



Freedom of Information Request FOI 19 79

Staff absence due to mental health related illness

Query:

I would like figures by financial year for the number of firefighters and civilian employees absent due to mental health related illness within your fire service.

London Fire Brigade responded to a similar request in January 2018 (see disclosure log FOIA3550.1, at <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/3217/foia35501.pdf>). I would be grateful, if at all possible, if you could follow the same format for your response to this information request, and trust this is also easier for you. A further reason for asking for the information in this format is so that I can collate it on a national level more easily.

[Further information: in FOIA response 3550.1, London Fire Brigade gave a table, by financial year (for 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2017/18) with details of number of cases of absence due to mental health ("stress, anxiety and depression related illness"), a column with an unexplained acronym ("LWD"), which I assume is total number of days lost, and contextual columns detailing maximum days available, and average number of staff.]

Please can you update this information with the following:

1. 2018/19 data on number of cases, number of days of absence, total days and total average staff, as per the methodology of the previous response.
2. If there is time without exceeding time limits (Section 12), please also provide data for the financial years 2011/12 through to 2015/16.

Please explain/clarify as necessary the "LWD" column, and please provide any further context or explanation on methodology that you deem helpful/necessary.

Response:

Please see the information that you have requested in the table below;

Financial year	Number of Cases	Number of working days lost due to mental health related illnesses (incl. stress, anxiety and depression)	Maximum days number available	Average number of Staff
2011/12	29	637	342783	1270
2012/13	17	413	349267	1297
2013/14	30	482	348813	1298
2014/15	36	686	355366	1321
2015/16	33	779	364812	1341
2018/19	65	2767	359840	1327



As a Service, we have carried out a lot of work to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, with the aim of promoting an open and honest culture. It is probable that this work has encouraged better reporting of mental health related sickness and hence, contributed to the rise in absence levels.

Please note for clarity;

- **The “Number of cases” refers to the total number of occasions whereby a member of staff has reported sick due to a mental health related illness. If the same staff member has been sick on two separate occasions they will occur as two cases within this data set.**
- **The “Number of working days lost due to mental health related illnesses (incl. stress, anxiety and depression)” is the total number of days accumulated from the number of cases. For 2011/12 to 2015/16, an average days/shifts lost has been used because the watch rota is not held.**
- **Dorset Fire and Rescue Service and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service combined to form Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service on 1 April 2016 so this response covers both Dorset and Wiltshire.**