



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority  
Human Resources Committee

# HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 18 October 2019

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Members on key Human Resources metrics for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019. Please note that absence reporting references the period 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of its remit, the Human Resources Committee of the Fire Authority receives regular updates on Human Resources (HR) issues within the Service. This includes issues such as sickness absence, formal discipline, grievance, employment tribunal cases and staffing numbers. These issues are collectively referred to as HR metrics.
- 1.2 Reports are on a quarterly basis and allow the Human Resources Committee to keep informed of ongoing issues and offer their guidance and scrutiny.

## 2. REPORT

### HR METRICS - SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 2.1 The following represents absence figures for Quarter 1: 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019:

Target absence figures for 2019/20 are:

Wholetime and Control: 6 days per person  
 Non-Uniformed: 7 days per person  
 Whole Workforce: 6.25 days per person

(The average is affected by the numbers of employees in each work group and the average work shift)

- 2.2 Absence across the workforce, excluding On-Call employees, increased by 245 days (19.3%) during the review period. A comparative breakdown of figures by employment group are set out in Appendix C. This also represents an increase compared to the same quarter of the previous year (2018-19) of 344 days (+29.4%).

Absence	Quarter 1 1 April – 30 June 2019	Compared with previous quarter (Q4)	Cumulative total days lost for 19/20	Cumulative average over last 12 months
<b>Total workforce</b>  <b>(140 employees have been absent on 153 occasions during Q1, excluding On-Call*)</b>	1516 days lost  2.4 days per employee	1271 days lost  1.99 days per employee  19.3% increase (+245 days)	1516 days lost	8.33 days per employee (target 6.25 days)

\*due to the nature of the On-Call Duty System, On-Call absence is not reflected in the figures. These are shown separately at Appendix C

- 2.3 Across the workforce a total of 1516 working days were lost in the first quarter of 2019/20. The trends across quarters is shown in the table set out at Appendix A.
- 2.4 Long term absence equated to 67.6% of the total absence during this period. A full period commentary of Quarter 1 can be found at Appendix C.
- 2.5 This represents a decrease of absences but an increase of shifts lost; less people have been absent, but those absences have resulted in more shifts lost than the previous quarter.

## **NATIONAL TRENDS**

- 2.6 The Service contributes to the National Fire Chiefs Council sickness absence survey, which is undertaken quarterly and allows for comparison between contributing fire and rescue services.
- 2.7 The reasons for sickness absence mirror the national trends with musculo skeletal and mental health related absences featuring heavily in all workgroups.
- 2.8 Appendix B reflects the national absence trends for Quarters 1 (April to June 2019). The two charts reflect Whole-time and Control (12i) and whole workforce figures (12ii).
- 2.9 For Whole-time and Control (12i) the chart show that the Service ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> of the 30 Services at 2.36 days per employee, and was above the sector sickness average of 2.16 days per employee. The lowest average was 1.09 days and the highest 4.99 days.
- 2.10 For whole workforce (12ii) the tables show that the Service, ranked 24<sup>th</sup> of the 30 Services at 2.44 days per employee, and was above the sector sickness average of 2.15 days per employee. The lowest average was 1.13 days and the highest 4.36 days.

## **DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC**

- 2.11 Over the period 1 July 2019– 30 September 2019:

- Disciplinary: 2
- Grievances: 2
- Harassment and Bullying: 0
- Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy: 0
- Dismissals including ill health retirements: 0 (pending appeal)
- Redundancy: 0
- Redeployment: 0
- Employment Tribunal cases: 1
- IDRPs appeals: 0
- Performance and capability: 0

## STAFFING NUMBERS

2.12 During the period 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019, 21 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels at 30 September 2019 are highlighted below:

	Approved	Actual	Variance
<b>Wholetime</b>	455 (455 FTE)	448 (446.6 FTE)	-7 (-8.4 FTE)
<b>On-Call</b>	192 Units	264 persons (142 units) (includes 67 dual contracts)	-50 units
<b>Support</b>	156 (148.18 FTE)	153 (145.5 FTE)	-3 (-2.68)
<b>Fire Control</b>	NA	NA	NA

2.13 There have been 23 leavers and 21 starters since the last report, which has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 865 (this includes 67 dual contractors and the removal of 26 Control Staff). Leavers are broken down as follows: 8 Wholetime, 4 On-Call, 10 Support roles and 1 Dual Contractor.

