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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Sick days taken for mental health

Thank you for your request for information of 11th August about sick days taken for mental health. We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked;

How many staff sick days have been related to mental health between 1st August 2018 - 1st August 2019 in your department?

Defra can confirm that we have searched our records and can provide the information below. This information is taken from 1 August 2018 – 31st July 2019.

Absence Reason	Grand Total of Working Days Lost	Total Staff in Period	Average Working Days Lost
Mental Disorders*	3446	4093	0.84

*This category includes: psychological illnesses such as stress, depression, anxiety and any other mental health condition.

In the last year we have reviewed, refreshed and reinforced our various services and support mechanisms in place to support employee mental health. This has included benchmarking against the core and enhanced standards in the 'Thriving at Work Report'. For example we have implemented Mental Health First Aiders to support individuals in crisis, an internal employee-led mental health 'buddy' network, and employees have access to an external provider Employee Assistance Programme, and Occupational Health Service. Staff and Line Managers are encouraged to notify work-related stress to the Safety, Health and Wellbeing team; follow up conversations help to identify areas to address and ensure individuals are signposted to appropriate support. A programme of regular wellbeing related webinars are available and we consult with areas of the business to provide bespoke health and wellbeing services as needed.



Information disclosed in response to this FOIA request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

We attach Annex A, explaining the copyright that applies to the information being released to you, and Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Information Rights Team

InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk

Annex A

Copyright

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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Andrew Mobsby, Head of Information Rights, Area 5B, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The ICO can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF