

Reference:	FOI.19616.26
Subject:	Interpreting, translation and transcription services
Date of Request:	16 February 2026

Requested:

I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding your organisation's use of language support services. Please provide all information for the most recent full financial year for which you hold complete data, unless otherwise stated.

1. Spend, Suppliers & Contracting

a. Total spend on:

- Interpreting
- Translation
- Transcription

b. Who is your current supplier(s) for language services?

If multiple suppliers are used, please specify which services each supplier delivers.

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

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

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

f. Contract expiry dates:

- Without extensions
- With all extensions applied

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

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

i. Do you have any minimum durations set for interpreting bookings?

If yes, please specify for each service type (spoken, non-spoken, telephone, video).

2. Activity Data – Latest Full Financial Year

a. Total number of:

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

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

3. Performance, Fulfilment & Complaints

- a. Fulfilment rate (%) for:
 - Face-to-face interpreting
 - Telephone interpreting
 - Video interpreting
 - Document translation
 - Audio transcription
 - b. Number of language service complaints received in the latest full financial year.
 - c. Percentage of positive vs negative feedback received regarding language services.
 - d. Languages your provider has been unable to source in the last 12 months.
 - e. Have any service credits been applied in the last 12 months?
If yes, what performance issues were they linked to?
4. Social Value, Tender Information & Pricing
- a. Social value delivered under this contract in the last 12 months.
 - b. If tendered, please provide a copy of the winning bidder's tender submission.
 - c. Contracted rates for:
 - Spoken face-to-face interpreting (hourly)
 - 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)
 - d. Has your provider increased their rates in the last 12 months?
 - e. What is the Authority's typical route to market for procuring language services?
5. Assistive Technology (BSL / Deaf Access)
- a. Do you have a VRS (Video Relay Service) on-demand service in place allowing Deaf BSL users to contact you via video when phoning?
 - b. 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?
 - c. If yes to either:
 - Who is the provider?
 - When was the service introduced?
 - Is it available 24/7?
 - Is there a cost to the Authority?
6. Additional Data for the Most Recent Full Financial Year
- a. Total number of spoken language requests.

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

7. Final Clarification Request

- a. 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:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is applying a Section 43 exemption of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) to questions 4c and part of 5c as answering would be prejudicial to commercial interests. Section 43(2) exempts information, where disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any company.

Commercial interests may be prejudiced where disclosure would, or would be likely to:

- Weaken a company's position in a competitive environment by revealing market sensitive information or information of potential usefulness to its competitors.
- Damage a company's business reputation or the confidence that customers/users, suppliers or investors may have in it.

This exemption is qualified; therefore, even if information falls within Section 43, public authorities must then apply the public interest test set out in Section 2(2)(b).

The information can only be withheld if the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

The UHB has therefore considered the following:

In favour of disclosure: There is a public interest in transparency and in the accountability of public funds. Furthermore, it is in the public's interest that public funds be used effectively and that public sector bodies obtain the best value for money when contracting for the provision of services.

Against Disclosure: It is not within the expectation of the interpreting, translation and transcription suppliers providing these services that these details would be released into the public domain, and this in turn could impact negatively on the UHB's relationship with them, thus affecting our service delivery.

Decision: The UHB has considered that releasing the information under the FoIA, to which the UHB is subject, would impede upon the UHB's relationship with the suppliers and give unfair advantage to their competitors for any future business opportunities. The UHB considers that the public interest in withholding this information, is greater than the interests in disclosing it.

The UHB is also unable to provide you with all the information requested, as it is estimated that the cost of answering your request would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

The “appropriate limit” represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours (or 2½ working days) in determining whether the UHB holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

The UHB does not centrally record the information requested for questions 2a, 2b, 3a, 3c, and 3d. Therefore, to provide you with the data requested, the UHB would need to contact each service and request that they undertake a manual search of their records, to identify any information that may fulfil these parts of your request.

Additionally, to provide you with the information requested for question 6, the UHB would be required to undertake a manual trawl of all invoices received relating to language services to identify any information that would fulfil this part of your request, as it is not recorded centrally.

