

Reference:	FOI.15827.24
Subject:	Retained foreign objects post-procedure
Date of Request:	25 October 2024

Requested:

1. How many incidents of a retained foreign object post-procedure were logged by your Health Board in the past five years?

By 'retained foreign object post procedure', I refer to retained guide wires, mouth props, surgical instruments, needles, vaginal swabs, throat packs, etc.

Please break down this information by:

- The retained item.
- The financial year, covering April 1st - March 31st (2019/20, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25).
- For the latter, please provide information from April 1st to September 30th 2024.

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) can confirm that there are nine incidents of a retained foreign object post-procedure recorded on its incident reporting system, Datix, during the 2019/20 – 2024/25 financial years.

The UHB is unable to provide a further breakdown of the information into calendar years or detail of the foreign object, due to the low numbers of cases (less than 5), as there is a potential risk of identifying individuals if this was disclosed. The UHB is therefore withholding this detail under Section 40(2) of the 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.