2.14 As at 30 September 2019 Whole-time establishment stood at 448 operational personnel (446.6 fte) employees against an establishment of 455 posts.

2.15 During the period the Service has appointed to 8 Whole-time trainee firefighter roles, five support roles and eight On-Call trainee firefighter roles.

## HMICFRS INSPECTION OUTCOMES

2.16 At its meeting on 27 September 2019, the Fire Authority endorsed the report of the Chief Fire Officer in respect of the Service's response to the outcomes from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection and agreed that respective Committees would receive progress reports relevant to their areas of scrutiny.

2.17 The actions that fall within the remit of the Human Resources Committee are set out below:

Areas of Improvement	Timescales	Response
<p>The Service should ensure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation</p>	<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Whilst 90% of employees who completed the employee survey stated that they knew and understood Service values, further promotion of the values will be rolled out using the Values Toolkit and communications will be refreshed to ensure that the message remains fresh and relevant. Themed value team meetings / messaging / posters etc co-ordinated on a quarterly basis and promoted via corporate communications.</p> <p>The inspection report drew attention to a number of employees who had reported hearing inappropriate conversations or feeling bullied or harassed or discriminated against - the Service will seek to understand and address these issues and ensure that employees are aware of how they can raise such concerns and are confident that they will be dealt with in an appropriate manner.</p>
<p>The Service should develop a training plan that clearly aligns and supports its workforce plan</p>	<p>December 2019</p>	<p>Training plan developed for 2019/20 based on planning assumptions within the workforce plan. Ops Training Plan focusses on core competency acquisition and revalidation.</p> <p>Draft plan being presented to Head of Service Delivery September 2019.</p>
<p>The Service should ensure staff are appropriately trained in safety-critical skills, such as incident command</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The joint Assurance, Training and Service Delivery was started in April this year to provide oversight of performance metrics associated with maintenance of competence and acquisition and revalidation.</p> <p>This was done immediately following the HMIC visit due to the issues with core competencies. It has improved the situation and will continue to provide the routine monitoring and governance of performance metrics associated with ops training function.</p>

Areas of Improvement	Timescales	Response
The Service should improve communication around positive action through all levels of the organisation	March 2020	Development of a joint commitment statement on positive action with representative bodies via equalities forum.  Raise via initial equalities induction training; covered by mandatory e-learning package; identify e-learning / digital video; promote positive action prior to wholetime recruitment via MyNet and station visits by middle managers; use role models from previous campaigns.
The Service should ensure individual performance targets clearly support objectives within the IRMP	March 2020	A project is currently underway to review the PDR process, including a new policy, new electronic PDR system. Moving it from SharePoint to iTrent to bring information around individuals to one place. The plan is to incorporate the strategic aims and programmes from the annual corporate plan from within the IRMP.
The Service should improve staff awareness and understanding of promotion and selection process	October 2019	The Progression Procedure, which sets out the route for progression to higher roles, has been refreshed and is under consultation. This will be promoted via the Intranet and other communication channels. The next promotion process will be for Station Manager roles in October, and prior information has been circulated and a briefing session organised for prospective applicants.
The Service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.	March 2020	The Leadership Development Pathway has been reviewed and will be sent to all stations to ensure that employees understand what actions they need to take to enhance their progression to leadership roles. A consultation paper will be developed to consider ways in which the service can continue to identify, develop and support high potential employees within a more structured framework.

