

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.16169.24
<b>Subject:</b>	Sickness leave
<b>Date of Request:</b>	10 December 2024

**Requested:**

I would like to make an application under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for the following information: (please provide the figures from January 2022 - present, in calendar years not fiscal). I would appreciate it if you could categorise the information according to the hospital and the unit (e.g the Intensive Care Unit, A&E, etc).

1. How many members of hospital staff have been away from work with illness? Please, can you indicate how many of those staff noted a mental condition or stress as the main reason for their absence.
2. Of those, how many staff members have been absent from their work for a period of 2 months or longer?
3. Of those in question 1, how many staff members did not return to work after that period of illness?
4. Of those in question 3, what were the reasons behind them not returning to work?
5. How many job vacancies have there been in each Hospital over this period? (Please provide the information per hospital, per unit and per year please).
6. How many staff members have let the hospital know that they are feeling under pressure or suffering with stress? (Please provide the information per unit and per year please).

**Response:**

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with all of the information as requested, as there is a potential risk of identifying individuals if this was disclosed. The UHB is therefore withholding the following details under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act (FoIA):

- Where the figures in the table below in response to question 3 and attachments 1 to 4 have been replaced with an asterisk (\*) due to the low numbers of cases (5 and under)
- For question 3, the information requested broken down by department, due to the low number of cases (5 and under)

This information is protected by the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)/UK General Data Protection Regulations, as its disclosure would constitute unfair and unlawful processing and would be contrary to the principles and articles of the UK GDPR. This exemption is absolute and therefore, there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.

In reaching this decision, the DPA and UK GDPR define personal data as data that 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.

Please note:- the data provided below and overleaf is for the number of sickness episodes; one (1) individual may have had multiple absences, therefore, each episode is counted separately.

1. The UHB provides, within the table below, the overall number of staff who have been away from work with any illness, along with how many members of staff noted mental health or stress as the main reason for their absence, during the calendar years 2022, 2023 and from 1 January to 30 November 2024.

<b>Calendar year</b>	<b>Number of staff off</b>	<b>Reason being Mental Health/Stress</b>
2022	6,859	1,079
2023	7,185	1,296
2024	8,019	1,650

For a departmental breakdown of staff who have been away from work with any illness, along with how many members of staff noted mental health or stress as the main reason for their absence, see Attachments 1 and 2.

2. The UHB provides, within the table overleaf, the total number of staff members who have been absent from work for a period of two (2) months or longer, during the calendar years 2022, 2023 and from 1 January to 30 November 2024.

<b>Calendar year</b>	<b>Number</b>
2022	584
2023	708
2024	879

For a breakdown of staff by department, who have been absent from work for a period of two (2) months or longer, see Attachment 3.

3. The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of staff members who did not return to work after a period of illness, during the calendar years 2022, 2023 and from 1 January to 30 November 2024.

<b>Calendar year</b>	<b>Number</b>
2022	9
2023	*
2024	*

4. The reasons for the identified staff members not returning to work are:
  - End of fixed term contract
  - Voluntary Resignation – Health
  - Voluntary Resignation – Incompatible Working Relationships
  - Voluntary Resignation – Other/Not Known
  - Voluntary Resignation – Work Life Balance
5. The UHB is unable to answer this question exactly as it is asked, as the data is not held in this manner. However, the UHB can provide a vacancy position at a set time. The UHB has provided the vacancies per acute site during January of the calendar years 2022, 2023 and 1 January to 30 November 2024, within Attachment 4.

6. The UHB is unable to answer this question exactly as posed. The phrase “feeling under pressure” or “suffering with stress” could imply situations where a concern has been raised between an employee and a manager that was not work related or it did not involve absence from work that would be formally recorded on our central Electronic Staff Record (ESR).

However, in relation to the staff identified in question one (1), the UHB provides, within the table below, the number of staff with a work stress related absence, as recorded on the UHB’s ESR system during the calendar years 2022, 2023 and from 1 January to 30 November 2024.

<b>Calendar year</b>	<b>Number</b>
2022	21
2023	19
2024	20