



Department of  
**Finance and  
Personnel**  
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# Analysis of Sickness Absence in the NI Departments 2008/2009



## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
	<b>Analysis of Sickness Absence Data for 2008/2009</b>
	<b>Executive Summary</b> 3
	<b>Key Facts</b> 5
<b>Chapter</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Working Days Lost Through Sickness Absence</b>
	Introduction 9
	Departmental Variation 10
	Grade Level 11
	Gender 12
	Age Group 13
<b>2.</b>	<b>Spells of Sickness Absence</b>
	Introduction 17
	Number of Absence Spells 17
	Duration of Absence Spells 17
	Absence Certification 18
<b>3.</b>	<b>Reasons for Sickness Absence</b>
	Overall 21
	Grade Level 22
	Gender 23
	Age Group 24
<b>4.</b>	<b>Long-term Sickness Absence</b>
	Prevalence of Long-term Absence 27
	Grade Level 27
	Gender 28
	Age Group 28
	Reason for Long-term Absence 29
<b>5.</b>	<b>Targets</b>
	Introduction 33
	Absence Targets - NICS Overall 34
	Days Lost per Staff Year by Department 35
	Long-term Frequency 36
	Long-term Duration 37
	Short-term Frequency 38
<b>6.</b>	<b>Data Quality</b>
	Data Quality 41
	Concluding Comments 42
<b>Appendix 1.</b>	Calculations 43
<b>Appendix 2.</b>	Tables Relating to Chapter 1 47
<b>Appendix 3.</b>	Seasonal Effects on the Onset of Absence 53
<b>Appendix 4.</b>	Illustrative Standardised Departmental Absence Levels 57
<b>Appendix 5.</b>	Tables Relating to Chapter 2 61
<b>Appendix 6.</b>	Tables Relating to Chapter 3 65
<b>Appendix 7.</b>	Tables Relating to Chapter 4 71
<b>Appendix 8.</b>	Tables Relating to Chapter 6 75
<b>Appendix 9.</b>	List of Abbreviations 79

The reader should note that 'NICS' refers to the 'eleven NI Departments'.

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## Executive Summary

- ▶ This report provides a detailed analysis of sickness absence data for non-industrial staff in the eleven NI Departments over the 2008/2009 financial year. It contains analyses of trends over the last five years and an evaluation of the progress that has been made towards absence targets. It also provides comments on the quality of absence data.
- ▶ In 2008/2009 the headline absence figure was 11.0 days (average days lost per staff year); down from 12.9 days in the previous year. This fall, while substantial, was not enough to enable the NICS to meet its target of 10.2 days.
- ▶ The proportion of staff with no absence has increased from 43.1% in 2007/2008 to 49.8%.
- ▶ The headline absence level represents 4.9% of available working days lost and has a direct paybill cost of £21.0 million.
- ▶ The level of absence was highest in the Administrative Officer (AO) grade (15.0 days).
- ▶ More generally, the absence level of females (14.2 days) was markedly higher than that of males (7.8 days). A substantial disparity remained even when Pregnancy Related Disorders were taken into account.
- ▶ Analysis by department revealed that the level of absence ranged from 6.8 days in OFMDFM to 14.6 days in DSD. A large part of this variation was attributable to differences between departments in terms of their grade, gender and age profiles.
- ▶ The high level of absence in the NICS was due, in large part, to the 10.2% of staff who were absent from work on a long-term basis for an average of 61.7 working days. This relatively small group of staff accounted for 70.6% of the total days lost.
- ▶ The main reason for long-term absence was Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses. The proportion of long-term working days lost due to illnesses of this type was 34.2%.
- ▶ While the strategic target for short-term absence was achieved, and good progress was made in relation to reducing frequency of long-term absence, the duration of long-term absence showed little change over the reporting period.
- ▶ Quality assurance checks on absence data have revealed that while there is some evidence of under-recording of absences associated with the move to the new pay and absence management system, there has, nevertheless, been a real and substantial decrease in absence levels.



## Key Facts

	2003/ 2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009
<b>Proportion of Staff with No Recorded Spells of Absence</b>	34.5%	38.5%	41.0%	40.7%	43.1%	49.8%
<b>Days Lost per Staff Year</b>	15.5	14.2	13.4	13.7	12.9	11.0
<b>Percentage of Available Working Days Lost</b>	6.9%	6.5%	6.0%	6.2%	5.8%	4.9%
<b>Total Number of Working Days Lost</b>	372,817	351,421	328,141	322,640	284,833	246,806
<b>Estimated Cost of Absenteeism<sup>1</sup> (£ Million)</b>	26.1	25.3	25.4	25.6	24.5	21.0
<b>Average Number of Spells per Staff Year</b>	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.9
<b>Proportion of Working Days Lost by Certification</b>						
Certified	80.4%	82.9%	83.3%	83.7%	83.1%	79.4%
Self-Certified	19.6%	17.1%	16.7%	16.3%	16.9%	17.1%
<b>Long-term Absence</b>						
Proportion of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence	64.6%	68.5%	68.4%	69.3%	69.4%	70.6%
Frequency Rate <sup>2</sup>	14.1%	13.2%	13.0%	13.7%	12.5%	10.9%
Average Duration (Working Days)	60.6	64.2	62.0	60.5	62.0	61.7
<b>Short-term Absence</b>						
Average Number of Spells per Staff Year	1.41	1.13	1.04	1.00	0.95	0.76

A more detailed analysis of this information is presented throughout the report.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that any information provided in this report on the cost of absence is calculated where possible on the basis of each individual's actual salary.

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



**Chapter 1**  
**Working Days Lost Through Sickness Absence**



# 1. Working Days Lost Through Sickness Absence

## 1.1 Introduction

In 2008/2009 an average of 11.0 days were lost by non-industrial staff as a result of sickness absence. This figure is lower than the previous year (12.9 days). This overall level of absence represents 4.9% of available working days and, in paybill terms, is estimated to have cost in the region of £21.0 million.

The following pages look at the variation in the levels of absence across departments, grades, gender and age groups over time. Further information can be found in Appendix 2, with information on seasonal effects on the onset of absence included in Appendix 3.

## 1.2 Departmental Variation

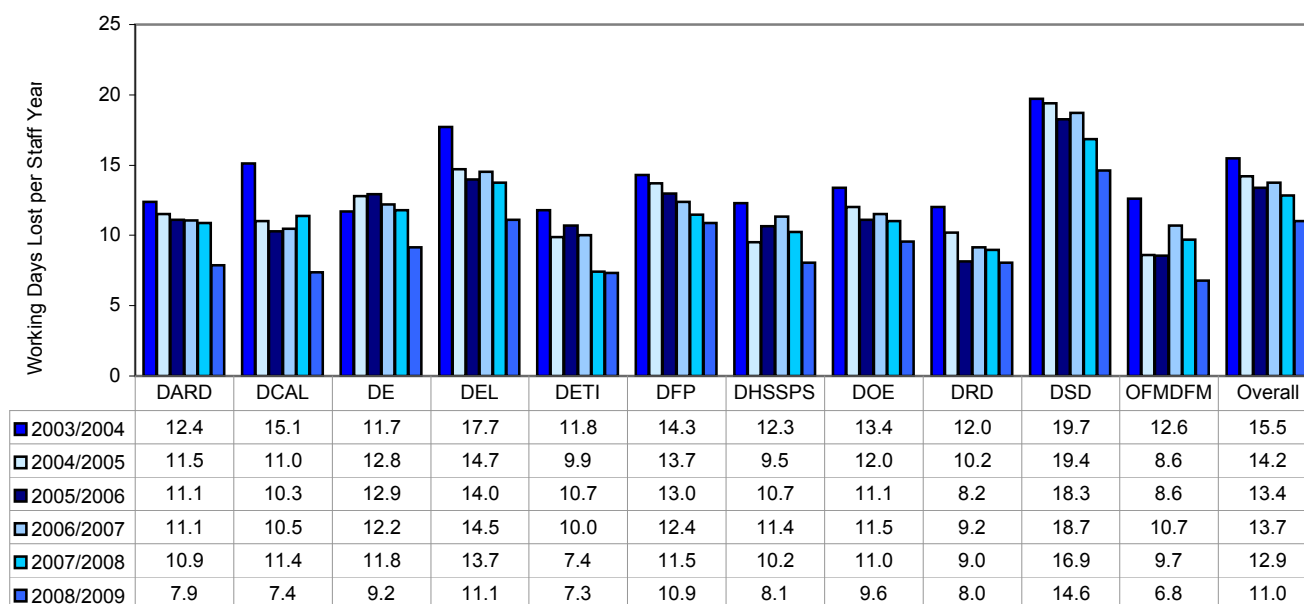
The level of absence ranged from 6.8 days lost in OFMDFM, to 14.6 days lost in DSD. The absence rate in OFMDFM was equivalent to a loss of 3.1% of available working days, whereas the rate in DSD amounted to 6.5% of available working days (Table 4, Appendix 2).

All of the eleven departments achieved a reduction over the previous year in the average number of days lost. In percentage terms this reduction was greatest in DCAL (35.3%).

When making departmental comparisons it is important to bear in mind that absence levels differ by grade, gender and age. Consequently the staffing profile of a department can have a major bearing on its absence rate. The extent to which a department's staffing profile can influence its overall absence rate, most notably in the case of DSD and DEL, is illustrated by the analysis presented in Appendix 4.

Figure 1<sup>3</sup>

Average Number of Days Lost Per Staff Year by Department 2003/2004 - 2008/2009



Note:

1. Staff from the Office of the NI Assembly Ombudsman are included in the DFP figure for 2003/2004 and 2004/2005.
2. Staff from Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation are included in the DETI figure.
3. Staff from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Complaints and the Planning Appeals Commission are included in the DFP figure for 2003/2004.

<sup>3</sup> Please note that the data in Figure 1 is displayed to 1 decimal place for presentational reasons only and if trying to calculate percentage increases or decreases on a year to year basis the user should note that the percentages shown may not match due to rounding of figures.

