

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request Reference FoI/24/196

MRI Scans

1. How many MRI Scanners do you currently have in the trust/health board?

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (the UHB) has five static MRI machines, four of which are located at University Hospital of Wales and one of which is at University Hospital Llandough.

There are also two mobile MRI scanners managed by the UHB, but these are not currently on Cardiff and Vale sites.

2. How many MRI scans are requested each year?

32,363 scans.

3. How many MRI scans are done in a year?

26,886

4. Which make and model of MRI Scanner do you have installed across the trust/health board?

- 2 GE Signa Artist 1.5T.
- 1 GE Signa Premier 3T.
- 1 GE Signa Artist 1.5T.
- 1 Siemens Aera 1.5T.

5. What is your 'Do not attend' rate?

The rate in March 2024 was 5.8%.

6. What is your failed MRI scan rate i.e. scan abandoned midway during an investigation?

840 examinations were abandoned during the 2023–24 financial year.

7. What percentage of your failed and DNA rates are due to claustrophobia?

In completing a search for the information requested, 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 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit') 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.

8. What is the number of patients per month referred to an open MRI scanner?

The UHB has relied upon the section 12 exemption here and is therefore refusing your request.

9. The cost per patient to refer to an open MRI scanner (tariff you're charged).

After considering your request, 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.

10. What was the cited reason as to why the patient was referred to an open scanner?

The only two reasons for agreeing open MRI scans are claustrophobia or increased body habitus.

11. What is your Projected MRI demand within the trust/health board (% increase)?

Please see the attached Excel document.