

### Fire Service rates of mental ill health

I submitted a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to every fire and rescue service in the UK, asking: *“I would like to know how many working days (both firefighters and staff) were lost to psychological disorders between January 2020 and January 2022.”*

Below are the results:

Service	Breakdown	Days/Shifts lost (total)	Comments
Avon	<p><b>Uniformed staff:</b></p> <p>Anxiety / Depression <b>D</b> 319            Anxiety / Depression <b>N</b> 1312.5            Post Traumatic Stress <b>N</b> 456            Mental Health - Other <b>D</b> 612            Mental Health - Other <b>N</b> 997</p> <p><b>Corporate Staff</b></p> <p>Anxiety / Depression <b>D</b> 28            Anxiety / Depression <b>N</b> 372            Mental Health - Other <b>D</b> 38            Mental Health - Other <b>N</b> 437.5</p> <p><b>D</b> = duty-related  <b>N</b> = not duty-related</p>	<p><b>Uniformed staff:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3,696.5 (total)*</b></p> <p><b>Corporate staff:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>875.5 (total)*</b></p>	<p>*No information if these are lost shifts or days.</p> <p>No separation between the years.</p> <p>Data protection coordinator stated the below were available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Wellbeing Adviser</li> <li>• Staff can also seek advice and assistance from our HR department, Health, Safety and Welfare department, Fitness and Physical Wellbeing Adviser, station fitness advisers, Service Chaplin, line managers, other trained AF&amp;RS staff, Occupational Health provider and our external confidential counselling service</li> <li>• Support services range from health awareness campaigns which include information about stress, anxiety and depression and critical incident support</li> <li>• Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) support into the detailed support services and we have staff trained as TRiM practitioners across the organisation</li> <li>• Wellbeing activities such as meditation sessions and other relaxation techniques</li> <li>• Funded counselling sessions</li> <li>• The Service has signed up to the Mind Blue Light Pledge and trained a selection of staff as Blue Light Champions which raises awareness and provides support to staff with mental health concerns.</li> <li>• We have also introduced Wellbeing Areas in our workplaces, which includes providing stations with funding to create their own outdoor workplace wellbeing areas</li> </ul>

Service	Breakdown	Days/Shifts lost (total)	Comments
Bedfordshire	Operational wholetime staff <b>1085</b> Other staff groups <b>396</b>	<b>1,481 (total days)</b>	No other information offered
Berkshire	Anxiety <b>150</b> Anxiety / depression <b>97</b> Depression <b>1018</b> Stress (non-work related) <b>711</b> Stress (work related) <b>511</b>	<b>2,487 (total days)</b>	No other information offered
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	No information obtained		<b>I received no response to my requests</b>
Cambridgeshire	<b>Wholetime Firefighters (year 2020-2021)</b> <b>863</b> (Male 829 / Female 34) <b>On-call Firefighters</b> <b>203</b> (Male 197 / Female 6) <b>Fire control</b> <b>619</b> (Male 80 / Female 539) <b>Support staff</b> <b>388</b> (Male 131 / Female 257)  <b>Wholetime Firefighters (year 2021-2022)</b> <b>1,061</b> (Male 808 / Female 253) <b>On-call Firefighters</b> <b>387</b> (Male 387 / Female 0) <b>Fire control</b> <b>291</b> (Male 0 / Female 291) <b>Support staff</b> <b>389</b> (Male 124 / Female 265)	<b>4,201 (total days)</b>	The breakdown of male/female was voluntarily offered by Cambridgeshire when they saw I was a men's specialist.

Service	Breakdown	Days/Shifts lost (total)	Comments	
Cheshire	<b>Wholetime Firefighters</b>		No separation between the years	
	Anxiety	242		
	Depression	64		
	Stress	344.5		
	Other	246		
	<b>On-call Firefighters</b>			
	Anxiety	48		
	Depression	1		
	Stress	367		
	Other	146		
Cheshire	<b>Support staff</b>			
	Anxiety	167.2		
	Depression	146		
	Stress	100		
	Other	212.5		
Cleveland & Durham	Firefighters and staff	1,441.68 (total days)	No other information offered	
Cornwall	Wholetime Firefighters	295	1,142 (total days)	No other information offered
	On-call Firefighters	764		
	Non-Uniformed Officers	83		
Cumbria	No breakdown offered.	639 (total days)	No other information offered	
Derbyshire	No breakdown offered.	1439.3 (total days)	No other information offered	

