

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE 2022/23

An overview of Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) for the financial year

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Executive Summary

- The headline absence figure for 2022/2023 was 12.3 days (average days lost per staff year), a slight increase from 12.2 days in the previous year.
- The 12.3 days lost per staff year represented 5.7% of the available working days in 2022/2023, a slight increase on the 5.6% days lost in 2021/2022. In salary terms, this equated to an estimated £39.0 million in direct salary cost - equivalent to 3.7% of the total NICS pay bill in 2022/2023. This is an increase of £0.4 million on direct salary cost in the previous year.
- 57.8% of staff had no recorded sick absence in 2022/2023 - a decrease from 62.0% in 2021/2022.
- The level of absence within Departments varied from 5.8 days for the Executive Office (TEO) to 17.9 days for the Department of Justice (DoJ), with the majority of Departments recording higher absence levels compared to 2021/2022.
- The absence level for females (13.3 days) remained higher than that for males (11.4 days) with over half of this difference being due to gender-specific conditions¹.
- Staff who had been in post for under two years had a much lower level of sickness absence (6.6 days) than staff who had been employed for two years or more (13.1 days).
- Nearly one in every eight staff (12.4%) had at least one spell of long-term absence - these spells lasted around three months on average. This accounted for over three quarters (79.5%) 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 (38.0%) during 2022/2023. Within this category, work-related stress accounted for 28.3% of the days lost.
- COVID-19 (Coronavirus) accounted for 0.74 working days lost per staff year in 2022/2023, which was the equivalent of 6.0% of all sickness absence days in the NICS for the period.²

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

² Between 4 November 2021 and 17 July 2022, the first 10 calendar days of an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as paid special leave on HRConnect, and not as a sickness absence. Between 18 July 2022 and 9 October 2022, this was reduced to the first 5 calendar days. From 10 October 2022, an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as sickness absence. Subsequently caution should be taken when reading trend information.

KEY FACTS

Key Facts ¹	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023
Proportion of Staff with No Recorded Spells of Absence (%)	51.3	50.7	72.3	62.0	57.8
Working Days Lost per Staff Year	12.6	12.9	9.8	12.2	12.3
Percentage of Available Working Days Lost (%)	5.8	5.9	4.4	5.6	5.7
Total Number of Working Days Lost	268,334	272,797	207,160	269,839	278,105
Direct Salary Cost² (£ Million)	32.9	36.6	28.4	38.6	39.0
Average Number of Spells per Staff Year	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.7
Proportion of Working Days Lost by Certification: Certified (%)	88.1	87.6	90.9	89.9	88.9
Proportion of Working Days Lost by Certification: Self-Certified (%)	10.2	10.1	4.7	6.9	8.9
Proportion of Working Days Lost by Certification: Uncertified/Missing (%)	1.7	2.3	4.4	3.1	2.3
Long-term Absence: Proportion of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence (%)	77.6	77.0	83.9	80.5	79.5
Long-term Absence: Frequency Rate³ (%)	13.9	14.0	11.4	13.4	13.1
Long-term Absence: Average Duration (Working Days)	63.1	62.8	64.0	64.3	66.0
Short-term Absence: Average Number of Spells per Staff Year	0.63	0.64	0.26	0.44	0.52

¹ Between 4 November 2021 and 17 July 2022, the first 10 calendar days of an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as paid special leave on HRConnect, and not as a sickness absence. Between 18 July 2022 and 9 October 2022, this was reduced to the first 5 calendar days. From 10 October 2022, an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as sickness absence. Subsequently caution should be taken when reading trend information.

² Any information provided in this report that relates to direct salary cost is calculated, where possible, on the basis of each individual's actual salary and the associated employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions.

³ 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

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To download any of the tables found in this report in Microsoft Excel (.xlsx) format, visit the [Sickness absence page](#) on the NISRA website.

If you require this publication in a machine-readable format, the tables supplied in .xlsx format can be saved as .csv files by Microsoft Excel or by the free Apache OpenOffice suite.

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NATIONAL STATISTICS STATUS

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

These statistics were designated as National Statistics in August 2019 following a full [assessment](#) against the [Code of Practice](#) which was carried out by the Office for Statistics Regulation.

Please note all figures contained within this report are obtained from the HRCS Financial Sickness Absence database.

CHAPTER 1

Working Days Lost through Sickness Absence

12.3 working days lost on average due to
sickness absence

5.7% of available working days lost due
to sickness absence

£39.0 million lost direct salary cost

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

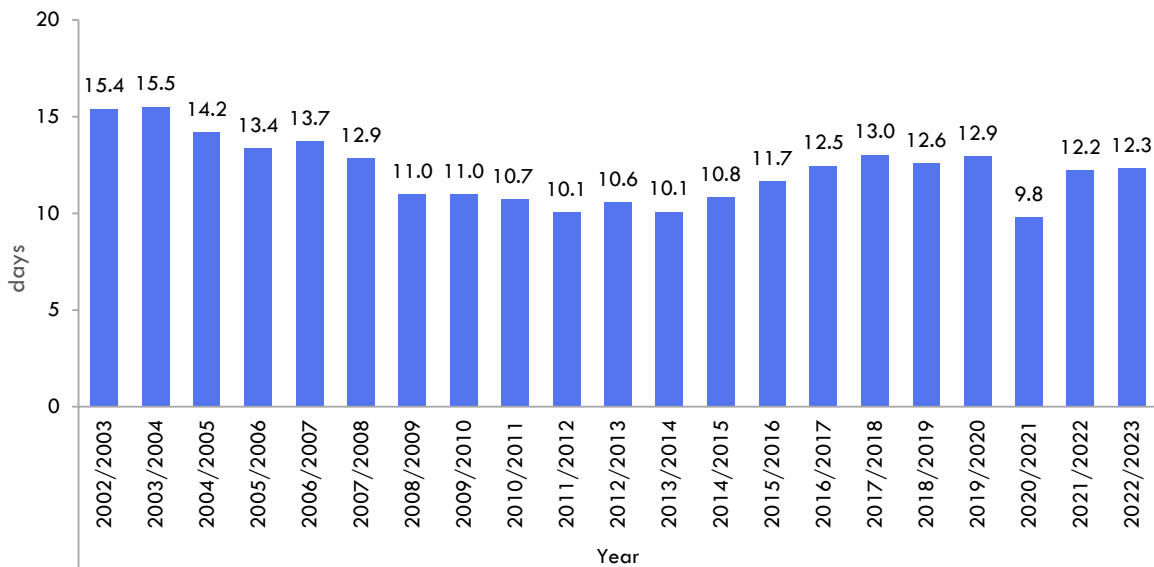
Staff in the NICS lost an average of 12.3 days to sickness absence in 2022/2023 - a slight increase from the previous year when staff lost 12.2 days.

In total, 5.7% of all available working days were lost due to sickness absence, equating to around £39.0 million in direct salary cost¹, equivalent to around 3.7% of the total NICS pay bill. This is a slight increase on the previous year when 5.6% of available working days were lost at a cost of £38.6 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 slightly higher than the previous year. 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 a low of 10.1 days. In the eleven years since then the absence level has risen to a high of 13.0 days in 2017/2018, followed by a sharp decline in 2020/2021; the lowest recorded absence level over the past twenty years. Absence figures then returned to around pre-pandemic levels in 2021/2022 and remained at this level in 2022/23.

Figure 1

Working Days Lost per Staff Year² in NICS (2002/2003 to 2022/2023)³



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 0.2 of a day to the overall absence level. If they were excluded, the headline figure of 12.3 days would reduce to 12.1 days.

¹ Direct Salary Cost 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 direct salary cost is calculated, where possible, on the basis of each individual's actual salary and the associated employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions.

² 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.

³ There was a new HR System and recording process introduced in 2008/09. Data for DoJ, PPS and Industrial staff were included from 2010/11 onwards.

1.2 Department

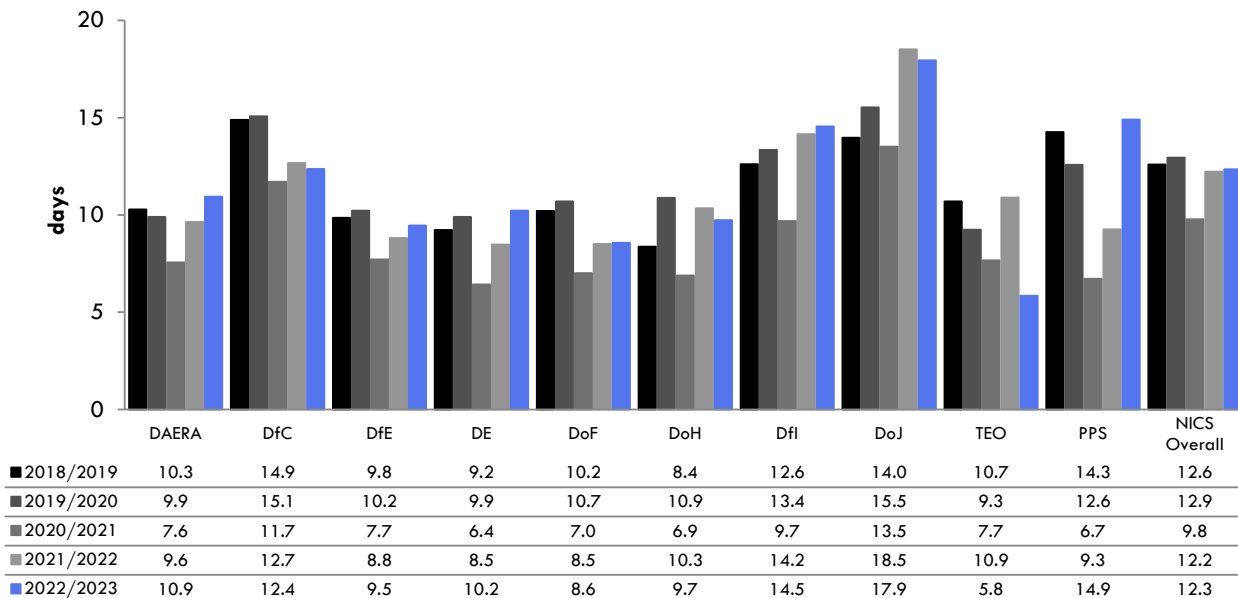
The average number of working days lost due to sickness absence in 2022/2023 ranged from 5.8 days for The Executive Office (TEO) to 17.9 days for the Department of Justice (DoJ), as shown below in Figure 2.

The majority of departments saw a rise in their absence levels from last year, with the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) experiencing the greatest increase.

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) contain around 14.3% of all NICS staff and had the biggest impact on the overall increase in absence level. Within DAERA the majority of grade levels experienced a rise, with Staff Officers (SO) 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 (2018/2019 to 2022/2023)¹



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 17.9 to 12.1 days lost through sickness absence.

¹ 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.

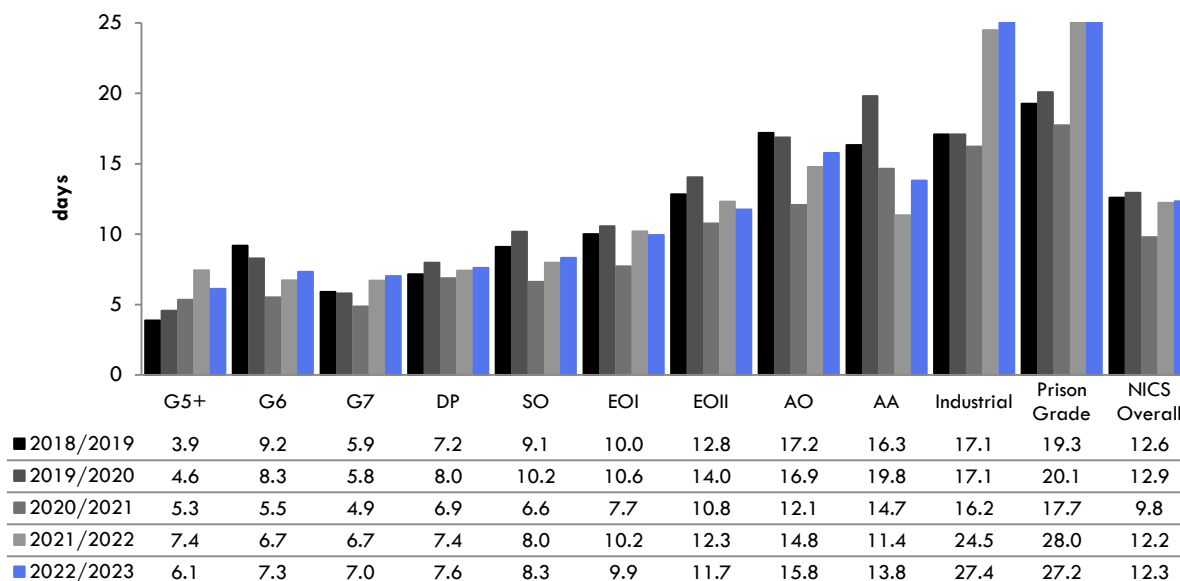
There is notable variation in absence levels across grade levels, although a general trend of decreasing levels of absence as grade level increases can be observed. As shown in Figure 3, the average number of working days lost in 2022/2023 ranged from 6.1 days for staff at Grade 5 + level to 27.4 days for Industrial staff.

The majority of grade levels reported a rise compared with 2021/2022, with industrial staff experiencing the largest increase.

The AO level encompassed the largest number of staff - representing 22.0% of the NICS - and had the biggest impact on the increase in the overall NICS absence level in 2022/2023. 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 (2018/2019 to 2022/2023)¹



¹ 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

Figure 4 shows the absence level increased for males and remained the same for females in 2022/2023, with males experiencing an average of 11.4 days and females an average of 13.3 days.

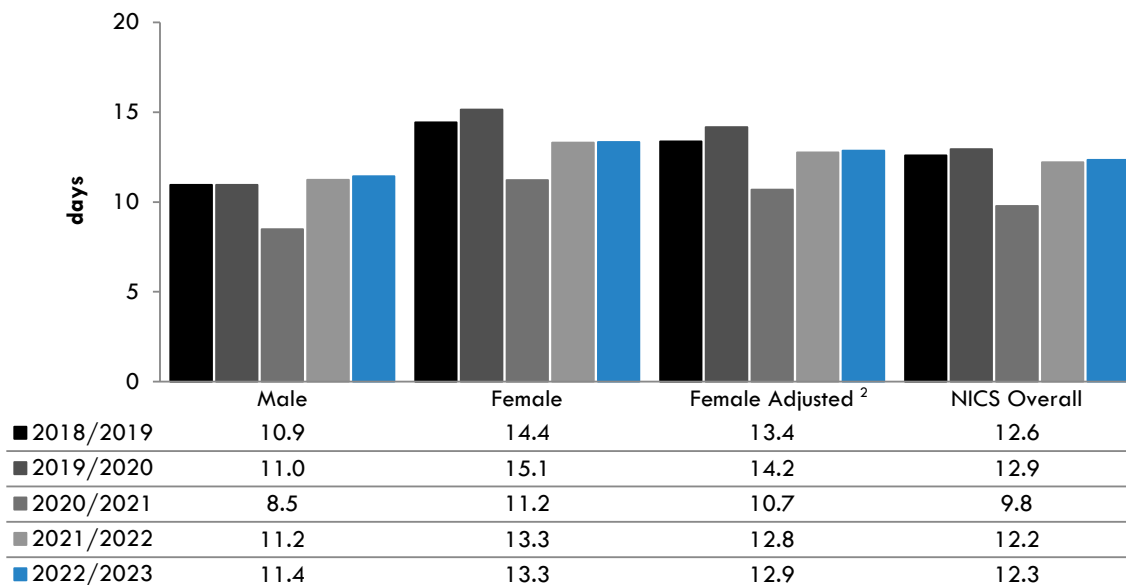
Female staff have historically had a higher level of absence than males, with a difference of around 3 to 4 days observed in recent years. However in the last two years this difference was reduced to around 2.0 days. There are also other factors to take into account when comparing the difference between genders.

The largest cause of the difference was *Pregnancy Related Disorders*. If this cause was excluded, the adjusted absence level for females fell from 13.3 days to 12.9 days. If all gender-specific absences¹ were excluded from the absence figures the difference between male and female absence would fall to 0.8 days (12.1 days for females and 11.3 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 (2018/2019 to 2022/2023)



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

² 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 6.6 days through sickness absence in 2022/2023. This was over six days less than the average number of days lost (13.1 days) by staff with more than two years of service, as shown in Table 1.

