



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Nobel House
Area 4a
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

T: 03459 33 55 77
helpline@defra.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

[Redacted]

By email: [Redacted]

Our ref: FOI2019/07982
9 May 2019

Dear [Redacted],

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Staff Mental Health

Thank you for your request for information of 9 April 2019 about staff mental health. We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The information you requested and our response is detailed below.

- *The total number of staff employed within the department*
- *The total number of sick days taken by employees due to psychological illnesses such as stress, depression and anxiety - may you please provide the figures per year in the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018*
- *May you please outline how long term sick leave is defined by the department i.e the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs recognises sickness related absence for longer than 5 consecutive calendar days as long term sick leave*
- *The total number of staff who had to take long term sick leave due to psychological illnesses such as stress, depression and anxiety (may you please break down the figures per calendar year in the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018)*
- *The total number of employees who quit/ stepped down from their position within the department citing psychological illnesses such as stress, anxiety, depression as a contributing factor (may you please break down the figures per calendar year in the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018)*

If you believe the contents of any such files are exempt from disclosure, please provide summaries of any such exempt files.

Defra can confirm that we have searched our records and can provide the information below. The data is taken as at 31 December for each year:



Year	Total Number of Staff in the Department (Headcount)	Total Number of Sick Days due to Mental Disorders*	Total Number of Staff who took periods of sick which exceed one instance of 6 days sick and / or 4 instances of sick leave in a 12 month
2018	4,204	3,076.83	82
2017	3,535	1,788.90	87
2016	1,808	1,724.18	45
2015	1,982	2,533.01	70

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

Defra does not use the phrase 'long term sick', however for the purposes of the table above we have taken this as periods of sick which exceed one instance of 6 days sick and / or 4 instances of sick leave in a 12 month period are reviewed with the employee.

Unfortunately we are not able to provide information on the number of employees who have quit/stepped down due to psychological illness as this information as it is not held by Defra.

We have various services and support mechanisms in place to support employee mental health. For example we have an internal employee led mental health 'buddy' network, and employees have access to an external provider Employee Assistance Programme, and Occupational Health Service.

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, 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

[Redacted]

Information Rights Team
InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk

Annex A

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

Most documents produced by Defra will be protected by Crown Copyright. Most Crown copyright information can be re-used under the [Open Government Licence](#). For information about the OGL and about re-using Crown Copyright information please see [The National Archives website](#).

Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party see the [Intellectual Property Office's website](#).

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 Nick Teall, Head of Information Rights, Area 4a, 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