

[www.nhslothian.scot](http://www.nhslothian.scot)

Date 15/12/2025  
Your Ref  
Our Ref 10868

Enquiries to Richard Mutch  
Extension 35687  
Direct Line 0131 465 5687  
[loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot](mailto:loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot)  
[richard.mutch@nhs.scot](mailto:richard.mutch@nhs.scot)

Dear

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION**

I write in response to your request for information in relation to translation and interpretation.

Question:

**1. Total expenditure**

- a. The total annual expenditure on **translation and interpretation services**.
- b. Please confirm whether these figures include:
  - o Face-to-face interpreters
  - o Telephone interpreting
  - o Video-remote interpreting
  - o British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting
  - o Written translation of documents and patient information
  - o Any other communication support services (please specify)

Answer:

Provided in Excel spreadsheet.

Question:

**2. Breakdown by service type**

For each of the same financial years, please provide the annual expenditure broken down (where recorded) into:

- a. Face-to-face spoken language interpreting
- b. Telephone interpreting
- c. Video-remote interpreting
- d. BSL or other sign language interpreting
- e. Written translation (e.g. patient letters, leaflets, consent forms)
- f. Any other distinct categories you use internally (please specify)

Answer:

We are unable to provide the detail at this level as it is not held in a centrally extractable format. Under the Freedom of Information Act NHS Lothian is not required to create new records to enable it to respond to your enquiry. This information is not collated or held in

aggregate form and it would be necessary to review all case files relating to patients over the period you have requested to assemble the information you seek. Even if NHS Lothian did this – and there would be significant cost implications in doing so – it would be unable to respond in full to your request. The information requested is therefore exempt under section 12.1 – Cost.

Question:

**3. Breakdown by language**

For each financial year, please provide any breakdown you hold of expenditure by **language**.

- If a full language-by-language breakdown is not readily available within the FOISA cost limits, please provide:
  - a. The **top 10 most-used languages** by expenditure in each year, with spend for each; or
  - b. The most granular language breakdown you hold in existing reports or management information.

Answer:

Provided in Excel spreadsheet

Question:

**4. Breakdown by provider**

For each financial year, please provide any breakdown you hold of expenditure by **provider/supplier**, including:

- a. The name of each external provider of translation/interpreting services; and
- b. The total annual amount paid to each provider.

If you use internal/in-house interpreters or translators, please state this and, where recorded, provide the annual cost of in-house provision (e.g. staff costs, where these are separately identified in your records or management reports).

Answer:

See Excel spreadsheet for a.

Question:

**5. Volumes / activity data** For each financial year, please provide any activity data you hold, including (where recorded):

- a. The total number of interpreting **appointments / assignments** arranged (face-to-face, telephone, video-remote) – ideally broken down by type.
- b. The total number of **documents** translated (or, if you record it differently, any other available measure of volume such as number of translation jobs or word count).

If you do not hold this information in a reportable format, please confirm that this is the case.

Answer:

a.	Difficult to get split of assignment type for past 7 years, supplied by type for this FY.
b.	Not supplied
	B. not supplied

Question:

**6. Contracts and procurement arrangements**

Please provide:

a. Details of any current contracts or framework agreements for translation and interpretation services, including:

- o Name of contractor(s)
- o Contract start and end dates (including any extension periods)
- o Whether the contract is call-off from a national framework (and, if so, which one)

b. The **estimated or maximum contract value** for each contract, where this information is held.

Answer:

a.	The Big Word Contract start date 1st March 2024 to 28th February 2026 Call Off from Crown Commercial Services Framework - RM6141
b.	See Excel for The Big Word

I hope the information provided helps with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at [www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal). If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner's response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian's Freedom of Information website at: <https://org.nhslothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

**ALISON MACDONALD**  
**Executive Director, Nursing**  
Cc: Chief Executive  
Enc.

Dear Freedom of Information Team,

I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA).

This request relates to your organisation as an NHS Board in Scotland.

For each of the last seven financial years (for example: 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25, or the last seven financial years for which you hold data), please provide:

**1. Total expenditure**

a. The total annual expenditure on **translation and interpretation services**.

b. Please confirm whether these figures include:

- Face-to-face interpreters
- Telephone interpreting
- Video-remote interpreting
- British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting
- Written translation of documents and patient information
- Any other communication support services (please specify)

Financial Year	Total Costs
2018/19	1,586,446
2019/20	1,492,999
2020/21	937,069
2021/22	1,484,563
2022/23	1,838,693
2023/24	2,153,274
2024/25	2,127,657

**Includes costs for all of the above**

**3. Breakdown by language**

For each financial year, please provide any breakdown you hold of expenditure by **language**.

If a full language-by-language breakdown is not readily available within the FOISA cost limits, please provide:

- a. The **top 10 most-used languages** by expenditure in each year, with spend for each; or
- b. The most granular language breakdown you hold in existing reports or management information.

