

Reference:	FOI.10288.22
Subject:	Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans for overweight patients
Date of Request:	15 November 2023

Requested:

Please include the information for each of the following financial years; 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22:

1. The number of patients within the remit of the Trust who have had to be sent to an external, or alternative MRI machine due to being overweight
2. The annual cost of using these alternative or external MRIs
3. Where the MRIs are (for example, at specialist hospitals)

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with the information requested in questions 1 and 2 regarding the number of patients who were referred to an external provider for an MRI due to being overweight and the annual cost of this. This is due to it being estimated that the cost of answering your request would exceed the “appropriate limit” as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) 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.

The UHB does not hold a central record of the patients that were referred to an external provider for an MRI due to being overweight; the requested information would only be available within the patient’s medical records. Where a referral is received querying a patient’s suitability for the UHB’s MRI machine due to their weight, the UHB would not reject a referral. It would instead return it to the referring clinician with the UHB’s device’s specifications and details of our third party provider, for the referral to be redirected should the referring clinician deem it to be inappropriate for the UHB’s equipment. Where a referral is unable to be fulfilled because of the patient being overweight, this information would be shared with the referring clinician for them to refer onward to our external provider.

In order to provide the information requested, the UHB would be required to undertake a manual search of all MRI referrals received within the requested timeframe, to identify any that were returned to the referring clinician and then subsequently follow the trail to identify if the patient was subsequently referred onwards for an MRI due to being overweight. The cost of these would subsequently need to be identified using the details of the referral and any subsequent invoices received.

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, 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*.

3. Any MRIs for patients who are unable to undergo an MRI within the UHB due to their weight would be referred onto the European Scanning Centre in Cardiff.