



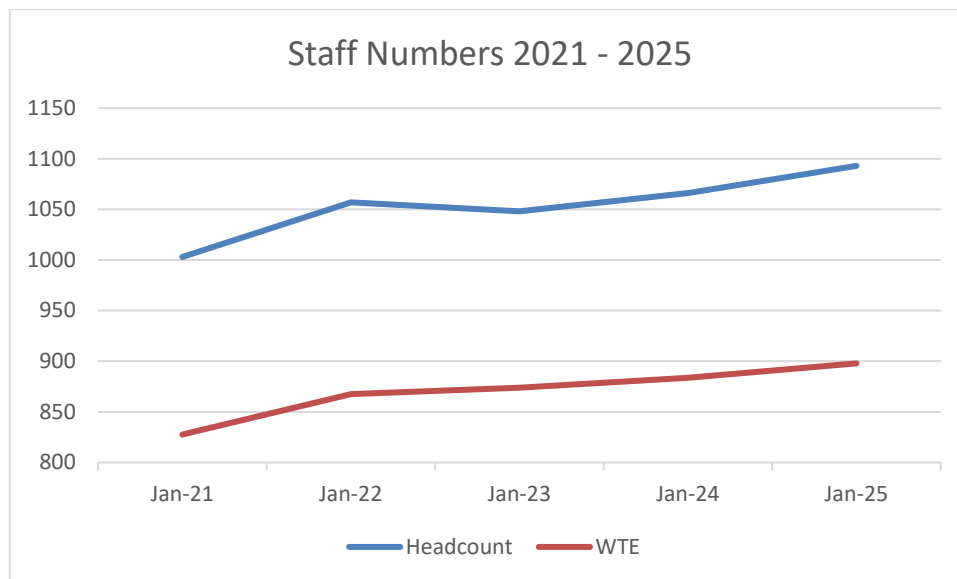
# **WORKFORCE REPORT**

## **April 2025**

## 1. WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

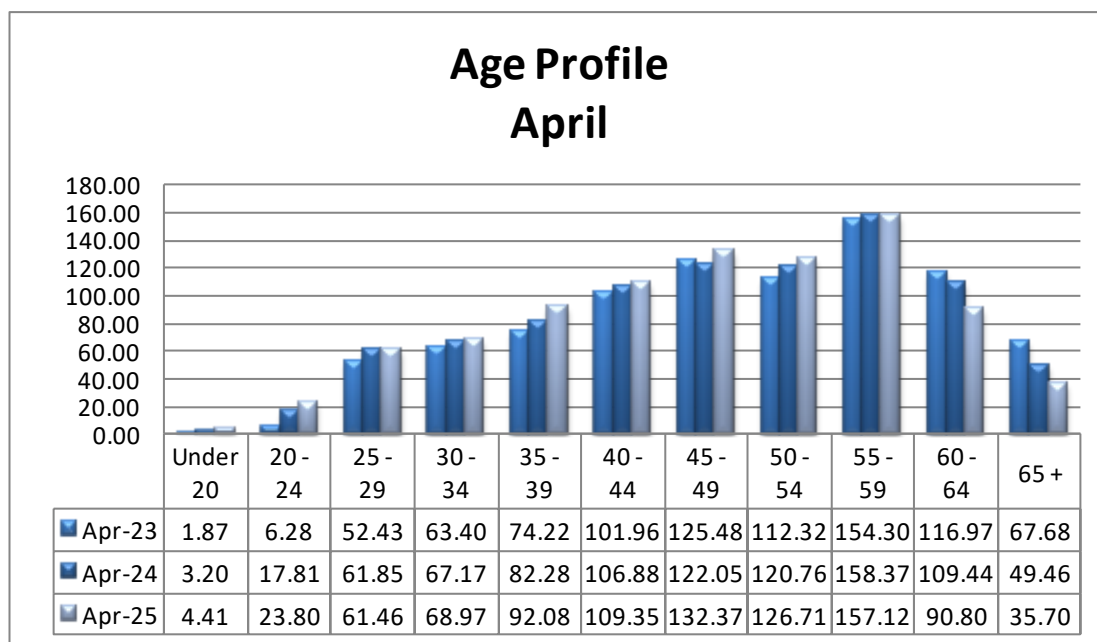
### 1.1 Staff in post

On 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 NHS Western Isles has a total headcount of 1101 (902.76 WTE) employees.



Staff numbers overall have increased. This was initially due to the covid response in terms of contact tracing and vaccinations. 2022 and 2024 also saw the transfer of staff from the medical practices in Barra and Uist.

### 1.2 Age Profile



The workforce is ageing with 46% (down from 48% in 2022) of employee's aged over 50 and the highest proportion of employees is in the age 55-59 category. The median age of the workforce is 47 compared to an NHS Scotland median age of 44 years. The normal pensionable retirement age continues to rise to 67 (previously 60 for women and 65 for men) which means that people are having to work longer to access pension benefits.

