

**Documentation of statistics for  
Sickness benefits 2024**

## 1 Introduction

The purpose of the Sickness Benefits statistics is to provide information about the costs of sickness benefits and the number of sickness benefit recipients, both in terms of the number of people affected and the number of full-time employees. The statistics have been compiled since 1995, but are in their current form comparable from the year 2020 onwards.

## 2 Statistical presentation

Sickness benefit is an annual statement of the number of people, benefit days and amounts paid out in connection with illness. Furthermore, the extent of partially resumed work is calculated. The data is broken down by labour market affiliation, age, gender and geography. Furthermore, figures from the Sickness Benefit Statistics are included in the statistics Persons below the state pension age on public benefits, Labour Market Accounts and Absence, where the extent of absence due to illness is put into a larger context.

### 2.1 Data description

The statistics include absence due to illness where there is either a payment from the public sector or an application. This means that people who are not entitled to receive sickness benefits, for example due to the employer's obligation to pay for the first 30 days of absence (the employer period), are not included in the statistics, unless the absence is longer than 30 days or the employer has insurance or other agreement with the public sector that enables payment of unemployment benefits from the first day of absence. The statistics show the year-by-year development in the number of people who have received unemployment benefits due to illness during the year. The statistics also show the annual cost of sickness benefits in current prices and the total number of days for which benefits have been paid.

### 2.2 Classification system

The following groupings are used: Gender, age (ten-year intervals), labour market affiliation (employee, self-employed or unemployed) and region (regions and municipalities). Grouping by socio-economic status and industry is planned but not realised.

### 2.3 Sector coverage

Payment of unemployment benefit due to illness is conditional on the person having a connection to the labour market. With the exception of recent graduates and the unemployed, this requires employment as an employee or self-employment. The statistics can therefore be calculated for all sectors that appear in the Register-based Labour Force Statistics.

## **2.4 Statistical concepts and definitions**

**Employer period:** The number of days of sick leave, counted from the first day of sick leave, during which the employer is required by law to pay either salary or sickness benefit.

**Partial return to work:** A situation where an employee or self-employed person on sick leave works a reduced number of hours compared to their normal working hours and receives sickness benefits for the hours not worked. This arrangement is often used when a person suffering from stress is gradually training to return to a full workweek.

**Full-time person:** Unit used to convert absence to full-time level in a given period. Calculated as the sum of full, half and quarter days of absence in hours within a period divided by the number of hours worked by a full-time employee in the same period.

## **2.5 Statistical unit**

The statistics are published in the units number of people (affected), full-time equivalents.

## **2.6 Statistical population**

Persons who, under Danish or EU law, have received sickness benefits from Danish authorities or whose employer or they themselves have applied for sickness benefits.

## **2.7 Reference area**

People with a connection to the Danish labour market regardless of residence.

## **2.8 Time coverage**

The statistics cover the period from 2020 onwards.

## **2.9 Base period**

Not relevant for this statistic.

## **2.10 Unit of measure**

The statistics are published in the units number of people (affected), full-time equivalents, amounts in thousands of DK kroner and days.

## **2.11 Reference period**

The calendar year in which the days are held.

## **2.12 Frequency of dissemination**

Annually.

### **2.13 Legal acts and other agreements**

There is a legal basis for obtaining the information pursuant to Section 6 of the Act on Statistics Denmark, cf. Consolidated Act no. 610 of 30 May 2018

### **2.14 Cost and burden**

The statistics are based on administrative data. Therefore, there is no direct reporting burden when compiling these statistics.

### **2.15 Comment**

Further information can be obtained by contacting Statistics Denmark. The Sickness Benefits Act can be found at [Retsinformation](#), and easy-to-understand guides on how the sickness benefit system works can be found at [Borger.dk](#), on the websites of many unemployment insurance funds, and on the websites of many municipalities.

## **3 Statistical processing**

When the data is received, all fields are checked by machine and the number of observations received matches the number of observations sent by KMD. If the data delivery cannot be approved, KMD is contacted in order to correct the delivery.

### **3.1 Source data**

The data basis for the statistics is based on extracts from the Municipal Sickness Benefit System, where all information from a case is sent to Statistics Denmark if there have been changes since the previous data delivery.

### **3.2 Frequency of data collection**

Monthly

### **3.3 Data collection**

Electronic transfer of administrative data.

