

Reference:	FOI.4224.20
Subject:	GP surgeries
Date of Request:	7 October 2020

Requested:

1. How many General Practices/ GP Surgeries have made use of the services of the external private company 'GP Hub Wales' (<http://gphub.org/>) within the last five years? Can you note the figures by year and also by local council please?
2. How many General Practices/ GP Surgeries are there in the Hywel Dda University Health Board?
3. How many General Practices/ GP Surgeries are under direct rule of the Hywel Dda University Health Board. That is, how many do the health board run directly?
4. How many General Practices/ GP Surgeries have been under the direct rule of the Hywel Dda University Health Board in the last five years? Please state the figures by year and also by Local council areas.
5. How much money has Hywel Dda University Health Board payed to the private consultancy agency 'GP Hub Wales' in the last five years? Please not the figures by year and also by local council area.
6. Has Hywel Dda University Health Board payed any other similar companies that provide medical consultancy work such as GP HUB Wales in last five years? If yes, please confirm how much and give a breakdown of the numbers for every year over the past five.

In noting the information by year as requested would you be able to note it under the format provided here: 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019- 2020.

By noting any information by local council areas please can you stick to the council areas listed below bilingually.

Blaenau Gwent
 Bridgend (Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr)
 Caerphilly (Caerffili)
 Cardiff (Caerdydd)
 Carmarthenshire (Sir Gaerfyrddin)
 Ceredigion
 Conwy
 Denbighshire (Sir Ddinbych)
 Flintshire (Sir y Fflint)
 Gwynedd
 Isle of Anglesey (Ynys Môn)
 Merthyr Tydfil (Merthyr Tudful)
 Monmouthshire (Sir Fynwy)
 Neath Port Talbot (Castell-nedd Port Talbot)
 Newport (Casnewydd)
 Pembrokeshire (Sir Benfro)
 Powys

Rhondda Cynon Taf
 Swansea (Abertawe)
 Torfaen (Tor-faen)
 Vale of Glamorgan (Bro Morgannwg)
 Wrexham (Wrecsam)

Response:

1. The UHB confirms it does not hold information for GP practices, if held this information would need to be obtained directly from the practice. Contact details for each of the UHB's GP Practices can be found via the following link:

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/862/directory/gps/>

The table overleaf provides the number of UHB managed GP practices within the Hywel Dda University Health Board area that have utilised the services of the external private company 'GP Hub Wales'. This is broken down by council area and financial year for the periods requested.

Council area	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Pembrokeshire	1	1	1	2	1
Carmarthenshire	0	1	2	3	3
Ceredigion	0	0	0	0	0

2. The UHB confirms that there are forty eight (48) GP practices within the UHB area.
3. The UHB confirms that there are four (4) GP managed practices.
4. The UHB provides, within the table below, the UHB managed GP practices, council areas and the dates they were managed from and to, for the financial years requested.

Managed GP practice	Council area	From	To
Ashgrove surgery	Carmarthenshire	September 2018	Current date
Minafon surgery	Carmarthenshire	August 2016	Current date
Sarn surgery	Carmarthenshire	September 2017	Current date
Goodwick surgery	Pembrokeshire	November 2014	March 2019
Tenby surgery	Pembrokeshire	August 2018	Current date

5. As the private consultancy agency costs requested from the UHB relates to third parties, the UHB considers that Section 43 applies, as answering would be Prejudicial to their Commercial Interests. Section 43(2) exempts information, disclosure of which would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person, in this case the provider listed above. Commercial interests may be prejudiced where disclosure would, or would 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. Private sector bodies engaging in commercial activities with the public sector must expect some information about those activities to be disclosed.

Against Disclosure: Disclosure of this information would have a direct impact and cause substantial harm to the consultancy agencies as it would disclose their pricing and products/services provided to the UHB, and this 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.

It has therefore been decided above that releasing the information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to which the UHB is subject, will give an unfair advantage to the consultancy agencies' 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.

Decision: - The UHB considers that the public interest in withholding the costs is greater than the interests in disclosing it and thereby giving unfair commercial advantage to competitors of the company to which this information concerns.

6. The GP Hub provides a telephone consultation service for GP practices; therefore, the UHB confirms that no similar companies have been engaged by the UHB's Primary Care or GP services.