

Reference: FOI.ICB-2324/465

Subject: Spend on Interpreting, Translation and Transcription Services

*I can confirm that the ICB **does hold some of the information requested**; please see responses below:*

QUESTION	RESPONSE						
1. Please confirm your overall spend on interpreting, translation and transcription services for the following financial years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021-22 • 2022-23 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="1099 655 1352 692">Financial Year</th> <th data-bbox="1352 655 1632 692">Total Expenditure</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="1099 692 1352 729">2021/22</td> <td data-bbox="1352 692 1632 729">170,106.58</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1099 729 1352 766">2022/23</td> <td data-bbox="1352 729 1632 766">278,943.70</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Financial Year	Total Expenditure	2021/22	170,106.58	2022/23	278,943.70
Financial Year	Total Expenditure						
2021/22	170,106.58						
2022/23	278,943.70						
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?	Language Empire Ltd – spoken interpreting, written translation Sign Solutions Ltd – signed interpreting						
3. If you have a separate British Sign Language/non-spoken supplier, who is this?	See Q2						
4. If you have a separate transcription supplier, who is this?	See Q2						

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?	a) 30 September 2024 b) 30 September 2024
7. Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the contract manager responsible for language services?	All correspondence should be directed in the first instance via bnssg.customerservice@nhs.net
8. Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the person responsible for your language services budget?	All correspondence should be directed in the first instance via bnssg.customerservice@nhs.net

9. Could you please provide the following data for 2023:

Total number of face-to-face interpreting assignments (spoken language) and hours completed	12 assignments 14 hrs 20 min
Total number of face-to-face interpreting assignments (non-spoken language) and hours completed	January to March 139 assignments 139 sessions – hours not held April to December 374 assignments 236 hrs 15 min
Total number of telephone interpreting calls and minutes completed	29,170 calls 7,643 hrs 5 min
Total number of video interpreting calls (spoken language) and minutes completed	4 calls 2 hrs 30 min
Total number of video interpreting calls (non-spoken language) and minutes completed	11 calls 6 hrs 56 min
Total number of document translations and words translated	65 translations 81,226 words
Total number of audio transcriptions and total audio duration	0

10. What were your top 20 highest-volume languages for interpreting/translation requests in 2023?	Interpreting: ARABIC SOMALI POLISH ROMANIAN PASHTO SORANI
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	<p>PORTUGUESE SPANISH FARSI URDU MANDARIN UKRAINIAN DARI CANTONESE BENGALI PUNJABI RUSSIAN BULGARIAN TURKISH ALBANIAN</p> <p>Translation (Data on requested language provided. We do not hold information on source language): English Albanian Pashto Arabic - Morocco Dari (Afghan)</p>
<p>11. Can you please provide the fill rate % you received for the following services in 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face interpreting • Telephone interpreting • Video interpreting • Document translation 	<p>The ICB does not hold this information.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio transcription 	
<p>12. What languages has your provider been unable to source in the last 12 months?</p>	<p>The ICB does not hold this information.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>14. What social value has been delivered as part of this contract in the last 12 months?</p>	<p>The ICB does not hold this information.</p>
<p>15. If your contract was awarded through a tender process, can you please provide a copy of the winning bidder's tender?</p>	<p>The ICB believes that disclosure of the information would prejudice the commercial interests of the ICB (Section 43(2)) and that information regarding procurement bids have been sent to the ICB in confidence (Section 41). These exemptions have been considered in more detail below:</p> <p><u>Section 41 (Information received in confidence)</u> The ICB considered the detailed information received during the procurement as confidential. The procurement documentation states: "The authority confirms that it will keep confidential and will not disclose to any third parties any information obtained from a named customer contact, other than to the Cabinet Office and/or contracting authorities defined by the regulations, or pursuant to an order of the</p>

court or demand made by any competent authority or body where the authority is under a legal or regulatory obligation to make such a disclosure.”

Section 41 is a qualified exemption and therefore the public interest test has been set out below.

The public interest arguments in favour of disclosing the information took into account the FOI Act definition of where there is a public interest as well as the legal framework for public authority procurements as set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The ICB is required to undertake all procurement activity openly and in a manner which enables behaviour to be scrutinised.

The ICB understands that there will be public interest in the ensuring that any procurements are undertaken fairly and that decision making processes are robust. This includes demonstrating that the ICB has undertaken this procurement in a way which provides the best value for money and uses resources in the most effective way.

As noted above, the information received during the procurement process is considered confidential as the information is commercially sensitive to those organisations bidding. As the ICB has outlined that information would not be shared, it is reasonable to assume that this would be the expectation of the bidders. As the data relates to

procurement, it is reasonable to assume that a breach of this confidence would be actionable in court. The disclosure may also discourage interested bidders from bidding. It is in the public's interest that the ICB is able to commission good quality services for the local population.

