

Reference:	FOI.10007.22
Subject:	Remote monitoring of patients
Date of Request:	11 October 2022

Requested:

1. Does your organisation use remote monitoring tools to help patients to manage their health and care at home?
2. Has your organisation extended the use of remote monitoring to utilise solutions to proactively manage the next steps of care for patients being treated in the home?
3. If yes, does the organisation use any suppliers to support the process of providing virtual wards?
 - a) Please state the name of the supplier/supplier's.
 - b) Please provide the annual cost for the above supplier contract for the financial year 20/21 to 21/22 (April 2021- March 2022)
4. If yes, is this made up of existing resource or additional capacity?
5. Could you please provide the name and job title of the person who is responsible for the management of virtual wards?
6. Please complete the table for each of the specialities listed:

Response:

1. Yes, Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) does utilise remote monitoring tools to help patients manage their health and care at home
2. Yes, the UHB has extended its use of remote monitoring solutions to proactively manage the next steps of patients' care as per their individual needs.
3. a. The UHB works with a third party provider, Delta Wellbeing, who commissioned the services of external providers to deliver the virtual ward service.
3. b. As the details requested relate to third party suppliers commissioned by a third party contracted supplier, the UHB considers that Section 43 of the FoIA applies, as answering would be prejudicial to their commercial interests. Section 43(2) exempts information, disclosure of which would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person; in this case the provider listed above. Commercial interests may be prejudiced where disclosure would, or would be likely to:
 - Weaken a company's position in a competitive environment by revealing market sensitive information or information of potential usefulness to its competitors.
 - Damage a company's business reputation or the confidence that customers/users, suppliers or investors may have in it.

This exemption is qualified; therefore, even if information falls within Section 43, public authorities must then apply the public interest test set out in Section 2(2)(b).

The information can only be withheld if the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

The UHB has therefore considered the following:

In favour of disclosure: There is a public interest in transparency and in the accountability of public funds. Furthermore, it is in the public's interest that public funds be used effectively and that public sector bodies obtain the best value for money when contracting for the provision of services. Private sector bodies engaging in commercial activities with the public sector must expect some information about those activities to be disclosed.

Against Disclosure: Disclosure of this information would have a direct impact and cause substantial harm to the suppliers, as it would disclose their pricing and products/services provided to the UHB, and it would be likely that this would damage their ability to work within a highly competitive sector. The information being requested is likely to be used by their competitors to gain a competitive advantage.

Decision: - The UHB has considered that releasing the information under the FoIA, to which the UHB is subject, will give an unfair advantage to the suppliers' competitors. The UHB believes that there is wider established public interest in companies not being prejudiced merely because they have contracted with a public sector body, and that there is a public interest in ensuring that there is competition for public sector contracts.

Therefore, the public interest in withholding the costs for the service is greater than the interests in disclosing it and thereby giving unfair commercial advantage to competitors of the company to which this information concerns.

4. The remote monitoring service has been extended using existing resource.
5. Claire Hurlin, Strategic Head of Community and Chronic Conditions is the responsible officer.
6. The table has been completed as requested

Speciality	What specialties are Virtual Wards currently implemented in? (tick for yes)	If yes, How many virtual "beds" are currently operating in total and in each speciality?	Please state the number of beds the organisation has in total and for each speciality?
Total			
Mental Health			
Cardiology	✓	The UHB cannot provide a fixed number as this fluctuates	Not determined – the work we are doing is proof of concept / the evaluation will provide a better indication of the optimum number of beds we require relative to population demographics and epidemiology
Dermatology			

Diabetes			
Endocrinology			
Gastroenterology			
Geriatric Medicine			
Gynaecology			
Hepatology			
Neurology			
Oncology			
Ophthalmology			
Palliative medicine			
Paediatrics services			
Physiotherapy	✓		
Rehabilitation	✓	The UHB cannot provide a fixed number as this fluctuates	Not determined – the work we are doing is proof of concept / the evaluation will provide a better indication of the optimum number of beds we require relative to population demographics and epidemiology
Renal medicine			
Respiratory	✓	The UHB cannot provide a fixed number as this fluctuates	Not determined – the work we are doing is proof of concept / the evaluation will provide a better indication of the optimum number of beds we require relative to population demographics and epidemiology
Rheumatology			
Colorectal surgery			
Breast Surgery Service			
Ear, Nose and Throat			
General Surgery			
Orthopaedics and Trauma	✓	The UHB cannot provide a fixed number as this fluctuates	Not determined – the work we are doing is proof of concept / the evaluation will provide a better indication of the optimum number of beds we require relative to population demographics and epidemiology
Orthoptics			

Pain management			
Plastic surgery			
Thoracic medicine			
Urology			
Vascular surgery			
Audiology Service			
Other- Please state which			