

Our reference: **CHSFOI22-23.05**

██████████
██████████

Dear ██████████

DECISION ON YOUR ACCESS APPLICATION

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (FOI Act), received by Canberra Health Services (CHS) originally on Thursday 18 August 2022 and was rescoped on **Thursday 13 October 2022**.

The rescoped application requested access to:

'How many Canberra Health staff have required leave for Covid 19 infections and subsequent illness with Covid 19?'

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of Canberra Health Services (CHS) under section 18 of the FOI Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act. CHS was required to provide a decision on your access application by **Thursday 10 November 2022**.

The information has been extracted into one document holding information within the scope of your access application. The document was created for the purpose of your request and captures information sourced from ACT Government HR IT systems.

CHS does not hold information on the number of staff who accessed leave. COVID-19 related leave is processed in the payroll system as 'other' leave. After 'other' leave is processed it is unable to be broken down by leave type. The data provided at Attachment A relates to the number of days of COVID-19 leave applied for. This does not signify approved leave days or the number of staff who applied for leave.

Decisions on access

I have decided to grant full access to the one document.

In reaching my access decision, I have taken the following into account:

- The FOI Act;
- The contents of the documents that fall within the scope of your request;
- The views of relevant third parties; and
- The *Human Rights Act 2004*.

Charges

Processing charges are not applicable to this request.

Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the FOI Act, CHS maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. The scope of your access application, my decision and documents released to you will be published in the disclosure log not less than three days but not more than 10 days after the date of this decision. Your personal contact details will not be published.

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/freedom-information/disclosure-log>.

Ombudsman review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the FOI Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is published in ACT Health's disclosure log, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

If you wish to request a review of my decision you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Via email: ACTFOI@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: ombudsman.act.gov.au

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
Level 4, 1 Moore St
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740
<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

Further assistance

Should you have any queries in relation to your request, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI Coordinator on (02) 5124 9831 or email HealthFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

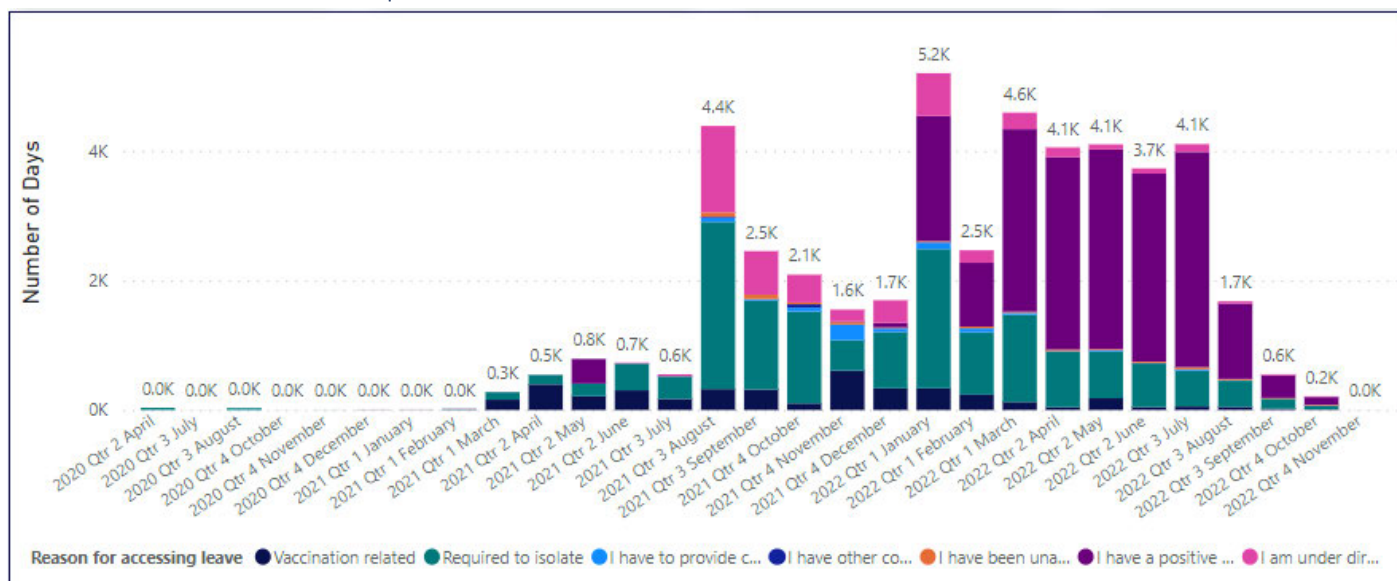


Kalena Smitham
Executive Group Manager
People and Culture

10 November 2022

CHSFOI22-23.05 – Request for Data

With regard to sick leave; how many Canberra Health staff have required leave for COVID-19 infections and subsequent illness with COVID-19?



The above graph depicts the number of days of ‘COVID-19 Leave’ applied for by CHS staff from April 2020 to 30 October 2022.

There are 7 different options staff can enter when applying for COVID leave:

1. Vaccination related
2. Required to Isolate
3. I have to provide care for my child/children as a result of school/childcare closures whilst facility is cleaned and am unable to work from home
4. I have other compassionate grounds for not being able to attend the workplace, I am unable to work from home and have exhausted my other leave options
5. I have been unable to secure a childcare placement for my child/children as a result of COVID related reasons – I am trying to make alternative childcare arrangements and am unable to work from home
6. I have a positive COVID-19 diagnosis
7. I am under a direction from a public health authority to isolate/quarantine and unable to work from home

The figure under “Required to isolate” is a combined total of those applications under;

- Required to isolate
- I am under a direction from a public health authority to isolate/quarantine and unable to work from home

The figure under “Vaccination related” is a total of those applications under ‘Vaccination related’.

The figure under “COVID Infections” is a total of those applications under ‘I have a positive COVID-19 diagnoses.

The figure under “Total (incl. other) is a combined total of all COVID-19 Leave applications.

COVID19 Leave data caveats

Due to the way that this data is captured (through applications for COVID-19 Leave) there are several caveats that need to be taken into consideration:

- The data is representative of the amount of COVID-19 Leave applications that have been applied for, not those applications that have been approved
- If there have been errors in a staff members original COVID-19 Leave application which meant they needed to resubmit their leave application, this will result in duplication of the data
- Due to the nature of the leave requirement, COVID Leave applications are submitted retrospectively once the staff member has returned to the workplace

Personal leave as a result of COVID-19 infections

As per the ACTPS [‘Emergency Response – ACTPS employee entitlement and access to leave during the COVID-19 pandemic’](#) policy (aka. ACTPS COVID Leave policy), ACTPS staff are provided with 7 consecutive days of COVID Leave for if they contract COVID-19. After the 7 days of COVID Leave, if staff are still unwell they are required to access their own Personal Leave balances. If these balances have been exhausted, additional COVID Leave can be considered.

Due to the way that Personal Leave is processed by Shared Services, it is not possible to determine whether the Personal Leave application is COVID-19 related. No information is recorded on the ACTPS payroll system regarding the nature and/or justification of the Personal Leave request.