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| <b>Reference:</b>       | FOI.7341.21                |
| <b>Subject:</b>         | Absences due to Long Covid |
| <b>Date of Request:</b> | 4 November 2021            |

**Requested:**

Under the Freedom of Information Act, can I enquire as to how many staff within Hywel Dda University Health Board are off currently with Long Covid?

**Response:**

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with the requested information, as it is estimated that the cost of answering your request would exceed the “appropriate limit” as stated in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. The “appropriate limit” represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours (or 2 ½ working days) in determining whether the UHB holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

The UHB’s Electronic Staff Record (ESR) system does not have an absence reason of Long Covid. In order to provide you with the data being requested, the UHB would need to undertake a search of all COVID-19 related absences recorded on the UHB’s ESR system and cross reference the staff members identified with their ‘Return to Work’ Absence Review Forms, which are completed by the line manager and stored within departmental filing systems, to identify if any of the information required was recorded.

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), which provides an exemption from a public authority’s obligation to comply with a request for information where the cost of compliance is estimated to exceed the appropriate limit.

However, under Section 16 of the FoIA, we are required as a public authority, to provide advice and assistance so far as it is reasonable, to individuals who have made a request under FoIA.

Therefore, in utilising the available information in the ESR system, the UHB has identified that there are currently twenty-three (23) members of staff on a period of long-term sickness recorded as a Covid related absence.