

Human Tissue Authority
151 Buckingham Palace Road
London
SW1W 9SZ

By email
[REDACTED]

Tel [REDACTED]
Web www.hta.gov.uk

Date 6 August 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request

Thank you for your request for information dated 8 July 2014, which we received as follows:

“I am trying to establish the cost to the NHS of translation into English from foreign languages. The Department of Health says it does not have the figures, and has referred me to you and other bodies.

I should be thankful if you would treat the following questions as requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and answer:

1. In respect of the fiscal year 2013/14 (or the last full year for which figures are readily available), how much did the public sector spend on interpreters and translation in the delivery of the National Health Service?
2. If possible, please break down the expenditure between hospitals, GPs, Department of Health, other Agencies, other Public Bodies and “other”. If a slightly different breakdown already exists, please confirm the details by e-mail, so we can liaise about my amending this Request with a view to you responding more quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively.
3. What sums are budgeted for subsequent year(s)?
4. What variance from budget has been noted month by month in the current year?
5. Are there any factors anticipated, which will increase (a) the demand and (b) the cost of translation into English? If so, what are they?”

Response

The response provided is only for the Human Tissue Authority (HTA).

During the 2013/14 year the HTA was required to assess a case of living donation where neither the donor nor recipient were UK nationals. In order to satisfy ourselves that in this case the statutory tests had been met in regard to the donation of bone marrow or peripheral blood stem cells from a child who lacked the competence to consent we sought advice from Mills & Reeve LLP and as part of this advice supporting documentation was translated into English.

The total cost of the legal advice was £2697.60, of which a small proportion would have been for translation into English by Mills & Reeves sister office in the relevant country.

The HTA did not use any interpreters during 2013/14 to translate into English.

As translation into English is an unusual activity for the HTA, there is no specific budget allocated for this purpose. Rather, the costs are met from the budget associated with the given activity, in this case the budget for legal advice.

The HTA does not consider there are any significant factors which will increase our demand for documents to be translated into English, or the cost of any such translation. However, as two of the pieces of legislation we work under flow from European Directives (Quality and Safety of Organs Intended for Transplantation Regulations 2012 and Human Tissue (Quality and Safety for Human Application) Regulations 2007) we are mindful that there may be occasions when a document from another Member State is not available in English and the costs of any translation may fall to the HTA.

If you are unhappy with the way the HTA has handled your request for information in this case, you may in the first instance ask us for an internal review by writing to us at the above postal or email address.

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have the right to appeal directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision, at the address below:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 08456 30 60 60
or 01625 54 57 45

Website: www.ico.gov.uk

There is no charge for making an appeal.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature block]