

FOI 3637

27th March 2026**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST**

Provide all information for the most recent full financial year for which you hold complete data, unless otherwise stated.

A) Spend, Suppliers & Contracting**1. Total spend on:**

- **Face to face Interpreting**

Response:

SHSCT do not pay for foreign language f2f interpreting. 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.

- **Interpreting and Translation (Telephone & Written)**

Response:

£97,442

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

Response:

- The Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service is managed by the Business Service Organisation (BSO) on behalf of the region, and they provide face to face foreign language interpreting through a register of self-employed sessional interpreters, who are professionally accredited. Please direct query 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**

Response:

The Big Word

- **Written Translations –**

Response:

The Big Word, Global Connects, Flex

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

- **Sign Language**

Response:

Sign Language Interactions

SPPG provide funding for sign language interpreting across the region. 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.

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

Response:

N/a

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

Response:

No

5. Contract expiry dates:

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

Response:

SPPG provide funding for telephone and sign language interpreting across the region. 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.

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

Response:

The Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service is managed by the Business Service Organisation (BSO). Please direct query to BSO who have their own dedicated FOI team who will be able to assist you with your request - BSO: Foi.bso@hscni.net



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

Response:

SPPG provide funding for telephone and sign language interpreting across the region. 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.

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

Response:

SPPG provide funding for telephone and sign language interpreting across the region. 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.

B) Activity Data – Latest Full Financial Year

10. Total number of:

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

Response:

There were 47,761 BSO (spoken language) face-to-face SHSCT requests processed in 2024/25, including 579 video call bookings. BSO do not hold data on number of hours completed.

- Face-to-face interpreting assignments (non-spoken) + total hours
- Telephone interpreting calls + total minutes - 8,206 calls, 77,877 minutes
- Video interpreting calls (spoken) + total minutes
- Video interpreting calls (non-spoken) + total minutes
- Document translations + total words translated –141 documents translated and 311,031 words.
- Audio transcriptions + total audio duration

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

Response:

Interpreting Top 20 Languages 2024/25 – face to face interpreting

1. Polish
2. Lithuanian
3. Bulgarian
4. Tetum
5. Portuguese
6. Romanian

7. Arabic
8. Russian
9. Ukrainian
10. Latvian
11. Slovak
12. Urdu
13. Hungarian
14. Mandarin
15. Cantonese
16. Pashto Central
17. Bengali
18. Somali
19. Spanish
20. Czech

Interpreting Top 20 languages 2024/25 - telephone interpreting

1	Polish
2	Bulgarian
3	Lithuanian
4	Portuguese
5	Romanian
6	Russian
7	Arabic
8	Ukrainian
9	Somali
10	Slovak
11	Hungarian
12	Latvian
13	Vietnamese
14	Mandarin
15	Tetum
16	Cantonese
17	Urdu
18	Turkish
19	Bengali
20	Spanish

C) Performance, Fulfilment & Complaints

12. Fulfilment rate (%) for:

Response:

- Face-to-face interpreting - BSO Interpreting Service SHSCT Rate of Provision for 2024/25 was 97.85%
- Telephone interpreting – 96.94%
- Video interpreting
- Document translation –100% fulfilment
- Audio transcription

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

Response:

Face to Face (spoken) Foreign Language Interpreting provision is provided by the BSO Interpreting Service. The BSO Interpreting Service manages all complaints associated with the BSO Interpreting Service.

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

Response:

Face to Face (spoken) Foreign Language Interpreting provision is provided by the BSO Interpreting Service. The BSO Interpreting Service manages all feedback associated with the BSO Interpreting Service.

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

Response:

Not known - Please direct query to SPPG: FOI@health-ni.gov.uk.

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

Response:

Not known - Please direct query to SPPG: FOI@health-ni.gov.uk.

D) Social Value, Tender Information & Pricing

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

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

19. Contracted rates for:

- **Spoken face-to-face interpreting (hourly)** - SHSCT does not contract face-to-face interpreting it is 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 word)**

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

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

Response:

For Q17 – 21 answers are Not known - Please direct query to SPPG: FOI@health-ni.gov.uk.

E) 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?

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?

Response:

Yes, Sign Language Interactions provides the service.

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.

F) Additional Data for the Most Recent Full Financial Year

24. Total number of spoken language requests.

Response:

There were 47,761 BSO (spoken language) face-to-face SHSCT requests processed in 2024/25

25. Total number of non-spoken language requests.

26. Total spend on spoken vs non-spoken language services.

27. Fulfilment rates for spoken vs non-spoken services.

G) 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.

Response:

Response to Q25-28 - Please direct any further queries to SPPG: FOI@health-ni.gov.uk

Email: Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net