

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.6281.21
<b>Subject:</b>	Independent hospitals
<b>Date of Request:</b>	21 June 2021

**Requested:**

I write regarding an FOI request on the use of independent hospitals during COVID-19 and to clear the patient waiting times backlog. I would therefore be grateful if you could answer the following questions:

1. Did you have an agreement with independent hospitals to cover non-COVID 19 treatments during the first year of the pandemic and, if so, which providers did you have an agreement with?
2. Do you have a current agreement with independent hospitals to cover treatment backlogs following the publication of the Welsh Government's *COVID-19: Looking Forward* document in March and, if so, which providers do you have an agreement with?
3. If you have or had an agreement with independent hospitals to cover non-COVID 19, a breakdown of the costs of these agreements;
4. If possible, a breakdown of the number of NHS treatments in your health board which have been placed through independent hospitals between March 2020 and March 2021 and the top three specialties; and
5. If possible, a breakdown of the number of NHS treatments in your health board which have been placed through independent hospitals between March 2021 and June 2021 and the top three specialties.

**Response:**

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) confirms that it did have an agreement with BMI Werndale Private Hospital, to cover non COVID-19 treatments during the first year of the pandemic.
2. The UHB confirms that it has a Procurement Outsourcing Framework agreement, which allows the UHB to procure services from a number of approved suppliers that meet the UHB's entry criteria. The UHB is currently utilising this Framework to place contracts with other providers to cover treatment backlogs.

Whilst the above agreements are yet to be finalised, the UHB has a current agreement in place with BMI Werndale Private Hospital for the provision of services for Cataract patients.

3. The UHB confirms that the contract spend with BMI Werndale Private Hospital, to cover non COVID-19 treatments, was £269,299.00, for the financial year 2020/21.
4. The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of NHS treatments contracted out to BMI Werndale Private Hospital, by all specialities, during the financial year 2019/20.

Speciality	Number of treatments
Ophthalmology	2,800
Urology	2,039
Colorectal	698
Trauma and Orthopaedics (T&O)	657
Gynaecology	244
Breast	125
Pain Management	90
Ear, Nose and Throat	89
General Surgery	59
Dermatology	29

5. The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of NHS treatments contracted out to BMI Werndale Private Hospital, by all specialities, during the period 1 April to 30 June 2021.

Speciality	Number of treatments
Ophthalmology	338
Urology	*
T&O	20
General Surgery	37

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 numbers of cases (5 and under), 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/General Data Protection Regulations 2016 (GDPR), as its disclosure would constitute unfair and unlawful processing and would be contrary to the principles and articles 6 and 9 of the 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/General Data Protection Regulations 2016 defines 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.