

Reference:	FOI.17050.25
Subject:	Waiting list validation
Date of Request:	7 April 2025

Requested:

1. I would like to know how many patients were contacted by yourselves, either directly, or through a Third-Party, in 2021/2022 to validate their position on the waiting list as a result of them having waited 52 weeks or more for their first OP attendance, as directed by Dr Andrew Goodall on 7th April 2021.
2. I would also like to know how many did not respond.

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.

Multiple departments across the UHB contact patients, including the Planned Care team, the waiting list team and the booking centre. A patient could be contacted for several reasons, via a call or a letter. This could include patients being contacted at short notice to back fill an appointment.

The UHB’s validation team validate circa three thousand (3,000) records a month, for all parts of the Referral to Treatment (RTT) pathway. The validation methods vary from administrative validation to telephoning patients. The validation team also write to patients who they have not been able to contact asking them to get in touch with the UHB. If no contact is received patients are then removed from the waiting list.

For the 2021/22 financial year, the UHB does not centrally hold records with this detail. I can further inform you that there was no external validation efforts made during this time.

In order to provide you with the number of patients that were contacted to validate their waiting list position and how many patients did not respond, the UHB would need to undertake a manual trawl of all patient records, to identify any information that may fulfil your request, as this information 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.

During the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, twenty-eight (28) new referrals where the patient had waited at least fifty-two (52) weeks were removed from the waiting list due to the patient not telephoning, as recorded on the UHB’s Welsh Patient Administration System (WPAS).

Additionally, the UHB does hold some more recent information on validation exercises. Provided within the table below, are the outcomes held from a telephone validation exercise undertaken during the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Outcome	Number
Answered - patient wants to be removed from list needs clinical review	2
Answered - remain on list	519
Answered - remove from list as treated elsewhere/moved/received private treatment	21
Left Message on Answerphone	67
Not answered – two attempts made	34
Total	643

The UHB's validation team contacted 643 patients via telephone, of which 34 patients did not answer after two (2) attempts. As a result, these patients would have been written to with a non-responder letter and removed from the waiting list.