

Reference:	FOI.16938.25
Subject:	Clinic utilisation and cost
Date of Request:	25 March 2025

Request and response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) does not hold all of the information requested for question 1, as Oral Surgery, Neurosurgical, Plastic Surgery and Cardiothoracic services are provided by Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB).

We therefore recommend that you redirect these parts of your request to the Freedom of Information Team at SBUHB who may be able to help you further. The contact details are as follows:

FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk or alternatively, you can contact: FOIA Team, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Health Board Headquarters, 1 Talbot Gateway, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR.

The UHB provides the information it holds within the table below, as requested.

Clinical Services (Outpatients)	1. What is the average booked Clinic Utilisation for the mentioned clinical services?
General Surgery Service	95%
Urology Service	95%
Trauma and Orthopaedic Service	88%
Ear Nose and Throat Service	90%
Ophthalmology Service	70%
Oral Surgery Service	Not held
Neurosurgical Service	Not held
Plastic Surgery Service	Not held
Cardiothoracic Surgery Service	Not held
General Internal Medicine Service	64%
Gastroenterology Service	94%
Cardiology Service	97%
Dermatology Service	82%
Respiratory Medicine Service	90%
Neurology Service	99%
Rheumatology Service	87%
Elderly Medicine Service	82%
Gynaecology Service	71%
Other - Medical Services	Diabetic Medicine: 93% Endocrinology: 98% Stroke Medicine: 83%
Other - Mental Health Services	83% (Adult Mental Illness)
Other - Paediatric Services	Acute Paediatrics: 68%
Other - Surgical Services	Breast: 72% Colorectal: 87% Vascular: 91 Pain Management: 97%
Other - Other Services	Not applicable

Radiology/Imaging	95.7%
Respiratory physiology - Sleep Studies	90.2% (Sleep Disordered Breathing)
Urodynamics - Pressures & Flows	Not held
Endoscopy	97.6%
Trust Average	87%

The UHB does not hold the information exactly as requested for question 2. Therefore, the UHB provides, within the table overleaf as requested, the costs of attended Outpatient appointments, by Specialty, as provided to Welsh Government (WG) via the Welsh Costing Returns, for the 2023/24 financial year.

Clinical Services (Outpatients)	2. What is the average financial cost to the trust for a vacant/DNA'd outpatient clinic appointment slot for the following clinical services? Eg: New appointment £200, Follow up appointment £124			
	Face to Face appointment		Virtual appointment	
	New	Follow up	New	Follow up
General Surgery Service	£331.12	£203.35	£318.95	£170.28
Urology Service	£244.95	£155.86	£210.24	£117.54
Trauma and Orthopaedic Service	£270.84	£166.74	£227.21	£116.42
Ear Nose and Throat Service	£205.84	£119.23	£144.71	£91.86
Ophthalmology Service	£268.55	£161.22	£163.44	£202.91
Oral Surgery Service	Not held			
Neurosurgical Service	Not held			
Plastic Surgery Service	Not held			
Cardiothoracic Surgery Service	Not held			
Other Medicine	£275.21	£193.55	£343.74	£142.97
Gastroenterology Service	£528.93	£287.84	£425.16	£157.32
Cardiology Service	£477.63	£194.71	£418.99	£155.18
Dermatology Service	£256.71	£169.90	£222.94	£136.20
Respiratory Medicine Service	Included in 'Other Medicine' above			
Neurology Service	£327.00	£175.51	£247.07	£52.87
Rheumatology Service	£728.09	£380.33	£574.99	£301.11
Elderly Medicine Service	£562.27	£286.52	£555.22	£278.55
Gynaecology Service	£479.90	£244.06	£417.42	£214.71
*Other - Medical Services	£296.53	£147.23	£419.82	£170.09
**Other - Mental Health Services	£533.39	£283.97	£496.47	£257.02
Other - Paediatric Services	£660.58	£359.33	£669.20	£336.66
Other - Surgical Services	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
***Other - Other Services	£318.81	£161.73	£222.38	£515.31
Radiology/Imaging	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Respiratory physiology - Sleep Studies	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Urodynamics - Pressures & Flows	Not held			
Endoscopy	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Trust Average	£346.94	£189.64	£314.04	£176.33

* Includes – Genito Urinary Medicine, Haematology, Infectious Diseases, Medical Nephrology, Oncology, Palliative Care and Thoracic Medicine.

** Includes - Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Learning Disabilities, Mental Illness and Old Age Psychiatry.

*** Includes - Accident and Emergency (A&E), Clinical Oncology, Obstetrics and Pain.

3. Freedom Of Information Request	Response	Example
<p>What is the unit cost to the trust for sending an appointment letter to patients and which provider does the trust utilise? If a unit/consumption cost is not available, please provide details of the provider and the annual contract value for appointment notification letters.</p>	<p>Section 21 and 43 exemptions applied. Full explanation provided below.</p>	<p>Mail To Me Ltd – Provider £0.04 per appointment letter / £2.3M spent during Jan 24 – Dec 24</p>

The UHB is applying an exemption under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), as some of this information is already in the public domain and is accessible by another means. The UHB uses Royal mail for its paper-based appointment letters alongside the Quadient Ltd franking system. The tariffs for which are available on the Quadient website.

For ease of reference, a link has been provided below, which will take you directly to the webpage where the price list can be downloaded.

[Royal Mail Price List](#)

An exemption under Section 43 of the FoIA has been applied to the contract costs for its digital supplier, as they relate to a third party and would be prejudicial to their commercial interests. Section 43(2) exempts information, where disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any company.

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 openness and transparency and in the accountability of the use 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.

Against Disclosure: Disclosure of this information would have a direct impact and may cause substantial harm to the provider, as it would disclose their pricing, 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 consulted with the third party, PSL Ltd, and has taken their comments into consideration. It has therefore been decided that releasing the information under the FoIA, to which the UHB is subject, will give an unfair advantage to the provider's 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.

The UHB considers that the public interest in withholding the costs, is greater than the interest in disclosing it.