

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request Reference FoI/24/255**

**Anterior Cruciate Ligament Injuries**

**Information Requested:**

I would like all relevant information relating to ACL injuries treated by your health board:

1. Total number of female patients treated for an ACL injury since 2019
2. Total number of male patients treated for an ACL injury since 2019
3. A yearly breakdown on how many female patients have had to receive an ACL reconstruction due to an injury in sport, since the year 2019.

**Response Details:**

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 the Appropriate Limit and Fees Regulations 2004. The UHB has therefore relied upon the section 12 exemption of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA 2000) ('Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit') and is refusing your request for the following reasons.

It should first be noted that multiple requests within a single item of correspondence are considered separate requests for the purposes of section 12(4) of the FOIA 2000, as confirmed in *Fitzsimmons v Information Commissioner* [2008] UKIT EA/2007/0124.

When a public authority is estimating whether the appropriate limit is likely to be exceeded for the purposes of regulation 5 of the Fees Regulations as prescribed by section 12(4) of the FOIA 2000, it can include the costs of complying with two or more requests if these are:

- made by one person, or by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign; and
- received by the public authority within any period of 60 working days.

Since all of these requests were sent by the same individual and received on 22 April 2024, the UHB believes these conditions to be satisfied.

Regulation 5(2) of the Fees Regulations equally requires that aggregated requests relate 'to any extent' to the same or similar information. This test is likely to be met where requests possess an overarching theme or have a common thread running between them with respect to the nature of the information sought. And since each of the requests relates to data on anterior cruciate ligament injuries, the UHB considers the requirement of similar information sought to be met due to the common themes present.

The UHB has estimated that to complete the work needed to respond to the aggregated requests would exceed the time limit as set within the Fees Regulations to respond to a request made under the FOIA 2000. 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 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.

In light of the above considerations, the UHB is refusing your requests for information in accordance with section 12(4) of the FOIA 2000.

However, under a public authority's duty to advise and assist pursuant to section 16 of the FOIA 2000, the UHB may be able to retrieve some related data compiled via the clinical coding process. Please be aware that the current ICD and OPCS coding classifications do not differentiate between injuries to, and interventions on, the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) and the posterior cruciate ligament (PCL). If you would like the UHB to attempt to retrieve information based on coded clinical data in relation to ACL and PCL injuries, please confirm the parameters of such a request.