### 1.3 Grade Level

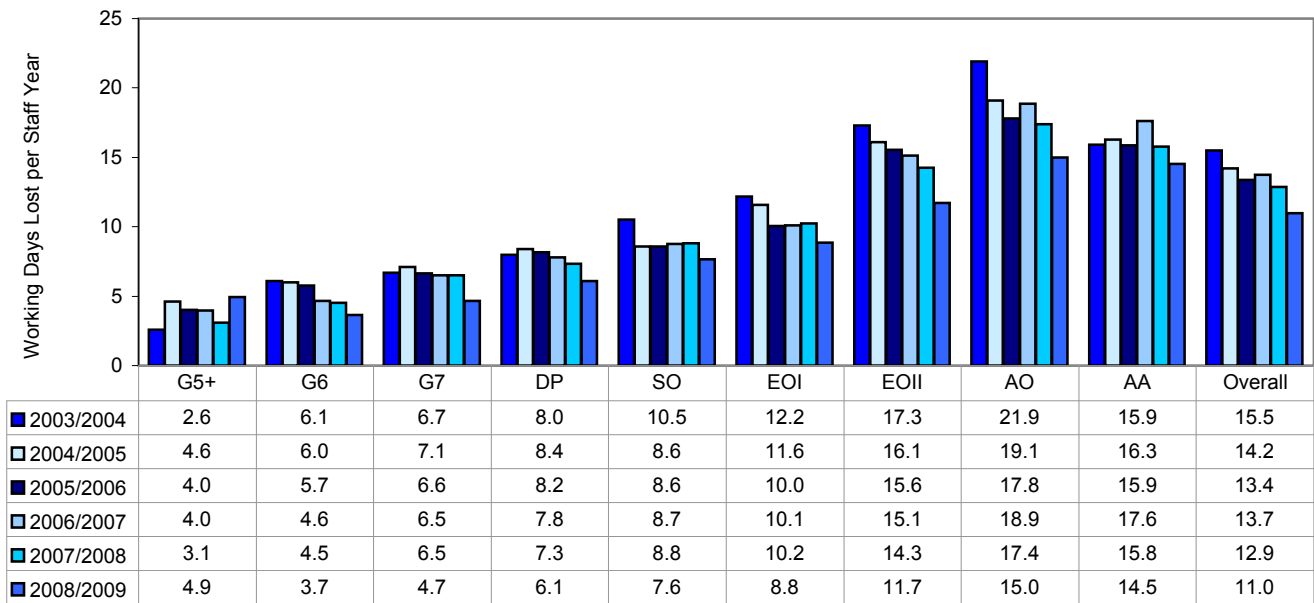
In 2008/2009, as with previous years, the level of absence was highest for staff at or analogous to Administrative Officer (AO) grade (15.0 days lost). Female officers at this grade level had a particularly high level of absence - 17.8 days lost on average. Analysis by department revealed that the level of absence among female AOs ranged from 9.6 days lost in DHSSPS to 20.3 days lost in DSD (Table 12, Appendix 2).

From AO level upwards the days lost decreased at each successive grade to reach a low of 3.7 days lost at Grade 6 before rising to 4.9 days lost at Grade 5 and above.

Compared with the previous financial year, eight of the nine grade levels showed a decrease in the average number of days lost during 2008/2009 with only Grade 5 and above showing an increase.

Figure 2<sup>4</sup>

Average Number of Days Lost Per Staff Year by Grade Level 2003/2004 - 2008/2009



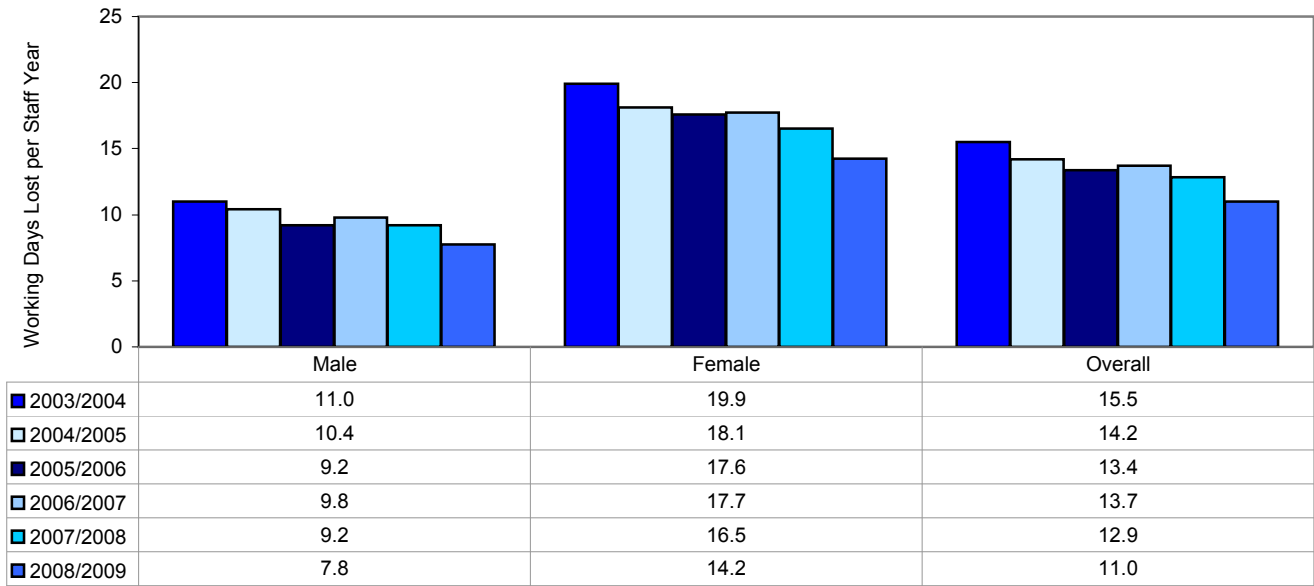
<sup>4</sup> Please note that the data in Figure 2 is displayed to 1 decimal place for presentational reasons only and if trying to calculate percentage increases or decreases on a year to year basis the user should note that the percentages shown may not match due to rounding of figures.

## 1.4 Gender

In 2008/2009 the level of absence decreased for both males and females. The level of absence for females (14.2 days lost) was markedly higher than the level for males (7.8 days lost). When Absences due to *Pregnancy Related Disorders* were removed from the calculations the female level of absence, while reducing to 12.6 days lost, remained substantially higher than the male level.

Figure 3<sup>5</sup>

Average Number of Days Lost Per Staff Year by Gender 2003/2004 - 2008/2009



<sup>5</sup> Please note that the data in Figure 4 is displayed to 1 decimal place for presentational reasons only and if trying to calculate percentage increases or decreases on a year to year basis the user should note that the percentages shown may not match due to rounding of figures.

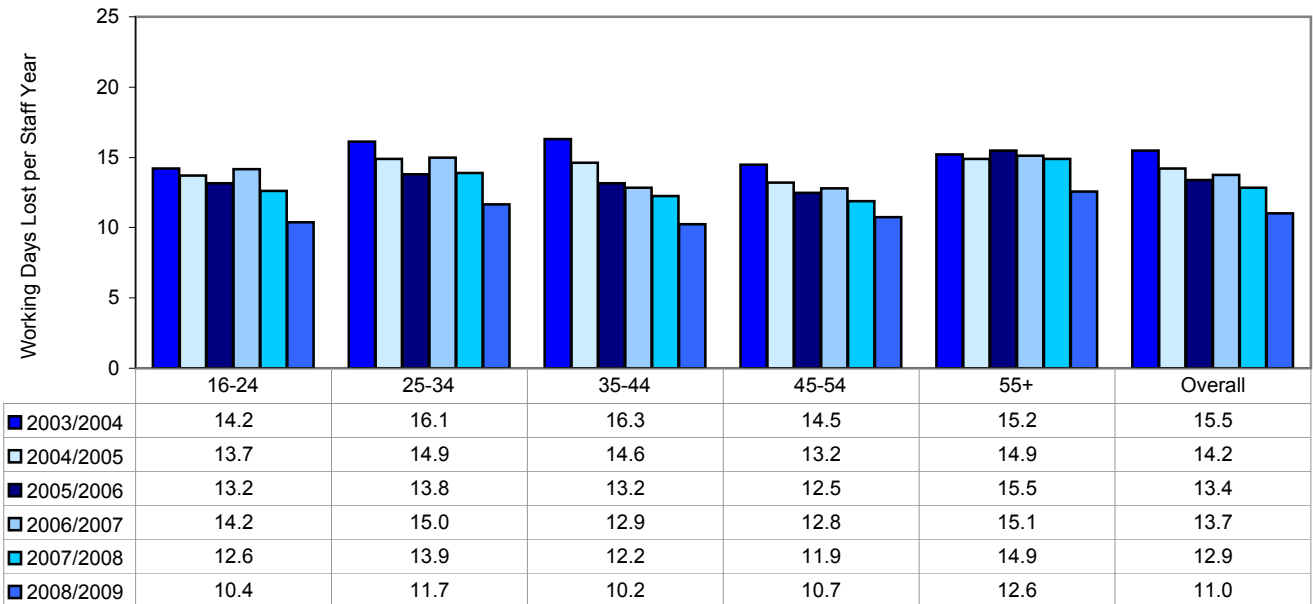
### 1.5 Age Group

In 2008/2009 the absence level of staff ranged from a low of 10.2 days lost for those aged 35-44, to a high of 12.6 days lost for those aged 55 and over. Compared with the previous financial year, the absence level decreased in each of the five age groups. This decrease was largest among staff aged 16-24 (17.6% decrease from the previous year).

The self-certified absence level, which generally decreased with age up until the 45-54 age group, was highest for those aged 16-24 (2.6 days lost). Certified absence levels ranged from a low of 7.3 days lost for staff in the youngest age category to a high of 10.7 days lost for staff in the oldest age category (Table 7, Appendix 2).

Figure 4<sup>6</sup>

Average Number of Days Lost Per Staff Year by Age Group 2003/2004 - 2008/2009



<sup>6</sup> Please note that the data in Figure 4 is displayed to 1 decimal place for presentational reasons only and if trying to calculate percentage increases or decreases on a year to year basis the user should note that the percentages shown may not match due to rounding of figures.



## **Chapter 2 Spells of Sickness Absence**



## 2. Spells of Sickness Absence

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the number and average duration of recorded spells of sickness absence. Supporting information can be found in Appendix 5.