2.18 Current progress is set out within the Response column of the table, and future progress against these areas of improvement will be reported to the Committee at future meetings.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Authority's pay budgets cover the cost of the workforce, and these include budgets for overtime to cover sickness absence where operational cover is affected. The actual numbers of employees in post compared to the establishment can cause budgetary variances and these are reported to the Finance and Resources Committee.
- 3.2 Any increase in absence has a direct impact upon the Service's operational pay budget as gaps in the ridership can lead to an increase in overtime pay to cover for long-term absence.

### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The human resources and learning and development implications are set out in the report.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

As this review does not impact upon policy or service delivery, no equality impact assessment has been undertaken. However, workforce equality monitoring information is undertaken and reported separately to this report.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

A regular reporting system on the management of human resources ensures that the Service and the Authority are aware of any developing workforce issues.

### **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the contents of the report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

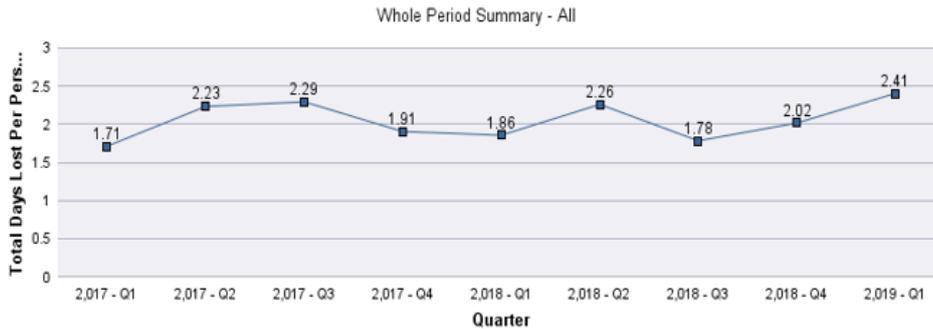
John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

