



10 April 2025

Our Ref: FOI 715

Request

We received your request on 19 March 2025 for the following information:

- 1. Number of staff who've been on long term sickness absence, for each year, since 2020*
- 2. Reason for long term sickness absence, for each year, since 2020*

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Our response

- Number of staff who've been on long term sickness absence, for each year, since 2020

Calendar Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
Employees with an absence > 20 continuous days in year	407	452	433	485	494	215

**Figures relate to full calendar years, with exception of 2025 where the figure relates to the period 1 January 2025 to the date of response. For the purposes of this request, long term sickness absences reported are those sickness absences of 20 continuous working days or more, regardless of the person's working pattern.*

Please note that on average **85.5%** of our workforce had no absence at all in the years detailed above. This compares to an average of 62.5% of employees within NICS having no absence over the reported period 2020 - 2024. (Source: NISRA Absence in the NICS).

2. Reason for long term sickness absence, for each year, since 2020

	Calendar Year					
Absence Reason	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Stress/Mental/Fatigue**	185	217	219	248	237	89
Other Illness	50	36	35	51	61	39
Musculo-Skeletal / Back Problems	41	41	40	52	64	29
Chest and Respiratory	29	52	40	25	19	10
Back & Neck Problems	28	27	21	26	15	
Heart/B P/Circulation	22	27	29	30	27	14
Infections	12	7	4	8	8	6
Neurological	12	11	14	13	8	6
Eye/Ear/Nose & Mouth	10	6	7	9	14	6
Digestive System	8	17	13	14	24	8
Pregnancy Related	6	8	8	6	14	3
Genito-urinary Problems	4	3	3	3	3	5
Grand Total	407	452	433	485	494	215

***Stress/Mental/Fatigue has been the most frequent cause of absence during the period 2020 to date. This is consistent with other public sector organisations including the Northern Ireland Civil Service and Northern Ireland Councils.*