### 2.2 Number of Absence Spells

The upward trend in the proportion of staff with no sickness absence has continued in 2008/2009 with 49.8% of staff falling into this category. A further 31.9% of staff had one recorded absence and 12.9% were absent on two separate occasions during the year. The remainder of staff (5.3%) were absent from work through illness on three or more occasions.

Overall, non-industrial staff in the NICS had an average of 0.9 spells of sickness absence, a decrease from 1.1 spells in the previous financial year.

Figure 5

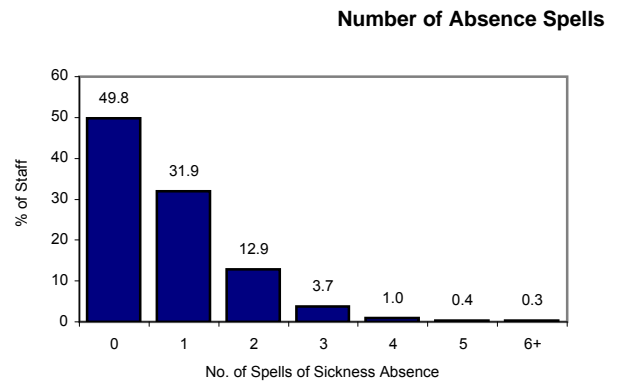


Figure 6

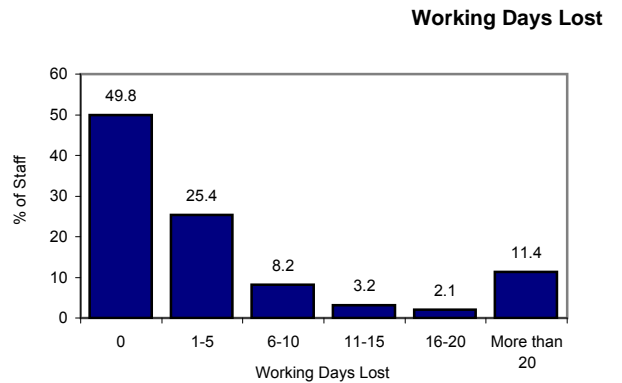
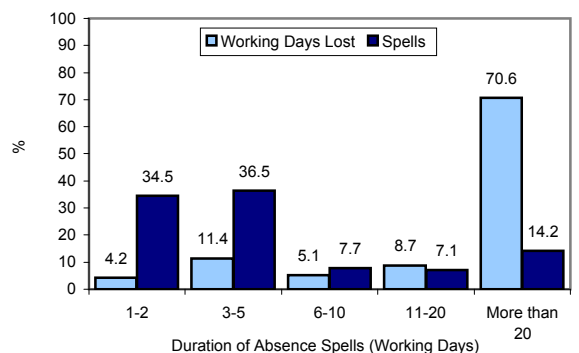


Figure 7

### 2.3 Duration of Absence Spells

As shown in Figure 7, the majority of absence spells are short-term in nature, with 71.0%<sup>7</sup> of absence spells lasting for five working days or less. These absences accounted for 15.6% of the total working days lost. Long-term spells of absence (i.e. those lasting for more than 20 consecutive working days) accounted for 14.2% of all spells of absence. These absence spells accounted for 70.6% of the total working days lost.

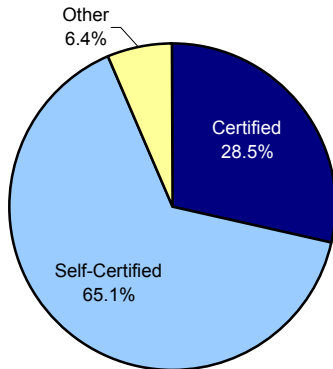
Duration of Absence Spells



<sup>7</sup> Please note that the data in Figures 5, 6 and 7 are displayed to 1 decimal place for presentational reasons only and if summing any of the percentages shown, the user should note that the totals may not match due to rounding of figures.

Figure 8

Proportion of Absence Spells by Certification



## 2.4 Absence Certification<sup>8</sup>

Self-certified absences made up 65.1% of all spells of sickness absence. This was a smaller proportion than that found in the previous financial year (69.4%). Absence spells that were covered by a medical certificate accounted for 28.5% of spells.

Figure 9

Proportion of Working Days Lost by Certification

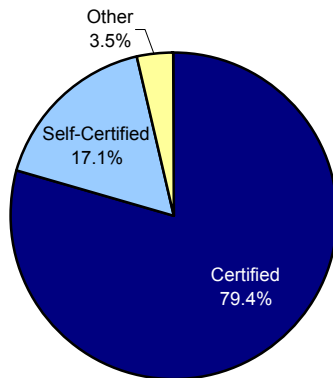


Figure 9 shows that 79.4% of the working days lost were covered by a medical certificate, giving rise to a certified absence rate of 8.7 days lost per staff year (3.9% of available working days). Shorter term absences covered by self-certification accounted for 17.1% of the working days that were lost, resulting in a self-certified absence rate of 1.9 days lost per staff year (0.8% of available working days).

On average, self-certified absences lasted 3.3 working days whereas certified absences lasted 34.6 working days.

<sup>8</sup> By comparing these results with the information presented on the duration of absence spells, the reader will notice that some of the absence spells which lasted five working days or less were certified. Other includes staff with absence spells which were either uncertified or the certification was missing.

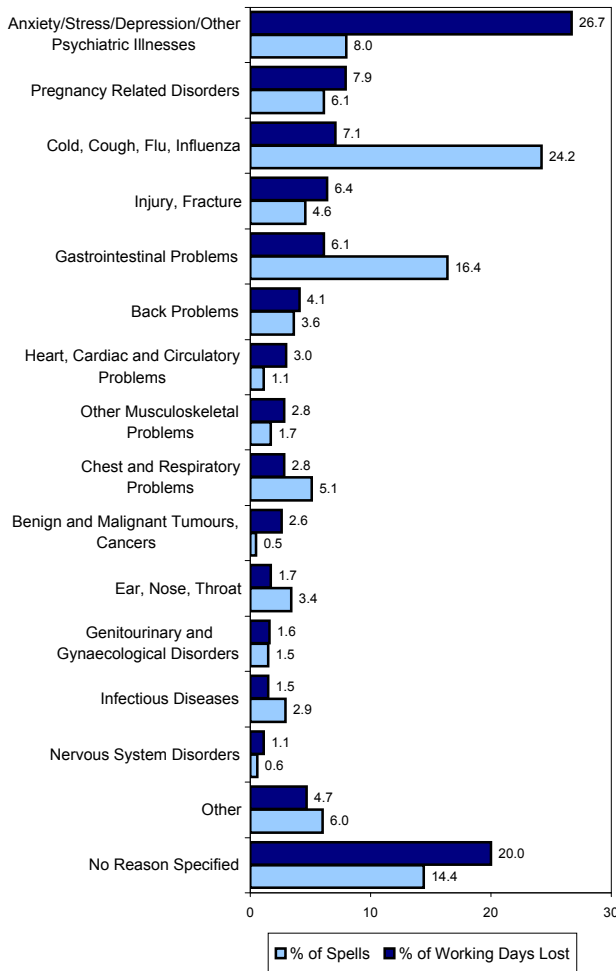
## **Chapter 3 Reasons For Sickness Absence**



### 3. Reasons for Sickness Absence

Figure 10

#### Overall Reasons for Absence



#### 3.1 Overall

*Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* accounted for 26.7% of working days lost in 2008/2009. As can be seen in Table 1, absences in this category tended to be long-term, lasting an average of 41.6 days.

*Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza* accounted for the largest proportion of absence spells (24.2%). These were generally short-term in nature, lasting on average 3.7 working days.

The reason for absence was missing for a high proportion (14.4%) of absence cases.

An analysis of the reasons for certified and self-certified absences is presented in Appendix 6.

The move to the new pay and absence management system introduced a new classification system for absence reasons, therefore the information in the categories presented here cannot be directly compared to previous years.

Table 1

#### Average Duration of Absences by Reason

Reason for Absence	Average Duration (Working Days)
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	64.3
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	41.6
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	34.9
Nervous System Disorders	24.2
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	20.6
Injury, Fracture	17.2
Pregnancy Related Disorders	15.9
Back Problems	14.2
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	13.7
Chest and Respiratory Problems	7.0
Infectious Diseases	6.7
Ear, Nose, Throat	6.1
Gastrointestinal Problems	4.6
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	3.7
Other	9.6
No Reason Specified	17.3

The following tables show the percentage of the total working days lost attributable to each reason for absence, disaggregated by grade, gender and age group. Shading has been used in each table to highlight the illness category which accounted for the largest proportion of the working days lost at each grade level.

### 3.2 Grade Level

Table 2 shows that for those absences with a specified reason, *Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* accounted for the largest proportion of the working days lost across all grades.

**Table 2**

#### Reasons for Absence by Grade Level

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost						
	G7+	DP	SO	EOI	EOII	AO	AA
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	22.5	14.5	23.1	21.1	28.2	29.3	29.1
Back Problems	2.3	4.7	4.1	5.4	4.5	3.7	4.1
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	-	-	3.5	4.1	2.5	1.4	2.7
Chest and Respiratory Problems	3.0	3.4	2.6	3.0	3.5	2.5	2.6
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	7.1	8.3	8.2	7.8	7.6	6.5	6.7
Ear, Nose, Throat	3.1	1.7	1.3	1.9	1.4	1.8	1.3
Gastrointestinal Problems	6.7	5.4	5.8	5.7	5.5	6.5	6.3
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.7	2.0	2.4	2.8	1.6	1.3	1.1
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	8.6	7.3	3.5	2.9	2.8	2.2	2.7
Infectious Diseases	2.5	2.4	2.0	1.1	1.5	1.3	1.7
Injury, Fracture	6.9	5.1	6.2	7.2	7.0	5.9	6.7
Nervous System Disorders	-	-	0.5	1.0	1.7	0.8	1.3
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	2.8	2.9	1.9	2.2	4.0	2.4	3.1
Pregnancy Related Disorders	4.2	4.1	3.7	4.9	8.1	10.7	6.3
Other	2.0	4.8	5.7	4.7	4.3	5.0	4.0
No Reason Specified	21.9	26.7	25.4	24.2	15.7	18.6	20.2
<b>Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed

### 3.3 Gender

*Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* accounted for the largest proportion of the total working days lost among both males and females (23.9% and 28.1% respectively).