# APPENDIX A

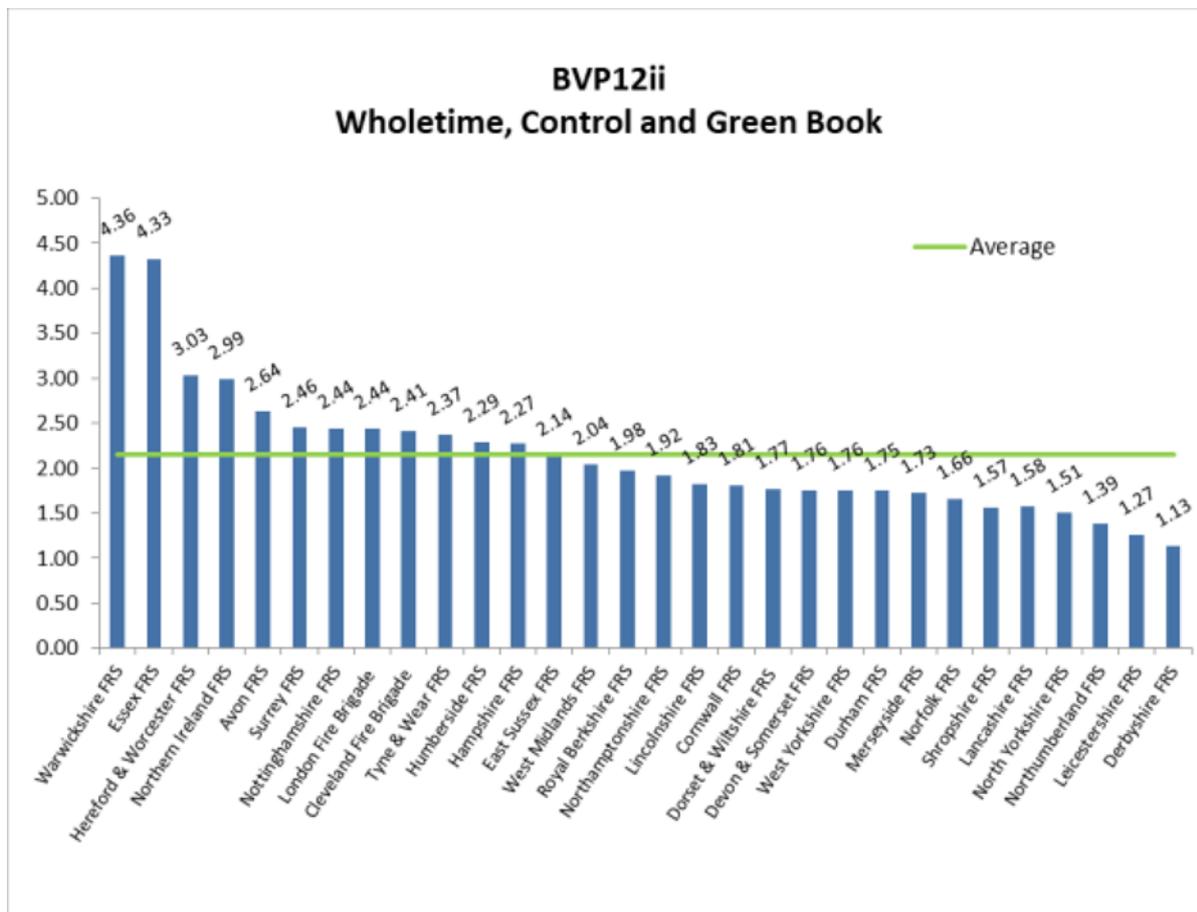
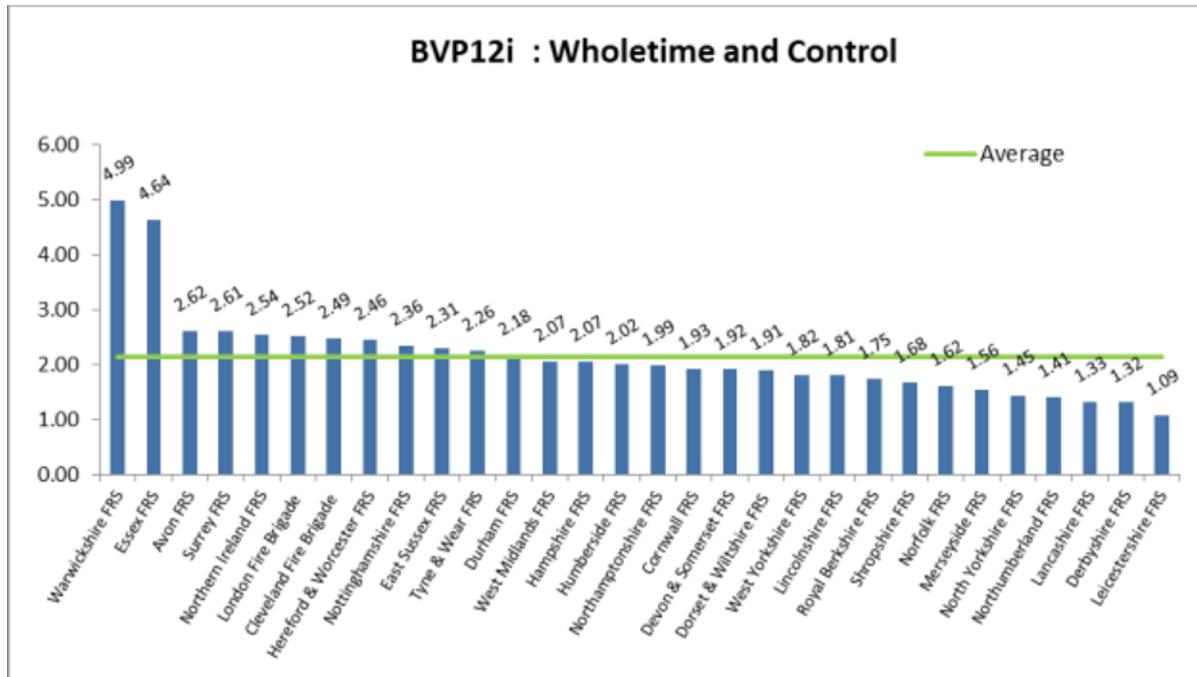
## Appendix - Reporting Period: 01/04/2017 to 30/06/2019

