

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.15573.24
<b>Subject:</b>	Disability assistance dogs
<b>Date of Request:</b>	27 September 2024

**Requested:**

1. How many disability discrimination complaints have been submitted with any mention of an Assistance Dog? How many of these were raised by patients compared to staff?
2. Has there ever been a disability discrimination claim with any mention of Assistance Dogs brought against any members of senior management? How was this resolved?
3. How many claims were settled versus going to hearing?
4. How much has this cost the Health Board per year since 2010?
5. Do you have an Assistance Dog Policy in place within the Health Board, if so who has this been reviewed and approved by?

**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 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.

In order to provide you with all of the data requested for questions 1 to 4, the UHB would need to undertake a manual search of all incidents recorded by the Workforce and Organisational Development (W&OD) Department for the 2010 to 2018 calendar years and the incidents recorded on the UHB’s Datix Incident Reporting system for any data required prior to the 2015 calendar year. These would then need to be scrutinised, to identify any information that would fulfil this part of your request, as this information is not recorded centrally and is not easily accessible or identifiable.

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. Therefore, the UHB provides the accessible information it holds below.

1. As no date range has been provided, a Section 12 exemption has been applied to the period prior to the 2015 calendar year as this data is not easily accessible. Therefore, the UHB has undertaken a search of its Datix Incident Reporting system for the time frame that is accessible, and one (1) patient complaint that mentions assistance dogs has been recorded, from the 2015 calendar year to the date of your request.

2. The UHB confirms that no incidents have been recorded by the W&OD and Legal Services departments for disability discrimination claims against members of senior management that mention assistance dogs, during the period 01 January 2019 to 30 September 2024.
3. & 4. A Section 12 exemption has been applied. However, the UHB confirms that no claims relating to assistance dogs have been identified within the accessible time period.
5. The UHB confirms that it has a Management of Resident/Visiting Animals in the Health Care Settings Policy. Appendix 1 of this policy is Guideline for the management of assistance dogs within the healthcare setting, and Appendix 2 is social distancing: guide dogs. This policy is led by the Infection Prevention Group and approved by the Clinical Written Control Documentation Group and is currently under review as part of its three (3) yearly review process by the Senior Infection Prevention Nurse.

A copy of the policy has been provided at attachment 1.