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Request for Information Reference: 02.24.59

FOI Direct line: 01325 743700
Email: cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.net

Email only

8th March 2024

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for submitting a request for information which we received on 19th February 2024 in relation to County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust). Your request has been processed under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and I am now able to provide you with a response.

Your request was in relation to Translations costs and I am providing the following information in response to your specific questions:

Please can you provide the following information regarding language services.

1. Please confirm your overall spend on interpreting, translation and transcription services for the following financial years:

- **2021-22** - £119,496.44
- **2022-23** - £115,859.14

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?

Everyday Language Solutions

3. If you have a separate British Sign Language/non-spoken supplier, who is this?

The Trust do not have a different supplier.

4. If you have a separate transcription supplier, who is this?

The Trust do not have a different supplier.

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?

The Trust have just renewed for a 2 year period

7. Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the contract manager responsible for language services?

Paula Brennan, 01913728672, paulabrennan@nhs.net

8. Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the person responsible for your language services budget?

Paula Brennan, 01913728672, paulabrennan@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**

1794, 2682 hours.

- **Total number of face-to-face interpreting assignments (non-spoken language) and hours completed**

221, 478 hours.

- **Total number of telephone interpreting calls and minutes completed**

1533, 66504 minutes.

- **Total number of video interpreting calls (spoken language) and minutes completed**

11, 945 minutes.

- **Total number of video interpreting calls (non-spoken language) and minutes completed**

6, 720 minutes.

- **Total number of document translations and words translated**

16, 19321 words.

- **Total number of audio transcriptions and total audio duration**

None.

10. What were your top 20 highest-volume languages for interpreting/translation requests in 2023?

Arabic, Polish, Kurdish, British Sign Language, Bengali, Kurdish Sorani, Romanian, Mandarin, Farsi, Russian, Ukrainian, Albanian, Cantonese, Tamil, Thai, Punjabi, Czech, Spanish, Turkish, Vietnamese.

11. Can you please provide the fill rate % you received for the following services in 2023:

- **Face-to-face interpreting** - 99.85%
- **Telephone interpreting** - 100%
- **Video interpreting** - 100%
- **Document translation** - 100%
- **Audio transcription** - 100%

12. What languages has your provider been unable to source in the last 12 months?

None.

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?

Not applicable.

14. What social value has been delivered as part of this contract in the last 12 months?

Support for the local economy through recruitment and education, Training and reduction in Carbon Emissions.

15. If your contract was awarded through a tender process, can you please provide a copy of the winning bidder's tender?

See below

16. What are your contracted rates for each of the following services?

- **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**
- **Audio transcription: per audio minute rate**

The Trust are unable to provide the information as requested on the grounds that this information is commercially sensitive and has, therefore, been withheld pursuant to Section 43 of the Act.

Our supplier has made clear representation that pricing for language services is commercially sensitive information, the disclosure of which would be likely to prejudice their commercial interests, as it would provide alternative bidders with an understanding of their costs (which would not be reciprocated) with respect to similar contracts in the NHS, thereby undermining their ability to tender, on fair and equal terms, for such contracts. The Trust considers that there is potential for such harm to arise with reasonable proximity and, therefore, that the exemption under Section 43(2) of the Act is engaged.

The Trust acknowledges the public interest in publication of the information; specifically the interest in transparency with respect to expenditure on services, as a means of assisting the taxpayer in evaluating their value for money. However, there is a competing public interest in preserving fair market competition and the ability of public authorities to obtain value for money when sourcing services. In previous rulings the Information Commissioner has made clear that the Freedom of Information Act is not intended to distort fair market competition. In this case, the Trust therefore considers that the public interest in preserving fair competition outweighs the general public interest in transparency and is therefore applying the exemption under Section 43(2).

17. Has your provider of language services increased their charge rate to you in the last 12 months?

No.

18. What is the Authority's typical route to market?

Tender process.

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?

Paula Brennan, 01913728672, paulabrennan@nhs.net

21. Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the person in charge of procurement for the Authority?

Procurement cdda-tr.procurement@nhs.net contactable via the Trust's switchboard on: 01325380100

In line with the Information Commissioner's directive on the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 your request will form part of our disclosure log on the Trust's website. However please be assured that we anonymise all responses prior to adding them to the disclosure log.

I hope that this response has provided you with the information you had requested. If you have any queries or wish to discuss the information supplied, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone or in writing. If however, you are dissatisfied with the way in which your request has been handled and would like an internal review, you will need to contact me in writing at the above address or via cdda-tr.cddftfoi@nhs.

If you remain dissatisfied with our response following an internal review you have the right to appeal to The Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. More information is available on their website; www.ico.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Corporate Records and Freedom of Information Facilitator