### **3.4 Data validation**

When the data is received, all fields are checked by machine and the number of records received is compared at entity level with corresponding figures from a control table that is part of the data delivery. It is checked that there is data from all municipalities.

### **3.5 Data compilation**

Data is received directly from the administrative sickness benefit system's data model, which means that a data delivery consists of 32 tables used to update as many registers called source registers. Every quarter, data is extracted from the source registers and merged together to form the integrated sickness benefit register, which as of May 2025 consists of just under 44 million observations and 55 variables plus various metadata variables. The purpose of the integrated register is to make it easy to perform counts on sickness benefit data, which is why all information, regardless of type, in the registers is embedded in a standardised way so that all records have the same structure. In this connection, it has proved necessary to make corrections in cases where different information for the same case has overlapping periods. Holidays that fall on one of the first five days of the week (public holidays) are artificially counted as sick days. In cases where there is no information on the number of hours of sick leave for a given person in a given week, the hours are calculated based on the amount paid out, and if this is not possible, the hours are imputed from other observations from the case in question.

### **3.6 Adjustment**

Nothing to note

## **4 Relevance**

Sickness benefit statistics tell us how many man-years Danish society loses due to long-term illness and how long it will take the long-term sick person to return to the labour market if he or she returns.

### **4.1 User Needs**

The data is used as a factual basis for public planning, research and debate. As sick leave during the employer period is paid for by the employer, there is no payment of sick pay during the employer period (except if the employer has an agreement or insurance), which means that the statistics say nothing about short-term sick leave.

### **4.2 User Satisfaction**

As sick leave during the employer period is paid for by the employer, there is no payment of sick pay during the employer period (except if the employer has an agreement or insurance). This means that the statistics do not say anything about total sickness absence, (long-term and short-term sickness) and this is probably the user need.

### **4.3 Data completeness rate**

Not relevant for this statistic.

## **5 Accuracy and reliability**

The statistics summarise the reports of illness that have triggered the payment of unemployment benefits. The expectation is that all sickness benefit cases with payment are reported. Therefore, the statistics can be expected to be accurate in relation to actual payments. However, some cases are not reported until long after the end of the period to which the case relates, which is why the last quarter is not fully updated. The delayed updates result in a revision the following year that is in the order of 0.5 per cent in an upward direction.

### **5.1 Overall accuracy**

The statistics calculate the reports of illness that have triggered the payment of unemployment benefits. In this sense, the coverage is 100 per cent. However, when using the statistics, it should be noted that 'normal' sick leave of less than 30 days is not included in the statistics because it is the employer who pays for the first 30 days of sick leave. Furthermore, statements of the number of people for the last year are 0.5 per cent too low due to late reports.

### **5.2 Sampling error**

Not relevant for this statistic.

### **5.3 Non-sampling error**

Not relevant for this statistic.

### **5.4 Quality management**

Statistics Denmark follows the recommendations on organisation and management of quality given in the Code of Practice for European Statistics (CoP) and the implementation guidelines given in the Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System (QAF). A Working Group on Quality and a central quality assurance function have been established to continuously carry through control of products and processes.

### **5.5 Quality assurance**

Statistics Denmark follows the principles in the Code of Practice for European Statistics (CoP) and uses the Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System (QAF) for the implementation of the principles. This involves continuous decentralized and central control of products and processes based on documentation following international standards. The central quality assurance function reports to the Working Group on Quality. Reports include suggestions for improvement that are assessed, decided and subsequently implemented.

## **5.6 Quality assessment**

Statistics Denmark receives sickness benefit data from the Municipal Sickness Benefit System (KSD). As KSD is responsible for paying out around DKK 15 billion annually to companies and individuals, the system is thoroughly tested and reliable. Statistics Denmark receives data with the least possible transformation of data, as Statistics Denmark itself makes the necessary adjustments. Furthermore, Statistics Denmark has been involved in user testing the programs that extract data for Statistics Denmark, which is why the quality of sickness benefit data must be considered very good.

## **5.7 Data revision - policy**

Statistics Denmark revises published figures in accordance with the [Revision Policy for Statistics Denmark](#). The common procedures and principles of the Revision Policy are for some statistics supplemented by a specific revision practice.

## **5.8 Data revision practice**

The most recent year will usually be slightly under-dated due to late submissions. Once the most recent year has become the penultimate, the year is routinely recalculated and these are the only revisions made unless an error is detected. The revision is around 0.5 per cent in the upward direction.

