

Reference:	FOI.5753.21
Subject:	Gallstone surgery waiting lists
Date of Request:	6 April 2021

Requested:

1. How many people are on the gallstone surgery waiting list?
2. 32,000 operations have been carried out between Jan – Oct 2020 by Hywel Dda University Health Board that were classed as urgent, can you confirm this?
3. How will the Health Board clear the backlog of patients waiting for operations as recently highlighted in the media? Please provide details of the plan.

Response:

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with the precise 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, as well as locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

In order to provide you with the requested information, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all General Surgery waiting lists, to identify the number of patients awaiting a Cholecystectomy, 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. Therefore, the UHB can advise that there are approximately two hundred and fifty (250) patients on the Cholecystectomy waiting lists, across all priority categories. However, the waiting list is currently undergoing a validation exercise, which could see numbers increase or decrease.

2. The UHB confirms that a previous FOI response advised that the number of hospital admissions for elective surgery operations, recorded as inpatient admissions, day cases and day admissions, undertaken across the UHB was 32,671, during the period January to October 2020.

However, the number of those elective surgery operations that were recorded as urgent, on the Welsh Patient Administration System (WPAS), was 11,084 during the period January to October 2020.

3. The UHB confirms that it is working closely with Welsh Government (WG) on a waiting list recovery plan. The UHB is currently prevented from normal activity due to ongoing COVID-19

infection prevention control restrictions and therefore, it is only operating on the most urgent, clinically risk assessed and cancer patients, in line with WG guidelines.

Additional information on the UHB's recovery plan is already within the public domain; therefore, the UHB has applied an exemption under Section 21 of the FoIA, as the information is accessible by another means.

The UHB's draft Annual Recovery Plan 2021/22 was presented at the public Board meeting on 25 March 2021. For ease of reference, please click on the link below, which will take you directly to this documentation:

<https://hduhb.nhs.wales/about-us/your-health-board/board-meetings-2021/board-agenda-and-papers-25th-march-2021/25th-march-2021-documents/item-3-4-hdduhb-draft-annual-recovery-plan-2021-22/>