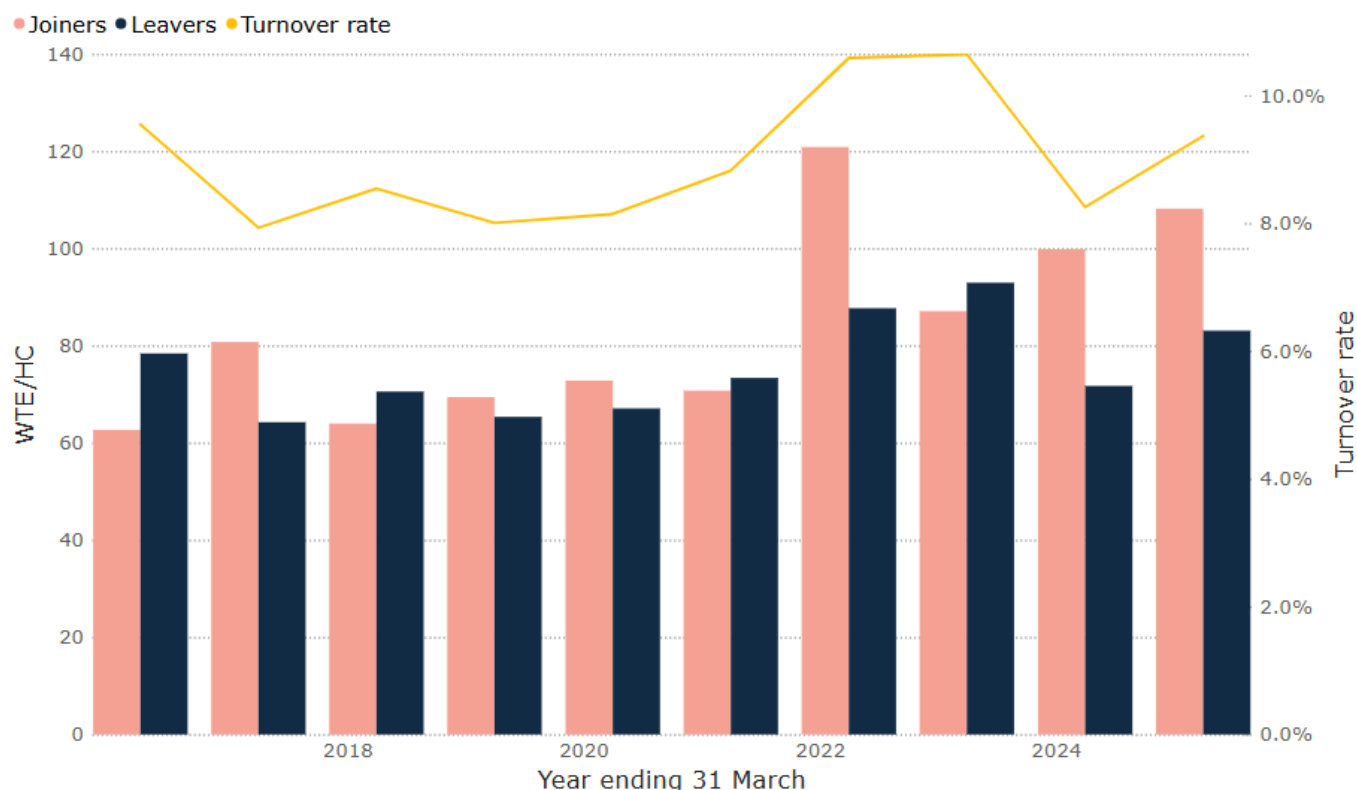
NHS Western Isles continues to attract young people to NHS careers through work experience, careers fares and summer student recruitment. 24 work experience placements are planned between May and

September (up from 17 in 2024). These placements are across Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Radiology, IT, Catering, Nursing and Medicine. Preparations are in place for another cohort of summer student placements from May and there are plans to advertise two catering apprenticeships in April.

### 1.3 Turnover

High rates of employee turnover in an organisation can indicate a loss of organisational knowledge, increased costs in recruitment of new employees and costs of induction and training. Turnover rate at 31 March 2025 was 9.4%, down from 10.6% in 2023. There continue to be more joiners to the organisation than leavers with 108 joining and 83 leaving.

#### Turnover over time



Historically the NHS has had low turnover rates but this has increased since the Covid 19 Pandemic. The increased use of fixed term contracts for specific projects with non-recurring funding and Retire and Return also affects turnover.

## 1.4 Retire and Return and Partial Retirement

Options for retirement have expanded in the last three years to include partial retirement and retire and return. These provide a variety of options for accessing pension benefits and changing posts and work patterns for those approaching retirement age.

There have been 42 accepted applications in total for retire & return and partial retirement since the policies were introduced in 2022 and 2023. There have been 11 partial retirements.

The table below shows that staff in most job families have made use of the retirement policies.

	2023	2024	2025
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	1	2	2
ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSION	3	2	0
DENTAL SUPPORT	3	0	1
HEALTHCARE SCIENCES	1	0	0
MEDICAL AND DENTAL	0	0	0
MEDICAL SUPPORT	0	0	0
NURSING/MIDWIFERY	8	7	3
OTHER THERAPEUTIC	0	0	0
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CARE	0	0	0
SENIOR MANAGERS	0	1	0
SUPPORT SERVICES	4	3	1

\*This data is provided on a January – December year.

