

Dear

ATISN 27602 – Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines

Thank you for your request to Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) which was received on 30 September 2026, relating to Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines funding.

You have asked for the following:

- 1. Please explain the process by which local health boards receive this funding, including who determines eligibility, who authorises the payment, and whether the payment is made by the Welsh Government, Health Care Research Wales, or another body.*
- 2. For roles advertised by Health Care Research Wales through NHS Jobs, please explain the process for approving the need for each role, including who reviews and approves the business case, job description, salary band and funding source.*
- 3. Please provide the number of new roles funded or supported through this funding to date, broken down by permanent roles, fixed-term roles and secondments. For each role, please provide the salary band or grade, whether the successful candidate was already employed by Health Care Research Wales at the time of appointment, whether the appointment was an internal promotion, and whether the successful candidate was external to Health Care Research Wales.*
- 4. Please identify which local health boards have received Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines funding, the amount received by each board, and the purpose for which each allocation was made, including whether it supported research activity, staffing costs, patient benefit or another category of expenditure.*
- 5. Please provide the total amount of Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines funding received to date and a breakdown of how that total has been spent, including the amount and percentage allocated to staffing costs, research activity, patient benefit and any other expenditure categories.*

Our Response

1. Funding is made available to eligible organisations through specific funding calls administered by the Health and Care Research Wales Support & Delivery Centre on behalf of the Welsh Government.

A funding call is opened following a recommendation from the Commercial Research Delivery Wales Board and approval by the Welsh Government. Each call sets out its own eligibility and assessment criteria, aligned with the objectives of the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing, Access and Growth (VPAG).

Applications are assessed by a funding panel against the published criteria. The panel's recommendations are submitted to the Welsh Government, which makes the final funding decision. Where an application is approved, the Welsh Government issues the grant award letter and makes payment directly to the relevant organisation. The organisation then allocates the funding within their organisation in line with the grant award letter.

2. Health and Care Research Wales is not a legal entity. We have therefore interpreted this question as relating to posts within the national Support & Delivery Centre hosted by Powys Teaching Health Board.

All recruitment in the Support and Delivery Centre is carried out by Powys Teaching Health Board as the employer in line with the hosting agreement between Welsh Government and Powys Teaching Health Board. All appointments in the workplan are approved by Welsh Government prior to appointment, via contract management arrangements. For posts at Agenda for Change (AfC) Band 8a and above, or at medical grade, the job description is also submitted to the Welsh Government for review and approval.

3. Health and Care Research Wales is not a legal entity. We have therefore interpreted this question as relating to posts within the national Support & Delivery Centre hosted by Powys Teaching Health Board. This information is held by Powys teaching Health Board. We advise you contact Powys teaching Health Board for this information.

4&5 combined

Since the start of the programme, Welsh Government has received £8.4m VPAG funding from UK Government. This covers the initial payment of £500k in December 2024 and £7.9m in financial year 2005/2026. Welsh Government receive payments from the Department for Health and Social Care (England) in December each year.

The table attached provides the amount of VPAG funding each organisation has received to date (at 20 October 2026) from Welsh Government.

During 2026/27, grant award payments to Welsh organisations have already been made covering Quarter 1 April to June 2026) and these are included in the table attached.

The information is not broken down by the categories requested as we are not able to differentiate between supported research activity, staffing costs, patient benefit or another category of expenditure. In order to provide further context, the information has been broken down into the two financial categories outlined below.

Revenue funding – which is provided to cover the day-to-day running costs of an organisation, service, programme or project. In the case of VPAG funding, this typically includes staff salaries and on-costs, training and development, travel and subsistence, or consumables and supplies (under £5k). Most of the revenue funding is related to staff costs.

Capital funding – which is provided to purchase, build, upgrade, or significantly improve assets that will deliver benefits over several years. In the case of VPAG funding, typical examples include major research related equipment, IT systems and infrastructure, or refurbishment of a research facility.

All expenditure is consistent with the objectives of the VPAG scheme, with funding used to enhance organisations' capacity and/or capability to deliver commercial research activity. This includes investment in staff and equipment that support the delivery of commercial research and ultimately provide benefits to patients.

The attached table therefore outlines VPAG funding that has been paid to organisations between December 2024 and 20 October 2026. In addition, this has been categorised as either revenue and capital (including percentage split) and the name of the grant award.

We have concluded that some of the information requested is exempt from disclosure under Section 40(2) – Personal Information of the Freedom of Information

Act. An explanation of our application of this exemption is set out at **Annex A** of 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,

Annex A

Section 40(2) – Personal Information of the Freedom of Information Act

Section 40(2) together with the conditions in section 40(3)(a)(i) or 40(3)(b) provides an absolute exemption if disclosure of the personal data would breach any of the data protection principles.

‘Personal data’ is defined in sections 3(2) and (3) of the Data Protection Act 1998 (‘the DPA 2018’) and means any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual. An identifiable living individual is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of the individual.

We have concluded that, in this instance, the information requested contains third party personal data.

Under Section 40(2) of the FOIA, personal data is exempt from release if disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the GDPR. We consider the principle being most relevant in this instance as being the first. This states that personal data must be:

“Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject”

The lawful basis that is most relevant in relation to a request for information under the FOIA is Article 6(1)(f). This states:

“Processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller or by a third party except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child”.

In considering the application of Article 6(1)(f) in the context of a request for information under FOIA it is necessary to consider the following three-part test: -

- **The Legitimate interest test:** Whether a legitimate interest is being pursued in the request for information.
- **The Necessity test:** Whether disclosure of the information/confirmation or denial that it is held is necessary to meet the legitimate interest in question.
- **The Balancing test:** Whether the above interests override the interests, fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject.

Our consideration of these tests is set out below:

1. Legitimate interests

Your request relates to information regarding the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines funding, and an excel spreadsheet table outlines VPAG funding that has been paid to organisations between December 2024 and 20 October.

We have concluded that, in this instance, there is little to be gained from releasing the name of individual. We believe we have provided sufficient information to satisfy the legitimate interest, and we do not believe disclosure of the identities of those consultants would allow any greater understanding

2. Is disclosure necessary?

Following the above analysis, we do not believe that disclosure of the personal data is necessary.

3. The balance between legitimate interests and the data subject's interests or fundamental rights and freedoms

As we do not believe disclosure of this personal data is necessary, there is no requirement on us to undertake a test to balance the legitimate interests against the right of individuals, as the fundamental rights and freedoms provided by the DPA are not being challenged.