

Health Service National Absence Reporting

2026

Introduction:

The requirement for measurement of absence data is set out within HSE HR Circular 008/2008 and HSE HR Circular 017/2022, with the primary purpose of establishing a national health service-wide reporting process of monthly percentage absence rates by agency and staff category. Link to HSE HR Circulars can be found [here](#).

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. 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. The latest NSP (NSP 2026) commits to a **national target** level of less than or equal to **4%**.

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. To support managers in this element of their role, is the Managing Attendance policy, which can be found [here](#).

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to set out the 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 (recorded in hours) is any time lost through paid absences due to certified absenteeism, self-certified absenteeism and Covid 19 SLWP absenteeism. Lost Time does not include absences due to maternity leave, carer's leave or other statutory approved leave as per Appendix 1.

Available time (recorded in hours) is contracted time less annual leave, public holidays and other absences as per Appendix 1 for the period under review.

Clarifications: The recording of Lost Time should be driven from payroll where possible as it applies to **paid** self-certified absenteeism, certified absenteeism and Covid 19 SLWP absenteeism.

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

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Exclusions: Staff who are not on the payroll due to circumstances such as 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.

National Definition of Percentage Maternity Rate:

The national definition of a percentage Maternity rate is based on the concept of 'lost time rate due to maternity absences'. This measures lost time due to maternity absences against available time (available time plus maternity hours) and is expressed as a percentage.

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

Lost maternity time (recorded in hours) is any time lost through paid/unpaid maternity leave.

Available time for % Maternity Rate (recorded in hours) is contracted time less annual leave, public holidays or other statutory approved leave plus the maternity absences as per Appendix 1 (Table 1A) for the period under review. Details provided in part 2 of the Absence template will automatically calculate the available time for Maternity % rate.

Clarifications: The recording of Lost Maternity Time should be driven from payroll where possible as it applies to **paid/unpaid** maternity leave.

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

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 **15th 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 and Part 2 of the absence template must be fully completed by 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

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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.

Sample Absence Template for Section 38 agencies

1	National Absenteeism Return								
2	Returned from:		Agency Name			Agency Code:		<input type="text"/>	
3	Month:		<input type="text"/>						
4	Part 1: Absenteeism Rates - by Staff Category								
5	LOCATION	Staff Category:	Medical & Dental	Nursing & Midwifery	Health & Social Care Professionals	Management & Administrative	General Support	Patient & Client Care	Total
6	Agency Name	Available Hours	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7		Hours Lost Due to Self- Certified Absenteeism	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8		Hours Lost Due to Certified Absenteeism	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9		Hours Lost Due to Covid Special Leave with Pay (SLWP)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11		Total Hours Lost Due to Absenteeism	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12		% Absent Rate							
19	Part 2: Maternity Leave								
20	Agency Name	Staff Category:	Medical & Dental	Nursing & Midwifery	Health & Social Care Professionals	Management & Administrative	General Support	Patient & Client Care	Total
21		Hours lost due to <u>Paid</u> Maternity Leave	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
22		Hours lost due to <u>Unpaid</u> Maternity Leave	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23									
24	Please click here for Help & Guidance								

Absence RAG Rating Red ● > 4.2% of target Amber ● > 4% - ≤ 4.2% of target Green ● ≤ 4% of target

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Instructions Part 1 and Part 2

Row	Name	Format	Comment
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 Special Leave with Pay (SLWP)	Numeric (Two decimals)	HR Circular 013 2023, SLWP applies for the duration of the HSE recommended 'stay at home period' following a positive COVID-19 test result (whatever duration is in place at the time of the absence. The maximum limit for SLWP is currently 5 calendar days to reflect the latest public health advice as of 18 April 2023. Any periods of COVID-19 related illness which extend beyond the HSE guidance to 'stay at home' (currently five calendar days) following a positive COVID-19 test, will be treated as ordinary sick leave.
11	Total Hours Lost Due to Absenteeism by Staff Category	Numeric (Two decimals)	Pre-calculated when rows 7 to 10 populated
12	% Absent Rate by Staff Category	Numeric (Two decimals)	Pre-calculated formula to calculate this cell
Part 2	Hours lost due to Paid/Unpaid Maternity Leave by Staff Category		
21	Hours lost due to Maternity Leave (Paid) by Staff Category	Numeric (Two decimals)	Hours lost due to paid maternity leave for each staff category
22	Hours lost due to Maternity Leave (Unpaid) by Staff Category	Numeric (Two decimals)	Hours lost due to unpaid maternity leave for each staff category

