

Reference:	FOI.18357.25
Subject:	Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA)
Date of Request:	16 September 2025

Requested:

1. How many patients have a current diagnosis of Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6) at your Trust?
2. How many patients have been newly diagnosed with Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6) in the past 3 months?
3. How many patients were treated by the Rheumatology department for Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6)?
4. How many patients were treated by the rheumatology department in the past 3 months with the following:
 - Tocilizumab – for any disease
 - Tocilizumab for rheumatoid arthritis (RA) only
 - Tocilizumab for giant cell arteritis (GCA) only
5. How many patients were treated by the ophthalmology department (for any disease) in the past 3 months with Tocilizumab?
6. How many patients were treated in A&E in the past 3 months for giant cell arteritis (GCA) with Tocilizumab?
7. In the past 3 months, how many patients with a primary diagnosis of GCA (ICD10 codes M31.5 or M31.6) were:
 - Admitted as an inpatient
 - Treated in A&E

Clarification

Could you please provide us with the total number of all patients.

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with the information for questions 3 and part of question 4, 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 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 all of the data requested for question 3, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all identified prescriptions and cross reference with the patient’s medical record to identify the reason for treatment.

For question 4, the UHB has compiled the accessible information it holds by linking the unique patient identifier to the clinical diagnosis coding and has assumed that a diagnosis of Rheumatoid Arthritis or GCA is mutually exclusive to treatment with Tocilizumab. However, this assumption may not accurately reflect all cases due to potential coding/clinical nuances.

In order to accurately provide you with all of the data requested, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all identified diagnoses and cross reference with the patient's physical medical record and treatment plan to identify the reason for treatment.

The UHB has identified at least ninety-seven (97) patients who are receiving the biologic drug named within question 4. Therefore, if the UHB were to conduct a search on the patients identified, it would exceed the 'appropriate limit', costing the UHB the following:

97 @ 15 minutes per item = 24.25 hours
24.24 hours @ £25 per hour = £606.25

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 Freedom of Information Act (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.

For question 3, the UHB would be able to further consider your request if you were able to narrow down the timeframe of your request. For example, making a request for data for one (1) month per year rather than all records held, etc. Refining your request by providing a smaller timeframe would enable the service to undertake a manual trawl of individual patient records, identifying any further information that may fulfil your request.

However, for question 4, the UHB is unfortunately unable to provide advice on how you can refine your request further. This is due to the UHB still requiring a manual trawl of all identified prescriptions for cross referencing with patient records, to identify the accuracy of the information.

Additionally, for question 3, a Section 40 exemption has been applied to the ICD-10 codes requested, due to the low number of cases (less than 5). Similarly, for question 7, where the figure in the table has been replaced with an asterisk (*), the UHB is unable to provide you with the exact number of patients due to the low number of cases (less than 5), as there is a potential risk of identifying individuals if this was disclosed. The UHB is therefore withholding this detail under Section 40(2) of the FoIA. This information is protected by the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)/UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) as its disclosure would constitute unfair and unlawful processing and would be contrary to the principles and articles of the UK GDPR. This exemption is absolute and therefore, there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.

In reaching this decision, the DPA and UK GDPR define personal data as data that relates to a living individual who can be identified solely from that data or from that data and other information, which is in the possession of the data controller.

1. The UHB confirms it has one hundred and thirty-eight (138) patients currently being treated for GCA.

2. The UHB is unable to provide the information exactly as requested as there is a standard three (3) month backlog on clinical coding. Therefore, the UHB has provided the most up to date period available and can confirm that using the ICD-10 codes provided, zero (0) patients were newly diagnosed with GCA, during the period 1 June to 31 August 2025.
3. Exemptions under Sections 12 and 40 applied. However, under Section 16, the UHB can confirm that there is a total of seventy-four (74) patients, irrelevant of ICD-10 codes recorded on the Welsh Patient Administration System (WPAS) as having been treated by the Rheumatology Department for GCA, during the period 1 June to 31 August 2025.
4. A Section 12 exemption has been applied. However, under Section 16, the UHB provides the information held within the table below, for the period 1 June to 31 August 2025.

Medication	Number
Tocilizumab – for any disease	97
Tocilizumab for rheumatoid arthritis (RA) only	29
Tocilizumab for giant cell arteritis (GCA) only	6

5. The UHB confirms that zero (0) patients were recorded on its Pharmacy system as being treated with Tocilizumab by the Ophthalmology Department for any condition, during the period 1 June to 31 August 2025.
6. The UHB confirms that zero (0) patients were recorded on its Pharmacy system as being treated with Tocilizumab for GCA in an Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department, during the period 1 June to 31 August 2025.
7. The UHB provides within the table below, the number of patients with a primary diagnosis of GCA that were either admitted as an inpatient or treated in an A&E Department, during the period 1 June to 31 August 2025.

Treatment type	Number
Admitted as an inpatient	10
Treated in A&E	*