

Reference:	FOI.7073.21
Subject:	Number of cancelled operations
Date of Request:	4 October 2021

Requested:

1. Please can you tell me the number of last minute elective operations cancelled for non clinical reasons at your trust or board for each month of 2020 and 2021 to date.
2. Please can you tell me the number of urgent operations cancelled for non-medical reasons during each month.

If giving the full data requested would be likely to exceed the costs cap, please provide data for the most recent month and then as many months as possible working backwards until the limit is reached.

3. If possible, please let me know how many of the cancelled elective operations had still not been carried out 28 days later.
4. If possible, please let me know how many of the cancelled urgent operations had still not been carried out 28 days later.

Clarification

I'd be grateful if you could use the NHS England definition of last minute: "Last minute means on the day the patient was due to arrive, after the patient has arrived in hospital or on the day of the operation or surgery." Source:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/04/Cancelled-Operations-Guidance_July2011.doc

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 and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. The "appropriate limit" represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours (or 2 ½ working days) in determining whether the UHB holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

Some patients will be listed for more than one procedure. Therefore, in order to provide you with the requested data for questions 3 and 4 of your request, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of patient records to ascertain if a patient underwent the same operation that had previously been cancelled, as the system does not hold this degree of information without manual interrogation.

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, we are required as a public authority, to provide advice and assistance so far as it is reasonable, to individuals who have made a request under FoIA. Therefore, the UHB provides the information it holds for questions 1 and 2 below.

1. The UHB provides, within the table overleaf, the number of elective operations cancelled at last-minute for non-clinical reasons, by month, for the calendar years 2020 and 2021 to date.

Number of elective operations cancelled at last-minute		
Month	2020	2021
January	37	*
February	33	0
March	14	*
April	*	*
May	0	*
June	*	*
July	*	16
August	*	17
September	6	13
October	8	7
November	*	N/A
December	*	N/A
Total	122	67

2. The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of urgent operations cancelled for non-medical reasons, by month, for the calendar years 2020 and 2021 to date.

Number of urgent operations cancelled		
Month	2020	2021
January	17	0
February	10	0
March	7	2
April	*	8
May	0	3
June	*	2
July	*	14
August	*	14
September	*	13
October	6	8
November	*	N/A
December	*	N/A
Total	66	64

Where the figures in the tables have been replaced with an asterisk (*), the UHB is unable to provide you with the exact number of patients, due to the low number of cases (5 and under), 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/General Data Protection Regulations 2016 (GDPR), as its disclosure would constitute unfair and unlawful processing and would be contrary to the principles and articles 6

and 9 of the GDPR. This exemption is absolute and therefore, there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.

In reaching this decision, the Data Protection Act 2018/General Data Protection Regulations 2016 define personal data as data which 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.