

Reference:	FOI.15953.24
Subject:	Medical equipment management
Date of Request:	12 November 2024

Your request and our 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 section 2 question 3 and section 4 question 2, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all of its medical equipment, to identify any information that fulfils these parts of your request, as the 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 and provides the accessible information it holds overleaf.

SECTION 1: Hospital Demographics

1. Please indicate your trust/hospital type and type of care:

- Acute
- Mental Health
- Community
- Ambulance
- Other (please specify)

The UHB provides Primary care, Community care, in-hospital care and Mental Health and Learning Disabilities (MHL) services across four (4) acute hospitals, five (5) community hospitals and two (2) integrated care centres across the three (3) counties of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire.

2. Type of Care:

- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Other (please specify)

Please see response to question 1.

3. Total Number of Beds: Please indicate the total number of inpatient beds in your hospital, including all types (e.g., general, ICU, maternity) if applicable.

The UHB confirms that it has a total number of one thousand, one hundred and seventy-three (1,173) inpatient beds.

4. ICU/ITU Bed Count: How many beds are designated for intensive or high-dependency care?

The UHB confirms that it has a total of twenty-six (26) Intensive Therapy Unit (ITU)/High-Dependency Unit (HDU) beds.

5. Annual Admissions: Please provide the total number of patient admissions in the last calendar year. If exact figures are unavailable, please provide your best estimate.

The UHB confirms that the total number of patient admissions was one hundred and twenty-four thousand, nine hundred and twenty-two (124,922) during the 2023 calendar year.

SECTION 2: Procurement and Inventory Management

1. Formal Procurement Policies: Does your hospital have formal policies or guidelines for medical equipment procurement?

Yes (please provide a copy or summary)

No

Yes, the UHB does have a policy for the procurement of medical equipment.

A copy of Policy 467 - Medical Devices Management Policy has been provided at Attachment 1.

2. Designated Procurement Roles: Is there a designated individual or team responsible for managing the procurement of medical equipment? If yes, please provide the role(s) and a brief description of responsibilities.

Yes – Individual

Yes – Team

No

The UHB does not hold the requested information, as the UHB's procurement is undertaken by the Procurement Service in NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP). We therefore recommend that you redirect this part of your request to the Freedom of Information (FoI) Team in NWSSP, who may be able to help you with your enquiry. Contact details for NWSSP are as follows:-

shared.services@wales.nhs.uk or alternatively, you can contact: Information Governance Manager, 4-5 Charnwood Court, Heol Billingsley, Parc Nantgarw, Cardiff, CF15 7QZ.

3. Inventory Review Frequency: How often is your medical equipment inventory reviewed for excess or unused items?

Monthly

Quarterly

Biannually

Annually

Other (please specify)

A Section 12 exemption has been applied. However, under Section 16, the UHB can confirm that its Clinical Engineering department is currently looking into identifying utilisation metrics to capture this information in the future.

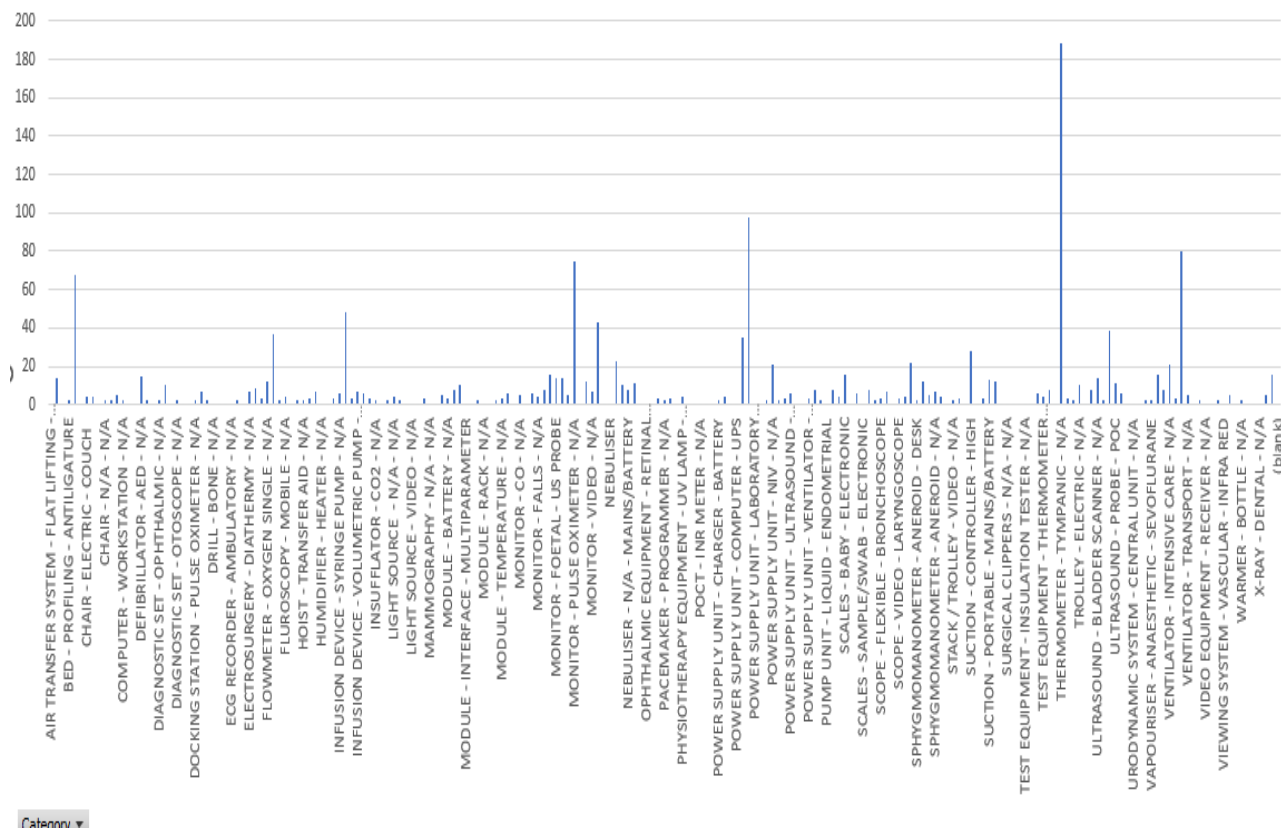
4. Primary Sources for Procurement: What are the primary sources for your medical equipment procurement? Please indicate the proportion sourced from the NHS supply chain versus individual suppliers and provide any additional details as applicable.

