

Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service

2020/2021



Department of

Finance

An Roinn

Airgeadais

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This annual report provides a comprehensive analysis of sickness absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service in the 2020/2021 financial year and contains analyses of trends over the last five years as well as headline figures since 1999/2000.

9.8 working days
lost per staff year



4.4% of available
working days lost



£28.4 million in
lost production

The headline absence figure for 2020/2021 was **9.8 days** (average days lost per staff year), a considerable decrease from 12.9 days in the previous year. The absence level for 2020/2021 is the lowest absence level recorded for over 22 years.

The 9.8 days lost per staff year represented **4.4%** of the available working days in 2020/2021, a decrease on the 5.9% days lost in 2019/2020. In salary terms, this equated to an estimated **£28.4 million** of lost production - equivalent to 2.9% of the total NICS pay bill in 2020/2021. This is a decrease of £8.2 million on the cost of lost production in the previous year (2019/2020).

Nearly three quarters of staff (72.3%) had no recorded sick absence in 2020/2021 - the highest rate for the last five years.

The level of absence within Departments varied from 6.4 days for the Department of Education (DE) to 13.5 days for the Department of Justice (DoJ), with all Departments recording lower absence levels compared to 2019/2020.

The absence level for females (11.2 days) remained higher than that for males (8.5 days) with 0.9 days 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 (4.9 days) than staff who had been employed for two years or more (10.1 days).

Over one in every ten staff (10.8%) had at least one spell of long-term absence - these spells lasted around three months on average. This accounted for over three quarters (83.9%) 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 (43.5%) during 2020/2021. Within this category, work-related stress accounted for 29.7% of the days lost.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) accounted for 1.01 working days lost per staff year in 2020/2021, which was the equivalent of 10.3% of all sickness absence days in the NICS for the period.

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

KEY FACTS

Key Facts	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021
Proportion of Staff with No Recorded Spells of Absence (%)	49.5	46.6	51.3	50.7	72.3
Working Days Lost per Staff Year	12.5	13.0	12.6	12.9	9.8
Percentage of Available Working Days Lost (%)	5.6	6.0	5.8	5.9	4.4
Total Number of Working Days Lost	270,458	279,996	268,334	272,797	207,160
Estimated Lost Production¹ (£ Million)	32.6	33.8	32.9	36.6	28.4
Average Number of Spells per Staff Year	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.4
Proportion of Working Days Lost by Certification: Certified (%)	86.9	86.5	88.1	87.6	90.9
Proportion of Working Days Lost by Certification: Self-Certified (%)	11.5	11.6	10.2	10.1	4.7
Proportion of Working Days Lost by Certification: Uncertified/Missing (%)	1.6	1.9	1.7	2.3	4.4
Long-term Absence: Proportion of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence (%)	76.1	74.7	77.6	77.0	83.9
Long-term Absence: Frequency Rate² (%)	13.5	14.0	13.9	14.0	11.4
Long-term Absence: Average Duration (Working Days)	62.5	62.0	63.1	62.8	64.0
Short-term Absence: Average Number of Spells per Staff Year	0.68	0.72	0.63	0.64	0.26

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

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

CHAPTER 1

Working Days Lost through Sickness Absence

9.8 working days lost on average due to
sickness absence

4.4% of available working days lost due
to sickness absence

£28.4 million lost production

1. WORKING DAYS LOST THROUGH SICKNESS ABSENCE

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

1.1 Introduction

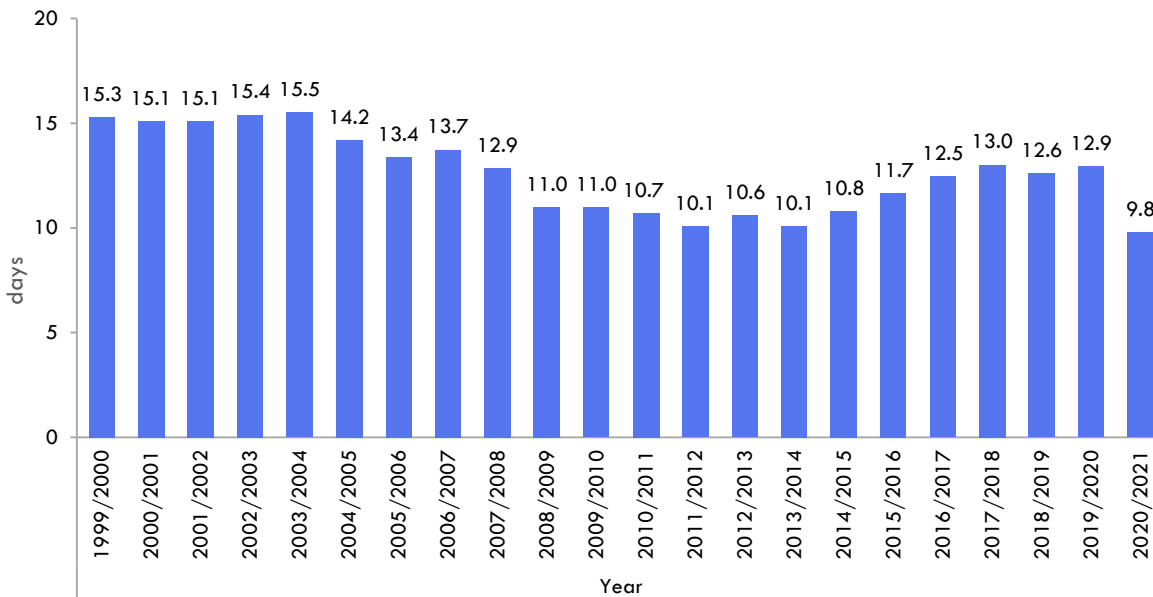
Staff in the NICS lost an average of 9.8 days to sickness absence in 2020/2021 - a considerable decrease from the previous year when staff lost 12.9 days.

In total, 4.4% of all available working days were lost due to sickness absence, equating to around £28.4 million in lost production¹, equivalent to around 2.9% of the total NICS pay bill. This is a decrease on the previous year when 5.9% of available working days were lost at a cost of £36.6 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 lower than last year - the lowest each has been over the past five years. Looking at longer trends in 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 nine 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-two years.

Figure 1

Working Days Lost per Staff Year² in NICS (1999/2000 to 2020/2021)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 0.02 of a day to the overall absence level. If they were excluded, the headline figure of 9.8 days would remain unchanged.

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

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

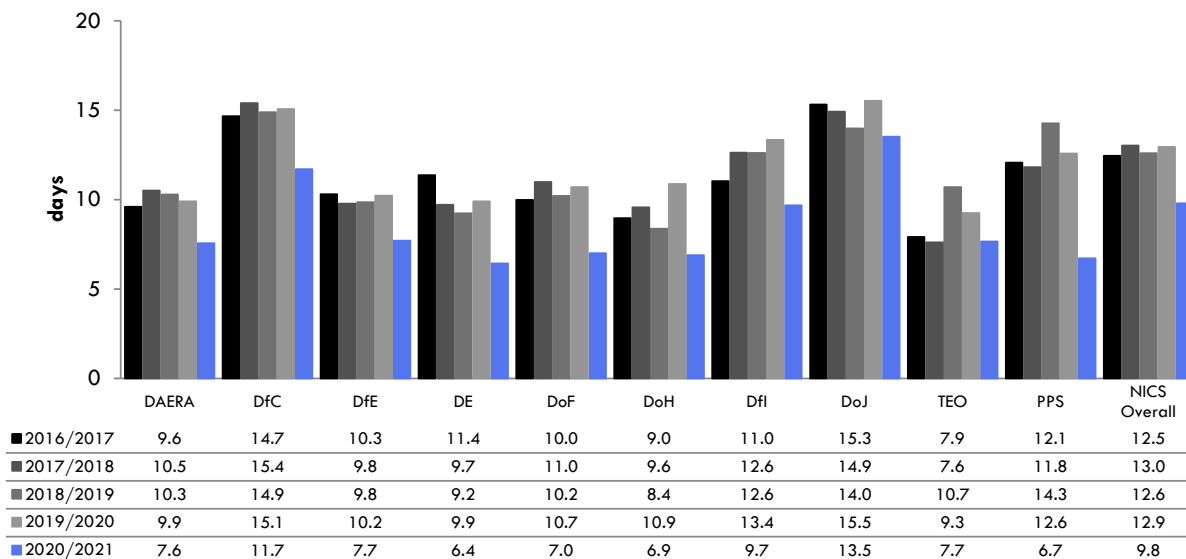
The average number of working days lost due to sickness absence in 2020/2021 ranged from 6.4 days for the Department of Education (DE) to 13.5 days for the Department of Justice (DoJ), as shown below in Figure 2.

All Departments improved on their absence levels from last year, with the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) experiencing the greatest reduction.

DfC contains around 28.7% of all NICS staff and had the biggest impact on the overall decrease in absence level. Within DfC all grade levels (other than DP) experienced a reduction with AO and EOII staff having the biggest impact on this decrease. 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 (2016/2017 to 2020/2021)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 13.5 to 10.5 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.

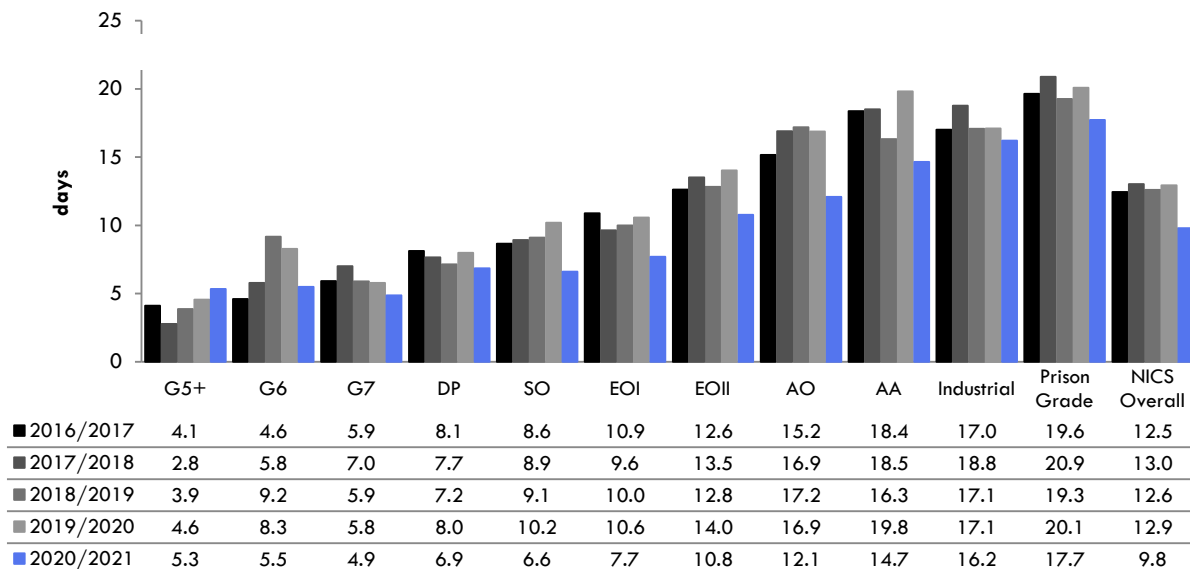
There is notable variation in absence levels across grade levels, although a general trend of decreasing levels of absence as grade level increases can be observed. As shown in Figure 3, the average number of working days lost in 2020/2021 ranged from 4.9 days for staff at Grade 7 level to 17.7 days for Prison Grade staff.

All grade levels aside from G5+ reported an improvement compared with 2019/2020, with AA staff experiencing the largest decrease.

The AO level encompassed the largest number of staff - representing 21.7% of the NICS - and had the biggest impact on the decrease in the overall NICS absence level in 2020/2021, contributing 1.29 days to the 3.16 decrease in working days lost. For detailed information on each grade level's contribution to the overall NICS absence level, see Table 9.2 in Appendix 9.

Figure 3

Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Analogous Grade Level (2016/2017 to 2020/2021)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 decreased for males and females in 2020/2021, with males experiencing an average of 8.5 days and females an average of 11.2 days.

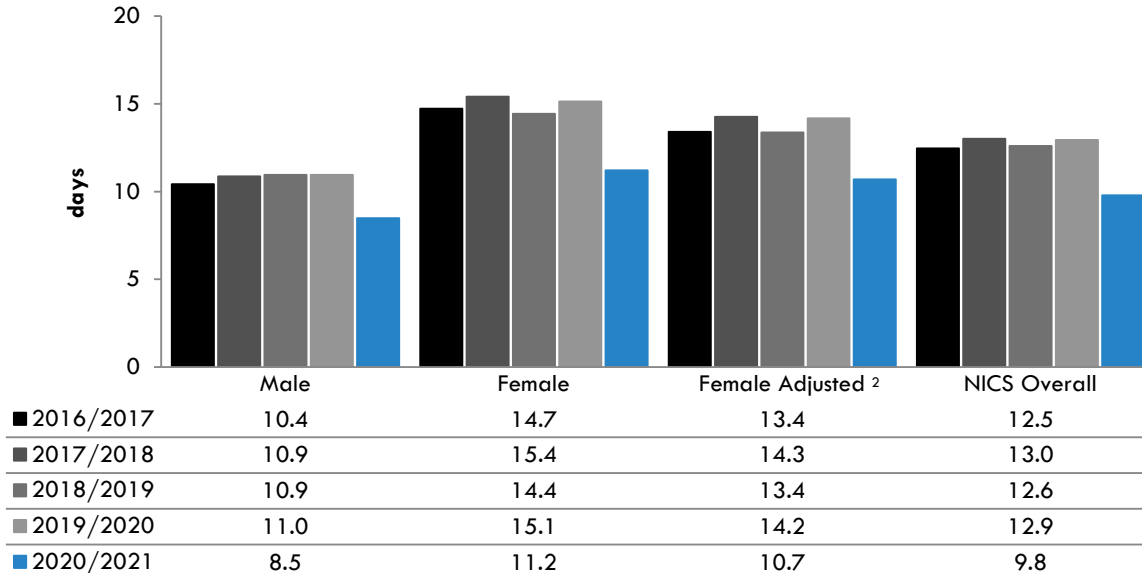
Female staff have historically had a higher level of absence than males, with a difference of around 4 days observed in recent years. However in 2020/2021 this difference was reduced to 2.7 days, the size of the gap having decreased by 1.4 of a day from 2019/2020. There are also other factors to take 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 11.2 days to 10.7 days. If all gender-specific absences¹ were excluded from the absence figures the difference between male and female absence would fall to 1.8 days (10.2 days for females and 8.4 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 (2016/2017 to 2020/2021)



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 4.9 days through sickness absence in 2020/2021. This was over five days less than the average number of days lost (10.1 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 in probation. For probationary staff, each absence spell leads to a review and the consideration of potential inefficiency action.

