

Reference:	FOI.118.19
Subject:	Expenditure on Locum Doctors
Date of Request:	11 February 2019

Requested

1. A list of the five highest amounts of annual payment made to a single locum doctor by your health board in each of the last three financial years?
2. A breakdown the proportion of the health board's staff spends on locums/agency staff in each of these years and the total amount for each year?

Response:

1. Under the Freedom of Information Act where information likely to exceed the "appropriate level", a public authority is permitted to exempt the information requested under Section 12 of the FOIA. However, under Section 16, a public authority is obliged to provide advice and assistance on how the request can be refined in order to enable disclosure of some of the information requested.

In this instance Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide the five highest annual payments that were made to a single locum doctor for the last three financial years as it is estimated that the cost of retrieving and providing this information 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 comply with your request the UHB would be required to manually interrogate all invoices for locum doctors to identify the highest payments made to individual locum doctors in each financial year. For the 2016/17 financial year it is estimated to cost the following:

Manual scrutiny of 30,000 invoices at approximately 5 minutes per invoice

$$\begin{aligned}
 30,000 \times 5 \text{ minutes per record} &= 2,500 \text{ hours} \\
 5,800 \text{ hours} \times \text{£}25 \text{ per hour} &= \text{£}62,500
 \end{aligned}$$

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 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*.

2. The table below provides the total expenditure on locum doctors and the UHB's total medical costs for the requested timeframe.

Costs	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Agency Locum Medical	£9,237,819	£15,444,890	£8,907,946
Total Medical Pay	£84,488,822	£92,608,123	£96,540,844