

Reference:	FOI.12721.23
Subject:	Tongue-tie division
Date of Request:	20 September 2023

Requested:

Please can you address the following questions, for each calendar year, 2021 and 2022:

1. How many babies were diagnosed with a tongue-tie?
2. How many babies required the tongue-tie division procedure?
3. How many babies received the tongue-tie division procedure?
4. What was the average waiting time for babies with tongue-tie to receive the tongue-tie division procedure?
5. What is the current waiting time for babies to receive the tongue-tie division?
6. How many babies currently have the tongue-tie diagnosis?
7. How many babies are currently on the waiting list to receive the tongue-tie division?

Response:

Within Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB), the tongue-tie service has recently transitioned from being delivered by the Ears Nose and Throat (ENT) Department to being delivered by the Maternity service through the Midwifery Tongue-tie Clinic, which commenced on 31st March 2022.

The 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.

The Midwifery Tongue-tie Clinic is managed internally by the Maternity Team with all records of referrals held manually by the team. The ENT Department referrals were managed by the central waiting list team; limited information was recorded centrally on the Welsh Patient Administration System (WPAS). Information in relation to wait times and whether a patient was referred for division would be held within individual patient records. In order to provide you with the information requested, the UHB would need undertake a manual trawl of all patient records, to identify any information that may fulfil your request, as this information is not recorded centrally. It is estimated that in order to identify the information required, it would take the UHB:

93 records x 20 minutes per record = 31 hours
 31 hours @ £25 per hour = £775

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 the information requested for questions 1 – 3 in the table below for the time period requested.

Question	2021	2022
How many babies were diagnosed with a tongue-tie?	52	204
How many babies required the tongue-tie division procedure?	Section 12	146*
How many babies received the tongue-tie division procedure?	23	166

*The ENT Department does not keep departmental records and therefore, its information is not recorded in this figure. Patient data is recorded on a central system, the Welsh Patient Administration System (WPAS), which records only part of the information that has been requested.

Please note the difference between the figures provide for questions 2 and 3 of your request are due to some cases being conducted by ENT and the Maternity Tongue-tie service in the same calendar year. In accordance with the Section 12 exemption applied above, the information provided for question 2 only applied to the Maternity Tongue-tie Service.

4. The average wait time for babies referred with a tongue-tie to receive a tongue-tie division procedure is two - three weeks.
5. The current wait time for babies to receive tongue-tie division is one week.
6. There are currently ten babies that have a tongue-tie diagnosis.
7. There are currently ten babies on the waiting list to receive tongue-tie division.