**Table 3**

#### Reasons for Absence by Gender

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost	
	Male	Female
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	23.9	28.1
Back Problems	4.5	3.9
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	2.2	2.8
Chest and Respiratory Problems	3.1	2.7
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	9.8	5.7
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.6	1.7
Gastrointestinal Problems	6.7	5.7
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.6	2.2
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	5.0	1.9
Infectious Diseases	1.9	1.3
Injury, Fracture	8.1	5.4
Nervous System Disorders	1.6	0.8
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	2.7	2.9
Pregnancy Related Disorders	n/a	12.2
Other	4.8	4.6
No Reason Specified	23.5	18.1
<b>Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 3.4 Age Group

*Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses* accounted for the largest proportion of working days lost among staff with a specified absence reason in all age groups during 2008/2009.

**Table 4**

#### Reasons for Absence by Age Group

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost				
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	25.8	26.8	28.8	29.2	16.7
Back Problems	3.1	3.7	4.9	4.3	3.6
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	-	0.8	2.3	4.2	4.8
Chest and Respiratory Problems	2.7	2.0	2.3	3.5	4.2
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	10.9	8.1	7.1	5.6	6.4
Ear, Nose, Throat	2.0	1.5	1.8	1.7	1.4
Gastrointestinal Problems	8.8	8.2	5.6	4.4	4.7
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.9	0.9	2.2	2.0	1.5
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1.8	0.7	1.8	4.3	8.0
Infectious Diseases	2.1	1.8	1.4	1.3	1.5
Injury, Fracture	10.3	5.3	6.1	6.3	6.9
Nervous System Disorders	-	0.9	1.5	1.3	-
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	1.3	1.6	1.7	4.2	5.0
Pregnancy Related Disorders	8.7	18.0	9.0	0.6	-
Other	6.0	3.9	4.4	5.2	4.7
No Reason Specified	15.5	15.8	19.0	22.0	28.9
<b>Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed

**Chapter 4**  
**Long-term Sickness Absence**



## 4. Long-term Sickness Absence

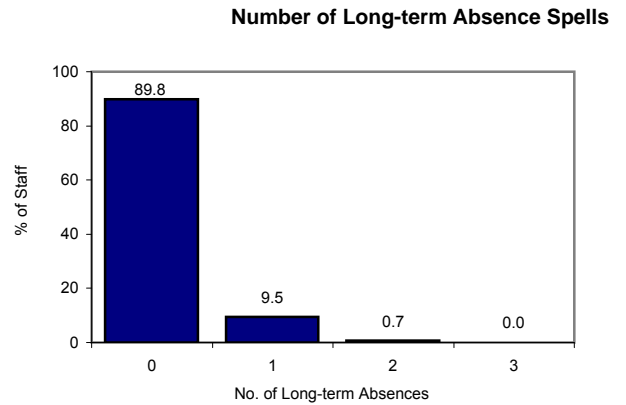
This chapter considers long-term absence, which is defined as any spell of absence lasting more than 20 consecutive working days in the 2008/2009 financial year. Supporting information can be found in Appendix 7.

### 4.1 Prevalence of Long-term Absence

A total of 2,635 staff (10.2%) in the NICS had one or more spells of long-term absence. This was a decrease on the previous financial year (11.4% of staff).

The frequency rate<sup>9</sup> of long-term absence (10.9%) equates to 2,822 spells. As already highlighted in Chapter 2, long-term absences accounted for 70.6% of the total working days lost throughout the year and is equivalent to losing the work of approximately 771 full-time staff for the entire year.

Figure 11

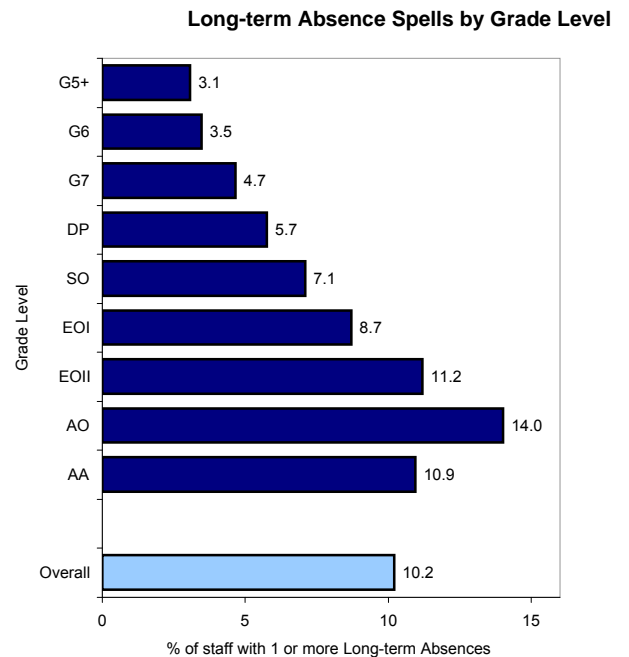


Number of Long-term Absences	Number of Staff	Percentage of staff
0	23,164	89.8
1	2,456	9.5
2	171	0.7
3	8	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,799</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 4.2 Grade Level

As with the previous five years, the incidence of long-term absence was highest at the AO grade, where 14.0% of staff had one or more spells of long-term absence during the year (Figure 12). From AO level upwards the incidence of long-term absence decreased at each successive grade level.

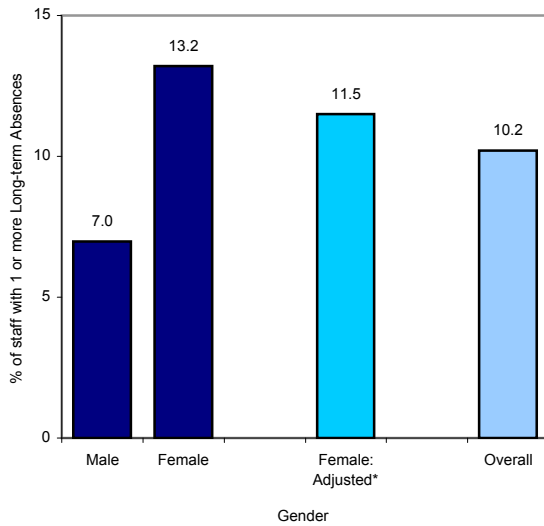
Figure 12



<sup>9</sup> Frequency Rate is the average number of long-term absences per employee, expressed as a percentage. (No of spells of absence in the period/No of employees) x 100

Figure 13

Long-term Absence Spells by Gender



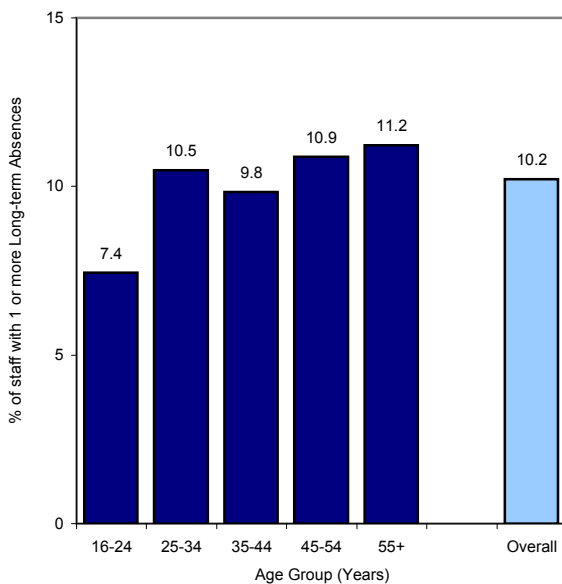
\* Excludes Absences due to Pregnancy Related Disorders

4.3 Gender

The proportion of females with one or more spells of long-term absence (13.2%) was significantly higher than the comparative male proportion (7.0%). When all long-term absences due to Pregnancy Related Disorders were excluded from the calculations, the proportion of females who had one or more spells of long-term absence (11.5%) remained substantially higher than that of males (Figure 13).