## 1.5 Overtime

1.5.1 The table below shows overtime hours in each roster location for the month of April.

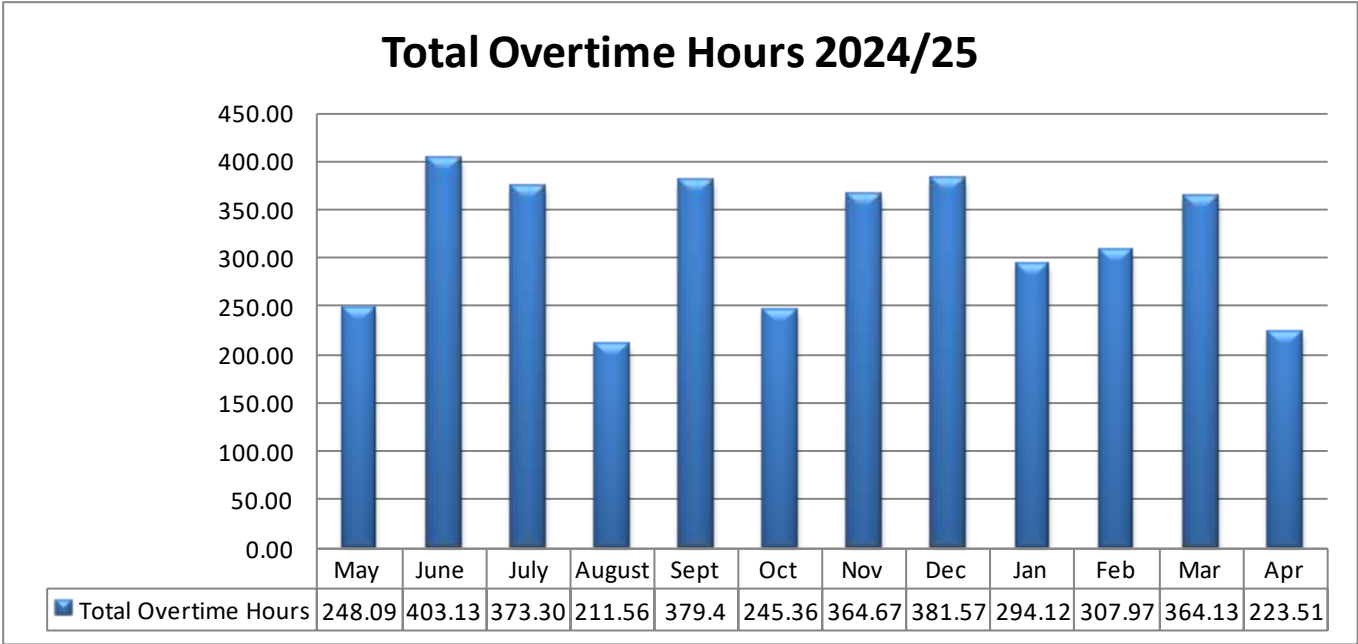
Roster Location	In Post Avg WTE	Overtime T 1/2 Hours	Overtime T2 Hours	Total Overtime Hours
WIHB-A&E	14.15	7.37	0.00	7.37
WIHB-Comm. SI Uists & Benbecula	13.92	5.72	0.00	5.72
WIHB-Hotel Services - Catering	16.53	31.80	0.00	31.80
WIHB-Hotel Services - Domestic	33.70	8.47	0.00	8.47
WIHB-Maternity	19.75	17.98	0.52	18.50
WIHB-Porters	7.91	37.98	0.00	37.98
WIHB-U&B Hospital - Hotel Service	12.21	35.58	6.78	42.36
WIHB-Works Building	6.81	5.47	0.00	5.47
WIHB-Works Engineering	9.80	54.30	0.00	54.30
WIHB-Works & Estates	1.00	5.64	0.00	5.64
WIHB-X-Ray	11.94	2.08	0.00	2.08

The highest levels of overtime are in Works to cover weekend call-outs and projects.

Domestics and Catering use overtime due to vacancies and additional demands.

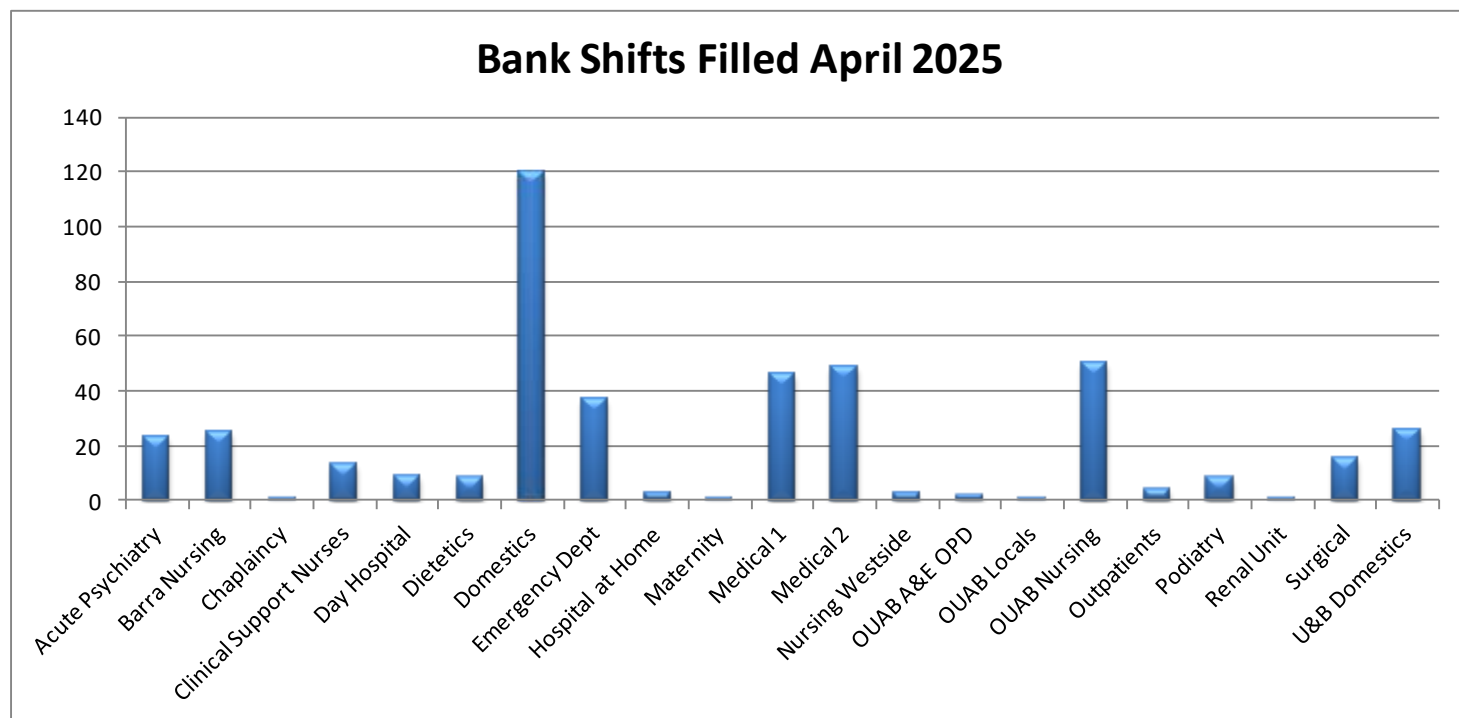
1.5.2 Total Overtime

The table below shows an analysis of overall overtime per month for the last 12 months.