Quarter Breakdown by Month	April		May		June	
	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost
Non Uniformed	0.59	92.5	0.98	153.5	1.01	159.0
Wholetime & Control	0.64	303.0	0.77	365.0	0.94	442.5
Sum:	0.6278	395.5	0.823	518.5	0.9548	601.5

Current Q vs Previous Q	2,018 - Q4		2,019 - Q1	
	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost	Days Lost Per Person	Total Working Days Lost
Non Uniformed	1.4777	232	2.5796	405
Wholetime & Control	2.1966	1039	2.3478	1110.5
Sum:	2.0175	1271	2.4056	1515.5



## APPENDIX B



## APPENDIX C

### Q1 - Wholetime

In total 1053 working days were lost due to sickness during this quarter. Of this, 767 days were lost to long-term absence (28+ calendar days absent) and 286 days were lost due to short term absence. This represents an overall increase of 82 days (8%) on the previous quarter, a significant increase in long term absences and a reduction in short term absence.

The average absence per employee was 2.35 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

HMICFRS have asked us to report on sickness absence using a slightly different formula than we have used in previous reporting. The two main differences are how the headcount (which establishes the per person element) and how absences for part time employees are calculated. FTE Shifts lost are 2.34 for Wholetime.

73% of sickness absence in this quarter was due to long term absence. There were 40 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 23 of which were classified as long-term sickness. At the end of the period 20 employees had returned to work with 20 still absent.

### Reasons for absence

Main reasons for sickness absence for the Wholetime are Mental Health issues (14 instances, 405 days) and Musculo Skeletal (31 instances, 340 days). The main long-term absence reasons were Musculo Skeletal (23 instances, 123 days) For short term absences was Mental Health (10 instances, 378 days)

Wholetime			Short Term Absences			Long Term Absences		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health	14	405	Musculo Skeletal	23	123	Mental Health	10	378
Musculo Skeletal	31	340	Hospital/Post Operative	4	39	Musculo Skeletal	8	217
Hospital/Post Operative	5	83	Mental Health	4	27	Hospital/Post Operative	1	44
Other known causes (not specified in list)	8	59	Virus/Infectious Diseases	5	25	Other known causes (not specified in list)	2	37
Genitourinary/Gynecological/Reproductive	1	28	Other known causes (not specified in list)	6	22	Genitourinary/Gynecological/Reproductiv	1	28
Virus/Infectious Diseases	5	25	Cause Known, but not specified	2	20	Mental Health - Other	1	16
Mental Health - Other	4	22	Ear, Nose, Throat	4	19			
Cause Known, but not specified	2	20	Gastro-Intestinal	6	14			
Ear, Nose, Throat	4	19	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	5	12			
Gastro-Intestinal	6	14	Respiratory - Chest Infection	3	8			

## Control Absence

In total 57.5 working days were lost due to sickness absence during this quarter. Of this 22 days were lost due to long term absence and 35.5 days were lost due to long term absence at an average of 2.2 days per employee.

The HMICFRS Full Time Equivalent shifts lost for Control is 2.2 days per employee.

This represents a decrease of 10.5 days (18%) on the previous quarter.

There were two periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration) one of these were long term sickness the other short term, both employees returned

Due to the level of absence, and to protect confidentiality, no analysis has been made of reasons for absence.

This is the last quarter we will report on absence from Control as they have now joined Derbyshire FRS as part of Joint Fire Control.

