

Introduction to absence

According to some absence surveys you might think that no-one ever turns up for work! However, the reality is a little less scary with typically around 6 days per employee taken for sickness absence in smallish private companies, 8 days taken in large private companies and 10-12 days per year by those in the public sector.

However (and there are two big 'however's' to mention here), as any manager will tell you, just one member of staff who keeps phoning in sick or who is on long term sickness absence can be incredibly time consuming and complex to manage. Secondly, the sensitivity of absence issues and the fear of confrontation felt by many, make this a management skill that is often neglected.

★ **Tip:** If you are thinking of getting the average down in your department or company, when analysing last year's figures, separate out short term and long term (anything over 4 weeks) absence and set separate targets for the two areas if you really want to measure progress.

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