

Reference:	FOI.9141.22
Subject:	The impact of Covid-19 on Freedom of Information responsiveness
Date of Request:	10 June 2022

Requested:

1. For the period 16th March – 17th July 2020 (i.e., when ICO had indicated a sympathetic approach to delay), provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%, for these questions:
 - a. how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt by your organisation?
 - b. how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?
 - c. how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt by your organisation?
 - d. how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?
2. For the period 18th July – 8th October 2020 (i.e., during the 'preparing for recovery' phase), provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%, for these questions:
 - a. how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt by your organisation?
 - b. how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?
 - c. how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt by your organisation?
 - d. how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?
3. During the period 1st March to 30th October 2020, provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%, for these questions:
 - a. how many responses to FOI requests were issued more than 60 working days after receipt of the request?
 - b. how many responses to FOI review requests were issued more than 60 working days after receipt of a request for an internal review?
4. When FOI request or review responses were issued more than 21 working days after receipt during the period 1st March and 30th October 2020, what were the main reasons for the delay? e.g., closure of premises due to Covid-19, reallocation of resources due to Covid-19, staff

shortages due to Covid-19, absence of key staff due to Covid-19, limited access to necessary systems due to Covid-19, other issue related/unrelated to Covid19.

5. In relation to the FOI requests received by your organisation between 1st March and 30th October 2020, what proportion related directly to Covid-19, your organisation's Covid-19 response or impact of the pandemic on your organisation? (Provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%)
6. On 17th July 2020 the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) launched a self-assessment Freedom of Information toolkit (FOI self-assessment toolkit | ICO) to help public authorities respond to FOI requests as they prepared to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.
 - a. Does, or has your organisation ever, use/d the toolkit? If so, please explain whether it has it had any positive outcomes.
 - b. If your organisation has not/does not make use of the toolkit, please explain why not.
7. In response to Covid19, has the volume of information your organisation publishes:
 - not changed
 - significantly increased
 - significantly decreased
 - don't know
8. Has your organisation taken steps to proactively publish information relating to Covid-19, your organisation's Covid-19 response or the impact of the pandemic on your organisation? If it includes a dedicated webpage, please provide a link to the webpage.

Response:

- 1a. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) provides within the table below, the number of Freedom of Information (Fol) responses issued within 20 working days of receipt, by month, during the period 16 March to 17 July 2020.

2020	Number issued
16-31 March	3 of 7
April	7 of 17
May	28 of 33
June	37 of 38
1-17 July	16 of 17

- 1b. The UHB confirms that one response of (1) of one (1) request for a Fol internal review, was issued within 20 working days, during the period 16 March to 17 July 2020.

- 1c. The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of Fol responses issued, between 21 and 60 working days, by month, during the period 16 March to 17 July 2020.

2020	Number issued
16-31 March	4 of 7
April	9 of 17
May	5 of 33
June	1 of 38

* The additional request for April 2020 is included in the response to question 3, totalling 17 requests being received.

1d. The UHB confirms that no responses were issued to Fol internal review requests, between 21 and 60 days, during the period 16 March to 17 July 2020.

2a. The UHB provides, within the table overleaf, the number of Fol responses issued within 20 working days of receipt, by month, during the period 18 July to 8 October 2020.

2020	Number issued
18-31 July	23 of 23
August	31 of 31
September	33 of 34
1-8 October	14 of 15

2b. The UHB confirms that one response of (1) of one (1) request for a Fol internal review, was issued within 20 working days, during the period 18 July to 8 October 2020.

2c. The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of Fol responses issued, between 21 and 60 working days, by month, during the period 18 July to 8 October 2020.

2020	Number issued
September	1 of 34
1-8 October	1 of 15

2d. The UHB confirms that no responses were issued to Fol internal review requests, between 21 and 60 days, during the period 18 July to 8 October 2020.

3. The UHB provides within the table below, the number of Fol and internal review responses, issued more than 60 working days of receipt, during the period 1 March to 30 October 2020.

1 March – 30 October 2020	Issued 60+ days
Fol requests	1 of 215
Fol internal review requests	0 of 0

4. The UHB confirms that the main reasons that contributed to responses being issued after 21 working days of receipt were:

- Operational pressures and the lack of capacity across the UHB to fulfil the requests,
- Staff shortages/absences due to COVID-19
- Redeployment of staff due to COVID-19 pandemic

5. The UHB confirms that twenty seven (27) responses of two hundred and fifteen (215) requests received were directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic, during the period 1 March to 30 October 2020.

6a. The UHB confirms that it has not used the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) self-assessment Fol toolkit.

6b. This part of your request does not fall within the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA). The FoIA covers any recorded information that is held by a public authority; recorded information includes printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings. The UHB has an obligation to provide information already in recorded form but cannot create new information to answer a question.

7. & 8. The UHB confirms that publication of information did increase during the pandemic.

The UHB's website and social media pages were continually updated with announcements and changes to the UHB's services as the pandemic progressed i.e., changes/restrictions to visiting, vaccination information and statistics, closure and re-instating of services etc.

All pandemic related information and press releases were published on the UHB's website and can be accessed via the link provided below:

[Home - Hywel Dda University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/healthboard/hywel-dda)