

Health Service National Absence Reporting

Introduction:

The requirement for measurement of absence data is set out within HSE HR Circular 016/2021, with the primary purpose of establishing a national health service-wide reporting process of monthly percentage absence rates by agency and staff category.

Measurement of absence is critical from a national perspective as absence data is a key enabler to support effective absence management which can importantly, support service delivery and equally deliver significant savings and where absence rates are improved. The HSE **National Service Plans** set absence rates as a key performance indicator (KPI) with the objective of reducing the impact and cost of absence and currently commits to a national target level of less than 3.5% for all agencies.

The monitoring and reporting of absence data is also critical for managers at local and national level by enabling a better understanding of the scale and characteristics of absence, which in turn allows for more effective absence management and operational planning. Not all absence can be avoided or reduced, but an organisation must actively work with employees to manage and reduce absence as appropriate. The attached attendance policy ([managing attendance policy revised may 2014.pdf](#)) is designed to identify scope for improvement in attendance levels and to find workable solutions to illness absence issues where they exist. This will benefit both the HSE in terms of increased productivity and service delivery along with benefits for employees.

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to set out instructions for the provision of accurate and consistent absence reporting at national level. It is important that these instructions are followed and that each return is compiled in line with the official instructions set out herein.

Definitions:

National Definition of Percentage Absence Rate:

The national definition of a percentage absence rate is based on the concept of 'lost time rate'. This measures lost time against available time and is expressed as a percentage.

$$\% \text{ Absence Rate} = \frac{\text{Lost Time in period under review}}{\text{Available Time in period under review}} \times 100$$

Lost time is any time lost through paid absences due to certified absenteeism, self-certified absenteeism, Covid 19 absenteeism (Special Leave With Pay (SLWP) for COVID-19 will only apply when an employee is advised to self-isolate **and** is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or had a positive test. Appropriate medical/HSE confirmation of the need to self-isolate and/or a diagnosis of COVID-19 will be required for the duration of the absence) and unexplained absences. It does not include absences due to maternity leave, carer's leave or other statutory approved leave. Attendance and absences are recorded in hours.

Available time is contracted time less annual leave and public holidays for the period under review. In the case of monthly reports, the focus is on the period of one calendar month. A percentage absence rate can be determined for either shorter or longer episodes, for all periods of absence within one month.

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For the categorisation of absences included or excluded in lost time and in available time see Appendix 1 below for further detail.

Clarifications: The recording of Lost Time should be driven from payroll where possible as it applies to paid self-certified absenteeism, certified absenteeism, COVID-19 absenteeism leave and unexplained absence. Lost time includes pregnancy related sick leave as opposed to non-inclusion of statutory maternity leave.

Inclusions: All “employees” (i.e. on your payroll) are covered in the absence report and the full position for your Agency should be stated.

Exclusions: Staff who are not on the payroll due to circumstances such as including unpaid sick leave, unpaid maternity leave should not be included.

Circulars: As new HR Circulars relating to absence are published, the National Absence Instructions will be reviewed and updated as required. Until such time as these instructions are updated, the instructions in the relevant circulars will take precedence in the interim.

Instructions:

Deadline: The National Absence Report is a critical health service report used both internally and externally and it is vital that all returns are received by the 19th of each month so that absence levels can be reported within the timeframe required.

Accuracy: On-going data quality, data maintenance and accuracy is the responsibility of the employer/submitting agency and is supported by these instructions and National HR. There should be a continuous review of data quality around all aspects of absence reporting. This is vital to ensure an accurate return for your agency.

Format of Returns:

For fully operational integrated SAP sites, absence data will be extracted from the Bex Analyser database directly by Strategic Workforce Planning & Intelligence. All other HSE areas and Section 38 agencies are required to submit absence returns on the National Absence Template to nationalabsence@hse.ie.

All sections (highlighted in blue) in Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 of the absence template must be fully completed by Non SAP areas and Section 38 agencies in the approved format as set out below as this format is used as a database upload. Templates with missing data will be considered as a non-return and will be returned back to the agency for completion. **No changes** are to be made to the Template (either order of the rows/ columns) as this will disable the upload.

