

Reference:	FOI.12476.23
Subject:	Lip biopsies and neuro-ophthalmology
Date of Request:	19 August 2023

Requested:

Lip biopsies

1. In which unit(s) in which hospital(s) or other establishment(s) in your Health Board area are lip biopsies conducted on the NHS?
2. How many lip biopsies have been conducted on the NHS within your Health Board area within the last 12 month or other period for which you have data? Please indicate the period for which you are providing data.
3. How many out of area lip biopsy referrals has the NHS within your area made within the last 12 month or other period for which you have data? Please indicate the period for which you are providing data.

Neuro-ophthalmology

4. Which unit(s) in which hospital(s) or other establishment(s) within your Health Board area have a NHS neuro-ophthalmologist consultant providing neuro-ophthalmology services on the NHS.
5. Please provide the name(s) of the consultant(s) in each case. I assume that this is publicly available data and so is not exempted under the Freedom of Information Act.

Out of area referral policies

6. I'm also requesting copies of Health Board out of area referral policies, guidance, strategies/plans.

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with all the information requested for questions 2 and 3, 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 and the Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. The "appropriate limit" represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours (or 2½ working days) in determining whether the UHB holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

In order to provide you with the data requested for question 2, the UHB would be required to undertake a manual trawl of all head and neck biopsy procedures undertaken within the last twelve (12) month period, to identify the information that would fulfil this part of your request, as this data is not recorded separately. Similarly for question 3, a manual trawl would also be required to identify the number of out of area lip biopsy referrals made, for the same twelve (12) month period, as this information is not recorded centrally.

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 FoIA, the UHB has a duty to provide advice and assistance. Therefore, the UHB provides the accessible information it holds below.

1. The UHB confirms that lip biopsies are currently undertaken in Prince Philip Hospital, Llanelli only and are conducted in an outpatient's treatment room.
2. & 3. Section 12 exemption applied.
4. The UHB confirms that it does not have a Neuro-ophthalmology service. Therefore, the UHB does not have a Neuro-ophthalmologist consultant.
5. All UHB Neuro-ophthalmology patients are referred to Mr Hugh Jewsbury, Consultant in Ophthalmology, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CAVUHB).
6. As the information requested is already within the public domain, the UHB has applied an exemption under Section 21 of the FoIA, as the information is accessible by another means. The All Wales Prior Approval policy is available on the UHB's website:

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

[hduhb.nhs.wales/about-us/governance-arrangements/policies-and-written-control-documents/policies/hduhb-all-wales-prior-approval-policy/](https://www.hduhb.nhs.wales/about-us/governance-arrangements/policies-and-written-control-documents/policies/hduhb-all-wales-prior-approval-policy/)