Table 1

Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Length of Service (2016/2017 to 2020/2021)

Length of Service	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2016/2017	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2017/2018	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2018/2019	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021
Less than 1 year	2.1	4.4	5.0	3.6	2.5
1 to less than 2 years	5.7	7.1	8.9	8.3	6.0
Less than 2 years	3.0	5.8	7.4	6.1	4.9
2 to less than 3 years	6.8	7.9	12.3	13.0	11.5
3 to less than 4 years	12.4	10.1	14.4	16.1	10.7
4 to less than 5 years	11.4	11.6	13.0	11.5	12.0
5 years or more	12.7	13.4	12.8	13.2	10.0
2 years or more	12.6	13.2	12.8	13.3	10.1
NICS Overall	12.5	13.0	12.6	12.9	9.8

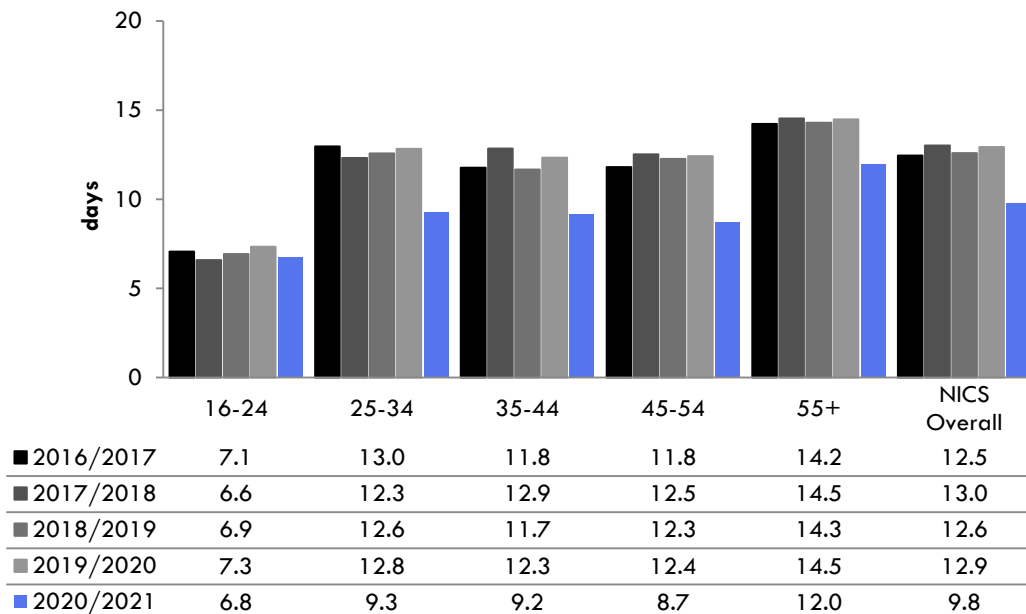
1.6 Age Group

Figure 5 shows the average number of working days lost ranged from 6.8 days for staff aged 16-24 to 12.0 days for staff aged 55+. It should be noted, however, that the youngest age group (16-24) accounted for less than 1% of NICS staff.

Staff in all age groups experienced a decrease in absence levels, with those staff in the 45-54 age group experiencing the largest decrease. 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 (2016/2017 to 2020/2021)



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.

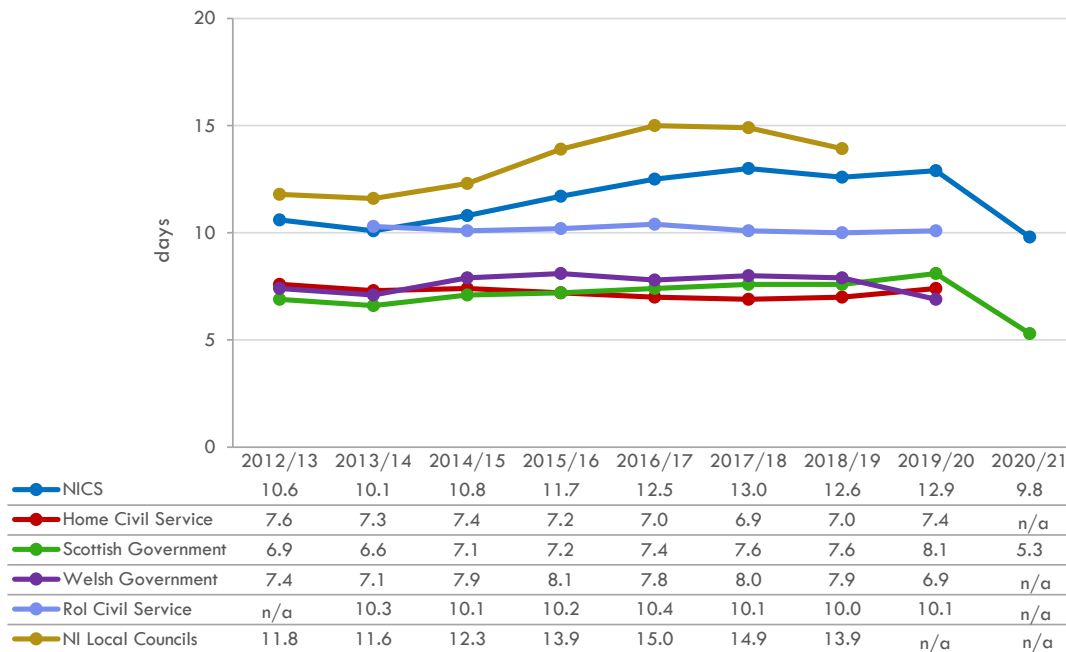
Comparison with other Civil Service Sickness Absence Statistics/Local Councils (2012/2013 to 2020/2021)

Each public sector organisation listed below in Figure 6 varies in how they report sickness absence statistics. Like the NICS, the Home Civil Service, Scottish Government and Welsh Government report on a per Staff Year basis although other steps in the recording differ from that of the NICS. Without detailed, published methodologies from these organisations it is not possible to assess comparability of these figures to the NICS. The Republic of Ireland Civil Service reports absence on a per full time equivalent basis and NI Local Councils report on a per employee basis.

Figure 6 shows the average working days lost per staff year decreased considerably from 2019/20 to 2020/21 for the NICS and Scottish Government. There were no 2020/21 figures available for the other areas at the time of publication. For more detailed information and links to each organisations sickness absence statistics, see Appendix 11.

Figure 6

Average Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹ in UK/Rol Civil Service and Local Councils (2012/13 to 2020/21)^{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 2019.

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. However, due to Covid-19 related complications, CIPD were unable to report reliable sickness absence rates for the first time in over twenty years. Make UK¹ carry out a similar survey for UK manufacturers.

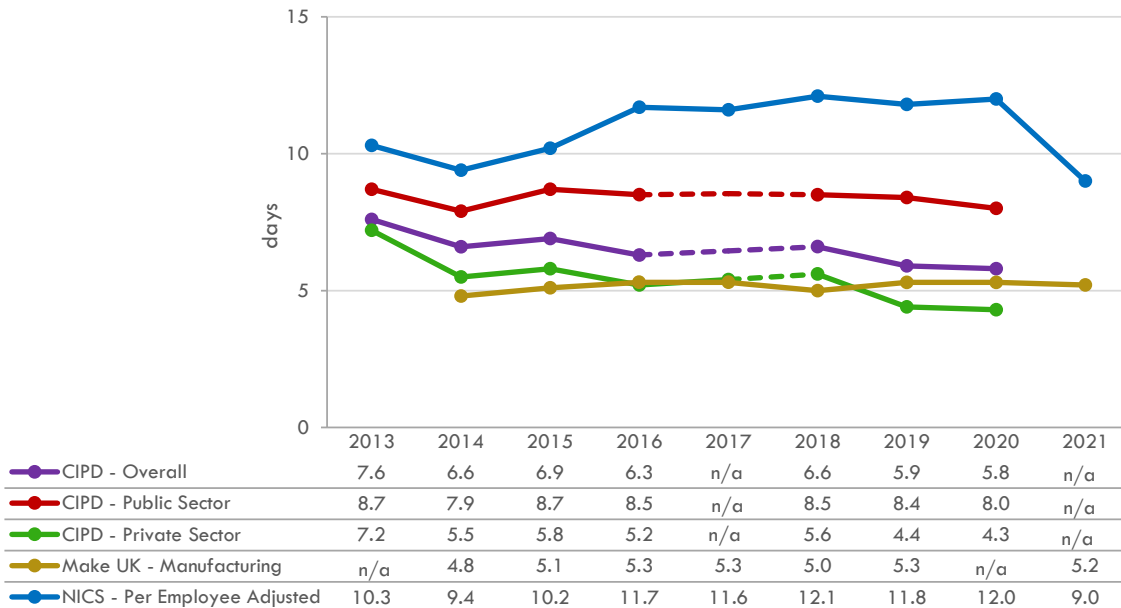
As their figures are normally based on survey returns they can be affected by response bias. For example, firms with solid methods of data collection and more robust/acceptable figures to report may be the ones most likely to send in their figures.

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 decreased from 12.0 days in 2020 to 9.0 days in 2021. However it is again worth noting care should be taken when comparing these figures due to differing methods of data collection/reporting.

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

Figure 7

Average Working Days Lost per Employee CIPD/Make UK³ (2013 to 2021)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. The figures also exclude the top and bottom 5% of responses and are reported on a "per employee" basis – a methodology that tends to report a lower level of absence than a "per Staff Year" approach. The figures reported by CIPD for 2020 relate to their survey undertaken in October/November 2019. The Make UK figures are presented in a similar manner above while the NICS per Employee Adjusted figures for 2021 relate to the 2020/2021 financial year for comparison purposes.

⁴ n/a: No figures published/available.

CHAPTER 2

Spells of Sickness Absence

72.3% of staff had **no** sickness absence

43.3% of absence spells lasted five working days or less

90.9% 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 2020/2021, nearly three quarters of all staff (72.3%) had no spells of sickness absence - a considerable increase from the previous year when 50.7% of staff had none. One spell of absence was recorded for 22.4% of staff, 4.3% had two spells, while the remaining 1.0% of staff were absent on three or more occasions.

The proportion of staff with no absence varied markedly between Departments from 63.6% in DoJ to 81.8% in TEO (see Table 6.10 in Appendix 6).

Figure 9 shows that 9.4% of staff were absent for between one and five days in total during 2020/2021. Meanwhile, the percentage of staff who were absent for a total of more than 20 days during the year fell to 11.2% - a decrease on last year's figure of 14.3% (see Table 6.8 in Appendix 6).

Figure 8
Number of Absence Spells

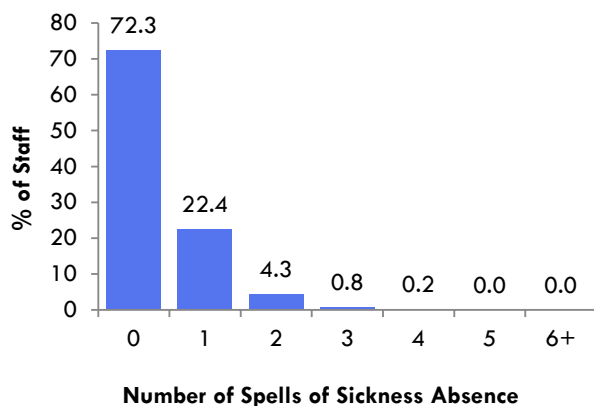
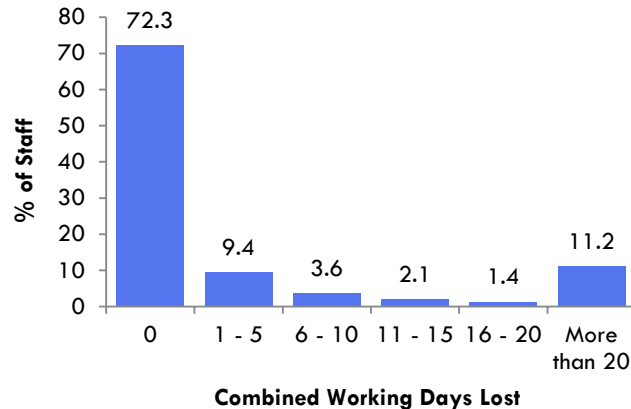


Figure 9
Combined Working Days Lost¹

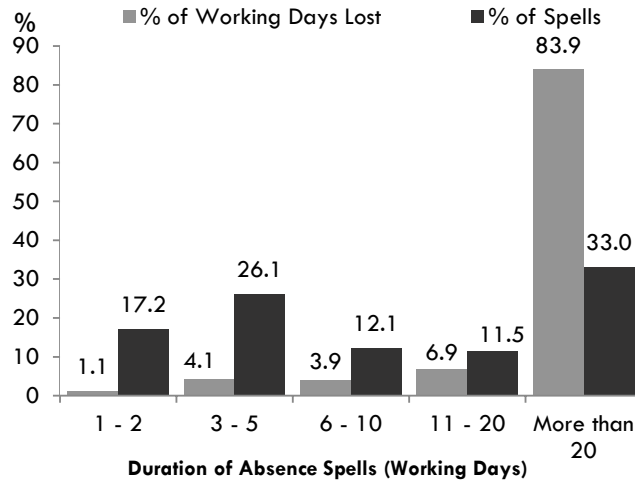


¹ The total number of working days lost for an individual, counted across all their absence spells, during the financial year.

2.2 Duration of Absence Spells

Around 8,200 sickness absence spells were recorded in 2020/2021, less than half of all spells recorded in the previous year. Figure 10 shows that 43.3% of spells were relatively short - lasting five working days or less. This is a substantial decrease from recent years where absences lasting five working days or less typically represented around 65% of all spells. In 20/21 such absences only accounted for 5.2% of the total working days lost to sickness absence. In total, short-term absences (those lasting 20 working days or less) accounted for 66.9% of all spells.

Figure 10
Duration of Absence Spells



Long-term absences (those lasting more than 20 days) made up the vast majority of all working days lost. Although they represented only 33.0% of spells, they accounted for 83.9% of all working days lost, as shown in Figure 10. This is a notable increase on recent years where long-term absences typically represented around 20% or less of all spells.

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

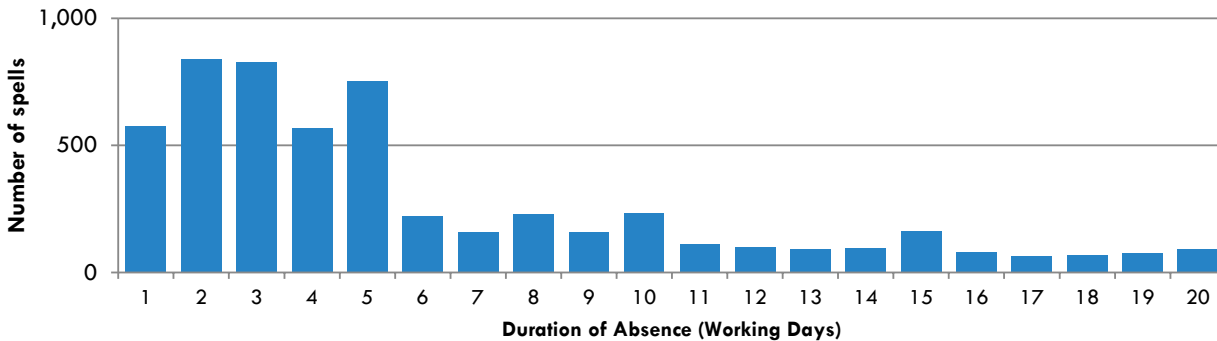
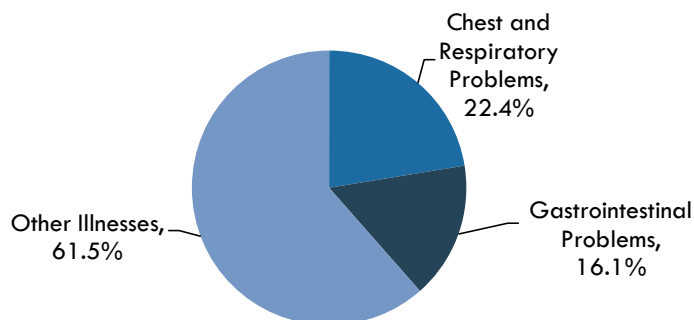


Figure 11 shows just under 850 spells of absences lasted for two working days - the most frequent duration of all absences.

