

Reference:	FOI.13207-13212.23
Subject:	Maternity staffing levels, Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeries, Weight Management Service (WMS), Heart procedures, Cataracts, Hip and knee replacements
Date of Request:	23 November 2023

Requested:

FOI.13207 – Maternity staffing levels

For each of the years 2018-2023 please can you provide the following information under the FOI Act:

1. If the health board has met the safe maternity levels
2. The number of days where the safe maternity levels were not met
3. The number of times each of the below red flag midwifery staffing incidents occurred in your health board:
 - a. Delayed or cancelled time critical activity.
 - b. Missed or delayed care (for example, delay of 60 minutes or more in washing and suturing).
 - c. Missed medication during an admission to hospital or midwifery-led unit (for example, diabetes medication).
 - d. Delay of more than 30 minutes in providing pain relief.
 - e. Delay of 30 minutes or more between presentation and triage.
 - f. Full clinical examination not carried out when presenting in labour.
 - g. Delay of 2 hours or more between admission for induction and beginning of process.
 - h. Delayed recognition of and action on abnormal vital signs (for example, sepsis or urine output).
 - i. Any occasion when 1 midwife is not able to provide continuous one-to-one care and support to a woman during established labour

FOI.13208 – Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeries

The number of patients in your health board on the waiting list for:

1. Cleft lip repair surgery
2. Cleft palate repair surgery
3. Thyroid surgery
4. Tonsil surgery
5. Ear drum surgery
6. Ear canal surgery
7. Sinus surgery

8. Nasal surgery

FOI.13209 – Weight Management Service (WMS)

1. The number of patients in your health board on the waiting list for Tier 3 and Tier 4 weight management services
2. The longest and average wait times for patients in your health board to access Tier 3 and Tier 4 weight management services
3. The number of patients in your health board on the waiting list for weight management surgery
4. The longest and average waiting list times for patients in your health board to receive weight management surgery

FOI.13210 – Heart procedures

Number of patients in your Health Board on the waiting list for:

1. Cardiac bypass surgery
2. Carotid endarterectomy surgery
3. Heart valve surgery
4. Pacemaker implantation

FOI.13211 – Cataracts

1. Number of patients in your health board on the waiting list for cataract surgery
2. Average and longest wait in your health board for cataract surgery

FOI.13212 – Hip and knee replacements

Number of patients in your health board on the waiting list for:

1. Hip replacement surgery
2. Knee replacement surgery

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with all of the information requested, 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 information requested for question 3 of FOI.13207, the UHB would be required to undertake a manual trawl of the red flag incidents recorded for Maternity services, for the requested period, to identify any information that would fulfil your request, 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.

Additionally, as the "appropriate limit" has been reached for the request in its entirety, the UHB is also unable to provide all of the information for questions 1 and 2 of FOI.13208.

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 for the remainder of your request, overleaf.

FOI.13207 – Maternity staffing levels

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) confirms that its Maternity services did not meet the safe maternity levels required, at all times, during the 2018 to 2022 calendar years and the 2023 calendar year to the date of your request.

However, the UHB confirms that it utilises the Birth Rate Plus (BR+) workforce acuity tool, which is used to calculate the number of midwifery staff required to provide antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal care. The UHB continually strives to achieve the BR+ calculations and uses the escalation policy when acuity is increased to meet the needs of the service, including recruitment of staff, resulting in a continuous cycle of staff recruitment, to fulfil the needs of the service.

2. The UHB confirms that there were five (5) incidents recorded where staffing levels did not achieve the safe maternity levels, where the escalation policy was implemented, during the 2018 to 2022 calendar years and the 2023 calendar year to the date of your request.
3. Section 12 exemption applied. However, the UHB provides the accessible information it holds below.
 - c. All medicine management errors are reported on the UHB's Datix Incident Reporting System and discussed in detail at the Medicine Event Rating Grid (MERG) meeting. The UHB can therefore confirm that there has been one (1) reported missed medication error reported.
 - i. The UHB confirms that there have been no incidents recorded on the UHB's Datix Incident Reporting System when one (1) midwife has not been able to provide continuous one-to-one care and support to a woman during established labour.

However, the UHB can confirm that it has introduced the Birmingham Symptoms Obstetric Triage Systems (BSOTS), which supports clinical prioritisation of women attending the maternity units and is associated with safer clinical outcomes. Therefore, the information requested for 3e and 3f will be identifiable in the future.

FOI.13208 – Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeries

The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of patients currently on the waiting list for the listed Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeries.

No	ENT surgery	Number
1.	Cleft lip repair	Section 12 exemption applied
2.	Cleft palate repair	
3.	Thyroid	0
4.	Tonsil	68
5.	Ear drum	*
6.	Ear canal	*
7.	Sinus	0
8.	Nasal	25
	Other ENT procedures	18
	Total	117

Where the figures in the table on the previous page have 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 (less than 5), 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 (DPA)/UK General Data Protection Regulations, as its disclosure would constitute unfair and unlawful processing and would be contrary to the principles and articles of the UK GDPR. This exemption is absolute and therefore there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.

In reaching this decision, the DPA and UK GDPR define personal data as data that 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.

FOI.13209 – Weight Management Service (WMS)

The UHB confirms that it does not have a Tier 4 Weight Management Service. UHB patients would be referred to the Tier 4 WMS provided by Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB).

We therefore recommend that you redirect the Tier 4 WMS parts of your request to the Freedom of Information Team in SBUHB, who may be able to help you with your enquiry. The contact details are as follows:-

FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk or alternatively, you can contact: FOIA Team, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Health Board Headquarters, 1 Talbot Gateway, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR.

1. The UHB confirms that it currently has one thousand and seventy-three (1,073) patients on the Tier 3 WMS. However, twenty-five (25) of the Tier 3 patients have been referred to the Tier 4 WMS.
2. The UHB confirms that the current longest wait for Tier 3 patients is thirty-seven (37) weeks with the average wait currently being thirty-four (34) weeks.
3. The UHB confirms that it currently has twenty-five (25) patients on the waiting list for weight management surgery.
4. The UHB does not hold this information, as Tier 3 patients are referred to the Tier 4 WMS in SBUHB for bariatric surgery and follow up care.

FOI.13210 – Heart procedures

The UHB confirms that it does not hold the information for question 2. UHB patients that require Carotid Endarterectomy surgery are referred to the Vascular Department in Morriston Hospital, Swansea Bay University Health Board.

Therefore, we recommend that you redirect this part of your request to the Freedom of Information Team at SBUHB who may be able to help you further. The contact details are as follows:

FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk or alternatively, you can contact: FOIA Team, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Health Board Headquarters, 1 Talbot Gateway, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR.

However, the UHB provides, within the table below, the number of patients currently on the waiting list for the listed heart surgeries for 1, 3 and 4.

No	Heart surgery	Number
1.	Cardiac bypass surgery	8
3.	Heart valve surgery	31
4.	Pacemaker implantation	7

FOI.13211 – Cataracts

1. The UHB confirms that it currently has two thousand four hundred and eighty-one (2,481) patients on the waiting list for cataract surgery.
2. The UHB confirms that the average waiting time for cataract surgery is currently forty-nine (49) weeks and the longest wait is currently one hundred and twenty-six (126) weeks.

FOI.13212 – Hip and knee replacements

1. The UHB confirms that it currently has one thousand five hundred and forty-two (1,542) patients on the waiting list for hip replacement surgery.
2. The UHB confirms that it currently has two thousand two hundred and eleven (2,211) patients on the waiting list for knee replacement surgery.