Service	Breakdown	Days/Shifts lost (total)	Comments
Devon & Somerset	Wholetime Firefighters <b>1,739</b> On-Call Firefighters <b>2,470</b> Control (uniformed staff) <b>285.2</b> Support staff (non-uniformed) <b>774.33</b>	<b>5,268.53 (total days)</b>	Data only provided January 2021 - January 2022 (this was due to an <b>error</b> in my request)  <b>The full breakdown, by month, can be found at the bottom of this document.</b>
Dorset & Wiltshire	No breakdown offered. See comments.	<b>7,065.67 (total shifts)</b>	No separation of years  DWFRS: This figure is for the dates of 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2020 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022 as our sickness data is calculated quarterly.  Please note that this figure is inclusive of all staff groups and On Call is calculated as calendar days lost while all other staff groups are calculated as actual shifts lost.
East of Sussex	Wholetime firefighters <b>2270.5</b> Support staff <b>3064.7</b>	<b>5,335.2 (total shifts)</b>	No separation of years  ESFRS: We do not report on lost shifts for On-Call
Essex	Year 2020-2021 <b>3,032</b> Year 2021-2022 <b>2,553</b>	<b>5,585 (total days)</b>	No other information offered
Gloucestershire	No breakdown offered. See comments.	<b>1,765.5 (total days)</b>	GFRS Note: Our sickness recoding system - 'SAP' has one category 'stress and depression' which covers all stress, depression or other mental health related absence.
Greater Manchester	No breakdown offered. See comments.	<b>9,826.5 (total days)</b>	No separation of years.  GMFRS categorise these days under "mental health illnesses"

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Hampshire & Isle of Man	<p><b>HFRS</b></p> <p>Anxiety 223</p> <p>Depression 169</p> <p>Stress 1,256</p> <p>Psych disorders (other) 199</p> <p>Psych symptoms 176</p> <p>(year 2020-2021)</p> <p><b>HIWFRS</b></p> <p>Anxiety 255</p> <p>Depression 567</p> <p>Stress 1,570</p> <p>Psych disorders (others) 326</p> <p>Psych symptoms 231</p> <p>(year 2021-2022)</p>	4,972 (total days)	<p>HIWRS notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIWFRS did not become a Combined Fire Authority until April 2021, the columns for 2020-21 only hold figures for Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) as the sickness codes used by HFRS matched those used currently by HIWFRS.</li> <li>• There were also an additional 23 days lost between 2020-21 for Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS), which have not been included in the table as they were labelled under a distinctive category of 'Anxiety/Depression (Mental Health)'.</li> <li>• Additionally, due to a change in our systems, we do not hold any data for the days lost due to psychological disorders post 9 March 2022 and therefore cannot provide it as per Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Consequently, please be aware that the column for 2021-22 is not a complete account of the days lost for this financial year to date.</li> </ul>
Hereford & Worcestershire	<p>Wholetime Fire Control Support 258 50 316.75</p> <p>(year 2020-2021)</p> <p>Wholetime Fire Control Support 87 154 121</p> <p>(year 2021-2022)</p>	986.75 (total)*	<p>*No information if these are lost shifts or days.</p> <p>HWFRS: The Service does not hold a record of this information for On-Call employees.</p> <p>HWFRS classify categories as: Stress, Anxiety, Depression and Other</p>
Hertfordshire	<p>Firefighters (no breakdown between wholetime/retained) 1,565</p>	1,565 (total days)	<p>Council classify psychological disorders as "Stress, Depression, Anxiety and Mental Health"</p>

