

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request Reference FoI/24/182
Solutions Software

1. What software do you use for your payroll, hr and finance solutions, how much annually do you spend on each, when does each contract expire?

Oracle ESR is used for payroll and HR software solutions. It is a Department of Health and Social Care contract for England and Wales and will run until 2034.

After considering your request for payroll and HR software solutions expenditure, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (the UHB) considers this information to be exempt from disclosure under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('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 both the supplier and the UHB. 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: It has been established that releasing the information sought under the Freedom of Information Act, to which the UHB is subject, will give an unfair advantage to the supplier's competitors. There is a risk of disclosure prejudicing the commercial interests of the UHB by affecting its bargaining position with suppliers. This in turn could lead to less effective use of public funds in future. The UHB believes that there is wider established public interest in suppliers 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 is not in the public's interest to disclose this information.

For finance software solutions, Oracle, QlikView, and Qlik Sense are used. The systems are managed across Wales by Velindre University NHS Trust and the contribution from Cardiff and Vale University Health Board for the cost is £332,464 for the 2024–25 financial year.

2. Do you manage your payroll in-house or do you outsource it if so, who do you outsource it to?

Managed on an All Wales basis for all NHS Wales organisations by NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership.

3. How many people do you pay each month using your payroll solution?

21,000 per month.

4. How many pensioners do you pay using your payroll solution?

None.

5. Do you use Microsoft power platform technologies such as Power Automate, Power Virtual Agents?

Yes.

6. What is the employee count at the university?

17,900 employees.

7. Do you collaborate with other organisations in the delivery of HR & Payroll shared services? If so which organisation?

No.

8. Do you work with any industry experts such as ATOS, KPMG, EY, Accenture etc?

No.

9. Who at the university is the head of service for HR and Payroll software or services and what is their role?

After considering your request, the UHB believes that the data requested is classed as personal data as defined under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. Its disclosure would be contrary to the data protection principles and constitute unfair and unlawful processing with regard to Articles 5, 6, and 9 of the GDPR. We are therefore withholding this detail under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This exemption is absolute and therefore there is no requirement to apply the public interest test.