

Reference:	FOI.10042.22
Subject:	Maintenance backlog
Date of Request:	14 October 2022

Requested:

1. In this health board, what is the total size of the maintenance backlog? Please provide the estimated value of the work to be completed in pounds sterling as well as a breakdown of what work is outstanding, and the cost associated with undertaking that work. Please outline what date individual items of outstanding work were added to the maintenance list. Please also provide the total size of the maintenance backlog in pounds sterling at the end of the 2021/22, 2020/21, 2019/2020, 2018/19 and 2017/18 financial years.
2. In this health board, if maintenance work is urgently required, but has not been actioned as yet, please highlight this in your response to the above question. If there is an estimated start date for this work, please outline this. If there is no estimated start date, please highlight this and provide a reason.
3. In this health board, are there concerns about the structural integrity of any part of the estate or any buildings at risk of collapse if maintenance work is not completed? If so, please outline whether work is planned or underway to avert the risk of collapse or further damage. If work is planned or underway to avert the risk of collapse, please outline what that work is.
4. In this health board, where there are concerns around the structural integrity of buildings, please outline the scale of expenditure on mitigating safety measures in the 2022/23 financial year so far. Please also provide the scale of expenditure on mitigating safety measures in the 2021/22, 2020/21, 2019/2020, 2018/19 and 2017/18 financial years.

Response:

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) has applied an exemption under Section 36(2)(c) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) to a part of question 1 of your request. This states that information being considered under this exemption, would or would be likely to, in the reasonable opinion of the UHB's qualified person, prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs. In the case of the UHB, the qualified person is the Chief Executive.

The UHB considers that the disclosure of a breakdown of the outstanding maintenance works, would or would be likely to inhibit the effectiveness of the UHB's decision making and the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation. As a public authority, the UHB has an effective risk management process in place and requires the discretion to assess the risk posed by all of these works and thereafter prioritise them, according to the balance of risk.

The UHB is aware of the scale of the works required in part caused by the age and condition of its estate, and a major infrastructure programme business case was approved by the Board and submitted to Welsh Government for review. Due to the extent of the works and the level of detail requested, the UHB is withholding this information under Section 36(2) (b)(ii) and (c)(i) of the FoIA, to enable it to maintain the protection of its services and the welfare of its patients through their confidence in its service delivery, whilst providing assurance that the risk posed is under regular review with necessary works being prioritised to maintain health and safety.

Section 36 of the FoIA is subject to the public interest test, applied as follows:

In favour of disclosure: There is a legitimate public interest in transparency and accountability of the ways in which public bodies operate and manage their services and operational functions. This includes enhancing the public's understanding of the UHB's plans and challenges, thus building trust between the public and the UHB.

Against disclosure: Disclosure of this information would be likely to cause substantial harm to the UHB's ability to effectively manage and mitigate risks. A significant amount of worry could be caused, thus impeding the UHB's ability to safely treat its patients, due to the focus being drawn to maintenance works. The UHB must be able to protect and preserve its operational security and patient and staff safety.

Decision: The UHB considers that the public interest in withholding the information is greater than the interest in disclosing it. It believes that there is wider established public interest in the Board's ability to make decisions, to plan and implement any required works as these are deemed necessary, whilst working closely with Welsh Government on remedial actions.

It has therefore been decided that releasing the information under FoIA, to which the UHB is subject, would be likely to impair the UHB's operational planning.

Whilst operating in accordance with the Code of Practice under Section 45 of the FoIA, the UHB has a duty to provide advice and assistance and therefore provides responses to the remaining aspects of your request below.

1. The current value of backlog maintenance is £106,308,327.00. Funding has been allocated to address the prioritised risks via the Hywel Dda University Health Board's (UHB) Capital Programme.

The maintenance backlog is continuously being updated, where individual backlog maintenance risks are identified. These are added to the database and then removed once works are completed. The table below provides an annual breakdown of the values per financial year.

Financial year	Value
2017/18	£59,010,761.12
2018/19	£59,677,779.98
2019/20	£62,194,605.01
2020/21	£81,591,966.14
2021/22	£105,744,916.86

The UHB can also signpost you to the Board paper submitted to Public Board on 26 November 2020 in relation to the maintenance backlog, which will provide additional detail on the works. The paper can be accessed via the link provided below:

[Bundle Public Board 26 November 2020 \(nhs.wales\)](#)

2. All backlog maintenance is risk assessed and is managed in accordance with approved capital funding. Where there is an imminent risk, the issue is made safe and an emergency bid for funding is made. Any urgent breakdown maintenance work is also risk assessed and prioritised according to risk.

3. There are structural issues at the following sites:
 - Penlan, Carmarthen – The boundary retaining wall has been damaged by undergrowth, causing a crack to form at high level. Funding is approved and works are programmed to address the issue.
 - Bronglais General Hospital (BGH), Aberystwyth – a structural defect to the external fabric of a lift shaft has been identified. A full inspection to identify the full scheme solution and cost is being arranged, with all solutions and initial works being completed in accordance with structural safety advice.
4. Within the 2022/23 financial year, approximately £50k has been allocated to address the risk at the Penlan site. The costs for the lift shaft at BGH are yet to be finalised and are therefore not currently held, though the estimated cost is around £100k. There has been no historical expenditure to mitigate safety measures relating to structural integrity.