

Reference:	FOI.17051.25
Subject:	Spinal strokes
Date of Request:	7 April 2025

Requested:

1. Can you tell me how many spinal strokes have been reported since the beginning of 2021 till now?
2. How many were reported each year?

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 exact data requested, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all patient records to identify those who have received an MRI, Ultrasound or other diagnostic testing, and subsequently received a diagnosis of Spinal Infraction, to further identify any information that may fulfil your request.

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.

The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of inpatient admissions with a diagnosis of Spinal Infarction, during the 2021 to 2024 calendar years, as recorded on the Welsh Patient Administration System (WPAS).

Year	Number
2021	6
2022	*
2023	5
2024	*
Total	17

Where the figures in the above table have been replaced with an asterisk (*), the UHB is unable to provide you with the exact number of patients 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