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Government should engage with PCS to tackle civil service sickness levels

“If the government was serious about tackling sickness levels in the civil service, they would engage with us,” said PCS GS Fran Heathcote in response to figures showing long-term sick leave in the civil service rising by a third in 4 years

The figures [uncovered through a parliamentary question](#) by the Liberal Democrats found that civil servants lose 1.8 million working days a year to long-term sickness, with the Ministry of Justice the worst affected.

PCS General Secretary Fran Heathcote said: “There have been two large-scale studies into sickness in Whitehall and they have both revealed that the lower the grade of the employee, the higher their sick and death rates.

“The studies also found a firm connection between the way work is organised and the subsequent health impacts– effectively saying much sickness absence is caused by work itself because of stress and other factors.

“We raised this with managers at the MoJ and the Cabinet Office but they refused to take any action.

“If the government was serious about tackling sickness levels in the civil service, they would engage with us and look at ways of changing how people work.”