Reference:	FOI.13763.24
Subject:	Use of high-cost medications in ophthalmology
Date of Request:	7 February 2024

Requested:

1. For the 4 months from September to December 2023, how many patients received the following intra-vitreal treatments for any eye condition:
   - Aflibercept
   - Bevacizumab
   - Brolucizumab
   - Dexamethasone
   - Faricimab
   - Ranibizumab - Lucentis
   - Ranibizumab - Ongavia

2. For the patients above, how many were new to intra-vitreal treatment? Please provide the patient numbers by the treatments listed below, excluding patients who previously had received any of these treatments.
   - Aflibercept
   - Bevacizumab
   - Brolucizumab
   - Dexamethasone
   - Faricimab
   - Ranibizumab - Lucentis
   - Ranibizumab - Ongavia

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.

The UHB does not keep a central record of patients that received intra-vitreal treatments or those that were new to the treatments. The treatments are recorded as the number of dispensed items to the clinic as a whole. Therefore, in order to provide you with the requested data, the UHB would be required to cross-reference the treatments with clinic records, to identify any information that would 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 for question 1 below.

1. The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of intra-vitreal treatments issued, for any eye condition, during the period 1 September to 31 December 2023.

Treatment	Number issued
Aflibercept	2,238
Bevacizumab	0
Brolucizumab	*
Dexamethasone	51
Faricimab	17
Ranibizumab - Lucentis	117
Ranibizumab - Ongavia	1,1287

Where the figure in the table has been replaced with an asterisk (*), the UHB is unable to provide you with the exact number of patients due to the low number 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.