

Reference:	FOI.13974.24
Subject:	Cost of processing Freedom of Information (FOI) requests
Date of Request:	7 March 2024

Requested:

For the last 3 tax year's (23/22, 22/21, 21/20) please provide the total cost of:

1. Total number of staff hired with responsibility for freedom of information requests, (full time equivalent).
2. Total salary costs for staff with responsibility for freedom of information requests.
3. Total for all other costs associated with handling freedom of information requests.
4. Total number of freedom of information requests received, and total number responded with the requested information.

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 (FoIA) 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.

FOI requests received by the UHB can be fully or partially responded to with the application of appropriate exemptions, be responded to by way of a refusal notice or be diverted to other organisations for response. The UHB does not centrally record the outcome of its FOI requests and would therefore be required to undertake a manual trawl of all FOI requests received to identify all of the information requested at question 4.

A total of 1,588 FOI requests were received during the requested timeframe; it is estimated that the cost of answering your request would be:

1,588 records @ 10 minutes per record = 264.67 hours
264.67 hours @ £25 per hour = £6,616.67

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the 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. As such, I can inform you that the UHB’s FOI function is managed through the Corporate Governance directorate. The FOI Officer manages the day-to-day FOI function and ensures all requests are fulfilled in accordance with the Health Board’s statutory duty. There are wider roles which support the FOI Officer and the FOI function; by way of administrative tasks, quality assurance checks and approval processes etc however there is only one person employed to undertake this role.

1. The UHB has not recruited any new members of staff with responsibility for FOI requests during the time period requested. The UHB has (1) one FTE member of staff responsible for processing FOI requests, namely the FOI Officer. This resource has remained at this level since the Act was introduced.

2. The FOI Officer is employed by the UHB on a band 5 salary. A national pay system - Agenda for Change (AfC) - was introduced across the NHS in October 2004 for all directly employed staff except doctors and the most senior managers. The salary scale for a band 5 employee as set out in the AfC pay system is between £28,834 - £35,099.

Whilst the function is also supported by other members of the wider team, the UHB does not hold a salary figure representative of the time each of these members of staff spend on the FOI aspects of their roles.

3. The UHB does not hold the information requested.
4. The UHB provides within the table overleaf the total number of FOI requests received within the time period requested.

Year	FOI requests
2022/23	569
2021/22	552
2020/21	467

Additionally, the UHB publishes the responses to its requests for information under the FoIA on its disclosure log, which can be accessed via the following link:

[Disclosure Log - Hywel Dda University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)