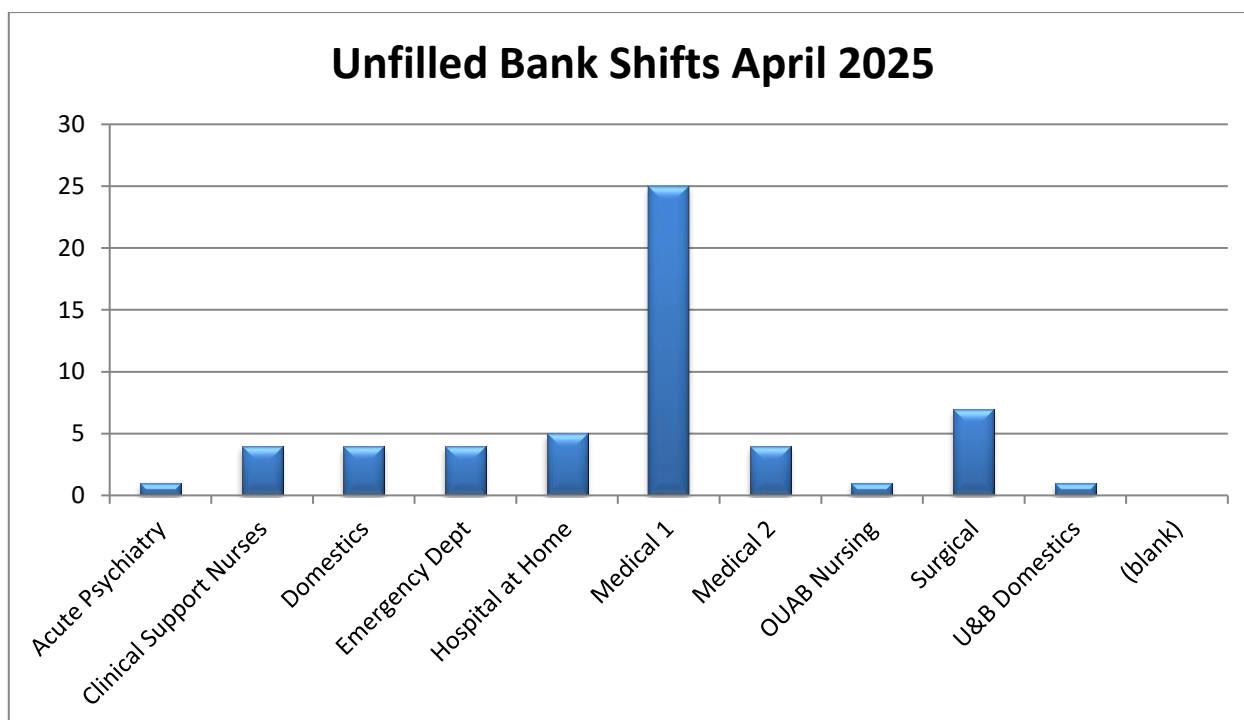


## 1.6 Bank Usage

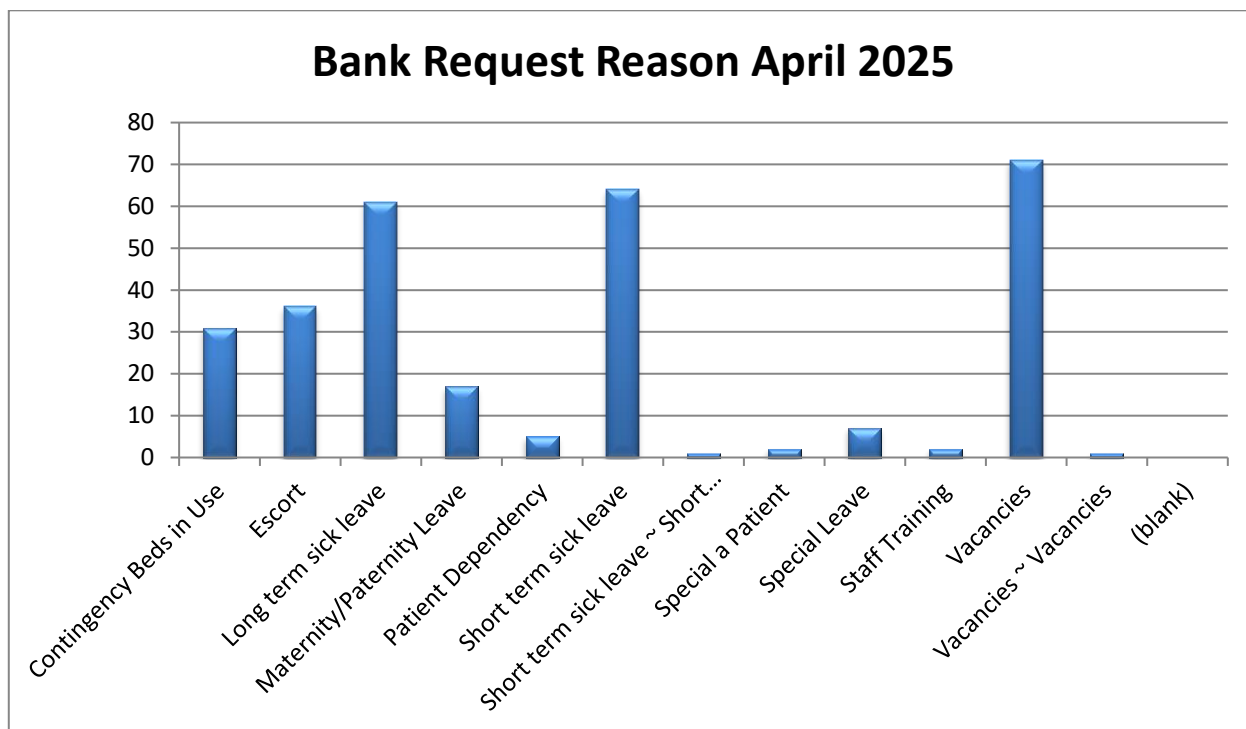
1.6.1 The table below shows the number of Bank shifts filled in April 2025. The highest level of Bank Usage is in Domestic Services due to vacancies and high sickness absence. Inpatient wards have the next highest levels of Bank usage (Medical 2, Medical 1, OUAB and Surgical).