Service	Breakdown	Days/Shifts lost (total)	Comments
Humberside	Uniformed <b>1409</b> Non-uniformed <b>355</b> <b>(years 2020-2021)</b>  Uniformed <b>1075</b> Non-uniformed <b>770</b> <b>(years 2021-2022)</b>	<b>3,609 (total)*</b>	*No information if these are lost shifts or days. Humberside calendar years from April to March.
Isle of Man	No information obtained		<b>IoM fire: Unfortunately, we are unable to deal with your request for the following reason: Your address indicates that you are not an Isle of Man resident, please note that the purpose of the Act is to enable persons who are resident in the Island to obtain access to information held by public authorities.</b>
Kent	<b>Operations</b> Anxiety/Stress/Exhaustion <b>4231</b> Mental Health <b>1570</b>  <b>Finance &amp; Corporate Services</b> Anxiety/Stress/Exhaustion <b>93</b> Mental health <b>200</b>	<b>5,094 (total days)*</b>	*Please be aware that the number of days lost will calculate from the start date of the absence until the end of the absence, so will calculate seven days a week for operational colleagues regardless of the amount of shifts they were due to work during that period. Therefore this is not a count of working days lost.  <b>For a detailed description of the wellbeing support and initiatives available in KFRS, given (without request) at the time of the FOI submission, please see the end of this document.</b>
Lancashire	Uniformed <b>4,131</b> Non-uniformed <b>3,306</b>	<b>7,437 (total)*</b>	*No information if these are lost shifts or days. No other information offered
Leicestershire	Wholetime Firefighters Fire Control Operators Support Staff <b>(no breakdown figures offered)</b>	<b>1,714.56 (total days)</b>	No separation between the years

Service	Breakdown	Days/Shifts lost (total)	Comments
Lincolnshire	Year 2020-2021 Year 2021-2022	<b>1996</b> <b>1163</b>	<b>3,159 (total days)</b> No breakdown of staff members or mental health conditions
London	Operational Staff Fire & Rescue Service Staff Control Staff	<b>24703</b> <b>4919</b> <b>756</b>	<b>30,378 (total days)</b> No separation between the years
Merseyside	No breakdown offered.	<b>4,426 (total)</b>	No other information offered
Norfolk	No breakdown offered.	<b>2,997 (total days)</b>	No separation between the years NFRS record absence under "Mental Well-being (including Stress, Depression and Anxiety)
Northamptonshire	No breakdown offered.	<b>659.5 (total)*</b>	*No information if these are lost shifts or days. NFRS record absence under "Anxiety, depression, mental health and stress" NFRS note: We are unable to report on working days lost on-call staff as they do not follow a standard working pattern
Northumberland	Firefighters Staff	<b>620</b> <b>0</b>	<b>620 (total days)</b> No other information offered
North Yorkshire	Firefighters and staff	<b>1,441.68 (total days)</b>	NYFRS record absence as "Sickness - Mental Health"
Nottinghamshire	No breakdown offered. See comments.	<b>3,635 (total days)</b>	No other information offered
Oxfordshire	Uniformed Non-uniformed	<b>545</b> <b>266</b>	<b>811 (total)*</b> *No information if these are lost shifts or days. No separation between the years No other information offered

Service	Breakdown	Days/Shifts lost (total)	Comments
Shropshire	No breakdown offered.	<b>1,293 (total days)</b>	SFRS record absence under “Anxiety, Stress, Depression and Other” No separation between years
South Yorkshire	No breakdown offered. See comments.	<b>3081 (total shifts)</b>	No separation between the years No other information offered
Staffordshire	No breakdown offered. See comments.	<b>6354.2 (total days)</b>	No separation between the years No other information offered
Suffolk	No breakdown offered. See comments.	<b>1,085 (total days)</b>	No separation between the years No other information offered
Surrey	No breakdown offered. See comments.	<b>2,582 (total days)</b>	SFRS note: Please be advised that our database does not allow a break down category for absence related to 'psychological disorders', however we were able to extract data for absence related to stress which is the closest description to your request.
Tyne & Wear	Year 20-21 Year 21-22	<b>1164</b> <b>836</b>	<b>2,000 (total shifts)</b> No other information offered
Warwickshire	Year 2020-2021 Year 2021-2022	<b>301.5</b> <b>265.23</b>	<b>566.73 (total shifts)</b> WFRS record absence as “Stress and Mental Health



Service	Breakdown	Days/Shifts lost (total)	Comments
West Midlands	Depression 706 Stress 1742 Anxiety 966 Other Mental Health issues 531 <b>(Year 2020-2021)</b>  Depression 286 Stress 1699 Anxiety 1102 Other Mental Health issues 449 <b>(Year 2021-2022)</b>	<b>7,451 (total)*</b>	*No information if these are lost shifts or days.  No separation between the years
West Sussex	Wholetime 3013 Retained 1736 Support 1017 <b>(days lost)</b>  Wholetime 1387.5 Retained No info available Support 600 <b>(shifts lost)</b>	<b>5,766 (total days)</b>  <b>1987.5 (total shifts)</b>	No separation between the years  No other information offered
West Yorkshire	No information obtained - see comments.		<b>WYFRS said they were exempt from the FOI request as the information was already available here: <a href="https://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk/fire-authority/committees/full-authority">https://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk/fire-authority/committees/full-authority</a> but I have been unable to find these figures.</b>
Scotland	No information obtained		<b>I received no response to my request</b>
Mid & West Wales	No information obtained		<b>I received no response to my request</b>