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 on 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 (2018/2019 to 2022/2023)

Length of Service	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2018/2019	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2021/2022	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023
Less than 1 year	5.0	3.6	2.5	3.6	5.0
1 to less than 2 years	8.9	8.3	6.0	6.1	7.4
Less than 2 years	7.4	6.1	4.9	4.6	6.6
2 to less than 3 years	12.3	13.0	11.5	11.3	11.7
3 to less than 4 years	14.4	16.1	10.7	15.7	13.7
4 to less than 5 years	13.0	11.5	12.0	13.2	17.9
5 years or more	12.8	13.2	10.0	13.0	13.0
2 years or more	12.8	13.3	10.1	13.0	13.1
NICS Overall	12.6	12.9	9.8	12.2	12.3

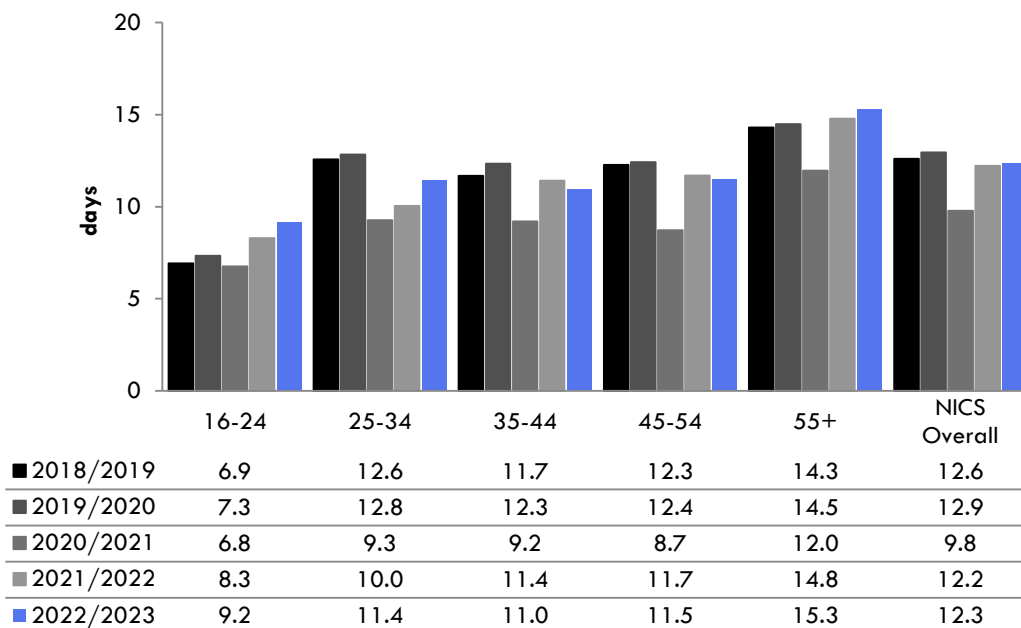
1.6 Age Group

Figure 5 shows the average number of working days lost ranged from 9.2 days for staff aged 16-24 to 15.3 days for staff aged 55+. It should be noted, however, that the youngest age group (16-24) accounted for only 1.5% of NICS staff.

The majority of age groups experienced an increase in absence levels, with staff in the 25-34 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 (2018/2019 to 2022/2023)



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 year¹" 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.

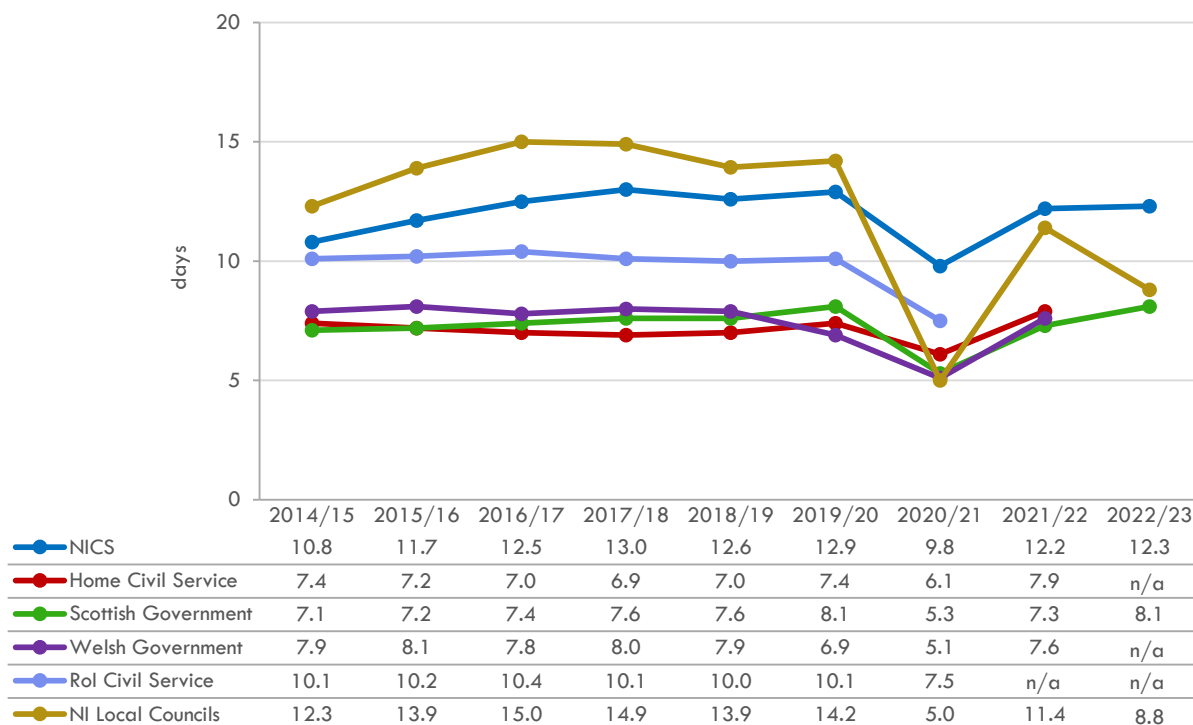
Comparison with other Civil Service Sickness Absence Statistics/Local Councils (2014/2015 to 2022/2023)

Each public sector organisation listed below in Figure 6 varies in how they report sickness absence statistics. Similar to 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.

Figure 6 shows the average working days lost per staff year increased from 2021/22 to 2022/23 for the NICS and Scottish Government and decreased for the NI Local Councils. There were no 2022/23 sickness absence statistics available for the other areas at the time of publication and no figures published since 2020/21 for the Republic of Ireland Civil Service. For more detailed information and links to each organisations sickness absence statistics, see Appendix 12.

Figure 6

Average Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹ in UK/Rol Civil Service and Local Councils (2012/13 to 2022/23)^{2,3}



¹ 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.

² n/a: No figures published/available.

³ Rol Civil Service figures are for calendar years from 2013 to 2020.

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. Due to Covid-19 related complications, CIPD were unable to report reliable sickness absence rates in 2021 and 2022, however normal reporting resumed in 2023. Make UK¹ carry out a similar survey for UK manufacturers.

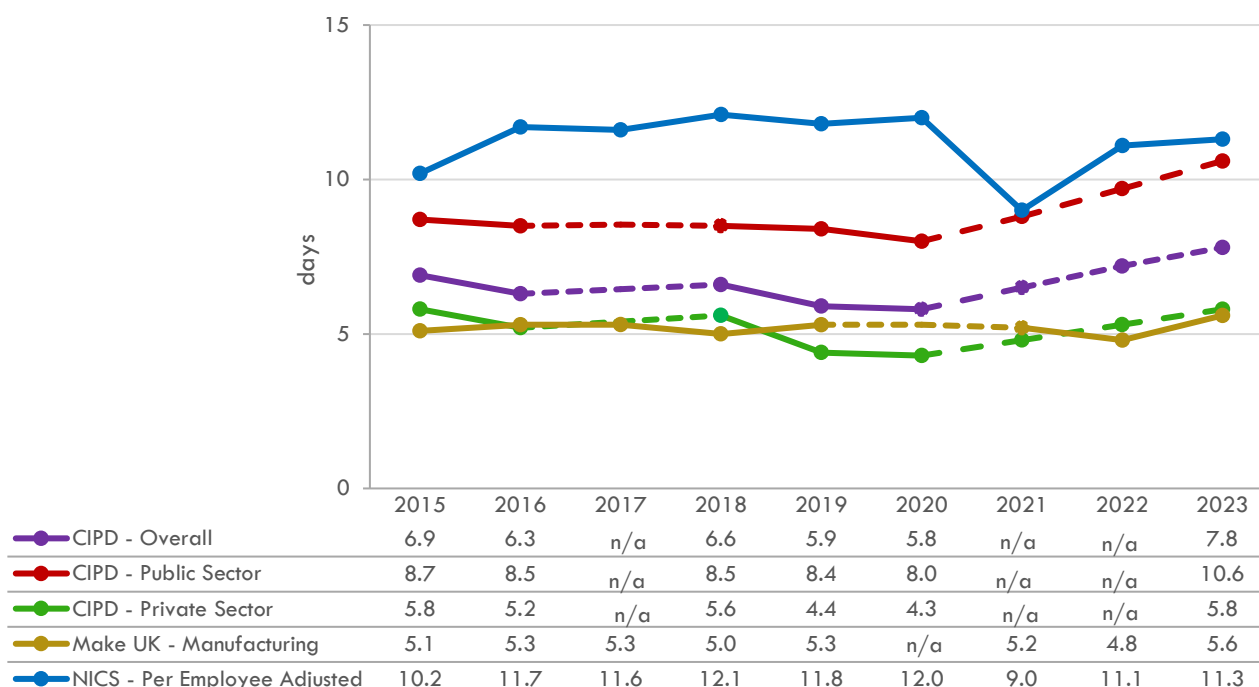
As their figures are normally based on survey returns they can be affected by response bias. For example, firms with solid methods of data collection and more robust/acceptable figures to report may be the ones most likely to send in their figures.

The NICS Working Days Lost per Employee figure (as opposed to per Staff Year²) has been included below to provide a more direct comparison with the private sector. Figure 7 shows that this NICS figure increased from 11.1 days in 2022 to 11.3 days in 2023. 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 12.

Figure 7

Average Working Days Lost per Employee CIPD/Make UK³ (2015 to 2023)⁴



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

² 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.

³ CIPD figures are based on an annual survey with between 342 (2014) and over 1,000 (2020) responses. 918 organisations responded in 2023. 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 2023 relate to their survey undertaken in March/April 2023. The Make UK figures are presented in a similar manner above while the NICS per Employee Adjusted figures for 2023 relate to the 2022/2023 financial year for comparison purposes.

⁴ n/a: No figures published/available.

CHAPTER 2

Spells of Sickness Absence

57.8% of staff had **no** sickness absence

60.4% of absence spells lasted five working days or less

88.9% 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 2022/2023, 57.8% of all staff had no spells of sickness absence - a decrease from the previous year when 62.0% of staff had none. One spell of absence was recorded for 30.1% of staff, 9.2% had two spells, while the remaining 3.0% of staff were absent on three or more occasions.

The proportion of staff with no absence varied markedly between Departments from 46.6% in DoJ to 71.3% in TEO (see Table 6.10 in Appendix 6).

Figure 9 shows that 19.0% of staff were absent for between one and five days in total during 2022/2023. Meanwhile, the percentage of staff who were absent for a total of more than 20 days during the year fell to 13.3% - a slight decrease on last year's figure of 13.6% (see Table 6.8 in Appendix 6).

Figure 8
Number of Absence Spells

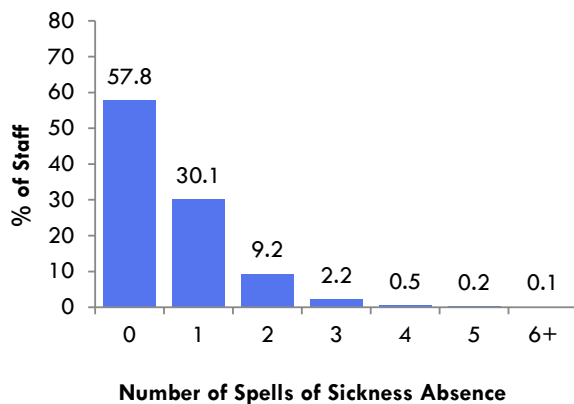
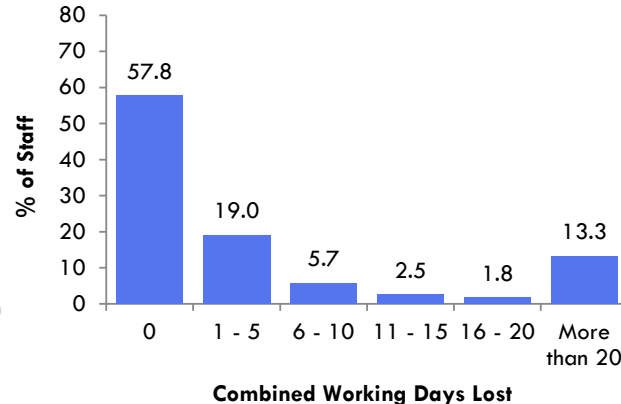


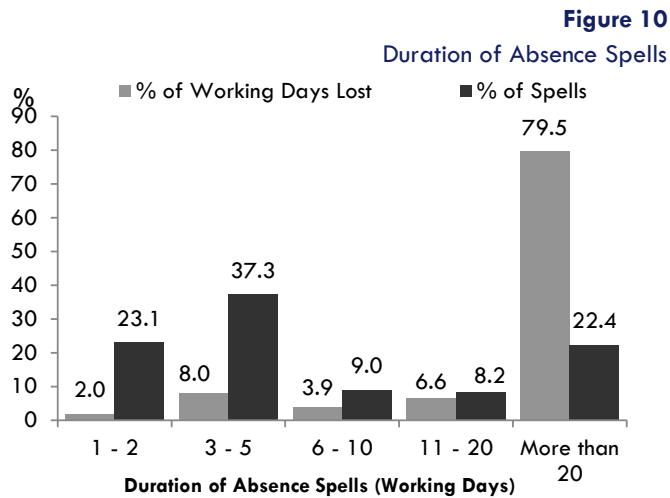
Figure 9
Combined Working Days Lost¹



¹ 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 15,000 sickness absence spells were recorded in 2022/2023, approximately 2,000 more than in the previous year. Figure 10 shows that 60.4% of spells were relatively short - lasting five working days or less. Such absences, however, only accounted for 10.0% of the total working days lost to sickness absence. In total, short-term absences (those lasting 20 working days or less) accounted for 77.6% of all spells.



Long-term absences (those lasting more than 20 days) made up the vast majority of all working days lost. Although they represented only 22.4% of spells, they accounted for 79.5% of all working days lost, as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 11
Number of Spells by Duration - Short-term Absences

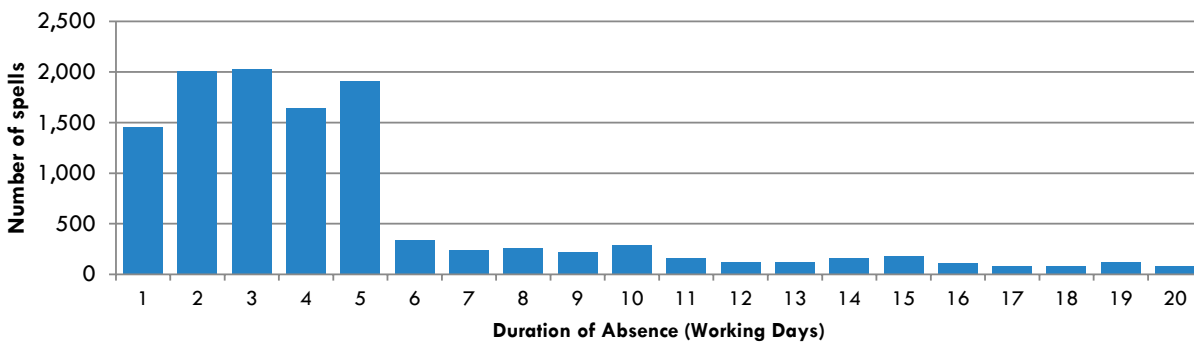
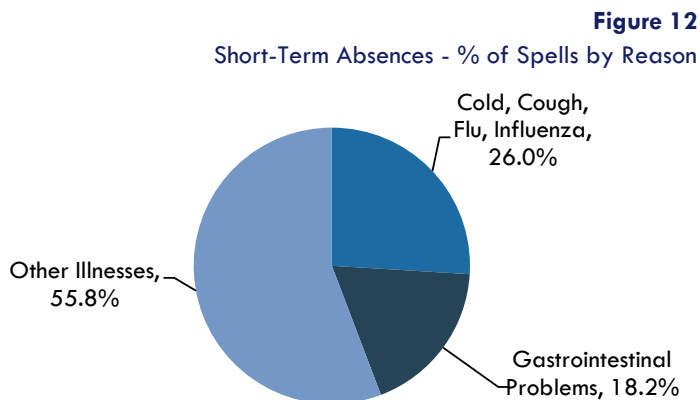


Figure 11 shows over 2,000 spells of absence lasted for three working days - the most frequent duration of all absences.

