

FOI 3075

14<sup>th</sup> May 2025

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST**

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**Q1. Can you please provide a breakdown of the number of physical assaults and verbal abuse against health care staff recorded within your health trust between 2019 and 2024? As well as a yearly breakdown, please also provide a breakdown by location e.g. Craigavon hospital etc. and if possible type of assault/abuse. Please provide in a Microsoft excel spreadsheet format.**

**Response:**

It is not possible for the SHSCT to confirm how many assaults as requested above. This is due to the fact that one incident may involve more than one assault/alleged assault, against one, or more than one, staff member.

To review each incident individually to ascertain this information would require a significant manual review of incidents and would take more than 18 hours to collate. The cost of locating and retrieving the information exceeds the “appropriate limit” as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004. In order, to obtain this information, it would exceed the £450 limit and is therefore cost prohibitive.

Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Public Authorities are not obliged to comply with an information request where to do so would exceed the cost limit.

The response below has provided the number of incidents which relate to the Physical assault/verbal abuse on staff.

The SHSCT uses Regional CCS2 coding to theme incidents reported on the Datix Risk Management System. The information provided includes incidents coded as:

- Inappropriate/Aggressive Behaviour towards Staff by a Patient;
- Inappropriate/Aggressive Behaviour towards Staff by a Visitor;
- Inappropriate/Aggressive Behaviour towards Staff by Staff

The information has been included in tabular form for ease of copying to excel spreadsheet format.

Location	Physical Assault/Verbal Abuse	Year					
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Armagh Community Hospital	Verbal Abuse	<5	<5	<5	<5		

<b>Banbridge Polyclinic</b>	<b>Physical Assault</b>						<b>&lt;5</b>
	<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>				<b>&lt;5</b>	
<b>Community</b>	<b>Physical Assault</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>487</b>
	<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>Craigavon Area Hospital</b>	<b>Physical Assault</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>1130</b>
	<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Daisy Hill Hospital</b>	<b>Physical Assault</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>63</b>
	<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Independent/Voluntary Sector Locations</b>	<b>Physical Assault</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>148</b>
	<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Lurgan Hospital</b>	<b>Physical Assault</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>68</b>
	<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Portadown Magowan West</b>	<b>Verbal Abuse</b>					<b>&lt;5</b>	
<b>South Tyrone Hospital</b>	<b>Physical Assault</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>St Lukes Hospital</b>	<b>Physical Assault</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>

There were 10572 verbal abuse and physical assault incidents reported between 1st January 2019 and 31st December 2024 on the Datix system coded as above. Please note these incidents include both founded and alleged assaults.

The Trust has a legal duty to protect patient confidentiality and, in line with this duty, the figure <5 has been provided where figures are very low. This is because of the potential risk of identification of an individual. In reaching this decision the Trust has taken into account the small geographical area which the Trust serves and the sensitivity of the information requested. 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.

S 40 (2) (third party information) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 has been applied to exempt the redacted information from disclosure. The Trust does not consider the disclosure of the redacted 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.

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