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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
Senior Management Team
Health & safety in HSE – Incident & sickness absence in HSE 2007/08

A Paper by Tim Beaumont

Advisor: HRD – PIR Team; Managing Attendance Support Team; Statistics Branch;
Cleared by Giles Denham on 27 May 2008

Issue

1. An analysis of sickness absence and health & safety incidents in HSE during the last work year, and setting a new sickness absence target for this year.

Recommendation

2. That the SMT
 - a. Notes the report on last year's performance in respect of incidents and sickness absence.
 - b. Agrees to continue the targeted approach for central support begun this year.
 - c. Agrees that the annual target for sickness absence for 2008/09 should be set at 8.0 days/year (or 0.67 days/month).

Background and discussion

3. This paper is the latest in a series of reports to the SMT on HSE's own health and safety performance. The intention is to inform the Board of progress and identify any particular issues that require action.
4. The report summarises the work that has been done over the last work-year.
5. The information on performance, and supporting analysis, is set out in:
 - a. Annex 1 –Sickness Absence
 - b. Annex 2 – Incidents.

Summary Analysis

Absence

6. When compared to last year's figures¹ :
 - a. HSE's overall performance has improved slightly. Absence is now at 8.7 compared to 9.0.

¹ : See HSE/07/62 for full details of last years absence performance

- b. Absences in the over 60s have risen.
- c. Different divisions co-located and part of the same Directorate continue to have very different absence patterns.
- d. The pattern of absence duration remains largely the same.
- e. Looking at absence reasons, symptoms ill defined has fallen from the second most used cause to the 6th, accounting for only 6.4% of absences recorded. Stress/depression remains the commonest reason given.

Incidents

- f. The most frequently reported incidents correlate to the identified highest risks to staff.
- g. Most of the fifteen road traffic incidents in Bootle were misses in the Redgrave Court car park. The local safety committee has taken measures aimed at reducing the number of these.

Activity to support management of attendance

- 7. In response to earlier reports about sickness absence the then Board requested that a Managing Attendance Support Team be set up. The team has now made two support visits – one to BSD and one to FOD London. Both have provided extra training to line managers in dealing with absence issues. The team from HRD coordinating the support visits have made contact with two other divisions in preparation for further visits. A total of ten are planned for the year ahead.
- 8. Activities elsewhere have included: in HSL, extra effort has been given to tackling stress and DSE related incidents. Another initiative has been to hand difficult absence cases to managers with greater experience in these areas. In FOD, bi-annual management Board papers have been used to help target activity. These reports also review management activity to date to ensure that cases have been progressing.
- 9. Overall the work has followed the pattern of identifying hotspots and then targeting interventions to deal with local issues. Effort is committed to raising line management awareness regarding absence and HR procedures. The absence analysis suggests areas to target with support in the year ahead.

Proposed sickness absence target for 2008/09

- 10. Statistics Branch were consulted about a suitable target for the end of 2008/09. They fitted the historic data to an established model and estimated that current trends would suggest that absence in HSE would be around 7.5 by the end of 2009/10, well above the historic target of 6.2. They also noted that a reduction to a level around 8.4 would represent a significant statistical reduction. These estimations will improve with more data being provided. One exercise that will help will be to quantify the rate that absence accumulates throughout the year. This can then be used to estimate likely year end performance based on interim reporting.
- 11. With regards to sickness absence targets themselves the proposal is that last year's target of 8.0 is used for this year. This is on the basis that we haven't enough of a trend to rely very heavily on statistical projections, but a target of 8.0

days will still require action to achieve. Incidentally, this would mean that the monthly target was 0.67 days per staff member.

Consultation

12. This paper has been reviewed by members of the Managing Attendance Support Team, which includes trade unions. Technical aspects of the report have been developed with the help of PIR team in HRD and Statistics Branch.

Costs and Benefits

13. The costs of absences found in the paper are derived from data held in e-HR and are based on the daily cost of absence (i.e. salary/days worked x duration of absence in days). This is a conservative estimate because, as the footnote states, the data excludes some other direct costs to HSE and all indirect costs.