Figure 14

Long-term Absence Spells by Age Group



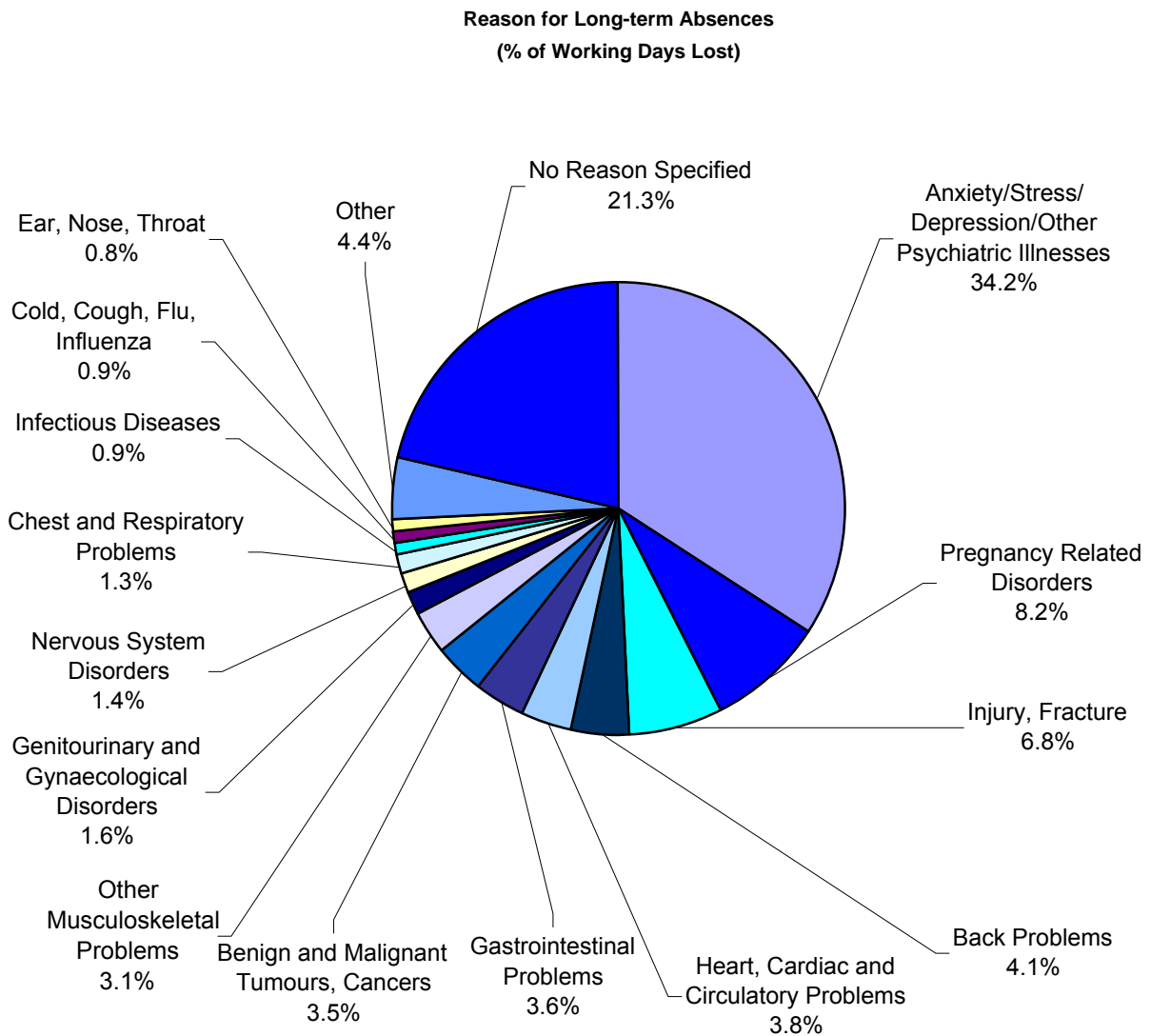
4.4 Age Group

The incidence of long-term absence was lowest in the 16-24 age group, with 7.4% of staff having one or more spells of long-term absence during 2008/2009 (Figure 14). Staff in the 55 and above age group were most likely to be absent on a long-term basis, with 11.2% having one or more spells of long-term absence. Long-term absences attributed to 81.4% of the total working days lost among staff in this age group (Table 3, Appendix 7).

### 4.5 Reason for Long-term Absence

Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses accounted for 34.2% of long-term working days lost. No reason for absence was specified for a high proportion of working days lost (21.3%).

Figure 15





**Chapter 5  
Targets**



## 5. Targets

### 5.1 Introduction

During 2005, Ministerial targets were agreed for an overall reduction in sickness absence, within the eleven NI Departments, to 9.5 days lost per staff year by 2010. Targets were strategically based, with the main focus on reducing the frequency and duration<sup>10</sup> of long-term<sup>11</sup> absences, and, to a lesser extent, the frequency of short-term absences. To achieve their target in terms of days lost per staff year, the Eleven NI Departments needed to:

- reduce long-term duration by 7% each year;
- reduce long-term frequency by 7% each year; and
- reduce short-term frequency by 5% each year

over the period 2005/2006 to 2009/2010.

This chapter charts how the NI Departments, both at an overall level and individually, are progressing towards their targets.

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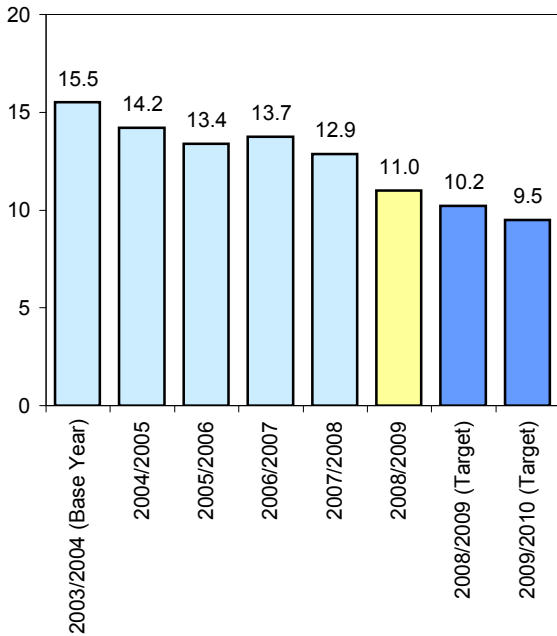
<sup>10</sup> Throughout this report, the duration of absences relates only to days lost in the corresponding financial year.

<sup>11</sup> For the purpose of target-setting, absences are dichotomised into long-term and short-term, with long-term being defined as greater than 20 consecutive working days.

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Figure 16

Average Number of Working Days Lost per Staff Year



## 5.2 Absence Targets - NICS Overall

Despite making up some lost ground, the NICS failed to achieve its overall absence target for 2008/2009, losing 11.0 working days per staff year against a target of 10.2 days. While making progress, it also failed to meet its strategic target for the frequency of long-term<sup>12</sup> absences, achieving a frequency rate of 10.9% against a target of 10.5%.

Similar to the previous financial year, the NICS failed to meet its strategic target for the duration<sup>13</sup> of long-term absences, achieving an average duration of 61.7 days against a target of 45.3 days. Progress in this area has been particularly poor.

At 0.76 short-term spells per staff year, the short-term target was achieved (1.15 spells). This was, in fact, lower than the final target set for 2010 (1.09 days).

Table 5

Frequency and Duration of Absence

		2003/2004 (Base Year)	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2008/2009 (Target)	2009/2010 (Target)
Overall	Average days lost per staff year	15.5	14.2	13.4	13.7	12.9	11.0	10.2	9.5
Long-term	Frequency Rate <sup>14</sup> (%)	14.1	13.2	13.0	13.7	12.5	10.9	10.5	9.8
	Average Duration (working days)	60.6	64.2	62.0	60.5	62.0	61.7	45.3	42.2
Short-term	Average number of spells per staff year	1.41	1.13	1.04	1.00	0.95	0.76	1.15	1.09

Note: **Green** text denotes target met  
**Red** text denotes target not met

<sup>12</sup> For the purpose of target-setting, absences are dichotomised into long-term and short-term, with long-term being defined as greater than 20 consecutive working days.

<sup>13</sup> Throughout this report, the duration of absences relates only to days lost in the corresponding financial year.

<sup>14</sup> Frequency Rate is the average number of absences per employee, expressed as a percentage.

### 5.3 Days Lost per Staff Year by Department

Table 6 shows that while the NICS failed to meet its overall target of 10.2 days lost per staff year, seven departments met their individual targets. The department furthest ahead of target was DCAL (7.4 days compared to a target of 10.4 days), followed by OFMDFM (6.8 days compared to a target of 8.5 days).

Although their individual targets were not met, all the remaining departments showed an improvement on their comparative figure for the previous year.

Table 6<sup>15</sup>

#### Overall Days Lost per Staff Year<sup>16</sup>

	Actual					2008/2009			Target <sup>17</sup>
	2003/2004 (Base Year)	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	Actual	Target	% Difference	2009/2010
DARD	12.4	11.5	11.1	11.1	10.9	7.9	8.5	7.5	8.5
DCAL	15.1	11.0	10.3	10.5	11.4	7.4	10.4	29.3	9.6
DE	11.7	12.8	12.9	12.2	11.8	9.2	8.5	-7.8	8.5
DEL	17.8	14.7	14.0	14.5	13.7	11.1	11.5	3.2	10.4
DETI	11.8	9.9	10.7	10.0	7.4	7.3	8.5	13.7	8.5
DFP	14.3	13.8	13.0	12.4	11.5	10.9	9.3	-16.9	8.5
DHSSPS	12.3	9.5	10.7	11.4	10.2	8.1	8.5	5.2	8.5
DOE	13.4	12.0	11.1	11.5	11.0	9.6	9.1	-5.2	8.5
DRD	12.0	10.2	8.2	9.2	9.0	8.0	8.5	5.3	8.5
DSD	19.7	19.4	18.3	18.7	16.9	14.6	12.5	-16.9	11.2
OFMDFM	12.6	8.6	8.6	10.7	9.7	6.8	8.5	20.1	8.5
Overall	15.5	14.2	13.4	13.7	12.9	11.0	10.2	-7.8	9.5

Note: **Green** text denotes target met  
**Red** text denotes target not met

<sup>15</sup> Please note that the data in Table 6 is displayed to 1 decimal place for presentational reasons only and if trying to calculate percentage difference the user should note that the percentages shown may not match due to rounding of figures.

<sup>16</sup> It was agreed that once a department has reached a level of 8.5 days they are required to maintain that level.

<sup>17</sup> Targets are based on the number and composition of staff in each of the eleven NI Departments during 2003/2004 as, at the time of setting, this was the most recent information available.

## 5.4 Long-term<sup>18</sup> Frequency<sup>19</sup>

The NICS failed to meet its overall target for long-term frequency rate. At departmental level only five of the eleven departments met their individual target.

With a long-term frequency rate of 9.9%, DE was furthest from meeting its target. It was followed by DHSSPS, DFP and DOE respectively.

While a number of departments failed to meet their target, they all showed an improvement from the previous financial year.

OFMDFM achieved the lowest long-term frequency rate at 6.5%, followed by DCAL (6.6%) and DETI (6.9%).

Table 7<sup>20</sup>

### Long-term Frequency

	Actual					2008/2009			Target <sup>21</sup>
	2003/2004 (Base Year)	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	Actual	Target	% Difference	2009/2010
DARD	11.1	10.9	11.2	11.3	11.0	8.7	8.3	-4.5	8.3
DCAL	10.3	9.4	8.6	9.5	10.6	6.6	7.7	14.0	7.2
DE	8.8	11.9	11.1	11.8	10.4	9.9	7.0	-41.7	7.0
DEL	17.7	13.8	15.0	16.0	13.8	11.1	13.3	16.3	12.3
DETI	10.8	9.2	10.1	10.5	7.1	6.9	8.1	15.2	8.1
DFP	12.6	11.9	11.6	11.1	10.5	10.3	9.4	-9.1	8.7
DHSSPS	9.7	7.8	10.2	11.1	10.1	8.1	7.3	-11.2	7.3
DOE	11.2	10.3	10.1	11.3	9.8	9.0	8.4	-7.5	7.8
DRD	10.9	10.1	8.3	9.7	9.5	7.7	8.2	6.4	8.2
DSD	18.6	18.1	17.7	18.7	16.3	14.6	13.9	-4.9	13.0
OFMDFM	9.8	8.6	6.9	8.6	9.0	6.5	7.4	12.1	7.4
Overall	14.1	13.2	13.0	13.7	12.5	10.9	10.5	-4.2	9.8

Note: **Green** text denotes target met  
**Red** text denotes target not met

<sup>18</sup> For the purpose of target-setting, absences are dichotomised into long-term and short-term, with long-term being defined as greater than 20 consecutive working days.

