

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Request Reference FoI/23/500
Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS) Therapy

Information Requested:

1. Could you possibly let me know if Vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) therapy for epilepsy is funded by the Health Board?
2. What criteria is required to be able to undergo such a procedure?
3. Where is such a procedure done?
4. And how many such procedure are carried out with the Cardiff & Vale Health Board per year?

Response Details:

1. Yes.
2. Used for drug resistant intractable epilepsy which is mainly in the paediatric population. Each case has to be discussed in the Epilepsy Surgical MDT to determine the suitability for VNS.
3. University Hospital of Wales.
4. In completing a search for the information requested, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (the UHB) has confirmed that this information is not centrally recorded or collated. To retrieve the information requested would require a manual search through individual records and the UHB considers that this would exceed the limit set within regulations for responding to a request. The UHB has therefore relied upon the Section 12 exemption ('Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit') of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and is refusing your request.

The UHB has estimated that to complete the work needed to respond to this request would exceed the time limit as set within regulations to respond to a Freedom of Information Act request. Under the Act there is an allowance of two and a half days, or 18 hours, to comply with a request and the cost limit set within the Fees Regulations for this amount of work (18 hours) is £450 for the UHB. The Fees Regulations specify that the cost of complying with a request must be calculated at the rate of £25 per hour.

However, to comply with our Section 16 duty to advise and assist, the UHB can inform you that for paediatric procedures approximately 5-10 new implants are fitted annually, and approximately 10 replacement battery procedures are carried out. For adults, only replacement VNS battery procedures have been carried out, with approximately 10-15 annually.