Service	Breakdown	Days/Shifts lost (total)	Comments		
North Wales	<b>Wholetime</b>		No separation between the years		
	Anxiety	190		Wholetime	1191
	Depression	77		Retained	4018
	Stress	919		Control	219
	Other mental health	5			
	<b>Retained</b>			Non-op	891
	Anxiety	1145		(total days)	
	Depression	206			
	Stress	2446			
	Other mental health	221			
	<b>Control</b>				
	Anxiety	73			
	Depression	No data			
	Stress	146			
Other mental health	No data				
<b>Non-operational</b>					
Anxiety	162				
Depression	95				
Stress	634				
Other mental health	No data				
South Wales	Operational Staff	10,202	11,869 (total shifts)	Notes from SWFRS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological disorders include stress, stress at work, anxiety, depression, bereavement anxiety, PTSD.</li> <li>• Operational staff include Wholetime, On-Call and Fire Control and all ranks have been included.</li> <li>• Some staff members have more than one contract therefore shifts lost have been calculated on all contracts.</li> </ul>	
	Corporate Staff	1,667			
Northern Ireland	No information obtained			I received no response to my request	

## Devon and Somerset breakdown by month:

Mental Health sickness by post type	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22
Wholetime Firefighters	49	48	65	81	98	96	139	161	203	227	244	165	163
On-Call Firefighters	119	99	183	186	135	208	213	256	176	172	216	230	177
Control (uniformed staff)	10	0	13	27.2	18.2	17.6	17.6	21.8	37.6	33.8	37.6	32.8	18
Support staff (non uniformed)	7	10.77	37.05	20.92	50.37	99	126.53	108.81	86.23	52.6	39.8	66	68.8
<b>Mental Health Days Lost Total</b>	185	157.77	298.05	315.12	301.57	420.6	496.13	547.61	502.83	485.4	537.4	493.8	426.8

## Kent Fire and Rescue Service:

“KFRS takes the issue of mental health very seriously, as in the course of their work, firefighters can be exposed to potentially distressing scenes. However, we recognise that this is an issue that affects everyone, irrespective of their role. Consequently, our comprehensive package of support for mental and emotional well-being is available for operational and corporate (i.e. non-operational) colleagues.

This takes the form of an employee assistance programme and well-being programme, mental health allies, duty welfare support officer (available 24/7), post-incident debriefing and defusing and, also, a culture which actively challenges the stigma around mental health and the barriers to seeking help and support for mental well-being. We also have in place the appropriate referral systems into our occupational health provider if anyone is displaying signs of any form of mental health issue.

All staff have completed mandatory online training in psychological support and wellbeing. We have delivered mental health first aid training to all managers. We have trained over 60 Mental Health First Aiders which include staff in a variety of roles across the service. Furthermore, all our corporate management board have undertaken this training. We have over 40 Wellbeing Champions/allies within the service who are able to signpost individuals to further support. All staff have been offered mental health awareness training through 2020-2021.

In addition, as part of our commitment to the ‘Stop Suicide’ pledge, the Service released an on-line training course for suicide prevention, giving staff the skills and confidence to engage with colleagues who are displaying signs of mental or emotional distress.

KFRS also hosts an annual resilience and wellbeing conference to raise awareness of mental health issues. Previous years have covered resilience at work, managing stress, suicide prevention awareness (including commitment to the Stop Suicide pledge), alcohol and suicide, self-harm and PTSD.

During the coronavirus-related lockdowns, the Service ran regular seminars focussed on offering support for those working at home during the pandemic. It is important to point out that in addition to corporate colleagues, this also includes operational colleagues who are not based at fire stations, e.g. those working within non-operational teams, within the middle and upper-middle management structure and those previously based at Service Headquarters or Training Centre.

As a service we strive to reduce the stigma associated with mental health through regular education and awareness programmes. The support available to employees is varied – recognising that one size doesn't fit all, designed to increase help-seeking behaviours and mobilise informal peer support discussions.”

FOR OUR MEN