

1 – Northern Ireland –

We updated the Mental Health Directorate on the position on 28 November 2022 during a regular quarterly meeting led by Deputy Director Mr Gavin Gray. This included the substance of the response from NI Department of Health Strategic Planning and Performance Group and Public Health Agency. It is understood that this would be used to support ministerial briefing.

2 – Sickness Absence –

The rolling year average is 7.97% presently, and this is broken down to short term absence rate 2.20% and long term rate of 6.35%. Given this, key focus is on establishing the causes of longer term absences in particular, and what actions can be taken to support staff back to work. We can advise that the key reasons for longer terms absences are related to anxiety/ stress/ depression, followed by musculoskeletal problems.

Whilst attendance management has been a key area of focus, we are taking further directed action. A Task and Finish Group has been commissioned to take urgent review of the causal factors and longitudinal trends; to interrogate the data and to use this to lead on our response. This is expected to include review of the current provision of support services, what additional work can be done to support staff in work, as well as linking to our Staff and Volunteer Wellbeing Strategy.

At present we are unable to provide a detailed response to the committee as this work is recently underway – but would be able to provide detailed information on the result of the findings of the Task and Finish group in six months should this be helpful.