Short-term absence spells were predominately due to *Chest and Respiratory Problems* (22.4%) or *Gastrointestinal Problems* (16.1%) 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. For specific analysis of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) absences see section 3.5.

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



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

2.3 Absence Certification

All NICS staff are required to have their spells of sickness absence certified. For absences of seven calendar days or less staff are able to self-certify whereas, for longer absences, a Medical Certificate from a medical practitioner or hospital is required. Given that 2020/2021 has seen an increase in the proportion of spells being attributable to long-term absence (see section 2.2), it is not surprising that the majority (53.8%) of spells were medically certified, with self-certified absences making up a further 36.3% of the total, as shown in Figure 13 below.

Absences which were uncertified or missing a certification have been classified here as 'other' and accounted for 9.9% 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 days while certified absences lasted 42.5 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 90.9% of the total working days lost, equating to 8.9 days lost per staff year or 4.0% of the available working days (see Table 3.3 in Appendix 3). Self-certified absences accounted for a further 4.7% of the working days lost while 'other' absences made up the remaining 4.4%, 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

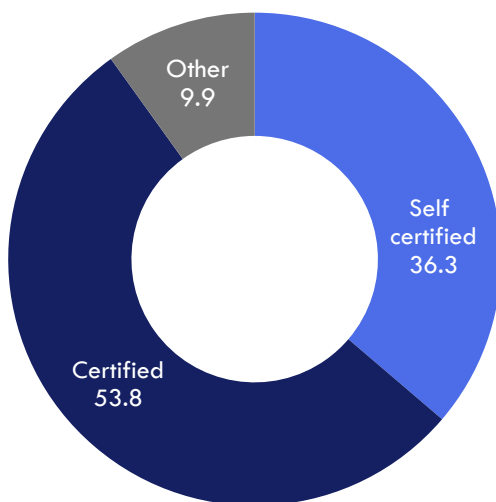
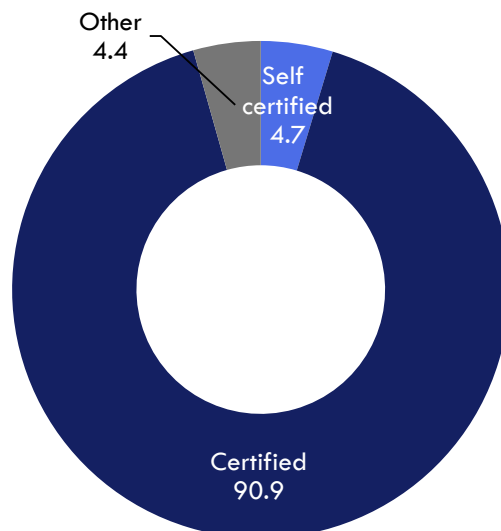


Figure 14
% of Working Days Lost by Certification



CHAPTER 3

Reason for Sickness Absence

The main reason for absence was

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

accounting for **over 1 in 2.5** working days lost

3. REASON FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE

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

3.1 NICS Overall

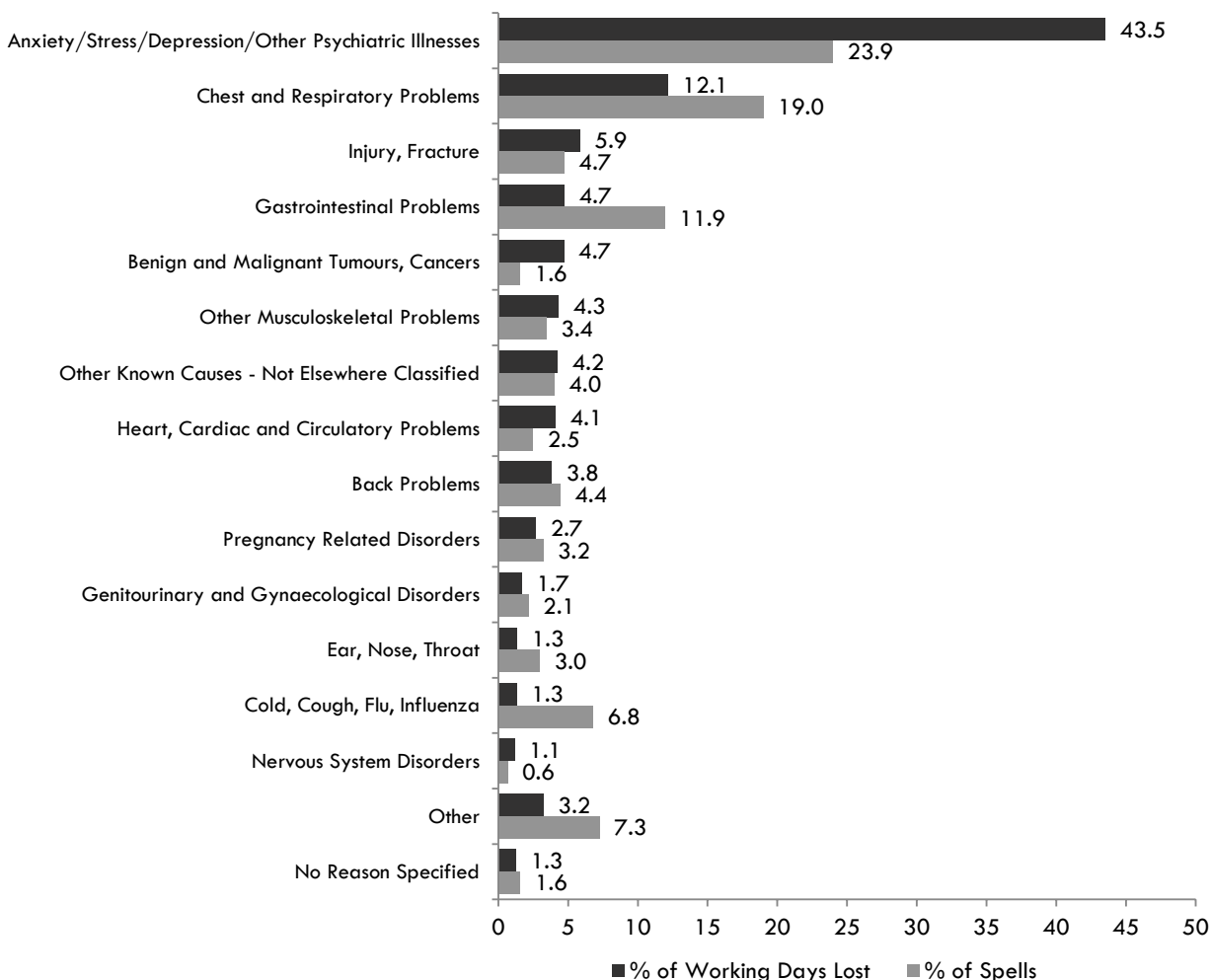
Absences recorded as *Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* or *Chest and Respiratory Problems* accounted for 42.9% of all absence spells in 2020/2021. Both illnesses also accounted for the highest proportion of working days lost.

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 43.5% of the total working days lost while 29.7% 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^{1,2}

Reason for Absence



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

² 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 76.0 working days, as shown in Table 2. These absences, however, were quite rare and only accounted for 1.6% of absence spells. By contrast, absences due to *Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* not only had the second highest average duration (45.7 working days) but also accounted for 23.9% of spells.

At the other end of the scale, absences due to *Dental and Oral Problems* had the shortest average duration at 3.9 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	76.0
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	45.7
Nervous System Disorders	44.9
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	41.8
Substance Abuse	34.5
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	31.7
Injury, Fracture	31.2
Infectious Diseases	28.0
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	27.4
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	26.6
Blood Disorders	22.8
Back Problems	21.7
Pregnancy Related Disorders	21.0
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	19.9
Asthma	18.4
Skin Disorders	16.8
Chest and Respiratory Problems	16.1
Eye Problems	14.6
Ear, Nose, Throat	11.4
Gastrointestinal Problems	10.0
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	5.6
Headache/Migraine	5.2
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	4.8
Dental and Oral Problems	3.9
No Reason Specified	20.2

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 Prison Grade staff experienced an increase in the proportion of working days lost to this reason compared with 2019/2020. EOII staff experienced the most notable change, which saw the proportion rise from 38.1% to 48.9%.

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 the highest level of *Back Problems*. This situation is likely to reflect the type of work undertaken by these grades.

Table 3^{1,2,3}

Reason for Absence by Grade Level

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost 67+	% of Working Days Lost DP	% of Working Days Lost SO	% of Working Days Lost EOI	% 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	40.7	41.0	39.7	42.6	48.9	45.4	46.7	35.6	40.2
Asthma	n/a	-	n/a	n/a	-	-	-	0.4	0.7
Back Problems	4.7	1.0	4.4	3.4	2.3	3.7	8.8	9.5	4.1
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	8.4	6.2	5.1	7.4	4.5	4.5	10.3	1.8	0.5
Blood Disorders	-	-	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.2	-	-	-
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	-	-	n/a	n/a	0.1
Chest and Respiratory Problems	9.8	11.8	11.5	11.8	12.1	12.0	11.2	9.8	16.0
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	1.7	1.6	1.5	0.9	0.9	1.5	1.0	0.8	1.8
Dental and Oral Problems	0.1	0.2	0.1	-	0.1	0.3	-	0.2	0.1
Ear, Nose, Throat	0.8	0.7	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.2	0.7	0.4	2.4
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	-	1.3	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Eye Problems	1.0	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.7	-	-	0.0
Gastrointestinal Problems	3.4	6.3	4.0	6.1	5.1	4.9	0.9	1.4	5.0
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.6	1.9	2.4	2.1	0.9	1.9	2.2	2.3	0.6
Headache/Migraine	1.1	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.2	1.3	0.2
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	3.5	4.9	4.5	5.8	3.7	3.1	6.5	6.6	2.9
Infectious Diseases	-	n/a	0.2	0.5	0.8	0.3	-	-	-
Injury, Fracture	4.0	3.0	5.3	3.8	4.7	4.6	1.3	15.5	11.8
Nervous System Disorders	1.1	1.3	2.1	0.6	0.9	1.4	2.2	-	n/a
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	7.4	8.5	3.3	4.1	3.1	2.9	1.2	3.1	6.9
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	2.6	4.1	5.9	3.3	4.8	4.5	3.2	6.2	2.7
Pregnancy Related Disorders	3.2	3.3	3.8	1.7	2.1	3.9	1.6	-	1.5
Skin Disorders	-	0.3	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.3	n/a	-	0.4
Substance Abuse	n/a	-	n/a	-	-	0.7	n/a	-	n/a
No Reason Specified	0.9	0.7	1.3	1.9	1.8	0.8	-	1.8	1.5
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 over 10 years *Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* was the reason behind the highest percentage of working days lost for both males and females.

The second highest reason for both males and females was *Chest and Respiratory Problems*, accounting for 12.5% of working days lost for males and 11.8% for females, as shown in Table 4.

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	43.5	43.5
Asthma	0.2	-
Back Problems	5.2	2.7
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	3.8	5.5
Blood Disorders	0.5	0.2
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.0	n/a
Chest and Respiratory Problems	12.5	11.8
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	1.5	1.2
Dental and Oral Problems	0.2	0.1
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.3	1.3
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.3	0.5
Eye Problems	0.6	0.4
Gastrointestinal Problems	5.1	4.5
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	1.1	2.2
Headache/Migraine	0.8	0.6
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	6.1	2.4
Infectious Diseases	0.2	0.5
Injury, Fracture	6.4	5.4
Nervous System Disorders	1.3	1.0
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	3.8	4.6
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	3.9	4.6
Pregnancy Related Disorders	n/a	4.9
Skin Disorders	0.6	0.3
Substance Abuse	0.5	-
No Reason Specified	1.0	1.4
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.

Chest and Respiratory Problems accounted for the second highest percentage of working days lost for all age groups aside from the 16-24 category. It should also be noted that the 16-24 age group accounted for less than 1% of NICS staff when considering the high levels of *Injury, Fracture* within this category.

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	35.4	45.1	49.5	45.4	36.5
Asthma	n/a	0.0	-	0.2	0.2
Back Problems	4.8	3.5	4.5	3.2	3.8
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	n/a	3.1	2.5	3.9	7.9
Blood Disorders	-	-	0.2	0.3	0.5
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	n/a	-	-	-	n/a
Chest and Respiratory Problems	6.4	11.5	12.5	13.7	10.8
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.4	0.8
Dental and Oral Problems	-	0.1	0.2	0.2	-
Ear, Nose, Throat	-	2.3	1.3	1.3	1.2
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	n/a	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.3
Eye Problems	n/a	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.7
Gastrointestinal Problems	8.3	4.4	3.7	5.2	5.3
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	n/a	0.3	2.1	2.2	1.4
Headache/Migraine	0.6	1.1	0.6	1.1	0.3
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	n/a	0.6	2.7	4.5	6.0
Infectious Diseases	-	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.7
Injury, Fracture	21.4	6.2	4.0	5.7	7.2
Nervous System Disorders	n/a	1.9	1.2	1.0	1.0
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	4.3	4.1	2.9	5.0	4.8
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	-	3.6	2.1	2.7	7.7
Pregnancy Related Disorders	3.6	8.9	6.2	-	-
Skin Disorders	-	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.7
Substance Abuse	n/a	n/a	0.5	0.1	0.2
No Reason Specified	-	0.7	0.6	1.1	2.0
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 (-).

