

STATES OF JERSEY



ABSENCE LEVELS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

**Presented to the States on 2nd December 2003
by the Policy and Resources Committee**

STATES GREFFE

REPORT

The Policy and Resources Committee has been able to monitor levels of absence that apply in States departments following the introduction of a new computer system at the beginning of 2002. In October of last year it submitted its first Report (R.C.37/2002) to the States identifying levels of absence that had been identified during the first 6 months of 2002. The Committee now submits its second Report, which includes aggregated data for the 12 month period ended 31st December 2002 and the 12 month period ended 30th June 2003.

The implementation of the Manpower and Personnel Information System has required an investment of time and effort on the part of States' Departments and the corporate States Human Resources Department. 32 of the 33 departments have now been able to implement the system fully: the remaining Department, Education, Sport and Culture, is currently working towards implementing the system throughout its schools and other business units and it is anticipated that the system will have been fully implemented by the end of this year.

There are a range of measures that are traditionally applied for measuring sickness absence. The one that is most commonly used identifies the proportion of time lost as a result of sickness compared to the contracted working time. This measure provides a basis not only to compare internal rates of absence but also enables comparisons to be made with other organisations because of its widespread applicability.

The comparative data for the 12 month periods ended December 2002 and June 2003, together with the data relating to the first 6 months of 2002, are set out below.

Department	% Absence as at 30.6.02	% Absence as at 31.12.02	% Absence as at 30.6.03
Agriculture and Fisheries	5.59	6.69	6.34
Airport	3.09	2.94	3.83
Bailiff's Chambers	0.48	0.44	2.57
Driver and Vehicle Standards	4.30	4.72	3.59
Economic and Commercial Development	3.87	2.78	1.67
Employment and Social Security	3.77	3.25	3.48
Fire Service	4.67	4.21	4.62
Harbour	4.78	5.12	3.40
Health and Social Services	4.78	4.03	4.53
Home Affairs	10.03	3.54	2.45
Housing	3.52	3.54	4.26
Immigration and Nationality	1.81	1.93	2.04
Impôts	6.32	6.55	6.19
Income Tax	3.66	2.76	2.48
Judicial Greffe	1.50	1.60	1.65
Law Officers	2.94	2.85	2.73
Lieutenant Governor	3.76	3.70	2.16
Official Analyst	2.75	2.09	2.34
Planning and Environment	4.02	2.75	2.48
Police	5.67	4.89	4.77
Policy and Resources	2.27	2.30	1.82
Prison	9.83	9.29	11.00
Probation	12.05	7.33	1.52
Public Services	6.20	6.15	5.48
Sport Leisure and Recreation	5.41	5.28	6.48
States Greffe	1.13	2.55	2.27
States Human Resources	6.64	6.75	6.50
States Treasury	5.09	5.04	4.74
Superintendent Registrar	NIL	NIL	8.60
T.A	1.94	4.23	3.61
Tourism	1.04	1.01	2.66
Viscount	3.32	5.02	8.99
Overall % Absence Rate	4.87	4.48	4.58

It will be seen from the above that the proportion of time lost to sick absence has remained comparatively constant at around 4.5% throughout the periods in question. Clearly the individual figures for separate departments vary above and below that figure. The reasons for this variance will depend upon a number of different circumstances. However, there are certain factors that can lead to significant shifts in the level of absence. This can be most apparent in the case of smaller departments where only a small number of employees need to be absent as a result of long-term sickness in order to have a disproportionate effect on the overall percentage level of absence.

In comparing absence levels with those outside of Jersey, it should be noted that the survey carried out by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development in 2003 in the United Kingdom showed an average level of absence of 3.9% across a wide range of organisations. However, this figure varied according to the industrial sector. The average figure in the United Kingdom's public service was recorded as being 4.6%. It will be seen, therefore, that Jersey's most recent average figures fall slightly below that of its direct comparator.

Under the policy and procedures that have been adopted across the States of Jersey, chief officers and departmental managers keep their levels of absence, both at a departmental and a business unit level, under regular review. Actions should, therefore, already been in hand to deal with those situations where particular problems have been identified.