



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Sickness absence in the NHS: April to June 2020

Data on sickness absence rates for directly employed NHS staff for April to June 2020.

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Contents

1. Main points

2. Trends in the sickness absence rate

3. Sickness absence rate by NHS organisation

4. Sickness absence rate by staff group

5. Quality and methodology information

6. Contact details

New information is shown for the quarter ended 30 June 2020, which includes the first phase of the coronavirus pandemic. Data for January to March 2020 has been revised.

In response to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, additional and timelier management information is collected on sickness absence. It is not collected on the same basis as that published in this quarterly release, and therefore the figures will differ. This management information suggests that a daily average of around 4,000 (4.3%) staff were self-isolating over the quarter ended 30 June 2020, with April being the highest month (around 4,500 or 4.8%). Some of these staff will have been working from home. Information on [coronavirus and NHS activity and capacity](#) is published in a weekly update.

NHS staff who are self-isolating are not counted as being off sick and are therefore not included in these quarterly Sickness absence in the NHS statistics.

The data is sourced from the NHS Electronic Staff Record provided by Health Education and Improvement Wales.

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Data included in this release is published on [StatsWales](#).

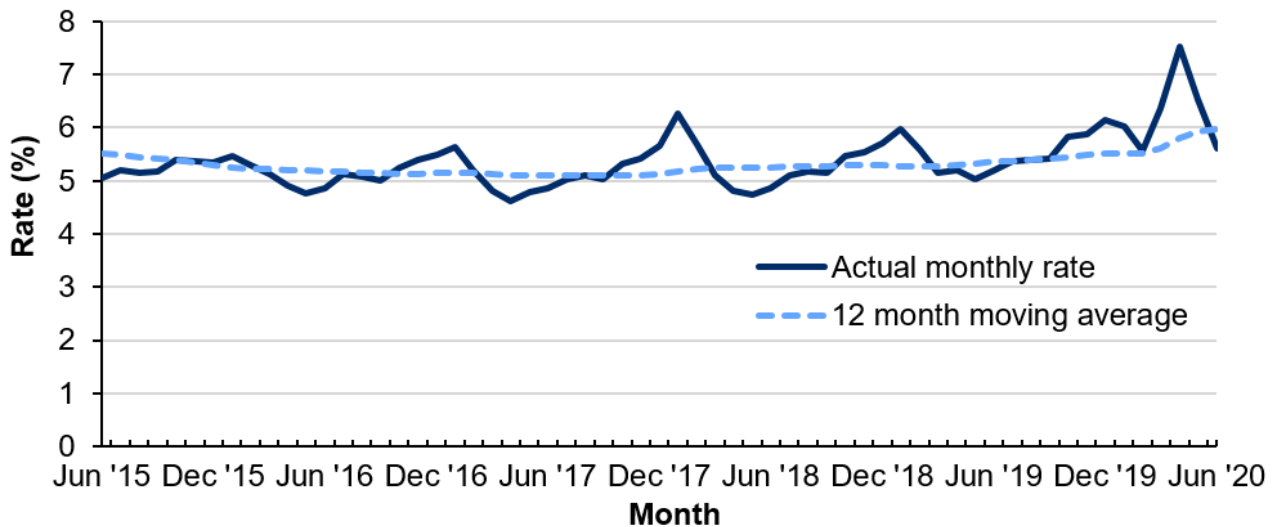
1. Main points

- Sickness absence was 6.5%, up 1.4 percentage points from the quarter ending June 2019.
- After a gradual fall during 2015 to 2017, the average is rising and was 6.0% over the last year; mainly due to the increase in the latest quarter when the pandemic was at its height.
- Swansea Bay local health board had the highest sickness absence rate, 8.4%.
- Health Education and Improvement Wales had the lowest sickness absence rate, 1.3%.
- The staff group with the highest sickness absence rate was healthcare assistants and other support workers, 8.9%.
- The staff group with the lowest sickness absence rate was medical and dental staff, 2.5%.