<sup>19</sup> Frequency Rate is the average number of absences per employee, expressed as a percentage.

<sup>20</sup> Please note that the data in Table 7 is displayed to 1 decimal place for presentational reasons only and if trying to calculate percentage difference the user should note that the percentages shown may not match due to rounding of figures.

<sup>21</sup> Targets are based on the number and composition of staff in each of the eleven NI Departments during 2003/2004 as, at the time of setting, this was the most recent information available.

## 5.5 Long-term<sup>22</sup> Duration<sup>23</sup>

None of the eleven departments achieved their individual target for the duration of long-term absence and consequently the overall NICS target of 45.3 days (actual 61.7 days) was missed by a large margin. The duration of long-term absence is actually higher in 2008/2009 than in 2003/2004 when the target base rate was established.

DOE, which had an average long-term absence duration of 65.5 days and a target of 37.9 days was the furthest off target.

Table 8<sup>24</sup>

### Long-term Duration

	Actual					2008/2009			Target
	2003/2004 (Base Year)	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	Actual	Target	% Difference	2009/2010
DARD	58.7	62.3	62.6	60.2	62.3	57.7	43.9	-31.5	43.9
DCAL	59.0	45.0	57.3	56.5	59.4	62.5	44.1	-41.7	41.0
DE	70.0	59.8	73.0	62.0	68.8	61.0	56.3	-8.3	56.3
DEL	56.2	62.4	54.4	54.6	60.1	58.0	42.0	-38.0	39.1
DETI	52.0	51.8	58.1	48.2	50.4	59.2	38.9	-52.3	38.9
DFP	66.4	69.9	66.5	65.7	61.3	61.5	49.7	-23.7	46.2
DHSSPS	64.9	64.6	56.2	56.3	57.2	52.9	48.5	-9.1	48.5
DOE	50.7	55.5	56.2	53.0	62.2	65.5	37.9	-73.0	35.3
DRD	57.9	62.2	54.2	54.5	53.6	68.2	43.3	-57.6	43.3
DSD	62.5	67.1	64.6	64.1	64.3	62.2	46.7	-33.2	43.5
OFMDFM	69.8	53.0	70.2	65.9	54.3	62.4	52.2	-19.5	52.2
Overall	60.6	64.2	62.0	60.5	62.0	61.7	45.3	-36.3	42.2

Note: **Green** text denotes target met  
**Red** text denotes target not met

<sup>22</sup> For the purpose of target-setting, absences are dichotomised into long-term and short-term, with long-term being defined as greater than 20 consecutive working days.

<sup>23</sup> Throughout this report, the duration of absences relates only to days lost in the corresponding financial year.

<sup>24</sup> Please note that the data in Table 8 is displayed to 1 decimal place for presentational reasons only and if trying to calculate percentage difference the user should note that the percentages shown may not match due to rounding of figures.

## 5.6 Short-term<sup>25</sup> Frequency

All eleven departments were ahead of target on short-term absence spells, with all eleven already achieving beyond their final target for 2010.

DSD had the highest number of short-term spells per staff year (0.89).

DARD had the lowest number of absence spells per staff year (0.53) and were 48.5% ahead of target.

Table 9<sup>26</sup>

### Short-term Absence Spells

	Actual					2008/2009			Target <sup>27</sup>
	2003/2004 (Base Year)	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	Actual	Target	% Difference	2009/2010
DARD	1.27	0.98	0.84	0.82	0.71	0.53	1.03	48.5	1.03
DCAL	1.99	1.53	1.29	1.18	1.14	0.65	1.62	59.7	1.54
DE	1.34	1.22	1.10	0.95	0.91	0.62	1.15	46.2	1.15
DEL	1.47	1.11	1.02	0.99	0.89	0.77	1.20	36.1	1.14
DETI	1.55	1.24	1.09	1.02	0.85	0.70	1.26	44.4	1.26
DFP	1.38	1.16	1.12	1.09	1.06	0.86	1.13	23.8	1.07
DHSSPS	1.49	1.15	1.16	1.16	1.01	0.84	1.21	31.0	1.21
DOE	1.61	1.25	1.10	1.13	1.06	0.69	1.31	47.4	1.25
DRD	1.15	0.78	0.77	0.80	0.79	0.55	0.93	40.6	0.93
DSD	1.45	1.24	1.14	1.05	1.00	0.89	1.18	24.4	1.12
OFMDFM	1.45	1.14	1.05	0.95	1.01	0.59	1.15	49.1	1.18
Overall	1.41	1.13	1.04	1.00	0.95	0.76	1.15	34.1	1.09

Note: **Green** text denotes target met  
**Red** text denotes target not met

<sup>25</sup> For the purpose of target-setting, absences are dichotomised into long-term and short-term, with long-term being defined as greater than 20 consecutive working days.

<sup>26</sup> Please note that the data in Table 9 is displayed to 2 decimal places for presentational reasons only and if trying to calculate percentage difference the user should note that the percentages shown may not match due to rounding of figures.

<sup>27</sup> Targets are based on the number and composition of staff in each of the eleven NI Departments during 2003/2004 as, at the time of setting, this was the most recent information available.

**Chapter 6  
Data Quality**



## 6.1 Data Quality

In November 2008 the NICS introduced a new pay and absence management system as part of the HRConnect service. The new system requires line managers to key information on staff absences directly into the personnel database, thereby ensuring that line managers have a much more immediate involvement in managing attendance issues within their respective business areas.

It is recognised that the change in recording practices and the move to a new system could have an impact on the quality of absence data. This issue has been brought into focus by the finding that there has been a higher than expected reduction in absence levels and a marked increase in the proportion of staff with no absences.

All Departments were asked to quality assure their absence information and highlight any problems. While no significant problems were identified by Departments it is important to acknowledge that they had limited scope for assessing the validity of the absence information held on their staff.

As part of our data validation we were able to compare, for a small group of staff, manual records of absenteeism with those being kept on the system. While these comparisons identified some instances of under-recording, it has not been possible to generalise from these findings and quantify the level of any under-recording across the NICS. However, it has been possible to undertake analysis that provides a feel for the potential impact of under-recording. Of all the key figures contained in this report the one that looks the most anomalous is that relating to the proportion of staff with no absences, 49.8% - up from 43.1% in the previous year. While it is impossible to say to what extent this marked increase is due to under-recording it is possible to assess the impact of the magnitude of this change on the overall absence level. If we were to make the assumption that the proportion of staff with no absences was, say, 45.0%, not 49.8%, this would, for illustrative purposes, change the overall level of absence from 11.0 days to 11.2 days.

Analysis of trend data, before and after the transition to the new recording system, has not provided us with evidence of a marked decrease in absence rates following the transition. The downward trend in absence was clearly evident prior to the move to the new payroll and absence management service (Table 1, Appendix 8).

In conclusion, our analysis reveals that while there is evidence that the move to the new pay and absence management system has led to some under-recording of absences there has, nevertheless, been a real and substantial decrease in absence levels. This reduction has been due in large part to a reduction in the frequency of long-term absence.

## 6.2 Concluding Comments

The NICS has achieved a substantial reduction in its level of absence during the reporting period and has made up some of the ground it had lost in the last few years. While inroads are now starting to be made into the frequency of long-term absence, one of the key determinants of the high level of absence in the NICS, the same cannot be said about the duration of long-term absences, which are actually higher now than they were five years ago when the base level for targets was established. There is no reason why absence duration cannot be reduced and it is important that attention is focused on this area if the overall Ministerial target is to be achieved.

The report has highlighted issues relating to the under-recording of absences. While issues of this type might be expected given the significant change in the responsibilities of line managers in relation to the recording of absence information on the new pay and absence management system, it is imperative that Departments put in place adequate quality control procedures and support for line managers to ensure that what might be regarded as teething issues associated with lack of familiarity with the new system do not lapse into custom and practice.

**Appendix 1  
Calculations**



## Appendix 1

## 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 (1999)"*. 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 amounted to 226 working days during 2008/2009, 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

There are 2 members of staff **A** and **B**.

**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:

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

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

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

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

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

**Appendix 1****Scaling Absences Lasting More than 6 Months**

The Cabinet Office issued revised guidance for the collection, analysis and reporting of sickness absence data during 2006/2007. This included recommending that a scaling adjustment be applied to absences lasting for more than 6 months to ensure that longer-term absences are not over estimated.

Taking the example of a full time employee who was absent for the entire 2008/2009 financial year. Each full time employee can have a maximum of 226 working days. Where a full time employee is absent for the whole year, and unable to take their leave, then they are actually absent for 251 working days. In order to make sure that longer-term absences are not over-estimated, a scaling adjustment was applied which recalculated the total working days lost to 226.

