



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Sickness absence in the NHS: April to June 2021

Data on sickness absence rates for directly employed NHS staff for April to June 2021.

First published: 17 November 2021

Last updated: 17 November 2021

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/sickness-absence-nhs-april-june-2021-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Contents

Introduction

Main points

Trends in the sickness absence rate

Sickness absence rate by NHS organisation

Sickness absence rate by staff group

Quality and methodology information

Contact details

Introduction

New information is shown for the quarter ended 30 June 2021. Data for January to March 2021 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.

The management information suggests that a daily average of around 900 (0.9%) staff were self-isolating over the quarter ended 30 June 2021, with the number decreasing each month from an average of around 1,200 in April to an average of just over 700 in June. Information on [coronavirus and NHS activity](#)

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/sickness-absence-nhs-april-june-2021-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

and capacity is published in a weekly update.

A number of factors related to COVID-19 have impacted on the data this quarter:

- shielding advice to the clinically extremely vulnerable was in place throughout the quarter
- vaccinations were made available to healthcare workers (and others) from December 2020
- the second peak in terms of confirmed cases was in early January 2021

Clinically extremely vulnerable staff on the shielding list, and therefore not in work due to that, are included in the self-isolating count collected in the management information. In these official statistics, NHS staff who are self-isolating or shielding are not counted as being off sick, and are therefore not included in these quarterly sickness absence statistics. The official statistics should continue to be considered the authoritative source of data on sickness absence in the NHS in Wales.

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

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

Main points

The average sickness absence rate for the 12 months ending June 2021 was 5.7%. The average had been rising slowly since 2018 but increased noticeably in the quarter ending June 2020. It stayed relatively stable for the next few quarters before decreasing in the quarter ending March 2021.

Quarter ending 30 June 2021

- Sickness absence rate was 5.5%, down 1.0 percentage point compared to the quarter ending 30 June 2020.

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/sickness-absence-nhs-april-june-2021-html> for the latest version.

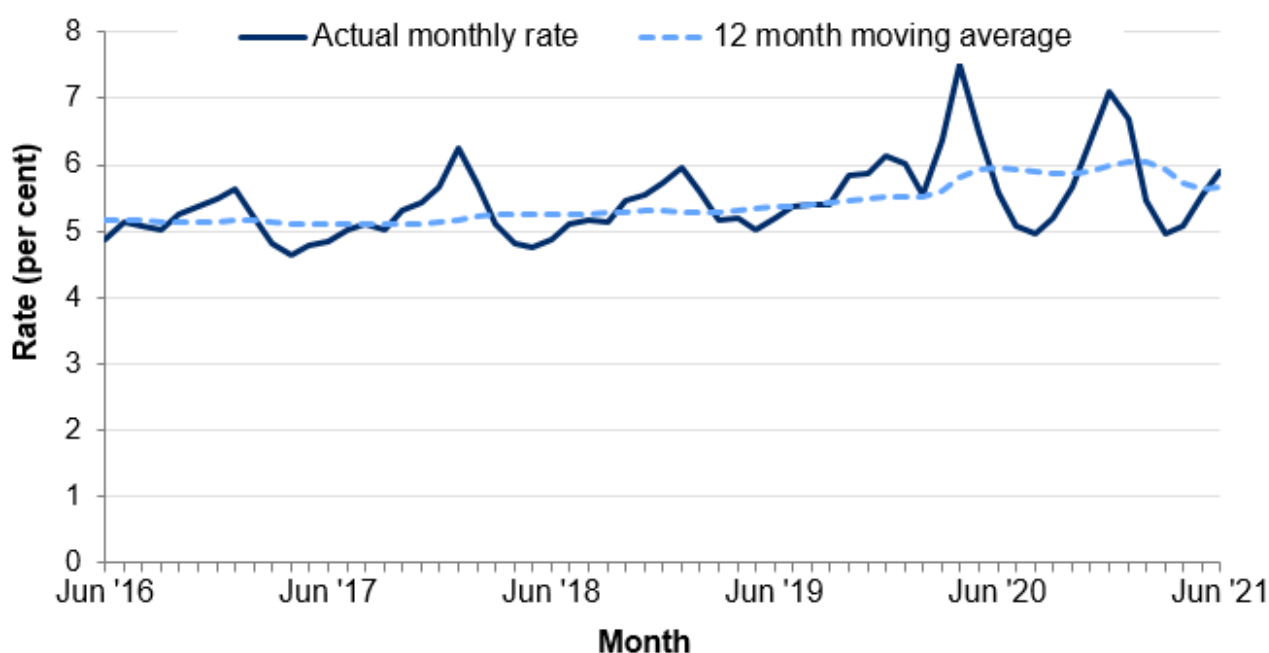
Get [information on copyright](#).

