



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Sickness absence in the NHS: April to June 2022

Data on sickness absence rates for directly employed NHS staff for April to June 2022.

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Introduction

This statistical release presents official statistics about sickness absence of staff directly employed in the NHS in Wales. New information is shown for the quarter that ended on 30 June 2022 and data for January to March 2022 has been revised.

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a separate data collection of **management information** about the sickness absence of NHS staff has been established. The management information provides a more timely indication of sickness absence rates, but it is not collected via the same method as data in this statistical release and is not subject to the same level of quality assurance. For these reasons, the data in the two collections will differ and the official statistics in this release should continue to be considered the authoritative source of data on sickness absence of NHS Wales staff.

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

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

Main points

Long term trend

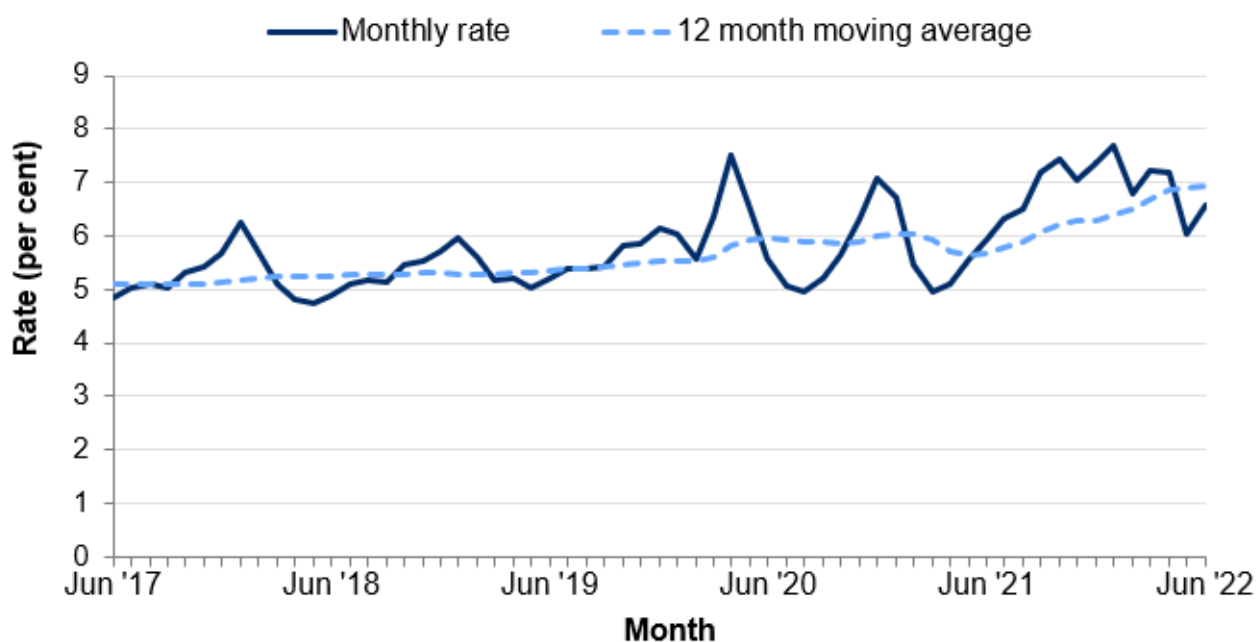
The 12-month average sickness rate which ended on 30 June 2022 increased gradually from close to 5.0% throughout 2017 to close to 6.0% throughout 2020. Following a slight decrease in spring 2021, the rate increased more sharply and reached 6.9% for the 12 months ending 30 June 2022. This is the highest 12-month rate since data was first published in 2009.

Short term trend

- Sickness absence rate was 6.6%, an increase of 1.1 percentage points compared to the quarter ending 30 June 2021. This is the fourth highest quarterly rate on record.
- When comparing NHS organisations, the rate ranged from 9.7% in the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust to 1.4% in Health Education and Improvement Wales.
- When comparing staff groups, the rate ranged from 10.7% for ambulance staff to 1.9% for medical and dental staff.

Trends in the sickness absence rate

Figure 1: Trends in sickness absence rates in NHS Wales by month, June 2017 to June 2022



Source: Health Education and Improvement Wales

Sickness absence shows wide seasonal variation throughout the year with lower rates in summer and higher rates in winter. To provide clearer information on longer term changes to the rate of sickness absence, a 12-month moving average is shown in Figure 1.

The 12-month moving average has been increasing over the long term, with sharper increases over the last year. It reached its highest peak on record (6.9%) for the 12 months ending on 30 June 2022.

When looking at the rate for individual months, the sickness absence rate for January 2022 was the highest recorded monthly rate (7.7%) followed by April

2020 (7.5%). These high points coincide with waves of the COVID-19 pandemic.