The ICB has considered the public interest test and believes that it is in the public interest to maintain the exemption. Any legal action resulting from loss of confidence would not be in the public interest as ICB resources, both financial and staff, would be required to support any action. Disclosure of the information may result in discouraging future bids. The ICB has a responsibility to secure the best use of public resources and provide value for money. To achieve this the ICB needs to have a wide range of organisations willing to bid for services.

Section 43(2) – Prejudice to the commercial interests of the ICB

Section 43(2) exempts from disclosure information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of an organisation. The ICB believes that disclosure of the information may prejudice a future procurement.

Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption and therefore the public interest test has been set out below.

The contract for the services ends on 30 September 2024 and the ICB has approved an open tender procurement process to recontract the service. The tender information contains information which if disclosed could prejudice the outcome of this planned procurement.

The public interest arguments in favour of disclosing the information are the same as those outlined above for the Section 41 exemption.

The ICB is expected to ensure that procurement decisions are made considering value for money. The ICB believes that disclosure of information which would prejudice the planned procurement would not be in the public interest. The disclosure of a previous bidders bid may influence any future bids which would lead to prejudice of commercial interests. This prejudice could take the form of increased costs as part of any procurement or contract challenges if the procurement was deemed unfair. The disclosure may also discourage interested bidders from bidding. It is in the public's interest that the ICB is able to commission good quality services for the local population.

The ICB believes that the public interest test supports the exemption as it is important that procurements are undertaken fairly. It is the public's interest that public resources are utilised in the most effective way and this would not be the case if there was a challenge to a procurement following disclosure of information. Disclosure of the

	<p>information may result in discouraging bids. The ICB has a responsibility to secure the best use of public resources and provide value for money. To achieve this the ICB needs to have a wide range of organisations willing to bid for services.</p> <p><u>Section 43(2) – Prejudice to the commercial interests of the current contract holders</u></p> <p>The ICB considers the prejudice to the ICB enough to support non-disclosure however consideration had also been given to the possible prejudice to the current contract holders should the winning bids be disclosed. These bids may contain information the contract holders believe to be commercially sensitive and release of this information may disadvantage them for future similar procurements both inside and outside public authorities. The ICB has not contacted the current contract holders for confirmation and therefore does not rely on these considerations for exemption but the impact on the current contract holders has been considered by the ICB.</p>
<p>16. What are your contracted rates for each of the following services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>The ICB believes that disclosure of the information would prejudice the commercial interests of the ICB (Section 43(2)). The exemption has been considered in more detail below:</p> <p><u>Section 43(2) – Prejudice to the commercial interests of the ICB</u></p> <p>The contract for the services ends on 30 September 2024 and the ICB has approved an open tender procurement process to recontract the service. The ICB believes that disclosure of the rates would</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audio transcription: per audio minute rate	<p>prejudice the commercial interests of the ICB as this may result in increased cost of services.</p> <p>Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption and therefore the public interest test has been set out below.</p> <p>The public interest arguments in favour of disclosing the information are the same as those outlined above for the Section 41 exemption.</p> <p>The ICB is expected to ensure that procurement decisions are made considering value for money. The overriding principle for non-healthcare service procurement is cost, the ICB must procure services which meet the specification for the lowest possible cost. The ICB believes that disclosure of cost information may result in increased costs when the planned procurement takes place. The disclosure of costs may influence future bids which would lead to prejudice of commercial interests. This prejudice could take the form of increased costs as part of any procurement or contract challenges if the procurement was deemed unfair. The disclosure may also discourage interested bidders from bidding. It is in the public's interest that the ICB is able to commission good quality services for the local population.</p> <p>The ICB believes that the public interest test supports the exemption as it is important that procurement are undertaken fairly and it is the</p>
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	<p>public’s interest that public resources are utilised in the most effective way and this would not be the case if there was a challenge to a procurement following disclosure of information. Disclosure of the information may result in discouraging bids. The ICB has a responsibility to secure the best use of public resources and provide value for money. To achieve this the ICB needs to have a wide range of organisations willing to bid for services.</p> <p><u>Section 43(2) – Prejudice to the commercial interests of the current contract holders</u></p> <p>The ICB considers the prejudice to the ICB enough to support non-disclosure however consideration had also been given to the possible prejudice to the current contract holders should the current costs be disclosed. Release of this information may disadvantage them for future similar procurements both inside and outside public authorities. The ICB has not contacted the current contract holders for confirmation and therefore does not rely on these considerations for exemption but the impact on the current contract holders has been considered by the ICB.</p>
<p>17. Has your provider of language services increased their charge rate to you in the last 12 months?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>18. What is the Authority’s typical route to market?</p>	<p>In accordance with the ICB’s procurement policy and Standing Financial Instructions published on the ICB website:</p>

	https://bnssg.icb.nhs.uk/library/procurement-policy/ https://bnssg.icb.nhs.uk/library/standing-financial-instructions/
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.	No
20. Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the person responsible for the language services budget?	See Question 8
21. Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the person in charge of procurement for the Authority?	See Question 7

The information provided in this response is accurate as of 2 April 2024 and has been approved for release by David Jarrett, Chief Delivery Officer for NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB.