

HFRS 1st Quarter 18-19 Sickness Absence Comparison Report

Please Note: - Within this report, Retained sickness figures quoted are Total Days not average contract hours lost as these are the figures used in the National Occupational Health Report. Due to the use of Total Days means that the average days per person figure will be significantly higher overall than the figures we quote locally, as we use the average contract hours lost for Retained which makes a significant difference.

The following looks at current sickness absence from 1st April 2018 – 30th June 2018 compared to the recently published National Fire & Rescue, Occupational Health Performance Report.

Nationally there were 7,429 separate occurrences of sickness absence during this 1st quarter period, and this equates to an average of 2 duty days lost absence per person. At Humberside for the same time period there were 207 separate occurrences of sickness and an average of 2.11 duty days lost per person.

In the same period during 2017/18 Humberside had 215 separate occurrences of sickness, with an average of 2.61 duty days lost per person.

Comparing the national report for this 1st quarter period 18-19, compared to 17-18, isn't that easy due to the increase of services who are now returning their data for all contract types. I believe the increase is in part due to the fact that HMIC are going to be using the National report as a basis for comparing sickness absence levels across the country. Therefore, moving forward, the report will be easier to make a proper comparison of our absence levels across other FRS's.

The below table shows the contract type, number of services who returned data for that contract type and the number of duty days lost (Total Days used for retained).

As is shown in the table, there has been a reduction nationally for Wholetime absence as the days lost has reduced from 41843, to 40482 and this also includes additional data from 2 more FRS's. Retained absence has increased significantly, however an additional 5 FRS's have submitted data. Control absence has reduced, even with an additional FRS's data, and there has been a minor increase in Support staff absence but this figure includes 2 more FRS's data. Overall absence has increased when comparing this period to 17-18 but is likely to be due to the inclusion of an additional 5 FRS's Retained absence data.

	Contract Type	No of days lost	No of services returning data
17-18	Wholetime	41843	37
18-19	Wholetime	40482	39
17-18	Retained	9264	18
18-19	Retained	15303	23
17-18	Control	2204	31
18-19	Control	1871	32
17-18	Support Staff	12172	36
18-19	Support Staff	12227	38
17-18	All Staff	65483	38
18-19	All Staff	68324	39

Main Causes of Sickness Absence by contract type

Wholetime

Nationally 39 services submitted sickness absence data for Wholetime staff and this equated to 40,482 duty days lost in this 1st quarter period. At Humberside, Wholetime sickness absence totalled 740 duty days lost with an average per person of 1.59. Across the 39 services that submitted data, the national average duty days lost per person for Wholetime was 1.90.

The below table summarises the top 5 Categories of sickness absence for Humberside, compared to the top 5 nationally.

Wholetime Top 5 Absence Categories	% of Total Absence Per Contract Group	National Data - Wholetime Comparison	% of Total Absence Per Contract Group
Musculo Skeletal Back	21.62%	Mental Health Anxiety/Depression	20.00%
Mental Health Anxiety/Depression	20.95%	Musculo Skeletal Lower Limb	15.00%
Musculo Skeletal Lower Limb	14.46%	Musculo Skeletal Back	11.00%
Musculo Skeletal Upper Limb	10.54%	Gastro Intestinal	8.00%
Musculo Skeletal Shoulders	5.14%	Musculo Skeletal Upper Limb	5.00%

In comparison to this 1st quarter national figures, the level of absence for Mental Health is currently at a similar level of 20.95% compared to 20% nationally, however, in comparison to the same period for 17-18 this is a large increase of over 19% at Humberside for this sickness category. The reasoning behind the increase is likely to be long term sickness absence for this category compared to the same period last year. Musculo Skeletal Back absence is almost double in terms of percentage of total absence for Wholetime, compared to the national figures, and this is slightly higher than HFRS 17-18 figures.

There have been significant reduction in other absence categories and this is reflected in the fact that overall for Wholetime, sickness absence has reduced for this 1st quarter period of 18-19 compared to 17-18, with 115 fewer days absent.

Control

Nationally 32 services submitted sickness absence data for Control staff and this equated to 1,871 duty days lost in this 1st quarter period. At Humberside, Control sickness absence totalled 24 duty days lost with an average per person of 1.03. Across the 32 services that submitted data, the national average duty days lost per person for Control was 1.99. The below table summarises the top 5 Categories of sickness absence for Humberside, compared to the top 5 nationally for Control.