**Appendix 2**  
**Tables Relating to Chapter 1**



## Tables Relating to Chapter 1

Table 1: Distribution of Working Days Lost

Cumulative Number of Working Days Lost	% of Staff
0	49.8
1-5	25.4
6-10	8.2
11-15	3.2
16-20	2.1
More than 20	11.4

Table 2: Absence Levels by Length of Service

Length of Service	Days Lost per Staff Year
Less than 6 months	5.4
6 months to less than 1 year	7.3
1 to less than 2 years	9.7
2 to less than 3 years	11.3
3 to less than 4 years	10.3
4 to less than 5 years	10.0
5 years or more	11.5
<b>Overall</b>	<b>11.0</b>

Table 3: Absence Levels by Occupational Grouping

Occupational Groups with more than 200 staff

Occupational Group	Days Lost per Staff Year
Typists	14.9
Support Grade Staff	14.4
General Service	12.5
Drawing Officers	11.4
Driving Examiners	9.3
Scientific Officers	6.9
Casual	6.3
Statisticians	6.2
Civil Eng (inc Assistants)	5.7
Computing	5.6
Planning	5.4
Agricultural Inspectors	4.8

## Appendix 2

Table 4: Certification by Department

Department	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Total	Self-Certified	Certified	Total
DARD	1.1	6.5	7.9	0.5	2.9	3.5
DCAL	1.4	5.9	7.4	0.6	2.6	3.3
DE	1.4	7.4	9.2	0.6	3.3	4.1
DEL	1.8	8.8	11.1	0.8	4.0	5.0
DETI	1.7	5.5	7.3	0.7	2.5	3.3
DFP	2.1	8.4	10.9	0.9	3.8	4.9
DHSSPS	1.7	6.2	8.1	0.8	2.8	3.6
DOE	1.5	7.7	9.6	0.7	3.5	4.3
DRD	1.3	6.6	8.0	0.6	3.0	3.6
DSD	2.5	11.6	14.6	1.1	5.2	6.5
OFMDFM	1.1	5.5	6.8	0.5	2.5	3.1
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>

Table 5: Certification by Grade

Grade Level	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Total	Self-Certified	Certified	Total
G5+	0.4	4.5	4.9	0.2	2.0	2.2
G6	0.5	3.1	3.7	0.2	1.4	1.6
G7	0.8	3.7	4.7	0.4	1.7	2.1
DP	1.1	5.0	6.1	0.5	2.2	2.8
SO	1.2	6.2	7.6	0.5	2.8	3.4
EOI	1.6	6.8	8.8	0.7	3.1	4.0
EOII	2.1	9.2	11.7	1.0	4.1	5.3
AO	2.6	11.9	15.0	1.1	5.3	6.7
AA	2.2	11.7	14.5	1.0	5.2	6.5
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>

Table 6: Certification by Gender

Gender	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Total	Self-Certified	Certified	Total
Male	1.7	5.8	7.8	0.7	2.6	3.5
Female	2.1	11.7	14.2	0.9	5.2	6.4
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>

Table 7: Certification by Age Group

Age Group	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Total	Self-Certified	Certified	Total
16-24	2.6	7.3	10.4	1.2	3.2	4.6
25-34	2.4	8.9	11.7	1.1	3.9	5.2
35-44	1.8	8.0	10.2	0.8	3.6	4.6
45-54	1.4	9.0	10.7	0.6	4.1	4.8
55+	1.5	10.7	12.6	0.7	4.8	5.7
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>

## Appendix 2

Table 8: % of Available Working Days Lost by Department

Department	% of Available Working Days Lost					
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
DARD	5.5	5.2	5.0	5.0	5.0	3.5
DCAL	6.8	5.0	4.6	4.8	5.2	3.3
DE	5.2	5.8	5.8	5.5	5.4	4.1
DEL	8.0	6.7	6.2	6.6	6.2	5.0
DETI	5.3	4.5	4.8	4.5	3.4	3.3
DFP	6.4	6.2	5.8	5.6	5.2	4.9
DHSSPS	5.5	4.3	4.8	5.1	4.7	3.6
DOE	6.0	5.4	5.0	5.2	5.0	4.3
DRD	5.4	4.7	3.7	4.2	4.1	3.6
DSD	8.8	8.8	8.1	8.4	7.6	6.5
OFMDFM	5.7	3.9	3.8	4.8	4.4	3.1
<b>Overall</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>

Table 9: % of Available Working Days Lost by Grade

Grade Level	% of Available Working Days Lost					
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
G5+	1.2	2.1	1.8	1.8	1.4	2.2
G6	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.1	2.1	1.6
G7	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.1
DP	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.4	2.8
SO	4.7	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.4
EOI	5.5	5.3	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.0
EOII	7.7	7.3	6.9	6.9	6.5	5.3
AO	9.8	8.6	7.9	8.5	7.9	6.7
AA	7.0	7.3	7.0	7.9	7.1	6.5
<b>Overall</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>

Table 10: % of Available Working Days Lost by Gender

Gender	% of Available Working Days Lost					
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Male	4.9	4.7	4.1	4.4	4.2	3.5
Female	8.9	8.2	7.8	8.0	7.5	6.4
<b>Overall</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>

Table 11: % of Available Working Days Lost by Age Group

Age Group	% of Available Working Days Lost					
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
16-24	6.3	6.1	5.8	6.3	5.7	4.6
25-34	7.2	6.7	6.1	6.7	6.2	5.2
35-44	7.3	6.6	5.9	5.8	5.6	4.6
45-54	6.5	6.0	5.6	5.8	5.4	4.8
55+	6.9	6.8	7.0	6.9	6.8	5.7
<b>Overall</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>

Note: **Green** text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year  
**Red** text denotes an increase from the previous financial year

## Appendix 2

Table 12: Working Days Lost by Department for Female Staff at AO Grade

Department	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year
DSD	20.3
DFP	19.0
DOE	17.5
OFMDFM	15.7
DE	15.2
DRD	14.0
DEL	13.4
DARD	11.8
DETI	11.6
DCAL	10.1
DHSSPS	9.6
<b>Overall</b>	<b>17.8</b>

**Appendix 3**  
**Seasonal Effects on the Onset of Absence**



## Seasonal Effects on the Onset of Absence

The following tables examine seasonal effects on the onset of sickness absence during the financial year 2008/2009.

**Table 1: Onset of Absence by Month**

Month	% of Spells Starting in Month	
	Self-Certified	Certified
April	10.3	11.5
May	7.1	9.5
June	8.0	9.8
July	6.7	8.0
August	6.7	7.2
September	8.5	8.7
October	8.8	9.9
November	8.5	7.8
December	11.3	6.6
January	10.5	8.4
February	6.3	6.2
March	7.2	6.5

**Table 2: Onset of Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses by Month**

Month	% of Spells Starting in Month
April	6.7
May	7.0
June	9.3
July	7.1
August	7.7
September	9.9
October	11.8
November	9.1
December	6.5
January	8.0
February	7.6
March	9.3

**Table 3: Onset of Absence by Weekday**

Weekday	% of Spells Starting on Weekday	
	Self-Certified	Certified
Sunday	0.1	0.9
Monday	35.2	36.7
Tuesday	22.8	20.4
Wednesday	17.8	17.5
Thursday	15.0	14.4
Friday	8.8	9.6
Saturday	0.2	0.6



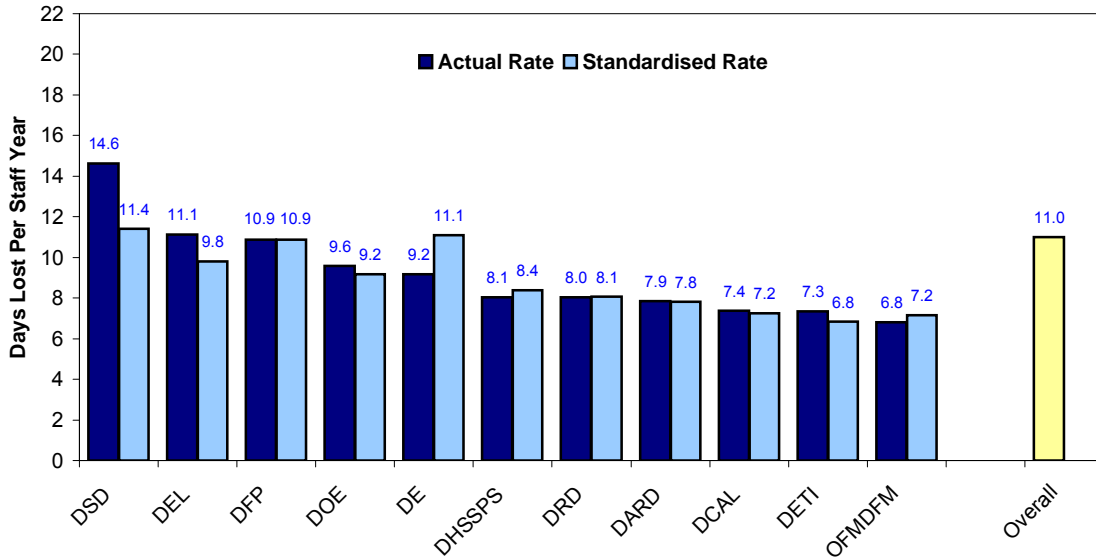
**Appendix 4**  
**Illustrative Standardised Departmental Absence Levels**



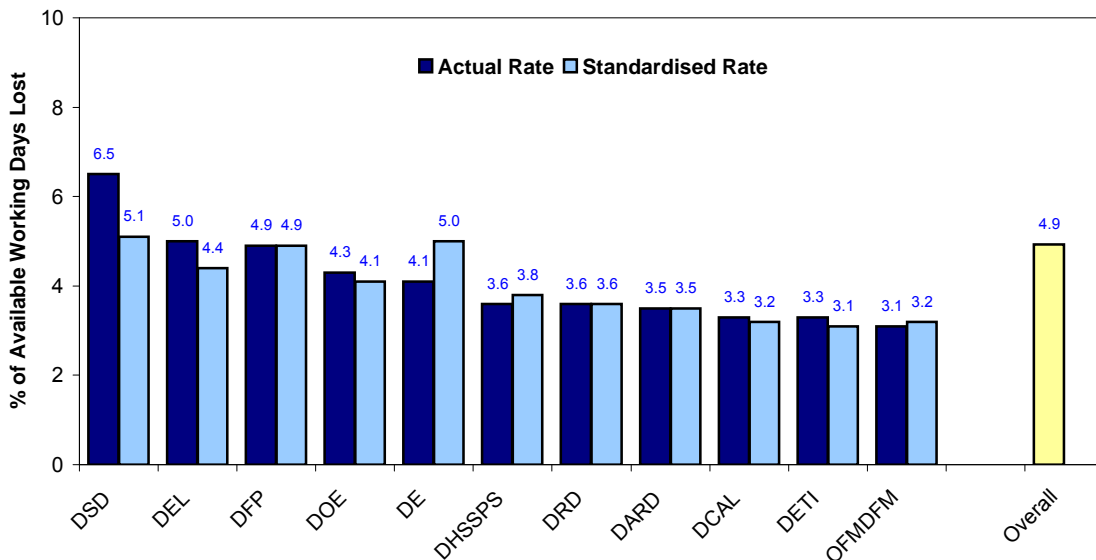
### Illustrative Standardised Departmental Absence Levels

The following figures show the extent to which a department's staffing profile can influence its overall absence rate. In Figures 1 and 2 below, the staffing profile of each department has been standardised by Grade, Gender and Age to that of DFP.

