

Reference:	FOI.15342.24
Subject:	Caesarean sections and birth pool deliveries
Date of Request:	25 September 2024

Requested:

1. Number of Women using a Birthing Pool/Water Immersion following a previous Caesarean Section:

Please provide the number of women who had a previous caesarean section and used a birthing pool or water immersion during a subsequent labour and/or birth in your Health Board for each of the following time periods:

- 01 January 2013 – 31 December 2013
- 01 January 2014 – 31 December 2014
- 01 January 2015 – 31 December 2015
- 01 January 2016 – 31 December 2016
- 01 January 2017 – 31 December 2017
- 01 January 2018 - 31 December 2018
- 01 January 2019 - 31 December 2019
- 01 January 2020 - 31 December 2020
- 01 January 2021 - 31 December 2021
- 01 January 2022 - 31 December 2022
- 01 January 2023 - 31 December 2023

2. Clinical Guidelines:

- Please provide copies of any current maternity/midwifery/obstetric clinical guidelines, policies or protocols specifically relating to:
 - The use of water immersion or birthing pools during labour and/or birth.
 - Vaginal birth after caesarean section (VBAC).
- Please provide copies of any other maternity/midwifery/obstetric clinical guidelines, policies or protocols which contain information about water immersion/birthing pools during labour and/or birth.
- Please provide copies of any other maternity/midwifery/obstetric clinical guidelines, policies or protocols which contain information about vaginal birth after caesarean section.

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 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.

Maternity data is only centrally recorded as far back as the 2018 calendar year. Therefore, in order to identify the information requested prior to this date, the UHB would be required to undertake a

manual trawl of maternity records for the 2013 to 2017 calendar years, to identify the required information.

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. Therefore, the UHB provides the accessible information it holds below.

1. The UHB provides within the table below, the number of women who birthed in a birthing pool following a previous caesarean section, during the 2018 to 2023 calendar years.

Calendar year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number	5	13	*	5	5	9

Where the figure in the table has been replaced with an asterisk (*), the UHB is unable to provide you with the exact number of patients due to the low number of cases (less than 5), as there is a potential risk of identifying individuals if this was disclosed. The UHB is therefore withholding this detail under Section 40(2) of the FoIA. This information is protected by the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)/UK General Data Protection Regulations, as its disclosure would constitute unfair and unlawful processing and would be contrary to the principles and articles 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 DPA and UK GDPR define personal data as data that 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.

2. The requested clinical guidelines are provided at Attachments 1 and 2.