

**Príomhoifigeach Daoine**

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To:

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- Each Regional Executive Officer**
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- Each Assistant Chief Finance Officer**
- Each Regional Director of People**
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- Each CEO Section 38 Agencies**
- Each HR Manager Section 38 Agencies**
- Each Employee Relations Manager**
- Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery**
- Each Group Director of Midwifery**
- Each Clinical Director**
- Head of HR, PCRS**
- Director National Ambulance Service**

From: Anne Marie Hoey, Chief People Officer

Date: 6th January 2026

Subject: HR Circular 001/2026 - Collection and Reporting of National Absence

Dear Colleagues,

The purpose of this circular is to outline the revised reporting timeline for the collection of National Absence data, to set out the national definition of the National Maternity absence rates and to advise on the reporting requirement for paid and unpaid maternity leave for all agencies. Also to note the removal of the Temporary Special Scheme of Paid Leave for Public Health Service Employees Unfit for work post Covid-19 infection from the National Absence Template.

1. Revised timeline for collection of National Absence, the monthly National Absence collection timeline will **change** from the 19th of the month to the 15th of the month with effect from 1st January 2026. This means that the deadline for January 2026 National absence data will be 15th February 2026. It is critical that all agencies comply with this timeline.

2. National Maternity absence rate definition is based on the concept of 'lost time' rate due to maternity absences (paid or unpaid). This measures lost time due to maternity absences against available time and is expressed as a percentage. The available time includes the maternity hours for the purpose of this calculation.

$$\% \text{ Maternity rate} = \frac{\text{Lost Time (Paid/Unpaid) in period under review}}{\text{Available Time plus maternity hours in period under review}} \times 100$$

3. The Maternity data collection with effect from 1st January 2026 will require Section 38 agencies to return maternity data by paid maternity lost hours and unpaid maternity lost hours of which this dataset will be published as a % rate in the National Absence report. A new National Absence Template will be circulated to provide for the additional unpaid maternity data.
4. In line with HR Memo 051/2025 the Temporary Special Scheme of Paid Leave for Public Health Service Employees Unfit for Work Post COVID-19 infection concluded on 31st December 2025. Therefore the National Absence Template has been updated to remove this reporting requirement for 2026.
5. The national absence instructions for 2026 are updated in link below:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/our-workforce/workforce-reporting/national-absence-instructions-2026.pdf>

Queries

For queries relating to the reporting of National absence please contact nationalabsence@hse.ie

Yours sincerely



Anne Marie Hoey
Chief People Officer