Short-term absence spells were predominately due to *Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza* (26.0%) or *Gastrointestinal Problems* (18.2%) as shown in Figure 12. It is worth noting that any sickness absences due to *COVID-19 (Coronavirus)* are categorised under *Chest and Respiratory problems*¹. For specific analysis of *COVID-19 (Coronavirus)* absences see section 3.5.



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

¹ Between 4 November 2021 and 17 July 2022, the first 10 calendar days of an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as paid special leave on HRConnect, and not as a sickness absence. Between 18 July 2022 and 9 October 2022, this was reduced to the first 5 calendar days. From 10 October 2022, an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as sickness absence. Subsequently caution should be taken when reading trend information.

2.3 Absence Certification¹

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 (52.2%) of spells were self-certified with medically certified absences making up a further 38.7% of the total.

Absences which were uncertified or missing a certification have been classified here as 'other' and accounted for 9.1% of absence spells. A proportion of this figure would relate to absences which have not been able to be certified in the usual manner due to complications and restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As would be expected, self-certified absences did not last as long as certified absences. On average, self-certified absences lasted 3.2 working days while certified absences lasted 42.6 working 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 88.9% of the total working days lost, equating to 11.0 days lost per staff year or 5.0% of the available working days (see Table 3.3 in Appendix 3). Self-certified absences accounted for a further 8.9% of the working days lost while 'other' absences made up the remaining 2.3%, as shown in Figure 14.

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

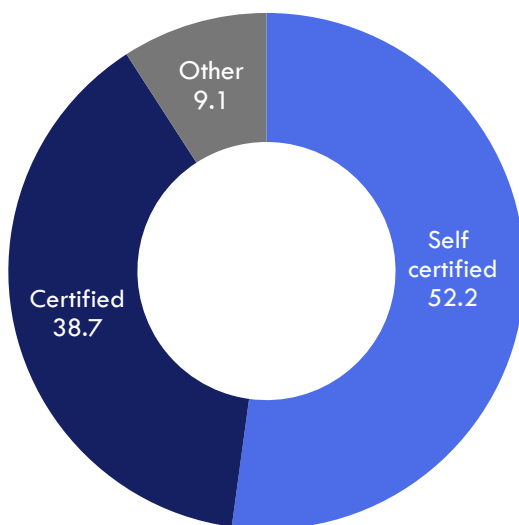
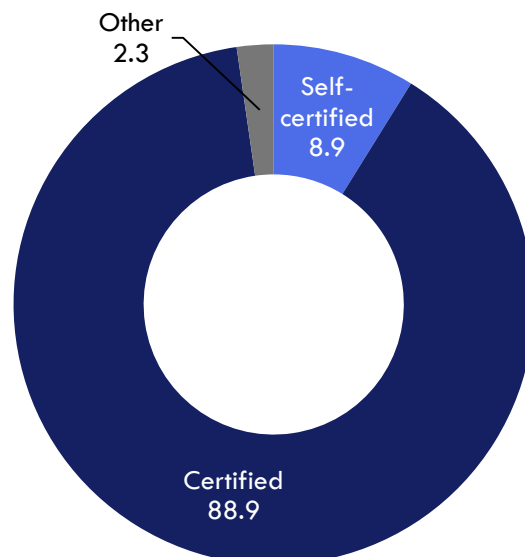


Figure 14
% of Working Days Lost by Certification



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 7.¹

3.1 NICS Overall

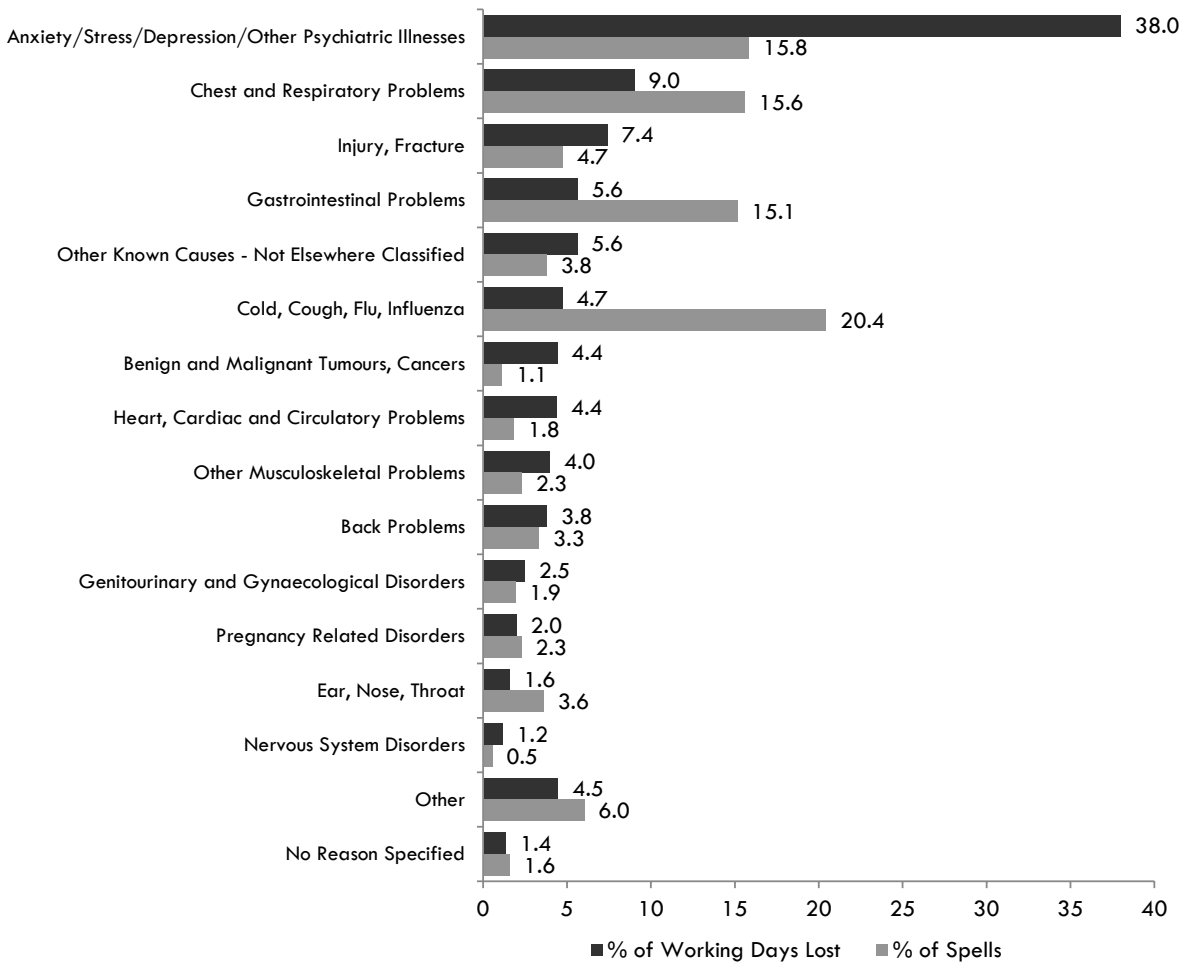
Absences recorded as *Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* or *Chest and Respiratory Problems* accounted for 31.4% of all absence spells in 2022/2023. Both illnesses also accounted for the highest proportion of working days lost.

As in previous years, *Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* remained the reason behind the highest proportion of working days lost. Figure 15 shows this reason accounted for 38.0% of the total working days lost while 28.3% of the working days lost within 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^{2,3}

Reason for Absence



¹ Between 4 November 2021 and 17 July 2022, the first 10 calendar days of an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as paid special leave on HRConnect, and not as a sickness absence. Between 18 July 2022 and 9 October 2022, this was reduced to the first 5 calendar days. From 10 October 2022, an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as sickness absence. Subsequently caution should be taken when reading trend information.

² The category 'Other' contains any absence with a reason that accounted for less than 1% of the working days lost.

³ 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 72.8 working days, as shown in Table 2. 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 (44.6 working days) but also accounted for 15.8% of spells.

At the other end of the scale, absences due to *Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza* had the shortest average duration at 4.3 days. For a detailed breakdown of absence reason by spells, see Table 7.2 in Appendix 7.

Table 2^{1,2}

Average Duration of Absence by Reason

Reason for Absence	Working Days
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	72.8
Substance Abuse	70.4
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	44.6
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	44.4
Blood Disorders	41.7
Nervous System Disorders	39.5
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	32.3
Injury, Fracture	29.2
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	27.6
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	24.0
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	22.6
Back Problems	21.2
Eye Problems	17.4
Skin Disorders	16.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	16.2
Chest and Respiratory Problems	10.7
Infectious Diseases	9.7
Asthma	9.0
Ear, Nose, Throat	8.2
Headache/Migraine	7.9
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	7.6
Gastrointestinal Problems	6.9
Dental and Oral Problems	5.2
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	4.3
No Reason Specified	15.9

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

² 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, as shown in Table 3. All grade levels aside from AA staff experienced a decrease in the proportion of working days lost to this reason compared with 2021/2022. DP staff experienced the most notable change, which saw the proportion decrease from 41.5% to 36.6%.

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 a high level of *Back Problems*. This situation is likely to reflect the type of work undertaken by these grades. It should also be noted that the AA staff group accounted for only 1.9% of NICS staff when considering the high levels of *Back Problems* within this category.

Table 3^{1,2,3}

Reason for Absence by Grade Level

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost G7+	% of Working Days Lost DP	% of Working Days Lost SO	% of Working Days Lost EO1	% of Working Days Lost EOII	% of Working Days Lost AO	% of Working Days Lost AA	% of Working Days Lost Industrial	% of Working Days Lost Prison Grade
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	37.3	36.6	35.1	38.1	39.5	42.3	35.8	25.9	36.4
Asthma	-	0.1	-	-	0.1	0.1	.	0.3	.
Back Problems	3.2	1.4	3.5	2.7	3.0	4.5	9.9	7.9	3.0
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	5.2	7.0	7.6	7.4	4.3	3.4	-	3.5	0.9
Blood Disorders	0.5	0.4	0.4	1.2	0.4	1.0	.	-	-
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	.	.	-	.	-	0.1	-	-	-
Chest and Respiratory Problems	6.5	10.9	9.3	9.0	9.5	8.1	9.5	9.3	9.9
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	4.6	5.4	5.1	5.8	5.5	5.2	6.5	3.0	1.5
Dental and Oral Problems	0.1	0.6	0.2	-	-	0.2	0.2	-	0.1
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.0	1.5	3.6	1.5	1.2	1.7	1.0	1.6	0.8
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.2	0.4	0.3	1.3	0.2	0.5	-	.	-
Eye Problems	1.0	0.9	1.8	1.1	1.1	0.8	.	0.9	0.3
Gastrointestinal Problems	7.1	6.7	4.5	6.3	7.2	5.2	8.9	3.4	4.0
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	6.6	3.7	2.1	1.8	2.5	2.1	1.2	2.9	1.5
Headache/Migraine	0.7	0.5	0.4	1.2	1.5	1.2	1.2	0.2	0.8
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	7.1	4.1	6.1	3.6	4.2	4.1	0.9	7.1	3.0
Infectious Diseases	1.0	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.3	-	0.1	0.3
Injury, Fracture	4.8	3.8	5.8	5.8	5.2	5.4	8.3	13.6	17.5
Nervous System Disorders	1.6	2.1	0.9	1.1	0.9	0.9	-	3.3	-
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	6.5	5.7	5.8	2.5	5.3	4.4	4.4	3.2	12.5
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	1.8	3.6	3.0	3.2	4.2	4.0	1.6	12.9	1.7
Pregnancy Related Disorders	1.5	2.6	2.2	2.4	2.7	1.6	0.6	.	2.6
Skin Disorders	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	-	0.0	0.4
Substance Abuse	-	.	.	1.1	0.1	1.1	-	-	.
No Reason Specified	1.0	1.6	1.3	2.1	0.5	1.1	4.1	0.6	2.3
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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

² n/a: No cases recorded.

³ Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-).

3.3 Gender

As has been the case for 14 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 9.6% of their working days lost. Chest and Respiratory Problems was the second highest reason for females, accounting for 9.0% of their working days lost.

Table 4^{1,2,3}
Reason for Absence by Gender

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost	% of Working Days Lost
	Male	Female
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	36.3	39.6
Asthma	0.1	0.1
Back Problems	4.9	2.8
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	3.3	5.5
Blood Disorders	0.8	0.4
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.0	0.0
Chest and Respiratory Problems	9.0	9.0
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	4.9	4.5
Dental and Oral Problems	0.1	0.2
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.5	1.6
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.5	0.4
Eye Problems	0.8	1.1
Gastrointestinal Problems	5.8	5.5
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	1.2	3.7
Headache/Migraine	0.8	1.2
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	6.4	2.5
Infectious Diseases	0.3	0.4
Injury, Fracture	9.6	5.4
Nervous System Disorders	1.2	1.1
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	5.1	6.1
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	4.8	3.2
Pregnancy Related Disorders	.	3.8
Skin Disorders	0.6	0.2
Substance Abuse	0.6	0.4
No Reason Specified	1.5	1.2
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0

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

² n/a: No cases recorded.

³ 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, as shown in Table 5.

The only other absence reasons to exceed 10% of working days lost in any age group were *Injury, Fracture* among the 16-24 and 25-34 age group (which accounted for 10.5% and 13.8% of their working days lost respectively) and *Chest and Respiratory Problems* in the 35-44 and 45-54 age group, accounting for 10.3% and 10.5% of their working days lost.

Table 5^{1,2,3}

Reason for Absence by Age Group

Reason for Absence	% of	% of	% of	% of	% of
	Working Days Lost	Working Days Lost	Working Days Lost	Working Days Lost	Working Days Lost
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	50.2	37.8	43.2	38.6	33.2
Asthma	.	-	-	0.1	0.1
Back Problems	1.5	2.8	3.2	3.7	4.7
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	.	0.3	2.4	5.8	6.3
Blood Disorders	-	-	0.2	0.8	0.8
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	-	.	-	0.0	0.0
Chest and Respiratory Problems	8.2	6.5	10.3	10.5	7.7
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	9.2	5.0	6.1	4.8	3.4
Dental and Oral Problems	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1
Ear, Nose, Throat	4.2	2.2	1.9	1.1	1.4
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	.	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.2
Eye Problems	.	0.7	0.2	1.0	1.5
Gastrointestinal Problems	6.4	7.4	5.5	5.1	5.5
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.5	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.9
Headache/Migraine	0.8	1.3	0.9	0.9	1.0
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	2.8	1.2	2.3	4.3	7.2
Infectious Diseases	1.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3
Injury, Fracture	10.5	13.8	5.8	7.2	6.7
Nervous System Disorders	.	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.2
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	2.3	6.5	4.6	6.0	5.9
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	0.3	1.3	1.8	3.2	7.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	1.1	6.4	4.5	0.2	.
Skin Disorders	-	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.4
Substance Abuse	.	-	0.6	0.6	0.5
No Reason Specified	0.4	1.8	1.2	1.1	1.5
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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

² n/a: No cases recorded.

³ Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-).

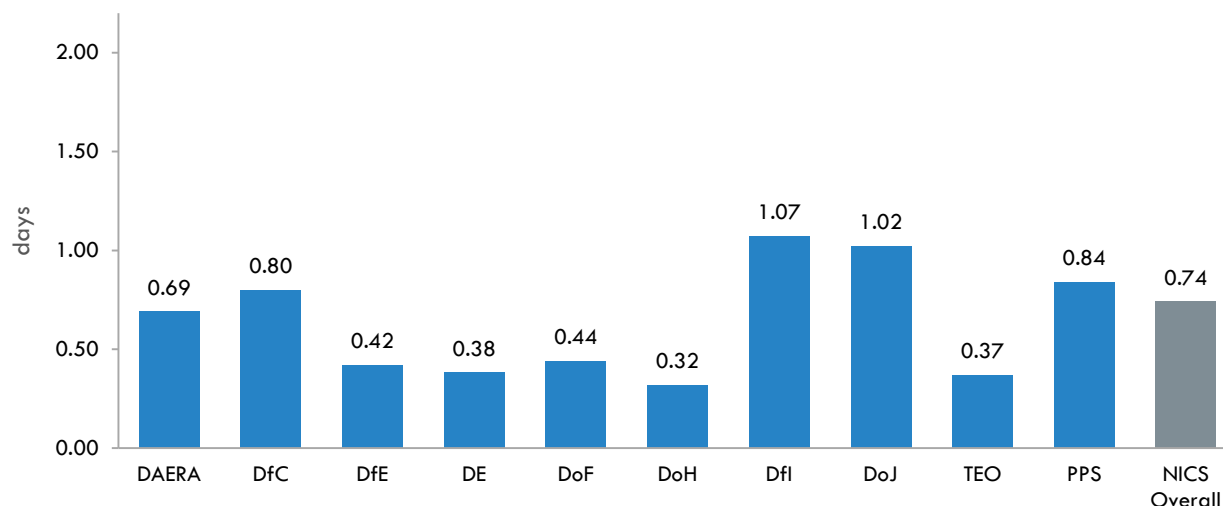
3.5 Sickness Absence due to *COVID-19* (Coronavirus)¹

In the 2022/2023 reporting year there were 1,578 spells of *COVID-19* in the NICS, amounting to 16,745 working days. This equated to 0.74 working days lost per staff year or 0.34% of all available working days. *COVID-19* represented 6.0% of all sickness absence days that occurred in 2022/2023.

