

Reference:	FOI.8255.22
Subject:	Fax machines
Date of Request:	15 February 2022

Requested:

1. How many fax machines were operated in hospitals and GP surgeries in your health board area in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
2. How many new fax machines were purchased in hospitals and GP surgeries in your health board area in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
3. How many fax machines are currently being used in hospitals and GP surgeries in your health board area?
4. If possible, how many faxes emergency departments in your health board area received and sent in 2019, 2020 and 2021?

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with the information requested for questions 1, 3 and 4, 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 the data requested, all departments across all sites within the UHB would have to be contacted and asked to locate, identify and collate any information that would fulfil 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.

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 FoIA.

The UHB can confirm that it currently has an active project to remove all fax machines from the organisation by 2025 (when BT will be switching off the Public Switched Telephone Network). This project has commenced with Mental Health Services (MHS), where 40 fax machines have been identified for removal. The UHB is now working with the service to identify suitable alternative options i.e. secure E-mail, Righfax, Secure File Sharing Portal etc. to enable these fax machines to be decommissioned. Upon completion of the decommission within MHS, the UHB will repeat the exercise for all other service areas.

Additionally, the UHB provides the information for question 2 below.

2. The UHB confirms that no new fax machines were purchased during the calendar years 2019 and 2020. However, four (4) new fax machines were purchased during the calendar year 2021.