



Deputy Sorca Clarke
Dail Eireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

July 18th 2025

PQ Number: 35472/25

PQ: To ask the Minister for Health if translation and interpretation costs are ringfenced in mental health services for those with limited English; and the average cost per health region for accessible communication supports -Sorca Clarke

Dear Deputy Clarke,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for a response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

In order to deliver services to people it is important to use professional interpreters who are neutral, independent and who accept the responsibility of keeping all information confidential. Where appropriate, the health service can provide an interpreter for those who can't speak English. If staff need to use the services of an interpreter, they can consult [On Speaking Terms: Good Practice Guidelines for Staff in the Provision of Interpreting Services](#), as well as these additional resources:

- [HSE National Standard Operating Procedure for Accessing Interpretation Services](#) (excluding Irish Language Services).
- [Poster](#) for services to display in healthcare settings. The languages are English, Irish, Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Chinese Mandarin, Czech, Farsi, French, Georgian, Kurdish, Lithuanian, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Urdu.
- [Translations of health resources](#).
- The [Emergency Multi-Lingual Aid](#) helps health staff to communicate more effectively with patients who do not speak English. The aid includes visual cues and language identification card to assist in assessments. It is intended for use prior to asking for the services of an interpreter or while waiting for the interpreter to arrive.

The HSE National Social Inclusion Office have also developed guidance for services who need to translate material. Please see [Lost in Translation? Good Practice Guidelines for HSE Staff in Planning, Managing and Assuring Quality Translations of Health Related Material into Other Languages \(PDF\)](#) and a HSE [guide to translating information materials into different languages](#).



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Interpreter services are provided via a national framework which was awarded to a preferred provider in 2024 by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP). This contract is now live and will run until November 17, 2026. Service areas, including mental health, are being directed to contact the provider directly to access interpretation services. If there are any accessibility issues, they have been advised to access existing external interpreter services as required, following the prior approval of HSE local procurement.

While there is no separate dedicated care group budget for these services, contact was made with mental health management teams to ascertain detail on mental health-specific costs under the overall national framework. Based on a number of returns from Integrated Health Areas in the Health Regions, the indicative average cost for accessible communication supports in 2024 was €46,048 per Integrated Healthcare Area (IHA).

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

General Manager – Policy Implementation
HSE Mental Health Services
Access and Integration