

Reference:	FOI.5009.21
Subject:	Elective surgery waiting times
Date of Request:	14 January 2021

Requested:

Please could you provide us with the following information regarding elective surgery.

- a. How many people do you have waiting for elective surgery;
- b. How many have been waiting for (i) 6 months or more (ii) 12 months or more (iii) 18 months or more

If possible can we have a breakdown of how many people are waiting for different types of treatment:

- (i) hip, knee, shoulder replacement
- (ii) non-urgent eye surgery
- (iii) bariatric treatment
- (iv) sports injuries.

For the general total number waiting for elective surgery and the 6, 12 and 18 month sub-groups – can we have a comparative figure for:

July 2020, January 2020, January 2019, January 2018, January 2017 and January 2016.

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 a breakdown of treatments, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all patient records, to identify any information that fulfils your request, as this information 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.

Under section 16 of the FOIA, we are required, as a public authority, to provide advice and assistance so far as it is reasonable, to individuals who have made a request under FOIA.

The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of patients waiting for elective surgery and the number of patients waiting over six (6), twelve (12) and eighteen (18) months, for the requested periods.

Month/year	Number of patients	+6 months	+12 months	+18 months
January 2016	11,792	4,390	852	11
January 2017	12,692	5,154	1,613	78
January 2018	11,848	4,019	843	121
January 2019	10,131	2,282	238	21
January 2020	10,452	2,713	11	0
July 2020	10,525	6,573	1,346	*

Where the figures in the tables have been replaced with an asterisk (*), the UHB is unable to provide you with the exact number of patients due to the low numbers of cases (5 and under), 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 Freedom of Information Act 2000. This information is protected by the Data Protection Act 2018/ General Data Protection Regulations 2016 (GDPR), as its disclosure would constitute unfair and unlawful processing and would be contrary to the principles and articles 6 and 9 of the GDPR. This exemption is absolute and therefore there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.

In reaching this decision, the Data Protection Act 2018/General Data Protection Regulations 2016 defines personal data as data which 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.