

Reference:	FOI.14403.24
Subject:	Audiology services
Date of Request:	13 May 2024

Requested:

To better understand how your trust deals with audiology services, please clarify whether your Health Board provides these services:

- a. In-house (i.e., delivered in your Health Board or provided by another NHS organisation)
- b. Outsourced (i.e., delivered by an independent provider in their care setting)
- c. Insourced (i.e., delivered by an independent provider in your care setting)

Additionally, please provide the following data for your Health Board and for each financial year 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, and 2023/24:

Hearing assessments

1. How many patients had a hearing assessment within the following settings and what was the total spending in £ on treating these patients (where possible please could you give the data per independent provider contracted):
 - a. In-house
 - b. Outsourced
 - c. Insourced

Hearing aid fittings

2. How many patients had a hearing aid fitting assessment within the following settings and what was the total spending in £ on treating these patients (where possible please could you give the data per independent provider contracted):
 - a. In-house
 - b. Outsourced
 - c. Insourced

Hearing aid aftercare

3. How many patients had hearing aid aftercare performed within the following settings and what was the total spending in £ on treating these patients (where possible please could you give the data per independent provider contracted):
 - a. In-house
 - b. Outsourced
 - c. Insourced

Hearing aid devices

4. How many hearing aid devices were delivered to patients within the following settings and what was the total spend £ on hearing aid devices for these patients in (where possible please could you give the data per independent provider contracted):
 - a. In-house
 - b. Outsourced
 - c. Insourced

Other

5. Could you please provide a copy of the service specification given to all bidders for when the contract for hearing aid services was last advertised?

If any of the specific splits are not available, please provide total figures for the system and specify which main splits are recorded by your Health Board (in-house / independent sector).

For your convenience, I have attached an Excel file for you to use and provide the requested information.

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) does not hold all of the information requested as it has not outsourced or insourced Audiology services during the requested financial years, and has not advertised for hearing aid services. Additionally, the financial information requested is not recorded by the activity types requested.

The UHB is also unable to provide you with all of the information requested for question 4, as it is estimated that the cost of answering your request would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) 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.

As the information on hearing aid devices delivered to patients is not collated and recorded centrally, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all Audiology patient records, for the 2018/19 to 2022/23 financial years, to identify the information that may fulfil these parts of your request.

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), 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.

However, under section 16 of the FoIA, the UHB has a duty to provide advice and assistance and provides the accessible information it holds for its in-house Audiology service, within the attached spreadsheet as requested, at Attachment 1.

Additionally, the UHB provides a copy of its Audiology Service Specification that has been developed by the Audiology service, at Attachment 2.