Absence RAG Rating Red ● > 4.2% of target Amber ● > 4% - ≤ 4.2% of target Green ● ≤ 4% of target

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Appendix 1 below provides Categorisation of Absences for National Absence Rate:

Absence Code (SAP only)	Absence Type	Lost Certified Hours	Lost Self-certified Hours	Lost COVID-19	Deduct from Available Time
0100	Annual Leave				X
0101	Public Holiday Leave				X
0200	Sick Leave (Certified)	X			
0205	Sick Leave(SelfCertified)		X		
0207	Sick Leave (C.I.P)	X			
0220	Sick Leave (Rehab)	X			
0225	Sick Pay Withheld(Cert)	X			
0226	SickPay Witheld(SelfCert)		X		
0230	Sick Leave PRI	X			
0231	Sick Leave Ext.PRI(½ pay)	X			
0233	SL Half PayHRCir 24/2015	X			
0300	Maternity Leave Paid				X
0310	Additional Maternity (U)				X
0312	Mat Leave Prem Birth				X
0315	Ante / Post Natal Lve (P)				X
0320	Fathers Leave (Paid)				X
0325	Additional Father Lve (U)				X
0330	Adoptive Leave (Paid)				X
0335	Addit. Adopptive Lve (U)				X
0337	Pre-adopt class/meet (P)				X
0340	Paternity Leave (Paid)				X
0345	Parental Leave (U)				X
0350	Carers Leave (unpaid)				X
0360	Parents Leave				X
0386	Shorter Working Year (U)				X
0400	Health and Safety Leave				X
0401	Health & Safety > 21 days				X
0403	COVID-19 Paid Leave			X	
0405	Force Majeure Leave (P)				X
0408	Medical Care Leave (U)				X
0410	Bereavement Leave (P)				X
0411	Humanitarian Leave (P)				X
0415	Special Lve -Marriage (P)				X
0420	Jury Leave				X
0421	Court Appear Job Rltd (P)				X
0425	Career Break				X
0430	Special Leave with Pay				X
0431	Red Weather Warning				X
0440	Concession/Privilege (P)				X

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Absence Code (SAP only)	Absence Type	Lost Certified Hours	Lost Self-certified Hours	Lost COVID-19	Deduct from Available Time
0445	Special Lve -nominal pay				X
0450	Flexi-Leave (Paid)				X
0455	Rapid Resp. Corps Lve (P)				X
0490	Compensatory Rest				X
0495	Educational Leave NCHD				X
0500	Study Leave (Paid)				X
0505	Examination Leave (Paid)				X
0550	Study Leave (Unpaid)				X
0555	Examination Leave (U)				X
0600	Trade U - Annual Delegate				X
0601	Trade U - Special Delegat				X
0602	Trade U - Exec. Meeting				X
0603	Trade U - Irish Congress				X
0605	Leave Candidate Interview				X
0615	Leave Ministerial Appoint				X
0620	Def Forces: Annual 7 days				X
0625	Def Forces: Annual 14 day				X
0630	Def Forces: Annual 21 day				X
0635	Def Forces: Basic 14-30 d				X
0640	Def Forces: Special 7 d				X
0645	Def Forces: Special 14 d				X
0650	Def Forces: Special 21 d				X
0700	Suspension (U)				X
0702	Administrative Leave				X
0705	Unauthorised Absence (U)		X		
0715	Industrial Action (U)		X		
0910	Time Off in Lieu				X
0911	TOIL - On-Call				X
0913	Ambulance Rest Period(U)				X
0920	Unpaid Leave				X
0921	Elected Representative Leave				X
0922	Return to Work - Part Cap				X
0930	Time in Lieu of Rest Days				X
0940	Time in Lieu of Hist RD				X
0960	Assault on duty (F Pay)	X			
0961	Assault on duty 1st Ext	X			
0962	Assault on duty 2nd Ext	X			
0963	Act 109	X			
0964	Reflective Leave				X
0966	Injury Grant	X			
0967	Blood Borne Diseases				X
0968	MRSA exposure				X

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Appendix 1A below provides Categorisation of maternity absences for % Maternity Rate (Part 2 Absence Template):

Maternity Absence Code (SAP only)	Maternity Absence Type	Paid Maternity Leave	Unpaid Maternity Leave
0300	Maternity Leave Paid	X	
0312	Mat Leave Prem Birth	X	
0310	Additional Maternity (U)		X