2 November 2026

Dear

ATISN 26-0055 – Specialist inpatient care

Thank you for your request to Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 18 October relating to the Learning Disabilities Specialist Inpatient Services quarterly census.

You asked for the following information:

For the period between April 2026 and July 2026 quarterly Learning Disabilities Specialist Inpatient Services census snapshots.

For each Welsh commissioning/responsible health board, provide:

1. The total number of Welsh residents recorded as receiving specialist inpatient care.

2. Of those patients, the number receiving care:

• *within NHS provision operated by their own commissioning/responsible health board;*

• *within NHS provision operated by another Welsh health board;*

• *within independent-sector provision in Wales;*

• *within NHS provision in England; and*

• *within independent-sector provision in England.*

Where another categorisation is used within the dataset, please provide the equivalent available breakdown and explain the categories used.

3. The number of patients recorded as:

• *ready for discharge / clinically ready to leave hospital;*

• *experiencing delayed discharge or delayed progression; and*

• *not yet ready for discharge.*

Provide the terminology actually used within the dataset where this differs from the wording above.

4. Length of stay, preferably using the bands already held within the dataset.

If available, provide the number of patients whose current inpatient stay was:

• less than 3 months;
• 3–6 months;
• 6–12 months;
• 1–2 years;
• 2–5 years; and
• more than 5 years.

If different standard bands are used, please provide the data using those existing bands instead.

5. For patients identified as ready for discharge but remaining in inpatient care, please provide aggregated counts by the principal recorded barrier to discharge/progression, where this information is held.

Examples might include accommodation/housing, social-care provision, community clinical support, funding/commissioning arrangements or other recorded categories.

Use the categories already held within the dataset rather than creating new classifications for this request.

6. Confirm the coverage/denominator of the quarterly published specialist inpatient figures.

In particular, confirm whether they include all Welsh residents receiving specialist learning-disability inpatient care in:

• Welsh NHS hospitals;
• Welsh independent-sector hospitals;
• NHS hospitals in England; and
• independent-sector hospitals in England.

If any provider type, placement type or geographical setting is excluded from the published denominator, please identify that exclusion.

7. Provide any accompanying data dictionary, metadata, technical guidance or definitions used for the April and July 2026 returns which define:

• provider organisation;
• commissioner/responsible organisation;
• inpatient setting;
• length of stay;
• ready for discharge;
• delayed discharge/delayed progression; and
• discharge barrier.

Electronic spreadsheet format (CSV or Excel) would be preferred where the information is already held electronically.

Our Response

For each Welsh commissioning/responsible health board, provide:

To Clarify and to put the content of this response in context, Welsh Government only holds information collected, collated and provided by our external partners at Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) and NHS Performance and Improvement (NHS P&I). The April census data was collated by NHS P&I before the process changed and the July census (and subsequent censuses) was collated by DCHW. The process is slightly different, so some information captured in April is not available for July.

This information is collected based on a specific date and does not account for changes in activity that occur outside the date of recording. In the case cited data was captured on 8 April and 8 July.

The data provided is aggregated national data and is not broken down by individual health board. This is primarily due to the relatively low numbers of people included in the census, particularly when broken down into sub-categories, and the risk of patients being identifiable. This can also be seen in the national data where any data shown below 5 is categorised as less than 5 or <5

Welsh Government does not collect or hold any other information, so we are unable to respond to every aspect of the request below. However, I have responded to those queries where we do hold the information requested and indicated where this information is not held by us.

There are two further caveats to the information provided. Firstly, Powys THB does not have any dedicated inpatient beds within its estate, primarily due to its population size. Secondly, Cardiff and Vale UHB and Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB share their learning disability service with Swansea Bay UHB so patients from each health board are routinely housed in hospitals belonging to, and located within the geographical boundary of, a partner health board.

1. The total number of Welsh residents recorded as receiving specialist inpatient care.

April 2026 129
July 2026 121

2. Of those patients, the number receiving care:

• within NHS provision operated by their own commissioning/responsible health board;

This information is not held by Welsh Government on an individual health board basis.

• within NHS provision operated by another Welsh health board;

This information is not held by Welsh Government on an individual HB level.
The all-Wales figure is
April 2026 83 people in an NHS hospital in Wales
July 2026 91 people in an NHS Hospital in Wales

• within independent-sector provision in Wales;

This information is not held by Welsh Government at health board level.
The all-Wales figure is
April 2026 28
July 2026 18

• within NHS provision in England; and

April 2026 0
July 2026 0

• within independent-sector provision in England.

April 2026 18
July 2026 12

Where another categorisation is used within the dataset, please provide the equivalent available breakdown and explain the categories used.

Not applicable – no other categories are used.

3. The number of patients recorded as:

• ready for discharge / clinically ready to leave hospital;

This information is not held by Welsh Government.

• experiencing delayed discharge or delayed progression; and

This information is not held at health board level. The national figure is
April 2026 22
July 2026 17

• not yet ready for discharge.

This information is not held by Welsh Government.

Provide the terminology actually used within the dataset where this differs from the wording above.

