

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.10559.22
<b>Subject:</b>	Rejected referrals
<b>Date of Request:</b>	20 December 2022

**Requested:**

1. Between January 1 2022 and November 30 2022, how many referrals to specialist/secondary care outpatient teams from GPs have been rejected by your health board?
2. How many referral rejections were made in 2019?

For your information, the figures in relation to Cardiff and Vale UHB were 35,385 between January and November 2022 and 25,102 in 2019.

3. Which three outpatient services have seen the highest number of referral rejections? In Cardiff and Vale the relevant three services were Dermatology, Ent Audiological Medicine and Physiotherapy Adult.
4. What observations would you make about the statistics you have provided?

**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 (Fees and Appropriate Limit) 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 UHB does not hold a central record of the information requested for the 2019 calendar year, as the information was not recorded centrally until the 2022/23 financial year. In order to collate the information being requested, the UHB would be required to conduct a manual trawl of all referrals processed during the 2019 calendar year to identify any information that meets the request.

In addition, the UHB is unable to provide a breakdown of ‘rejected’ referrals, as this information is not provided centrally. As a result, in order to provide this data, a manual trawl of the referrals labelled as ‘Return’ would need to be undertaken, to identify those that were returned without further information being required.

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, 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 Freedom of Information Act, the UHB has a duty to provide advice and assistance. Therefore, the UHB has provided a response to the remainder of your request below.

1. The UHB can confirm that it returned 17,170 referrals to the referring GP between 1 April and 30 November 2022. As indicated above, the UHB is unable to provide the data prior to the commencement of the current financial year. Please note that the ‘Return’ label covers more than rejected referrals, but also includes those that required further information, along with those that provide guidance and advice to the GP on further management for the patient.

3. The UHB can confirm that the three outpatient services with the highest number of returned referrals between 1 April and 30 November 2022 were:
  - Cardiology
  - Dermatology
  - Gastroenterology
4. The Freedom of Information Act affords members of the public the opportunity to access information held by a Public Authority. This part of your request is not considered a valid Freedom of Information request, as it is requesting observations.