

Calculating Staff Absence Rate: A Help Sheet for North Somerset Healthy Workplaces Businesses

Why Measuring Staff Absence Matters

Monitoring staff absence is an essential part of understanding the health and wellbeing of your workforce. By tracking absence over time, businesses can:

1. Identify Trends

Regular measurement helps you spot patterns—such as seasonal peaks, frequent short-term absences, or issues concentrated in particular teams.

2. Understand the Impact of Health & Wellbeing

When you join the North Somerset Healthy Workplaces programme, we ask for your baseline absence rate. When you later apply for an award, we ask again.

This allows:

- **You** to see whether workplace wellbeing initiatives have reduced sickness absence.
- **Us** to support you more effectively, tailoring advice based on real data.
- **Everyone** to understand how improved health, morale, and culture influence attendance.

3. Support Better Planning

Absence data can help you:

- Improve staffing plans
- Create targeted wellbeing initiatives
- Engage employees in health improvement conversations
- Demonstrate return on investment for wellbeing activities

A healthy workforce is a productive workforce—and measuring absence helps you see progress.

How to Calculate Your Staff Absence Rate

Below is a recognised and widely used method based on total days lost to sickness over a year.

✓ Method: Annual Sickness Absence Rate (%)

Formula

$$\text{Absence Rate (\%)} = \left(\frac{\text{Total Number of Days Lost to Sickness}}{\text{Total Number of Working Days Available}} \right) \times 100$$

Definitions

- **Total number of days lost to sickness**
Count *all* calendar days your staff were absent due to sickness (not annual leave, parental leave, compassionate leave, etc.).
- **Total number of working days available**
This is:

$$\text{Number of employees} \times \text{Number of working days per employee per year}$$

For most full-time workers, this is usually **260 working days** (52 weeks × 5 days), but you can adjust if your organisation works differently, for example deducting bank holidays if your workplace closes for these.

Example Calculation

A business has:

- 40 employees
- 260 working days per employee per year
- 180 days lost to sickness over the year

Step 1: Calculate total working days available

$$40 \times 260 = 10,400$$

Step 2: Apply the formula

$$\left(\frac{180}{10,400}\right) \times 100 = 1.73\%$$

Your annual absence rate = 1.73%

Tips for Accurate Reporting

- Use a consistent 12-month period.
 - Include all sickness-related absences (short-term and long-term).
 - Exclude non-sickness absences such as annual leave, maternity/paternity leave, or unpaid leave.
 - Keep records updated regularly.
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Need Help?

If you ever need support calculating your absence data or want help understanding what it means for your organisation, the North Somerset Healthy Workplaces team is here to help.