

Reference:	FOI.20559.26
Subject:	Paracetamol overdose presentations
Date of Request:	29 May 2026

Requested:

For the financial year 2024/25 (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025), please provide the following information. If complete data for this period is not yet available, please provide the most recent 12-month period for which complete data is held, and specify the dates covered.

1. The total number of patients who presented to your emergency department(s) with paracetamol overdose or suspected paracetamol toxicity.
2. Of those presentations, how many involved patients aged 17 years or under. If possible, please break this down by the following age groups: 0-11 years, 12-15 years, 16-17 years.
3. Of all presentations, where this information is recorded, how many were classified as: (a) accidental overdose or therapeutic excess - defined as an unintentional overdose taken for therapeutic purposes; (b) intentional self-poisoning; (c) unknown or unclassified.
4. Of all presentations, how many involved a combination product containing paracetamol - such as a cold and flu remedy, co-codamol or similar - rather than paracetamol alone?

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with the information requested for question 4, 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, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of each patient's medical record that attended a UHB Accident and Emergency (A&E) department due to a paracetamol overdose or suspected paracetamol toxicity, during the 2024/25 financial year, to identify any information that would fulfil this part of your request, as it is not recorded centrally.

The UHB confirms that two hundred and four (204) patients attended an A&E department due to a paracetamol overdose or suspected paracetamol toxicity, during the 2024/25 financial year. It is estimated that a manual search of these records would exceed the 18 hours stipulated within the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA). Based on the number of records identified, conducting a search, taking a minimum of ten (10) minutes per record, would exceed the 'appropriate limit', costing the UHB the following:

204 @ 10 minutes per record = 34 hours
34 hours @ £25 per hour = £850.00

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the 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 the FoIA, this can include assisting a requestor to further refine their request.

The UHB suggests that you may refine your request by reducing the timeframe requested to a one (1) month period e.g. March 2025. However, the UHB would still be required to undertake a manual trawl of patients' medical records to identify any information that would fulfil your request, therefore, the outcome would be dependent on the number of records identified within a shorter time period.

Additionally, the UHB is unable to provide you with the information for question 2 broken down by the age ranges requested, due to the low number of cases (less than 5), as there is a potential risk of identifying individuals if this was disclosed. Therefore, the UHB is withholding these details under Section 40(2) of the FoIA.

This information is protected by the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)/UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR), as its disclosure would constitute unfair and unlawful processing and would be contrary to the principles and articles of the UK GDPR. This exemption is absolute and therefore, there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.

In reaching this decision, the DPA and UK GDPR define personal data as data that 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.

1. The UHB confirms that two hundred and four (204) patients attended a UHB A&E department due to a paracetamol overdose or suspected paracetamol toxicity, as recorded on the UHB's Welsh Patient Administration System (WPAS), during the 2024/25 financial year.
2. An exemption under Section 40 has been applied. However, of those identified in response to question 1, the UHB provides a breakdown by age range within the table below.

Age range	Number
0 -15	47
16 -17	24
18 and over	133

3. Of those identified in response to question 1, the UHB provides within the table below, the classification recorded on the WPAS.

Classification	Number
Accidental	29
Intentional	98
Unknown	77

Please note:- In order to provide you with the information in the table above, the free text column in the WPAS has been interpreted, therefore, the figures may not be a true reflection.

4. An exemption under Section 12 has been applied.