14. The recommendations in this paper are already part of the HRD workplan. Reducing the number of incidents and absence rates will both benefit the health and safety of HSE's staff and HSE's own efficiency. .

Action

15. The analysis points to some particular areas for action. If the SMT agrees, the team behind the Managing Attendance Support Visits will contact the relevant managers to offer help. The team will also contact managers in areas of good performance for advice on good practice.

Annex 1 – Analysis of sickness absence for 2007/08

The provisional overall headline figures for sickness absence in HSE in 2007/08 were given in last month's balanced scorecard based on a report run in April. When the same report was re-run for this month it found the number of absence days recorded had increased for the year. Late reporting accounts for some of this increase. Retrospective adjustments to absence figures also cause variation – e.g. going back into an absence to change the start or end date on the basis of new information. The reported overall absence rate for HSE in 2007/08 can be now confirmed as being 8.7 days/staff member. The new headline figures for absence are given in the tables below.

Table 1 – Gender split of staff, days absent & absence cost in HSE for 2007/08

	Female	%	Male	%
Staff in post as at 31.3.08	1759	47.4	1950	52.6
Days absent	20167	62.6	12068	37.4
Cost ²	£2,226,096	52.3	£2,028,365	47.7

Table 2 - Headline HSE figures for absence in 2007/08

	HSE Total for 2007/08
Staff in post ³	3555 (3774) ⁴
Days absent	32,235 (34,077)
Rate	8.7 (9.0)
Total cost	£4,254,461 (£2,450,611)

²: Costs are salary costs only. Other direct costs – NI contributions, pension contributions, acting up allowances – are not included. Nor are indirect costs included such as time used by managers to deal with absence cases.

³: 12 month average monthly whole time equivalent of staff in post

⁴: 2006/07 figure in brackets

The following charts break down absence over the last 12 months identifying areas of concern.

