

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.16797.25
<b>Subject:</b>	Outpatient Mental Health (MH) appointment costs
<b>Date of Request:</b>	10 March 2025

**Requested:**

1. The total spending by the ICB on outpatient psychiatry appointments.
2. The average cost per assessment/appointment for the following outpatient psychiatry services:
  - ADHD assessments
  - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) assessments
  - General mental health assessments
  - Drug and alcohol assessments
  - Child psychiatry assessments
  - Follow-up psychiatry appointments

If available, a breakdown of the above costs distinguishing between assessments carried out by NHS providers and those commissioned from private providers.

**Response:**

Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) are a feature of the NHS in England. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is part of NHS Wales and is an integrated Local Health Board responsible for the planning and provision of primary, community and in hospital services, based on the needs of the local community across three (3) counties. Therefore, the information the UHB holds is provided below.

The (UHB) has applied an exemption under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) to a part of question 2 of your request, as some of the costs are outsourced contract costs relating to third parties and would be prejudicial to commercial interests. Section 43(2) exempts information, where disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any company.

Commercial interests may be prejudiced where disclosure would, or would be likely to:

- Weaken a company's position in a competitive environment by revealing market sensitive information or information of potential usefulness to its competitors.
- Damage a company's business reputation or the confidence that customers/users, suppliers or investors may have in it.

This exemption is qualified; therefore, even if information falls within Section 43, public authorities must then apply the public interest test set out in Section 2(2)(b).

The information can only be withheld if the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

The UHB has therefore considered the following:

**In favour of disclosure:** There is a public interest in transparency and in the accountability of public funds. Furthermore, it is in the public's interest that public funds be used effectively and that public sector bodies obtain the best value for money when contracting for the provision of services.

**Against Disclosure:** Disclosure of this information would have a direct impact and may cause substantial harm to the provider, as it would disclose their pricing, and it would be likely that this would damage their ability to work within a highly competitive sector. The information being requested is likely to be used by their competitors to gain a competitive advantage.

**Decision:** - The UHB has consulted with the third parties and has taken their comments into consideration. It has therefore been decided that releasing all of the information under the FoIA, to which the UHB is subject, will give an unfair advantage to the provider's competitors. The UHB believes that there is wider established public interest in companies not being prejudiced merely because they have contracted with a public sector body, and that there is a public interest in ensuring that there is competition for public sector contracts.

The UHB considers that the public interest in withholding the costs per assessment/appointment for its outsourced outpatient psychiatry services for ADHD and ASD services, is greater than the interest in disclosing it.

1. The UHB does not hold an annual cost specific to drug and alcohol assessments, as its Substance Misuse Service commissions services as part of a whole contract and does not specify areas for the treatment. Additionally, the UHB does not record the information exactly as requested as the UHB costs its MH services on a specialty basis. Therefore, the UHB provides, within the table below, the total costs of outpatient MH appointments, as reported in the Annual Welsh Costing Returns, for the 2023/24 financial year.

Provider	Cost
NHS providers	£3,193,554.83
Outsourced	£513,676.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,707,230.83</b>

Please note:- the NHS provider costs are for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Old Age Psychiatry and Mental Illness and include direct, indirect and corporate overheads. The outsourced costs relate to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

2. A Section 43 exemption has been applied to the outpatient MH outsourced appointment costs for the ADHD and ASD services. Please see response to question 1 for substance misuse services.

However, the UHB provides, within the table below, the average cost for new and follow up outpatient MH appointment for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Old Age Psychiatry and Mental Illness, as reported in the Annual Welsh Costing Returns, for the 2023/24 financial year.

Service	New outpatient appointment	Follow up outpatient appointment
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry	£759.52	£353.70
Old Age Psychiatry	£510.76	£278.95
Mental Illness	£514.51	£269.08