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Sample Absence Template For Non SAP & Section 38 agencies

National Absenteeism Return

Returned from:

Agency Code:

Month:

PART 1: Absenteeism Rates - by Staff Category

LOCATION	Staff Category:	Medical & Dental	Nursing & Midwifery	Health & Social Care Professionals	Management & Administrative	General Support	Patient & Client Care	Total
Agency Name	Available Hours							-
	Hours Lost Due to Self- Certified Absenteeism							-
	Hours Lost Due to Certified Absenteeism							-
	Hours Lost Due to COVID-19 Absenteeism							-
	Total Hours Lost Due to Absenteeism	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	% Absent Rate							

Part 2: COVID-19 Available to Work Hours & Headcount

Agency Name	Staff Category:	Medical & Dental	Nursing & Midwifery	Health & Social Care Professionals	Management & Administrative	General Support	Patient & Client Care	Total
Agency Name	Available to Work Cocoon (Hours)							-
	Available to Work Cocoon (Headcount)							-
	Available to work Caring arrangements (Hours)							-
	Available to work Caring arrangements (Headcount)							-

Part 3: Maternity Leave (Paid)

Agency Name	Staff Category:	Medical & Dental	Nursing & Midwifery	Health & Social Care Professionals	Management & Administrative	General Support	Patient & Client Care	Total
	Hours lost due to Maternity Leave							-

1. COVID 19 absence should be recorded by Managers/HR Managers as paid leave . This separate classification is important as this absence does **not** impact on employees entitlements under the Public Service Sick Leave scheme (see HSE HR Circular 005/2021 for further details)
2. COVID-19 absenteeism definition is as per HR Circulars 007/2021 and 005/2021 (Special Leave With Pay (SLWP) for COVID-19 will only apply when an employee is advised to self-isolate **and** is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or had a positive test. Appropriate medical/HSE confirmation of the need to self-isolate and/or a diagnosis of COVID-19 will be required for the duration of the absence).
3. For the purpose of National Absence reporting, COVID-19 absence **should be included in Available time** (Row 6) and reported separately as Hours Lost Due to COVID 19 Absenteeism (Row 9).
4. Additional COVID-19 codes to record data on those who are available to work cocooning and available to work caring arrangements are set out within the provisions of HR Circular 007/2021 and 005/2021. These Codes are only to be used for these groups who are awaiting the assignment of work in the home.
5. Both new available to work COVID-19 codes should be **excluded from Available time** but also recorded separately in Part 2 of the National Absence Template.
6. Part 2 of this template records Available to work hours and headcount by staff category.

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Instructions Part 1, Part 2 & Part 3

