

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.16928.25
<b>Subject:</b>	Plastic bags on psychiatric wards
<b>Date of Request:</b>	25 March 2025

**Requested:**

- 1a. Are plastic bin liners used on psychiatric inpatient wards run by your Trust?
- 1b. If they are not allowed, when were they prohibited?
- 1c. How many incidents of inpatient self-harm involving plastic bin liners have there been in the last five years (specifically 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024)?
- 1d. How many inpatient deaths involving plastic bin liners have there been in the last five years (specifically 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024)?
- 2a. Are other types of plastic bags (i.e. not bin liners) allowed into psychiatric inpatient wards run by your Trust?
- 2b. If they are not allowed, when were they prohibited?
- 2c. How many incidents of inpatient self-harm involving plastic bags (excluding bin liners counted above) have there been in the last five years (specifically 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024)?
- 2d. How many inpatient deaths involving plastic bags (excluding bin liners counted above) have there been in the last five years (specifically 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024)?

**Response:**

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with the information for question 1c and 2c, 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 Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA).

This information is protected by the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)/UK General Data Protection Regulations, 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.

- 1a. The UHB confirms that plastic bin liners are only used in locked staff areas on its inpatient psychiatric wards and not on the wards themselves.
- 1b. The UHB does not hold the exact date plastic bin liners were not allowed on the inpatient psychiatric wards.
- 1c. A Section 40 exemption has been applied.

1d. The UHB confirms that there have been no inpatient deaths involving plastic bin liners, during the 2020 to 2024 calendar years.

2a. The UHB confirms that plastic bags are a prohibited item and are therefore not allowed into inpatient psychiatric wards. Checks are undertaken on admission and return from leave along with regular room sweeps; any plastic bags found are removed.

2b. The UHB confirms that plastic bags have been prohibited on inpatient psychiatric wards since 2019.

2c. A Section 40 exemption has been applied

2d. The UHB confirms that there have been no inpatient deaths involving plastic bags, during the 2020 to 2024 calendar years.