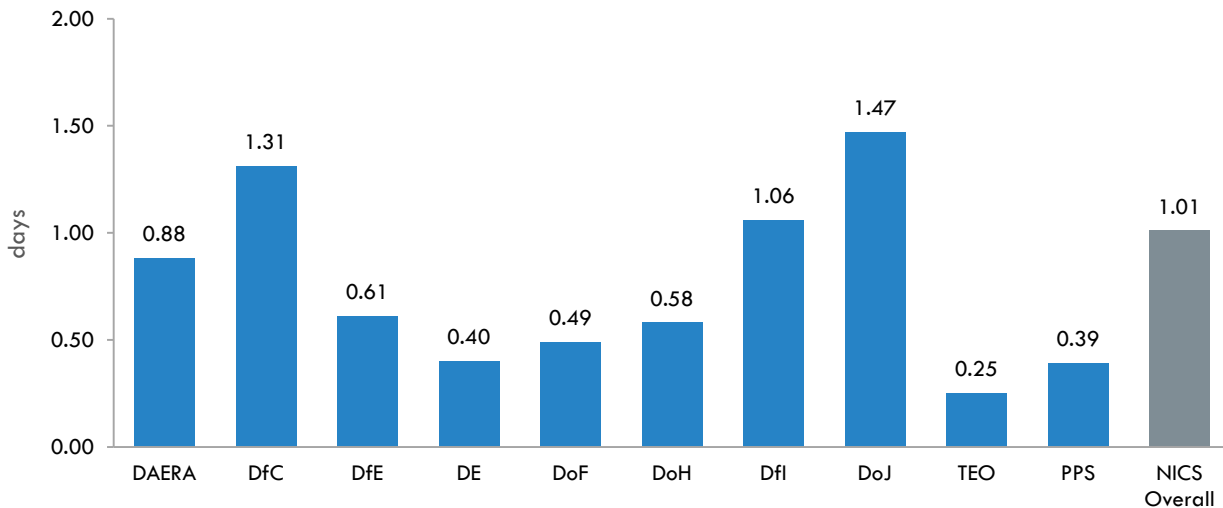
3.5 Sickness Absence due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

In the 2020/2021 reporting year there were 1,362 spells of COVID-19 in the NICS, amounting to 21,306 working days. This equated to 1.01 working days lost per Staff Year or 0.45% of all available working days. COVID-19 represented 10.3% of all sickness absence days that occurred in 2020/2021.

Figure 16 shows that across Departments the level of absence ranged from 0.25 days per Staff Year in The Executive Office (TEO) to 1.47 days in the Department of Justice (DoJ). This equated to 10.9% of all sickness absence days in DoJ and 0.67% 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



Prison Grade staff had the highest level of COVID-19 sickness absence with 2.19 days lost per Staff Year, with Industrial staff also experiencing high levels. More information on the COVID-19 Absences by Grade Level can be found in Table 7.8 in Appendix 7.

Males and Females experienced similar levels of COVID-19 sickness absence, accounting for 10.9% of all Male absence in 2020/2021 and 9.8% 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 1.08 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).

CHAPTER 4

Long-term Sickness Absence

10.8% of staff had at least one long-term absence

Long-term absences accounted for **83.9%** of the total working days lost

A long-term average duration of **64.0** working days

21.4% 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 2020/2021, over one in every ten staff (10.8%) 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 (13.3%).

These 2,581 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 2,717 spells was around three calendar months (64.0 working days¹).

Long-term absences accounted for 83.9% of all working days lost, which was an increase on the proportion recorded in 2019/2020. This level of long-term absence would, by way of illustration, be equivalent to the loss of around 773 full-time staff for an entire year.

Table 6

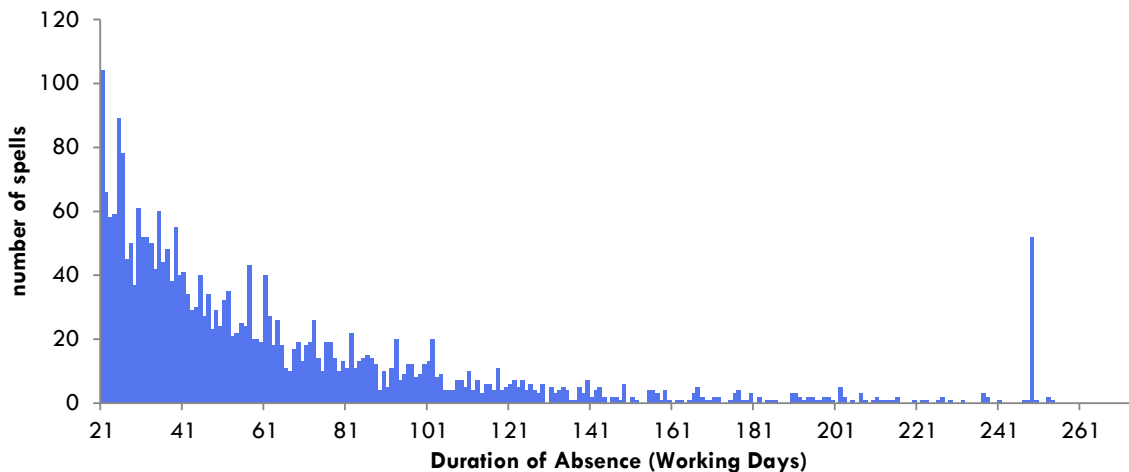
Number of Long-term Absence Spells

Number of Long term Absence Spells	Number of Staff	% of Staff
0	21,317	89.2
1	2,452	10.3
2	122	0.5
3+	7	0.0
NICS Overall	23,898	100.0

Meanwhile, the Frequency Rate² - the number of long-term spells per employee - decreased from 14.0% to 11.4%.

Figure 17

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



Although only 19.0% of *all* sickness absence spells lasted longer than two months (41 working days), the working days lost from these absences accounted for 67.4% of the total working days lost.

¹ The figure of 64.0 working days is the mean duration. The median (the middle value of all the long-term absence durations) is 47.0 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 2020/2021 are included in the analysis, the average increases to 72.2 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 52 spells of absence lasting a standard working year.

4.2 Grade Level

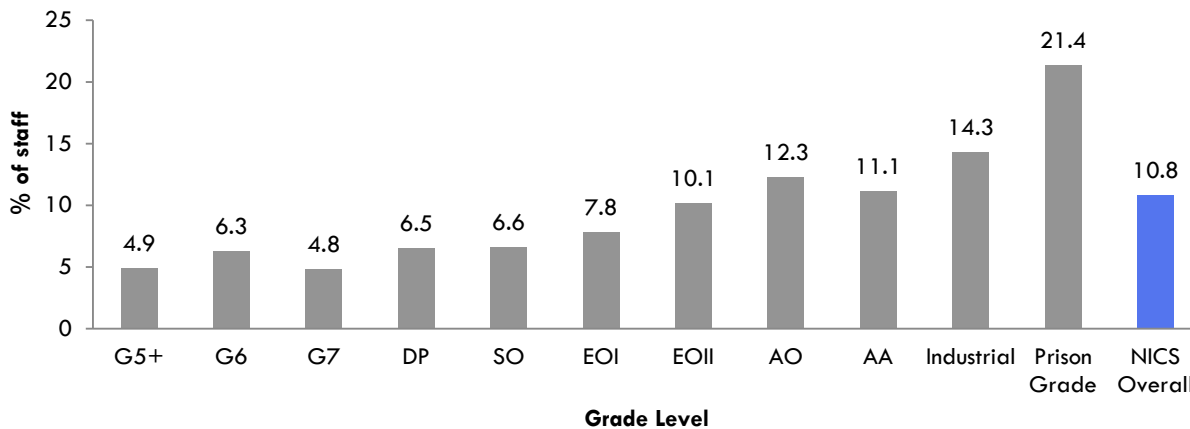
Figure 18 shows Prison Grade staff had the highest incidence of long-term sickness absence - with over one in five (21.4%) staff having a long-term absence spell in 2020/2021. This was a decrease on the 2019/2020 figure of 23.2%. The only grade levels to show an increase in incidences of long-term sickness absence spells were G5+ and G6.

The average long-term duration of Prison Grade absences was 63.2 working days, which was lower than the overall NICS average (64.0 working days). In total, 84.6% of all working days lost by Prison Grade staff were due to long-term absences – however, G5+ staff had the highest percentage (89.0%) 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, 12.3% 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

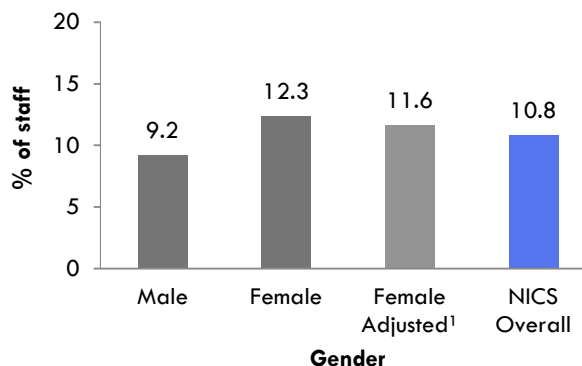
Figure 19 shows females had a higher incidence of long-term absence (12.3%) than males (9.2%), even after absences due to *Pregnancy Related Disorders* were excluded.

On the other hand, the average duration of their long-term absences (61.1 days) was shorter than those of males (67.9 days).

For further information, see Table 8.3 in Appendix 8.

Figure 19

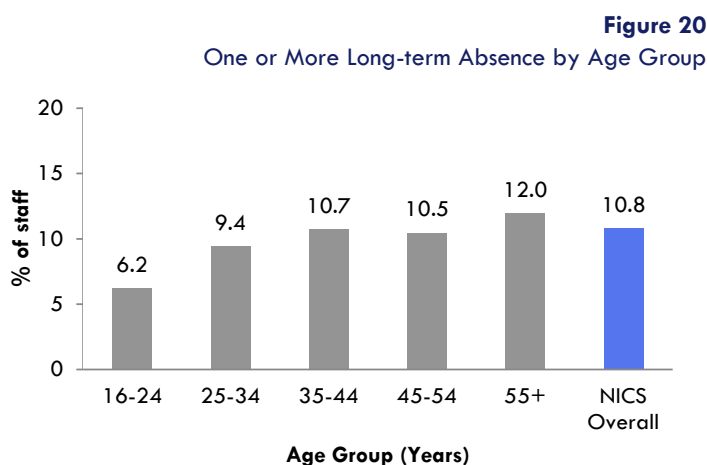
One or More Long-term Absence by Gender



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, with staff aged 16-24 recording a considerably lower percentage (6.2%) than all other age groups. Similarly, the average duration of the long-term absences generally increased with age group (see Table 8.4 in Appendix 8).



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 (46.7%) and the working days lost (48.0%).

The second most significant reason was *Chest and Respiratory Problems*, which accounted for 9.3% of the long-term working days lost and 12.0% of the long-term absence spells, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Reason for Long-term Absence^{1,2} (% 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	48.0	46.7
Chest and Respiratory Problems	9.3	12.0
Injury, Fracture	6.0	6.2
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	5.4	3.4
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	4.5	4.1
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	4.5	3.8
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	4.2	4.4
Gastrointestinal Problems	3.7	3.5
Back Problems	3.6	3.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	2.5	3.3
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	1.6	1.9
Nervous System Disorders	1.3	1.1
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.0	1.0
Other	3.0	4.0
No Reason Specified	1.2	1.4
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.

4.6 Long-term Frequency¹

DoJ had the highest frequency of long-term absences in 2020/2021 at 16.4%, which was a decrease on the previous year's figure of 18.0%. TEO had the lowest frequency at 6.0%, as shown in Table 8.

All Departments reported a reduction in their long-term frequency rate, with the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) experiencing the greatest improvement - a frequency rate decrease from 13.1% to 8.6%.

Table 8
Long-term Frequency by Department (2016/2017 to 2020/2021)²

Department	Long-term Frequency Rate (%) 2016/2017	Long-term Frequency Rate (%) 2017/2018	Long-term Frequency Rate (%) 2018/2019	Long-term Frequency Rate (%) 2019/2020	Long-term Frequency Rate (%) 2020/2021
DAERA	10.5	11.2	11.2	9.7	8.7
DfC	15.2	15.8	15.8	16.1	13.3
DfE	10.5	9.5	9.7	11.2	9.2
DE	11.2	10.1	9.6	10.0	6.9
DoF	10.4	10.3	10.0	10.3	7.7
DoH	8.0	10.0	8.9	10.3	6.3
DfI	12.0	14.1	13.3	13.9	10.6
DoJ	17.2	16.6	16.5	18.0	16.4
TEO	7.7	6.6	9.3	9.2	6.0
PPS	13.6	12.3	15.6	13.1	8.6
NICS Overall	13.5	14.0	13.9	14.0	11.4

4.7 Long-term Duration³

In 2020/2021, The Executive Office (TEO) had the longest average duration of long-term absence spells at 92.9 working days while the shortest average was 55.0 working days in the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). Seven Departments showed an increase in average duration compared with 2019/2020; with DAERA, DoJ and PPS reporting a decrease as shown in Table 9.

The most notable increase was in TEO, where the average duration rose by 37.9 days to 92.9 days. Overall the long-term duration of absence spells in the NICS increased by 1.2 days.

Table 9
Long-term Duration by Department (2016/2017 to 2020/2021)²

Department	Long-term Duration (working days) 2016/2017	Long-term Duration (working days) 2017/2018	Long-term Duration (working days) 2018/2019	Long-term Duration (working days) 2019/2020	Long-term Duration (working days) 2020/2021
DAERA	62.4	61.2	64.3	67.1	66.4
DfC	62.0	61.4	62.1	59.6	61.4
DfE	61.2	57.4	59.9	54.5	59.7
DE	64.4	58.4	58.2	61.6	69.0
DoF	55.2	61.6	60.6	63.9	64.4
DoH	63.4	57.3	53.4	67.2	72.2
DfI	66.5	64.6	71.1	70.9	71.7
DoJ	66.3	63.3	61.9	62.7	62.6
TEO	56.0	61.6	73.5	55.0	92.9
PPS	56.4	58.6	60.7	60.1	55.0
NICS Overall	62.5	62.0	63.1	62.8	64.0

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.

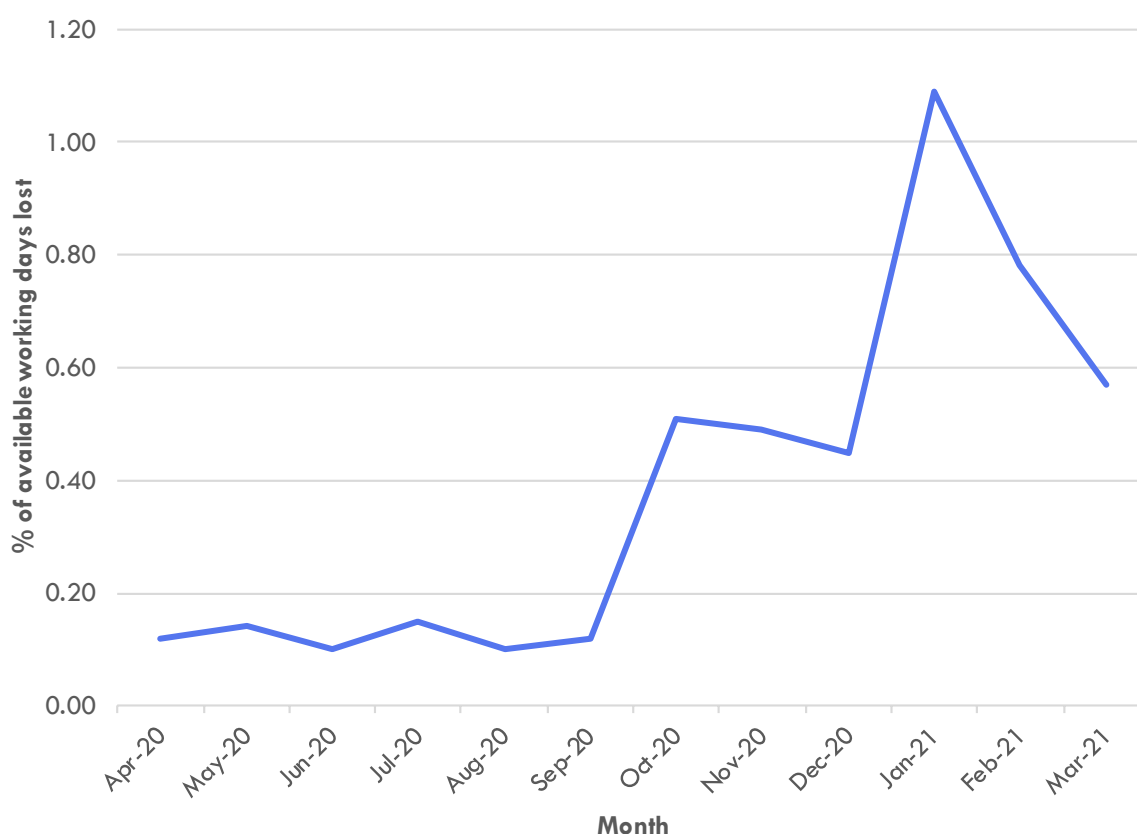
5.1 Reduction in Sickness Absence in the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The 2020/21 financial year saw a reduction in sickness absence of 3.1 days per staff year equivalent from the 2019/20 year (12.9 days 2019/20 to 9.8 days 2020/21). This reduction took place in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and the many impacts this had on normal working practices and life in general.