**Figure 1: Days Lost Per Staff Year**



**Figure 2: % of Available Working Days Lost**





**Appendix 5**  
**Tables Relating to Chapter 2**



## Tables Relating to Chapter 2

Table 1: Average Duration and Number of Spells by Certification Across Grades

Grade Level	Self-Certified Absences		Certified Absences		Total	
	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)
G5+	0.2	2.4	0.1	49.5	0.3	18.9
G6	0.2	2.5	0.1	37.5	0.3	12.8
G7	0.3	2.5	0.1	26.4	0.5	9.9
DP	0.4	2.8	0.2	31.6	0.6	11.0
SO	0.4	2.9	0.2	34.6	0.6	11.8
EOI	0.5	3.4	0.2	33.9	0.7	12.0
EOII	0.6	3.5	0.3	35.1	0.9	12.6
AO	0.7	3.5	0.3	34.5	1.2	12.9
AA	0.8	2.8	0.3	37.6	1.2	12.6
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>12.4</b>

Table 2: Average Duration and Number of Spells by Certification Across Genders

Gender	Self-Certified Absences		Certified Absences		Total	
	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)
Male	0.5	3.3	0.2	34.2	0.7	10.7
Female	0.6	3.3	0.3	34.8	1.0	13.6
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>12.4</b>

Table 3: Average Duration and Number of Spells by Certification Across Age Groups

Age Group	Self-Certified Absences		Certified Absences		Total	
	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)
16-24	1.0	2.7	0.3	28.7	1.3	7.9
25-34	0.8	3.2	0.3	31.9	1.1	10.6
35-44	0.5	3.5	0.2	33.4	0.8	12.5
45-54	0.4	3.3	0.2	37.8	0.7	15.3
55+	0.4	3.7	0.3	41.1	0.7	17.9
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>12.4</b>

## Appendix 5

Table 4: Number of Absence Spells - % of Staff 2003/2004 - 2008/2009

Number of Absence Spells	% of Staff					
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
0	34.5	38.5	41.0	40.7	43.1	49.8
1	28.7	32.2	31.7	32.7	32.8	31.9
2	19.2	17.9	17.0	17.3	15.7	12.9
3	10.1	6.9	6.3	6.0	5.4	3.7
4	4.2	2.6	2.3	1.9	1.6	1.0
5	1.7	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.4
6+	1.6	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.3

Table 5: Duration of Absence Spells - % of Spells 2003/2004 - 2008/2009

Duration of Absence Spells (Working Days)	% of Spells					
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
1-2	42.3	40.9	39.2	37.1	37.2	34.5
3-5	33.8	33.3	33.8	34.7	35.7	36.5
6-10	7.2	7.4	7.7	7.4	7.1	7.7
11-20	6.2	6.6	6.9	7.1	6.9	7.1
More than 20	10.5	11.9	12.5	13.5	13.1	14.2

Table 6: Average Duration of Short-term Absence Spells - Days 2003/2004 - 2008/2009

Department	Days					
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
DARD	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.3
DCAL	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.0
DE	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.8
DEL	4.1	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.5
DETI	3.6	3.7	3.8	4.2	4.0	3.8
DFP	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.2
DHSSPS	3.3	3.2	3.6	3.7	3.6	4.0
DOE	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.9
DRD	4.1	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.2
DSD	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.5
OFMDFM	3.4	3.2	3.4	4.0	4.0	4.2
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.3</b>

Note: **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 3**



## Tables Relating to Chapter 3

Table 1: Certification by Reason

Reason	% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Total
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	0.1	1.2	1.3
Back Problems	0.0	0.2	0.2
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.0	0.1	0.1
Chest and Respiratory Problems	0.0	0.1	0.1
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	0.3	0.1	0.4
Ear, Nose, Throat	0.0	0.0	0.1
Gastrointestinal Problems	0.1	0.1	0.3
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.0	0.1	0.1
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	0.0	0.1	0.1
Infectious Diseases	0.0	0.1	0.1
Injury, Fracture	0.0	0.3	0.3
Nervous System Disorders	0.0	0.0	0.1
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	0.0	0.1	0.1
Pregnancy Related Disorders	0.0	0.3	0.4
Other	0.0	0.2	0.2
No Reason Specified	0.1	0.8	1.0
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>

Table 2: % of Absence Spells by Reason

Reason	% of Spells
	2008/2009
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	8.0
Back Problems	3.6
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.5
Chest and Respiratory Problems	5.1
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	24.2
Ear, Nose, Throat	3.4
Gastrointestinal Problems	16.4
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	1.5
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1.1
Infectious Diseases	2.9
Injury, Fracture	4.6
Nervous System Disorders	0.6
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	1.7
Pregnancy Related Disorders	6.1
Other	6.0
No Reason Specified	14.4
<b>Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Appendix 6

Table 3: % of Working Days Lost by Reason

Reason	% of Working Days Lost
	2008/2009
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	26.7
Back Problems	4.1
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	2.6
Chest and Respiratory Problems	2.8
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	7.1
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.7
Gastrointestinal Problems	6.1
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	1.6
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	3.0
Infectious Diseases	1.5
Injury, Fracture	6.4
Nervous System Disorders	1.1
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	2.8
Pregnancy Related Disorders	7.9
Other	4.7
No Reason Specified	20.0
<b>Overall</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Appendix 7**  
**Tables Relating to Chapter 4**



## Tables Relating to Chapter 4

Table 1: Long-term Absence by Grade

Grade Level	Long-term Absences		
	No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Average Duration (Working Days)	% of the Total Working Days Lost Attributable to Long-term Absence
G5+	3.5	111.0	78.2
G6	4.2	64.7	74.3
G7	5.6	52.7	63.3
DP	6.6	62.0	66.7
SO	8.4	61.8	68.0
EOI	10.4	60.0	70.4
EOII	13.5	60.4	69.3
AO	17.5	61.5	71.9
AA	15.9	66.8	73.1
<b>Overall</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>70.6</b>

Table 2: Long-term Absence by Gender

Gender	Long-term Absences		
	No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Average Duration (Working Days)	% of the Total Working Days Lost Attributable to Long-term Absence
Male	8.2	63.0	66.4
Female	17.0	61.1	72.9
<b>Overall</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>70.6</b>

Table 3: Long-term Absence by Age Group

Age Group	Long-term Absences		
	No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Average Duration (Working Days)	% of the Total Working Days Lost Attributable to Long-term Absence
16-24	10.8	53.3	55.2
25-34	13.3	57.9	65.9
35-44	11.7	60.6	69.4
45-54	12.7	64.0	75.6
55+	14.2	72.2	81.4
<b>Overall</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>70.6</b>

## Appendix 7

Table 4: Long-term Absence by Grade 2003/2004 - 2008/2009

Grade	% of the Total Working Days Lost Attributable to Long-term Absence					
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
G5+	47.8	62.3	61.9	66.2	51.7	78.2
G6	72.7	75.8	72.9	55.8	70.3	74.3
G7	62.7	68.2	66.2	60.5	66.6	63.3
DP	58.9	64.7	67.7	65.9	64.7	66.7
SO	64.4	63.5	65.6	67.1	65.1	68.0
EOI	61.2	67.7	65.3	63.8	67.2	70.4
EOII	68.0	71.4	72.9	71.1	72.0	69.3
AO	67.1	70.5	68.9	71.6	71.2	71.9
AA	57.3	64.4	66.1	69.0	67.9	73.1
<b>Overall</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>68.4</b>	<b>69.3</b>	<b>69.4</b>	<b>70.6</b>

Table 5: Long-term Absence by Gender 2003/2004 - 2008/2009

Gender	% of the Total Working Days Lost Attributable to Long-term Absence					
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Male	59.3	64.5	62.7	65.1	65.7	66.4
Female	67.5	70.8	71.4	71.7	71.6	72.9
<b>Overall</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>68.4</b>	<b>69.3</b>	<b>69.4</b>	<b>70.6</b>

Table 6: Long-term Absence by Age Group 2003/2004 - 2008/2009

Age Group	% of the Total Working Days Lost Attributable to Long-term Absence					
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
16 - 24	49.9	55.6	55.4	58.8	60.7	55.2
25 - 34	62.4	66.0	64.7	67.1	66.0	65.9
35 - 44	67.2	71.6	69.9	70.0	69.8	69.4
45 - 54	70.0	72.1	73.4	72.8	71.6	75.6
55+	70.4	74.2	76.0	75.4	78.0	81.4
<b>Overall</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>68.4</b>	<b>69.3</b>	<b>69.4</b>	<b>70.6</b>

Note: **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 6**



## Tables Relating to Chapter 6

Table 1: Percentage decrease in Absence Rates on Previous years Rates

	% decrease from Previous Year	
	Apr-Oct	Nov-Mar
2006/2007 to 2007/2008	4.9	7.3
2007/2008 to 2008/2009	14.0	17.3



**Appendix 9**  
**List of Abbreviations**



## List of Abbreviations

### List of Abbreviations

<b>AA</b>	Administrative Assistant
<b>AO</b>	Administrative Officer
<b>DEL</b>	Department for Employment and Learning
<b>DRD</b>	Department for Regional Development
<b>DSD</b>	Department for Social Development
<b>DARD</b>	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>DCAL</b>	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
<b>DE</b>	Department of Education
<b>DETI</b>	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
<b>DFP</b>	Department of Finance and Personnel
<b>DHSSPS</b>	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
<b>DOE</b>	Department of the Environment
<b>DP</b>	Deputy Principal
<b>EOI</b>	Executive Officer I
<b>EOII</b>	Executive Officer II
<b>G5+</b>	Grade 5 and above
<b>G6</b>	Grade 6
<b>G7</b>	Grade 7
<b>G7+</b>	Grade 7 and above
<b>NI</b>	Northern Ireland
<b>NICS</b>	Northern Ireland Civil Service
<b>NISRA</b>	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
<b>OFMDFM</b>	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
<b>SO</b>	Staff Officer