Please see Policy 467 provided at Attachment 1, Section 2.

SECTION 3: Waste and Disposal

1. Excess/Expired Equipment: What percentage of your medical equipment inventory was classified as excess, unused, or expired in the last 12 months? Please provide a breakdown by equipment type, if available.

The UHB confirms that 4.4% of its medical equipment inventory was classified as excess, unused or expired, during the previous twelve (12) months. A breakdown of the equipment has been provided in the table below.



2. Disposal Responsibility: Is there a specific role or department responsible for overseeing the disposal of medical equipment? If yes, please provide the role(s) and responsibilities.

- Yes – Individual
- Yes – Department
- No

Yes, the UHB’s Clinical Engineering department manages the disposal of medical devices at end of life, with Jon Wilson, Clinical Engineering Manager overseeing disposal.

3. Formal Disposal Policy: Does your hospital have a formal policy for the disposal of medical equipment?

Yes (please provide a copy or summary of any policies)

No

Yes, the UHB has policies for the disposal of medical equipment.

Please see Policy 467 provided at Attachment 1, Section 27.

Additionally, the UHB has provided a copy of Policy 390 – Cleaning Decontamination of Equipment prior to Inspection, Servicing, Repair, or Disposal, at Attachment 2.

4. Types of Commonly Disposed Equipment: Please specify the types of medical equipment most commonly disposed of due to expiry or non-use. Include examples and approximate percentages for each type, if possible.

Surgical instruments

Diagnostic devices

Monitoring equipment

Imaging equipment

Other (please specify)

Please see response to Section 3, question 1.

SECTION 4: Sustainability and Environmental Impact

1. Sustainability Initiatives: Does your hospital have a sustainability initiative for recycling, reuse, or redistribution of excess or unused medical equipment?

Yes (please provide details)

No

Yes, the UHB has outlets via existing contracts to maximise recycling and the reuse of any waste generated by the UHB. The UHB also uses the WARP IT site available to staff on its intranet platform, which enables items that are still in good condition, but no longer needed in one department to be reused by another department. The UHB is currently looking into expanding this platform to work with third parties to repair items for reuse/donation where feasible.

2. Disposal of Excess or Expired Equipment: How does your hospital manage the disposal of excess, expired, or damaged equipment? Please provide a breakdown by disposal method and indicate the approximate amount (in tonnes) used per year for each method.

Recycling

General waste

Donation

Other (please specify)

A section 12 exemption has been applied. However, under Section 16, the UHB provides within the table below, the disposal methods for all general/recyclable waste, and the amounts in tonnes during the 2023/24 financial year.

Method	Amount
Recycling	803t
General waste	109t landfill 730t recovered
Donation & other	Section 12 exemption applied

Additionally, the UHB has provided copies of the following policies:

- Policy 093 - Disposal of Surplus and Obsolete Furniture, Equipment, Sale of Scrap and other Waste Materials, at Attachment 3.
- Policy 258 – Waste Management Policy, at Attachment 4.

SECTION 5: Policies and Compliance

1. Compliance with Disposal Guidelines: How does your hospital ensure compliance with national or NHS guidelines on the disposal and management of medical equipment?

Internal audits

External audits

Regular staff training

Other (please specify)

Information on compliance is available in Policy 093, provided at Attachment 3.

Additionally, devices that are no longer of use to the UHB are processed in line with the Procurement specification. Any devices disposed of via waste pathways utilise the Environmental disposal services protocols within the Estates, Facilities and Environmental Team, in line with the Environmental Team standards.

2. Internal Audits of Equipment Management: Has your hospital conducted internal audits within the last 12 months to assess the management of excess medical equipment?

Yes (If yes, please indicate the frequency of audits and any key findings, if available)

No

No, the UHB has not conducted internal audits to assess the management of excess medical equipment, during the last twelve (12) months. However, its Clinical Engineering department monitors device compliance monthly, using background ongoing dynamic auditing.