- The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust had the highest sickness absence rate, 8.1%.
- Digital Health & Care Wales had the lowest sickness absence rate, 1.7%.
- The staff group with the highest sickness absence rate was the Ambulance group, 8.8%.
- The staff group with the lowest sickness absence rate was Medical and Dental staff, 1.5%.

The percentages in this release are rounded to the nearest 0.1; percentage point changes are calculated based on the unrounded numbers.

Trends in the sickness absence rate

Chart 1: Trends in the sickness absence rate in the NHS in Wales by month, June 2016 to June 2021



Source: Health Education and Improvement Wales

Sickness absence on StatsWales

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/sickness-absence-nhs-april-june-2021-html> for the latest version.

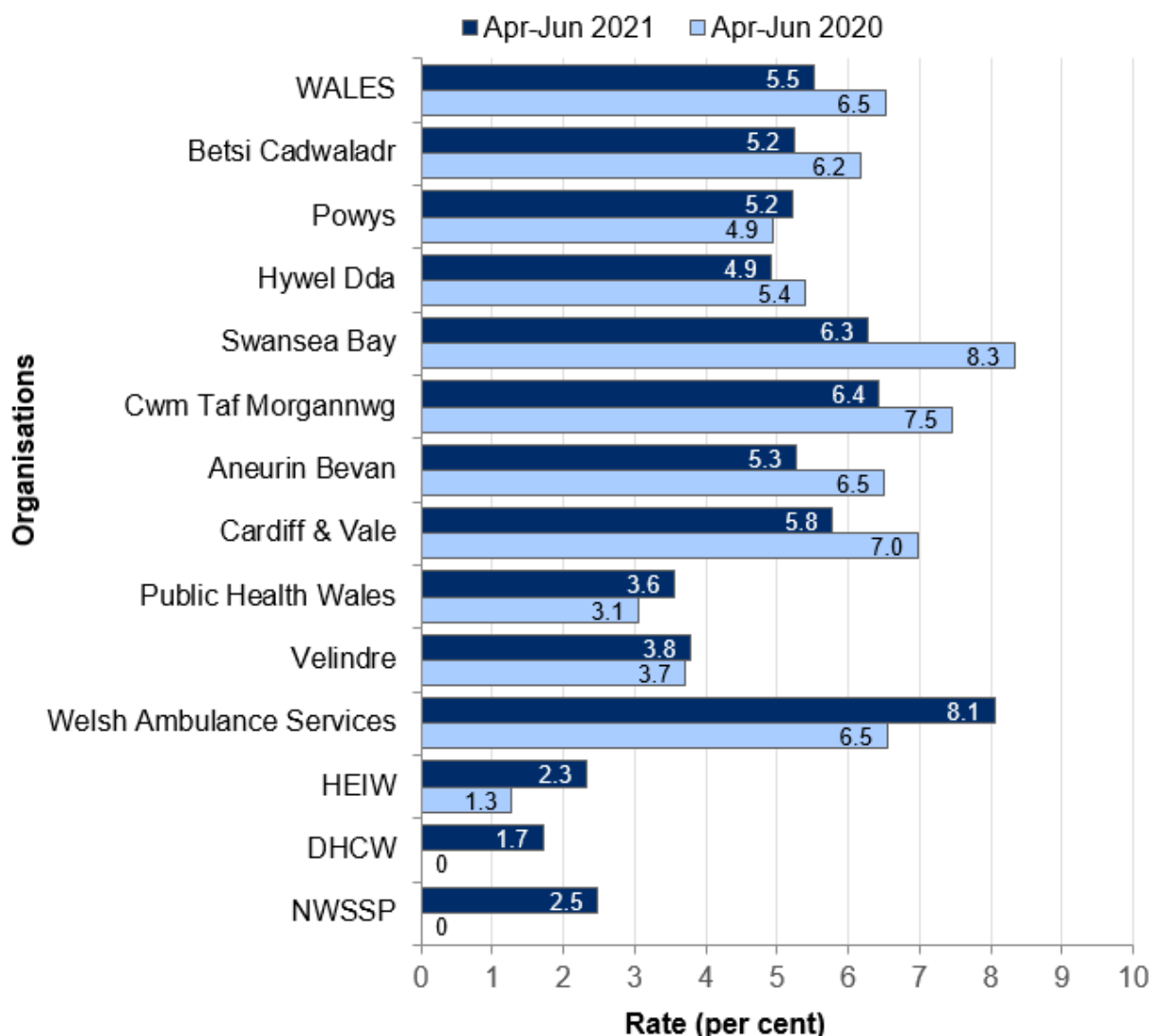
Get [information on copyright](#).

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 remained at around 6.0% over the year to January 2021 but has since started to decrease.

The chart also shows that the sickness absence rate for April 2020 is the highest recorded monthly rate (7.5%) followed by December 2020 (7.1%) – given the timing this is more than likely attributed to COVID-19. Those NHS staff self-isolating, which includes shielding staff, 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**.

