

Reference:	FOI.8562.22
Subject:	Employees with Long Covid-19
Date of Request:	25 March 2022

Requested:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I'm requesting the following information on employees with post-Covid syndrome.

1. How many employees of your health board have an ongoing absence from work owing to illness from COVID-19 that has been ongoing for 12 weeks or more as of 11 March 2022?
 - a. How many of these work in primary care services?
 - b. How many of these work in secondary care services?
2. How many employees of your health board have had an absence from work owing to illness from COVID-19 that lasted for 12 weeks or more between 30 January 2020 and 11 March 2022?
 - a. How many of these work in primary care services?
 - b. How many of these work in secondary care services?
3. How many RIDDOR reports has your health board submitted to HSE since 30 January 2020 relating to:
 - a. accidents or incidents at work which have, or could have, led to the release or escape of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) (dangerous occurrences)?
 - b. a person at work (a worker) having been diagnosed as having COVID-19 attributed to an occupational exposure to coronavirus (a case of disease)?
 - c. the death of a worker as a result of occupational exposure to coronavirus (a work-related death due to exposure to a biological agent)?

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 for Long Covid. Therefore, 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.

Additionally, the UHB is unable to break this data down into Primary and Secondary Care, as it is not recorded in this manner.

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.

Furthermore, Primary Care data for the individual GP Practices will need to be requested from them directly. For ease, a link has been provided below that includes the contact details for all GP Surgeries in the UHB's area.

[Health in Wales | GP Surgeries in Hywel Dda University Health Board](#)

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 and therefore, the UHB provides the accessible information it holds overleaf.

1. The UHB has utilised the available information in the ESR system and has identified that there were twenty (20) members of staff absent for a period of twelve (12) weeks or more, recorded as a Covid related absence, as at 11 March 2022.
2. The UHB has utilised the available information in the ESR system and has identified that there were seventy-seven (77) members of staff absent for a period of twelve (12) weeks or more, recorded as a Covid related absence, during the period 30 January 2020 to 11 March 2022.

Please note:- Some staff members may have had more than one absence of this type and length over the period and therefore, have only been counted once in the above.

3. The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reports the UHB has submitted to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), relating to the incidents requested, for the period 30 January 2020 to 11 March 2022.

Incident type		Number
a.	Accidents or incidents which have, or could have led, to the release or escape of coronavirus	*
b.	A staff member diagnosed with COVID-19 that may have been attributed to occupational exposure to coronavirus	*
c.	Death of a staff member as a result of occupational exposure to coronavirus (i.e. a work-related death due to exposure to a biological agent)?	*
	Total	6

Where the figures in the table have been replaced with an asterisk (*), the UHB is unable to provide you with the exact number of patients, due to the low number of cases (5 and under), as there is a potential risk of identifying individuals if this was disclosed. The UHB is therefore withholding this detail under Section 40(2) of the FoIA. This information is protected by the Data Protection Act 2018/General Data Protection Regulations 2016 (GDPR), as its disclosure would constitute unfair and unlawful processing and would be contrary to the principles and articles 6 and 9 of the GDPR. This exemption is absolute and therefore, there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.

In reaching this decision, the Data Protection Act 2018/General Data Protection Regulations 2016 define personal data as data which relates to a living individual who can be identified solely from that data or from that data and other information which is in the possession of the data controller.