Control Top 5 Absence Categories	% of Total Absence Per Contract Group	National Data - Control Comparison	% of Total Absence Per Contract Group
Gastro Intestinal	54.17%	Mental Health Anxiety/Depression	23.00%
Respiratory Other	25.00%	Respiratory Other	11.00%
Neurological	16.67%	Gastro Intestinal	7.00%
Musculo Skeletal Back	4.17%	Musculo Skeletal Lower Limb	6.00%
		Other (Hospital/Post-Operative)	5.00%

Due to the small levels of sickness absence for Control for this 1st quarter period, it is hard to compare to national figures. Mental Health and Musculo Back related absences have reduced from 15 days and 32 days to only 1 day for absence due to Musculo Back. Overall sickness for Control has dropped from 104 duty days to 24 duty days for this 1st quarter which is a 77% reduction.

Retained

Nationally 23 services submitted sickness absence data for Retained staff and this equated to 15,303 duty days lost in this 1st quarter period. At Humberside, Retained sickness absence totalled 953 Total days lost with an average per person of 2.83. Across the 23 services that submitted data, the national average Total days lost per person for Retained was 2.55. Without more services submitting data it is hard to say whether our current rate of absence would still be above the National level. The below table summarises the top 5 Categories of sickness absence for Humberside, compared to the top 5 nationally.

Retained Top 5 Absence Categories (Total Days used)	% of Total Absence Per Contract Group	National Data - Retained Comparison	% of Total Absence Per Contract Group
Musculo Skeletal Lower Limb	31.55%	Musculo Skeletal Lower Limb	20.00%
Musculo Skeletal Back	19.15%	Mental Health Anxiety/Depression	13.00%
Gastro Intestinal	18.47%	Musculo Skeletal Back	10.00%
Musculo Skeletal Knee	7.80%	Musculo Skeletal Other	6.00%
Mental Health Anxiety/Depression	6.70%	Other (Hospital/Post-Operative)	6.00%

It is to be referenced again that only 20 services submitted data and therefore the above top 5 National categories and associated percentages, may not be a true reflection of the national picture.

In comparison to this 1st quarter national figures, the level of absence for Mental Health is currently nearly half that of the National level at 6.7%. Musculo Skeletal Lower Limb is the top level category both at Humberside and nationally, however the percentage split is higher for Humberside. Musculo Skeletal Back absence is almost double in terms of percentage of total absence for Retained, compared to the national figures, which is a similar level for Wholetime. One reason for the similarity with Wholetime may be due to individuals undertaking dual contracts, therefore if absence is recorded for Wholetime, this will also be recorded against their Retained contract as well.

Support Staff

Nationally 38 services submitted sickness absence data for Support staff and this equated to 12,227 duty days lost in this 1st quarter period. At Humberside, Support Staff sickness absence totalled 408.59 duty days lost with an average per person of 2.26. For the same period of 17-18 there were 671.65 duty days lost, with an average per person of 3.78, which is a reduction of 1.5 duty days lost per person. Across the 38 services that submitted data, the national average duty days lost per person for Green Book was 1.82. The below table summarises the top 5 Categories of sickness absence for Humberside, compared to the top 5 nationally.

Support Staff Top 5 Absence Categories	% of Total Absence Per Contract Group	National Data - Support Staff Comparison	% of Total Absence Per Contract Group
Mental Health Anxiety/Depression	31.99%	Mental Health Anxiety/Depression	26.00%
Musculo Skeletal Upper Limb	13.26%	Musculo Skeletal Lower Limb	8.00%
Gastro Intestinal	9.00%	Respiratory Other	7.00%
Neurological	8.85%	Other (Hospital/Post-Operative)	7.00%
Musculo Skeletal Lower Limb	7.14%	Gastro Intestinal	5.00%

In comparison to this 1st quarter national figures, the level of absence due to Mental Health is currently accounting for nearly 32% of duty days lost for this period, compared to 26% nationally.

The reason for the seemingly large increase compared to 17-18, is due to the fact that there has been a reduction of 200 duty days absent for Support staff, compared to 17-18, and therefore when calculating the percentage split by category, means that as a percentage of the total duty days lost, the figure for Mental Health and other categories increases.