

Reference:	FOI.6650.21
Subject:	Joint replacement surgery
Date of Request:	10 August 2021

Requested:

I am emailing to request:

How Hywel Dda University Health Board plans to treat patients requiring elective joint replacement surgery within the target waiting times, following the cancellation of many surgeries due to the Covid-19 pandemic?

All information that Hywel Dda University Health Board holds from 1st September 2020 onwards regarding how it plans to deal with the elective joint replacement surgeries that were postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) confirms that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) waiting lists, including those waiting for joint replacements. The UHB is aware that this delay will impact patients in different ways and measures have been put in place to ensure that those with the greatest clinical need are prioritised.

The UHB's T&O Teams have categorised patients in accordance with clinical urgency, as directed by the British Orthopaedic Association Guidance. Consultants have risk stratified patients on their waiting lists for surgery into categories, namely priority 2, priority 3 and priority 4. These categories take into consideration the clinical condition and presentation of the patient, whether they have multiple diagnoses that require consideration, as well as what impact the delay would have on recovery and quality of life. Each patient is considered individually and reviewed at intervals, to ensure that the risk stratification is always accurate.

A letter has been sent to patients who have waited for surgery for longer than thirty six (36) weeks. The letter apologises for the wait they are experiencing and provides a link to the UHB's 'Preparing for Treatment' pages, which can be accessed via the link below:

<https://hduhb.nhs.wales/healthcare/covid-19-information/preparing-for-treatment-lifestyle-advice/>

The letter also asks patients to confirm if they wish to remain on the waiting list or whether they can be removed if their treatment is no longer required or because they have been treated elsewhere. This element of validation ensures waiting lists are as accurate as possible.

The UHB's T&O Teams are continually reviewing theatre and ward capacity against the ongoing social distancing requirements and staffing challenges, to ensure maximum patient numbers are achieved. Furthermore, the UHB is utilising the private sector to address the delays in treatment provision, whilst ensuring that patients are treated in order of clinical need.

The UHB is operating in accordance with guidance issued by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, British Orthopaedic Association, Federation of Surgical Specialty Associations and Royal College of Surgeons of England. Hyperlinks to key guidance are provided below:

COVID-19 rapid guideline: arranging planned care in hospitals and diagnostic service:

[NG179 COVID-19 rapid guideline: arranging planned care in hospitals and diagnostic services: visual summary \(nice.org.uk\)](#)

Clinical Guide to Surgical Prioritisation during the Coronavirus Pandemic:

https://fssa.org.uk/_userfiles/pages/files/covid19/prioritisation_master_30_april_21.pdf

Clinical guide to surgical prioritisation during the coronavirus pandemic:

[Clinical guide to surgical prioritisation during the coronavirus pandemic — Royal College of Surgeons \(rcseng.ac.uk\)](#)

Furthermore, information on the UHB's recovery plan and Board papers relating to the tender for outsourcing of some orthopaedic services are available on the UHB's website.

This information 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. For ease of reference, please click on the attached link, which will take you directly to the UHB's Board meeting papers:

[Board meetings 2021 - Hywel Dda University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)