

05 July 2023

Assaults in Hospitals

Can each health trust please provide figures for how many assaults have taken place on your hospital sites over the last five years?

The table below includes all reported incidents affecting patients, staff, contractors, vendors, public or visitors and coded as:

Apr 2018 to Mar 2019 – Physical abuse, assault or violence OR Assault etc with a weapon

Apr 2019 to Mar 2023 – Physical contact (actual assault)
 (Coding changed on 1st April 2019)

	2018/2019*	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Belfast City Hospital Site	78	346	373	297	479
Forster Green Hospital Site	96	108	177	488	310
Knockbracken Healthcare Park Site	620	201	206	159	156
Mater Hospital Site	349	80	36	72	78
Muckamore Abbey Hospital Site	3383	2166	1582	1565	1058
Musgrave Park Hospital Site	159	41	50	64	56
Royal Group of Hospitals Site	225	173	210	219	202

*Please note – figures for 2018/19 (old coding) are higher overall than for other years because they also include incidents of physical threat (no contact) as well as actual assault/abuse.

From April 2019 onwards, new coding allowed these to be separated out and they are therefore excluded from these figures.

Can that be broken down into each year, showing the nature of the assault (ie violent, sexual assault, rape, murder) and into each hospital site?

This information was not possible to attain. This information is not centrally held in this format. There is no further breakdown of coding below physical assault therefore we could not provide the 'nature' of the assault as per these examples without reading through each one and making a judgement. Sexual is a separate code from physical but can include harassment and indecent exposure which would not necessarily constitute an 'assault'.

How many staff members, patients and members of the public were involved?

This information is not available. We could not robustly provide this information, as not all involved parties will be necessarily be listed as contacts

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Can you show what action has been taken in relation to cases?

This information was not possible to attain. This information is not centrally held in this format.

Have any workers been dismissed or disciplined as a result of assaults?

Please see below table where a total of 18 Trust staff were dismissed or disciplined* as a result of an assaults# over the period April 21 until March 2023.

Information has been produced at a Trust level rather than hospital level. Information at a hospital level is not available. The information on where the assault occurred is not held centrally within Human Resources.

Calendar Year ~			
2018/19, 2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Not available ^	5 -10	5 -10	<5

*Formal disciplinary action (Formal warning up to and including summary dismissal)

Defined as Physical/Sexual Assault

^This information was not possible to attain. The time period predates the creation of a central system.

~ Calendar year in which the staff member was in receipt of the outcome letter relating to the formal disciplinary hearing.

Where less than 5 has been used. We are unable to provide an exact figure where numbers are very low. To provide this level of information would reduce numbers to discoverable limits where individuals could be identifiable. This is exempt from release under section 40(2) Personal Information relating to a third party, of the FOI Act. This information would be unfair to the individuals to release this information. Disclosure would constitute a breach of the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018.

In addition the Trust has taken into account the fact that all information disclosed in response to an FOI is disclosed to the 'world at large' and is published on the Trust website. The Trust does not consider the disclosure of this information to be fair to the individuals concerned as there is the potential risk of identification of an individual(s) which they would not expect, and which would therefore breach the fairness element of the first principle of the Data Protection Act 2018."