

Reference:	FOI.429.19
Subject:	Caesarean sections
Date of Request:	28 March 2019

Requested

I would be very grateful if you would clarify whether it is the Health Board's policy to ensure that a place is available in the special care baby unit in all cases where a mother is going to give birth by caesarean section on a predetermined date.

Additionally, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would be very grateful if you would provide the following information:

Over the last three years, on a year by year basis –

1. How many caesarean sections have not gone ahead on the scheduled date?
2. How many caesarean sections have not gone ahead at the scheduled time, but been postponed to a later time on the same day?
3. How many mothers were sent home hospital on the day of the operation due to the caesarean section being cancelled?
4. How many mothers suffered more than one cancelled or postponed caesarean section on the same birth?
5. How many babies were stillborn to women whose caesarean section was cancelled or postponed?

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) does not secure a bed in the Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) for patients scheduled to deliver their baby by caesarean. Most planned caesareans are scheduled weeks in advance and so securing a bed would not be possible. The working policy for any caesarean birth that may require a SCBU bed is to check availability daily and continually assess both availability and need.

The UHB records the total number of caesarean sections performed, but does not routinely record the number of these that were postponed or cancelled. Typically a caesarean section is rearranged over the phone prior to attendance at hospital, however there may be occasions whereby the expectant mother's surgery is re-arranged following her arrival at hospital, these may be recorded within the patient notes.

The UHB is unable to provide the details requested regarding cancelled or postponed caesarean sections as it is estimated that the cost of doing this would exceed the "appropriate level" as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004. The "appropriate level" represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours or (2 ½ working days) in determining whether the UHB holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

In order to ascertain whether the information is recorded within medical notes and subsequently collect the data the UHB would be required to conduct a manual trawl of all maternity notes for mothers who delivered via caesarean section within the requested timeframe. Within the 2016/17 financial year alone the UHB delivered 969 babies via caesarean, therefore in order to conduct this limited search alone it is estimated to cost:

969 @ 15 minutes per record = 242.25 hours

242.25 hours @ £25 per hours = £6,056.25