

Reference:	FOI.9401.22
Subject:	The reasoning behind the reinstatement of masks within Hywel Dda University Health Board's (UHB's) hospitals
Date of Request:	14 July 2022

Requested:

Following the decision of Hywel Dda University Health Board to reinstate the wearing of face coverings on around the 8th July 2022 please supply the following information

1. The scientific evidence, including referencing the scientific papers that this decision was based on.
2. Confirmation that in imposing these requirements Hywel Dda University Health Board had regard to the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and how people's Human Rights might be infringed
3. A copy of the minutes of any meetings where this decision was taken

Response:

1. The decision to reinstate face coverings within the UHB's hospitals was taken in response to an increased rate of COVID-19 in community and COVID-19 patients being admitted to our acute sites. The Infection Prevention measures being implemented are in accordance with extant national guidelines, which in turn are kept under review by a UK Expert Advisory Group against the emerging evidence base.
Welsh Government's expectation is that Health Boards in Wales will respond to local variation in COVID-19 transmission, by escalating interventions utilising a risk-based approach. A copy of the 'Infection Prevention and Control Measures for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) in Health and Care Settings – WALES', is provided at attachment 1.
2. The UHB is mindful of the Human Rights Act (1998) but this is balanced against its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) to employees and service users.
3. The UHB does not hold any minutes for the meetings which resulted in the decision to reinstate mask wearing in the UHB's hospitals. Regular dynamic risk assessments are carried out and decisions are taken based on the level of identified and potential risk. Formal minutes are not taken for these meetings; any decision making captured within the risk assessments are reported to the Executive Team, who meet regularly, for scrutiny.