Figure 1 - Absence rate by age category & gender

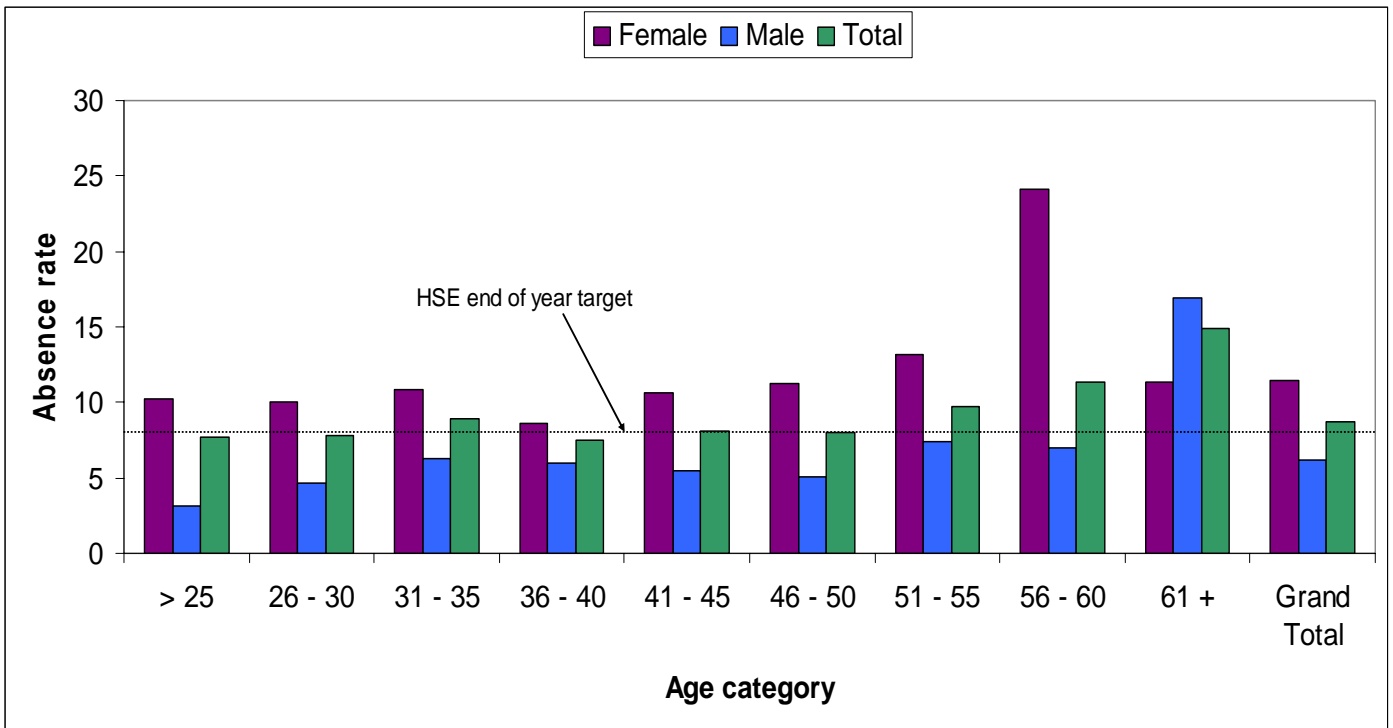


