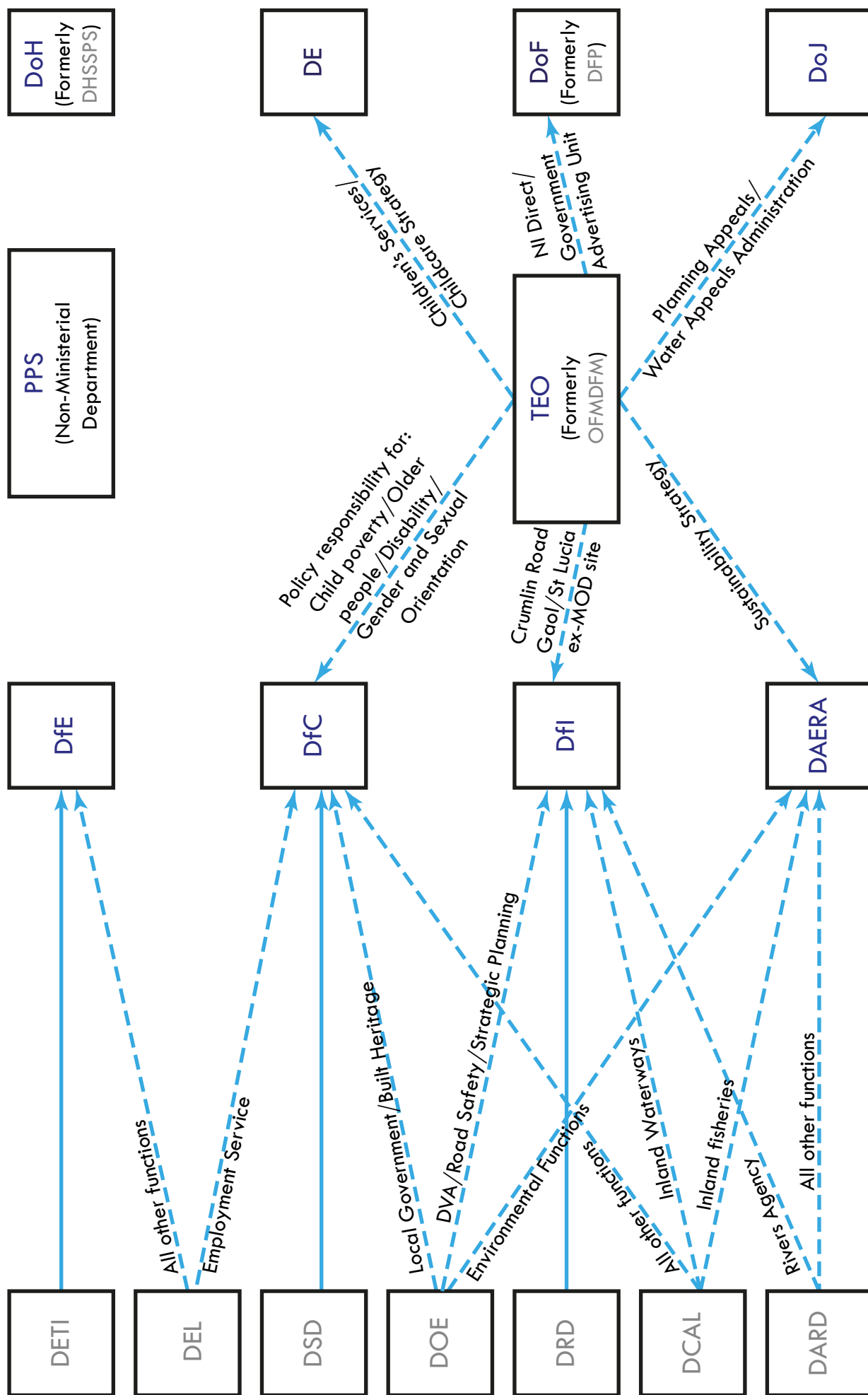
The CIPD also commission a survey (<https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/health-well-being-work>) each year that then reports on levels of sickness absence across the various UK labour market sectors. Make UK (formerly EEF) carry out a similar survey for UK manufacturers (<https://www.makeuk.org/Insights/Reports/2019/04/24/UK-Absence-Benchmark-Report-2019>).



# Appendix 12: Overview of NICS Departmental Restructuring

## NICS Departments following restructuring on 9th May 2016

On the 9th May 2016 new NICS Departmental structures came into effect. The chart below maps the changes in Departmental names that occurred at this time, as well as the reorganisation of the main functional areas.



Note: Explanation of the abbreviations used in this chart can be found in Appendix 13



## Appendix 13: List of Abbreviations

<b>AA</b>	Administrative Assistant
<b>AO</b>	Administrative Officer
<b>CBI</b>	Confederation of British Industry
<b>CIPD</b>	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
<b>DAERA</b>	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
<b>DARD</b>	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>DCAL</b>	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
<b>DE</b>	Department of Education
<b>DEL</b>	Department for Employment and Learning
<b>DETI</b>	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
<b>DfC</b>	Department for Communities
<b>DfE</b>	Department for the Economy
<b>Dfi</b>	Department for Infrastructure
<b>DFP</b>	Department of Finance and Personnel
<b>DHSSPS</b>	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
<b>DOE</b>	Department of the Environment
<b>DoF</b>	Department of Finance
<b>DoH</b>	Department of Health
<b>DoJ</b>	Department of Justice
<b>DP</b>	Deputy Principal
<b>DRD</b>	Department for Regional Development
<b>DSD</b>	Department for Social Development
<b>DVA</b>	Driver and Vehicle Agency
<b>EOI</b>	Executive Officer I
<b>EOII</b>	Executive Officer II
<b>G5+</b>	Grade 5 and above
<b>G6</b>	Grade 6
<b>G7</b>	Grade 7
<b>G7+</b>	Grade 7 and above
<b>GB</b>	Great Britain
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>HSENI</b>	Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland
<b>MOD</b>	Ministry of Defence
<b>NI</b>	Northern Ireland
<b>NICS</b>	Northern Ireland Civil Service
<b>NICTS</b>	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
<b>NIPS</b>	Northern Ireland Prison Service
<b>NISRA</b>	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
<b>OAGNI</b>	Office of the Attorney General Northern Ireland
<b>ODS</b>	OpenDocument Spreadsheet
<b>OFMDFM</b>	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
<b>PPS</b>	Public Prosecution Service
<b>ROI</b>	Republic of Ireland
<b>SO</b>	Staff Officer
<b>TEO</b>	The Executive Office
<b>YJA</b>	Youth Justice Agency