

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.16598.25
<b>Subject:</b>	Mortuaries
<b>Date of Request:</b>	12 February 2025

**Requested:**

1. How many mortuaries are there altogether within the Health Board and where are they?
2. What is the maximum body storage capacity at each hospital mortuary within the Health Board?
3. Under the new system, introduced on 9 September 2024, all deaths not investigated by a coroner are now reviewed independently by a medical examiner before a death certificate is issued.
  - 3a. Since September 2024, have any of the hospital mortuaries within the Health Board been at maximum capacity?
  - 3b. If yes to 3, for how long were the hospital mortuaries within the Health Board at maximum capacity?
  - 3c. Since September 2024, how many bodies have been moved to other hospital mortuaries within the Health Board, due to shortage of body storage at the hospital where the death took place.
  - 3d. Since September 2024, how many bodies have been moved to other hospital mortuaries within a different Health Board, due to shortage of body storage at the hospital where the death took place.
4. Have the Health Board invested in any form of additional body storage for the mortuaries within the hospitals since September 2024? If so, what kind.
5. On average, since September 2024, what is the longest period a body has been stored at a hospital morgue within the Health Board due to delays with issuing a death certificate.
  - 5a. How does this compare with the same period in 2023?

**Response:**

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with the information requested for question 5 of your request, 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 5 of your request, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all deceased patient records, as the information requested is not recorded centrally. We would need to identify which patients remained within the hospital mortuaries

for an extended length of time, and then establish the reason for the delay, so as to be able to identify those who experienced a delay with the death certification process.

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 has four (4) mortuaries in the following locations:
  - Glangwili General Hospital (GGH), Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire
  - Bronglais General Hospital (BGH), Aberystwyth, Ceredigion
  - Withybush General Hospital (WGH), Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire
  - Prince Philip Hospital (PPH), Llanelli, Carmarthenshire
2. The UHB provides the maximum body storage capacity at each hospital mortuary within the table below:

<b>Hospital</b>	<b>Maximum Capacity</b>
GGH	42
BGH	20
WGH	44
PPH	31

- 3a. Yes two (2) of the hospital mortuaries have been at maximum capacity since September 2024.
- 3b. The two (2) mortuaries noted in question 3 were each at maximum capacity for over three (3) months.
- 3c. Since September 2024, twenty-one (21) deceased patients have been moved to a different hospital mortuary within the UHB due to lack of capacity at the hospital where the death took place.
- 3d. No deceased patients have been moved to a different mortuary outside of the UHB due to lack of capacity within the UHB mortuaries.
4. Since September 2024, the UHB has acquired five (5) additional body storage units.
5. The UHB has applied a section 12 exemption to your request for information.