

FOI DOF/2026-0175

Request

1. How long has the current Governor in Charge of Hydebank Wood Prison been in post; and if he has been Governor for more than one period of time to detail the dates of those periods in charge also.
2. During his time in charge of Hydebank Wood prison has the Governor in Charge ever been accused by any member of prison staff or civilian staff member of inappropriate behaviour or bullying; and if yes how many and what were the outcomes of the follow up investigation(s).
3. How many members of prison or civilian staff have retired/resigned or taken medical retirement as a direct result of dealings with the Governor in Charge of Hydebank Wood.
4. Currently how many prison service staff are sick and not in work as a result of stress in the workplace and have any directly named the Governor in Charge or any of his Senior Management Team as responsible for their illness.
5. In the time of the current Governor in Charge of Hydebank Wood prison how many prison staff (all ranks) have been on sick leave due to stress.
6. How many temporary promotions has the Governor in Charge made in Hydebank Wood prison since his arrival there (this current stint).
7. Are there any NIPS prison checks as to who received temporary promotions or are they solely at the direction and discretion of the Governing Governor.
8. Does the NIPS feel that temporary Promotions are completely safe, worthy and above board if left to one individual to decide their gift.
9. How many of the current Senior Management Team and Senior Officer team in Hydebank Wood prison are temporary posts and how many of them have sat Boards or interviews for those positions.
10. Have all Boards to temporarily promote staff been carried out with proper interviews and sifts or have there been private conversations with the Governor in Charge.
11. Was a list kept and used of prison staff that passed their Board or interview for future vacancies and how long does that list last.
12. How many temporary promotions have been made from a list of those that passed interviews and what dates were they promoted; and have others been promoted without referring to any list.

13. If a temporary promotion has been made without referring to a list or interview what justification and authority was used to grant that promotion and was HQ aware
14. What checks and balances does the NIPS have to make sure bullying or a deliberate decision to ignore some staff by the Governor in Charge, does not occur and is the Director General and Director of Prisons content with the decisions made in Hydebank Wood.

DoF response

I can confirm the department holds some of the information requested.

1. The department holds this information but this is being withheld as it is exempt under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act due the fact that it constitutes personal information of a third party which cannot be disclosed under FOI. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (or certain other provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018). The information requested also falls within the special categories of personal data which requires explicit consent from individuals to process this information. Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test – also known as a Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test - (attached as a separate document – **Annex C**), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject. Making an unrestricted disclosure of personal data for private interests could constitute a disproportionate and unwarranted level of interference with the individuals' rights and freedoms – particularly their right to privacy and family life under the Human Rights Act 1998.
2. The department holds some information in relation to the request however this is being withheld as it is exempt under Section 40(2) as the information being requested falls within the special categories of personal data which requires explicit consent from individuals to process this information. Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test – also known as a Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test - (attached as a separate document – **Annex C**), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject. Making an unrestricted disclosure of personal data for private interests could constitute a disproportionate and unwarranted level of interference with the individuals' rights and freedoms – particularly their right to privacy and family life under the Human Rights Act 1998

3. The department does not hold information in a format that would enable us to respond to your request.
4. Information you have requested is being withheld as it is exempt under section 22(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 22(1) protects information intended for future publication. Section 22 is a qualified exemption, and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours maintaining the exemption in section 22(1) or disclosing the information by conducting a Public Interest Test. This can be found attached as a separate document (**Annex D**)

Information on sickness absence levels across all business areas and grades in the NICS is published annually by NISRA and can be accessed at: [Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2024/25 | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#)

5. Information you have requested is being withheld as it is exempt under section 22(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 22(1) protects information intended for future publication. Section 22 is a qualified exemption, and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours maintaining the exemption in section 22(1) or disclosing the information by conducting a Public Interest Test. This can be found attached as a separate document (**Annex D**). Information on sickness absence levels is published annually by NISRA and can be accessed at: [Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2024/25 | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#)
6. The department holds the information requested, however where the numbers are less than ten, the exact figure cannot be provided as it may identify specific individuals. This is being withheld as it is exempt under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act due to the low number individuals involved. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (or certain other provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018). The information requested also falls within the special categories of personal data which requires explicit consent from individuals to process this information. Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test – also known as a Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test - (attached as a separate document – **Annex C**), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject. Making an unrestricted disclosure of personal data for private interests could constitute a disproportionate and unwarranted level of interference with the individuals' rights and freedoms – particularly their right to privacy and family life under the Human Rights Act 1998.
7. The Department of Finance, NICS HR (Strategic HR Business Partner Team for NIPS) runs temporary promotion competitions on behalf of the business area where required and these are managed in line with section 17 of the NICS Career Opportunities & Promotion Policy at: [1.05 Career Opportunities and Promotion](#) applicable to all business areas within the NICS.

8. The department does not hold information in relation to this specific question but would refer to the response above at Question 7.
9. The department holds the information requested, however where the numbers are less than ten, the exact figure cannot be provided as it may identify specific individuals. This is being withheld as it is exempt under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act due to the low number individuals involved. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (or certain other provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018). The information requested also falls within the special categories of personal data which requires explicit consent from individuals to process this information. Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test – also known as a Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test - (attached as a separate document – **Annex C**), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject. Making an unrestricted disclosure of personal data for private interests could constitute a disproportionate and unwarranted level of interference with the individuals' rights and freedoms – particularly their right to privacy and family life under the Human Rights Act 1998.
10. Refer to response at Question 8.
11. Temporary promotion merit lists remain live and can be drawn from for 1 year from the date that they are agreed by a selection panel. The Department of Finance NICS HR (Strategic HR Business Partner Team for NIPS) retains records of all temporary promotion competition merit lists ran for the NIPS.
12. The department holds the information requested, however where the numbers are less than ten, the exact figure cannot be provided as it may identify specific individuals. This is being withheld as it is exempt under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act due to the low number individuals involved. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (or certain other provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018). The information requested also falls within the special categories of personal data which requires explicit consent from individuals to process this information. Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test – also known as a Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test - (attached as a separate document – **Annex C**), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject. Making an unrestricted disclosure of personal data for private interests could constitute a disproportionate and unwarranted level of interference with the individuals' rights and freedoms – particularly their right to privacy and family life under the Human Rights Act 1998.

13. The policy provides for the circumstances as described, for further information refer to section 17 of the Career Opportunities and Promotion Policy at: [1.05 Career Opportunities and Promotion](#)
14. The department does not hold this information but as stated above, the Department of Finance, NICS HR (Strategic HR Business Partner Team for NIPS) manages temporary promotion competitions in line with the NICS Career Opportunities and Promotion Policy.