

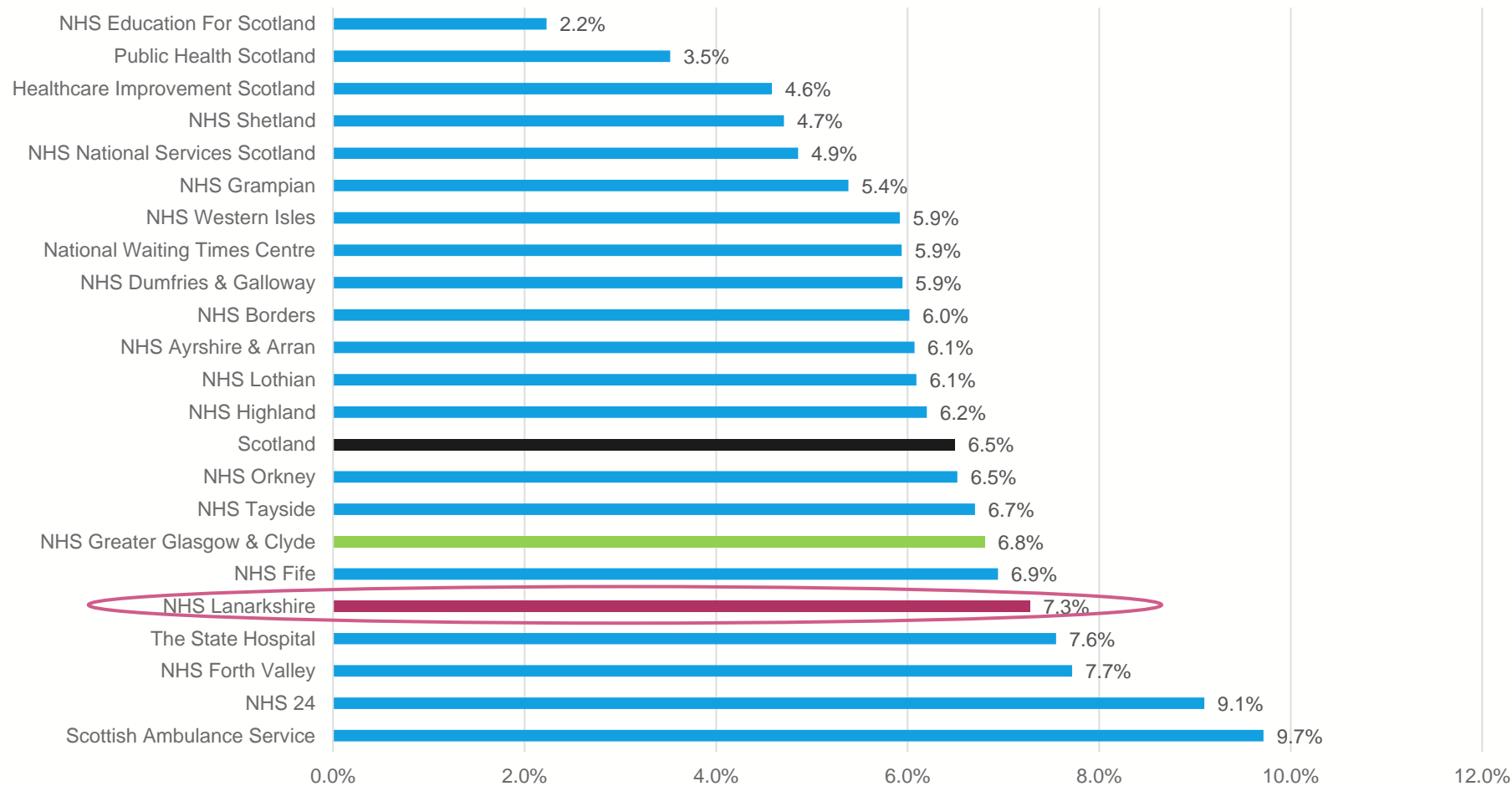
New Sickness Absence Framework Communication for Managers

April 2025



Current Sickness Absence Position - NHS Scotland Comparison

Rolling 12 Months to Jan 2025



Key Messages – New Absence Management Framework

Live from April 2025

- Framework developed in partnership to ensure all employees are provided with the necessary support to return to work in line with the [Once for Scotland Attendance Policy](#)
- Agreed via Area Partnership Forum, Staff Governance Committee, Corporate Management Team and Board Seminar.
- EASY service has now **ended** and is replaced with OHAS – Occupational Health Absence Support – focussing on Mental Health and Musculoskeletal health issues. If a member of your staff is absent with either of those reasons, the absence must be reported to the OHAS service by calling on **01698 759 310**. (More info next slide)
- HR will send all staff a letter to their home address after 29 days' sickness absence providing full details of the range of support services available as an employee of NHS Lanarkshire. We will also email their manager for information.
- HR will call managers at 60 days / 5 episodes to ensure supportive action is being taken in line with the Once for Scotland policy. This will be followed-up, if appropriate, at 90 days.
- Managers retain discretion to progress absences along the Once for Scotland Attendance Policy to ensure only those staff who would benefit from it do so.
- All people managers now receive a monthly email displaying the content on Slide which has been developed in-house by HR Technical Lead, Benjamin Law.

