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Coverage
United Kingdom

Theme
The Economy

Customer service staff top sickness rates

Customer service workers, such as call centre operators and service advisors, had the highest sickness absence rates of all occupations between July 2007 and June 2008, according to new analysis published today in the Office for National Statistics journal *Economic & Labour Market Review*.

In total, 4.8 per cent of those working in customer service occupations had taken at least one day off sick in the week before their survey interview, compared with a national average of 2.5 per cent.

'Transport associate professionals', a category including train drivers, air traffic controllers and pilots, recorded the lowest sickness absence rate, at 0.8 per cent.

Also in the report, figures show that women had higher sickness absence rates than men (2.9 per cent, compared with 2.2 per cent) while public sector workers had a higher rate than those in the private sector (2.9 per cent compared with 2.4 per cent).

Figures also show that people working in smaller organisations are less likely to take sickness absence than others. Workplaces with fewer than 25 employees had a sickness absence rate of 2.3 per cent, compared with 2.8 per cent for those with over 500 employees.

In total, 5.8 million scheduled working days were lost due to sickness or injury between July 2007 and June 2008.

Sickness absence rates are known to fluctuate on a seasonal basis, and the report presents further evidence of this phenomenon. By analysing figures over several years, the researchers show that sickness absence is highest during the winter months from October to March, and lowest between July and September.

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Data in the report were drawn from the ONS Labour Force Survey, a quarterly survey of about 53,000 households living at private addresses in the UK.

Other articles this month include:

An analytical example using the new EUKLEMS database – international trade and productivity

This article presents analysis on the possible impact of international trade on industrial productivity in the UK using the new EUKLEMS analytical database, in conjunction with Office for National Statistics Input-Output Supply Use tables. The aim is to also illustrate the breadth of opportunities the database offers potential users for a wide variety of economic research.

Producer Price Index Rebasing

This article describes the effects of rebasing the ONS Producer Price Index onto a 2005=100 base year and briefly summarises the effects that rebasing has on the main headline output and input series of the producer prices. The article shows the difference in weighting patterns of both the output and input series of the Producer Prices between the new base year (2005=100) and the previous base year (2000=100). The article also shows a graphical comparison of index values of the main headline series as well as giving a background to producer prices.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. *Economic & Labour Market Review* is available on the National Statistics website at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14692>
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