

Reference:	FOI.11596.23
Subject:	Dog attacks
Date of Request:	1 May 2023

Requested:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, can your health board provide annual numbers of people hospitalised in the health board area as a result of dog attacks (or more specifically, dog bites) between 2010 and 2022? If so, can you also provide data on the age range, gender and location (including health board area) of those who had to be hospitalised due to dog attacks?

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with all of the information requested, as it is estimated that the cost of answering your request would exceed the “appropriate limit” as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004. The “appropriate limit” represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours (or 2½ working days) in determining whether the UHB holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

In order to provide you with the data for the 2010 calendar year, the UHB would have to undertake a manual search of all patient hospital admission records, to identify those that were admitted due to a dog attack, as the Welsh Patient Administration System (WPAS) has not produced any results. The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which provides an exemption from a public authority’s obligation to comply with a request for information where the cost of compliance is estimated to exceed the *appropriate limit*.

The UHB is also unable to provide you with the information broken down by location, or gender, as requested, due to the low number of cases (5 and under).

Additionally, where the figures in the tables have been replaced with an asterisk (*), the UHB is unable to provide you with the exact number, again due to the low numbers of cases (5 and under), as there is a potential risk of identifying individuals if this was disclosed. The UHB has also replaced totals which could be used to calculate the redacted figure with a double asterisk (**). Therefore, the UHB is withholding these details under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA).

This information is protected by the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR), as its disclosure would constitute unfair and unlawful processing and would be contrary to the principles and articles 6 and 9 of the UK GDPR. This exemption is absolute and therefore, there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.

In reaching this decision, the Data Protection Act 2018/UK GDPR define personal data as data which relates to a living individual who can be identified solely from that data, or from that data and other information, which is in the possession of the data controller.

However, under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act, the UHB has a duty to provide advice and assistance to requestors. Therefore, the UHB has provided the accessible data it holds for the 2011 to 2022 calendar years and by age groups.

The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of patients that required inpatient treatment as a result of a dog bite, broken down by age group, across its acute hospitals, as recorded on the UHB's WPAS, during the 2011 to 2022 calendar years.

Calendar year	Age range			Total
	0-16	17-64	65 plus	
2011	*	9	*	15
2012	*	8	*	12
2013	*	9	*	13
2014	0	7	*	**
2015	0	11	*	**
2016	*	9	*	14
2017	*	16	*	19
2018	*	9	*	16
2019	*	7	*	13
2020	*	8	8	**
2021	*	15	*	18
2022	*	12	*	18
Total	24	120	38	182