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| Reference: | FOI.14842.24 |
| Subject: | Physician Associates (PA) |
| Date of Request: | 12 July 2024 |

Requested:

I am writing to request information regarding your use of Physician Associates.

1. How many Physician Associates are currently employed by your organisation?
2. Please provide copies of any policies regarding physician associates in your organisation. For example, policies regarding the scope of practice, clinical procedures, governance, supervision and appraisal processes for physician associates.
3. Please provide details of any patient safety incidents (reported via Datix or other internal patient safety reporting systems) where the clinician involved was a Physician Associate. Where possible, please include a breakdown of these incidents by year, severity and categorisation (e.g., department, nature of the incident, patient harm, outcome, organisational response etc). I request a time span of 3 years.

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 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 for question 3, the UHB would need to identify the Physician Associates employed within the last three (3) years, and cross reference the names with the Datix system and undertake a manual trawl, to identify any information that may fulfil this part of your request, as it is not easily accessible.

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 confirms that it employed thirty-two (32) Physician Associates, as recorded on the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) system, as at 15 July 2024.
2. The UHB confirms that it does not hold a specific policy regarding Physician Associates. They are employed under the Agenda for Change (A4C) Terms and Conditions of Service and would work in accordance with all policies and Standard Operating Procedures in place across the UHB e.g. Information Governance, consent and clinical.