NHS staff who are self-isolating, including shielding staff (shielding advice was paused from 1 April 2021), are not counted as being on sick absence and are therefore not included in these sickness absence rates. Monthly sickness absence rates by **NHS organisation** and **staff group** are published on StatsWales.

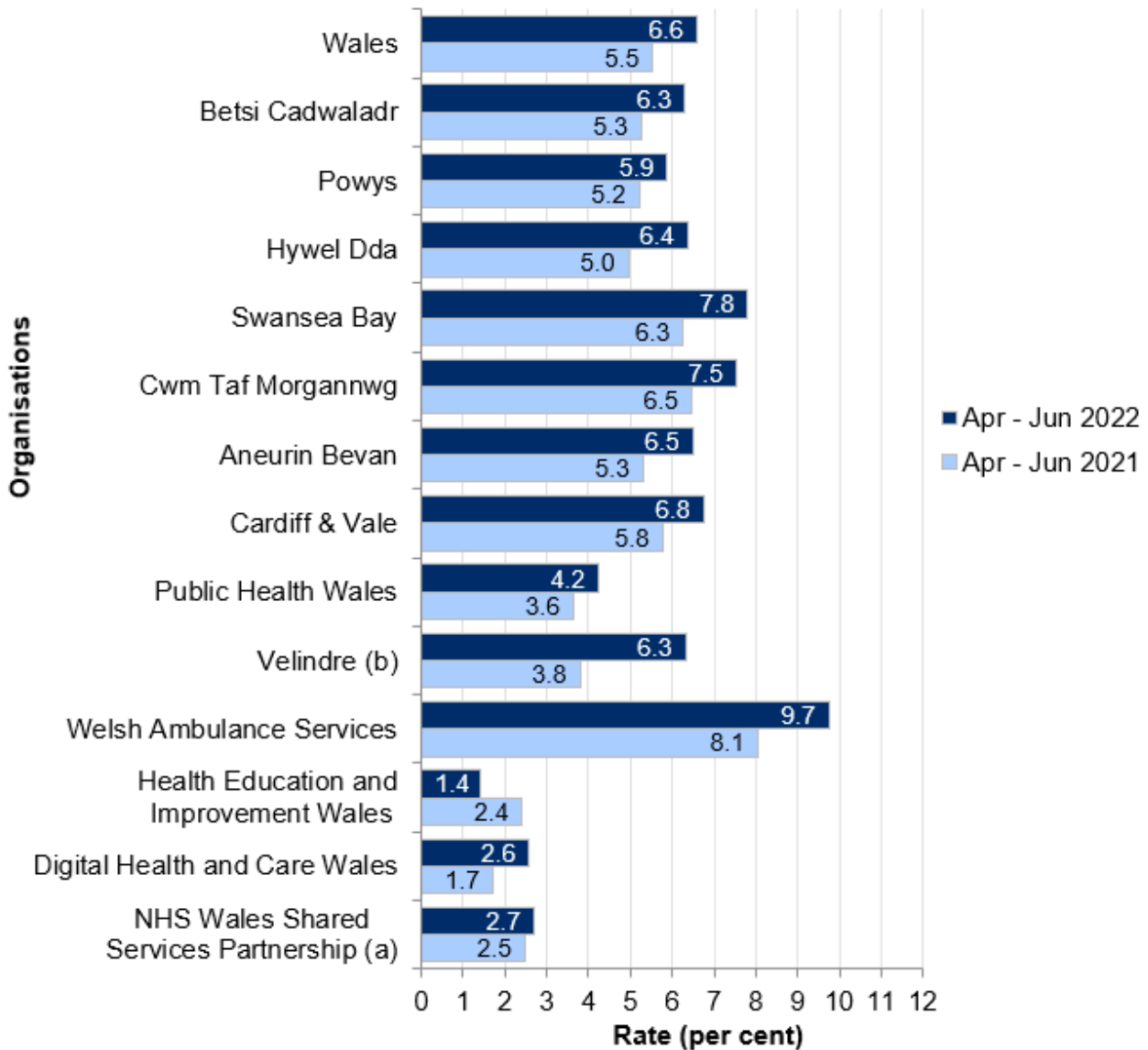
Sickness absence rate by NHS organisation

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Figure 2: Sickness absence rates in NHS Wales by organisation, quarter that ended on 30 June 2022 compared to the previous year



Source: Health Education and Improvement Wales

(a) NHS Wales Shared Service Partnership (NWSSP) data for Apr-Jun 2021 only includes certain NWSSP staff (including foundation dentists, F1 trainees and specialty registrars) up until 1 June 2021 from which point all NWSSP staff are included.

(b) Velindre data for Apr-Jun 2021 includes NWSSP staff for certain staff groups (but excludes some foundation dentists, F1 trainees and specialty registrars) up until 1 June 2021 from which point no NWSSP staff are included.