New Occupational Health Absence Service

New Absence Support Service to be Launched (replacing EASY):

The new Occupational Health Absence Service (OHAS) goes live in April 2025, replacing Early Access to Support for You (EASY) and changes the type of absences managers will be asked to report.

From April 2025, managers will no longer be required to report all sickness absences and instead will only be asked to **report** absences where staff are off with **mental health or musculoskeletal related issues and/or concerns**. The reporting mechanism remains the same; online via [Firstport](#) and the new service aims to deliver additional tailored support for staff with access to more focused support services and improved management for the duration of the absence. Managers will also receive greater support and guidance on applying absence policy to ensure staff are supported at every opportunity and at appropriate intervals.

Highlights:

From April 2025:

- EASY will be discontinued and replaced by Occupational Health Absence Service (OHAS);
- Managers will no longer report all sickness absences to EASY but **MUST** still record ALL sickness absence on SSTs;
- **ALL** sickness absences related to mental health and musculoskeletal issues and/or concerns **MUST** be reported to OHAS on day 1 of the absence or as close to day 1 as possible;
- Managers **MUST** also continue to advise OHAS when staff return to work;

Reporting sickness absences to OHAS remains the same via Salus - Occupational Health & Safety on Firstport.

Escalation Points

Managers still retain discretion to progress absences along the Once for Scotland Attendance Policy to ensure only those staff who would benefit from it do so.

Days	Episodes	Action	Stage of Policy	HR Involved
1	1	MH/MSK – Support Service	Early Intervention	No
29	4	Letter to employee outlining supportive measures (29 days only) Monthly Email includes link to Occupational Health and Manager Checklist		
60	5	Entry created on Absence Management System (AMS) , manager prompted to expect contact from HR	Direct Support via AMS check-ins	AMS Team
90		Follow-up by AMS team Local Governance Absence Groups		
180	6	Employee Relations case created (if none)	Stage 1	Yes
240	8	Senior HR Escalation with Director	Stage 2	
330	10	Full support of Human Resources	Stage 3	

Example Monthly Email to Managers

This is sent monthly to all people managers (from eESS records)

This email is intended for **Benjamin Law**

If you are not the intended recipient of this email then please follow these steps:

1. Notify us that we have the wrong email on file
 2. Delete this email
- Click [here](#) to jump to the Sickness Absence section
 - Click [here](#) to jump to the Appraisal section
 - Click [here](#) to jump to the Core Compulsory Training section

Sickness Absence - Manager information

The table below shows the number of **Episodes** and **Calendar Days** of absence in this **12-month** rolling period.


- These data are provided as management information, so you should check SSTs and other systems yourself before taking action.
- Absences with the same Reason Description that End/Start within 7 days of each other are considered 1 continuous absence.
- **OH - Manager Referral** refers to Occupational Health's Manager Referral records and will show the date (if applicable) of the most recent referral made for this member of staff. It is assumed that the referral is related to the absence if it is made within 2 weeks of the start or end of the absence, or at any time when the employee was still off.
- **Employee Relations** refers to records held by HR's Employee Relations team to identify whether a formal case has been recorded. If applicable, this will show the date the case was received by HR and the type of absence (short or long).
- The **HR Recommendation** is designed to prompt managers to follow best practice and ensure that the employee's wellbeing is supported.
If you are managing (or intend to manage) an absence in a way that contradicts the HR Recommendation then we would recommend seeking advice from either a senior manager or a member of HR.

Rolling 12-month Sickness Absence Record						
Employee Name	Calendar Days	Episodes	Most recent episode	OH - Manager Referral	Employee Relations	HR Recommendation
No Absence	-	-	-	-	-	-
Absence older than 1 month, over trigger	61	1	10-Oct-24 to 18-Oct-24	-	-	No absence recorded in previous month. If required, please continue supporting this employee in line with the Attendance Policy and previous HR Recommendations as appropriate.
			04-Dec-24			Absence Escalation 1 (of 5) This employee may require additional support with their wellbeing. Please ensure you are documenting regular discussions and, where appropriate, referring them to the resources available on Your Health Matters . You should have a look at these resources, and contact HR's Employee Relations Team via ServiceNow if you need advice;

Example Email to Manager advising of letter being sent

When a 29-day letter is sent to an employee, their manager on eESS will also receive this automated notification.

Absence Notification - 29+ Days



HRCommunications


To ● Law, Benjamin

Benjamin Law - 07-March-25.pdf 112 KB

↩ Reply

↩ Reply All

➡ Forward



⋮

Fri 07/03/2025 15:47

Hello

We are emailing you to notify you that the attached letter is being sent to Benjamin Law via Royal Mail to the address below:

1 Buchanan St
Glasgow
G1 4LE

This letter is sent to all staff with an absence of 29 calendar days or more, and is intended to supplement the discussions which, by this point, you should be having with Benjamin Law about how to address their absence and return to work.