Language	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs	Total Costs
Arabic	206,179	184,126	97,405	183,640	217,334	252,628	248,715							
Bengali	57,667	53,158	32,470	55,142	49,259	65,150	65,521							
BSL	163,305	220,037	89,687	90,031	108,243	177,690	192,360							
Bulgarian	29,725	20,807	22,423	31,067	27,806	27,479	23,988							
Cantonese	81,681	59,539	30,218	66,606	103,336	120,718	134,018							
Czech	5,998	1,725	1,160	2,817	2,592	1,546	1,045							
Estonian	412	0	0	0	0	0	0							
Farsi	2,742	1,552	2,070	2,244	2,265	3,511	8,743							
French	8,401	8,088	4,187	6,926	6,817	7,952	9,868							
German	6,852	659	340	1,733	1,618	535	3,009							
Gujerati	72	45	30	671	511	737	840							
Hindi	6,856	7,620	13,629	12,691	12,239	12,769	12,812							
Hungarian	19,077	17,335	14,778	18,712	17,351	25,889	19,906							
Italian	33,651	21,084	16,737	23,746	28,163	28,384	22,915							
Japanese	4,189	4,487	2,523	3,240	5,592	4,997	8,353							
Kurdish Badhini	2,671	1,970	1,805	3,357	2,469	7,161	3,572							
Kurdish Kurmanji	1,733	3,428	2,724	3,521	2,561	4,500	3,583							
Kurdish Sorani	4,308	0	0	0	0	0	0							
Latvian	7,309	4,745	1,893	1,326	2,769	2,786	6,883							
Lithuanian	11,065	8,301	7,182	7,503	10,479	8,940	7,250							
Mandarin	74,405	73,012	28,854	56,797	80,777	83,511	60,571							
Nepalese	3,941	3,189	1,900	5,523	2,795	3,271	3,074							
Polish	433,329	387,202	226,821	351,032	418,108	425,579	421,044							
Portuguese	15,808	19,169	20,366	24,337	18,492	23,596	18,248							
Punjabi	10,307	13,965	7,226	22,713	29,683	24,829	32,330							
Romanian	77,144	67,555	47,082	70,402	84,685	96,647	91,603							
Russian	17,977	18,744	8,122	17,645	50,827	54,730	50,646							
Vietnamese	10,548	7,875	7,154	5,429	6,420	8,956	15,081							
Korean	2,616	1,655	368	1,079	3,021	1,575	222							
Urdu	55,016	50,977	44,572	57,807	79,802	98,755	95,356							
Turkish	42,644	36,740	21,516	43,078	57,432	60,820	66,713							
Greek	8,882	3,463	3,040	5,535	4,267	5,129	3,419							
Spanish	66,115	58,322	41,652	60,702	73,303	80,760	66,453							
Slovakian	10,449	8,806	8,928	8,581	13,068	10,073	6,060							
Bosnian	3,588	1,360	945	290	119	345	1,040							
Swahili	2,709	183	48	0	0	0	52							
Albanian	2,409	2,064	685	2,027	2,479	1,852	1,490							
Thai	3,115	5,044	2,624	4,702	5,551	5,089	4,040							
Croatian	962	152	185	330	213	273	370							
Ukrainian	358	97	120	525	61,659	107,549	92,194							
Serbian	466	585	446	508	0	264	1,096							
Somalian	698	879	792	721	372	1,726	3,008							
Kurdish Sorani	0	8,008	3,533	3,307	3,778	3,072	4,663							
Tamil	0	119	1,863	1,245	858	1,025	962							
Telugu	0	0	127	337	59	275	0							
Pashto	0	0	0	290	4,418	4,455	4,988							
Mandinka	0	0	0	0	214	2,665	147							
Wolof	0	0	0	0	184	275	65							
Sylheti	0	0	0	0	0	177	1,011							
Dari	0	0	0	0	0	641	4,936							
Indonesian	0	0	0	0	0	0	432							
<b>Big Word</b>	<b>89,068</b>	<b>105,126</b>	<b>116,838</b>	<b>224,647</b>	<b>234,702</b>	<b>291,985</b>	<b>302,943</b>							
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,586,446</b>	<b>1,492,999</b>	<b>937,069</b>	<b>1,484,563</b>	<b>1,838,693</b>	<b>2,153,274</b>	<b>2,127,657</b>							

Unable to break down Big Word Service Costs by language

	F2F	%	REMOTE	%	TOTAL APPTS	In-house telephone	% of all remote	In-house Video	% of all remote	Big word	% of all remote
Apr-25	1,857	<b>32.54</b>	3,849	<b>67.46</b>	<b>5,706</b>	4	<b>0.10</b>	44	<b>1.14</b>	3801	<b>98.75</b>
May-25	1,953	<b>31.07</b>	4,332	<b>68.93</b>	<b>6,285</b>	10	<b>0.23</b>	42	<b>0.97</b>	4280	<b>98.80</b>
Jun-25	1,930	<b>31.89</b>	4,123	<b>68.11</b>	<b>6,053</b>	6	<b>0.15</b>	36	<b>0.87</b>	4081	<b>98.98</b>
Jul-25	1,886	<b>29.82</b>	4,439	<b>70.18</b>	<b>6,325</b>	5	<b>0.11</b>	45	<b>1.01</b>	4389	<b>98.87</b>
Aug-25	1,788	<b>30.89</b>	4,000	<b>69.11</b>	<b>5,788</b>	6	<b>0.15</b>	46	<b>1.15</b>	3948	<b>98.70</b>
Sep-25	1,925	<b>31.61</b>	4,164	<b>68.39</b>	<b>6,089</b>	6	<b>0.14</b>	47	<b>1.13</b>	4111	<b>98.73</b>
Oct-25	2,185	<b>32.15</b>	4,612	<b>67.85</b>	<b>6,797</b>	8	<b>0.17</b>	42	<b>0.91</b>	4562	<b>98.92</b>
Nov-25	2,005	<b>31.47</b>	4,366	<b>68.53</b>	<b>6,371</b>	15	<b>0.34</b>	39	<b>0.89</b>	4,312	<b>98.76</b>
Dec-25											
Jan-26											
Feb-26											
Mar-26											
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,529</b>	<b>31.43</b>	<b>33,885</b>	<b>68.57</b>	<b>49,414</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>33,484</b>	<b>98.82</b>

Financial Year	Number of Appointments
2015-16	34,222
2016-17	35,640
2017-18	38,483
2018-19	40,150
2019-20	42,453
2020-21	30,819
2021-22	47,937
2022-23	57,116
2023-24	64,517
2024-25	67,382