1.6.2 The table below details Bank shifts that were not able to be filled in April.



1.6.3 The table below details the reason for Bank use with contingency beds, vacancies and sick leave being the most common reason for Bank shifts.



## 1.7 Agency Usage

Agency/Locums are primarily used to cover long term Consultant vacancies in Psychiatry, General Medical, General Surgical, Paediatrics and Radiology.

There are no significant fluctuation in the use and cost of agency. All agency contracts are reviewed on a three month basis to ensure best value and strict controls are in place when engaging agency with sign off through the Chief Executive.

Rotas for the 2c Practices are being reviewed and there has been successful recruitment.

Department	Cost (£)	Reason
General Medical	19,819.57	Vacancy 24/7 Cover
Gen Surgical	32,164.33	Vacancy 24/7 Cover
Paediatrics	27,392.30	Vacancy 1:2 rota
Radiologist	- 31,158.64	9-5 Service
Junior Doctors	5,505.60	Vacancy cover
Out of Hours	27,421.76	OOH GP L&H (Direct Engagement)
Psychiatry	52,617.00	24/7 Cover
Maternity	9,550.15	Vacancy cover
Pharmacy	1,963.60	Vacancy cover
Waiting Times	7,964.19	Vacancy cover
2C Practices	- 3,173.72	Vacancy cover
Dental	81.75	
<b>Total Spend April</b>	<b>179,470.41</b>	

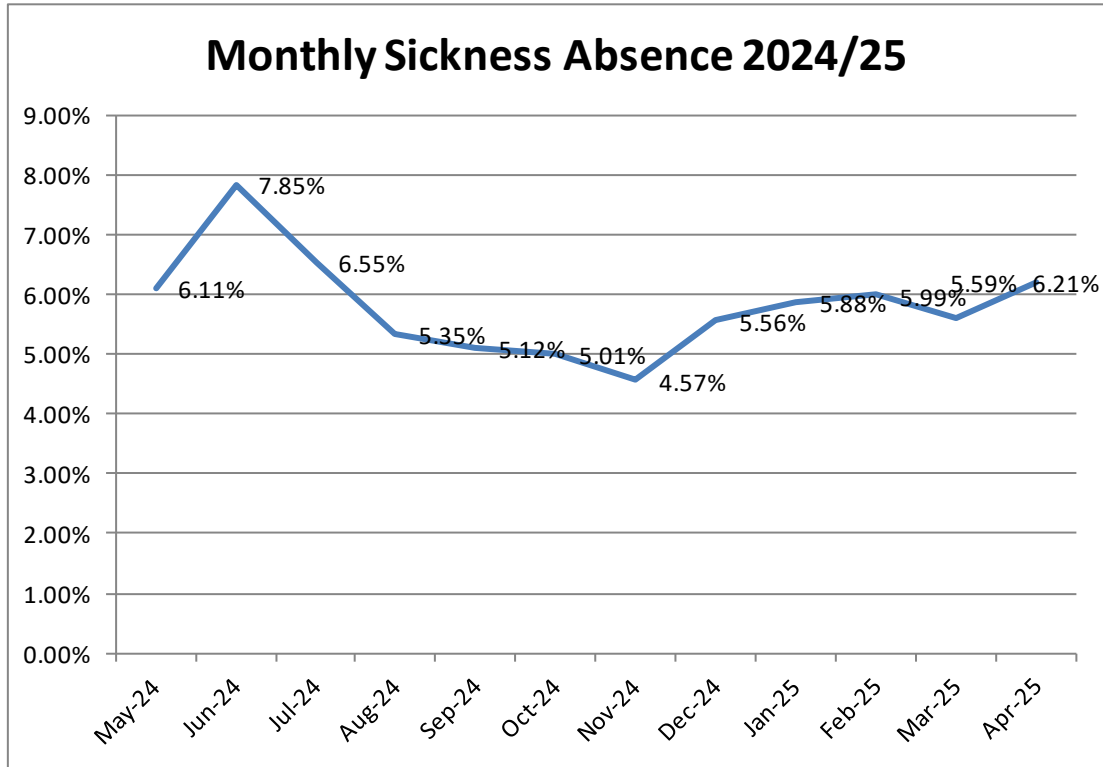


## ATTENDANCE

### 2.1 Sickness Absence

#### 2.1.1 Sickness absence rate over time

The graph shows the sickness absence trend over the past 12 months.



There was a slight rise in absence during the winter months that continues into April.

