

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request Reference FoI/24/395**  
**Policy Documents**

**Information Requested:**

[W]e require the risk policy, ligature audit and removal of possession policies and guidelines, used by the Health Board and Hafan Y Coed Mental Health Unit.

**Response Details:**

After considering your request, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (the UHB) believes that section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) applies in this instance and is refusing your request.

Under section 21 of the FOIA, a public authority does not have to respond to a request if the information being sought is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means.

In accordance with the duty to advise and assist imposed by section 16 of the FOIA, please refer to the below weblinks which you might find of use:

- [Mental Health Clinical Risk and Risk Mitigation Management Policy](#)
- [Search of Patients' Person and Belongings Policy and Procedure](#)

For a list of all the UHB's Patient Safety and Quality policies, please see [here](#).

With respect to your request for the ligature audit, the UHB believes the exemption as outlined in section 38 of the FOIA is engaged. The exemption applies where a public authority believes that disclosure of the information sought would be likely to endanger the physical or mental health of any individual or endanger the safety of any individual.

As a result of the qualified nature of section 38, a public interest test must be conducted to determine whether this exemption should be maintained. The UHB must decide whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in the disclosure of the requested information.

**In favour of disclosure**

The UHB understands that there is a public interest in promoting accountability and transparency by public authorities for decisions taken by them and in bringing to light information concerning public health and safety.

**Against disclosure**

The purpose of a ligature audit is to identify and assess ligature points within an environment that present a serious risk to service users and patients to minimise the risk of asphyxiation and self-harm. Such audits are conducted in line with statutory duties and require the UHB to assess the risk of harm within its

premises. In healthcare settings, where people at high risk of self-harm are cared for, it is especially important to conceal the detail of how patients have harmed themselves or might harm themselves.

## Decision

The UHB has concluded that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Releasing specific details about how potential ligature points can be used by individuals to attempt harm to themselves is counterintuitive to the purpose of such audits conducted by the UHB of its premises. The main purpose is to identify and mitigate any risk of harm to service users and patients. These audits would therefore be rendered ineffective for their purpose of minimising harm if disclosed. It was therefore decided that this exemption should be maintained and the information withheld.