The UHB can confirm that five hundred and sixty-eight (568) face to face interpretation sessions were undertaken during the 2024/25 financial year alone. It is estimated that a manual search of these records would exceed the 18 hours stipulated within the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA). Based on the number of records identified, conducting a search taking a minimum of five (5) minutes per digital record, would exceed the ‘appropriate limit’, costing the UHB the following:

568 @ 5 minutes per record = 47 hours and 20 minutes
 47 hours and 20 minutes @ £25 per hour = £1,183.33

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), which provides an exemption from a public authority’s obligation to comply with a request for information where the cost of compliance is estimated to exceed the appropriate limit.

However, under Section 16 of the FoIA, we are required as a public authority, to provide advice and assistance so far as it is reasonable to individuals who have made a request under the FoIA, this can include assisting a requestor to further refine their request.

Unfortunately, the UHB is unable to provide advice on how you can refine your request further. This is due to the UHB still requiring each service to undertake a manual search of records and invoices to identify any information that would fulfil your request.

However, the UHB provides the accessible information it holds below.

1a. The UHB provides within the table below, the total spend on interpretation and translation services, during the 2024/25 financial year.

Service	Spend
Interpretation	£64,362.96
Translation	£50,556.63
Transcription	£911.29

1b. The UHB provides within the table below, the suppliers used for interpretation and translation services, during the 2024/25 financial year.

Interpretation	
	Calan
	Cardiff County Council (CCC) - Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS)
	Cyfieith

	Cyfieithu Acen Ltd
	Easy Read Online Ltd
	E-Health Digital Media Ltd
	Helen Foulkes Translations
	Language Line Ltd
	Pembrokeshire People First
	Trywydd Cyf
Translation	CCC - WITS
	Cerys Sayers
	Language Line Ltd
	Wales Council for Deaf People
	Prestige Network
	Deaf Friendly Ltd
Transcription	Transcript Divas Ltd

1c. The UHB's providers for non-spoken language services are Wales Council for Deaf People and WITS.

1d. The UHB's provider for transcription services is Transcript Divas Ltd.

1e. The UHB confirms that it currently employs three (3) Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) in-house Welsh/English translators.

1f. The UHB confirms that there is a Collaboration Agreement in place with CCC WITS and NHS Wales as a whole, which automatically renews annually in June.

1g. The UHB can confirm that the manager responsible for its Welsh/English language services is Enfys Williams, Rheolwr Gwasanaethau'r Gymraeg/Welsh Language Services Manager who can be contacted by telephone on 01267 235151 or by email:
Enfys.williams@wales.nhs.uk

1h. The overall budget responsibility sits with the Executive Director of Finance. The UHB has applied a Section 21 exemption to the contact details as they are already in the public domain and are available on the UHB's website. For ease of reference, the link has been provided below, which will take you to the relevant webpage:

[Board members - Hywel Dda University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/about-us/our-people/our-board/)

1i. The UHB does not hold all the requested information. However, the UHB can confirm that for advance bookings made with WITS, the minimum booking duration for spoken languages is one (1) hour and for British Sign Language (BSL) it's a minimum of three (3) hours. There is no minimum duration for telephone or online (via an app) services, these are utilised on a pay as you go basis.

2. An exemption under Section 12 of the FoIA has been applied.

3a. An exemption under Section 12 of the FoIA has been applied.

3b. The UHB confirms that five (5) complaints relating to language services were recorded by its Patient Support Service, during the 2024/25 financial year. Of which, one (1) was upheld.

- 3c. & 3d. An exemption under Section 12 of the FoIA has been applied.
- 3e. The UHB does not hold the requested information.
- 4a. The UHB does not hold the requested information.
- 4b. Not applicable.
- 4c. An exemption under Section 43 of the FoIA has been applied.
- 4d. The UHB confirms that WITS have not increased their rates during the 2024/25 financial year.
- 4e. The UHB confirms that its usual route to market is via a Service Level Agreement (SLA).
- 5a. The UHB does not have a Video Relay Service (VRS) on-demand service in place which allows deaf BSL users to contact the UHB via video when telephoning.
- 5b. The UHB confirms that it does have a Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) on-demand service in place for emergency/unplanned/immediate communication needs for deaf patients or service users.
- 5c. The UHB provides within the table below, the information requested for its VRI service.

Provider	Language Line Insight app via mobile phones, tablets and PCs with a camera.
Commenced	2020
Availability	Not available 24/7. However, BSL interpreters are available Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.
Cost	Section 43 exemption applied.

- 6. An exemption under Section 12 of the FoIA has been applied.
- 7. The UHB confirms the Council for Deaf People and WITS offer in-person interpreters.