

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.13515.24
<b>Subject:</b>	COVID-19 and Bronglais General Hospital
<b>Date of Request:</b>	4 January 2024

**Requested:**

1. How many patients were infected with Covid in Bronglais Hospital, Aberystwyth between January 1st 2021 and March 30th 2021?
2. How many staff in Bronglais Hospital, Aberystwyth were infected with Covid between January 1st 2021 and March 30th 2021?
3. How many patients died with Covid on the death certificate that had been patients in Bronglais Hospital, Aberystwyth between January 1st 2021 and March 30th 2021?
4. What infection prevention & control (IPC) guidance was in being followed between January 1st 2021 and March 30th 2021 Bronglais Hospital, Aberystwyth?
5. What Welsh Government and Public Health Wales Guidance was being followed in-between January 1st 2021 and March 30th 2021 Bronglais Hospital, Aberystwyth?

**Response:**

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) considers that this information is exempt under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), which states that information is exempt if it is intended that the information held by the public authority will be published at a future date.

This exemption is qualified and therefore, if information falls within Section 22, public authorities must apply a public interest test.

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 the UHB being open and transparent. The Covid-19 pandemic and contraction of the virus, especially in the case of hospital transmissions, is a popular topic of discussion, with a significant amount of public interest. Due to the interest in the topic, it is within everyone's interests that information is shared and that the public be kept informed of developments, to reduce anxieties within our communities.

**Against Disclosure:** The information being requested is currently being validated and as such, is incomplete. Disclosure at this time could lead to anxiety in communities and due to the strong opinions of the handling of the pandemic, disclosure of the current information could attract negative opinion. It is the UHB's opinion that providing information before it has been fully validated could cause the public's anxieties to be exacerbated, which in turn, could harm the UHB's relationship with its communities.

**Decision:** The UHB considers that the public interest in withholding the requested information at this time is greater than the interest in disclosing it, as the attention drawn from the disclosure could cause harm to the UHB and it is therefore applying a Section 22 exemption.

The UHB is currently in the process of reviewing Covid-19 infections in Bronglais General Hospital (BGH), in line with the NHS Wales National Framework for the Management of Patient Safety Incidents. On completion of the review, the programme closure report will be presented to the Quality Safety and Experience Committee (QSEC) meeting in February 2024, with the details being published on the UHB's webpage, which can be accessed via the link below:

[Quality Safety and Experience Committee \(QSEC\) - Hywel Dda University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/quality-safety/experience-committee-qsec-hywel-dda-university-health-board)

2. The UHB confirms that the number of employees with a Covid-19 related absence, with a location recorded as BGH, as recorded on the UHB's Electronic Staff Record (ESR) system was twenty-eight (28), for the period 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021.
3. The UHB regrets to inform you that it does not hold the information requested. The cause of death is determined by the Coroner. Therefore, we recommend that you redirect this part of your request to the Freedom of Information Teams within each Local Authority in the UHB's footprint, who may be able to help you with your enquiry. Their details are set out below:
  - Information & Data Protection Officer, Carmarthenshire County Council, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP or by email [foia@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:foia@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)
  - Complaints & Freedom of Information Team, Ceredigion County Council, Canolfan Rheidol, Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3UE or by email [foi@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:foi@ceredigion.gov.uk)
  - Information Governance Team, Pembrokeshire County Council, County Hall, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA61 1TP or by email [FOI@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@pembrokeshire.gov.uk)
4. & 5. The UHB does not hold all of the information requested, as during the Covid-19 pandemic, there were many changes to Infection Prevention Control (IPC) national guidance. The UHB followed the guidance and protocols issued by Welsh Government (WG) and Public Health Wales (PHW), some of which have since been superseded and are no longer held.

We therefore recommend that you redirect this part of your request to the Freedom of Information Teams at WG and PHW, who may be able to help you further with your enquiry. Contact details are as follows:-

[Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales) or alternatively, you can contact: Freedom of Information Officer, Information Rights Unit, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ.

[foi.phw@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:foi.phw@wales.nhs.uk) or alternatively, you can contact: Freedom of Information Office, Public Health Wales, Floor 3, 2 Capital Quarter, Tyndall Street, Cardiff, CF10 4BZ.