## On Call Absence

Attendance for on-call fire-fighters does not reflect shifts lost as they do not have standard working hours, instead it reflects calendar days lost e.g. availability to attend incidents or training periods and absence is predicated over a 7-day availability pattern (compared to 4 day shift traditionally for whole-time employees).

In Q1, 888 days were unavailable due to sickness, broken down into 655 days of long-term absence (28+ days) and 233 days of short-term absence. This equates to an average of 3.4 “days” of unavailability per employee.

Compared to Q4, when 873 days were lost to sickness absence, this reflects a slight increase of 15 available days (1.7%).

There were 20 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 11 of which were classified as long-term sickness. At the end of the period 11 employees had returned to work with 9 still absent.

## Reasons for Absence

The 2 main conditions leading to long-term absence for On call employees in Q1 were Mental Health issues (7 instances, 258 days) and Musculo-Skeletal issues (12 instances, 274 days).

Retained			Short Term Absences			Long Term Absences		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Musculo Skeletal	12	274	Musculo Skeletal	9	81	Mental Health	4	234
Mental Health	7	258	Hospital/Post Operative	2	43	Musculo Skeletal	3	193
Cancer and Tumours	1	91	Ear, Nose, Throat	3	25	Cancer and Tumours	1	91
Hospital/Post Operative	3	82	Mental Health	3	24	Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	40
Other known causes (not specified in list)	3	51	Eye Problems	3	16	Hospital/Post Operative	1	39
Mental Health - Other	2	42	Virus/Infectious Diseases	3	14	Mental Health - Other	1	30
Ear, Nose, Throat	3	25	Gastro-Intestinal	3	12			
Eye Problems	3	16	Mental Health - Other	1	12			
Virus/Infectious Diseases	3	14	Other known causes (not specified in list)	2	11			
Gastro-Intestinal	3	12	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	3	11			

### Non-Uniformed (Support) Absence

In total 405 working days were lost due to sickness absence for non-uniformed personnel during the quarter. This breaks down into 236 days due to long term sickness absence (28+ continuous days absent) and 169 working days due to short term absence. This represents a significant increase of 173 days (75%) on the previous quarter. There is a large increase in long term absence 162 days (220%) which has impacted this quarter. T

The average absence per employee was 2.58 days lost, which is above the target figure of 1.6 days lost per quarter per employee.

The HMICFRS Full Time Equivalent shifts lost for Support Staff is 2.38 days per employee, the slight difference is due to the different way the figures are calculated for headcount and part time staff.

There were 6 individual long term sick in this quarter. There were 12 periods of absence covered by a Medical Certificate (i.e. absence longer than 8 days in duration), 4 of which were classified as long-term sickness. At the end of the period 8 employees had returned to work with 4 still absent.

### Reasons for Absence

The main reasons for non-uniformed absence was Mental Health (8 instances, 137.5 days) and Musculo Skeletal issues (4 instances, 76 days). Cancer is the main reason for long term absences.

**Non Uniformed**

			Short Term Absences			Long Term Absences		
Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost	Absence Reason - Grouped	Unique Absence Count	Days Lost
Mental Health	4	79	Mental Health	3	39	Cancer and Tumours	1	65
Musculo Skeletal	4	76	Ear, Nose, Throat	6	36	Musculo Skeletal	1	57
Cancer and Tumours	1	65	Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	10	26	Mental Health	1	40
Mental Health - Other	4	58.5	Mental Health - Other	3	24.5	Mental Health - Other	1	34
Ear, Nose, Throat	6	36	Hospital/Post Operative	1	20			
Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza	10	26	Musculo Skeletal	3	19			
Hospital/Post Operative	1	20	Virus/Infectious Diseases	6	17			
Virus/Infectious Diseases	6	17	Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	9			
Other known causes (not specified in list)	1	9	Headache/Migraine/Neurological	4	8.5			
Headache/Migraine/Neurological	4	8.5	Cause Known, but not specified	1	4			
			Unknown causes, not specified	1	4			