

Reference:	FOI.21182.26
Subject:	Exchange of patient information
Date of Request:	30 July 2026

Requested:

I would like to request the following information relating to the exchange of patient information between NHS organisations and care homes.

For the most recent 12-month period for which data is available, please provide:

1. Any recorded information showing the volume or proportion of patient information exchanged with care homes by:
 - paper (including posted or hand-delivered documents);
 - fax; and
 - electronic methods (such as secure email or digital record-sharing systems).
2. If the information requested in question 1 is not held, please confirm whether your organisation records the method by which patient information is shared with care homes.
3. Copies of any current policies, guidance or strategies relating to the digitisation of information sharing between NHS services and care homes.
4. Copies of any reports, audits, business cases or assessments produced within the last three years that evaluate or discuss the continued use of paper or fax for sharing patient information with care homes.

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with all 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 (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.

To provide you with the information requested for question 1, the UHB would be required to contact all its teams and services across the UHB, to identify if they hold any information that may fulfil this part of your request, as it is not recorded centrally.

Additionally, as the communication and delivery methods used is not routinely recorded, the UHB's teams would be required to undertake a manual search of its systems and patient health records, to identify any information that would fulfil this part of your request.

The UHB can confirm that it has one hundred and forty-seven (147) services and teams listed on its website. Therefore, contacting each of these services and requesting a search of systems would exceed the 18 hours stipulated within the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA). Based on the number of teams that would need to be contacted and the subsequent number of staff members within each team, conducting a search would far exceed the ‘appropriate limit’, costing the UHB the following:

147 @ 15 minutes per item = 36.75 hours
36.75 hours @ £25 per hour = £918.75

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the 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, 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 the FoIA, which can include assisting a requestor to further refine their request.

Unfortunately, the UHB is unable to provide advice on how you can refine your request further. This is due to the UHB still being required to contact all teams and request them to undertake a manual trawl of all computer systems, to identify any information relating to your request.

Nevertheless, the UHB has approached the main teams that may hold this information, such as Digital, Medical Records, Long Term Care, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities and Paediatrics and none of these teams can easily access or identify the information requested for questions 1 and 2.

2. An exemption under Section 12 of the FoIA has been applied. Under Section 16, the UHB can confirm that it adheres to the following policies:
 - Policy 836 – All Wales Information Governance Policy
 - Policy 837 – All Wales Information Security Policy

The UHB has applied an exemption under Section 21 of the FoIA, as this information is accessible by another means. The policies detailed above are available on the UHB's policies and written control documents webpage. A link has been provided overleaf:

[Policies and written control documents - Hywel Dda University Health Board](#)

3. Please see response to question 2
4. The UHB does not hold the requested information. Please see the policies referred to in response to question 2.