2. Trends in the sickness absence rate

Sickness absence was 6.5% in the quarter ended 30 June 2020, up 1.4 percentage points from the quarter ending June 2019.

Chart 1: Trends in the sickness absence rate in the NHS in Wales by month, June 2015 to June 2020



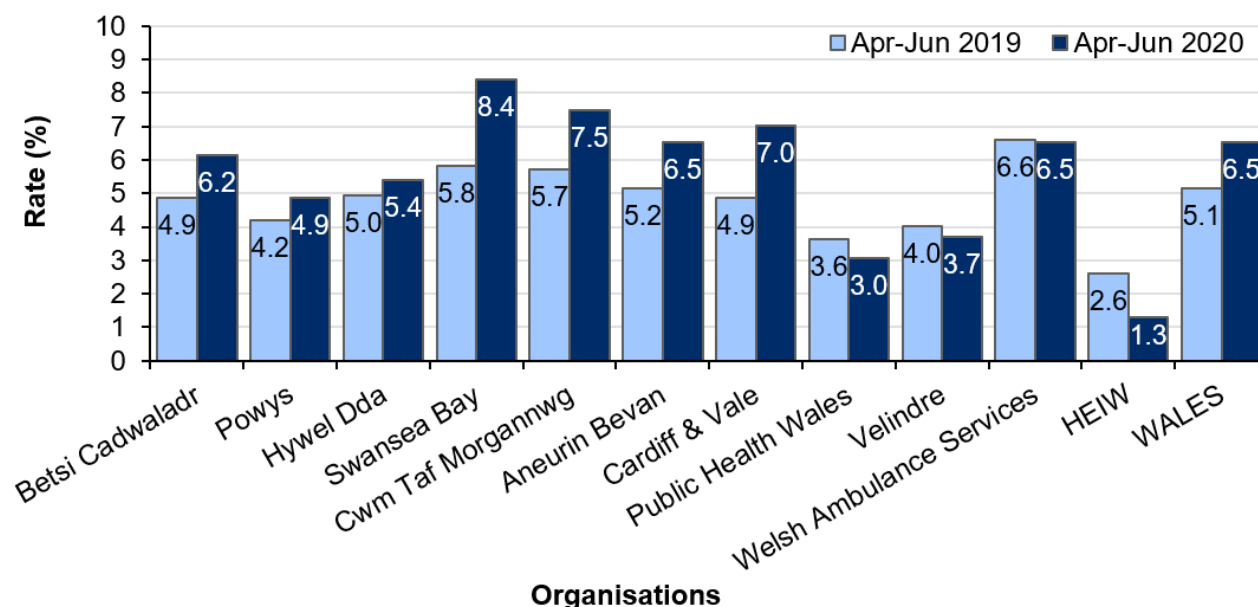
Source: Health Education and Improvement Wales

Sickness absence shows wide seasonal variation throughout the year with the rate lower in summer and higher in winter. To provide clearer information on long term changes to the rate of sickness absence a 12 month moving average is shown in Chart 1. The chart shows the 12 month moving average has gone up in recent months with the average for the 12 months ending June 2020 (6.0%) being the highest since data started to be collected in 2008.

The chart also shows that the sickness absence rate for April 2020 is the highest recorded monthly rate (7.5%), given the timing this is more than likely attributed to COVID-19. Those NHS staff self-isolating are not counted as being off sick and are therefore not included in these sickness absence rates. Monthly sickness absence rates by [NHS organisation](#) and [staff group](#) can be found on [StatsWales](#).

3. Sickness absence rate by NHS organisation

Chart 2: Sickness absence rate in the NHS by organisation, quarter ended 30 June 2020 compared with the previous year



Source: Health Education and Improvement Wales

Swansea Bay local health board had the highest sickness absence (8.4%) of all NHS organisations this quarter, with the lowest rate being in Health Education and Improvement Wales (1.3%).

