

Reference:	FOI.17323.25
Subject:	Podiatry service
Date of Request:	13 May 2025

Requested:

1. How many patients were treated by podiatrists in 2024?
2. Once referral is received, what are the current waiting times for patients to have both their first appointments as well as for follow up appointments?

Can you please break down waiting times in excess of 6 and 13 weeks for podiatry appointments?
3. How many patients are currently on the Trust's waiting list to receive podiatry related treatment in total?
4. Does your trust have an internal waiting target for the wait time for a first appointment to be made once the patient has been referred, if so, what is it and is the Trust meeting this target?

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.

The Podiatry Service does not have a robust IT system to enable it to calculate the exact waiting times, which is further complicated by varying factors affecting the waiting times. Therefore, in order to provide you with the information for question 2, the UHB would be required to undertake a manual trawl of podiatry patient records, to identify any information that may fulfil this part of your request, as it is not recorded centrally.

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 treated forty-four thousand (44,000) podiatry patients during the 2024 calendar year.
2. A Section 12 exemption has been applied. However, under Section 16 the UHB can confirm that waiting lists within the Podiatry service vary on an individual need's basis. Some patients attend open access clinics, with no waiting time and patients who are triaged as urgent, attend clinic within two (2) days. Generally, the referral will be triaged by a podiatrist and directed accordingly to the appropriate part of the service e.g. phone triage, Musculoskeletal (MSk), ulcer clinic,

community clinic, nail surgery etc. Waiting times will be different for each area across different sites depending on staffing, with priority given to those with the most urgent need.

The UHB can confirm that six hundred and five (605) patients have been waiting more than fourteen (14) weeks for podiatry treatment, as at 25 May 2025.

3. The UHB confirms that there are three thousand (3,000) patients on the waiting list for podiatry related treatments, as at 25 May 2025.
4. The UHB confirms that the Welsh Government (WG) therapies target waiting list time is fourteen (14) weeks; the UHB is not currently meeting this target in all areas. However, the UHB has numerous initiatives in place to try and maximize capacity to meet the WG target.