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Request for Information Reference: 07.21.31

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Email only

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021

## Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for submitting a request for information which we received on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021 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 translation and I am providing the following information in response to your specific questions:

**1. Please confirm your Trust's overall spending on Translation and Interpreting Services, for each of the financial years:**

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| a. 2018-19   | - £153,865.18 |
| b. 2019-2020 | - £146,247.75 |
| c. 2020-2021 | - £105,609.36 |

**2. If available, for the financial years specified in Question 1, please provide a breakdown of:**

**a. Total spend on written translation**

- 2018/19 - £398.28,
- 2019/20 - £3,089.40,
- 2020/21 - £1,098.96

**b. Total spend on telephone interpreting**

- 2018/19 - £102,287.62,
- 2019/20 - £4,784.91,
- 2020/21 - £18,115.38

**c. Total spend on video interpreting**

Nil. (n.b. Some consultations during COVID 19 have been carried out via MS Teams where interpreters have been needed this has been charged at the same rate as a telephone session. Usually we do not provide video interpreting services).

**d. Total spend on in-person/face to face interpreting (i.e. pre-booked consultations)**

- 2018/19 - £2,179.28,
- 2019/20 - £138,373.44,
- 2020/21 - £86,395.02

**e. Breakdown of spending between inpatient vs outpatient services**

This data is not kept by the Trust.

**3. If available, please provide a breakdown of the:**

**a. Total number of in-person/face to face interpreting sessions booked (break down by language, specialty, and clinical area)**

The Trust does not have the data in this format we can supply the different languages supplied in each financial year and the number of Face to Face sessions booked per Care Group for each financial year please see attached appendix.

**b. Please confirm what is the current process for clinical or administrative staff to book:**

- I. An in-person / face to face interpreting consultation**
- II. A telephone interpreting session**
- III. A video interpreting session**

All sessions are booked using the Cardea system

**4. Do you employ your own in-house / face-face interpreters? If yes:**

- a. How many interpreters do you have on payroll (breakdown by substantive and bank)?**
- b. What languages do they cover?**
- c. What is the hourly pay for in-house interpreters**

The Trust do not employ in-house/face-face interpreters.

**5. Do you outsource interpreting services to an external provider? If yes:**

- a. Which provider(s) do you currently use?**
- b. Are you able to provide approximate fee / interpreting session for:**
  - i. In-person/face to face interpreting**
  - ii. Telephone interpreting**
  - iii. Video interpreting**

The Trust does outsource interpreting services to an external provider. The provider is Everyday Language Solutions.

We 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.

Section 43 (2) exempts from disclosure the following:

(2) Information, the disclosure of which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person including those of the public authority holding the information.

Our supplier has made clear representation that pricing for the service/ initial project and value of annual support/maintenance 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).

- 6. If you outsource the provision of interpreting services to an external provider, could you please confirm:**
- a. Whether the provider was contracted via a national framework? If so, which one?**

No – full external procurement

- b. When does the current contract expire?**

30<sup>th</sup> June 2023

- c. Is there is an exclusivity clause, which would prevent the trust from piloting additional / complementary interpreting services during the duration of your contract with your existing provider?**

Yes

- 7. From which budget within your organisation are interpreting services funded? Which staff member/role is responsible for signing off that budget?**
- a. **Which stakeholders are involved in the decision concerning contracting of interpreting services (no need to provide actual names – please only provide role and/or job titles)**

This is within the budget and remit of Mr Noel Scanlon, Executive Director of Nursing

- 8. If available, could you please provide the following information for the financial years 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21:**
- a. **Anonymised list of procedures cancelled due to lack of interpreter for key stages (for example Consent process), including date when procedure was due and date when it was rescheduled**
- b. **Anonymised list of outpatient appointments cancelled due to lack of interpreter, including date when procedure was due and date when it was rescheduled**
- c. **Total number of incidents where one of the contributing factors was language barrier**
- d. **Total number of complaints where one of the contributing factors was language barrier**

The Trust does not record this data.

- 9. What is your hospital's policy on allowing multilingual clinicians or administrative staff to perform ad-hoc interpreting for patients? Is this:**
- a. **not officially allowed**
- b. **allowed in exceptional circumstances**
- c. **encouraged (alternatively please attach any relevant policies and we will review these ourselves)**

A - This is not officially allowed.

- 10. If we would like to engage in conversation with a member of staff in your organisation to discuss the innovation we propose to develop, who would be the most suitable person to approach?**

Mr Noel Scanlon, Executive Director of Nursing.

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](mailto: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](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

**Corporate Records and Freedom of Information Facilitator**