Figure 16 shows that across Departments the level of absence ranged from 0.32 working days per staff year in The Department of Health (DoH) to 1.07 days in the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). This equated to 7.3% of all sickness absence days in DfI and 0.49% 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*



Industrial staff had the highest level of *COVID-19* sickness absence with 2.14 working days lost per staff year, with Prison Grade staff also experiencing high levels with 1.54 days. 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, accounting for 6.5% of all Male absence in 2022/2023 and 5.6% of all Female absence (see Table 7.9 in Appendix 7). Across different Age Groups those aged 45-54 had the highest level of *COVID-19* absence with 0.86 days per staff year and staff in the youngest age bracket experienced the lowest with 0.27 days (see Table 7.10 in Appendix 7).

¹ Between 4 November 2021 and 17 July 2022, the first 10 calendar days of an absence attributed to *COVID-19* was recorded as paid special leave on HRConnect, and not as a sickness absence. Between 18 July 2022 and 9 October 2022, this was reduced to the first 5 calendar days. From 10 October 2022, an absence attributed to *COVID-19* was recorded as sickness absence. Subsequently caution should be taken when reading trend information.

CHAPTER 4

Long-term Sickness Absence

12.4% of staff had at least one long-term absence

Long-term absences accounted for **79.5%** of the total working days lost

A long-term average duration of **66.0** working days

31.4% 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 2022/2023, nearly one in every eight staff (12.4%) had a long-term absence, as shown in Table 6; this is a lower proportion of staff with a long-term absence than the previous year (12.7%).

These 3,173 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 3,350 spells was around three calendar months (66.0 working days¹).

Long-term absences accounted for 79.5% of all working days lost, which was decrease on the proportion recorded in 2021/2022. This level of long-term absence would, by way of illustration, be equivalent to the loss of around 1,010 full-time staff for an entire year.

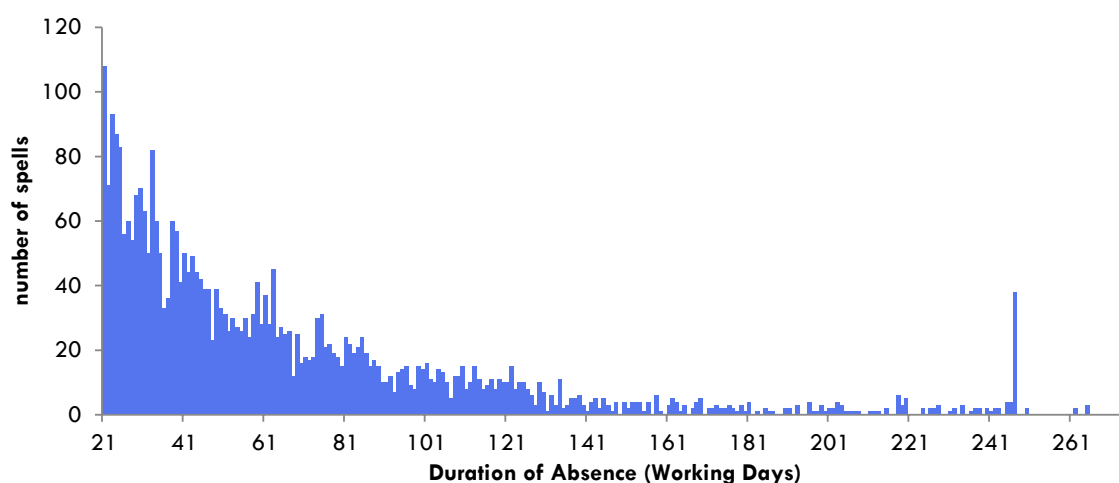
Table 6
Number of Long-term Absence Spells

Number of Long term Absence Spells	Number of Staff	% of Staff
0	22,423	87.6
1	3,002	11.7
2	165	0.6
3+	6	0.0
NICS Overall	25,596	100.0

Meanwhile, the Frequency Rate² - the number of long-term spells per employee - decreased from 13.4% to 13.1%.

Figure 17

Number of Spells by Duration - Long-term Absences (more than 20 working days)³



Although only 13.6% of *all* sickness absence spells lasted longer than two months (41 working days), the working days lost from these absences accounted for 65.5% of the total working days lost.

¹ The figure of 66.0 working days is the mean duration. The median (the middle value of all the long-term absence durations) is 50.0 working days, which equates to nearly 2½ months. These figures only take account of the days lost during the specific financial year. For context, if only long-term absences which ended during 2022/2023 are included in the analysis, the average increases to 73.7 working days (approximately 3½ months).

² 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

³ The increase to the far right of Figure 17 relates to 38 spells of absence lasting a standard working year. Some Civil Service occupations are contracted more than a 37 hour standard working week which results in the outliers beyond this.

4.2 Grade Level

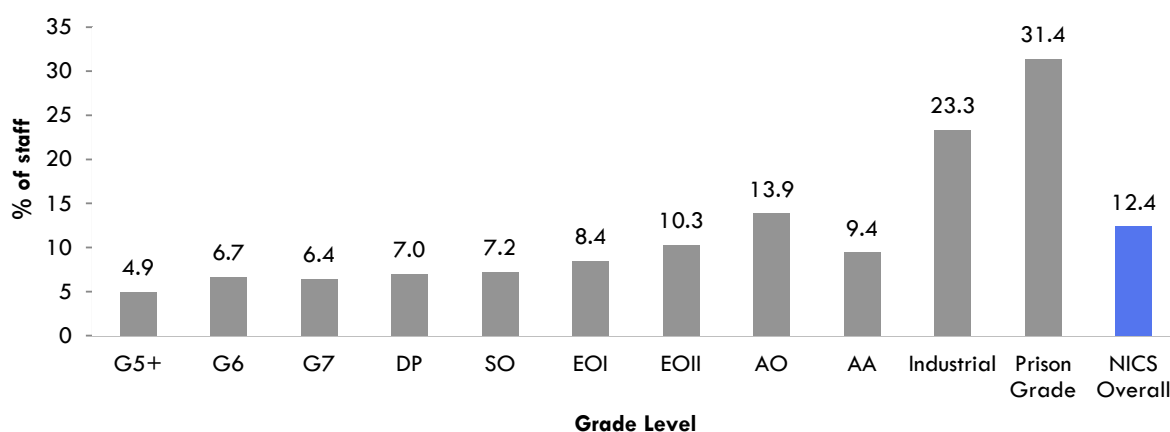
Figure 18 shows Prison Grade staff had the highest incidence of long-term sickness absence - with nearly a third (31.4%) of staff having a long-term absence spell in 2022/2023. This was an increase on the 2021/2022 figure of 30.1%. The majority of grade levels experienced a decrease in incidences of long-term sickness absence spells.

The average long-term duration of Prison Grade absences was 59.0 working days, which was lower than the overall NICS average (66.0 working days). In total, 80.3% of all working days lost by Prison Grade staff were due to long-term absences – however, G5+ staff had the highest percentage (88.2%) of any grade level in this category (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, 13.9% of the AO grade staff had a long-term absence compared with 4.9% of G5+ staff.

Figure 18

One or More Long-term Absence by Grade Level



4.3 Gender

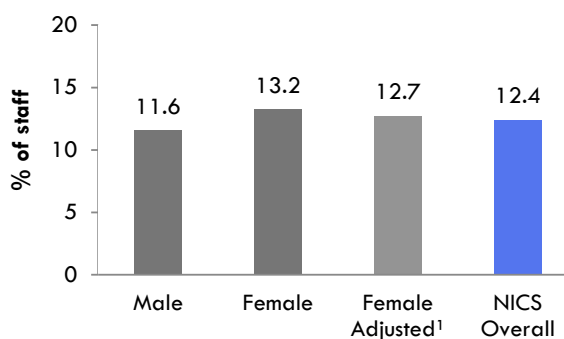
Figure 19 shows females had a higher incidence of long-term absence (13.2%) than males (11.6%), even after absences due to *Pregnancy Related Disorders* were excluded.

On the other hand, the average duration of their long-term absences (63.6 days) was shorter than those of males (68.8 days).

For further information, see Table 8.3 in Appendix 8.

Figure 19

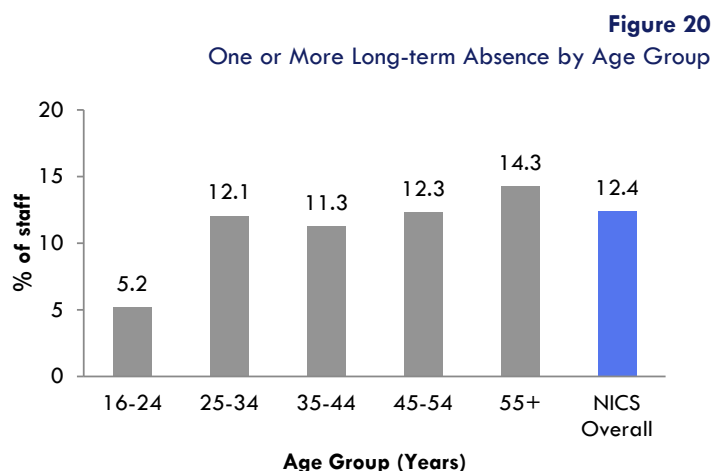
One or More Long-term Absence by Gender



¹ Excludes absences due to Pregnancy Related Disorders.

4.4 Age Group

As shown in Figure 20, a general trend of incidences of long-term absences increasing with age group can be observed. Similarly, excluding the 16-24 age group, the average duration of the long-term absences increased with age (see Table 8.4 in Appendix 8). It should be noted here that the youngest age group (16-24) accounted for only 1.5% of NICS staff.



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 (43.4%) and the working days lost (44.1%).

The second highest reason was *Injury, Fracture*, which accounted for 7.9% of the long-term working days lost and 9.1% of the long-term absence spells, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Reason for Long-term Absence^{1,2,3} (% of Long-term Working Days Lost and Long-term Spells)

Reason for Absence	% of Long-term Working Days Lost	% of Long-term Spells
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	44.1	43.4
Injury, Fracture	7.9	9.1
Chest and Respiratory Problems	6.5	7.1
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	6.0	6.8
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	5.4	3.6
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	5.1	4.2
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	4.4	4.1
Gastrointestinal Problems	4.0	4.4
Back Problems	3.8	3.9
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.5	2.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	1.7	2.2
Nervous System Disorders	1.3	1.2
Other	5.9	6.5
No Reason Specified	1.3	1.3
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0

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

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

³ Between 4 November 2021 and 17 July 2022, the first 10 calendar days of an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as paid special leave on HRConnect, and not as a sickness absence. Between 18 July 2022 and 9 October 2022, this was reduced to the first 5 calendar days. From 10 October 2022, an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as sickness absence. Subsequently caution should be taken when reading trend information.

4.6 Long-term Frequency¹

DoJ had the highest frequency of long-term absences in 2022/2023 at 20.5%, which was a decrease on the previous year's figure of 21.2%. TEO had the lowest frequency at 6.3%, as shown in Table 8.

Half of all Departments reported a decrease in their long-term frequency rate, with TEO experiencing the greatest fall - a frequency rate decrease from 12.6% to 6.3%.

Table 8

Long-term Frequency by Department (2018/2019 to 2022/2023)²

Department	Long-term Frequency Rate (%) 2018/2019	Long-term Frequency Rate (%) 2019/2020	Long-term Frequency Rate (%) 2020/2021	Long-term Frequency Rate (%) 2021/2022	Long-term Frequency Rate (%) 2022/2023
DAERA	11.2	9.7	8.7	10.8	11.4
DfC	15.8	16.1	13.3	13.7	12.8
DfE	9.7	11.2	9.2	9.9	9.5
DE	9.6	10.0	6.9	9.7	11.6
DoF	10.0	10.3	7.7	8.7	8.3
DoH	8.9	10.3	6.3	10.2	10.5
DfI	13.3	13.9	10.6	14.0	14.1
DoJ	16.5	18.0	16.4	21.2	20.5
TEO	9.3	9.2	6.0	12.6	6.3
PPS	15.6	13.1	8.6	10.1	16.3
NICS Overall	13.9	14.0	11.4	13.4	13.1

4.7 Long-term Duration³

In 2022/2023, The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) had the longest average duration of long-term absence spells at 78.7 working days while the shortest average was 49.4 working days in TEO. Six Departments showed an increase in average duration compared with 2021/2022; with the remainder reporting a decrease as shown in Table 9.

The most notable fluctuation was in TEO, where the average duration decreased by 10.9 days to 49.4 days. Overall the long-term duration of absence spells in the NICS increased by 1.7 days.

Table 9

Long-term Duration by Department (2018/2019 to 2022/2023)²

Department	Long-term Duration (working days) 2018/2019	Long-term Duration (working days) 2019/2020	Long-term Duration (working days) 2020/2021	Long-term Duration (working days) 2021/2022	Long-term Duration (working days) 2022/2023
DAERA	64.3	67.1	66.4	63.5	68.2
DfC	62.1	59.6	61.4	60.0	63.0
DfE	59.9	54.5	59.7	60.1	65.7
DE	58.2	61.6	69.0	61.7	61.3
DoF	60.6	63.9	64.4	65.9	66.5
DoH	53.4	67.2	72.2	68.0	64.6
DfI	71.1	70.9	71.7	78.2	78.7
DoJ	61.9	62.7	62.6	63.5	61.9
TEO	73.5	55.0	92.9	60.3	49.4
PPS	60.7	60.1	55.0	59.3	68.3
NICS Overall	63.1	62.8	64.0	64.3	66.0

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

² Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.

³ Throughout this report, the duration of absence relates only to days lost in the specific financial year.

CHAPTER 5

Absence Insight

5. ABSENCE INSIGHT

This chapter aims to provide an insight into some of the findings behind the headline figures.

5.1 Sickness Absence and an Ageing Workforce

The NICS is experiencing an ageing workforce with 57% aged 45 and over. This is an increase from 2012/13 where 51% of the workforce belonged to this age category. The NICS has an older age profile than the economically active comparator population aged 16-64 years. In particular, at January 2023, the proportion of NICS staff aged 50 or over (42.4%) is just over one and a half times that of the economically active population (25.7%)¹.

The median age of staff in the NICS has increased from 44 years old in 2012/13 to 47 years old in 2022/23.

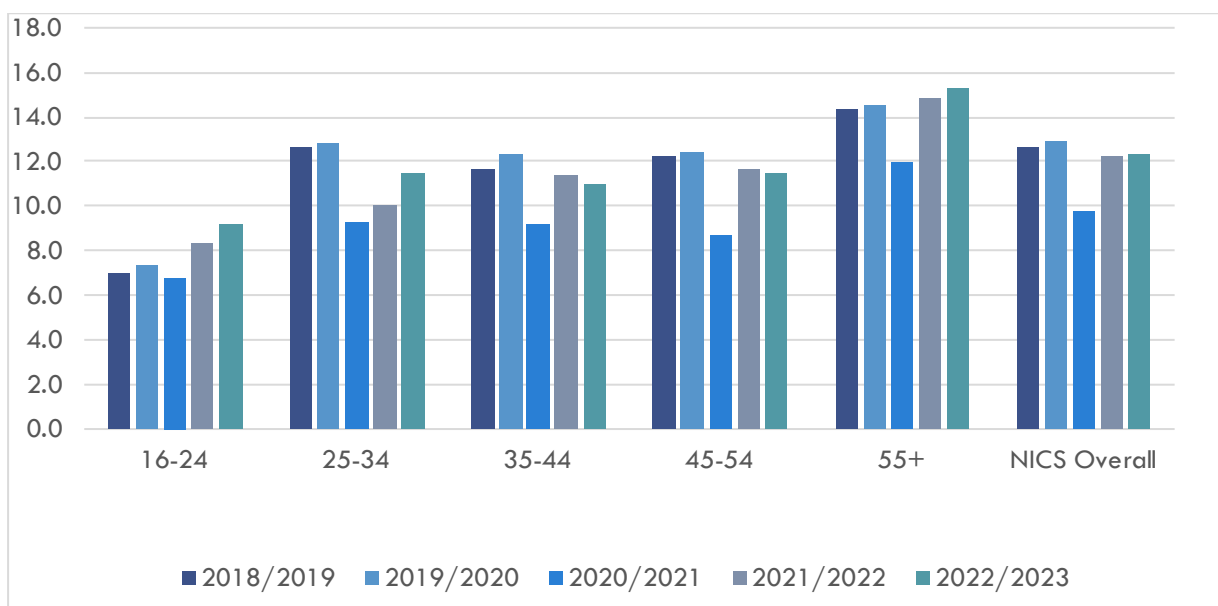
This increase in age profile has had an impact on sickness absence levels within the NICS for a variety of reasons as detailed below.

Average Working Days Lost

As shown in Figure 21 below, average working days lost per staff year has consistently been the highest for the oldest age group (55+) over the last five years. For the past three years the 55+ age group has also been the largest contributor to the overall NICS working days lost per staff year figure (Table 9.4, Appendix 9), despite containing approximately 27% of all staff and representing the third largest age group in the NICS. In contrast, the youngest age group (16-24) has consistently had the lowest number of average working days lost over the past five years. However, this age group is relatively small in number (containing approximately 1.5% of staff) and includes the highest proportion of probationers, whose absence is closely monitored during this time.

Figure 21

Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Age Group (2018/19 to 2022/2023)



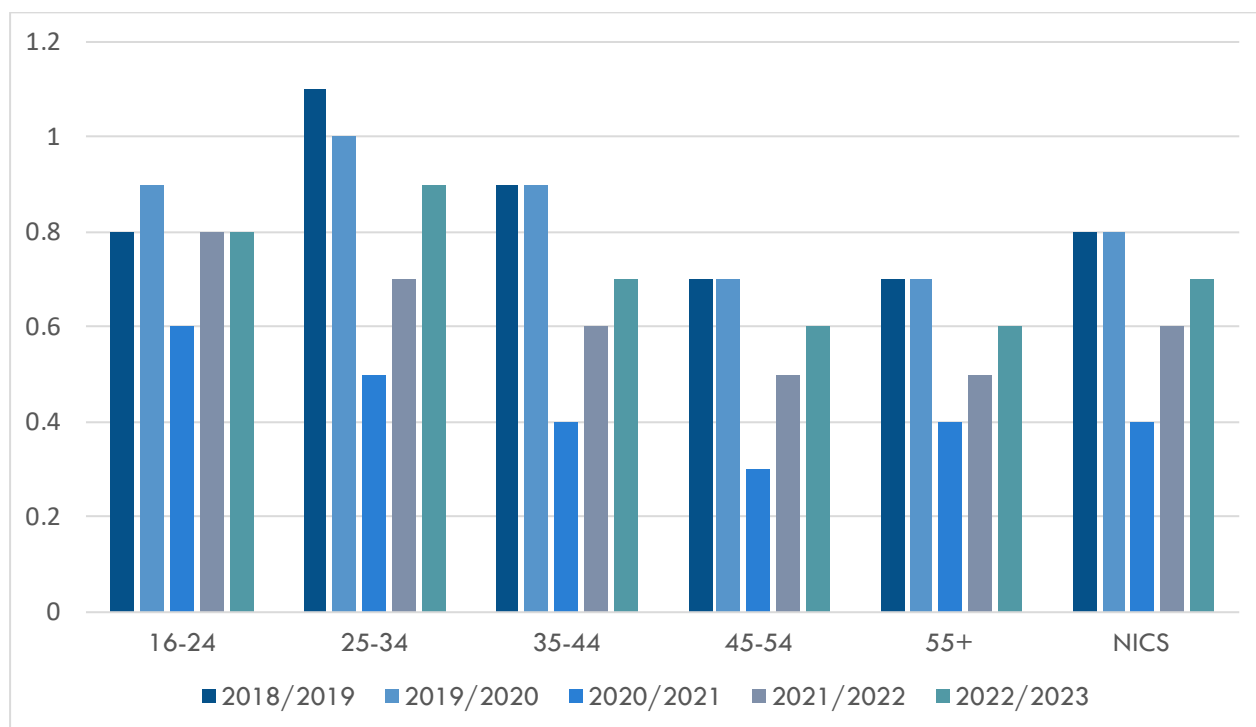
¹'Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2023', [Annual Report](#) published by HRCS/NISRA on 30th March 2023

Average number and Duration of Spells

Amongst the different age categories there is variation in the average number and duration of absence spells. Those in the older age categories tend to have a lower number of average absence spells per staff year compared with those in the younger age groups as shown in Figure 22 below. This trend has remained relatively consistent over the past five years.

Figure 22

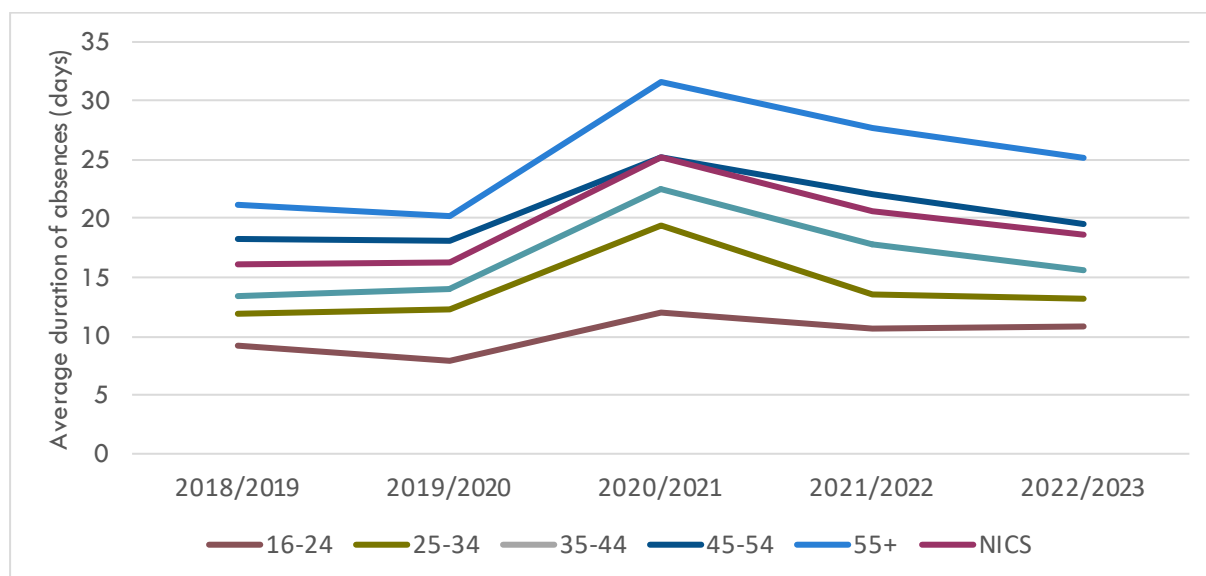
Average Number of Spells per Staff Year by Age Group (2018/19 to 2022/23)



However, as shown in Figure 23 below, in terms of average duration, older age groups contribute more as they tend to be off for longer than younger age groups. Those aged 55+ had an average duration of 25.2 days in 2022/23 in comparison with 10.9 days for the 16-24 age group. This average duration of 25.2 days in the 55+ age category is longer than the NICS overall (18.2 days). Therefore, while the number of occasions older staff are sick are fewer than younger staff, their absence spells last for longer periods of time. This trend has been consistent over the past five years.

Figure 23

Average Duration in Working Days of Absence Spells by Age Group (2018/19 to 2022/2023)

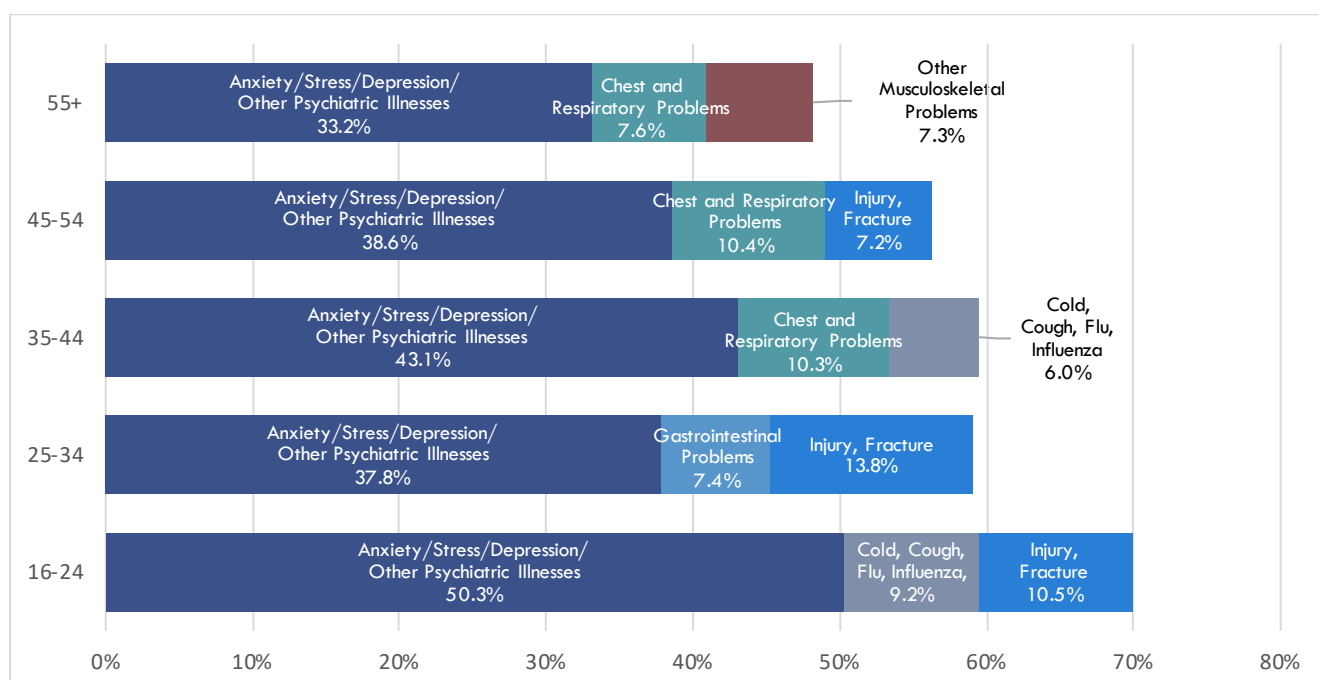


Reasons for Sickness Absence

Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric illnesses continues to remain the top absence reason across all age groups, as shown in Figure 24 below. However, this absence reason contributes less to the 55+ age group (33.2%) compared to all other age ranges, as other illnesses can become more of a factor as age increases. Within the Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric illnesses category, work-related stress is the largest contributor to the 16-24 age group, while in all other age groups non-work-related stress makes up the largest proportion of these type of illnesses.

Figure 24

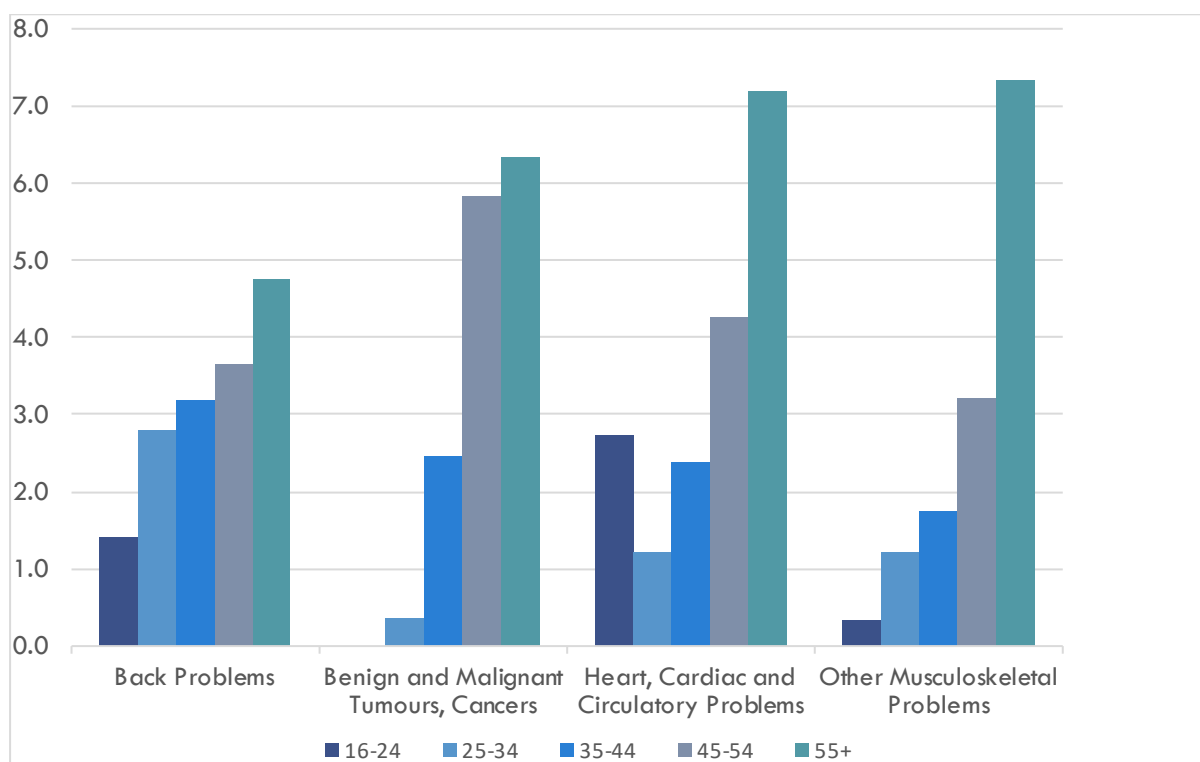
Top three sickness absences reasons by Age Group (2022/23)



Although there are similarities in the top absence reasons across all age groups, other illnesses become more prevalent as age increases. Figure 25 below demonstrates a clear trend of increasing absence with age within four sickness categories: Back Problems; Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers; Heart Cardiac and Circulatory Problems; and Other Musculoskeletal Problems. These absences combined accounted for 25.6% of all working days lost due to sickness in the 55+ age group. As Figure 25 below indicates, these types of absences have significantly less impact on younger age groups.

Figure 25

The Impact of Other Illnesses on Older Age Groups (2022/23)



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).

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.

Any information provided in this report relating to direct salary cost 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.

Table 1.1: Publication dates (2011/2012 to 2022/23)

Report Year	Date Published	Report Year	Date Published	Report Year	Date Published
2022/2023	29/06/2023	2018/2019	20/06/2019	2014/2015	10/09/2015
2021/2022	28/06/2022	2017/2018	26/09/2018	2013/2014	16/10/2014
2020/2021	29/06/2021	2016/2017	20/09/2017	2012/2013	30/10/2013
2019/2020	25/06/2020	2015/2016	22/09/2016	2011/2012	29/11/2012

The report for 2011/2012 was delayed beyond October for reasons detailed in the respective Data Quality section.

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 a Customer Survey in February 2021 or March 2018. The [HRCS Customer Survey Report](#) contains contact details for further information and is available to download via the sickness absence page on the NISRA website, the DoF website and the gov.uk website, along with the reports from previous years. The data presented in the report are also available in OpenDocument Spreadsheet (ODS) format. If the publication is required in a machine-readable format, the tables supplied in Open Document Spreadsheet format can be saved as .csv files by Microsoft Excel or by the free Apache OpenOffice suite.

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.

Between 4 November 2021 and 17 July 2022, the first 10 calendar days of an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as paid special leave on HRConnect, and not as a sickness absence. Between 18 July 2022 and 9 October 2022, this was reduced to the first 5 calendar days. From 10 October 2022, an absence attributed to COVID-19 was recorded as sickness absence. Subsequently caution should be taken when reading trend information.

The self-certification period for sickness absence was temporarily extended from 7 days to 28 days for the period 17 December 2021 to 26 January 2022. This is adhering to Covid-19 guidance issued by the NICS and applied to all new absences during this period.

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.

The recording of the reason for absence uses the Sickness Absence Recording Tool (SART) - details of which can be found at [IOM Sickness Absence Recording Tool Development and Guidance Website](#). 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 which can be found at [GB Civil Service sickness absence figures](#). 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) and can be found at [Scottish Government Workforce Information](#). They are produced on a "per staff year" basis. The Welsh Government includes headline sickness absence figures in their annual Consolidated Accounts, available at [Welsh Government Consolidated Accounts](#). They are produced on a "per staff year" basis also. In the Republic of Ireland (RoI), Public Service sick leave statistics are published annually and can be found at [RoI Public Sick Leave Statistics](#). These are on a "per full-time equivalent" basis. Since 2021, data has not been available for the Welsh Government; this may be due to COVID-19.

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.

Appendix 1: Data Quality

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.*

An [online customer survey](#) was undertaken in February 2021. The most frequently stated reason for using the sickness absence publication was performance monitoring followed by policy making/policy monitoring. The majority (79%) of respondents said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the publication overall. Most of the respondents (86%) said that the statistics fully or mostly met their needs; the remainder said that their needs were partly met. Suggestions for how needs could be better met and HRCS responses to all feedback are documented in Appendix 2 of the customer survey.