Figure 2 - Cost of absence by age category & gender

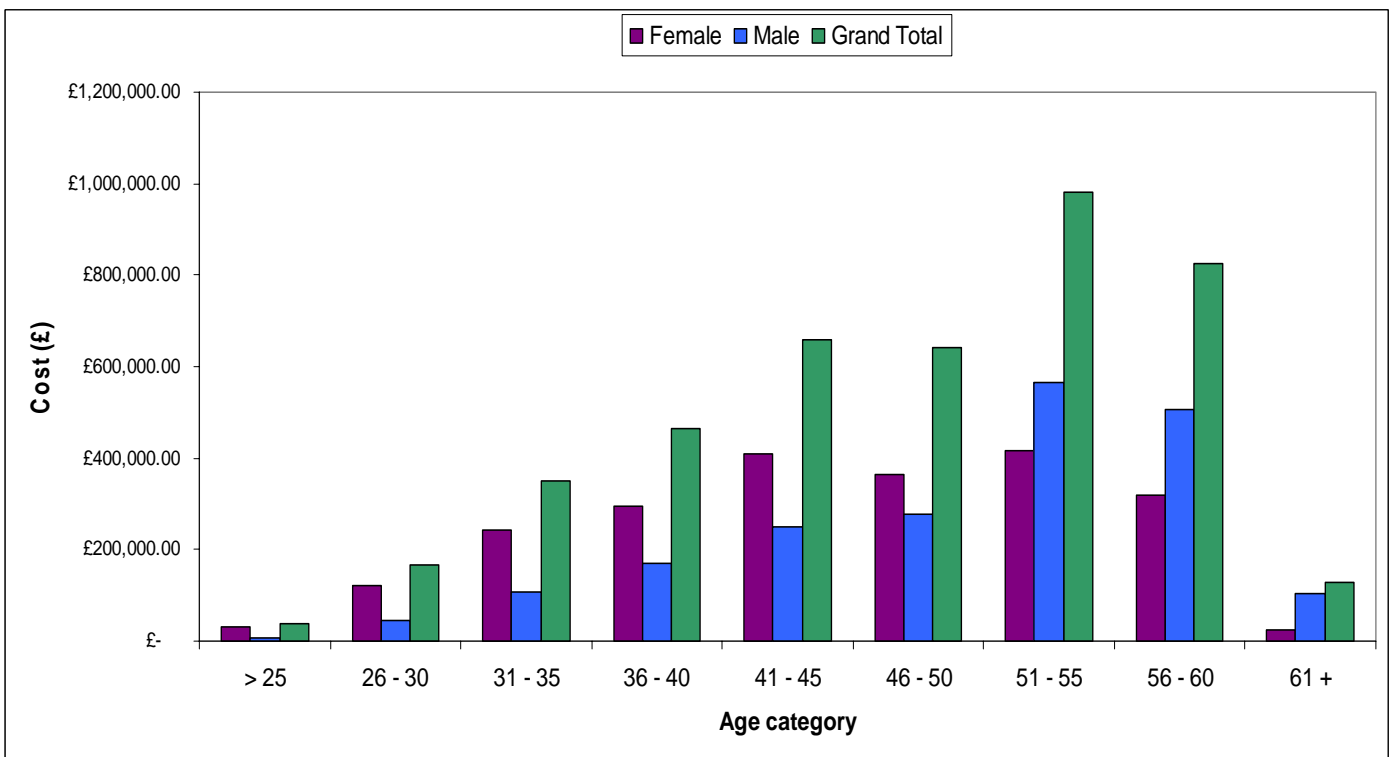


Figure 3 - Absence rate by