Part 1	Absenteeism Rates by Staff Category		
6	Available hours by Staff Category	Numeric (Two decimals)	This is contracted time less annual leave and public holidays for the period under review. See Appendix 1 for further information.
7	Hours Lost due to Self-Certified Absenteeism by Staff Category	Numeric (Two decimals)	Provisions for Self-Certified Sick Leave ; Paid sick leave for single or two day absences may be granted where an employee self- certifies that they were unfit for work due to illness . Such absences will not exceed 7 days in a rolling 24 month period
8	Hours Lost due to Certified Absenteeism by Staff Category	Numeric (Two decimals)	Provision for Certified Sick Leave ; Where absence exceeds two continuous days a medical certificate must be submitted on the third day of absence
9	Hours Lost due to COVID-19 absenteeism	Numeric (Two decimals)	Special Leave With Pay (SLWP) for COVID-19 will only apply when an employee is advised to self-isolate and is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or had a positive test. Appropriate medical/HSE confirmation of the need to self-isolate and/or a diagnosis of COVID-19 will be required for the duration of the absence.
10	Total Hours Lost Due to Absenteeism by Staff Category	Numeric (Two decimals)	Pre-calculated when rows 7 & 9 populated
11	% Absent Rate by Staff Category	Numeric (Two decimals)	Pre-calculated formula to calculate this cell
Part 2	COVID-19 Available to Work Hours & Headcount		
15	Available to Work Cocoon (Hours)	Numeric(Two decimals)	HR Circular 05/2021 identifies a category of persons who are extremely medically vulnerable. The advice for this group is to “cocoon” and stay at home and not attend the workplace. Employees who are deemed to be extremely medically vulnerable and are required to cocoon during this timeframe should be facilitated to work from home to the maximum extent possible. Code 0406 relates to those in this group, who are awaiting the assignment of work in the home. HR Memo Updated Occupational Health Guidance 14th January 2021, deems pregnant Health Care Workers (HCWs) to be as “High Risk” or “Very High Risk” given the increased risk of exposure in healthcare and rovides that pregnant HCWs should be facilitated to work from home if possible.Pregnant HCWs who are available for work and awaiting the assignment of work in the home, are included in the code 0406 Covid-19 Available to work Cocoon.
16	Available to Work Cocoon (Headcount)	Numeric(Two decimals)	Enter Headcount Available to Work Cocoon for the reporting period
17	Available to work Caring arrangements (Hours)	Numeric(Two decimals)	HR Circular 05/2021 sets out the working arrangements for those with caring arrangements. There is no special paid leave available for COVID-19 caring arrangements during this time. Code 0407 is only to be used for those in this group, who are awaiting the assignment of work in the home. Please also refer to HR Circular 02/2021 – Frontline Healthcare Employees with Childcare responsibilities during COVID-19.
18	Available to work Caring arrangements (Headcount)	Numeric(Two decimals)	Enter Available to Work Caring arrangements (Headcount) for the reporting period
Part 3	Hours lost due to Maternity Leave by Staff Category		
20	Hours lost due to Maternity Leave by Staff Category	Numeric(Two decimals)	Hours lost due to paid maternity leave for each staff category

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Related Circulars:

HSE HR Circular 08/2008: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hse-hr-circular-08-2008-re-monthly-return-of-percent-age-absence-rates---health-services.pdf>

HSE HR Circular 07/2010: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hse-hr-circular-007-2010-re-absence-data-management.pdf>

National Absence Policy (January 2009) Revised 2014: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/qavd/hr-policies-and-procedures/attend.html>

HSE HR Circular 08/2020: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hse-hr-circular-008-2020-re-update-to-hr-circular-007-2020-collection-of-covid-19-absence.pdf>

HSE HR Circular 018/2020: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hr-circular-018-2020-national-collection-of-absence-due-to-covid-19.pdf>

HSE HR Circular 038/2020: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hr-circular-038-2020-covid-19-new-absence-codes-and-change-on-absence-reporting.pdf>

HSE HR Circular 073/2020: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hr-circular-073-2020-application-of-special-leave-with-pay-for-covid-19.pdf>

HSE HR Circular 074/2020 <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hr-circular-074-2020-updated-faqs-re-working-arrangements-and-leave-associated-with-covid-19.pdf>

HSE HR Circular 005/2021: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hr-circular-005-2021-updated-dper-faqs-re-working-arrangement-and-leave-associated-with-covid-19.pdf>

HSE HR Circular 007/2021: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hr-circular-007-2021-covid-19-updated-absence-codes.pdf>

Appendix 1 below provides Categorization of Absences:

