

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.15337.24
<b>Subject:</b>	External contractors
<b>Date of Request:</b>	23 September 2024

**Requested:**

I'm seeking information on the use of non-clinical management consultants hired by your Health Board for advisory or project-based roles, specifically related to workforce management, cost reduction, financial efficiency or operational improvement. Please exclude any data related to Medical Locums, Clinical Consultants (doctors) or agency staff (unless upholding a post aligned with those mentioned above).

1. During the period between 1st April 2024 and 31st August 2024, how many external consultants were contracted by the Health Board and what were their job roles (for example Software Developer, Agency Cost Reduction Program Director, Service Efficiency Lead etc.)? (For clarity, I'm referring to individuals, not Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) numbers).
2. Please list the Job Title / Role, pay type (Umbrella / PSC etc.), rate type (day rate, hourly) of any contractors / consultants engaged with the Health Board at any time during April, May, June, July and August 2024. Please use the template below and include a one line description of the core purpose of the role (responsibilities / objectives), and whether the role pertains to the Health Board only, or to a wider All Wales or NWSSP etc. project.
3. For each job role, what was the average cost invoiced to the Health Board, per day, per contractor, between 1st April 2024 and 31st 2024.
4. For each of the job roles, what is the average tenure of those who were engaged at any time during 1st April 2024 and 31st August 2024. If they are still in post, please detail their start date and earliest anticipated end date.

Guidance note: for questions 3 and 4, please feel free to create a table that incorporates the answers to both questions, or create additional columns in the template provided to answer all questions in one table. In doing so, please ensure that the answer to each of the separate questions is fully satisfied.

<b>Job Title /Role</b>	<b>Pay Type</b> (i.e. Umbrella, PSC etc.)	<b>Rate Type</b> (i.e. Daily or Hourly)	<b>Health Board only or wider Wales</b>	<b>Core Responsibility /Objective(s)</b>

**Response:**

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is applying an exemption under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), as the costs requested for questions 2, 3 and 4 relate to a third party and would be prejudicial to commercial interests. Section 43(2) exempts information, where disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any company.

Commercial interests may be prejudiced where disclosure would, or would be likely to:

- Weaken a company’s position in a competitive environment by revealing market sensitive information or information of potential usefulness to its competitors.
- Damage a company’s business reputation or the confidence that customers/users, suppliers or investors may have in it.

This exemption is qualified; therefore, even if information falls within Section 43, public authorities must then apply the public interest test set out in Section 2(2)(b).

The information can only be withheld if the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

The UHB has therefore considered the following:

In **favour of disclosure**: There is a public interest in transparency and in the accountability of public funds. Furthermore, it is in the public’s interest that public funds be used effectively and that public sector bodies obtain the best value for money when contracting for the provision of services.

**Against Disclosure**: Disclosure of this information would have a direct impact and may cause substantial harm to the provider, as it would disclose their pricing, and it would be likely that this would damage their ability to work within a highly competitive sector. The information being requested is likely to be used by their competitors to gain a competitive advantage.

**Decision**: - It has therefore been decided that releasing the information under the FoIA, to which the UHB is subject, will give an unfair advantage to the provider’s competitors. The UHB believes that there is wider established public interest in companies not being prejudiced merely because they have contracted with a public sector body, and that there is a public interest in ensuring that there is competition for public sector contracts.

The UHB considers that the public interest in withholding the cost for the consultancy service provided, is greater than the interest in disclosing it.

However, whilst operating in accordance with the Section 45 Freedom of Information Code of Practice, the UHB has a duty to provide advice and assistance and provides the accessible information it holds within the table below.

The UHB confirms that it contracted one (1) external consultant during the period 1 April and 31 August 2024. The details not covered by the Section 43 exemption have been provided within the table below, as requested.

<b>Job Title/Role</b>	VAT Consultant
<b>Pay Type</b> (i.e. Umbrella, PSC etc.)	One-off invoice
<b>Rate Type</b> (i.e. Daily or Hourly)	Section 43 exemption applied
<b>Health Board only or wider Wales</b>	Health Board only
<b>Core Responsibility/Objective(s)</b>	VAT Advisory Services
<b>Average tenure</b>	Not applicable - no ongoing work as a one-off piece of work. The Invoice date was 02/07/24.