

FOI DOF/2025-0068

Request

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding the number of staff currently on long-term sick leave within your department.

Specifically, I would like to request the following information:

1. The total number of staff members currently on long-term sick leave (defined as sick leave lasting 4 weeks or more) as of the most recent data available.
2. A comparison of the number of staff on long-term sick leave in each year from 2019 to 2024.
3. The most common reasons given for long-term sick leave.

Request refinement received 13/02/25

I've just had a response from TEO who have referred me to this document - [Sickness absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service | Department of Finance](#) – which I believe already answers some of my questions.

Would you be able to amend my requests to only include my first question.

1. The total number of staff members currently on long-term sick leave (defined as sick leave lasting 4 weeks or more) as of the most recent data available.

DoF Response

I can confirm the Department holds the information requested.

1. The total number of staff members on long-term sick leave by department as at 30 September 2024 is presented in Table 1. The Northern Ireland Civil Service defines long-term sick leave as being absent for 20 consecutive working days or more.

Table 1. The total number of staff members on long-term sick leave by department as at 30 September 2024.

Department	Total staff members
Department for Communities (DfC)	253
Department for Infrastructure (DfI)	118
Department for the Economy (DfE)	35
Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)	107
Department of Education (DE)	12
Department of Finance (DoF)	88
Department of Health (DoH)	12
Department of Justice (DoJ)	153
Public Prosecution Service (PPS)	15
The Executive Office (TEO)	9
Total NICS	802

Source: HRConnect and additional DoJ databases.

End of December 2024 data will be available after the next quarterly Sickness in the NICS report due for publication on 25 February 2025.