directorate & gender

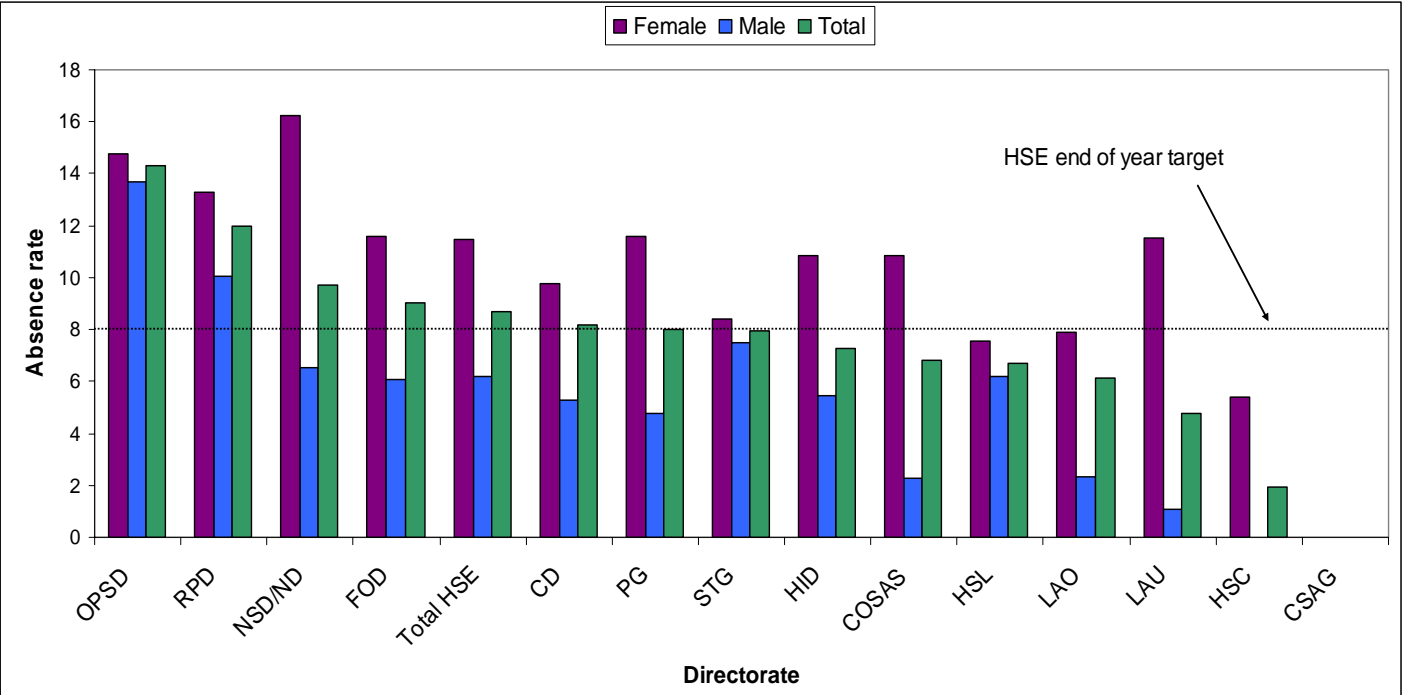
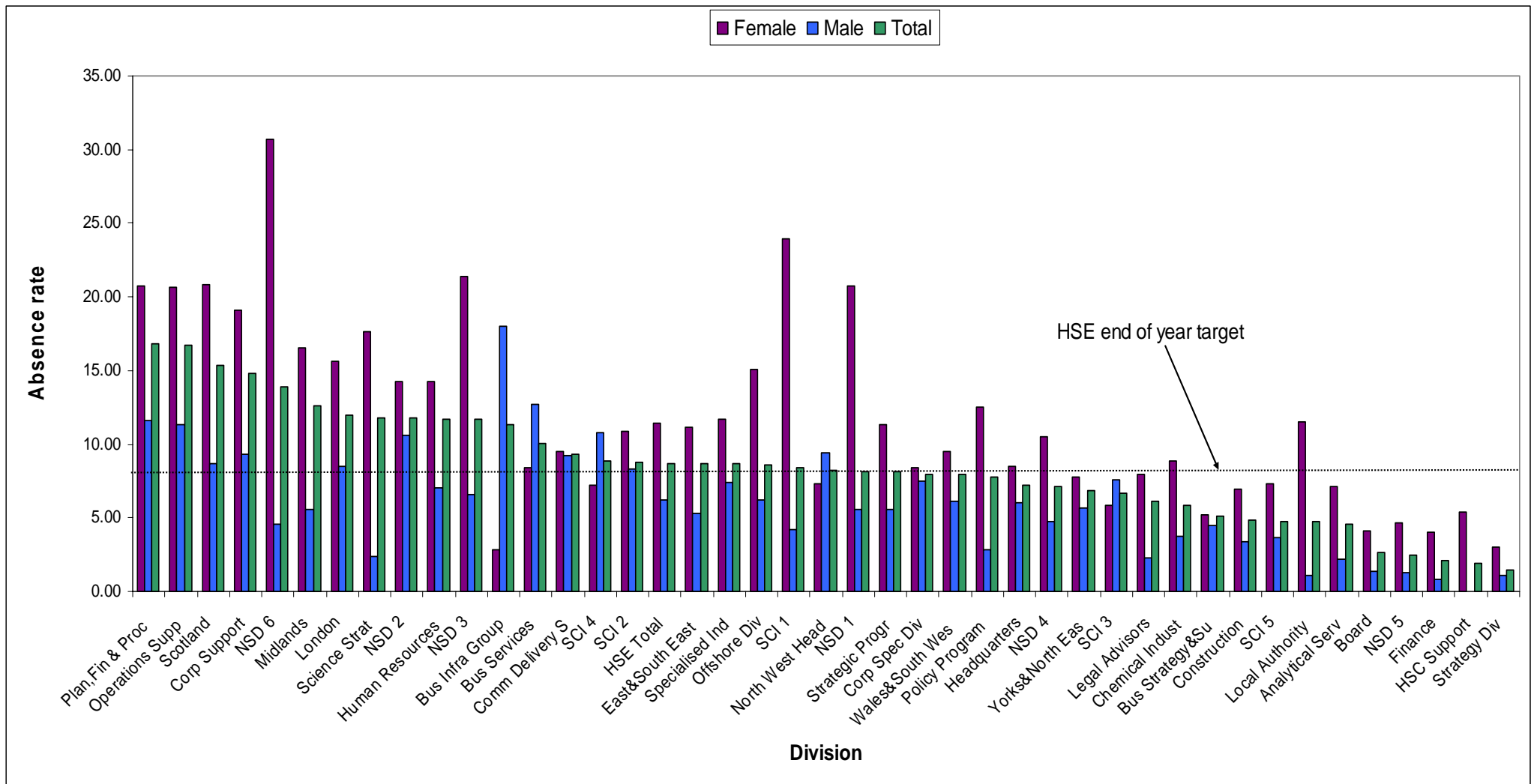