Sickness absence rate by NHS organisation

Chart 2: Sickness absence rate in the NHS by organisation, quarter ended 30 June 2021 compared with the previous year



Source: Health Education and Improvement Wales

Percentage absent by organisation and date on StatsWales

The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust had the highest sickness absence rate (8.1%) of all NHS organisations this quarter, with the lowest rate being in

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/sickness-absence-nhs-april-june-2021-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Digital Health and Care Wales (1.7%).

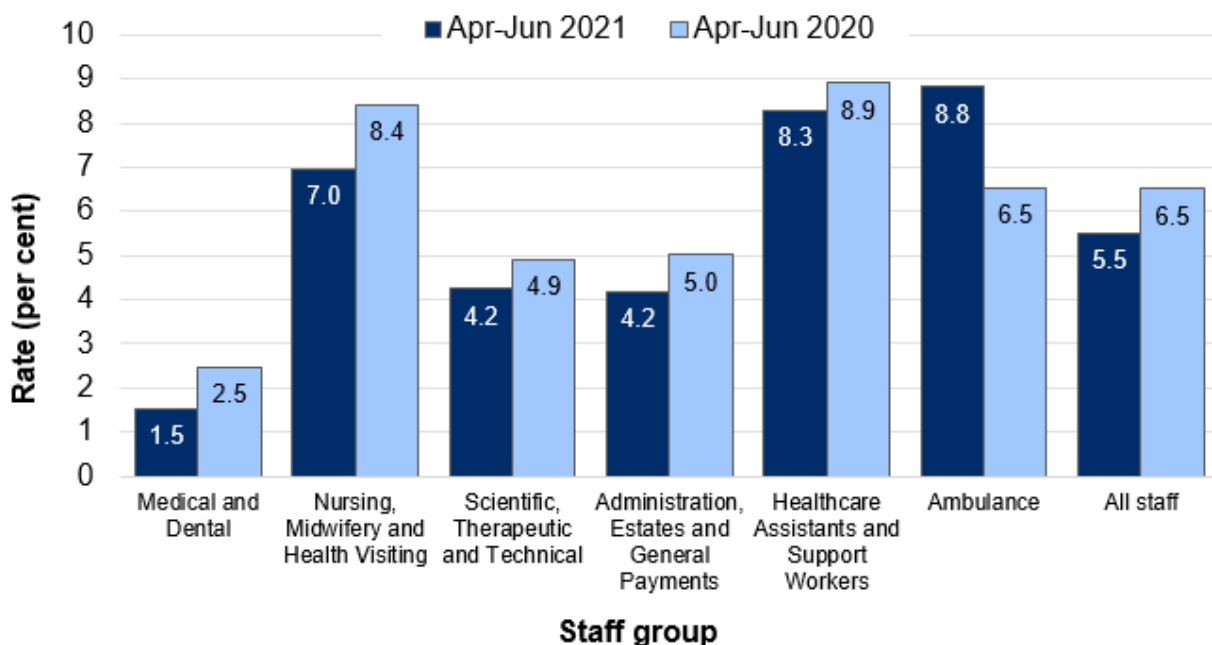
Cwm Taf Morgannwg had the highest sickness absence (6.4%) of all local health boards (LHBs) for the quarter ended 30 June 2021, with the lowest rate being in Hywel Dda (4.9%).

Compared with the same quarter in 2020, the staff sickness absence rate was higher in Powys LHB, Public Health Wales, Velindre and the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trusts and in Health Education and Improvement Wales, but was lower in all other organisations.

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

Sickness absence rate by staff group

Chart 3: Sickness absence rate in the NHS by staff group, quarter ended 30 June 2021 compared to the previous year



Source: Health Education and Improvement Wales

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/sickness-absence-nhs-april-june-2021-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Percentage absent by staff group and date on StatsWales

Of the six staff groups, the Ambulance group had the highest sickness absence rate this quarter (8.8%).

Medical and Dental staff had the lowest sickness absence rate for this quarter (1.5%) and has done so since data started to be collected in 2009.

In the quarter ended 30 June 2021, the staff sickness absence rate was higher compared with the previous year in the Ambulance staff group; the rate was lower in all the other staff groups.

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

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

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 Senedd Cymru. 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](#)

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/sickness-absence-nhs-april-june-2021-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

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.

Next update

16 February 2022

Contact details

Statistician: Bethan Sherwood
Telephone: 0300 025 6735
Email: stats.healthinfo@gov.wales

Media: 0300 025 8099

SFR 357/2021

About this document

This document is a copy of the web page [Sickness absence in the NHS: April to June 2021](#) downloaded.

Go to <https://gov.wales/sickness-absence-nhs-april-june-2021-html> for the latest version.

This document may not be fully accessible, for more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

Get [information on copyright](#).

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://gov.wales/sickness-absence-nhs-april-june-2021-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).