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 £26,000.

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. This guidance can be found at [National Statistician's guidance](#). Data are held on a network that is only accessible to the few statisticians who need access.

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:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total Number of working days lost} &= 30 \\ \text{Total Number of Staff Years} &= 1 + 0.5 = 1.5 \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{Working Days Lost per Staff Year} = \frac{30}{1.5} = \mathbf{20}$$

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

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total Number of working days lost} &= 30 \\ \text{Total Number of People} &= 2 \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{Working Days Lost per Person} = \frac{30}{2} = \mathbf{15}$$

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

Table 3.1: Department by Grade Level¹

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+	Working Days Lost per Staff Year DP	Working Days Lost per Staff Year SO	Working Days Lost per Staff Year EOI	Working Days Lost per Staff Year EOII	Working Days Lost per Staff Year AO	Working Days Lost per Staff Year AA	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Industrial	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Prison Grade
	DAERA	6.4	8.5	10.3	11.4	11.5	18.5	5.7	16.0
DfC	10.0	6.7	7.7	10.0	12.3	15.5	14.4	26.1	n/a
DfE	4.0	8.7	9.4	10.6	8.0	18.0	7.8	n/a	n/a
DE	9.5	5.9	6.7	12.6	10.9	13.3	40.2	n/a	n/a
DoF	7.5	6.9	7.7	6.0	8.1	13.3	13.8	36.4	n/a
DoH	10.0	7.9	6.2	17.2	11.2	15.4	19.8	n/a	n/a
DfI	4.7	5.7	7.6	9.0	13.1	16.3	19.4	31.6	n/a
DoJ	3.8	8.9	7.0	12.3	14.5	16.9	12.2	23.3	27.2
TEO	3.3	5.6	8.9	8.0	7.5	3.0	0.4	n/a	n/a
PPS	10.0	14.4	5.4	10.8	17.1	19.3	29.2	n/a	n/a
NICS Overall	6.9	7.6	8.3	9.9	11.7	15.8	13.8	27.4	27.2

Table 3.2: Absence Levels by Occupational Grouping²

Occupational Groupings (with more than 200 staff)

Occupational Grouping	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2018/2019	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2021/2022	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023
	Industrial	17.1	17.1	16.2	24.5
Prison Grade	19.3	20.1	17.7	28.0	27.2
Support Grade Staff	13.1	16.9	9.3	13.3	20.1
Driving Examiner	16.9	13.6	7.8	22.1	18.8
Planning	9.2	15.0	12.6	11.7	11.7
General Service	13.0	13.6	10.1	11.4	11.4
Secretarial/Typing	14.9	10.7	8.3	6.5	11.0
Agricultural Inspector	10.1	7.4	6.4	9.8	10.9
Other	8.9	9.1	6.4	8.2	10.0
Scientific Officer	6.7	8.0	5.8	6.3	8.9
Drawing Officer	12.4	10.7	9.8	9.7	8.6
Civil Eng (inc assistants)	6.2	7.6	5.3	6.2	6.9
Computing	6.7	6.4	4.7	6.6	6.5
Statistician	7.3	8.4	5.4	6.7	5.6
Casual	21.6	2.3	0.0	1.6	1.5

¹ n/a: No cases recorded.

² 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 Department¹

Department	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Self-Certified	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Certified	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Overall	% of Available Working Days Lost Self-Certified	% of Available Working Days Lost Certified	% of Available Working Days Lost Overall
DAERA	0.8	10.0	10.9	0.3	4.6	5.0
DfC	1.3	10.8	12.4	0.6	5.0	5.7
DfE	0.9	8.4	9.5	0.4	3.9	4.4
DE	0.8	9.4	10.2	0.4	4.3	4.7
DoF	1.0	7.4	8.6	0.5	3.4	3.9
DoH	0.7	8.9	9.7	0.3	4.1	4.5
DfI	1.1	13.4	14.5	0.5	6.1	6.7
DoJ	1.3	15.6	17.9	0.6	7.3	8.4
TEO	0.7	5.1	5.8	0.3	2.3	2.7
PPS	1.0	13.9	14.9	0.4	6.4	6.9
NICS Overall	1.1	11.0	12.3	0.5	5.0	5.7

Table 3.4: Certification by Grade Level¹

Grade Level	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Self-Certified	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Certified	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Overall	% of Available Working Days Lost Self-Certified	% of Available Working Days Lost Certified	% of Available Working Days Lost Overall
G5+	0.5	5.6	6.1	0.2	2.6	2.8
G6	0.5	6.8	7.3	0.2	3.1	3.4
G7	0.7	6.3	7.0	0.3	2.9	3.2
DP	0.8	6.7	7.6	0.4	3.1	3.5
SO	0.8	7.4	8.3	0.4	3.4	3.8
E0I	1.0	8.8	9.9	0.4	4.0	4.6
E0II	1.3	10.3	11.7	0.6	4.7	5.4
AO	1.5	14.1	15.8	0.7	6.5	7.2
AA	1.3	12.3	13.8	0.6	5.6	6.3
Industrial	1.4	25.9	27.4	0.6	11.8	12.4
Prison Grade	1.2	23.3	27.2	0.6	11.2	13.1
NICS Overall	1.1	11.0	12.3	0.5	5.0	5.7

Table 3.5: Certification by Gender¹

Gender	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Self-Certified	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Certified	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Overall	% of Available Working Days Lost Self-Certified	% of Available Working Days Lost Certified	% of Available Working Days Lost Overall
Male	1.1	10.1	11.4	0.5	4.6	5.3
Female	1.1	12.0	13.3	0.5	5.5	6.1
NICS Overall	1.1	11.0	12.3	0.5	5.0	5.7

Table 3.6: Certification by Age Group¹

Age Group	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Self-Certified	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Certified	Working Days Lost per Staff Year Overall	% of Available Working Days Lost Self-Certified	% of Available Working Days Lost Certified	% of Available Working Days Lost Overall
16-24	1.2	7.5	9.2	0.6	3.3	4.1
25-34	1.4	9.5	11.4	0.6	4.3	5.2
35-44	1.3	9.4	11.0	0.6	4.3	5.1
45-54	1.0	10.2	11.5	0.5	4.7	5.3
55+	0.8	14.3	15.3	0.4	6.6	7.1
NICS Overall	1.1	11.0	12.3	0.5	5.0	5.7

Appendix 3: Tables Relating to Chapter 1

Table 3.7: % of Available Working Days Lost by Department¹

Department	% Available Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% Available Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% Available Working Days Lost 2020/2021	% Available Working Days Lost 2021/2022	% Available Working Days Lost 2022/2023
DAERA	4.7	4.5	3.4	4.4	5.0
DfC	6.8	6.8	5.2	5.8	5.7
DfE	4.5	4.6	3.4	4.0	4.4
DE	4.2	4.5	2.9	3.9	4.7
DoF	4.7	4.8	3.1	3.9	3.9
DoH	3.8	4.9	3.1	4.7	4.5
DfI	5.8	6.0	4.3	6.4	6.7
DoJ	6.4	7.1	6.1	8.5	8.4
TEO	4.9	4.2	3.4	4.9	2.7
PPS	6.5	5.7	3.0	4.2	6.9
NICS Overall	5.8	5.9	4.4	5.6	5.7

Table 3.8: % of Available Working Days Lost by Grade Level¹

Grade Level	% Available Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% Available Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% Available Working Days Lost 2020/2021	% Available Working Days Lost 2021/2022	% Available Working Days Lost 2022/2023
G5+	1.8	2.1	2.4	3.4	2.8
G6	4.2	3.7	2.5	3.1	3.4
G7	2.7	2.6	2.2	3.1	3.2
DP	3.3	3.6	3.1	3.4	3.5
SO	4.2	4.6	3.0	3.6	3.8
E0I	4.6	4.8	3.4	4.7	4.6
E0II	5.9	6.3	4.8	5.6	5.4
AO	7.9	7.6	5.4	6.7	7.2
AA	7.5	8.9	6.5	5.1	6.3
Industrial	7.8	7.7	7.3	11.1	12.4
Prison Grade	9.0	9.4	8.1	13.2	13.1
NICS Overall	5.8	5.9	4.4	5.6	5.7

Table 3.9: % of Available Working Days Lost by Gender¹

Gender	% Available Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% Available Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% Available Working Days Lost 2020/2021	% Available Working Days Lost 2021/2022	% Available Working Days Lost 2022/2023
Male	5.0	5.0	3.8	5.1	5.3
Female	6.6	6.9	5.0	6.1	6.1
NICS Overall	5.8	5.9	4.4	5.6	5.7

Table 3.10: % of Available Working Days Lost by Age Group¹

Age Group	% Available Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% Available Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% Available Working Days Lost 2020/2021	% Available Working Days Lost 2021/2022	% Available Working Days Lost 2022/2023
16-24	3.1	3.3	3.0	3.6	4.1
25-34	5.7	5.8	4.1	4.5	5.2
35-44	5.4	5.6	4.1	5.2	5.1
45-54	5.6	5.6	3.9	5.3	5.3
55+	6.5	6.6	5.4	6.8	7.1
NICS Overall	5.8	5.9	4.4	5.6	5.7

¹ 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

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	% of Spells Starting in Month Certified	% of Spells Starting in Month Overall
April	4.9	5.6	5.3
May	6.4	6.6	6.5
June	6.2	6.6	6.5
July	4.2	6.6	5.7
August	5.9	7.7	6.7
September	7.1	7.3	7.1
October	11.9	8.9	10.5
November	12.1	9.3	10.8
December	12.8	7.0	10.5
January	10.3	10.8	10.3
February	7.6	10.5	8.6
March	10.7	13.2	11.5

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

Month	% of Spells Starting in Month
April	5.3
May	7.8
June	6.1
July	5.7
August	8.1
September	8.0
October	10.1
November	9.6
December	5.7
January	10.4
February	11.0
March	12.2

Table 4.3: Onset of Absence by Weekday

Weekday	% of Spells Starting on Weekday Self-Certified	% of Spells Starting on Weekday Certified	% of Spells Starting on Weekday Overall
Sunday	0.7	1.3	1.2
Monday ¹	31.6	34.0	32.1
Tuesday	24.9	20.0	22.6
Wednesday	18.1	16.7	17.3
Thursday	15.7	15.0	15.7
Friday	8.2	11.1	9.5
Saturday	0.9	1.8	1.6

¹ It should 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

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.

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

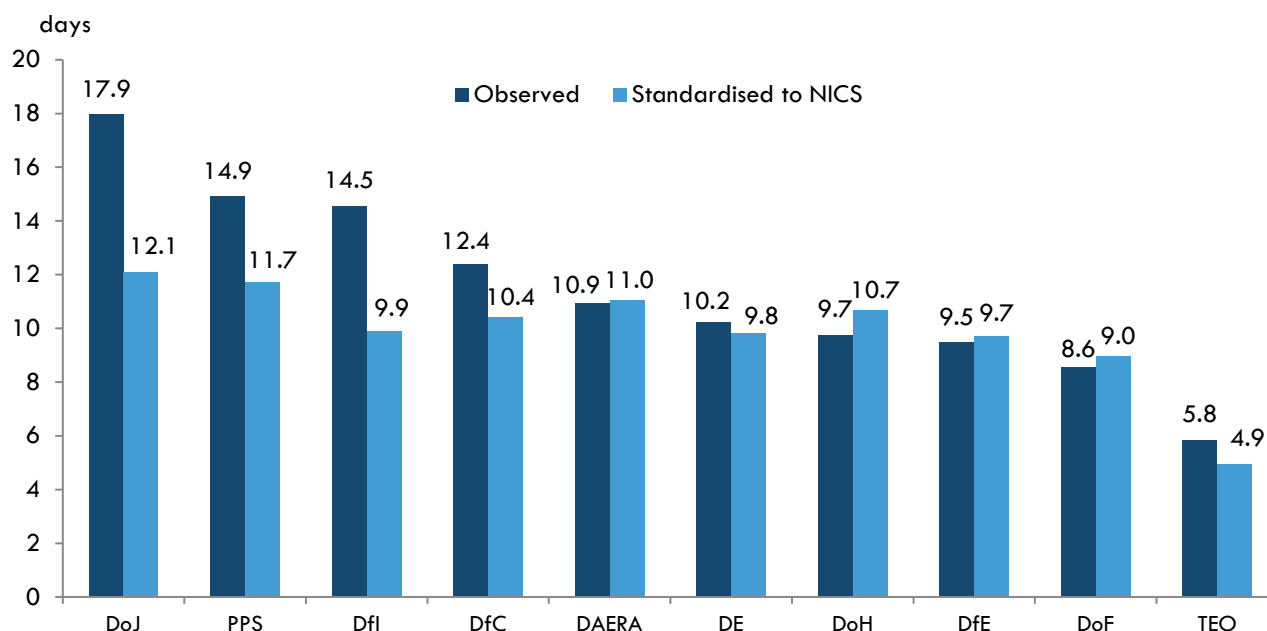
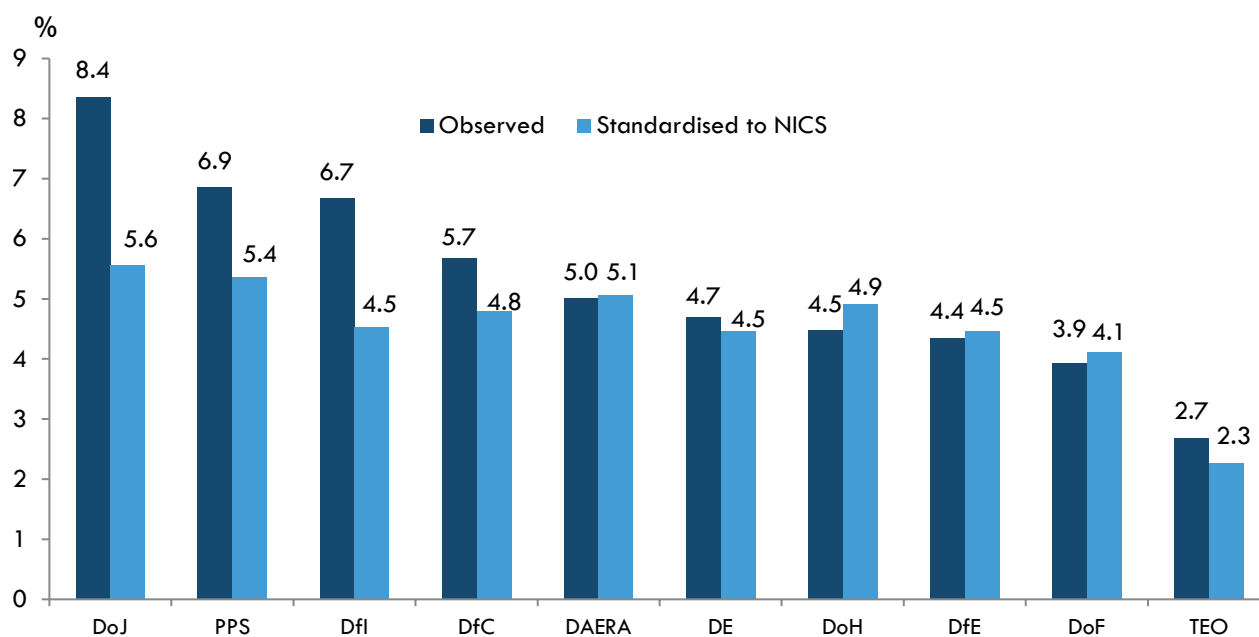


Figure 5.2: % of Available Working Days Lost - Observed and Standardised



Appendix 6: Tables Relating to Chapter 2

Spells of Sickness Absence

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

Department	Self-Certified Absences No. of Spells per Staff Year	Self-Certified Absences Average Duration (Working Days)	Certified Absences No. of Spells per Staff Year	Certified Absences Average Duration (Working Days)	Overall No. of Spells per Staff Year	Overall Average Duration (Working Days)
DAERA	0.3	3.0	0.2	44.0	0.5	21.3
DfC	0.4	3.0	0.3	40.5	0.8	16.1
DfE	0.3	3.1	0.2	42.0	0.5	17.9
DE	0.2	3.3	0.2	38.1	0.5	20.0
DoF	0.3	3.1	0.2	39.0	0.6	15.5
DoH	0.2	3.1	0.2	43.2	0.5	21.0
DfI	0.3	3.7	0.3	50.9	0.6	25.6
DoJ	0.4	3.3	0.4	42.0	1.0	18.9
TEO	0.3	2.7	0.2	30.8	0.5	12.9
PPS	0.3	3.3	0.3	47.0	0.6	24.7
NICS Overall	0.3	3.2	0.3	42.6	0.7	18.6

