

**Response to a Question Pursuant to Rule 14
of the Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation and their Committees**

Subject: Civil Service Absenteeism

States' Member: Deputy Andy Cameron

Date received: 7th April 2026

Date of reply: 22nd April 2026

Question 2:

Can the Committee confirm the current level of absenteeism across the civil service, including the total number of days lost to sickness over the past 12 months, and how this compares to previous years and to comparable jurisdictions such as Jersey, the Isle of Man, or similar public sector organisations.

What proportion of this absence is long-term versus short-term, and what are the primary drivers?

**What measures are currently in place to manage and reduce absenteeism, and what evidence is there that these measures are improving attendance and productivity?
When was this data last formally reported to the Committee?**

Answer:

Civil Servants form part of the Established Staff group, one of the 17 staff groups in the public service. For workforce reporting purposes, all staff groups are included to provide an organisation-wide perspective (including health, social care, education, law enforcement and other frontline services).

An employee's sickness absence is recorded by their line manager in accordance with the Sickness Absence Policy and it is monitored centrally.

The table below summarises information on short- and long-term absences over the last two years.

	Year	2025	2024	2023
	Approximate number of sickness absence days	67,000	63,000	60,000
	Average Headcount	5,887	5,686	5,513
	Total number of working days	1,336,304	1,290,677	1,251,360
	% of all sickness that was long term	52	48	47
	% of all sickness that was short term	48	52	53
Average sickness absence days per employee	Northern Ireland (Civil Service only)	13.4	13.8	12.3
	NHS	12		
	States of Guernsey (all staff groups)¹	11.4	11.0	10.8
	States of Jersey (excluding Health workers)	-	8.8	7.1

For the purposes of sickness absence reporting, long-term sickness absence is defined as an absence of four consecutive weeks or more. As at 31 December 2025 there were 117 employees across the whole public service on long term sickness absence and the average length of that sickness was 60 days.

When comparing States of Guernsey data to other organisations it is important to note the differences in the composition of various public sector workforces. For example, the States of Guernsey's workforce includes health and social care professionals, including large clinical and frontline groups that do not form part of other organisations such as the States of Jersey. Direct comparisons are therefore not always achievable.

There are multiple reasons for sickness absence recorded in the system. Non-work-related stress consistently accounts for around 20% of sickness absence overall, and approximately 25% of long-term sickness absence. This pattern has remained broadly consistent across the time periods set out in the table above. Work related stress accounts for around 11% of sickness absence overall, and approximately 17% of long-term sickness absence. Other trends reflect seasonal issues, such as short-term absences across the winter period relating to coughs, colds, or flu.

Extensive support is available to employees experiencing ill health, with a focus on remaining at, or returning to work. This includes: regular contact between the line manager and employee during any period of absence; access to the Employee Assistance Programme (including referrals to counselling); and referral to the Occupational Health Service where appropriate. Managers hold return-to-work discussions following periods of sickness

¹ Average sickness absence days is a figure calculated by dividing the number of sickness absence days by the average headcount of the organisation e.g. 67,000/5,887 gives 11.4 days per employee). There may be some differences in methodologies and time periods in the comparison jurisdictions shown in the table.

absence, giving employees the opportunity to raise concerns and discuss whether adjustments to their role or working environment may support recovery and sustained attendance at work.

Managers and the HR function use management information (including category and frequency) and Bradford Factor scores to monitor and act on absences. This supports early and proportionate actions and ensures a consistent approach from the support set out above to closer supervision or capability management where necessary.

Sickness absence information forms part of routine workforce monitoring and is reported internally quarterly. In addition, information on organisation-wide figures is included in the corporate quarterly monitoring report, enabling trends to be analysed and consideration given to any additional initiatives or interventions. This reflects the ongoing commitment to supporting staff and maintaining safe and effective public service delivery. The Committee receives the quarterly monitoring report.