## **6 Timeliness and punctuality**

The statistics are published annually at the beginning of April the year after the reference year. The statistics are usually published without delay in relation to the announced date

### **6.1 Timeliness and time lag - final results**

The statistics are published in the beginning of April, approximately 3 months after the end of the reference year.

### **6.2 Punctuality**

The statistics are usually published without delay compared to the announced time.

## **7 Comparability**

The statistics are influenced by Danish legislation. Over the years, the period the employer must pay for in connection with illness has been increased from 14 days to 30 days, and as of December 2012, the right to receive sickness benefits on public holidays was cancelled.

### **7.1 Comparability - geographical**

The statistics are heavily influenced by local Danish legislation, making comparison with similar statistics in other countries difficult.

## 7.2 Comparability over time

For the current dataset, which covers the period 2020-2024, there are the following significant changes

- Years 2020-2021: From 27 February 2020 to 30 June 2021, an extended right to reimbursement for salary or sickness benefits paid to employees and self-employed persons who were absent due to Covid-19 applied.
- Years 2021-2022: From 23 November 2021 to 28 February 2022, an extended right to reimbursement of wages or sickness benefits paid to employees or self-employed persons who were absent due to Covid-19 applied.

There is another dataset that covers the period 1995 to 2019.

In this dataset, the following significant changes have been made

- Year 2000: Public sector employees are included.
- Year 2007, 2 April: employer period increases from 14 to 15 days, which means fewer days of sick pay.
- Year 2008 2 June: employer period increases from 15 to 21 days, which means fewer days of sick pay.
- Year 2012, 2 January: employer period increases from 21 to 30 days, which means fewer days of sick pay.
- Year 2014: A new sickness benefit reform comes into force in summer 2014. The case processing of people on long-term sick leave in particular is changed.
- Year 2015, 1 May: Unemployed people are paid unemployment benefit during the first two weeks of illness instead of sickness benefit.
- Year 2020: A new IT system for the administration of sickness benefits is introduced.

## 7.3 Coherence - cross domain

Figures from Sickness Benefits are included in the statistics, Publicly Supported Persons, Labour Market Accounts and Absence, where the extent of absence due to illness is put into a larger context. However, for the Publicly Dependent statistics, days on sickness benefits are downgraded in cases where there is conflicting information, so the figures will rarely be exactly the same as in the primary statistics. Furthermore, the Ministry of Employment publishes monthly figures on the number of sickness benefit recipients on Jobindsats. However, the Ministry's method of calculation does not coincide with Statistics Denmark's.

## 7.4 Coherence - internal

Data is consistent.

## 8 Accessibility and clarity

These statistics are published in a Danish press release at the same time as the tables are updated in the StatBank. In the StatBank, these statistics can be found under the subject [Sickness benefits](#). For further information, go to the [subject page](#).

### 8.1 Release calendar

The publication date appears in the release calendar. The date is confirmed in the weeks before.

### **8.3 User access**

Statistics are always published at 8:00 a.m. at the day announced in the release calendar. No one outside of Statistics Denmark can access the statistics before they are published.

### **8.2 Release calendar access**

The Release Calendar can be accessed on our English website: [Release Calendar](#).

### **8.4 News release**

These statistics are published in a Danish press release.

### **8.5 Publications**

None

### **8.6 On-line database**

These statistics are published in the StatBank under the topic [Sickness benefits](#) in the following table:

- [SYGEDPo1](#): Sickness benefits by municipality, sex, age, benefit recipient and unit

### **8.7 Micro-data access**

The Sickness Benefits Statistics Register contains individual-level information for people who have applied for or received benefits from the unemployment benefit system. Micro-data is expected to be available from Q1 2026.

### **8.8 Other**

Data are made available to Research Services and DST Consulting.

### **8.9 Confidentiality - policy**

[Data Confidentiality Policy](#) for Statistics Denmark is applied.

### **8.10 Confidentiality - data treatment**

Before data is published in the StatBank, a discretionary procedure is carried out to ensure that no cells with less than three are published or can be recalculated from subtotals.

### **8.11 Documentation on methodology**

There are no separate methodological documents for these statistics.

### **8.12 Quality documentation**

Results from the quality evaluation of products and selected processes are available in detail for each statistics and in summary reports for the Working Group on Quality.

### **9 Contact**

The administrative placement of these statistics is in the division of Labour Market, Social Statistics. The contact person is Anna Skovbæk Mortensen, tel.: + 45 2177 6754, and e-mail: AOM@dst.dk.