

Reference:	FOI.16361.25
Subject:	Dog bites
Date of Request:	14 January 2025

Requested:

1. A count of finished consultant episodes (FCEs) with an external cause code of bitten or struck by a dog, 2007-08 to 2023-24 and partial year data for April 2024 to the end of December 2024.
2. A count of finished consultant episodes (FCEs) with an external cause code of bitten or struck by a dog, with a main or secondary operative procedure for repair/closure of skin and reconstruction surgery by age group, 2007-08 to 2023-24 and partial year data for April 2024 to the end of December 2024.

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.

The UHB’s Welsh Patient Administration System (WPAS) does not hold information prior to 2014. In order to provide you with the data requested from 2007 to 2013, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all patient records, to identify any patients who were treated for a dog bite or received an operative procedure for a dog bite, to identify information that may fulfil your request, as this is not recorded centrally.

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. The UHB provides within the table below, the number of episodes where a dog bite has been recorded on WPAS from 2014 to 2024 by calendar year.

Year	Number
2014	8
2015	15
2016	21
2017	24
2018	22
2019	19
2020	29
2021	21
2022	39
2023	31

2024	26
Grand Total	255

2. The UHB is unable to provide you with the number of patients categorised by age as requested due to the low number of cases (less than 5). Where the figures in the table below have been replaced with an asterisk (*), the UHB is unable to provide you with the exact number as there is a potential risk of identifying individuals if this was disclosed. The UHB is therefore withholding this detail under Section 40(2) of the FoIA. This information is protected by the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)/UK General Data Protection Regulations, as its disclosure would constitute unfair and unlawful processing and would be contrary to the principles and articles of the UK GDPR. This exemption is absolute and therefore, there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.

In reaching this decision, the DPA and UK GDPR define personal data as data that relates to a living individual who can be identified solely from that data or from that data and other information, which is in the possession of the data controller.

The UHB provides within the table below, the number of episodes where an attendance relating to a dog bite resulted with a treatment of suture, as recorded on WPAS from 2014 to 2024 by calendar year.

Year	Number
2014	*
2015	*
2016	*
2017	5
2018	6
2019	*
2020	*
2021	*
2022	8
2023	6
2024	*
Grand Total	45