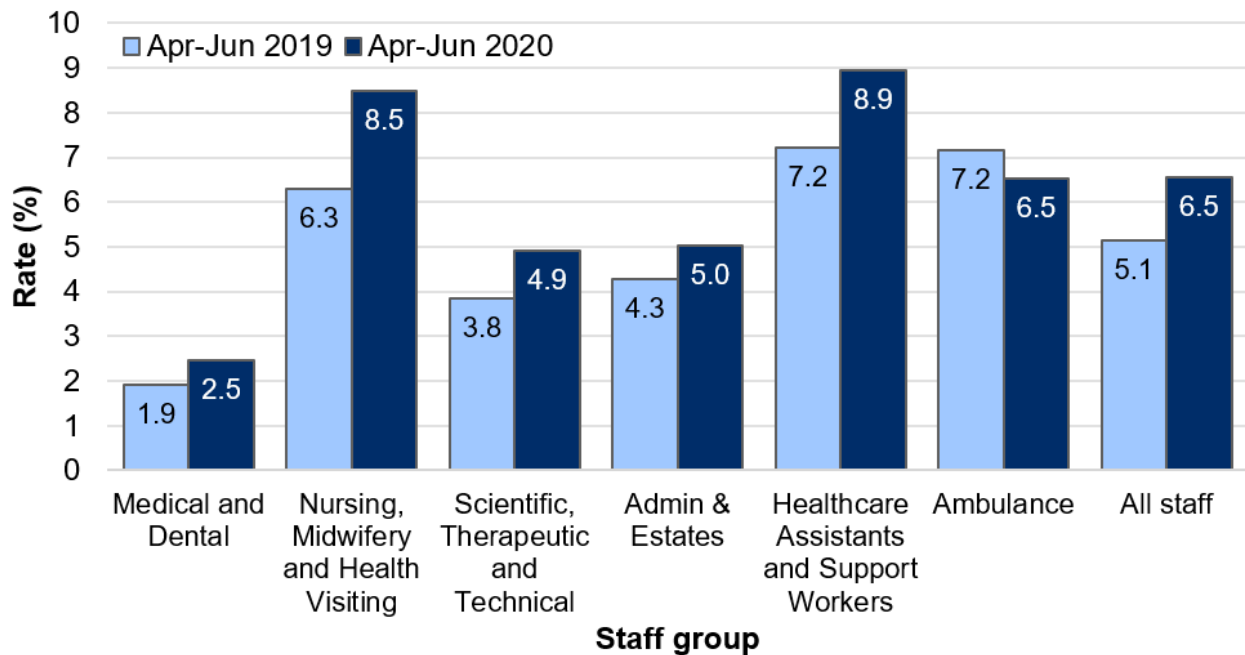
Swansea Bay had the highest sickness absence (8.4%) of all local health boards for the quarter ended 30 June 2020, with the lowest rate being in Powys (4.9%).

The staff sickness rate was higher in seven of the eleven organisations in the April to June 2020 quarter compared to the previous year, the exceptions being Health Education and Improvement Wales, Public Health Wales, Velindre and Welsh Ambulance Services Trust.

Data for all organisations is available on [StatsWales](#).

4. Sickness absence rate by staff group

Chart 3: Sickness absence rate in the NHS by staff group, quarter ended 30 June 2020 compared to the previous year



Source: Health Education and Improvement Wales

Of the six staff groups, healthcare assistants and support workers had the highest sickness absence rate this quarter (8.9%).

Medical and dental staff had the lowest sickness absence rate for this quarter (2.5%) and has done so since data started to be collected in 2009.

The staff sickness rate was higher in all staff groups except for ambulance staff in the April to June 2020 quarter compared to the previous year.

Data for all staff groups is available on [StatsWales](#).

5. Quality and methodology information

The data is sourced from the NHS Electronic Staff Record provided by Health Education and Improvement Wales. Further information is available in the [quality report](#).

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

6. Contact details

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