

Reference:	FOI.17442.25
Subject:	Technologies
Date of Request:	29 May 2025

Requested:

1. Are you currently utilising ambient voice / ambient scribe/dictation technologies or a similar technology?
If yes, please can you state the name of the supplier(s) used across your organisation?
2. If this hasn't been pursued at ICB level, are you aware of any practices across your organisation procuring these solutions on an individual basis?
If so, please can you provide the name of these solutions/providers, and your understanding of how the software is being utilised by the practice(s) - i.e. use-case.
3. If this has been perused at an ICB level, please can you provide the following details:
 - a. Contract value
 - b. Contract start/end-date
 - c. How the software is being utilised and the key use case and service utilising it.
 - d. Person responsible for the contract and/or pilot scheme used

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) has applied an exemption under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) to questions 3a and 3b as they relate to a third party and would be prejudicial to their commercial interests. Section 43(2) exempts information, where disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any company.

Commercial interests may be prejudiced where disclosure would, or would be likely to:

- Weaken a company's position in a competitive environment by revealing market sensitive information or information of potential usefulness to its competitors
- Damage a company's business reputation or the confidence that customers/users, suppliers or investors may have in it.

This exemption is qualified; therefore, even if information falls within Section 43, public authorities must then apply the public interest test set out in Section 2(2)(b).

The information can only be withheld if the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

The UHB has therefore considered the following:

In favour of disclosure: - There is a public interest in transparency and in the accountability of public funds. Furthermore, it is in the public's interest that public funds be used effectively and that public sector bodies obtain the best value for money when contracting for the provision of services. Private sector bodies engaging in commercial activities with the public sector must expect some information about those activities to be disclosed.

Against Disclosure: - Disclosure of this information would have a direct impact and cause substantial harm to the supplier, as it would disclose their pricing and products/services provided to the UHB, and it would be likely that this would damage their ability to work within a highly competitive sector. The information being requested is likely to be used by their competitors to gain a competitive advantage.

Decision: - The UHB has consulted with the third party and has taken their comments into consideration. It has therefore been decided that releasing the requested information under the FoIA, to which the UHB is subject, will give an unfair advantage to the provider's competitors. The UHB believes that there is wider established public interest in companies not being prejudiced merely because they have contracted with a public sector body, and that there is a public interest in ensuring that there is competition for public sector contracts.

Therefore, the public interest in withholding the information is greater than the interests in disclosing it and thereby giving unfair commercial advantage to competitors of the company to which this information concerns.

The UHB is also unable to provide you with all 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 information requested for question 2 and 3c, the UHB would need to contact all departments and services across the UHB and request that a search be undertaken to identify any information that fulfils these parts of your request, as this 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 uses dictation and speech transcription module technology; the supplier is T-Pro.
2. A Section 12 exemption has been applied.
- 3a. & 3b. Section 43 exemption applied.
- 3c. Section 12 exemption applied.
- 3d. The Head of Digital Operations is responsible for the contract and can be contacted by email at digitalseniorteam.hdd@wales.nhs.uk, with Huw Thomas, Executive Director of Finance having overall responsibility.