Absence Code (SAP only)	Absence Type	Lost Certified Hours	Lost Self-certified Hours	Lost COVID-19	Deduct from Available Time
0100	Annual Leave				Y
0101	Public Holiday Leave				Y
0200	Sick Leave (Certified)	Y			
0205	Sick Leave (Self Certified)		Y		
0207	Sick Leave (CIP)	Y			
0210	Tuberculosis (1/2 Pay)	Y			
0215	Tuberculosis (3/4 Pay)	Y			
0220	Sick Leave pension (P)	Y			
0225	Sick Pay Withheld (Cert)	Y			
0226	Sick Pay Withheld (Self Certified)		Y		
0230	Sick Leave PRI	Y			
0231	Sick Leave Ext.PRI (1/2 pay)	Y			
0233	SL Half PayHRCir 24/2015	Y			
0300	Maternity Leave Paid				Y
0305	Extended Maternity Lve				Y
0310	Additional Maternity (U)				Y
0311	Unpaid Maternity Lve				Y
0312	Mat Leave Prem Birth				Y
0315	Ante / Post Natal Lve (P)				Y
0320	Fathers Leave (Paid)				Y
0325	Additional Father Lve (U)				Y
0330	Adoptive Leave (Paid)				Y
0335	Addit. Adoptive Lve (U)				Y
0336	Unpaid Adoptive Lv				Y

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0337	Pre-adopt class/meet (P)				Y
0340	Paternity Leave (Paid)				Y
0345	Parental Leave (U)				Y
0350	Carers Leave (unpaid)				Y
0360	Parents Leave				Y
0380	Term Time (P)				Y
0385	Term Time (U)				Y
0386	Shorter Working Year (U)				Y
0400	Health and Safety Leave				Y
0401	Health & Safety > 21 days				Y
0403	COVID 19 - Paid Leave			Y	
0405	Force Majeure Leave (P)				Y
0406	COVID 19 - Av to Wrk Cocoon				Y
0407	COVID 19 - Av to Wrk Caring				Y
0410	Compassionate Leave (P)				Y
0415	Special Lve - Marriage (P)				Y
0420	Jury Leave				Y
0421	Court Appear Job Rltd (P)				Y
0425	Career Break				Y
0430	Special Leave with Pay				Y
0435	Fire brigade Leave (P)				Y
0440	Concession/Privilege (P)				Y
0445	Special Lve - nominal Pay				Y
0450	Flexi-Leave (Paid)				Y
0455	Rapid Resp. Corps Lve (P)				Y
0485	Fire Brigade Leave (U)				Y
0490	Compensatory Rest				Y
0495	Educational Leave NCHD				Y
0500	Study Leave (Paid)				Y
0505	Examination Leave (Paid)				Y
0550	Study Leave (Unpaid)				Y
0555	Examination Leave (U)				Y
0600	Trade U - Annual Delegate				Y
0601	Trade U - Special Delegate				Y
0602	Trade U - Exec. Meeting				Y
0603	Trade U - Irish Congress				Y
0605	Leave Candidate Interview				Y
0615	Leave Ministerial Appoint				Y
0620	Def Forces: Annual 7 days				Y
0625	Def Forces: Annual 14 day				Y
0630	Def Forces: Annual 21 day				Y
0635	Def Forces: Basic 14-30 d				Y
0640	Def Forces: Special 7 d				Y
0645	Def Forces: Special 14 d				Y
0650	Def Forces: Special 21 d				Y
0700	Suspension (U)				Y

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0701	Suspension with pay				Y
0702	Administrative Leave				Y
0705	Unauthorised Absence (U)		Y		
0715	Industrial Action (U)		Y		
0800	Sick Leave Full Pay (DTO)	Y			
0801	Sick Lve FulSelf cert (DTO)		Y		
0805	Sick Leave Half Pay (DTO)	Y			
0806	Sick Leave Half Self cert (DTO)		Y		
0810	Sick Leave NIL Cert (DTO)	Y			
0811	Sick Leave NIL Ucert (DTO)		Y		
0910	Time Off in Lieu				Y
0911	TOIL - On-Call				Y
0913	Ambulance Rest Period(U)				Y
0922	Return to Work - Part Cap				y
0920	Unpaid Leave				Y
0930	Time in Lieu of Rest Days				Y
0940	Time in Lieu of Hist RD				Y
0960	Assault on duty (F Pay)	Y			
0961	Assault on duty 1st Ext	Y			
0962	Assault on duty 2nd Ext	Y			
0963	Act 109	Y			
0964	Reflective Leave				Y