Figure 4 - Absence rate by Division⁵ and gender



⁵ : Divisions with fewer than 10 staff members removed in line with HR reporting best practice.

Figure 5 - Absence rate by office, region & gender. Organised by region in descending order from highest regional absence rate to lowest

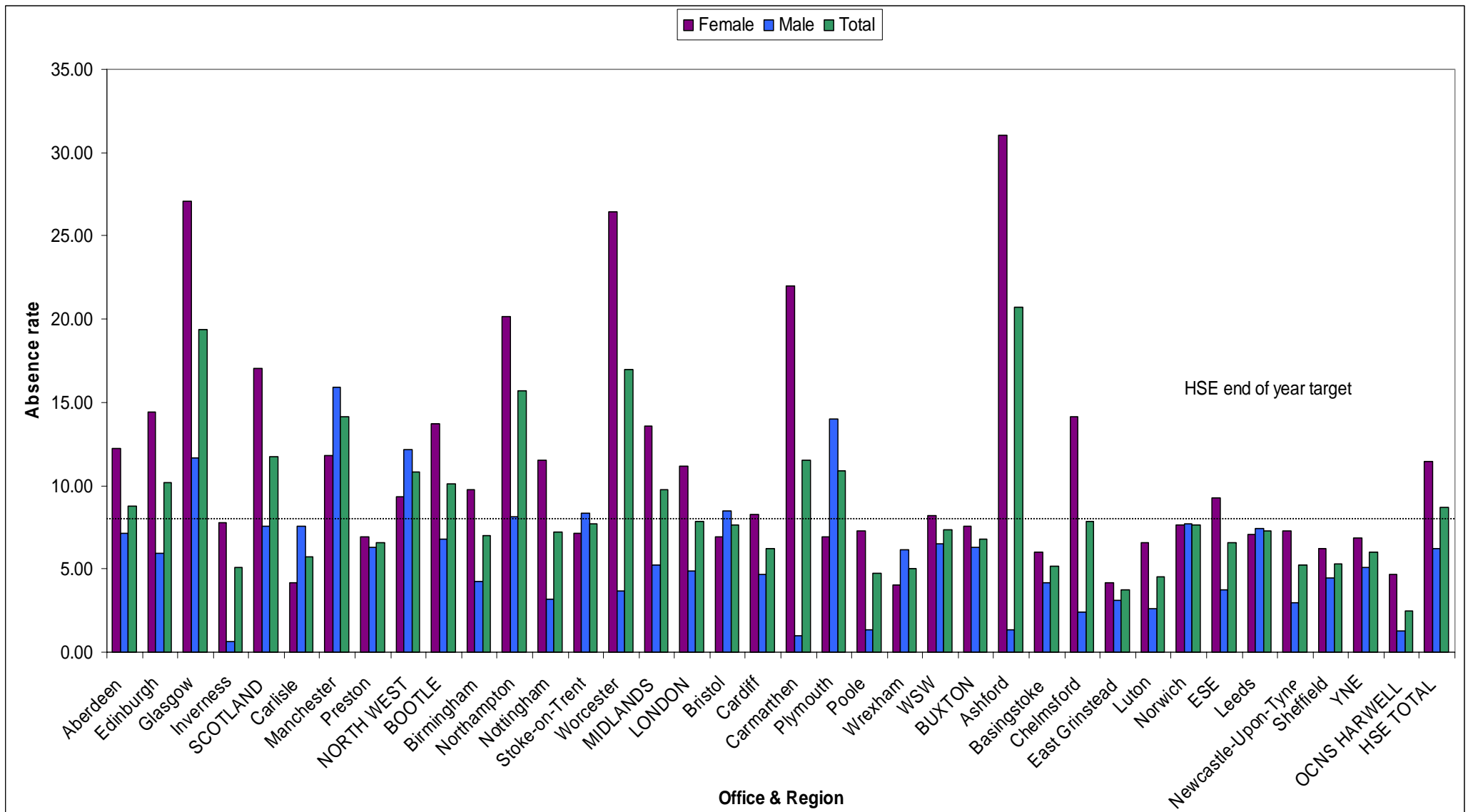


Figure 6 - Percentage absence by duration & gender

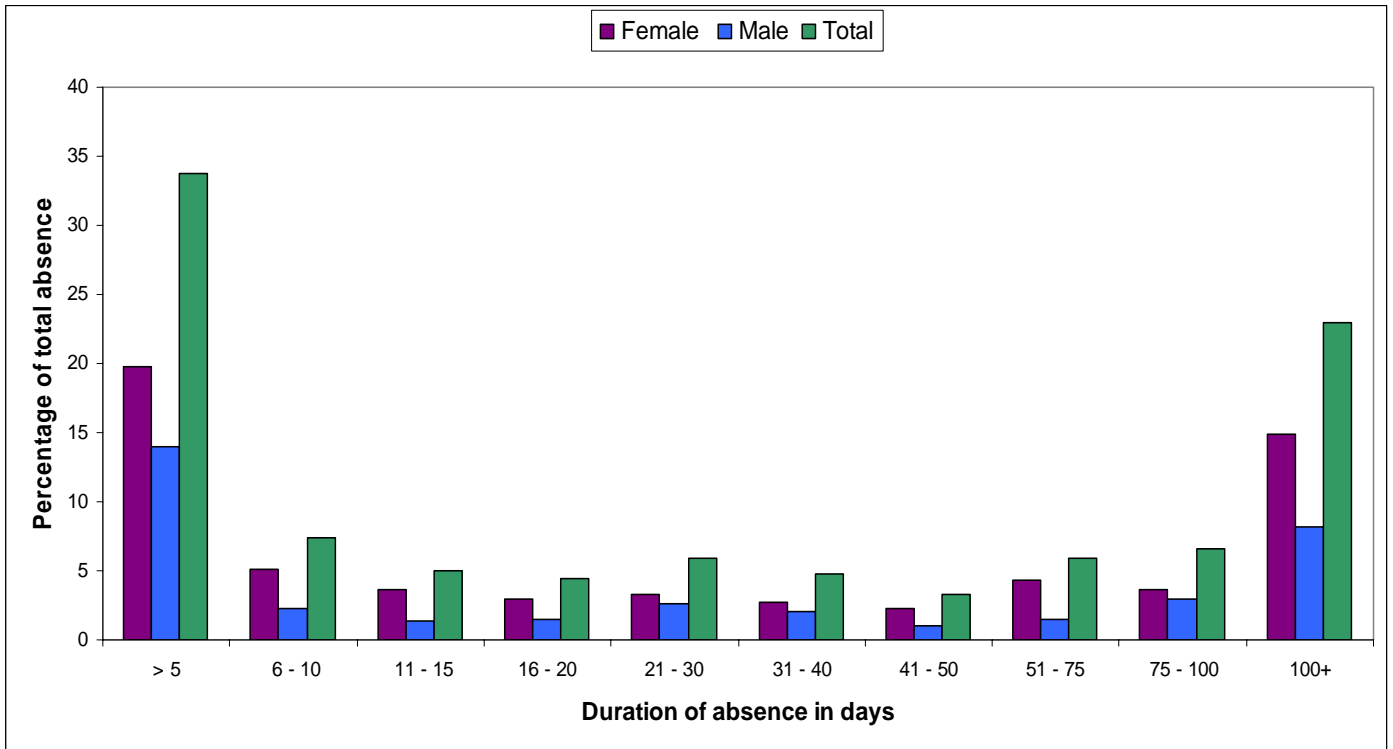
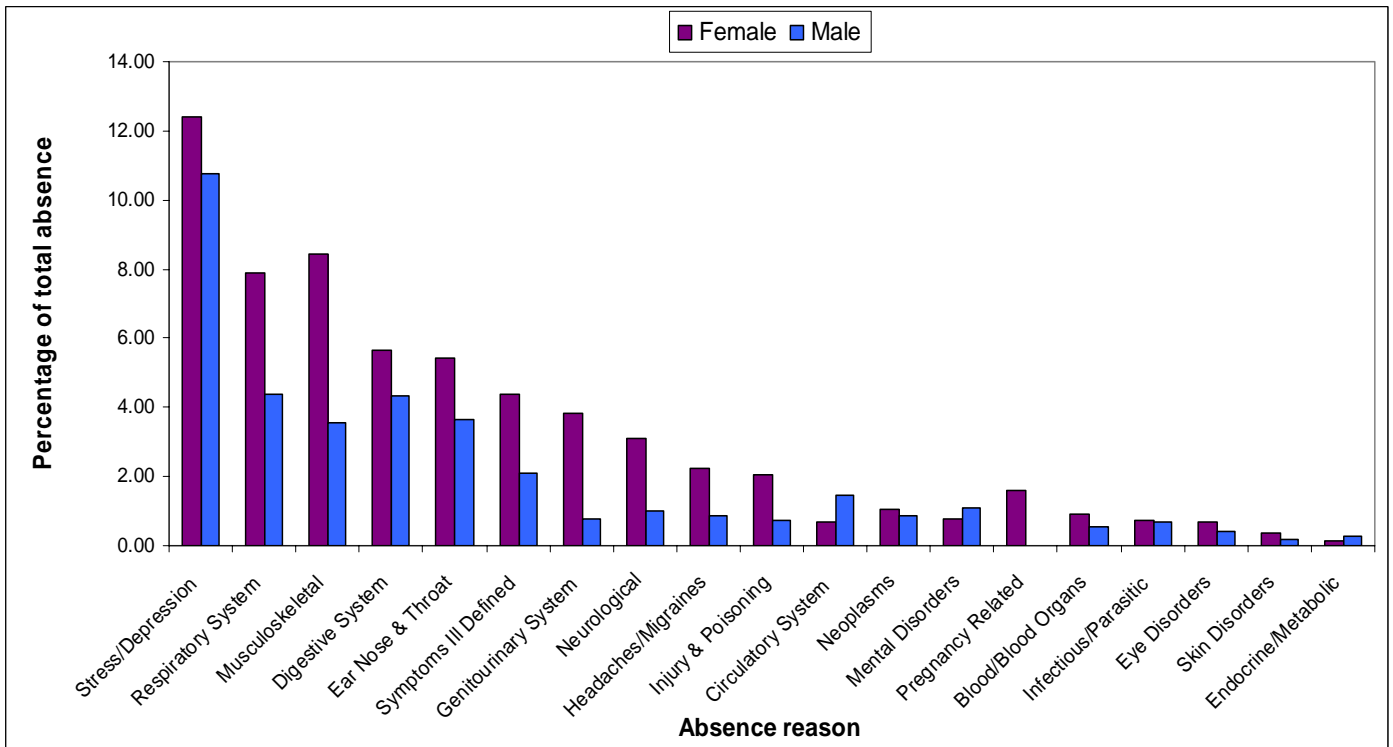


Figure 7 - Percentage absence by reason & gender



Annex 2 – Analysis of health & safety incidents in HSE for 2007/08

Table 3 - Reported incidents in HSE in 2007/08 by reporting region

Region	Total incidents	Leading to injury	Ill health	DSE related	Stress	Away from HSE sites	Hazardous substance exposure	Slip/Trip	Aggression or abuse	Road traffic accident/near miss
Aberdeen	4		3	1	2					
Bootle ⁶	63	17	18	4	13	5	2	7		15
ESE	24	2	10	8		7	4	1	2	2
HSL	30	13	6		3	5	5	2	2	1
Midlands	33	5	21	11	5	2			6	1
NW	19	6	7	6	1	4		1	2	2
Rose Court	23	9	6	3	2	9		4	1	4
Scotland	14	4	8		8	1				
WSW	17	4	9	3	5	2	1	2	1	2
YNE	23	7	9	6	1	8	1	2	2	5
Unclassified ⁷	1	1								
HSE TOTAL	251	68	97	42	40	43	13	19	16	32

Table 4 - Reported incidents in HSE in 2007/08 by Directorate

Directorate	Total incidents	Leading to injury	Ill health	DSE related	Stress	Away from HSE sites	Hazardous substance exposure	Slip/Trip	Aggression or abuse	Road traffic accident/near miss
COSAS	3		1		1					2
FOD	126	29	58	29	19	26	6	9	13	13
HID	24	5	14	6	8	4	1	1		2
HSL	30	14	6		3	5	5	2	2	1
LAO	1		1							
NSD & ND ⁶	23	10	5	1	4	3		3		4
OPSD	2		1							1
PG	17	2	8	6	2	4		1		3
RI	1	1								
RPD	14	4	2		2		1	2		4
STG	2		1		1	1				1
Unclassified ⁷	7	3				1		1	1	1
HSE TOTAL	251	68	97	42	40	43	13	19	16	32

⁶ OCNS Harwell included under Redgrave Court as part of ND

⁷ 'Unclassified' refers to relevant data not being entered on the e-HR record