Reference:	FOI.12978.23
Subject:	COVID-19 pandemic
Date of Request:	14 November 2023

Requested:

1. How many visits from Infection Control were carried out during each month for a period of 24 months from and including March 2020?

2. From those visits, what changes were made to align (if applicable) with the recommendations from Infection Control?

3. How was the use of the NHS Covid-19 App by staff actively encouraged?

Clarified

I require information for:

1. & 2. Regarding the visits from Infection Control to each hospital and to each Covid-19 ward within each hospital for the purposes of infection monitoring and ensuring compliance with guidelines set out and aligning with Government and Health Board guidelines during this period.

3. What procedures were undertaken by senior staff to actively encourage the use of the NHS Covid-19 App by staff working in each hospital during this period?

Response:

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with all of the information requested for question 1, 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.

The UHB confirms that all wards that were identified as having a COVID-19 outbreak received visits and frequent communications during the day from the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team to obtain updated information on patient placement, COVID-19 positivity rates, delivery of support and information for staff and staff sickness absence. Meetings were undertaken with the IPC Teams and wards during every outbreak and national guidance was followed.

In order to provide you with all of the data requested, the UHB would be required to undertake a manual trawl of all IPC COVID-19 incidents, to identify any information that would fulfil your request, as the information is not recorded centrally and easily accessible.

However, the UHB can confirm that within the accessible IPC records, there were ninety-four (94) COVID-19 outbreaks across its four acute hospitals, during the requested period. Therefore, to provide you with the exact information being requested, conducting the search would far exceed the 'appropriate limit', costing the UHB the following:

94 @ 15 minutes per item = 23.5 hours

23.5 hours @ £25 per hour = £587.50

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 and provides the accessible information it holds below.

The UHB provides, within the table below, a breakdown of the COIVD-19 outbreaks, by hospital, during the period 1 March 2020 to 31 March 2022.

Hospital	Number
Bronglais General Hospital	16
Glangwili General Hospital	30
Prince Philip Hospital	20
Withybush General Hospital	28

2. The UHB does not hold all of the information requested, as during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were many changes to IPC national guidance. The UHB followed the guidance and protocols issued by Welsh Government (WG) and Public Health Wales (PHW) throughout the requested period, 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 Team at WG and PHW, who may be able to help you further with your enquiry. Contact details are as follows:-

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 or alternatively, you can contact: Freedom of Information Office, Public Health Wales, Floor 3, 2 Capital Quarter, Tyndall Street, Cardiff, CF10 4BZ.

3. The UHB confirms that signage for the NHS COVID-19 App was displayed in all wards and departments, with signage advising to disable the App whilst on the premises, as the App did not recognise the difference between staff and patient positivity.