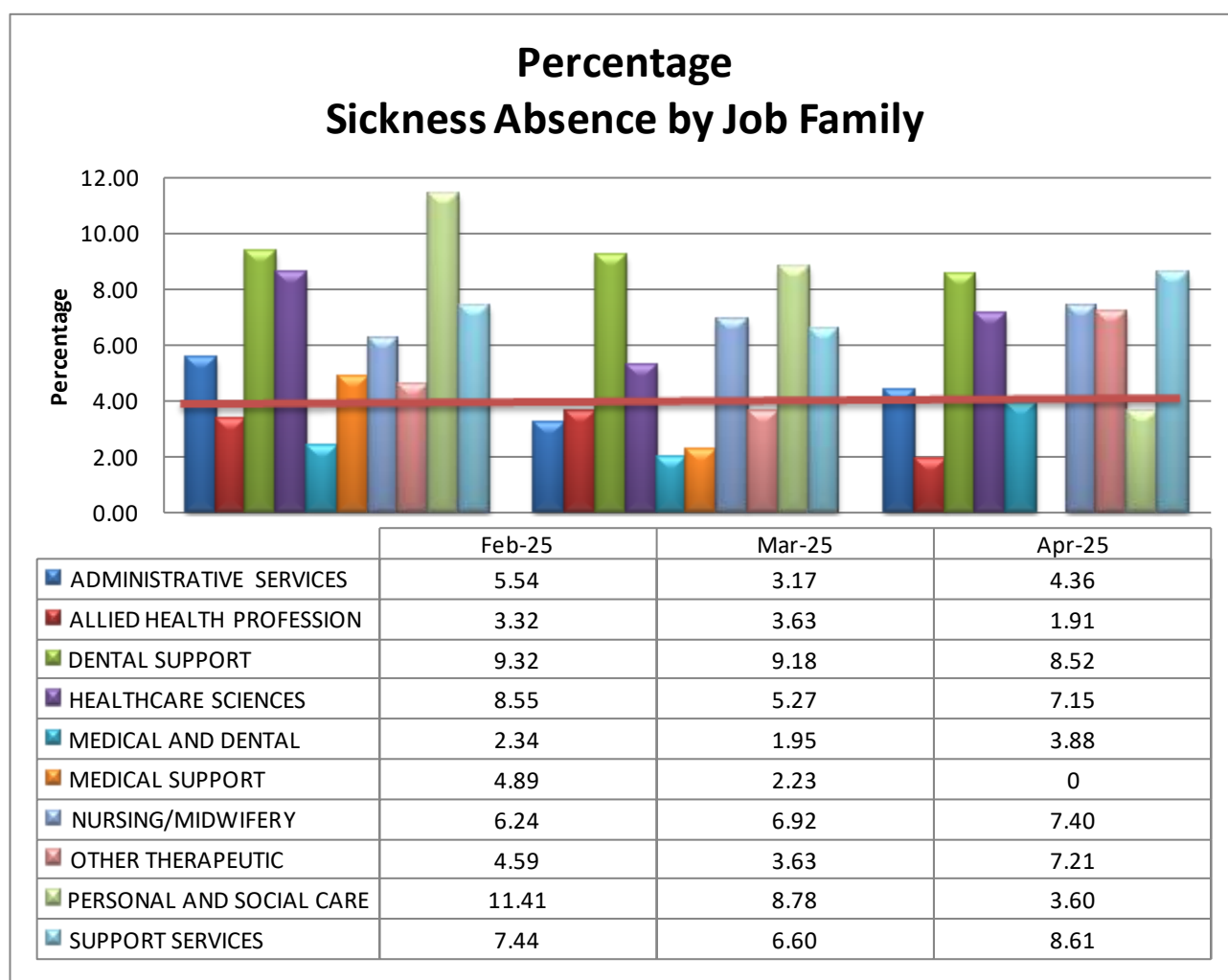
National data shows that NHS Western Isles has the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest rate of absence of all territorial boards for the period 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

Employee Relations Officer's and Occupational Health are working closely to monitor absence and ensure all absences are being managed. A monthly meeting is held to analyse absence and follow up with managers on any absences that are not being managed appropriately.

Performance review of senior managers includes management of sickness absence.

The Director of HR and Workforce Development has met with managers during February and March in areas with the highest absence to ensure all possible actions have been taken. There is a high level of assurance that the attendance management process is being applied consistently to staff who have met triggers.

## 2.1.2 Sickness Absence by Job Family 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025

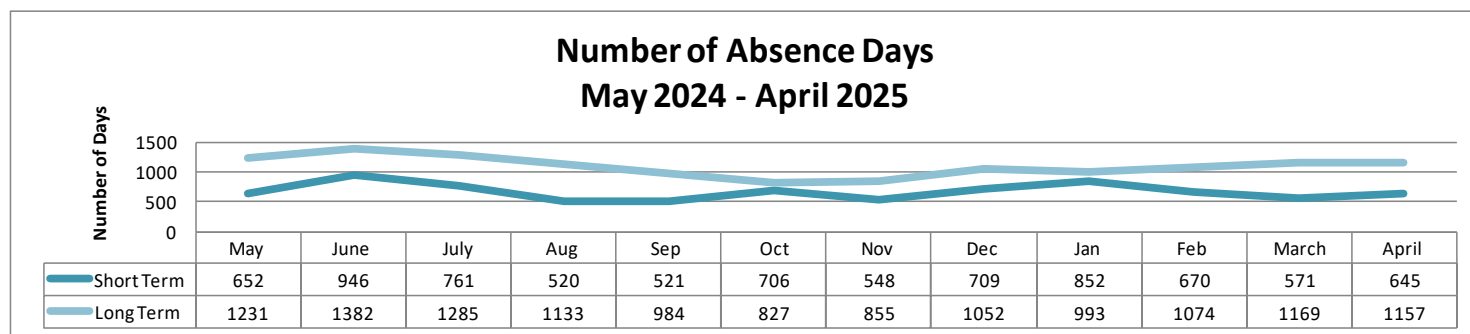


Nursing/Midwifery is the largest job family and therefore has the greatest overall impact on sickness absence. Support Services includes Domestic staff where we know sickness remains high. HR is working closely with the service to manage this absence.

Dental support has had a high level of absence in February, March and April. The service is going through a period of change so this may have impacted attendance. Dental had previously been an area of higher absence which reduced due to proper controls and process being followed.

### 2.1.3 Short Term and Long Term Absence

The increases in short term absence in October and January are due to winter illnesses as there was higher reporting of colds, coughs and flu and gastrointestinal reasons for absence.