Those discussions with Benjamin Law should be taking place under a [Supported Contact Arrangement](#), which you should put in place if you have not already done so.

Following the [NHS Scotland Attendance Policy](#) you should be considering / implementing short term support to assist Benjamin Law in their return to work. This may include an [Occupational Health Referral](#), or use of the services detailed on pages 3 and 4 of the attached letter. You will continue to receive updates about this absence in the HR Monthly Email, and if there is no indication of active management of the absence then we will reach out to you in due course. In some cases it is appropriate not to pursue an Occupational Health Referral or a formal HR case with our Employee Relations team, and use of those services is at your discretion as Benjamin Law's manager. You may find it useful to refer to the [Attendance Policy Flowchart](#) to understand how you should approach active management of an employee's absence.

Example Letter to employee



This is letter sent at 29 days’ absence to employees providing a range of wellbeing and support options.

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Employee Relations
Kirkfield Cottage
Kirklands HQ
Fallside Road
Bothwell
G71 8BB

Private & Confidential
Benjamin Law
1 Buchanan St
Glasgow
G1 4LE

07-March-25

Dear Benjamin Law

NHS Lanarkshire is committed to ensuring we support all our employees at work. This includes periods where our employees are not able to attend work by providing wellbeing support and interventions.

Having reviewed our support processes, we are now reaching out to employees who are either currently absent or have recently been absent on long term sick leave to ensure that their health and wellbeing is being supported appropriately.

If you have been absent for **more than 4 weeks** then please discuss with your manager a referral to our occupational health department. This will ensure that you receive the most appropriate support and advice/adaptations to help you return to work safely, whilst ensuring you don't return to work if you are not medically fit to do so.

In addition to the support and assistance you will be receiving from your manager, we would like to ensure that you are also aware of the additional free support available from NHS Lanarkshire. The most commonly used services are listed overleaf and are easily accessible.

The NHS Scotland Attendance Policy also contains information regarding support available to employees while on sick leave, notification and certification requirements, sick pay information and utilising annual leave should this be of assistance.

www.workforce.nhs.scot/policies/attendance-policy-overview/attendance-policy
I hope that you find this information helpful, and encourage you to reach out when, or if you feel it would be beneficial to you. In the meantime, I hope your health improves and if there is any further support that you feel may be of benefit to you, you can discuss this with your manager or if you wish to speak with a member of the Human Resources team, please contact us on 01698 754 340. Alternatively, you can access the HR Portal via www.LanarkshireHR.nhs.scot/hr-policies

Yours Sincerely,

Ann Marie Campbell
Head of HR – Employee Relations



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NHS Lanarkshire - Staff Wellbeing Support

Mental Health Support

The Talking Rooms

Independent confidential counselling service for staff
0800 138 9150 / thetalkingrooms.com/self-referral

Staff Care and Wellbeing

24-hour staff care helpline
01698 752 000

NHS Lanarkshire Psychological Support

Support available from mild stress through to complex/long term conditions.
lanarkshiremindmatters.scot.nhs.uk

Return to Work Services

Holistic approach to support staff to help address and manage factors that are adversely affecting overall wellbeing.
Salus helpline 01698 759 333

Able Futures

Nine months confidential, guidance and support from mental health professionals to help you cope with work while you manage a mental health condition such as anxiety, depression or stress.
0800 321 3137 / able-futures.co.uk

Workforce Specialist Service

Mental Health support via NHS Practitioner Health. Dedicated support to regulated health & social care professionals.
0300 0303 300 / practitionerhealth.nhs.uk/regulated-nhs-care-staff-in-scotland



Musculoskeletal Support

Support from NHS Lanarkshire Occupational Health (Salus)
Staff Podiatry and Staff Physiotherapy
Salus helpline 01698 759 333

Physiotherapy Support - NHS Lanarkshire Physiotherapy Service

NHS Lanarkshire Physiotherapists assess and treat people who have any injury, disease or problem that relates to muscles, bones, joints and peripheral nerves. They may also provide advice to help you manage your condition, or refer you to other services as appropriate. The MSK physiotherapy service is based in a variety of health centres and hospital outpatient departments across Lanarkshire.
nhs.uk/services/physiotherapy-msk

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessment

Assessment to minimise risk of injury associated with workstation.
Health&Safety@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk

General Support

Self-Referral for Occupational Health advice

Staff can confidentially access Occupational Health support without a referral from their manager if required.
Salus helpline on 01698 759 333

National Wellbeing Helpline

24/7 support service
0800 111 4191 / wellbeinghub.scot

Worrying about money? Finance/Money Concerns

Financial support
worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/south-lanarkshire
worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/north-lanarkshire

Further information on these and other services available free to staff can be found at nhs.uk/services/our-services-rrr/staff-support-and-wellbeing

Together