

Freedom of Information request 409-18

Request

We would be obliged if you could provide the following information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 for each of your constituent institutions

- 1) Numbers of staff employed in financial years 2005/06 and 2017/18
- 2) Numbers of stress related absences in the financial years 2005/06 and for 2017/18
- 3) Absence costs incurred in relation to all sickness absence for financial years 2005/06 and for 2017/18
- 4) Absence costs in relation to stress related illnesses for the same periods, 2005/16 and 2017/18
- 5) Information on steps that your board has taken to manage stress at work such as implementing the HSE Stress Management Standards
- 6) The date that your college/institution first carried a workplace stress risk assessment and dates of subsequent review.

Response

- 1) Please find below the number of staff employed in NHS Borders in the years requested:

2005/06 – 2387
2017/18 – 2591
- 2) Please find below the number of stress related absences in the years requested:

2005/06 – No data is held as systems were not in place at this time to record time and attendance figures.
2017/18 – 811 episodes
- 3) The basic pay costs for sickness absence lost hours in 2017/18 totalled £3.6m for 268,700 hours. No data is held for 2005/06 therefore no cost data is held.
- 4) The basic pay costs for stress related sickness absence lost hours in 2017/18 totalled £955,272 for 61,292 hours. No data is held for 2005/06 therefore no cost data is held.
- 5) Please find below steps NHS Borders has taken to manage stress at work:
 - Prevention & management of stress at work policy and guidelines which incorporates the use the HSE Stress Management Standards
 - Encourage a culture where stress is not seen as a sign of weakness or incompetence and where seeking help in managing negative effects of stress is seen as a sign of strength/good practice.
 - Identify workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress.

- Supply information for staff on: the effects of stress at work, positive coping mechanisms and general health improving activities within the workplace. Encourage staff to get help at an early stage by offering easy access to counselling and other professional help.
- Provide suitable training and guidance to managers/supervisors to equip them to undertake the necessary risk assessments in relation to stress in the workplace, and to arrange for implementation of effective control measures where appropriate.

Current courses available

- Identifying Stress and Promoting Resilience
- Managing Mental Health for Managers
- Working Health Matters

Work and Wellbeing

- Provide specialist advice for managers and staff on occupational stressors and the risk assessment process.
 - Deliver an education/training programme on stress risk assessment/awareness and management.
 - Provide support for staff at all levels who may be experiencing the negative effects of stress.
 - Monitor work related stress in terms of sickness absence patterns and self/management referrals and feedback appropriately to the organisation.
 - Inform NHS Borders, via the OH&S Forum, of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work
6. The earliest data held by NHS Borders show that risk assessments were carried out in 2012/13 with reviews taking place in 2013/14

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **409-18** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.