

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request Reference FoI/24/318

Escalation Levels

How many times have emergency departments at each hospital in your health board area been at escalation level four, described as “extreme pressure”, during the last three years and in 2024 to date. Please break this information down by hospital, month and year.

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 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.

Please also provide any details of the protocol for hospitals when they reach such an escalation level.

Each clinical board of the UHB has their own escalation cards which are directed specifically to their patient stream. As a generic rule, when there is high escalation, the clinical boards are expected to undertake or consider the following 'Level 4:20' actions:

- Every patient in a ward bed to be reviewed by a senior clinician – consultant or registrar.
- Is there a clear plan in the notes?
- Is the plan being followed?
- Discharge liaison officer on every ward to support.
- Is STAMP up to date?
- Are confirmed discharges in the discharge lounge?
- Are all potential discharges being expedited?
- All outliers to be reviewed by a consultant.
- Clinical Diagnostics and Therapies to support expediting diagnostics.
- Early escalation and comms into site.
- Seek support from local authorities.
- All patients in the emergency department to be screened by an EU consultant prior to referral.
- All patients in the emergency or assessment unit with a decision to admit to be rereviewed by a senior clinician to confirm need for admission.

Please also find attached the Emergency and Acute Medicine escalation cards. These are currently in the process of being renewed.