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

Grade Level	Self-Certified Absences No. of Spells per Staff Year	Self-Certified Absences Average Duration (Working Days)	Certified Absences No. of Spells per Staff Year	Certified Absences Average Duration (Working Days)	Overall No. of Spells per Staff Year	Overall Average Duration (Working Days)
G5+	0.2	2.5	0.1	65.3	0.3	22.0
G6	0.2	2.9	0.2	35.2	0.4	19.9
G7	0.2	3.0	0.2	38.6	0.4	17.2
DP	0.3	3.0	0.2	37.3	0.5	16.3
SO	0.3	3.1	0.2	40.1	0.5	17.3
E0I	0.3	3.1	0.2	41.3	0.6	17.9
E0II	0.4	3.1	0.3	40.4	0.7	16.4
AO	0.5	3.2	0.3	42.7	0.8	18.6
AA	0.5	2.8	0.3	44.3	0.8	16.8
Industrial	0.4	3.6	0.5	56.5	0.9	31.6
Prison Grade	0.3	4.1	0.5	43.8	1.3	21.1
NICS Overall	0.3	3.2	0.3	42.6	0.7	18.6

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

Gender	Self-Certified Absences No. of Spells per Staff Year	Self-Certified Absences Average Duration (Working Days)	Certified Absences No. of Spells per Staff Year	Certified Absences Average Duration (Working Days)	Overall No. of Spells per Staff Year	Overall Average Duration (Working Days)
Male	0.3	3.3	0.2	45.6	0.6	18.7
Female	0.4	3.0	0.3	40.2	0.7	18.4
NICS Overall	0.3	3.2	0.3	42.6	0.7	18.6

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 No. of Spells per Staff Year	Self-Certified Absences Average Duration (Working Days)	Certified Absences No. of Spells per Staff Year	Certified Absences Average Duration (Working Days)	Overall No. of Spells per Staff Year	Overall Average Duration (Working Days)
16-24	0.5	2.4	0.2	42.2	0.8	10.9
25-34	0.5	2.9	0.3	37.6	0.9	13.2
35-44	0.4	3.2	0.2	39.0	0.7	15.6
45-54	0.3	3.3	0.2	42.7	0.6	19.6
55+	0.3	3.1	0.3	47.6	0.6	25.2
NICS Overall	0.3	3.2	0.3	42.6	0.7	18.6

Table 6.5: Number of Absence Spells - % of Staff

Number of Absence Spells	% of Staff 2018/2019	% of Staff 2019/2020	% of Staff 2020/2021	% of Staff 2021/2022	% of Staff 2022/2023
0	51.3	50.7	72.3	62.0	57.8
1	33.4	33.9	22.4	28.0	30.1
2	11.4	11.3	4.3	7.4	9.2
3	2.9	3.1	0.8	1.9	2.2
4	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.5
5	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
6+	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1

Table 6.6: Duration of Absence Spells - % of Spells

Duration of Absence (Working Days)	% of Spells 2018/2019	% of Spells 2019/2020	% of Spells 2020/2021	% of Spells 2021/2022	% of Spells 2022/2023
1-2	28.0	26.6	17.2	22.0	23.1
3-5	37.3	37.4	26.1	30.1	37.3
6-10	7.3	8.2	12.1	11.7	9.0
11-20	7.6	7.9	11.5	10.3	8.2
More than 20	19.8	20.0	33.0	25.9	22.4

Table 6.7: Average Duration of Short-term Absence Spells - Working Days ¹

Department	Average Duration (Working Days) 2018/2019	Average Duration (Working Days) 2019/2020	Average Duration (Working Days) 2020/2021	Average Duration (Working Days) 2021/2022	Average Duration (Working Days) 2022/2023
DAERA	4.8	5.0	6.2	5.7	5.1
DfC	4.3	4.4	5.5	5.1	4.5
DfE	4.3	4.6	6.1	5.8	4.8
DE	4.3	4.7	6.5	5.7	5.3
DoF	4.3	4.4	5.9	5.2	4.6
DoH	4.2	4.9	6.8	6.5	5.1
DfI	5.1	5.6	7.3	6.1	5.7
DoJ	5.0	5.0	6.2	5.6	5.3
TEO	4.2	5.0	6.5	6.0	4.8
PPS	4.9	5.5	7.3	5.6	5.2
NICS Overall	4.5	4.7	6.0	5.5	4.9

¹ 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 2018/2019	% of Staff 2019/2020	% of Staff 2020/2021	% of Staff 2021/2022	% of Staff 2022/2023
0	51.3	50.7	72.3	62.0	57.8
1-5	22.5	22.3	9.4	14.6	19.0
6-10	7.4	7.5	3.6	5.3	5.7
11-15	2.8	3.2	2.1	2.7	2.5
16-20	1.9	2.1	1.4	1.9	1.8
More than 20	14.1	14.3	11.2	13.6	13.3

Table 6.9: Duration of Absence in Working Days Lost

Duration of Absence (Working Days)	% of Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% of Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% of Working Days Lost 2020/2021	% of Working Days Lost 2021/2022	% of Working Days Lost 2022/2023
1-2	2.8	2.6	1.1	1.7	2.0
3-5	8.9	9.0	4.1	5.8	8.0
6-10	3.7	4.1	3.9	4.6	3.9
11-20	7.1	7.3	6.9	7.5	6.6
More than 20	77.6	77.0	83.9	80.5	79.5

Table 6.10: Number of Absence Spells by Department^{1,2}

Department	% of Staff 0 Spells	% of Staff 1 Spell	% of Staff 2 Spells	% of Staff 3 Spells	% of Staff 4 Spells	% of Staff 5 Spells	% of Staff 6+ Spells
DAERA	65.8	26.3	6.5	1.0	0.3	-	-
DfC	53.3	33.1	10.4	2.5	0.5	0.1	0.1
DfE	65.4	27.1	6.3	0.9	0.4	.	.
DE	64.9	27.6	5.8	1.7	.	.	.
DoF	63.6	27.6	7.0	1.5	0.2	0.1	.
DoH	68.5	25.2	5.3	0.8	-	-	.
DfI	61.5	28.0	8.2	2.0	0.3	-	-
DoJ	46.6	32.3	14.3	4.5	1.4	0.6	0.3
TEO	71.3	23.3	4.8	0.7	.	.	.
PPS	60.3	28.8	9.7	0.8	-	-	.
NICS Overall	57.8	30.1	9.2	2.2	0.5	0.2	0.1

¹ Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-).

² n/a: No cases recorded.

Appendix 7: Tables Relating to Chapter 3

Reason for Sickness Absence

Table 7.1: Certification by Reason for Absence¹

Reason for Absence	% of Available Working Days Lost Self-Certified	% of Available Working Days Lost Certified	% of Available Working Days Lost Overall
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	0.0	2.1	2.2
Asthma	0.0	0.0	0.0
Back Problems	0.0	0.2	0.2
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	0.4	0.5
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	0.3
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.0	0.1	0.1
Headache/Migraine	0.0	0.0	0.1
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	0.0	0.2	0.3
Infectious Diseases	0.0	0.0	0.0
Injury, Fracture	0.0	0.4	0.4
Nervous System Disorders	0.0	0.1	0.1
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	0.0	0.3	0.3
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	0.0	0.2	0.2
Pregnancy Related Disorders	0.0	0.1	0.1
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
NICS Overall	0.5	5.0	5.7

¹ 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 Absence¹

Reason for Absence	% of Spells 2018/2019	% of Spells 2019/2020	% of Spells 2020/2021	% of Spells 2021/2022	% of Spells 2022/2023
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	14.4	14.7	23.9	18.2	15.8
Asthma	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Back Problems	5.5	4.7	4.4	4.0	3.3
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	1.2	1.1	1.6	1.3	1.1
Blood Disorders	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Chest and Respiratory Problems	5.3	7.6	19.0	19.7	15.6
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	19.1	19.8	6.8	14.0	20.4
Dental and Oral Problems	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6
Ear, Nose, Throat	4.7	4.6	3.0	3.0	3.6
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Eye Problems	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.0
Gastrointestinal Problems	19.3	18.4	11.9	12.4	15.1
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.6	2.4	2.1	1.9	1.9
Headache/Migraine	2.8	2.6	3.4	2.9	2.3
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1.7	1.8	2.5	1.8	1.8
Infectious Diseases	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.6
Injury, Fracture	5.2	4.8	4.7	4.3	4.7
Nervous System Disorders	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	2.9	3.0	4.0	4.7	3.8
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	3.1	3.4	3.4	2.6	2.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	5.8	5.0	3.2	2.9	2.3
Skin Disorders	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.5
Substance Abuse	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1
No Reason Specified	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.6
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

¹ 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 Absence¹

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% of Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% of Working Days Lost 2020/2021	% of Working Days Lost 2021/2022	% of Working Days Lost 2022/2023
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	38.7	37.4	43.5	39.8	38.0
Asthma	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1
Back Problems	5.7	5.1	3.8	4.1	3.8
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	5.2	5.0	4.7	4.0	4.4
Blood Disorders	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.6
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Chest and Respiratory Problems	3.3	3.9	12.1	13.8	9.0
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	4.5	4.4	1.3	2.8	4.7
Dental and Oral Problems	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2
Ear, Nose, Throat	2.0	1.8	1.3	1.5	1.6
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.4
Eye Problems	0.8	0.9	0.5	1.0	0.9
Gastrointestinal Problems	6.2	6.7	4.7	4.9	5.6
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.6	3.0	1.7	1.5	2.5
Headache/Migraine	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.7	1.0
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	4.0	4.7	4.1	3.4	4.4
Infectious Diseases	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.3
Injury, Fracture	8.4	8.0	5.9	6.7	7.4
Nervous System Disorders	0.9	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.8	5.6
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	4.1	4.9	4.3	3.9	4.0
Pregnancy Related Disorders	4.3	3.8	2.7	2.2	2.0
Skin Disorders	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4
Substance Abuse	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.5
No Reason Specified	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

¹ 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 Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% of Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% of Working Days Lost 2020/2021	% of Working Days Lost 2021/2022	% of Working Days Lost 2022/2023
Anxiety	14.0	15.2	20.2	16.8	19.4
Depression - Not Pregnancy Related	9.6	9.5	8.8	9.5	8.5
Stress - Not Work Related	36.5	34.0	33.3	33.3	37.1
Stress - Work Related	31.9	34.2	29.7	33.9	28.3
Other ¹	3.5	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.4
No Reason Specified ²	4.5	4.7	5.7	4.3	4.4
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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

Sub-reason for Absence	% of Spells 2018/2019	% of Spells 2019/2020	% of Spells 2020/2021	% of Spells 2021/2022	% of Spells 2022/2023
Anxiety	16.4	16.8	20.1	17.5	19.0
Depression - Not Pregnancy Related	9.4	8.3	6.9	7.0	8.0
Stress - Not Work Related	40.5	40.7	39.6	40.8	41.3
Stress - Work Related	25.1	25.5	25.6	26.8	23.7
Other ¹	3.5	3.1	2.4	2.3	3.3
No Reason Specified ²	5.2	5.5	5.3	5.6	4.8
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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

² 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^{1,2}

Reason for Absence	Average Duration (Working Days) 2018/2019	Average Duration (Working Days) 2019/2020	Average Duration (Working Days) 2020/2021	Average Duration (Working Days) 2021/2022	Average Duration (Working Days) 2022/2023
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	43.2	41.3	45.7	45.2	44.6
Asthma	9.6	9.6	18.4	19.1	9.0
Back Problems	16.7	17.6	21.7	21.1	21.2
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	72.3	73.4	76.0	65.8	72.8
Blood Disorders	29.6	23.2	22.8	33.1	41.7
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	7.4	4.7	5.6	20.3	7.6
Chest and Respiratory Problems	9.9	8.5	16.1	14.5	10.7
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	3.8	3.6	4.8	4.1	4.3
Dental and Oral Problems	5.0	4.1	3.9	3.5	5.2
Ear, Nose, Throat	6.8	6.4	11.4	10.3	8.2
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	21.8	25.4	27.4	20.5	22.6
Eye Problems	13.3	15.7	14.6	19.2	17.4
Gastrointestinal Problems	5.2	5.9	10.0	8.2	6.9
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	16.1	20.5	19.9	16.7	24.0
Headache/Migraine	6.0	5.5	5.2	5.1	7.9
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	38.0	43.5	41.8	38.8	44.4
Infectious Diseases	12.7	15.9	28.0	11.6	9.7
Injury, Fracture	25.8	26.9	31.2	32.1	29.2
Nervous System Disorders	25.9	37.2	44.9	43.7	39.5
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	24.7	23.1	26.6	21.1	27.6
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	21.4	23.8	31.7	31.7	32.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	11.7	12.3	21.0	15.8	16.2
Skin Disorders	14.2	12.8	16.8	18.4	16.3
Substance Abuse	19.2	36.2	34.5	26.4	70.4
No Reason Specified	11.0	14.6	20.2	15.0	15.9

¹ Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.

² 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	0.69	0.31	6.3
DfC	0.80	0.37	6.4
DfE	0.42	0.19	4.4
DE	0.38	0.18	3.7
DoF	0.44	0.20	5.1
DoH	0.32	0.15	3.3
DfI	1.07	0.49	7.3
DoJ	1.02	0.47	5.7
TEO	0.37	0.17	6.3
PPS	0.84	0.38	5.6
NICS Overall	0.74	0.34	6.0

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+	0.06	0.03	0.9
G6	0.14	0.06	1.9
G7	0.44	0.20	6.3
DP	0.66	0.30	8.7
SO	0.45	0.21	5.4
EOI	0.57	0.26	5.8
EOII	0.78	0.36	6.6
AO	0.84	0.39	5.4
AA	0.45	0.21	3.3
Industrial	2.14	0.97	7.8
Prison Grade	1.54	0.74	5.7
NICS Overall	0.74	0.34	6.0

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	0.75	0.34	6.5
Female	0.74	0.34	5.6
NICS Overall	0.74	0.34	6.0

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	0.27	0.12	2.9
25-34	0.42	0.19	3.7
35-44	0.85	0.39	7.7
45-54	0.86	0.40	7.5
55+	0.67	0.31	4.4
NICS Overall	0.74	0.34	6.0

Appendix 8: Tables Relating to Chapter 4

Long-term Sickness Absence

Table 8.1: Long-term Absence by Department

Department	Long-term Absence No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Long-term Absence Average Duration (Working Days)	Long-term Absence % of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence
DAERA	13.2	68.2	82.3
DfC	15.2	63.0	77.6
DfE	11.4	65.7	79.2
DE	13.4	61.3	80.5
DoF	9.7	66.5	75.5
DoH	12.4	64.6	82.3
DfI	15.5	78.7	83.9
DoJ	22.9	61.9	78.8
TEO	8.2	49.4	69.5
PPS	18.7	68.3	85.5
NICS Overall	14.9	66.0	79.5

Table 8.2: Long-term Absence by Grade Level

Grade Level	Long-term Absence No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Long-term Absence Average Duration (Working Days)	Long-term Absence % of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence
G5+	6.4	84.3	88.2
G6	9.1	63.5	78.7
G7	8.6	63.8	77.7
DP	9.5	60.9	76.1
S0	10.2	63.5	78.1
E0I	12.0	65.2	79.0
E0II	14.3	63.3	77.3
A0	18.6	67.6	79.8
AA	15.4	72.9	81.1
Industrial	27.1	87.8	87.0
Prison Grade	37.1	59.0	80.3
NICS Overall	14.9	66.0	79.5

Appendix 8: Tables Relating to Chapter 4

Table 8.3: Long-term Absence by Gender

Gender	Long-term Absence No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Long-term Absence Average Duration (Working Days)	Long-term Absence % of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence
Male	13.2	68.8	79.7
Female	16.7	63.6	79.4
NICS Overall	14.9	66.0	79.5

Table 8.4: Long-term Absence by Age Group

Age Group	Long-term Absence No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Long-term Absence Average Duration (Working Days)	Long-term Absence % of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence
16-24	9.3	72.0	72.9
25-34	15.0	55.8	73.3
35-44	13.5	60.9	75.0
45-54	13.8	66.8	80.1
55+	17.7	73.3	84.8
NICS Overall	14.9	66.0	79.5

Appendix 8: Tables Relating to Chapter 4

Table 8.5: Long-term Absence by Grade Level¹

Grade Level	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2018/2019	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2019/2020	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2020/2021	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2021/2022	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2022/2023
G5+	70.5	79.2	89.0	89.2	88.2
G6	84.3	77.9	86.4	83.7	78.7
G7	74.3	72.5	76.9	78.5	77.7
DP	72.1	73.1	82.9	79.3	76.1
SO	75.3	75.5	81.3	77.9	78.1
EOI	74.7	72.7	82.6	80.0	79.0
EOII	75.6	74.6	84.8	80.2	77.3
AO	77.0	76.9	83.2	79.2	79.8
AA	77.1	82.3	88.3	76.6	81.1
Industrial	86.8	84.3	88.2	87.6	87.0
Prison Grade	86.7	85.8	84.6	81.4	80.3
NICS Overall	77.6	77.0	83.9	80.5	79.5

Table 8.6: Long-term Absence by Gender¹

Gender	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2018/2019	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2019/2020	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2020/2021	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2021/2022	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2022/2023
Male	78.1	76.5	83.6	81.1	79.7
Female	77.1	77.5	84.2	79.9	79.4
NICS Overall	77.6	77.0	83.9	80.5	79.5

Table 8.7: Long-term Absence by Age Group¹

Age Group	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2018/2019	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2019/2020	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2020/2021	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2021/2022	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2022/2023
16 - 24	62.4	64.7	68.9	70.0	72.9
25 - 34	70.6	69.9	79.7	69.5	73.3
35 - 44	73.6	74.2	82.3	77.4	75.0
45 - 54	79.4	78.8	83.7	81.0	80.1
55+	82.6	80.8	87.1	85.9	84.8
NICS Overall	77.6	77.0	83.9	80.5	79.5

¹ 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^{1,2,3,4}

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2018/2019	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2019/2020	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2020/2021	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2021/2022	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2022/2023
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	45.8	44.1	48.0	45.6	44.1
Asthma	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.1
Back Problems	5.5	5.0	3.6	4.0	3.8
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	6.5	6.3	5.4	4.8	5.4
Blood Disorders	0.8	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.7
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	-	n/a	-	-	-
Chest and Respiratory Problems	2.2	1.9	9.3	10.5	6.5
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.9
Dental and Oral Problems	-	-	-	-	-
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.0
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.4
Eye Problems	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.9	0.9
Gastrointestinal Problems	3.7	4.5	3.7	3.7	4.0
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.6	3.1	1.6	1.4	2.5
Headache/Migraine	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.8
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	4.7	5.7	4.5	3.8	5.1
Infectious Diseases	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.2
Injury, Fracture	9.0	8.7	6.0	7.3	7.9
Nervous System Disorders	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.3
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	4.6	4.5	4.2	4.8	6.0
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	4.4	5.3	4.5	4.3	4.4
Pregnancy Related Disorders	3.6	3.2	2.5	1.9	1.7
Skin Disorders	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Substance Abuse	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.6
No Reason Specified	0.7	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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

² Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-).

³ Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year.

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year.

⁴ n/a: No cases recorded.

Appendix 8: Tables Relating to Chapter 4

Table 8.9: % of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence by Department¹

Department	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2018/2019	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2019/2020	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2020/2021	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2021/2022	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2022/2023
DAERA	10.4	9.4	8.4	10.4	10.9
DfC	15.0	15.2	12.7	13.0	12.2
DfE	9.5	10.7	8.6	9.8	8.9
DE	8.9	9.9	6.5	9.7	10.6
DoF	9.5	9.8	7.5	8.4	8.1
DoH	8.4	9.5	5.9	9.6	9.5
DfI	12.8	13.1	10.2	13.3	13.6
DoJ	15.5	16.8	15.2	19.7	18.8
TEO	8.7	8.9	6.0	12.4	6.1
PPS	14.6	12.5	7.9	9.7	15.9
NICS Overall	13.1	13.3	10.8	12.7	12.4

Table 8.10: % of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence by Grade Level¹

Department	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2018/2019	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2019/2020	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2020/2021	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2021/2022	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2022/2023
G5+	2.4	3.9	4.9	6.0	4.9
G6	7.2	5.7	6.3	5.3	6.7
G7	5.2	5.0	4.8	6.5	6.4
DP	6.3	6.6	6.5	7.3	7.0
SO	7.5	8.6	6.6	7.7	7.2
E0I	8.5	9.2	7.8	9.1	8.4
E0II	11.4	12.2	10.1	11.5	10.3
AO	16.0	15.8	12.3	13.7	13.9
AA	11.1	13.9	11.1	9.5	9.4
Industrial	17.6	16.7	14.3	19.5	23.3
Prison Grade	22.4	23.2	21.4	30.1	31.4
NICS Overall	13.1	13.3	10.8	12.7	12.4

¹ 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 Gender¹

Gender	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2018/2019	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2019/2020	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2020/2021	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2021/2022	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2022/2023
Male	11.3	11.4	9.2	11.3	11.6
Female	14.9	15.2	12.3	14.1	13.2
Female Adjusted*	13.8	14.2	11.6	13.5	12.7
NICS Overall	13.1	13.3	10.8	12.7	12.4

Table 8.12: % of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence by Age Group¹

Age Group	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2018/2019	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2019/2020	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2020/2021	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2021/2022	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2022/2023
16-24	7.0	7.5	6.2	7.0	5.2
25-34	13.1	12.6	9.4	9.3	12.1
35-44	12.4	13.1	10.7	12.3	11.3
45-54	13.1	13.6	10.5	13.1	12.3
55+	14.1	13.8	12.0	14.6	14.3
NICS Overall	13.1	13.3	10.8	12.7	12.4

¹ 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

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 Year¹

Department	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2021/2022	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023	Change
DAERA	1.35	1.56	0.21
DfC	3.76	3.71	-0.05
DfE	0.45	0.49	0.04
DE	0.19	0.24	0.04
DoF	1.27	1.26	-0.01
DoH	0.25	0.24	0.00
DfI	1.86	1.86	0.01
DoJ	2.72	2.57	-0.15
TEO	0.15	0.09	-0.06
PPS	0.17	0.27	0.10
NICS Overall	12.2	12.3	0.12

Table 9.2: Contribution of each Grade Level to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹

Grade Level	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2021/2022	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023	Change
G5+	0.10	0.09	-0.02
G6	0.10	0.11	0.02
G7	0.44	0.47	0.03
DP	0.93	0.97	0.04
SO	1.05	1.12	0.06
E0I	1.37	1.34	-0.02
E0II	2.23	2.13	-0.10
AO	3.26	3.47	0.21
AA	0.20	0.26	0.06
Industrials	0.85	0.86	0.00
Prison Grade	1.69	1.54	-0.15
NICS Overall	12.2	12.3	0.12

¹ 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 Year¹

Gender	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2021/2022	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023	Change
Male	5.91	5.99	0.09
Female	6.32	6.35	0.04
NICS Overall	12.2	12.3	0.12

Table 9.4: Contribution of each Age Group to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹

Age Group	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2021/2022	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023	Change
16-24	0.12	0.14	0.02
25-34	1.12	1.39	0.27
35-44	3.41	3.22	-0.19
45-54	3.52	3.41	-0.12
55+	4.06	4.19	0.13
NICS Overall	12.2	12.3	0.12

Table 9.5: Contribution of each Reason to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year^{1,2}

Reason for Absence	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2021/2022	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023	Change
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	4.87	4.69	-0.18
Asthma	0.02	0.01	-0.01
Back Problems	0.50	0.47	-0.03
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.49	0.55	0.06
Blood Disorders	0.07	0.07	0.01
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.01	0.00	-0.01
Chest and Respiratory Problems	1.69	1.11	-0.58
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	0.34	0.58	0.24
Dental and Oral Problems	0.01	0.02	0.01
Ear, Nose, Throat	0.19	0.20	0.01
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.05	0.05	0.01
Eye Problems	0.12	0.12	0.00
Gastrointestinal Problems	0.60	0.70	0.10
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.19	0.31	0.12
Headache/Migraine	0.09	0.12	0.03
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	0.41	0.54	0.13
Infectious Diseases	0.04	0.04	0.00
Injury, Fracture	0.82	0.92	0.10
Nervous System Disorders	0.15	0.14	-0.01
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	0.58	0.69	0.11
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	0.48	0.49	0.01
Pregnancy Related Disorders	0.27	0.24	-0.03
Skin Disorders	0.06	0.05	-0.01
Substance Abuse	0.03	0.06	0.04
No Reason Specified	0.16	0.17	0.01
NICS Overall	12.2	12.3	0.12

¹ The Change figures in this table are calculated from unrounded figures.

² 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^{1,2}

Department/Grade Level	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2021/2022	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023	Change	Department/Grade Level	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2021/2022	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023	Change
DAERA G7+	0.14	0.11	-0.03	DoH G7+	0.05	0.07	0.02
DAERA DP	0.17	0.21	0.04	DoH DP	0.06	0.05	-0.01
DAERA SO	0.22	0.33	0.12	DoH SO	0.04	0.03	-0.01
DAERA EOI	0.27	0.27	0.00	DoH EOI	0.03	0.03	0.00
DAERA EOII	0.19	0.20	0.02	DoH EOII	0.03	0.03	0.00
DAERA AO	0.23	0.29	0.07	DoH AO	0.03	0.02	-0.01
DAERA AA	0.02	0.02	0.00	DoH AA	0.00	0.01	0.00
DAERA Industrial	0.13	0.13	-0.01	DoH Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a
DAERA Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	DoH Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
DAERA Overall	1.35	1.56	0.21	DoH Overall	0.25	0.24	0.00
DfC G7+	0.08	0.10	0.02	DfI G7+	0.03	0.04	0.00
DfC DP	0.13	0.12	-0.01	DfI DP	0.11	0.08	-0.03
DfC SO	0.23	0.19	-0.04	DfI SO	0.14	0.12	-0.02
DfC EOI	0.35	0.37	0.01	DfI EOI	0.18	0.19	0.01
DfC EOII	1.36	1.31	-0.04	DfI EOII	0.14	0.13	-0.01
DfC AO	1.51	1.53	0.03	DfI AO	0.57	0.58	0.01
DfC AA	0.08	0.07	-0.02	DfI AA	0.01	0.06	0.04
DfC Industrial	0.02	0.03	0.01	DfI Industrial	0.67	0.67	0.00
DfC Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	DfI Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
DfC Overall	3.76	3.71	-0.05	DfI Overall	1.86	1.86	0.01
DfE G7+	0.04	0.03	-0.01	DoJ G7+	0.02	0.03	0.01
DfE DP	0.09	0.10	0.01	DoJ DP	0.06	0.10	0.04
DfE SO	0.08	0.10	0.01	DoJ SO	0.11	0.08	-0.03
DfE EOI	0.08	0.09	0.01	DoJ EOI	0.24	0.22	-0.02
DfE EOII	0.06	0.05	-0.01	DoJ EOII	0.19	0.16	-0.03
DfE AO	0.10	0.12	0.02	DoJ AO	0.37	0.39	0.03
DfE AA	0.01	0.01	0.01	DoJ AA	0.02	0.02	0.00
DfE Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a	DoJ Industrial	0.02	0.02	0.00
DfE Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	DoJ Prison Grade	1.69	1.54	-0.15
DfE Overall	0.45	0.49	0.04	DoJ Overall	2.72	2.57	-0.15
DE G7+	0.05	0.05	0.00	TEO G7+	0.03	0.01	-0.02
DE DP	0.03	0.03	0.00	TEO DP	0.05	0.02	-0.03
DE SO	0.01	0.02	0.01	TEO SO	0.03	0.03	0.01
DE EOI	0.01	0.02	0.01	TEO EOI	0.00	0.01	0.00
DE EOII	0.05	0.04	0.00	TEO EOII	0.03	0.02	-0.01
DE AO	0.04	0.05	0.02	TEO AO	0.02	0.00	-0.02
DE AA	0.01	0.02	0.02	TEO AA	0.01	0.00	-0.01
DE Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a	TEO Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a
DE Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	TEO Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
DE Overall	0.19	0.24	0.04	TEO Overall	0.15	0.09	-0.06
DoF G7+	0.18	0.17	-0.01	PPS G7+	0.01	0.04	0.04
DoF DP	0.17	0.19	0.02	PPS DP	0.04	0.06	0.01
DoF SO	0.20	0.20	0.00	PPS SO	0.00	0.00	0.00
DoF EOI	0.15	0.13	-0.03	PPS EOI	0.02	0.02	-0.01
DoF EOII	0.17	0.15	-0.02	PPS EOII	0.03	0.04	0.01
DoF AO	0.35	0.37	0.02	PPS AO	0.06	0.10	0.04
DoF AA	0.03	0.04	0.01	PPS AA	0.01	0.02	0.01
DoF Industrial	0.02	0.01	0.00	PPS Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a
DoF Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	PPS Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
DoF Overall	1.27	1.26	-0.01	PPS Overall	0.17	0.27	0.10
NICS Overall					12.2	12.3	0.12

¹ The Change figures in this table are calculated from unrounded figures.² 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 Year¹

Duration	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2021/2022	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023	Change
Short-term absence	2.39	2.52	0.14
Long-term absence	9.83	9.82	-0.02
NICS Overall	12.2	12.3	0.12

¹ The Change figures in this table are calculated from unrounded figures.

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

Table 10.1: Departmental Analysis¹

Department	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2018/2019	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2021/2022	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023
DAERA	10.3	9.9	7.6	9.6	10.9
DAERA Industrial	11.2	9.1	11.3	15.7	16.0
DAERA Non-Industrial	10.2	10.0	7.3	9.3	10.7
DfC	14.9	15.1	11.7	12.7	12.4
DfC Industrial	8.9	15.9	3.2	18.0	26.1
DfC Non-Industrial	14.9	15.1	11.7	12.6	12.3
DfE	9.8	10.2	7.7	8.8	9.5
DE	9.2	9.9	6.4	8.5	10.2
DoF	10.2	10.7	7.0	8.5	8.6
DoF Industrial	6.0	5.6	10.2	36.4	36.4
DoF Non-Industrial	10.2	10.7	7.0	8.4	8.5
DoH	8.4	10.9	6.9	10.3	9.7
DfI	12.6	13.4	9.7	14.2	14.5
DfI Industrial	20.0	20.1	18.1	27.7	31.6
DfI Non-Industrial	10.8	11.7	7.7	11.1	11.1
DoJ	14.0	15.5	13.5	18.5	17.9
DoJ Industrial	3.7	9.4	27.9	21.6	23.3
DoJ Non-Industrial	10.1	12.2	10.2	11.8	11.8
DoJ Prison Grade	19.3	20.1	17.7	28.0	27.2
TEO	10.7	9.3	7.7	10.9	5.8
PPS	14.3	12.6	6.7	9.3	14.9
NICS Overall	12.6	12.9	9.8	12.2	12.3
Industrial Overall	17.1	17.1	16.2	24.5	27.4
Non-Industrial Overall	12.0	12.3	9.0	10.7	10.9
Prison Grade Overall	19.3	20.1	17.7	28.0	27.2

¹ Staff in HSENI and OAGNI are included in the NICS Overall figures only.

Appendix 11: Business Area Analysis

Table 11.1: Business Area Analysis

Business Area	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2022/2023
DAERA, NIEA	9.5
DoF, NISRA	6.5
DfI, DVA	16.1
DoJ, FSNI	12.4
DoJ, LSA	12.6
DoJ, NICTS	11.9
DoJ, NIPS	24.8
DoJ, YJA	19.1
HSENI	7.7

Appendix 12: 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. These quarterly reports provide headline absence figures broken down by geographical area, gender, age group and grade level. They can be found at [Cabinet Office absence data](#).

Headline figures since 1999 for the Home Civil Service overall are also published quarterly (on a rolling 12-month basis) along with some limited commentary and can be found at [Home Civil Service sickness absence](#). 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), along with explanatory notes, at [Scottish Government workforce information](#). They are produced on a “per staff year” basis.

The Welsh Government includes headline sickness absence figures in their annual Consolidated Accounts, available at [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 [RoI Public Sick Leave Statistics](#). These are on a “per full-time equivalent” basis.

The NI Audit Office publish a Local Government Auditor’s Report each year that includes information on sickness absence levels in the local councils. These are presented on a “per employee” basis and can be found at [Local Government Auditors Report](#).

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. This report can be found at [ONS Sickness Absence in the Labour Market](#).

The CIPD also commission a Health and well-being at work survey each year that then reports on levels of sickness absence across the various UK labour market sectors. The most recently published report can be found at [CIPD Health and well-being at work](#). Make UK (formerly EEF) carry out a similar survey for UK manufacturers which can be found at [UK Absence Benchmark report](#).

Appendix 13: List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Form
AA	Administrative Assistant
AO	Administrative Officer
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DE	Department of Education
DfC	Department for Communities
DfE	Department for the Economy
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
DoF	Department of Finance
DoH	Department of Health
DoJ	Department of Justice
DVA	Driver and Vehicle Agency
EOI	Executive Officer I
EOII	Executive Officer II
FSNI	Forensic Science Northern Ireland
G5+	Grade 5 and above
G6	Grade 6
G7	Grade 7
G7+	Grade 7 and above
GB	Great Britain
HR	Human Resources
HSENI	Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland
LSA	Legal Services Agency of Northern Ireland
NI	Northern Ireland
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NICTS	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
OAGNI	Office of the Attorney General Northern Ireland
ODS	OpenDocument Spreadsheet
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
ROI	Republic of Ireland
SO	Staff Officer
TEO	The Executive Office
YJA	Youth Justice Agency