

23rd December 2022

BY EMAIL

Our Ref: FOI 1844

Dear 

Your request for information was received on 23rd November 2022 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 the BSO's Interpreting Service:

Please find the requested information below:

In the section "Administered services", the reports state: "BSO also makes payments for Interpreting Services on behalf of HSCB totalling approximately (amount)". In the table "Analysis of net expenditure by segment", another (although often similar) amount is indicated for the Managed services for the Regional Interpreting service. I am wondering what exactly these two figures refer to?

Regarding questions 1a and 1b: the figure of £3.9m referred to under "Administered Services" refers to both the costs of interpreting services and the administration surrounding these.

The reason for the difference between the £3.9m noted under "Administered Services" and the £3,664k included as "Regional Interpreting Services" in the Analysis of Net Expenditure by Segment, is that the salaries costs of the administrative team looking after interpreting services are included in the £2,874k "Wages & Salaries" figure under Managed Services.



If they include only face-to-face interpreting services or also telephone interpreting services?

The costs of interpreting services include both face to face and telephone services.

I am aware that the responsibility for the functions of the HSCB have been transferred to the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health on the 1st of April 2022. I would like to know if this means that there will any specific consequences for BSO's management and accounts.

BSO continue treat the service as being commissioned by SPPG (Dept of Health) and account for it as a managed service.

I noticed that the need to reduce face-to-face interpreting in favour of telephone interpreting in order to control costs has been repeatedly stated over the last years. If possible, I would also like to know how this has evolved over the years, and how many telephone interpreting appointments and how many face-to-face interpreting appointments there are each year.

To date, face to face interpreting has not reduced in favour of telephone interpreting. Face to face interpreting has always been, and continues to be, the preferred option across HSCNI Services, for both HSC Practitioners and Patients. BSO are aware of an increase in use of telephone interpreting during the COVID19 pandemic period (due to the reduction of face to face appointments/contact), however BSO do not hold Big Word Telephone Interpreting Service statistics/figures.

As of December 2022, face to face interpreting demand has risen again to reflect pre-pandemic levels.

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, as the BSO, along with all other public authorities are not obliged to accept internal review requests after this period has lapsed.

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

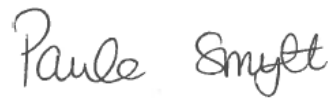
If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate 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
Phone: 0303 123 1113
Email: 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Smyth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Karen Bailey
Chief Executive