Covid-19 itself was responsible for 1.01 of the 9.8 days lost in 2020/21. As can be seen in Figure 21, the instances of Covid-19 in the NICS follows the pattern of peaks seen in the wider population in October 2020 and January 2021¹.

Figure 21

Percentage of available working days lost to Covid-19, April 2020-March 2021



5.2 Variation in sickness absence during 2020/21

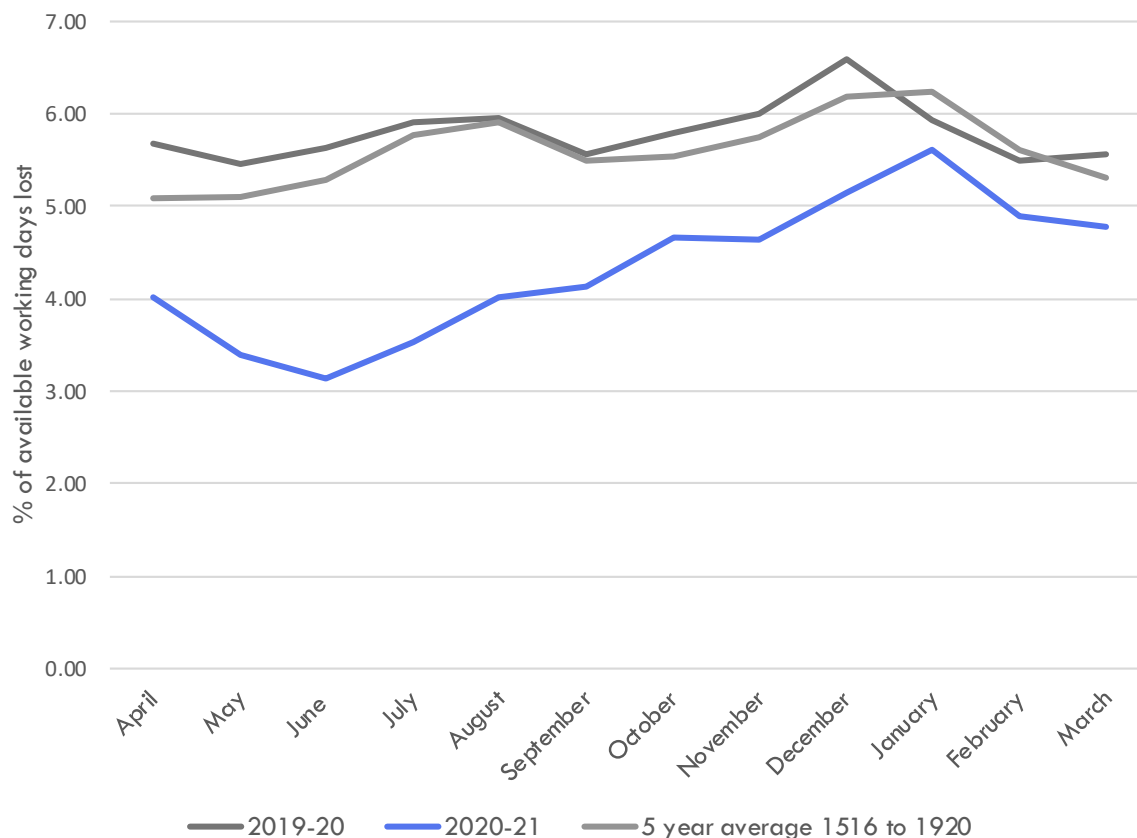
Levels of sickness absence in the NICS varied throughout the year. As can be seen in Figure 22, the biggest reduction in sickness absence was seen in the earlier half of the year, with sickness absence reaching its lowest point in June 2020, and its highest point in January 2021; coinciding with the peak in the Covid-19 pandemic in Northern Ireland.

¹ The 'Covid-19 in Northern Ireland, Daily Dashboard Charts & Graphs: 31 March 2021', produced by Information Analysis Directorate in the Department of Health can be accessed at [Covid-19 in Northern Ireland](#).

In January 2021 Covid-19 was the second highest contributor to sickness absence, behind Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses. Covid-19 accounted for 19.3% of all working days lost in this month.

Figure 22

Percentage of available working days lost to sickness absence 2019/20 and 2020/21 and the 5 year average 2015/16 - 2019/20



As can be seen in Figure 22, the reduction in sickness absence in the 2020/21 year is a departure from the average sickness absence experienced in the previous 5 years. This reduction can be attributed to a number of factors, including a reduction in short term absences and absences due to infectious illnesses.

5.3 Reduction in short term absence

One of the biggest impacts on sickness absence levels in 2020/21 was the reduction in short term absences lasting five working days or less. In 2020/21 these absences accounted for 5.2% of all working days lost to sickness absence compared to 11.6% of days in 2019/20.

All short term absences (those lasting 20 working days or less) accounted for 16.0% of working days lost, down 7.0 percentage points from 23.0% of days in 2019/20.

The largest proportion of short term absences in the 2020/21 year were for Chest and Respiratory Problems, accounting for 22.4% of all short term spells of absence with an average duration of 16.1 days (see Table 7.6 in Appendix 7). This is the overarching sickness absence reason under which Covid-19 absences have been categorised. The average duration of a sickness absence spell due to Covid-19 was 15.4 days. Of all absences due to Covid-19, 79.4% have been short term (lasting 20 working days or less) while 20.6% have been long term (over 20 working days).

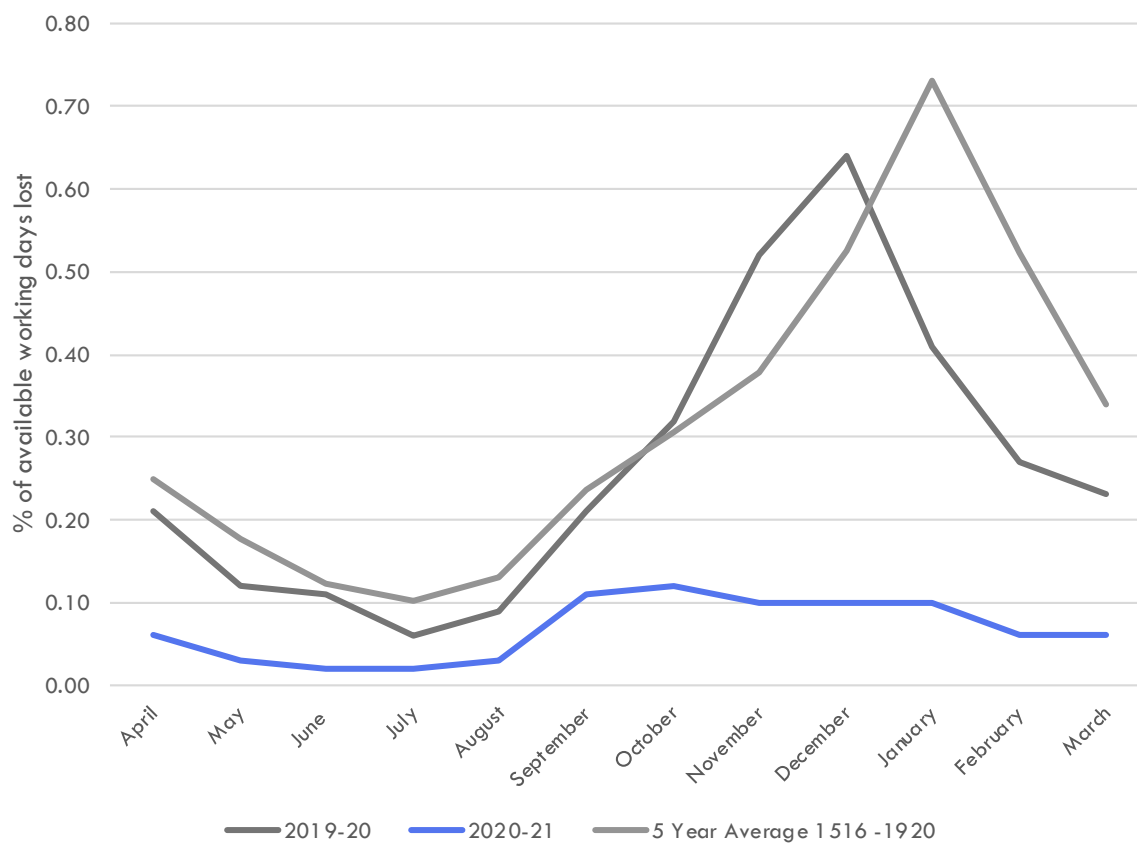
5.4 Absences due to Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza

The 2020/21 year saw a decrease in the number of absences due to a whole range of infectious conditions including Colds, Coughs, Flu, Influenza. In 2019/20 the largest proportion of short term illnesses (24.7%) fell under this reason. In 2020/21 this reason accounts for 9.9% of all short term absences, a reduction of 14.8 percentage points.

These absences tend to be short term in nature (lasting 20 working days or less). In 2020/21 the average duration of absences for Cold, Coughs, Flu, Influenza was 4.8 days, a slight increase from the 3.6 days average duration recorded in 2019/20 (see Table 7.6 in Appendix 7).

Figure 23

Percentage of available working days lost to Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza 2019/20, 2020/21 and 5 year average 2015/16 -2019/20



As can be seen in Figure 23, the large seasonal spike usually seen in the winter months, and experienced in the 2019/20 year, was absent in the 2020/21 year. The [Public Health Agency Influenza Weekly Surveillance Bulletin](#) indicates that the pattern, seen in the NICS, is replicated across Northern Ireland with a substantially reduced flu season, with virologists attributing much of this to lockdown conditions such as working from home, social distancing, hand washing and an overall lack of contact with others.

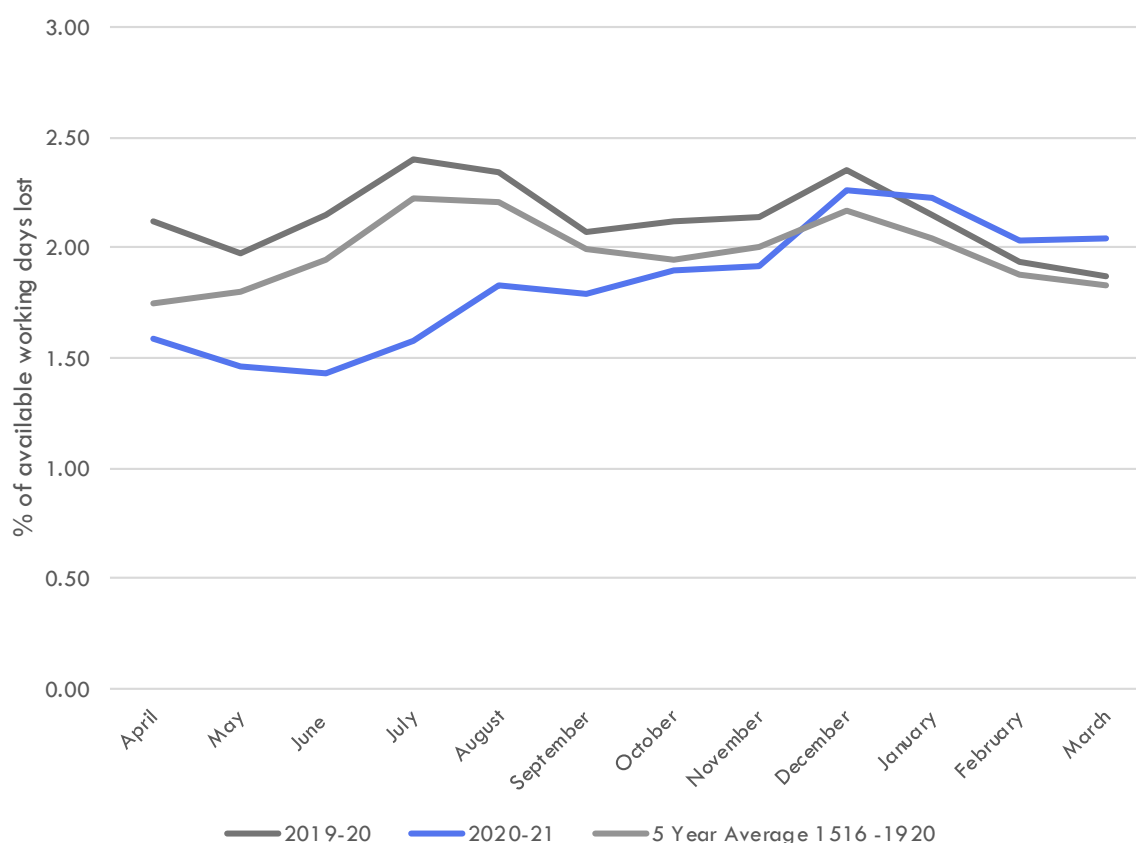
As Coughs, Colds and Flu are infectious illnesses, it is logical to suggest that other types of infectious illness will also have experienced a reduction in occurrences in 2020/21 due to measures put in place to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. The sickness absence reason 'Infectious Diseases' incorporates illnesses such as Chicken Pox, Shingles and Glandular Fever, amongst others. This reason tends to account for a small amount of the overall sickness absence in a standard year, accounting for 0.7% of all sickness absence spells in 2019/20. In 2020/21 this reason reduced by over half accounting for only 0.3% of all spells.

5.5 Absences due to Anxiety, Stress, Depression and other Psychiatric Illnesses

During the 2020/21 year Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses continued to be the largest contributor to sickness absence as has been the case for a number of years.