Not applicable. Welsh Government does not hold this information or use alternative terminology.

4. Length of stay, preferably using the bands already held within the dataset.

If available, provide the number of patients whose current inpatient stay was:

• less than 3 months;
• 3–6 months;
• 6–12 months;
• 1–2 years;
• 2–5 years; and
• more than 5 years.

If different standard bands are used, please provide the data using those existing bands instead.

> *Welsh Government does not hold this information in the bandings above. Neither do we hold information at a health board level. The national figures are below.*
> *In April, 70 patients had spent more than 3 consecutive years in one or more hospital-based settings, of these, 34 had spent more than 10 years in hospital-based settings.*
> *Welsh Government does not hold this information for the July census due to a change in the reporting process following the move from NHS P&I to DHCW..*

5. For patients identified as ready for discharge but remaining in inpatient care, please provide aggregated counts by the principal recorded barrier to discharge/progression, where this information is held.

Examples might include accommodation/housing, social-care provision, community clinical support, funding/commissioning arrangements or other recorded categories.

Use the categories already held within the dataset rather than creating new classifications for this request.

> *April 2026 18 people were delayed due to 'awaiting placement/accommodation. 4 people were delayed due to 'other' (unidentified) reasons.*
> *July 2026 This information is not held by Welsh Government for the July census due to a change in the reporting process following the move from NHS P&I to DHCW. This information will become available again for future census returns.*

6. Confirm the coverage/denominator of the quarterly published specialist inpatient figures.

In particular, confirm whether they include all Welsh residents receiving specialist learning-disability inpatient care in:

• Welsh NHS hospitals;
• Welsh independent-sector hospitals;
• NHS hospitals in England; and
• independent-sector hospitals in England.

If any provider type, placement type or geographical setting is excluded from the published denominator, please identify that exclusion.

Welsh Government does not hold any additional information or data in this category that is not published in the data release. The published data covers all Welsh patients in NHS hospitals in Wales, Independent hospitals in Wales and independent hospitals in England. No patients are housed in NHS hospitals in England.
This information is not held at health board level but the national figures are
April 2026 121 people were receiving treatment in a dedicated learning disability provision and 8 were receiving treatment in a dedicated mental health provision..
July 2026 113 people were receiving treatment in a dedicated learning disability provision with 8 people receiving treatment in a mental health provision.

7. Provide any accompanying data dictionary, metadata, technical guidance or definitions used for the April and July 2026 returns which define:

• provider organisation;
• commissioner/responsible organisation;
• inpatient setting;
• length of stay;
• ready for discharge;
• delayed discharge/delayed progression; and
• discharge barrier.

Welsh Government does not hold this information. However, a glossary of terms is available to support the data release, and this is attached for information and reference at Appendix 1 to this letter.

Next Steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:
Information Rights Unit
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House

Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 1

Glossary

This glossary explains key terms used in the report. Some terms describe legal status, hospital settings or statistical concepts and are included to support consistent interpretation of the data.

Term	Definition
Assessment and Treatment Unit (ATU)	A specialist inpatient service that provides short-term assessment, treatment and support for people with a learning disability whose needs cannot currently be met safely in the community.
Continuing care hospital	A hospital setting providing ongoing specialist inpatient care for people with longer-term support or treatment needs.
Delayed discharge / Pathway of Care Delay (POCD)	A situation where a person is clinically ready to leave hospital, but discharge is delayed because the right community support, accommodation, care package or pathway is not yet in place.
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)	Legal safeguards used when a person who lacks capacity is deprived of their liberty in a care home or hospital setting, to ensure this is lawful and in their best interests.
Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW)	The national organisation responsible for digital services, data and information systems supporting health and care in Wales.
Hospital spell	The amount of time a person has spent in their current hospital setting or environment.
Learning disability	A lifelong condition that affects a person's intellectual functioning and adaptive skills, meaning they may need additional support with learning, communication and daily living.

Locked rehabilitation hospital	A hospital setting that provides rehabilitation and therapeutic support in a secure or locked environment, usually for people who require structured care before moving to a less restrictive setting.
Management information	Data collected and used for operational, planning or monitoring purposes. It has not necessarily undergone the full assurance process required for official statistics.
Mental Health Act	Legislation that allows people to be detained in hospital for assessment or treatment of a mental disorder when specific legal criteria are met.
NHS provision	Services provided directly by the NHS.
Non-NHS provision	Services provided by independent or private providers, usually commissioned by the NHS.
Person spell	The total amount of time a person has spent in hospital from their first admission, including any moves between different hospital settings.
Quarterly Learning Disability Specialist Inpatient Census (QLDSIC)	A quarterly data collection completed by Welsh health boards about Welsh residents with a learning disability who are in specialist learning disability or mental health inpatient settings in Wales or England.
Secure hospital	A hospital setting providing care and treatment in conditions of security for people who present a level of risk that cannot be safely managed in open or less secure services.
Suppression	A disclosure control method where small numbers are not published, usually to reduce the risk of identifying individuals.
Welsh resident	A person whose usual residence is in Wales, even if they are receiving inpatient care outside Wales.