

Reference:	FOI.19154.25
Subject:	Staff sickness absence and patients leaving Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments
Date of Request:	13 January 2026

Requested:

1. The total number of working hours lost at Hywel Dda Health Board in 2025 due to staff sickness.
2. The total number of patients leaving A&E without treatment in 2025.

Clarification

By 'treatment', I mean the administering of medical care on site.

Can you provide information on those patients that waited but do not have 'treatment' recorded, but may have received some or been given advice?

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with all the information requested, as it is estimated that the cost of answering your request would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (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.

In order to provide you with the information requested for question 2, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all A&E patient records, to identify any information that may fulfil this part of your request, as this information is not recorded centrally.

The UHB can confirm that there were one hundred and twenty-seven thousand, five hundred and seventy-seven (127,577) attendances at a UHB A&E department during the 2025 calendar year. It is estimated that a manual search of these records would exceed the 18 hours stipulated within the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA). Based on the number of records identified, conducting a search of patient records taking a minimum of five (5) minutes per digital record, would far exceed the 'appropriate limit', costing the UHB the following:

127,577 @ 5 minutes per record = 10,588 hours and 54 minutes
 10,588 hours and 54 minutes @ £25 per hour = £264,722.50

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the 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 the FoIA, this can include assisting a requestor to further refine their request.

The UHB suggests that you may refine your request further by asking more specifically for the number of people that have left an A&E Department without being seen by a medical professional. If this is what you require, this more specific question may assist the team with extracting data from the Welsh Patient Administration System (WPAS).

The UHB provides the accessible information it holds for question 1 below.

1. The UHB does not hold the information exactly as requested as it does not record absence in hours lost. However, the UHB can confirm that the Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) number of days were lost due staff sickness absence was 228,895.73, equating to 6.55% of available WTE days, during the period 1 January to 30 November 2025.

Please note: absence is recorded in arrears and therefore this is the most up to date information available.