

15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**BY EMAIL**

████████████████████

**Our Ref: FOI 1402**

Dear ██████████

Your request for information was received on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested with regards to BSO's Telecoms and Networks contracts.

Please find this information below.

Please note that some information is considered exempt from disclosure under Section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('Law Enforcement').

I should explain that BSO's Information Technology Service (ITS) has been commissioned to provide ICT shared services to the wider Health and Social Care (HSC), including line rental and storing data from key information systems within its infrastructure. Essential elements of the service include the security of the data held and the protection of the HSC network boundary.

Section 31 is also a qualified exemption which means that the public interest test (PIT) must be considered. This involves weighing the harm resulting from possible disclosure against the likely benefit to the wider public. A copy of PIT is attached for your reference.

In considering the PIT, I acknowledge that there may be a public interest for disclosure in line with BSO's requirement to be open and transparent in its use of public monies and provision of public services. However, while I make no suggestion that there is any malicious intent on your part; provision (and therefore publication) would be capable of making BSO and the wider Health and Social Care, vulnerable to



malicious attack. I therefore consider that the public interest in withholding this information outweighs the public interest in supplying it.

### **Contract 1**

**1. Current Lines/Voice Services (Analogue, ISDN VOIP, SIP etc) Provider- Please can you provide me with the name of the supplier for the contract.**

Exempt

**2. Fixed Line- Contract Renewal Date- please provide day, month and year (month and year are also acceptable). If this is a rolling contract please provide me with the rolling date of the contract. If there is more than one supplier please split the renewal dates up into however many suppliers**

April 2023

**3. Fixed Line- Contract Duration- the number of years the contract is for each provider**

3

**4. Type of Lines- Please can you split the type of lines per each supplier? PSTN, Analogue, SIP**

SIP

**5. Number of Lines- Please can you split the number of lines per each supplier? SIP trunks, PSN Lines, Analogue Lines**

200

### **Contract 2**

**6. Minutes/Landline Provider- Supplier's name (NOT Mobiles) if there is no information available please can you provide further insight into why?**

**7. Minutes/Landline Contract Renewal Date- please provide day, month and year (month and year is also acceptable). If this is a rolling contract please provide me with the rolling date of the contract.**

**8. Minutes Landline Monthly Spend- Monthly average spend on calls for each provider. An estimate or average is acceptable.**

**9. Minute's Landlines Contract Duration: the number of years the contract is with the supplier.**

**10. Number of Extensions- Please state the number of telephone extensions the organisation currently has. An estimate or average is acceptable.**

None of the above is applicable to the BSO.

### **Contract 3**

**11. Fixed Broadband Provider- Supplier's name if there is not information available please can you provide further insight into why?**

**12. Fixed Broadband Renewal Date-** please provide day, month and year (month and year is also acceptable). If this is a rolling contract please provide me with the rolling date of the contract. If there is more than one supplier please split the renewal dates up into however many suppliers

**13. Fixed Broadband Annual Average Spend-** Annual average spend for each broadband provider. An estimate or average is acceptable.

None of the above is applicable to the BSO.

#### **Contract 4**

**14. WAN Provider-** please provide me with the main supplier(s) if there is no information available please can you provide further insight into why?

Exempt

**15. WAN Contract Renewal Date-** please provide day, month and year (month and year are also acceptable). If this is a rolling contract please provide me with the rolling date of the contract. If there is more than one supplier please split the renewal dates up into however many suppliers

GP Network – July 2025

PSSN – June 2025

Other WAN circuits are on numerous individual contracts.

**16. Contract Description: Please can you provide me with a brief description of the contract**

GP Network – this is a managed service network which provides network connectivity for GP practices to the Health & Social Care (HSC) Network

PSSN and other WAN circuits – these provide unmanaged point to point circuits connecting locations to HSC Network.

**17. The number of sites: Please state the number of sites the WAN covers. Approx. will do.**

Approximately 250

**18. WAN Annual Average Spend-** Annual average spend for each WAN provider. An estimate or average is acceptable.

WAN approximately £500,000

GP Network approximately £500,000

**19. For each WAN contract can you please provide me with information on how this was procured, especially around those procurement that used frameworks, please provide me with the framework reference.**

GP Network and other WAN circuits via NIPSSN

Individual WAN circuits via quotes from at least three suppliers.

**20. Internal Contact: please can you send me there full contact details including contact number and email and job title for all the contracts above.**

Director of Customer Care & Performance  
0300 555 0113  
[info@bso@hscni.net](mailto:info@bso@hscni.net)

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Information Governance Manager,  
2 Franklin Street,  
Belfast,  
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

**Website:** [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)  
**Phone:** 0303 123 1113  
**Email:** [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)  
**Post:** Information Commissioner's Office  
3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place  
Belfast  
BT7 2JB

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,



**Karen Bailey**  
Acting Chief Executive

## Public Interest Test (PIT)

Exemption claimed in respect of Section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('Law Enforcement') for disclosure of details on contracts registers

In considering this PIT, the following have been taken into account:

- the public interest in issues of accountability and transparency and in scrutinising how BSO's affairs are conducted
- the public interest in ensuring that BSO is able to protect its systems from cyber-attacks which could damage security
- the public interest in ensuring that BSO can proactively manage the risks around cyber security, for the wellbeing and safety of all its stakeholders

In favour of disclosure of information	In favour of not disclosing information
<p>Openness and transparency: it is recognised that releasing this information would provide the public with assurance that we are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protecting our technologies;</li> <li>• spending public money responsibly, especially where this relates to the provision of public services</li> </ul>	<p>BSO hosts a vast range of software, systems and data on behalf of the wider Health and Social Care (HSC) within Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Release of this information would make BSO, and by association the wider HSC more vulnerable to crime (namely a malicious attack on BSO's network). As such release of this information would be seen to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime by making BSO more vulnerable to hacking at a given time.</p>
	<p>Under data protection legislation, BSO has a legal obligation to process personal data in a manner that ensures its appropriate security using appropriate technical or organisational measures. The release of this information is therefore a reasonable threat to the security and integrity of confidential personal data held on our systems.</p>
	<p>BSO and the wider HSC operate the majority of their services with a high dependency on IT. Many services operate almost exclusively via information held within our network infrastructure. Any disruption of BSO's network infrastructure, even for a short period would be likely to severely restrict our ability to carry out statutory functions across the wider HSC network.</p>

	<p>There is therefore an overwhelming public interest in keeping BSO's systems secure which would be served by non-disclosure.</p> <p>It has therefore been decided that the balance of the public interest lies clearly in favour of withholding the material on this occasion.</p>
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