

01 April 2026

Use of Language Support Services

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) use of language support services for the full financial year 2024/2025.

Spend, Suppliers & Contracting

Total spend on:

1.
 - **Interpreting:** BHSCT do not pay for foreign language interpreting, it is provided via the BSO Interpreting Service. Face to Face (spoken) Foreign Language Interpreting provision is provided by the Business Services Organisation (BSO) Health and Social Care (HSC) Interpreting Service. The BSO Interpreting Service is commissioned by the Department of Health's Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) to provide foreign language interpreting services to HSC providers in Northern Ireland. The Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) cover the cost for all telephone foreign language and sign language interpreting across the region.
 - **Translation BHSCT:** £39206.12
 - **Transcription:** £0.00 – there is no cost to BHSCT

2. **Who is your current supplier(s) for language services?
If multiple suppliers are used, please specify which services each supplier delivers.**

The Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service is managed by the Business Service Organisation (BSO) on behalf of the region, they provide face to face interpreting through a register of self-employed sessional interpreters, who are professionally accredited. Please direct all queries to BSO who have their own dedicated FOI team who will be able to assist you with your request - BSO: Foi.bso@hscni.net

- **Telephone foreign language – The Big Word**
- **Written Translations – Global Connects, Flex**

3. **Who is your provider for non-spoken language services (e.g., BSL/ISL)?**

- Sign Language – Sign Language Interactions

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 query to SPPG, who

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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.

4. Who is your provider for transcription services (if separate)?

TILII Translates and Maghaberry Braille.

5. Do you employ any in-house interpreters or translators?

BHSCT do not employ in-house interpreters or translators.

6. Contract expiry dates

- **a) Without extensions**
- **b) With all extensions applied**

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Please direct query 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.

Please direct query to Department for Communities, who have their own dedicated FOI teams who will be able to assist you with your request, they can be contacted at foi@communities-ni.gov.uk

7. Name, phone number and email address of the contract manager for language services.

As per question 6.

8. Name, phone number and email address of the person responsible for the language services budget.

As per question 6.

9. Do you have any minimum durations set for interpreting bookings? If yes, please specify for each service type (spoken, non-spoken, telephone, video).

As per question 6

Activity Data – Latest Full Financial Year

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10. Total number of:

- **Face-to-face interpreting assignments (spoken) + total hours**

There were 47,358 BSO (spoken language) face-to-face BHSCT requests processed in 2024/25, including 173 video call bookings. BSO do not hold data on number of hours completed.

SPPG manage the contract for sign language interpreter bookings. Please direct query 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.

- **Telephone interpreting calls + total minutes**
- **Video interpreting calls (spoken) + total minutes**
- **Video interpreting calls (non-spoken) + total minutes**
- **Document translations + total words translated**
- **Audio transcriptions + total audio duration**

Regards the above points, cost of retrieving this information exceeds the costs limit specified in the FOI act.

We estimate that compliance with this element of the request for information would exceed the appropriate costs limit. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information 2000, the limit has been specified as £450 and represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

11. Top 20 highest-volume languages for interpreting/translation.

BSO Interpreting BHSCT Top 20 Languages 2024/25

1. Arabic
2. Polish
3. Romanian
4. Somali
5. Slovak
6. Mandarin
7. Cantonese
8. Farsi (Iran)
9. Lithuanian
10. Tigrinya
11. Portuguese
12. Hungarian
13. Amharic
14. Ukrainian
15. Bulgarian
16. Russian

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17. Spanish
18. Urdu
19. Bengali
20. Tetum

Translation 24/25

Cost of retrieving this information exceeds what is reasonable to be spent by a public body.

12. Performance, Fulfilment & Complaints

- **Fulfilment rate (%) for:**

Face-to-face interpreting - BSO Interpreting Service BHSCT Rate of Provision for 2024/25 was 95.15%

- **Telephone interpreting**
- **Video interpreting**
- **Document translation**
- **Audio transcription**

Regards the above points, cost of retrieving this information exceeds the costs limit specified in the FOI act.

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13. Number of language service complaints received in the latest full financial year.

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14. Percentage of positive vs negative feedback received regarding language services.

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As per question 13.

15. Languages your provider has been unable to source in the last 12 months:

As per question 13.

**16. Have any service credits been applied in the last 12 months?
If yes, what performance issues were they linked to?**

As per 13

Social Value, Tender Information & Pricing

17. Social value delivered under this contract in the last 12 months.

Not known - Please direct query 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.

18. If tendered, please provide a copy of the winning bidder's tender submission.

Not known - Please direct query 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.

19. Contracted rates for:

- **Spoken face-to-face interpreting (hourly)** BHSCCT does not contract face-to-face interpreting provided by the BSO Interpreting Service
- **Non-spoken face-to-face interpreting (hourly)**
- **Telephone interpreting (per minute)**
- **Spoken video interpreting (per minute)**
- **Non-spoken video interpreting (per minute)**
- **Document translation (per word)**
- **Audio transcription (per audio minute)**

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20. Has your provider increased their rates in the last 12 months?

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21. What is the Authority's typical route to market for procuring language services?

As per question 20.

Assistive Technology (BSL / Deaf Access)

22. Do you have a VRS (Video Relay Service) on-demand service in place allowing Deaf BSL users to contact you via video when phoning?

Yes, Sign Language Interactions provides the service via SPPG contract.

Please direct query 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.

23. Do you have a VRI (Video Remote Interpreting) on-demand service in place for emergency/unplanned/immediate communication needs for Deaf patients or service users?

Yes, Sign Language Interactions provides the service via SPPG contract.

Please direct query 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.

Additional Data for the Most Recent Full Financial Year

- **Total number of spoken language requests.**
- **Total number of non-spoken language requests.**
- **Total spend on spoken vs non-spoken language services.**
- **Fulfilment rates for spoken vs non-spoken services.**

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Final Clarification Request

28. If your provider offers additional provisions or specialist services (e.g., ISL, rare languages, emergency response, in-person support, or other enhanced services), please provide details.

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