Figure 24

Percentage of available working days lost to Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses 2019/20, 2020/21 and 5 year average 2015/16 -2019/20



As can be seen in Figure 24, absences due to Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses were below levels seen in the previous 5 years at the beginning of the year as the majority of staff adjusted to working from home and the many unprecedented changes to normal life that resulted as a consequence of the pandemic. From a point in the early summer, illnesses for these reasons have been increasing to a peak in December / January, coinciding with the peak in Covid-19 infections and remaining at a point above average by the end of the year.

The sickness absence category Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses can be broken down to 6 sub reasons, see Table 7.4 in Appendix 7. Of the 6 sub reasons the only specified reason to have an increase in the proportion of working days lost from 2019/20 to 2020/21 was Anxiety.

In 2019/20, 15.2% of working days lost to the overall reason Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses were due to Anxiety. In 2020/21 this had increased by 5 percentage points to 20.2%. In 2019/20 the percentage of working days lost to work related stress (34.2%) had slightly exceeded the percentage lost to non-work related stress (34.0%), within this illness category. In 2020/21 this pattern was reversed, non-work related stress accounted for 33.3% of all working days lost, with those days lost due to work related stress dropping by 4.5 percentage points to 29.7% of all working days lost within the category Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses.

Personal wellbeing figures produced by the Office of National Statistics found that there had been a steep increase in the number of people reporting high levels of anxiety during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their report covering the period up to September 2020, can be found at [Personal well-being in the Uk, quarterly: April 2011 to September 2020](#).

A Northern Ireland Specific report titled '[The Mental Health Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Northern Ireland, A Rapid Review](#)' was produced by the HSC in July 2020. The findings of this report were an expectation that occurrences of disorders such as depression and anxiety could be expected to increase as a consequence of psychological distress caused either directly or indirectly by the Covid-19 pandemic.

[The NISRA Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) Opinion Survey Key Findings](#), also reports that feelings of 'anxiety' were significantly higher in the two quarters from October 2020 to March 2021, than in the previous quarter July to September 2020. This increase in 'anxiety' coincided with periods of restrictions introduced to limit the spread of Covid-19.

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 lost production is calculated, where possible, on the basis of each individual's actual salary and the associated employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions.

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

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

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

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

Table 1.1: Publication dates (2010/2011 to 2020/21)

Report Year	Date Published	Report Year	Date Published	Report Year	Date Published
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
2018/2019	20/06/2019	2014/2015	10/09/2015	2010/2011	02/12/2011
2017/2018	26/09/2018	2013/2014	16/10/2014		

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

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

No issues relating to accessibility or clarity were received during internal user consultations held in June and August 2018, nor in a wider customer survey in March 2018, the results of which can be found at [HRCS Customer Survey Report](#). The report contains contact details for further information and is available to download through the NISRA, DoF and gov.uk websites along with the reports from previous years. The data presented in the report are also available in OpenDocument Spreadsheet (ODS) format through the link provided on Cover Page 2.

Appendix 1: Data Quality

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

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

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

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

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.

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.*

Internal user consultations were undertaken in June and August 2018, and a wider customer survey carried out in March 2018, the results of which can be found at [HRCS Customer Survey Report](#).

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. Printouts containing individual records or small cell sizes are locked away and shredded as soon as possible.

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

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

Appendix 2: Calculations

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

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

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

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

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

Example

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

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

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

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

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	4.5	6.1	7.0	6.8	7.6	12.9	9.3	11.3	n/a
DfC	2.5	8.4	7.6	9.7	11.8	14.5	26.4	3.2	n/a
DfE	6.3	6.0	5.6	10.1	10.2	10.7	1.2	n/a	n/a
DE	3.2	7.9	6.5	5.1	6.9	7.2	20.2	n/a	n/a
DoF	7.4	6.1	6.2	4.1	7.5	9.4	13.5	10.2	n/a
DoH	4.6	8.8	5.9	9.2	8.9	7.3	3.2	n/a	n/a
DfI	7.8	5.2	5.2	6.2	12.4	9.1	10.6	18.1	n/a
DoJ	2.8	9.1	8.2	10.4	14.8	12.3	8.3	27.9	17.7
TEO	5.3	7.3	4.7	8.8	9.4	14.0	35.9	n/a	n/a
PPS	2.1	7.7	2.7	6.2	7.2	9.0	12.4	n/a	n/a
NICS Overall	5.0	6.9	6.6	7.7	10.8	12.1	14.7	16.2	17.7

Table 3.2: Absence Levels by Occupational Grouping²

Occupational Groupings (with more than 200 staff)

Occupational Grouping	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2016/2017	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2017/2018	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2018/2019	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021
Prison Grade	19.6	20.9	19.3	20.1	17.7
Industrial	17.0	18.8	17.1	17.1	16.2
Planning	4.7	7.7	9.2	15.0	12.6
General Service	13.0	13.6	13.0	13.6	10.1
Drawing Officer	8.3	17.4	12.4	10.7	9.8
Support Grade Staff	13.2	10.5	13.1	16.9	9.3
Secretarial/Typing	13.3	16.0	14.9	10.7	8.3
Driving Examiner	11.4	12.6	16.9	13.6	7.8
Agricultural Inspector	8.7	7.2	10.1	7.4	6.4
Other	9.2	8.7	8.9	9.1	6.4
Scientific Officer	8.1	9.3	6.7	8.0	5.8
Statistician	7.3	5.6	7.3	8.4	5.4
Civil Eng (inc assistants)	6.1	5.0	6.2	7.6	5.3
Computing	6.4	7.7	6.7	6.4	4.7
Casual	2.6	7.2	21.6	2.3	n/a

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	0.3	7.1	7.6	0.1	3.2	3.4
DfC	0.6	10.8	11.7	0.3	4.8	5.2
DfE	0.3	7.3	7.7	0.2	3.3	3.4
DE	0.3	5.4	6.4	0.1	2.4	2.9
DoF	0.4	6.6	7.0	0.2	2.9	3.1
DoH	0.3	6.1	6.9	0.1	2.7	3.1
DfI	0.4	8.9	9.7	0.2	4.0	4.3
DoJ	0.6	11.5	13.5	0.3	5.2	6.1
TEO	0.3	7.3	7.7	0.1	3.3	3.4
PPS	0.2	6.3	6.7	0.1	2.8	3.0
NICS Overall	0.5	8.9	9.8	0.2	4.0	4.4

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+	0.1	5.1	5.3	0.1	2.3	2.4
G6	0.3	5.1	5.5	0.1	2.3	2.5
G7	0.3	4.5	4.9	0.1	2.0	2.2
DP	0.3	6.4	6.9	0.1	2.9	3.1
S0	0.3	6.1	6.6	0.1	2.7	3.0
EOI	0.4	7.2	7.7	0.2	3.2	3.4
EOII	0.5	10.0	10.8	0.2	4.4	4.8
AO	0.6	11.1	12.1	0.3	5.0	5.4
AA	0.5	13.3	14.7	0.2	5.9	6.5
Industrial	0.6	15.1	16.2	0.3	6.8	7.3
Prison Grade	0.6	14.1	17.7	0.3	6.5	8.1
NICS Overall	0.5	8.9	9.8	0.2	4.0	4.4

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	0.5	7.6	8.5	0.2	3.4	3.8
Female	0.5	10.4	11.2	0.2	4.6	5.0
NICS Overall	0.5	8.9	9.8	0.2	4.0	4.4

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	0.7	5.0	6.8	0.3	2.2	3.0
25-34	0.6	8.0	9.3	0.3	3.6	4.1
35-44	0.5	8.3	9.2	0.2	3.7	4.1
45-54	0.4	7.8	8.7	0.2	3.5	3.9
55+	0.4	11.3	12.0	0.2	5.1	5.4
NICS Overall	0.5	8.9	9.8	0.2	4.0	4.4

Appendix 3: Tables Relating to Chapter 1

Table 3.7: % of Available Working Days Lost by Department¹

Department	% Available Working Days Lost 2016/2017	% Available Working Days Lost 2017/2018	% Available Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% Available Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% Available Working Days Lost 2020/2021
DAERA	4.3	4.8	4.7	4.5	3.4
DfC	6.6	7.0	6.8	6.8	5.2
DfE	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.6	3.4
DE	5.1	4.5	4.2	4.5	2.9
DoF	4.5	5.0	4.7	4.8	3.1
DoH	4.0	4.4	3.8	4.9	3.1
DfI	5.0	5.8	5.8	6.0	4.3
DoJ	6.9	6.9	6.4	7.1	6.1
TEO	3.6	3.5	4.9	4.2	3.4
PPS	5.4	5.4	6.5	5.7	3.0
NICS Overall	5.6	6.0	5.8	5.9	4.4

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

Grade Level	% Available Working Days Lost 2016/2017	% Available Working Days Lost 2017/2018	% Available Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% Available Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% Available Working Days Lost 2020/2021
G5+	1.8	1.3	1.8	2.1	2.4
G6	2.1	2.6	4.2	3.7	2.5
G7	2.7	3.2	2.7	2.6	2.2
DP	3.7	3.5	3.3	3.6	3.1
SO	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.6	3.0
E0I	4.9	4.4	4.6	4.8	3.4
E0II	5.7	6.2	5.9	6.3	4.8
AO	6.8	7.7	7.9	7.6	5.4
AA	8.2	8.5	7.5	8.9	6.5
Industrial	7.6	8.6	7.8	7.7	7.3
Prison Grade	8.9	9.6	9.0	9.4	8.1
NICS Overall	5.6	6.0	5.8	5.9	4.4

Table 3.9: % of Available Working Days Lost by Gender¹

Gender	% Available Working Days Lost 2016/2017	% Available Working Days Lost 2017/2018	% Available Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% Available Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% Available Working Days Lost 2020/2021
Male	4.7	5.0	5.0	5.0	3.8
Female	6.6	7.1	6.6	6.9	5.0
NICS Overall	5.6	6.0	5.8	5.9	4.4

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

Age Group	% Available Working Days Lost 2016/2017	% Available Working Days Lost 2017/2018	% Available Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% Available Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% Available Working Days Lost 2020/2021
16-24	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.3	3.0
25-34	5.8	5.6	5.7	5.8	4.1
35-44	5.3	5.9	5.4	5.6	4.1
45-54	5.3	5.7	5.6	5.6	3.9
55+	6.4	6.6	6.5	6.6	5.4
NICS Overall	5.6	6.0	5.8	5.9	4.4

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	2.6	3.7	3.6
May	3.2	3.6	3.5
June	4.4	4.4	4.3
July	4.8	5.2	5.0
August	5.8	5.5	5.7
September	13.4	8.6	10.4
October	10.5	10.6	10.9
November	10.8	9.8	10.1
December	9.2	8.1	8.6
January	10.6	14.2	12.6
February	10.1	12.3	11.0
March	14.7	13.9	14.4

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

Month	% of Spells Starting in Month
April	4.4
May	4.1
June	5.4
July	5.8
August	6.3
September	9.0
October	8.3
November	9.3
December	8.6
January	11.6
February	13.0
March	14.2

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	0.8	1.2	1.3
Monday ¹	32.8	37.2	35.1
Tuesday	22.2	19.0	19.8
Wednesday	18.4	15.7	16.8
Thursday	16.4	15.9	16.4
Friday	8.6	9.8	9.3
Saturday	0.8	1.3	1.3

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

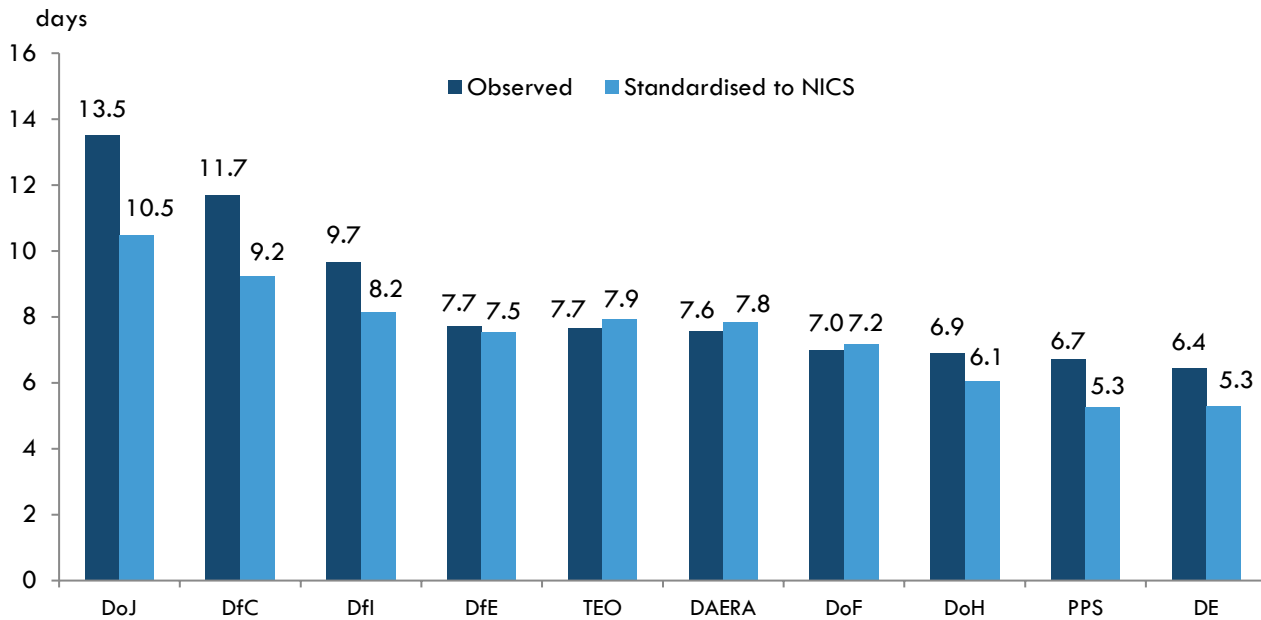
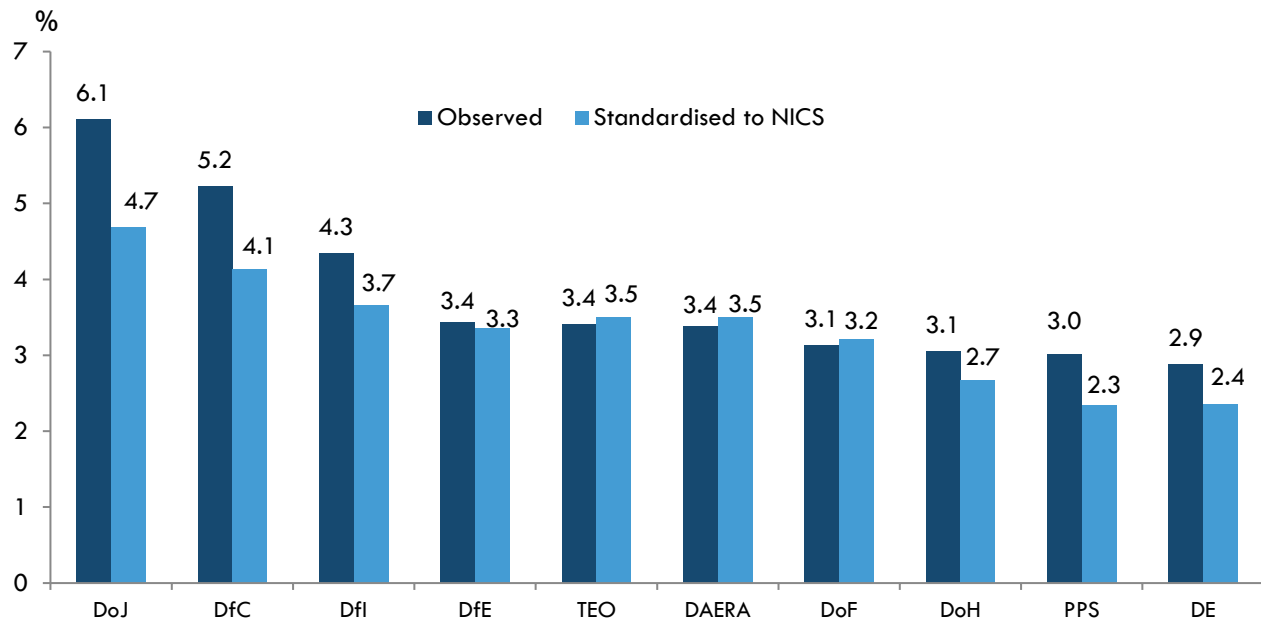


