

Reference:	FOI.4505.20
Subject:	COVID-19
Date of Request:	12 November 2020

Requested:

Request set one (1)

- a. The number of persons who were hospitalised with severe (or worse) Covid-19 symptoms during the ‘firebreak’ lockdown period 23 October 2020 – 8 November 2020. For the avoidance of doubt, do *not* include those who died and whose deaths were certified as being from/with Covid-19. Equally, do not include mere ‘cases’, that is, patients who may have tested positive for Covid-19 on account of current PCR tests. Instead, I limit my request to those only with the relevant symptoms which are severe or worse.
- b. The number of persons who were hospitalised with severe or worse Covid-19 symptoms for the month *preceding* that of the 23 October 2020 – 8 November 2020. That same restriction applies – please do *not* include deaths attributed to the disease or include positive ‘cases’.
- c. The number of patients hospitalised with severe respiratory illnesses including influenza, pneumonia for this time of year (October-November) over the last five years (2014-2019).

Request set two (2)

The number of patients who were hospitalised due to *non-Covid* respiratory illness including influenza, pneumonia and pleurisy during the ‘firebreak’ lockdown period 23 October 2020 – 8 November 2020.

Request set three (3)

- a. The number of medical staff working in intensive care and any other units that treat Covid patients who were prevented from working due to *testing positive* for Covid (i.e., PCR tests) during the ‘firebreak’ lockdown period 23 October 2020 – 8 November 2020.
- b. The number of medical staff in intensive care and any other units which treat Covid patients who were prevented from working due to displaying *symptoms* of Covid (i.e., mild and worse) during the ‘firebreak’ lockdown period 23 October 2020 – 8 November 2020.

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 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 provide you with the information for request sets, one (1) and two (2), the UHB would have to undertake a manual trawl of all admission records to identify those patients with a positive COVID-19 test result and further scrutinise the records to identify any information that may fulfil your request as the UHB’s Welsh Patient Administration (WPAS) system, does not code illnesses by severity.

Additionally, for request set three (3), where the information being requested is relating to staff, COVID-19 testing information was only recorded between the dates of 18 March 2020 and 20 May 2020, as key worker testing was originally booked via the UHB's command centre. However, since the national system has been utilised, the UHB has no way of identifying employee information. Therefore, the UHB would need to undertake a manual search of all Occupational Health (OH) records and manually scrutinise all COVID-19 positive test results to identify any information that would fulfil your request, as this information is not recorded centrally.

The number of positive tests recorded for UHB staff between 18 March 2020 and 20 May 2020 was 490; therefore, conducting the search for this element of your request for the two month period requested would far exceed the 'appropriate level', costing the UHB the following:

490 @ 15 minutes per patient record = 122.5 hours
 162.5 hours @ £25 per hours = £3,062.50

Therefore, the UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI), 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.

Under section 16 of the FOI, the UHB has an obligation to provide advice and assistance. The UHB therefore, provides within the table below, the number of patients admitted to hospital with a diagnosis of respiratory illness, for the months of October and November, for the calendar years 2014 to 2019 as requested.

Year	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
Month	Oct	Nov	Oct	Nov	Oct	Nov	Oct	Nov	Oct	Nov	Oct	Nov
Number	502	565	574	691	585	765	650	738	597	731	616	689

Information on COVID-19 hospital admissions is already within the public domain; therefore, the UHB has applied an exemption under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as the information is accessible by another means. The information requested is available on the Public Health Wales website.

For ease of reference please click on the attached link which will take you directly to the PHWs hospital admissions webpage:

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/public.health.wales.health.protection#!/vizhome/RapidCOVID-19virology-Public/Headlinesummary>