

Reference:	FOI.780.19
Subject:	Ophthalmology appointments
Date of Request:	15 May 2019

Requested

1. Does the Hywel Dda University Health Board have a policy that determines the speed with which a patient should be seen by the Ophthalmology department following receipt of an urgent referral from their GP? If so, please provide a copy.
2. Were there any unusual circumstances prevailing in the Withybush General Hospital between April and May 2018 that caused or contributed to delays in patients being seen by the Ophthalmology Department?
3. If an urgent referral sent by fax is sent to the Hospital Eye Service and had this been received from a GP surgery on 23 April 2019, in light of demand for such appointments prevailing at the time, and the availability of such appointment, within what timescales would such a referred patient have been offered an appointment?

Response:

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) does have Eye Care Measure Targets for the clinical prioritisation of Ophthalmology patients. A copy has been provided as Attachment 1.
2. In March 2018, Mr Rizwan Cheema (Locum Consultant) was relocated from covering Withybush and Glangwili clinics to Bronglais and North Road Eye Clinic, Aberystwyth, due to the lack of Consultant cover. This resulted in a decrease in the number of clinics held in Withybush General Hospital. The UHB has continuously tried to recruit into the vacant post with both substantive and agency staffing to secure continued service provision.
3. Ophthalmology patients are prioritised based upon clinical need; the three priority groups are R1, R2 and R3 with R1 being the most urgent. The UHB is unable to give an approximate date as this information is not deemed to be a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

FOIA permits members of the public to gain access to information which is held by a public authority. Question 3 of your request is not a request for information, but a speculative request for an approximate appointment date that would be allocated to a patient under the circumstances described. This information is not held by the UHB. However, if this case relates to a specific patient, that patient could contact our Patient Support Team who would be able to provide a more personal response.