Figure 5.2: % of Available Working Days Lost - Observed and Standardised



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	0.1	3.2	0.2	43.6	0.3	27.3
DfC	0.2	3.1	0.3	42.5	0.5	23.5
DfE	0.1	3.1	0.2	40.1	0.3	25.4
DE	0.1	3.3	0.1	42.1	0.2	26.3
DoF	0.1	3.2	0.2	39.2	0.3	23.0
DoH	0.1	3.2	0.2	40.7	0.3	26.3
DfI	0.1	3.8	0.2	47.2	0.3	31.1
DoJ	0.2	3.4	0.3	42.8	0.5	24.9
TEO	0.1	3.3	0.1	49.3	0.2	32.4
PPS	0.1	2.8	0.2	32.9	0.3	23.0
NICS Overall	0.1	3.2	0.2	42.5	0.4	25.2

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+	0.0	3.1	0.1	48.8	0.2	35.0
G6	0.1	3.1	0.1	40.6	0.2	24.6
G7	0.1	3.3	0.1	33.7	0.2	21.9
DP	0.1	3.1	0.2	40.1	0.3	25.2
SO	0.1	3.1	0.2	38.2	0.3	23.3
EOI	0.1	3.2	0.2	40.1	0.3	23.8
EOII	0.2	3.1	0.2	44.4	0.4	24.9
AO	0.2	3.2	0.3	39.9	0.5	23.5
AA	0.2	2.9	0.3	49.1	0.5	30.1
Industrial	0.2	3.6	0.3	59.7	0.4	36.7
Prison Grade	0.1	3.9	0.3	44.7	0.7	26.5
NICS Overall	0.1	3.2	0.2	42.5	0.4	25.2

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	0.1	3.4	0.2	45.6	0.3	24.8
Female	0.1	3.1	0.3	40.3	0.4	25.4
NICS Overall	0.1	3.2	0.2	42.5	0.4	25.2

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	0.2	3.0	0.2	28.1	0.6	12.0
25-34	0.2	3.1	0.2	37.9	0.5	19.4
35-44	0.2	3.3	0.2	39.9	0.4	22.5
45-54	0.1	3.3	0.2	41.8	0.3	25.2
55+	0.1	3.2	0.2	47.5	0.4	31.6
NICS Overall	0.1	3.2	0.2	42.5	0.4	25.2

Table 6.5: Number of Absence Spells - % of Staff

Number of Absence Spells	% of Staff 2016/2017	% of Staff 2017/2018	% of Staff 2018/2019	% of Staff 2019/2020	% of Staff 2020/2021
0	49.5	46.6	51.3	50.7	72.3
1	33.9	35.4	33.4	33.9	22.4
2	12.2	13.4	11.4	11.3	4.3
3	3.2	3.5	2.9	3.1	0.8
4	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.2
5	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0
6+	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0

Table 6.6: Duration of Absence Spells - % of Spells

Duration of Absence (Working Days)	% of Spells 2016/2017	% of Spells 2017/2018	% of Spells 2018/2019	% of Spells 2019/2020	% of Spells 2020/2021
1-2	29.5	27.7	28.0	26.6	17.2
3-5	37.6	38.9	37.3	37.4	26.1
6-10	7.5	8.0	7.3	8.2	12.1
11-20	7.1	7.5	7.6	7.9	11.5
More than 20	18.2	17.9	19.8	20.0	33.0

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

Department	Average Duration (Working Days) 2016/2017	Average Duration (Working Days) 2017/2018	Average Duration (Working Days) 2018/2019	Average Duration (Working Days) 2019/2020	Average Duration (Working Days) 2020/2021
DAERA	4.6	5.2	4.8	5.0	6.2
DfC	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.4	5.5
DfE	4.2	4.5	4.3	4.6	6.1
DE	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.7	6.5
DoF	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	5.9
DoH	4.1	3.8	4.2	4.9	6.8
DfI	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.6	7.3
DoJ	4.7	4.9	5.0	5.0	6.2
TEO	4.0	4.6	4.2	5.0	6.5
PPS	4.6	4.6	4.9	5.5	7.3
NICS Overall	4.4	4.6	4.5	4.7	6.0

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 2016/2017	% of Staff 2017/2018	% of Staff 2018/2019	% of Staff 2019/2020	% of Staff 2020/2021
0	49.5	46.6	51.3	50.7	72.3
1-5	23.7	24.6	22.5	22.3	9.4
6-10	8.3	8.9	7.4	7.5	3.6
11-15	2.8	3.4	2.8	3.2	2.1
16-20	2.0	2.1	1.9	2.1	1.4
More than 20	13.7	14.4	14.1	14.3	11.2

Table 6.9: Duration of Absence in Working Days Lost

Duration of Absence (Working Days)	% of Working Days Lost 2016/2017	% of Working Days Lost 2017/2018	% of Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% of Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% of Working Days Lost 2020/2021
1-2	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.6	1.1
3-5	9.7	10.2	8.9	9.0	4.1
6-10	4.0	4.5	3.7	4.1	3.9
11-20	7.1	7.6	7.1	7.3	6.9
More than 20	76.1	74.7	77.6	77.0	83.9

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	79.0	17.8	2.8	0.4	-	-	n/a
DfC	67.4	25.9	5.5	0.9	0.2	0.1	0.1
DfE	78.2	18.7	2.5	-	-	n/a	n/a
DE	80.8	16.9	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
DoF	77.5	19.2	2.9	0.3	0.1	n/a	n/a
DoH	81.6	16.2	1.6	0.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
DfI	75.7	20.8	2.9	0.5	-	n/a	-
DoJ	63.6	26.6	7.3	1.9	0.5	-	-
TEO	81.8	16.5	1.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
PPS	78.9	17.2	3.5	-	n/a	-	n/a
NICS Overall	72.3	22.4	4.3	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0

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	1.9	1.9
Asthma	0.0	0.0	0.0
Back Problems	0.0	0.1	0.2
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.0	0.2	0.2
Blood Disorders	0.0	0.0	0.0
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.0	0.0	0.0
Chest and Respiratory Problems	0.0	0.4	0.5
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	0.0	0.0	0.1
Dental and Oral Problems	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ear, Nose, Throat	0.0	0.0	0.1
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.0	0.0	0.0
Eye Problems	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gastrointestinal Problems	0.0	0.2	0.2
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.0	0.1	0.1
Headache/Migraine	0.0	0.0	0.0
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	0.0	0.2	0.2
Infectious Diseases	0.0	0.0	0.0
Injury, Fracture	0.0	0.2	0.3
Nervous System Disorders	0.0	0.0	0.1
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	0.0	0.2	0.2
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	0.0	0.1
NICS Overall	0.2	4.0	4.4

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 2016/2017	% of Spells 2017/2018	% of Spells 2018/2019	% of Spells 2019/2020	% of Spells 2020/2021
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	12.5	12.5	14.4	14.7	23.9
Asthma	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2
Back Problems	5.1	4.7	5.5	4.7	4.4
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.9	0.9	1.2	1.1	1.6
Blood Disorders	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Chest and Respiratory Problems	5.2	5.5	5.3	7.6	19.0
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	20.3	25.7	19.1	19.8	6.8
Dental and Oral Problems	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9
Ear, Nose, Throat	4.6	4.1	4.7	4.6	3.0
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
Eye Problems	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8
Gastrointestinal Problems	20.8	18.3	19.3	18.4	11.9
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.1
Headache/Migraine	2.7	2.5	2.8	2.6	3.4
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.8	2.5
Infectious Diseases	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.3
Injury, Fracture	5.0	4.9	5.2	4.8	4.7
Nervous System Disorders	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	2.7	2.5	2.9	3.0	4.0
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.4	3.4
Pregnancy Related Disorders	7.0	5.8	5.8	5.0	3.2
Skin Disorders	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7
Substance Abuse	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2
No Reason Specified	1.4	1.7	1.3	1.3	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 2016/2017	% of Working Days Lost 2017/2018	% of Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% of Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% of Working Days Lost 2020/2021
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	35.2	36.4	38.7	37.4	43.5
Asthma	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Back Problems	5.5	5.5	5.7	5.1	3.8
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	4.3	3.5	5.2	5.0	4.7
Blood Disorders	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.3
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Chest and Respiratory Problems	3.5	4.0	3.3	3.9	12.1
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	5.1	7.1	4.5	4.4	1.3
Dental and Oral Problems	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Ear, Nose, Throat	2.2	1.7	2.0	1.8	1.3
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.4
Eye Problems	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.5
Gastrointestinal Problems	7.1	6.7	6.2	6.7	4.7
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.7	2.9	2.6	3.0	1.7
Headache/Migraine	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.9	0.7
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	4.2	3.7	4.0	4.7	4.1
Infectious Diseases	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.4
Injury, Fracture	8.7	8.1	8.4	8.0	5.9
Nervous System Disorders	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.2	1.1
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	3.7	3.8	4.4	4.3	4.2
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	5.5	4.9	4.1	4.9	4.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	5.3	4.5	4.3	3.8	2.7
Skin Disorders	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4
Substance Abuse	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
No Reason Specified	1.2	1.8	0.9	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.

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 2016/2017	% of Working Days Lost 2017/2018	% of Working Days Lost 2018/2019	% of Working Days Lost 2019/2020	% of Working Days Lost 2020/2021
Anxiety	14.1	15.2	14.0	15.2	20.2
Depression - Not Pregnancy Related	13.8	12.1	9.6	9.5	8.8
Stress - Not Work Related	30.7	31.8	36.5	34.0	33.3
Stress - Work Related	33.3	34.2	31.9	34.2	29.7
Other ¹	2.4	2.5	3.5	2.5	2.3
No Reason Specified ²	5.6	4.3	4.5	4.7	5.7
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psych	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 2016/2017	% of Spells 2017/2018	% of Spells 2018/2019	% of Spells 2019/2020	% of Spells 2020/2021
Anxiety	16.5	17.1	16.4	16.8	20.1
Depression - Not Pregnancy Related	11.7	10.1	9.4	8.3	6.9
Stress - Not Work Related	36.4	38.8	40.5	40.7	39.6
Stress - Work Related	26.1	26.0	25.1	25.5	25.6
Other ¹	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.1	2.4
No Reason Specified ²	6.3	5.0	5.2	5.5	5.3
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psych	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) 2016/2017	Average Duration (Working Days) 2017/2018	Average Duration (Working Days) 2018/2019	Average Duration (Working Days) 2019/2020	Average Duration (Working Days) 2020/2021
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	42.3	43.1	43.2	41.3	45.7
Asthma	7.8	9.5	9.6	9.6	18.4
Back Problems	16.4	17.3	16.7	17.6	21.7
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	72.0	58.7	72.3	73.4	76.0
Blood Disorders	26.5	31.6	29.6	23.2	22.8
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	9.2	8.2	7.4	4.7	5.6
Chest and Respiratory Problems	10.1	10.8	9.9	8.5	16.1
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	3.7	4.1	3.8	3.6	4.8
Dental and Oral Problems	4.8	4.4	5.0	4.1	3.9
Ear, Nose, Throat	7.0	6.2	6.8	6.4	11.4
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	21.2	21.2	21.8	25.4	27.4
Eye Problems	15.9	16.7	13.3	15.7	14.6
Gastrointestinal Problems	5.1	5.4	5.2	5.9	10.0
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	17.0	17.8	16.1	20.5	19.9
Headache/Migraine	4.2	4.2	6.0	5.5	5.2
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	41.2	38.4	38.0	43.5	41.8
Infectious Diseases	11.1	12.6	12.7	15.9	28.0
Injury, Fracture	26.1	24.2	25.8	26.9	31.2
Nervous System Disorders	30.3	32.5	25.9	37.2	44.9
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	20.8	22.4	24.7	23.1	26.6
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	25.8	25.1	21.4	23.8	31.7
Pregnancy Related Disorders	11.4	11.5	11.7	12.3	21.0
Skin Disorders	13.9	12.5	14.2	12.8	16.8
Substance Abuse	28.1	21.5	19.2	36.2	34.5
No Reason Specified	12.6	16.0	11.0	14.6	20.2

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	0.88	0.39	11.6
DfC	1.31	0.58	11.2
DfE	0.61	0.27	8.0
DE	0.40	0.18	6.2
DoF	0.49	0.22	7.1
DoH	0.58	0.26	8.4
DfI	1.06	0.48	11.0
DoJ	1.47	0.67	10.9
TEO	0.25	0.11	3.3
PPS	0.39	0.17	5.7
NICS Overall	1.01	0.45	10.3

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+	0.26	0.11	4.8
G6	0.46	0.21	8.3
G7	0.48	0.22	9.9
DP	0.70	0.31	10.1
S0	0.60	0.27	9.1
E0I	0.75	0.34	9.8
E0II	1.16	0.52	10.8
A0	1.25	0.56	10.4
AA	1.19	0.53	8.1
Industrial	1.49	0.67	9.2
Prison Grade	2.19	1.01	12.4
NICS Overall	1.01	0.45	10.3

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	0.92	0.41	10.9
Female	1.10	0.49	9.8
NICS Overall	1.01	0.45	10.3

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	4.0
25-34	0.97	0.43	10.4
35-44	1.00	0.45	10.9
45-54	1.08	0.48	12.3
55+	0.96	0.43	8.1
NICS Overall	1.01	0.45	10.3

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	9.7	66.4	85.2
DfC	16.1	61.4	84.2
DfE	10.9	59.7	84.7
DE	7.8	69.0	83.2
DoF	8.9	64.4	81.9
DoH	7.8	72.2	82.0
DfI	11.5	71.7	85.2
DoJ	18.0	62.6	83.5
TEO	7.1	92.9	86.1
PPS	9.6	55.0	78.9
NICS Overall	12.8	64.0	83.9

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+	6.2	77.1	89.0
G6	8.7	54.8	86.4
G7	6.3	59.9	76.9
DP	9.1	62.8	82.9
SO	8.8	61.2	81.3
E0I	10.5	60.5	82.6
E0II	13.8	66.0	84.8
A0	16.8	59.8	83.2
AA	16.7	77.5	88.3
Industrial	16.4	87.2	88.2
Prison Grade	23.7	63.2	84.6
NICS Overall	12.8	64.0	83.9

