

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Request Reference Fol/20/438

Ophthalmic Equipment

Request details

We are contacting you with a Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) request in regards to ophthalmic equipment within your trust. Please could you complete the below table.

Do you use surgical ophthalmic disposable instruments? Yes

If yes, please specify which brand model and quantities were used in 2019

	Brand	Model/Code	What was the quantity purchased in 2019	What was the total annual value?
Capsulorhexis forceps	Re-usable(no disposables)	NA	NA	NA
Bonn forceps	Not known	NA	NA	NA
Tying forceps	Blink Medical	Ref-10-1415 Lot- 168269	20 (2 boxes)	*
Sinsky Hooks	Re-usable(no disposables)	NA	NA	NA
Chopper	MM Malosa Medical	Ref- MMSU1119S Lot- 000003257987	None (The UHB had enough in stock, did not order any)	None

*After considering your request in respect of the total annual value, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (the UHB) considers this information to be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Section 43) Commercial Interests. This section of the Act sets out an exemption from the right to know if:

- the information requested is a trade secret, or
- release of the information is likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person. (A person may be an individual, a company, the public authority itself or any other legal entity).

This exemption was considered by the UHB when deciding whether to disclose information because it considered that in doing so there could be a significant risk in prejudicing the commercial interests of the company in question. As this is a qualified exemption, the UHB is required to complete a public interest test in deciding whether it is in the public's interest to withhold or disclose the information.

In favour of disclosure: There is a public interest in transparency and in the accountability of spending of public funds. Furthermore, it is in the public's interest that public funds be used effectively and that public sector bodies obtain the best value for money when contracting for the provision of services.

Against disclosure: There is a risk of disclosure prejudicing the commercial interests of the UHB by affecting its bargaining position with agencies. This in turn could lead to less effective use of public funds in future. It has been established above that releasing the information under the Freedom of Information Act, to which the UHB is subject, will give an unfair advantage to the supplier's competitors. The UHB believes that there is wider established public interest in companies not being prejudiced merely because they have contracted with a public sector body (as upheld in ICO decision notice FS50473543 ICO v Royal Marsden Hospital Trust).

Decision: The UHB considers that the public interest in withholding the information is greater than the interests in disclosing it and thereby giving unfair commercial advantage to competitors of the supplier to which this information concerns. The UHB believes that disclosure of information in a manner which fails to protect the interests and relationships arising in a commercial context could have the effect of discouraging companies from dealing with the Health Board because of fears that the disclosure of information could damage them commercially. In turn this could then jeopardise the Health Board's ability to compete fairly and pursue its function to bring forward development in the area and obtain value for money. It was therefore decided that it was not in the public's interest to disclose this information.