

19 June 2024

Language Services

Under Freedom of Information Act 2000, please can you provide the following information regarding language services?

1. Please confirm your overall spend on interpreting, translation and transcription services for the following financial years: 2021-22 & 2022-23

The Business Services Organisation (BSO), Health and Social Care (HSC) Interpreting Service provide face-to-face (spoken) foreign language interpreting provision. The BSO Interpreting Service is commissioned by the Department of Health's Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) (formerly known as the Health and Social Care Board) to provide foreign language interpreting services to HSC providers in Northern Ireland. This provision is in line with Regulation 12 of the Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015, which allows the delivery of Service Level Agreements between public entities within the public sector. BSO is the statutory provider of face-to-face (spoken) foreign language interpreting for all HSC organisations.

With regard to telephone interpreting, written translation and sign language interpreting - the Department for Communities (DfC) has commissioned a number of contractors to provide interpretation, translation and transcription services to the Northern Ireland public sector. The contract was awarded through tender and runs from 1 February 2022 until 31 January 2026.

SPPG provide funding for telephone, face-to-face and sign language interpreting across the region. Face-to-face interpreting and sign language interpreting is paid directly by SPPG.

Please direct any queries regarding spending to SPPG, who have their own dedicated FOI Teams who will be able to assist you with your request, they can be contacted at: FOI@health-ni.gov.uk.

SPPG provide funding to Belfast Trust each year to cover the cost of telephone interpreting. The Trusts cover the cost of translations.

	21/22	22/23
Interpreting – Telephone	£89,447.01	£101,782.66
Translation	£60,986.82	£78,456.14

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2. **Who is your incumbent supplier(s) for language services? If you have more than one supplier, which services does each one provide to you?**
3. **If you have a separate British Sign Language/non-spoken supplier, who is this?**
4. **If you have a separate transcription supplier, who is this?**

Please see below response to questions 2 to 4:

Translation	Flex Language Global Connects The Language Room (<i>we no longer use The Language Room</i>)
Interpreting – In Person	The Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service
Interpreting – Telephone	Big Word
Sign Language Interpreting	Sign Language Interactions

5. **Do you have any in-house interpreters/translators?**

No

6. **When is your current language services contract (s) due to expire, a) without extensions and b) with all possible extensions?**
7. **Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the contract manager responsible for language services?**
8. **Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the person responsible for your language services budget?**
9. **Could you please provide the following data for 2023?**
 - Total number of face-to-face interpreting assignments (spoken language) and hours completed
 - Total number of face-to-face interpreting assignments (non-spoken language) and hours completed
 - Total number of telephone interpreting calls and minutes completed
 - Total number of video interpreting calls (spoken language) and minutes completed

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- **Total number of video interpreting calls (non-spoken language) and minutes completed**
- **Total number of document translations and words translated**
- **Total number of audio transcriptions and total audio duration**

With regard to questions 6 to 9, please direct any queries regarding provider(s) of interpretation services to BSO, DfC and/or SPPG.

BSO, DfC and SPPG have their own dedicated FOI Teams who will be able to assist you with your request. These organisations can be contacted as follows:

BSO: Foi.bso@hscni.net

DfC: foi@communities-ni.gov.uk

SPPG: FOI@health-ni.gov.uk

- **Total number of telephone interpreting calls and minutes completed:**

In 2023, there were 15588 calls; the provider does not have the ability to break this down to minutes.

- **Total number of document translations and words translated**

Unable to break down to number of documents
 The total number of words translated was 467,883

10. What were your top 20 highest-volume languages for interpreting/translation requests in 2023?

	Big Word Telephone Interpreting	Flex Language Written Translations	Global Connects Written Translations	The Language Room Written Translations
		*calculated by words translated	*calculated by no. of documents translated	*calculated by words translated
1.	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Polish
2.	Romanian	Mandarin	Polish	Hungarian
3.	Somali	Somali	Chinese	Slovak
4.	Polish	Farsi Cantonese	Lithuanian Romanian	Czech

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	Big Word Telephone Interpreting	Flex Language Written Translations	Global Connects Written Translations	The Language Room Written Translations
		*calculated by words translated	*calculated by no. of documents translated	*calculated by words translated
5.	Tigrinya	Romanian	Portuguese Somali	Arabic
6.	Mandarin	Amharic Kurdish K Kurdish S Tigrinya Nuer Russian Ukrainian	Slovak Ukrainian	Farsi
7.	Slovak	Slovak	Tigrinya Russian	Romanian
8.	Amharic	Polish	Bulgarian Hungarian Tetum Turkish	Dutch
9.	Farsi (Persian)	Portuguese	Bosnian Bengali Spanish Farsi French Latvian Sinhalese	Portuguese (Portugal)
10.	Portuguese	Lithuanian		Bengali
11.	Cantonese	Greek		Lithuanian
12.	Ukrainian	Hungarian		Mandarin
13.	Russian	Tetum		Romanian
14.	Hungarian	Bulgarian		
15.	Bulgarian	German		
16.	Czech	French		
17.	Lithuanian	Czech		
18.	Spanish			
19.	Bengali			
20.	Kurdish (Sorani)			

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Please direct any queries regarding face-to-face interpreting to BSO, who has its own dedicated FOI Team who will be able to assist you with your request, they can be contacted at Foi.bso@hscni.net.

11. **Can you please provide the fill rate % you received for the following services in 2023:**
 - **Face-to-face interpreting**
 - **Telephone interpreting**
 - **Video interpreting**
 - **Document translation**
 - **Audio transcription**
12. **What languages has your provider been unable to source in the last 12 months?**
13. **Have service credits been applied on your language services contract in the last 12 months? If so, what performance failure was this linked to?**
14. **What social value has been delivered as part of this contract in the last 12 months?**
15. **If your contract was awarded through a tender process, can you please provide a copy of the winning bidder's tender?**
16. **What are your contracted rates for each of the following services?**
 - **Spoken face-to-face interpreting: hourly rate**
 - **Non-spoken face-to-face interpreting: hourly rate**
 - **Telephone interpreting: per minute rate**
 - **Spoken video interpreting: per minute rate**
 - **Non-spoken video interpreting:**
 - **Document translation: per word rate**
 - **Audio transcription: per audio minute rate**
17. **Has your provider of language services increased their charge rate to you in the last 12 months?**
18. **What is the Authority's typical route to market?**
19. **Does the Authority currently have any interpreter on wheel devices as part of their current contract? If yes please advise how many and if these are provided free of charge or paid for by the Authority.**

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20. Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the person in charge of procurement for the Authority?

With regard to questions 11 to 20, please direct any queries regarding provider(s) of interpretation services to BSO, DfC and/or SPPG.

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