### 2.1.4 Sickness Absence by Reason – April 2025

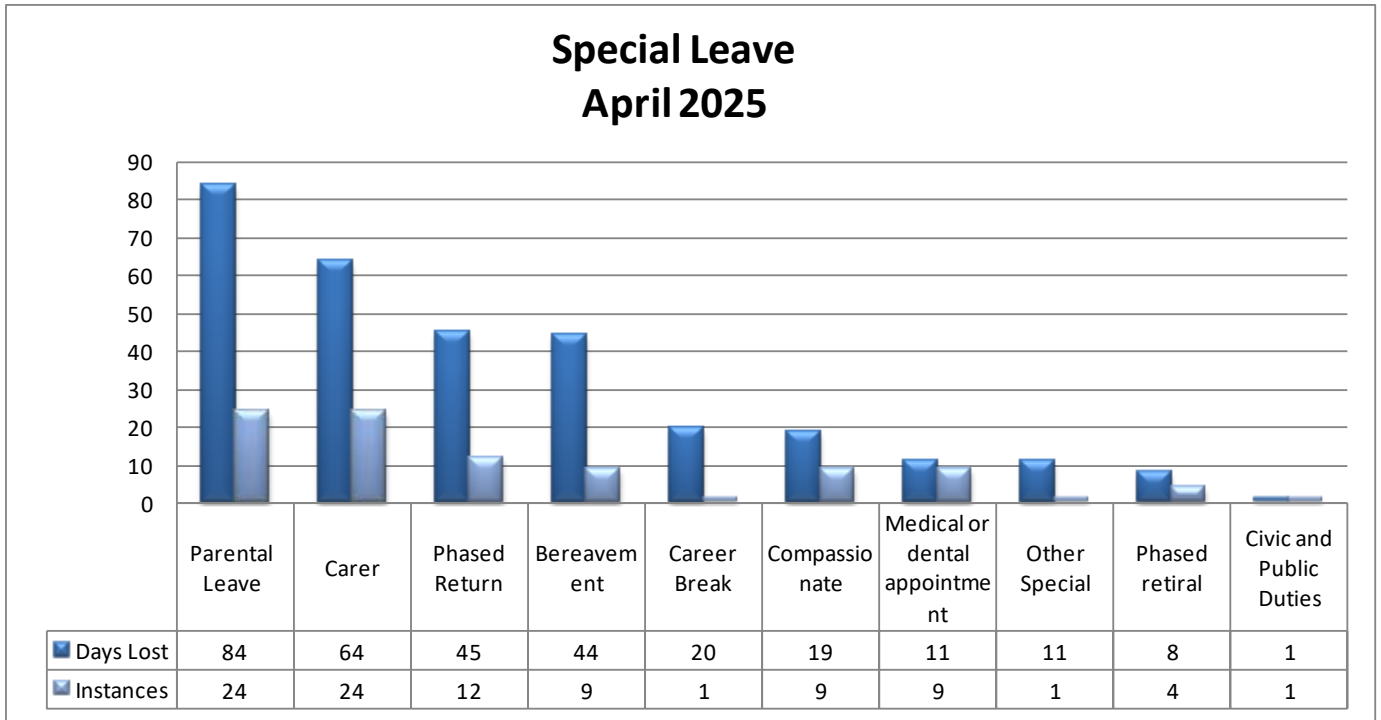
Whilst we had lower levels of absence due to anxiety/stress/depression/ other psychiatric illness over the last 6 months it has increased in March and April. The Director of HR has analysed the data in further detail to establish any themes and ensure appropriate action is taken to support staff. Musculoskeletal problems and winter illnesses are the other main reasons for absence.

Managers who have input 'unknown' reasons for absence have been contacted with an instruction to input an absence category. NHS Western Isles has the lowest number of 'unknown causes' of absences across all boards over the last year.

	Apr-25
Absence Reasons	Days Lost
Anxiety/Stress/ Depression/Other Psy Illness	494
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	254
Cold, Cough, Influenza	140
Benign Malignant Tumours	128
Back Problems	121
Injury/Fracture	121
Gastro- Intestinal Problems	100
Nervous system disorders - exclude headache, migraine	93
Heart, Cardiac, Circulatory Problems	90
Genitourinary & Gynae Problems ex Pregnancy	55
Other Known Causes not Otherwise Classified	54
Chest & Respiratory Problems	38
Eye Problems	34
Ear, Nose, Throat	18
Pregnancy Related Disorders	14
Skin Disorders	12
Dental, Oral Problems	11
Headache/Migrane	10
Infectious Diseases	7
Unknown Causes/Not Specified	3
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	2
Asthma	1
Covid Related Illness	1

### 3. Special leave

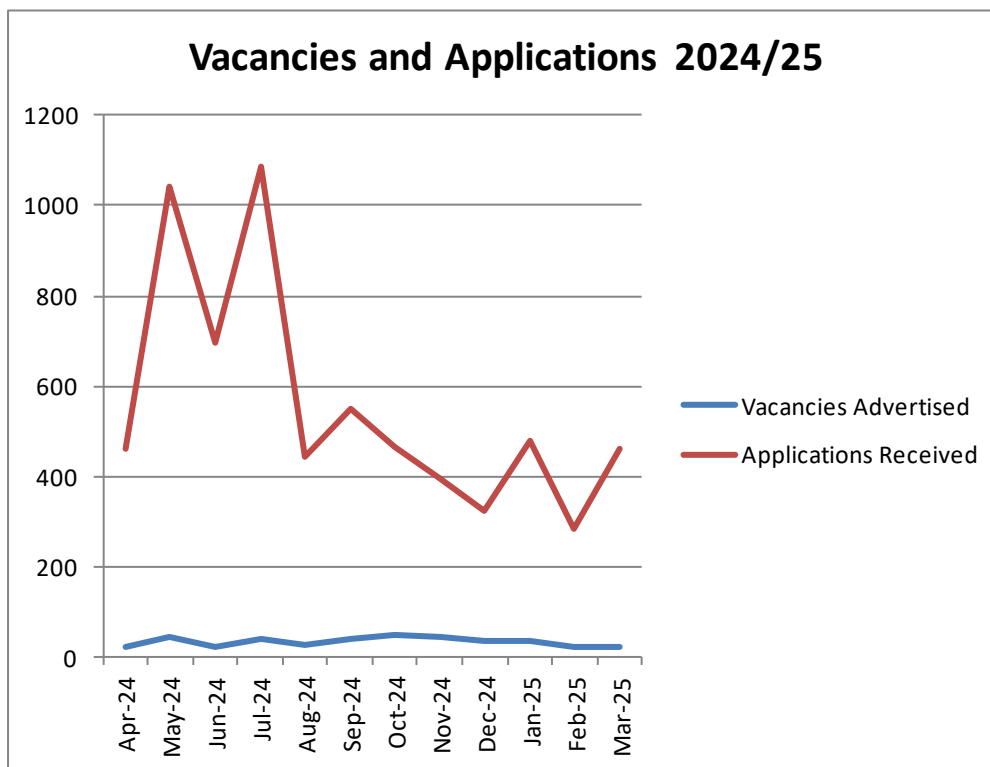
Special leave is allocated as per NHS Western Isles Policy.