The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust had the highest sickness absence rate (9.7%) of all NHS organisations in Apr-Jun 2022, with the lowest rate being in Health Education and Improvement Wales (1.4%).

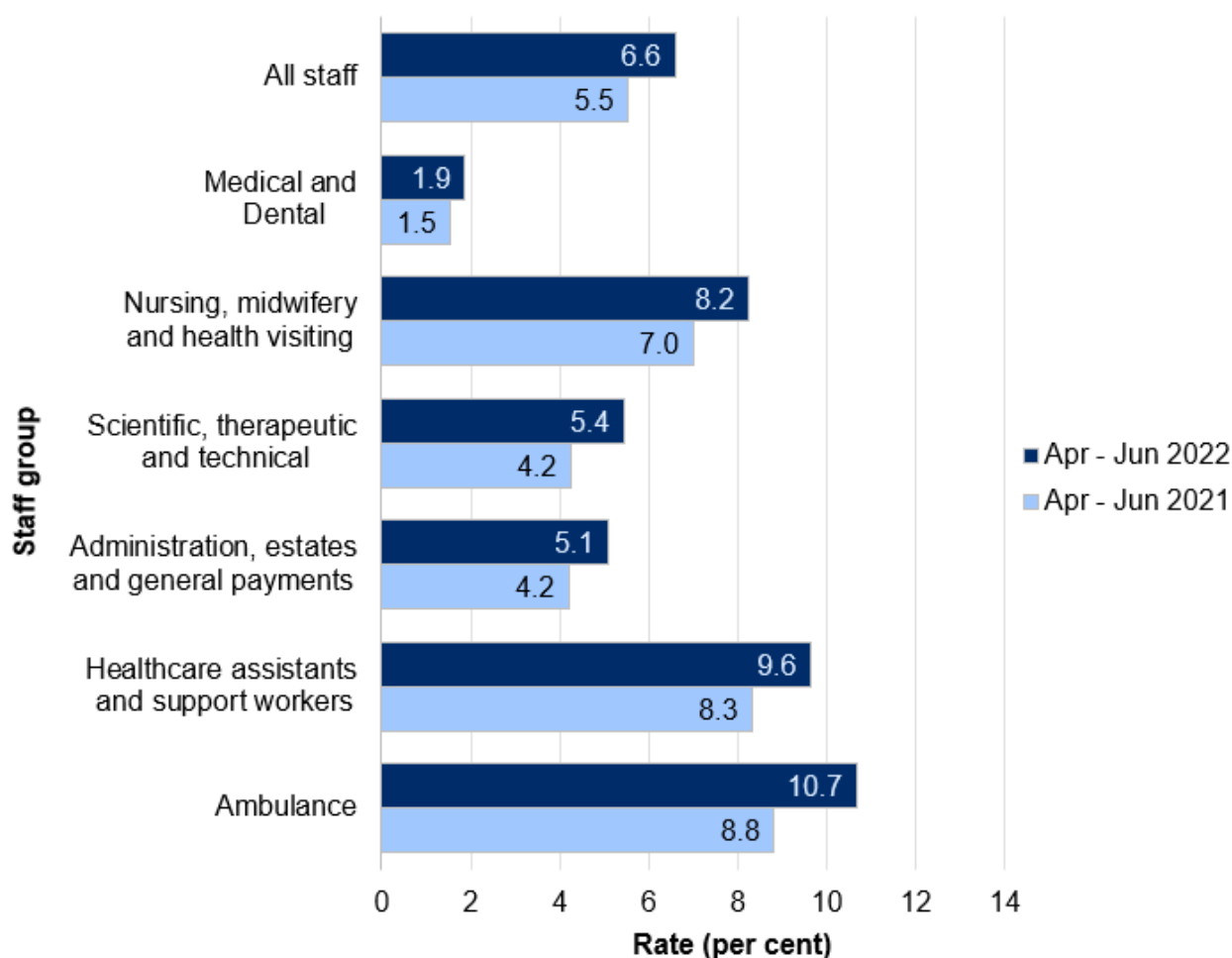
Swansea Bay had the highest sickness absence (7.8%) of all local health boards, with the lowest rate being in Powys (5.9%).

The staff sickness absence rate in Apr-Jun 2022 was higher in all the NHS organisations in Wales except for HEIW compared with the same quarter in 2021.

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

Sickness absence rate by staff group

Figure 3: Sickness absence rates in NHS Wales by staff group, quarter that ended on 30 June 2022 compared to the previous year



Source: Health Education and Improvement Wales

Of the six staff groups, ambulance staff had the highest sickness absence rate in April to June 2022 (10.7%).

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Medical and dental staff had the lowest sickness absence rate (1.9%) and has since data was first collected in 2009.

In April to June 2022, the staff sickness absence rate was higher compared with the same quarter in the previous year for all 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](#).

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

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 wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy

of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing 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.

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