



CÙRAM IS SLÀINTE NAN EILEAN SIAR

WESTERN ISLES HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

Briefing Note Sickness 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022

1. Sickness Rate

- 1.1 Both partners financially budget for approx. 4% sickness. Within nursing in NHS targeted sickness is built into rotas and thereby budgets, excess sickness is covered by bank or excess hours for part time staff if required in clinical areas. Social Care, budget financially separately for approx. 4% (2 weeks) rather than include in rota, and cover using relief if required and extra hours for part time staff.
- 1.2 For the period 1 April 2022 to the 30 September 2022 the sickness rate for the Health and Social Care delegated services and the Set Aside budget were in summary as follows:

April- September 2022	
CNES	8.33%
NHS	6.85%
Total	7.57%

- 1.3 The quarter 2 Workforce and Demographic report details the sickness by high level service.

2. Types of Sickness

- 2.1 Each partner has different categories for sickness, but it is obvious that there is a recurring theme across both NHS and Social Care. There was a total of 58,207 hours lost due to sickness across the partnership. Using a notional hourly rate of £24, the notional cost of sickness for the partnership is approx. £1.396m for the first 6 months if all posts were covered like for like.

- 2.2 The two main categories of sickness far exceeding all others are:
- a) all types of mental health illness, from stress at work, stress due too disciplinary, pressures at home, depression and anxiety for example.
 - b) musculoskeletal issues including back pain and arthritis.

Top Sickness	NHS	CNES	Total
Musculoskeletal and Back	23%	19%	21%
Depression/Anxiety/Stress	37%	31%	34%

Together these categories represent over half the lost hours for both partners as follows:

- 2.3 Due to the ability to class illness by different named categories by administrators and GPs there is a long list of reasons why people are off sick, but these as mentioned, are relatively small compared to the two above.
- 2.4 Covid Sickness is likely to be a theme of the winter months as NHS have recorded all Covid sickness from 1st September and the Comhairle from 1st July, as advised by Scottish Government letters. Previously Covid was classed as special leave. To date 4.8% sickness in Social Care is due to Covid and 0.9% in NHS. As this figure increases and together with other respiratory illness, this category of sickness is likely to be the 3rd highest reason of absenteeism. For the first 6 months respiratory illnesses including Covid, Cold, Flu, Virus, chest infection etc. resulted in 12.9% of all absences in the Comhairle and 12.8% absences in NHS.

3. Age of Workforce and Sickness

- 3.1 NHS Scotland have a target of 4% sickness which within NHS Western Isles aging workforce will be nearly impossible to achieve. There is a direct collation to the number of lost hours and the age of the work force – not the number of sick episodes. A person in their 50s is likely to suffer more from long term conditions than a younger person. Staff who work in frontline clinical and social work jobs often suffer more with Back and Musculoskeletal pain as they get older.
- 3.2 The table below shows the % sickness by age group and as can be seen the 55+ age group average rate is much higher than the overall sickness rate shown in paragraph 1.2.

Sickness Age	NHS	CNES	Total
01-44	5.3%	5.9%	5.6%
45-54	6.7%	5.7%	6.2%
55+	9.3%	12.6%	11.3%

- 3.3 As reported in the demographic and workforce report the % of over 55s in our Health and Social Care partnership is 32.7% with 44.2% and 38.2% respectively for residential services and homecare.

Debbie Bozkurt
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