### 3 RECRUITMENT

#### 3.1 Posts Advertised

A total of 411 posts have been advertised over the last 12 months with 6761 applications received which is an average of 17 applications per post.



Whilst number of applications are falling this is due to better control over speculative applications rather than a decrease in suitable applications, although suitable applications overall remain low.

Job Train functionality of 'killer questions' are used to filter out speculative applications from applications who do not meet the essential criteria. Whilst this can be effective to a certain extent applicants can circumvent the questions and submit applications. The HR team continue to assist managers sifting these high volumes.

Recruitment activity remains steady. According to national data NHS Western Isles currently has the fewest number of nursing vacancies across territorial Boards in Scotland.

### 3.2 Vacancies advertised throughout April 2025

The table below shows vacancies that have been advertised in April. There are some that have been advertised several times and are difficult to recruit to. The themes in hard to recruit posts are specialist skills (medics, AHPs, mental health) with shortages across the country. It should be noted that Psychiatry has the most Consultant vacancies across the country (57.7 WTE at 1 June 2024). Those in a remote more isolated location (posts in Uist & Barra) are also more difficult to recruit to.

April 2025 Vacancies Advertised	Times	Applications
Staff Nurse	1	2
Clinical Support Assistant	1	19
Catering Assistant	2	1
Integrated Midwife	1	15
Catering Assistant	1	7
Senior Emergency Nurse Practitioner	1	0
Emergency Department Healthcare Support Worker	1	74
Diabetes Specialist Nurse	1	1
Staff Nurse Theatre	1	112
Radiology Clerical Officer	2	20
Physiotherapist START	4	11
Senior Physiotherapist	4	11
Administrative Assistant	1	9
Supplies Officer	1	22
Alcohol and Drug Partnership Development Officer	2	18
Medical Secretary	1	9
MSK Outpatient Physiotherapist	2	20
Clinical Support Worker	1	18
Primary Care Clinical Pharmacist	1	2
Cook Chef	5	1
Surgical Ward Staff Nurse	1	111
Stroke Rehabilitation Assistant	1	17
Medical 2 Senior Charge Nurse	3	2
Radiography Student Helper	1	5
Catering Assistant	3	1
Catering Assistant Modern Apprenticeship	1	3
Catering Assistant Modern Apprenticeship	1	2
Health Visitor Team Lead	1	2
Bank Receptionist	1	14
Bank Catering Assistant	5	2
Catering Assistant	1	6
Consultant in Public Health	1	4

Actions taken to enhance recruitment include the following:

- Recruitment campaign for Consultant vacancies. This includes full page BMJ advert, BMJ enhanced online listings and accompanying communications.
- Use of international recruitment agencies for hard to fill posts.
- Advertising vacancies with a local recruitment market in the local press.
- Collaboration with local Job Centre/DWP on marketing applications and supporting candidates with applications.

- Marketing benefits of working for NHS Western Isles in terms of leave, pension, flexible working and pay enhancements.
- Using social media to maximise reach and use of different advertising methods, including LinkedIn.
- Use of recruitment and retention premia where appropriate, for example, Pharmacy, Podiatry, Tradespersons and Catering
- Advertisement of apprenticeships in Business Admin, IT, Catering and HR. A Catering apprentice and HR apprentice has been appointed.
- Requests for key worker housing from HHP resulting in suitable housing being identified for candidates.

### 3.3 Posts Appointed To

The table below shows all posts appointed to in April.

Appointed in April 2025	Start Date	Contract Type	Status
Laundry Assistant	01/04/2025	Permanent	New Starter
Domestic Assistant	01/04/2025	Permanent	New Starter
Information Technology Technical Officer	01/04/2025	Permanent	New Starter
Consultant General Surgery	14/04/2025	Permanent	New Starter
Health Protection and Screening Clinical Specialist	14/04/2025	Fixed Term	New Starter
PA to Director of Public Health	14/04/2025	Permanent	New Starter
Principal Clinical Psychologist	14/04/2025	Permanent	New Starter
Bank Healthcare Assistant	08/04/2025	Bank	New Starter
Medical Ward 1 Staff Nurse	28/04/2025	Permanent	New Starter
Bank Staff Nurse	28/04/2025	Bank	New Starter
Bank Staff Nurse	28/04/2025	Bank	New Starter
Psychological Interventions Assistant Trainee (Adults)	28/04/2025	Fixed Term	New Starter
Psychological Interventions Assistant Trainee (SYP)	28/04/2025	Fixed Term	New Starter
Clinical Lead for Realistic Medicine	14/04/2025	Fixed Term	New Starter
Pharmacy technician	15/04/2025	Permanent	New Starter
Surgical Staff Nurse	21/04/2025	Permanent	New Starter
Catering Assistant	28/04/2025	Permanent	New Starter
Healthcare Assistant	21/04/2025	Permanent	New Starter