

Reference:	FOI.9269.22
Subject:	Hospital acquired COVID-19 infections
Date of Request:	30 June 2022

Requested:

Can I ask for:

The number of probable and definite hospital acquired infections (as defined by NHS England) and subsequent deaths of people who died with, not just because of, covid.

Can I have this data from March 2020 until present (broken down monthly if possible).

Clarification

Just COVID infections please.

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) considers that some of the information in relation to the number of people that died from a hospital acquired COVID-19 infection for the period covering January to July 2022, is exempt under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), which states that information is exempt if it is intended that the information held by the public authority will be published at a future date.

This exemption is qualified and therefore, if information falls within Section 22, public authorities must apply a public interest test.

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 the UHB being open and transparent. The COVID-19 pandemic and contraction of the virus, especially in the case of hospital transmissions is a popular topic of discussion, with a significant amount of public interest. Due to the interest in the topic, it is within everyone's interests that information is shared and that the public be kept informed of developments, to reduce anxieties within our communities.

Against Disclosure: The information being requested is currently under review and is therefore incomplete. Disclosure at this time could lead to anxiety in communities and due to the strong opinions of the handling of the pandemic, disclosure of the current information could attract negative opinion. It is the UHB's opinion that providing information before it has been fully validated could cause the public's anxieties to become exacerbated and cause further anger, which in turn, could harm the UHB's relationship with its communities.

Decision: - The UHB considers that the public interest in withholding the requested information at this time is greater than the interest in disclosing it, as the attention drawn from the disclosure could cause harm to the UHB and it is therefore applying a Section 22 exemption.

The UHB is currently in the process of reviewing the hospital acquired COVID-19 infections, in line with the NHS Wales National Framework for the Management of Patient Safety Incidents. On completion of the review, the report will be published on the UHB's website, with all updates in relation to the ongoing review being presented at the Quality Safety and Experience Committee meetings, with the details being published on the UHB's webpage, which can be accessed via the link below:

[Quality Safety and Experience Committee \(QSEC\) - Hywel Dda University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)

[There have been two \(2\) updates on the review of Nosocomial COVID-19 Infections and other COVID-19 related matters](#) presented at the UHB's QSEC meetings, on the 10 August 2021 and 8 February 2022.

For ease of reference, please click on the attached link, which will take you directly to the review papers:

10 August 2021: [Health & Care Standards Fundamentals of Care Annual Audit Report \(nhs.wales\)](#)

8 February 2022: [Health & Care Standards Fundamentals of Care Annual Audit Report \(nhs.wales\)](#)

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.

Information on COVID-19 infection onset is already within the public domain and therefore, the UHB has applied an exemption under Section 21 of the FoIA, as the information is accessible by another means. The information is available on the Coronavirus data dashboard on the Public Health Wales (PHW) website.

For ease of reference, please click on the attached link, which will take you directly to the PHW COVID-19 webpage, where all information submitted to PHW can be viewed:

[New Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) data dashboard launched - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#)

Nevertheless, the UHB provides, within the table overleaf, the number of probable and definite hospital acquired COVID-19 infections and the number of those that died within twenty-eight (28) days of a positive COVID-19 test result, across the UHB's acute and community hospitals, by month, from March 2020 to June 2022.

Month	Probable	Actual	Deaths
March 2020	5	<5	0
April 2020	16	22	16
May 2020	10	5	6
June 2020	5	8	1
July 2020	<5	<5	0
August 2020	<5	<5	0
September 2020	0	<5	0
October 2020	12	24	3
November 2020	39	89	30
December 2020	94	123	73
January 2021	90	83	64

February 2021	53	78	44
March 2021	8	10	11
April 2021	<5	13	1
May 2021	<5	<5	2
June 2021	<5	6	0
July 2021	<5	6	1
August 2021	<5	6	0
September 2021	10	25	5
October 2021	23	82	18
November 2021	12	39	13
December 2021	<5	6	Section 22 applied
January 2022	39	122	
February 2022	26	63	
March 2022	45	125	
April 2022	38	66	
May 2022	13	19	
June 2022	8	8	

The following definitions have been used to complete the data above, in line with Public Health Wales guidance:

Hospital onset - indeterminate	Specimens taken on days 3 to 7 of admission
Hospital onset - probable	Specimens taken on days 8 to 14 of admission
Hospital onset - actual	Specimens taken >14 days after admission

Please note:- the data provided is subject to change due to the Nosocomial COVID-19 infection reviews' progress to completion. Please see full explanation regarding the review provided above.

Where the figures in the table have been replaced with <5, the UHB is unable to provide you with the exact number of patients, due to the low number of cases, of 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 Freedom of information Act 2000 (FoIA). This information is protected by the Data Protection Act 2018 and the 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 6 and 9 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 Data Protection Act 2018/UK GDPR define personal data as data which 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.