

Reference:	FOI.13608 & 13609.24
Subject:	Waits over three (3) years & Outpatient appointments and surgery cancellations
Date of Request:	18 January 2024

Requested:

FOI.13608 – Waits over three (3) years

1. The number of patient pathways in your health board that are waiting over 3 years (157 weeks) for treatment.
2. The specialty for which these patients are waiting over 157 weeks for treatment.

FOI.13609 – Outpatient appointments and surgery cancellations

1. The number of operations that have been cancelled in your health board for each of the last 12 months (and a breakdown of reason for cancellation)
2. The average length of time between the date of the cancelled operation and the date the rescheduled operation
3. The number of cancer operations that have been cancelled in your health board for each of the last 12 months (and a breakdown of reason for cancellation)
4. The average length of time between the date of the cancelled cancer operation and the date the rescheduled operation
5. The number of cancelled outpatient appointments in your health board for each of the last 12 months (and a breakdown of reason for cancellation)
6. The average length of time between the date of the cancelled outpatient appointment and the date the rescheduled outpatient appointment
7. The number of outpatient appointments for suspected cancer in your health board for each of the last 12 months (and a breakdown of reason for cancellation)
8. The average length of time between the date of the cancelled suspected cancer outpatient appointment and the date the rescheduled suspected cancer outpatient appointment

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.

Due to the complexity and size of the request, the “appropriate limit” has been reached in the collation of the data. Therefore, the UHB is unable to provide the information for question 6 of FOI.13609 as it has exceeded the time/cost limit allowed under the FoIA.

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 the remainder of your request below.

FOI.13608 – Waits over three (3) years

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) confirms that there are six hundred and ninety six (696) patient pathways that have been waiting over three (3) years for treatment, as recorded on the UHB’s Welsh Patient Administration System (WPAS), as at the date of your request.
2. The UHB provides overleaf, the specialty for which patients have been waiting over three (3) years for treatment, as recorded on the UHB’s WPAS.

Specialty
General Surgery
Urology
Colorectal
Vascular
Trauma & Orthopaedics
ENT
Dermatology
Gynaecology

FOI.13609 – Outpatient appointments and surgery cancellations

For questions 1, 3 and 7, the UHB is unable to provide you with the information broken down by month as requested, due to the low number of cases (5 and under), as there is a potential risk of identifying individuals if this was disclosed. Additionally, for questions 1, 3, 5 and 7, where the figures in the tables have been replaced with an asterisk (*), the UHB is unable to provide you with the exact number of patients, again due to the low number of cases (less than 5). The UHB has also replaced totals which could be used to calculate the redacted figure with a double asterisk (**). Therefore, the UHB is withholding these details 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.

1. The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of cancelled operations and the reason, as recorded on the UHB's WPAS, during the 2023 calendar year.

Cancellation reason	Number
Administrative error	7
Anaesthetist unavailable - other	*
Appointment inconvenient	6
Cancelled by anaesthetist unfit for anaesthetic	37
Did Not Attend (DNA)	33
Emergencies/ trauma	7
Equip failure/unavailable	13
ICU/HDU beds unavailable	*
List overrun	48
Operation not necessary (hospital cancel)	80
Operation not wanted (patient cancel)	26
Other - Hospital clinical	63
Other - Hospital non-clinical	22
Other - patient cancellation	27
Other reasons (patient cancel)	17
Pre-existing medical condition	11
Pre-op guidance not followed	34
Refused LA wishes GA (patient cancel)	*
Surgeon unavailable - leave	*
Surgeon unavailable - other	6
Theatre staff unavailable	*
Unable to attend personal reasons (patient cancel)	*
Unfit for surgery (hospital cancel)	271
Unfit for surgery (patient cancel)	11
Unfit with illness (hospital cancel)	21
Unsuitable for day surgery	*
Ward beds unavailable	10
Total	765

2. The UHB confirms that the average time between the cancelled operation and the rescheduled operation is four (4) days, as recorded on the UHB's WPAS.
3. The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of cancelled cancer operations and the reason, as recorded on the UHB's WPAS, during the 2023 calendar year.

Cancellation reason	Number
Cancelled by anaesthetist unfit for anaesthetic	8
DNA	15
Equip failure/unavailable	*
ICU/HDU beds unavailable	*
List overrun	*
Operation not necessary (hospital cancel)	16
Operation not wanted (patient cancel)	8
Other - Hospital clinical	12
Other - Patient cancellation	10

Other reasons (patient cancel)	*
Pre-existing medical condition	*
Pre-op guidance not followed	9
Unable to attend personal reasons (patient cancel)	*
Unfit for surgery (hospital cancel)	78
Unfit for surgery (patient cancel)	*
Unfit with illness (hospital cancel)	9
Ward beds unavailable	*
Total	187

4. The UHB confirms that the average time between the cancelled operation and the rescheduled operation for cancer is three (3) days, as recorded on the UHB's WPAS.
5. The UHB provides, within the table below, the number of cancelled outpatient appointments and the reason, by month, as recorded on the UHB's WPAS, during the 2023 calendar year.

2023	Cancelled by hospital	Inappropriate referral	Patient not fit for procedure	Removal other than treatment
January	5,245	*	10	76
February	6,213	*	7	72
March	6,432	8	8	101
April	5,197	*	7	76
May	4,901	*	*	111
June	6,288	*	*	69
July	5,735	13	*	223
August	5,988	13	*	138
September	4,979	*	*	60
October	5,645	0	8	75
November	5,221	*	6	68
December	2,471	0	0	*
Total	64,315	54	66	**

6. Section 12 exemption applied.
7. The UHB has assumed that it is the number of cancellations that is required. Therefore, the UHB provides within the table below, the number of cancelled outpatient appointments for suspected cancer and the reason, as recorded on the UHB's WPAS, during the 2023 calendar year. However, should this not be the information required, please clarify and we will re-visit the request.

Cancellation reason	Number
Cancelled by hospital	12
Inappropriate referral	*
Total	**

8. The UHB confirms that not all of the appointments have been rescheduled due to various reasons including patients are already on an open pathway, they have been seen elsewhere, discharged to a See on Symptom (SOS) or they were on the wrong pathway. However, of the

cancelled outpatient appointments for suspected cancer that have been re-scheduled, the average time was nineteen (19) days.