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	10.4	67.9	83.6
Female	15.5	61.1	84.2
NICS Overall	12.8	64.0	83.9

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	12.0	38.9	68.9
25-34	12.3	60.1	79.7
35-44	12.7	59.4	82.3
45-54	11.5	63.4	83.7
55+	14.7	70.8	87.1
NICS Overall	12.8	64.0	83.9

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 2016/2017	% of Working Days Lost due to Long- term Absence 2017/2018	% 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
G5+	69.9	54.0	70.5	79.2	89.0
G6	68.2	66.4	84.3	77.9	86.4
G7	73.1	69.3	74.3	72.5	76.9
DP	74.3	67.5	72.1	73.1	82.9
SO	71.7	69.2	75.3	75.5	81.3
E0I	77.2	69.1	74.7	72.7	82.6
E0II	73.1	73.4	75.6	74.6	84.8
AO	74.1	74.5	77.0	76.9	83.2
AA	77.8	78.7	77.1	82.3	88.3
Industrial	85.1	83.7	86.8	84.3	88.2
Prison Grade	86.1	86.9	86.7	85.8	84.6
NICS Overall	76.1	74.7	77.6	77.0	83.9

Table 8.6: Long-term Absence by Gender¹

Gender	% of Working Days Lost due to Long- term Absence 2016/2017	% of Working Days Lost due to Long- term Absence 2017/2018	% 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
Male	76.1	73.8	78.1	76.5	83.6
Female	76.0	75.4	77.1	77.5	84.2
NICS Overall	76.1	74.7	77.6	77.0	83.9

Table 8.7: Long-term Absence by Age Group¹

Age Group	% of Working Days Lost due to Long- term Absence 2016/2017	% of Working Days Lost due to Long- term Absence 2017/2018	% 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
16 - 24	59.2	52.5	62.4	64.7	68.9
25 - 34	68.4	67.6	70.6	69.9	79.7
35 - 44	73.0	72.3	73.6	74.2	82.3
45 - 54	78.7	76.9	79.4	78.8	83.7
55+	81.7	78.6	82.6	80.8	87.1
NICS Overall	76.1	74.7	77.6	77.0	83.9

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}

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2016/2017	% of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence 2017/2018	% 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
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	42.5	44.8	45.8	44.1	48.0
Asthma	0.1	0.2	-	-	0.1
Back Problems	5.4	5.6	5.5	5.0	3.6
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	5.5	4.5	6.5	6.3	5.4
Blood Disorders	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.5	0.3
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.1	-	-	n/a	-
Chest and Respiratory Problems	2.4	2.9	2.2	1.9	9.3
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.3	0.3
Dental and Oral Problems	0.1	0.1	-	-	-
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.2	0.7	1.1	1.0	1.0
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.4
Eye Problems	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.4
Gastrointestinal Problems	4.1	4.1	3.7	4.5	3.7
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.8	3.0	2.6	3.1	1.6
Headache/Migraine	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.4
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	5.1	4.5	4.7	5.7	4.5
Infectious Diseases	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.4
Injury, Fracture	9.5	8.9	9.0	8.7	6.0
Nervous System Disorders	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.3
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	3.8	4.1	4.6	4.5	4.2
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	6.1	5.5	4.4	5.3	4.5
Pregnancy Related Disorders	4.5	3.8	3.6	3.2	2.5
Skin Disorders	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
Substance Abuse	0.3	-	0.1	0.2	0.3
No Reason Specified	1.1	1.8	0.7	1.1	1.2
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.

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 2016/2017	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2017/2018	% 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
DAERA	10.2	10.8	10.4	9.4	8.4
DfC	14.3	14.9	15.0	15.2	12.7
DfE	9.9	9.4	9.5	10.7	8.6
DE	10.7	10.1	8.9	9.9	6.5
DoF	10.0	9.8	9.5	9.8	7.5
DoH	8.0	9.6	8.4	9.5	5.9
DfI	11.5	13.3	12.8	13.1	10.2
DoJ	16.3	15.6	15.5	16.8	15.2
TEO	7.4	6.6	8.7	8.9	6.0
PPS	12.4	11.5	14.6	12.5	7.9
NICS Overall	12.8	13.3	13.1	13.3	10.8

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 2016/2017	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2017/2018	% 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
G5+	3.7	3.8	2.4	3.9	4.9
G6	4.1	5.2	7.2	5.7	6.3
G7	5.1	6.6	5.2	5.0	4.8
DP	6.9	6.6	6.3	6.6	6.5
SO	7.9	7.9	7.5	8.6	6.6
E0I	10.4	7.9	8.5	9.2	7.8
E0II	11.0	11.7	11.4	12.2	10.1
AO	14.4	15.4	16.0	15.8	12.3
AA	16.6	15.6	11.1	13.9	11.1
Industrial	17.0	18.0	17.6	16.7	14.3
Prison Grade	22.9	23.5	22.4	23.2	21.4
NICS Overall	12.8	13.3	13.1	13.3	10.8

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 2016/2017	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2017/2018	% 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
Male	10.8	11.0	11.3	11.4	9.2
Female	14.8	15.5	14.9	15.2	12.3
Female Adjusted*	13.4	14.2	13.8	14.2	11.6
NICS Overall	12.8	13.3	13.1	13.3	10.8

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 2016/2017	% of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence 2017/2018	% 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
16-24	4.5	3.9	7.0	7.5	6.2
25-34	12.9	12.4	13.1	12.6	9.4
35-44	12.5	13.0	12.4	13.1	10.7
45-54	12.8	13.4	13.1	13.6	10.5
55+	13.4	14.2	14.1	13.8	12.0
NICS Overall	12.8	13.3	13.1	13.3	10.8

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 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021	Change
DAERA	1.34	1.07	-0.26
DfC	4.52	3.36	-1.16
DfE	0.50	0.39	-0.11
DE	0.24	0.15	-0.08
DoF	1.64	1.06	-0.58
DoH	0.21	0.15	-0.07
DfI	1.82	1.31	-0.51
DoJ	2.27	2.03	-0.23
TEO	0.12	0.11	-0.02
PPS	0.25	0.13	-0.12
NICS Overall	12.9	9.8	-3.16

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 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021	Change
G5+	0.05	0.07	0.02
G6	0.12	0.08	-0.04
G7	0.35	0.32	-0.03
DP	0.91	0.82	-0.09
S0	1.35	0.90	-0.45
E0I	1.44	1.06	-0.38
E0II	2.53	1.93	-0.59
AO	3.92	2.62	-1.29
AA	0.39	0.26	-0.13
Industrials	0.65	0.59	-0.06
Prison Grade	1.25	1.14	-0.11
NICS Overall	12.9	9.8	-3.16

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

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Table 9.3: Contribution of each Gender to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹

Gender	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021	Change
Male	5.76	4.45	-1.31
Female	7.19	5.34	-1.85
NICS Overall	12.9	9.8	-3.16

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 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021	Change
16-24	0.05	0.06	0.01
25-34	1.44	0.94	-0.50
35-44	3.67	2.78	-0.89
45-54	4.05	2.76	-1.29
55+	3.73	3.25	-0.48
NICS Overall	12.9	9.8	-3.16

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 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021	Change
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	4.84	4.26	-0.58
Asthma	0.02	0.01	-0.01
Back Problems	0.66	0.37	-0.28
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.65	0.46	-0.19
Blood Disorders	0.07	0.03	-0.04
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.00	0.00	0.00
Chest and Respiratory Problems	0.51	1.19	0.68
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	0.57	0.13	-0.45
Dental and Oral Problems	0.03	0.01	-0.01
Ear, Nose, Throat	0.24	0.13	-0.11
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.07	0.04	-0.04
Eye Problems	0.11	0.05	-0.07
Gastrointestinal Problems	0.87	0.46	-0.41
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.39	0.17	-0.22
Headache/Migraine	0.11	0.07	-0.04
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	0.61	0.40	-0.21
Infectious Diseases	0.09	0.04	-0.06
Injury, Fracture	1.03	0.57	-0.46
Nervous System Disorders	0.16	0.11	-0.04
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	0.56	0.41	-0.14
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	0.64	0.42	-0.22
Pregnancy Related Disorders	0.49	0.26	-0.23
Skin Disorders	0.07	0.04	-0.02
Substance Abuse	0.02	0.02	0.00
No Reason Specified	0.15	0.12	-0.03
NICS Overall	12.9	9.8	-3.16

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.

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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 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021	Change	Department/Grade Level	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021	Change
DAERA G7+	0.08	0.08	-0.01	DoH G7+	0.01	0.03	0.02
DAERA DP	0.15	0.14	-0.01	DoH DP	0.05	0.05	0.00
DAERA SO	0.31	0.23	-0.08	DoH SO	0.06	0.03	-0.03
DAERA EOI	0.22	0.17	-0.05	DoH EOI	0.02	0.01	-0.01
DAERA EOII	0.17	0.14	-0.02	DoH EOII	0.05	0.02	-0.03
DAERA AO	0.29	0.21	-0.08	DoH AO	0.01	0.01	0.00
DAERA AA	0.05	0.01	-0.03	DoH AA	0.01	0.00	-0.01
DAERA Industrial	0.08	0.10	0.02	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	1.34	1.07	-0.26	DoH Overall	0.21	0.15	-0.07
DfC G7+	0.06	0.02	-0.04	DfI G7+	0.04	0.06	0.01
DfC DP	0.12	0.13	0.01	DfI DP	0.08	0.07	-0.01
DfC SO	0.25	0.20	-0.05	DfI SO	0.17	0.09	-0.08
DfC EOI	0.41	0.34	-0.07	DfI EOI	0.23	0.14	-0.09
DfC EOII	1.60	1.21	-0.39	DfI EOII	0.15	0.13	-0.02
DfC AO	1.90	1.33	-0.57	DfI AO	0.56	0.34	-0.22
DfC AA	0.16	0.12	-0.04	DfI AA	0.04	0.03	-0.01
DfC Industrial	0.02	0.00	-0.02	DfI Industrial	0.55	0.46	-0.08
DfC Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	DfI Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
DfC Overall	4.52	3.36	-1.16	DfI Overall	1.82	1.31	-0.51
DfE G7+	0.03	0.05	0.02	DoJ G7+	0.03	0.02	0.00
DfE DP	0.07	0.06	0.00	DoJ DP	0.10	0.11	0.00
DfE SO	0.10	0.05	-0.04	DoJ SO	0.10	0.10	0.00
DfE EOI	0.11	0.09	-0.02	DoJ EOI	0.24	0.19	-0.05
DfE EOII	0.09	0.07	-0.03	DoJ EOII	0.12	0.15	0.03
DfE AO	0.09	0.07	-0.02	DoJ AO	0.39	0.29	-0.10
DfE AA	0.02	0.00	-0.02	DoJ AA	0.04	0.02	-0.02
DfE Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a	DoJ Industrial	0.01	0.03	0.02
DfE Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a	DoJ Prison Grade	1.25	1.14	-0.11
DfE Overall	0.50	0.39	-0.11	DoJ Overall	2.27	2.03	-0.23
DE G7+	0.04	0.02	-0.02	TEO G7+	0.02	0.02	0.00
DE DP	0.05	0.03	-0.01	TEO DP	0.03	0.02	0.00
DE SO	0.03	0.02	-0.01	TEO SO	0.02	0.01	-0.01
DE EOI	0.01	0.01	0.00	TEO EOI	0.01	0.01	0.00
DE EOII	0.05	0.03	-0.02	TEO EOII	0.03	0.02	-0.01
DE AO	0.06	0.03	-0.03	TEO AO	0.02	0.02	0.00
DE AA	0.01	0.02	0.01	TEO AA	0.00	0.01	0.00
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	0.24	0.15	-0.08	TEO Overall	0.12	0.11	-0.02
DoF G7+	0.17	0.16	-0.01	PPS G7+	0.03	0.01	-0.02
DoF DP	0.23	0.17	-0.07	PPS DP	0.03	0.03	0.00
DoF SO	0.30	0.17	-0.13	PPS SO	0.01	0.00	-0.01
DoF EOI	0.17	0.09	-0.08	PPS EOI	0.01	0.01	0.00
DoF EOII	0.25	0.15	-0.10	PPS EOII	0.02	0.02	-0.01
DoF AO	0.46	0.27	-0.19	PPS AO	0.13	0.05	-0.08
DoF AA	0.04	0.05	0.00	PPS AA	0.01	0.01	0.00
DoF Industrial	0.00	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	1.64	1.06	-0.58	PPS Overall	0.25	0.13	-0.12
NICS Overall					12.9	9.8	-3.16

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

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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 2018/2019	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2019/2020	Change
Short-term absence	2.97	1.57	-1.40
Long-term absence	9.97	8.21	-1.75
NICS Overall	12.9	9.8	-3.16

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 2016/2017	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2017/2018	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2018/2019	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2019/2020	Working Days Lost per Staff Year 2020/2021
DAERA	9.6	10.5	10.3	9.9	7.6
DAERA Industrial	12.6	12.2	11.2	9.1	11.3
DAERA Non-Industrial	9.4	10.4	10.2	10.0	7.3
DfC	14.7	15.4	14.9	15.1	11.7
DfC Industrial	7.7	8.6	8.9	15.9	3.2
DfC Non-Industrial	14.7	15.4	14.9	15.1	11.7
DfE	10.3	9.8	9.8	10.2	7.7
DE	11.4	9.7	9.2	9.9	6.4
DoF	10.0	11.0	10.2	10.7	7.0
DoF Industrial	5.6	5.2	6.0	5.6	10.2
DoF Non-Industrial	10.0	11.0	10.2	10.7	7.0
DoH	9.0	9.6	8.4	10.9	6.9
DfI	11.0	12.6	12.6	13.4	9.7
DfI Industrial	19.3	21.9	20.0	20.1	18.1
DfI Non-Industrial	9.1	10.4	10.8	11.7	7.7
DoJ	15.3	14.9	14.0	15.5	13.5
DoJ Industrial	9.8	8.0	3.7	9.4	27.9
DoJ Non-Industrial	12.3	10.6	10.1	12.2	10.2
DoJ Prison Grade	19.6	20.9	19.3	20.1	17.7
TEO	7.9	7.6	10.7	9.3	7.7
PPS	12.1	11.8	14.3	12.6	6.7
NICS Overall	12.5	13.0	12.6	12.9	9.8
Industrial Overall	17.0	18.8	17.1	17.1	16.2
Non-Industrial Overall	11.8	12.3	12.0	12.3	9.0
Prison Grade Overall	19.6	20.9	19.3	20.1	17.7

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

Appendix 11: Links to other Organisations Sickness Absence Statistics

Comparisons with other Civil Service Sickness Absence Statistics/Local Councils

The Cabinet Office publish quarterly headline sickness absence statistics (on a rolling 12-month basis) in the form of a tabular report with no accompanying text or explanation. 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](#).

Appendix 12: 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
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
NI	Northern Ireland
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NICTS	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
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