

PRESS RELEASE

STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – ANALYSIS OF SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NI DEPARTMENTS



9.30am – Wednesday, 30 September 2009

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) today published an analysis of sickness absence of non-industrial staff in all Northern Ireland Government departments during 2008/2009.

The key findings are as follows:

- An average of 11.0 days per staff year was lost as a result of sickness absence. The absence level is down from 12.9 days last year, but the fall, while substantial, has not been enough to achieve the target of 10.2 days.
- The proportion of staff with no recorded sick absence has increased from 43.1% in 2007/2008 to 49.8% in 2008/2009.
- The direct paybill cost of sickness absence was £21.0 million.
- The absence rate was highest among staff at and analogous to Administrative Officer level (15.0 days).
- 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 main reason for absence was Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses, accounting for 26.7% of working days lost.
- The vast majority of the working days lost were due to a relatively small proportion of staff (10.2%) who were absent from work on a long-term basis for an average of 61.7 working days.

The report is available on the NISRA website at:

http://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/Analysis_of_Sickness_Absence_0809.html

Notes to Editors:

- a. This is the tenth annual report by the NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) on sickness absence. The report is based on data taken from the new pay and absence management system for NI Departments.
- b. Long-term absences are defined as absences lasting for more than 20 consecutive working days.
- c. All media enquiries should be directed to DFP Communications Office, telephone 028 9052 7374.