

Reference:	FOI.17231.25
Subject:	Influenza (flu) vaccine
Date of Request:	30 April 2025

Requested:

1. Does the health board offer all staff a 'flu vaccine every year or just staff in certain roles - if the latter can you be specific?
2. What was the percentage uptake of the 'flu vaccine among all staff offered it in 2024-25, in 2023-24, and in 2022-23?
3. Can you provide a breakdown of the uptake in the 3 years referred to above by category/role of staff - i.e. nursing, medical and dental, administrative, allied healthcare professional? (The answer I'm hoping to get would be, for example, uptake among nursing staff 60% in 2024-25, 65% in 2023-24 etc, uptake among admin staff 65% in 2024-25, 62% in 2023-24 etc.)
4. What does the health board do to encourage uptake of 'flu vaccine and,
 - a. does a lower uptake lead to an increased sickness absence?

Response:

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) confirms that all NHS Wales staff are eligible for the flu vaccine and all UHB staff are offered the vaccine.
2. & 3. The UHB does not hold the information requested for the 2022/23 financial year. We therefore recommend that you re-direct this part of your request to the Freedom of Information (Fol) Team in Public Health Wales (PHW), who should be able to help you with your enquiry. Contact details are as follows:

phw.foi@wales.nhs.uk or alternatively in writing to: Freedom of Information Office, Public Health Wales, Floor 3, 2 Capital Quarter, Tyndall Street, Cardiff, CF10 4BZ.

Additionally, the UHB provides within the tables below, the total percentage uptake for flu vaccine, broken down by staff group, during the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years.

Staff group	Percentage uptake	
	2023/24	2024/25
Add Prof Scientific and Technical	34.04%	41.40%
Additional Clinical Services	27.51%	32.39%
Administrative and Clerical	33.01%	40.52%
Allied Health Professionals	34.93%	43.25%
Estates and Ancillary	25.41%	27.98%
Healthcare Scientists	28.77%	40.00%
Medical and Dental	47.45%	54.09%
Nursing and Midwifery Registered	32.27%	37.58%
Total	31.86%	37.65%

4. The UHB has a robust communications plan for flu season. Information regarding access is shared via global email, Viva engage, staff social media platforms and SharePoint which hosts our intranet.

We encourage the cascading of information through management structures, utilising leadership emails to share information with their teams regularly, in addition to sharing photos of senior leadership having their vaccine and personal stories of how flu affected individuals, and their families.

In a more direct approach to those staff with reduced access to a computer, we share posters to various departments across the UHB and encourage their display in staff areas, as well using text messaging and adding announcements to staff payslips.

The provision during the latest flu season included:

- Daily drop in access at all Occupational Health (OH) departments between 08:30-16:30
- Flu Friday clinics: Every Friday throughout October at the four (4) acute hospital sites from 07:30-15:00
- Roving (nurse attending wards/departments) every week during November/December - mixture of daytime and evening sessions.
- Additional roving to satellite areas including community offices, community hospitals and district nursing teams.
- Trained peer vaccinators supported uptake in their own areas.
- Community Hubs between January and March - available in different venues across the UHB every week (nearly daily).
- Staff were also able to access their flu vaccine from their GP and local pharmacy.

a. There does appear to be a link between sickness levels and flu vaccine uptake in the staff groups. The staff group with the highest sickness absence did have the lowest flu vaccine uptake and the staff with the highest flu vaccine uptake had the lowest sickness absence during the period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.

However, this may not be a true reflection as the sickness absence rates are based on the S13 sickness code recorded in the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) system, which covers coughs, colds and influenza and are unable to be differentiated. It is also worth noting that although staff may report a sickness absence as influenza/flu, they may not have been screened and confirmed as an influenza case.