

Our ref: IG/FOI/FOI.180.26

28 May 2026

Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

I write further to your request for information which was received on 29 April 2026 to confirm, in accordance with S.1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, that Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) partly holds the information that you require. For ease of reference your request is set out below and the Health Board's response follows each question individually.

Your Freedom of Information (FOI) Request and Powys Response (Bold):

We are making a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please provide the following information for the period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026:

Q1. Does the Health Board record whether a patient is Deaf, hard of hearing, or a British Sign Language (BSL) user? – **Yes.**

b. If yes, please state how this information is recorded (e.g. categories used, patient record systems) – **Preferred method of communication including British Sign Language (BSL) and choice of language is recorded on the Welsh Nursing Care Record System (WNCR) which is used for our In-Patients and the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) which is used for our Community Services. For those services still using paper records, this would be captured in the record itself.**

Q2. How many patients are currently recorded as

a. Deaf – **33.**

b. Hard of hearing – **309.**

c. Deaf blind – **2.**

d. BSL users – **We do not record this category; however, the following breakdown is recorded in Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB):**

Chosen Sign as Communication Method – **2.**

First/Preferred Language as Sign – **1.**

Q3. Does the Health Board record Deaf patients' communication needs (e.g. requirement for a BSL interpreter)?

a. If yes, how? – **Yes. WNCR records whether an interpreter is required.**

b. If yes, are these needs automatically flagged for future appointments?

This information would be included in referral documentation and discharge summaries.

Q4. Does the Health Board provide professional BSL interpreters for Deaf patients across all its services? – **Yes.**

a. Please confirm whether this includes mental health and hospital appointments – **Yes.**

Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) has agreements in place via the Welsh Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS), Language Line and Convo. All departments within the organisation can access professional, fully qualified BSL interpreters. Remote interpreters can be provided on demand even when their requirements are not foreseen/known or booked in advance.

Q5. Please provide the total number of BSL interpreter bookings made in each year during the period – **During 2025-2026 a BSL interpreter was physically present during a medical appointment on 26 occasions. A BSL interpreter was booked via the Convo system on a further 7 occasions. This provides a total of 33 separate bookings of BSL interpretation.**

Q6. In the same period, how many appointments involving Deaf patients took place where a BSL interpreter was:

a. Requested – **I can confirm that this data is not centrally recorded.**

b. Provided – **As above, BSL interpretation was provided on 33 occasions.**

c. Request but not provided – **I can confirm that this data is not centrally recorded.**

Q7. Does the Health Board have a written policy or guidance relating to accessible communication or working with Deaf patients? – **Please see attached FOI.180.26 Attachment 1.**

Q8. Do you offer alternative methods to telephone communication for deaf people when contacting your service? If so, please specify which methods are available – **BSL users can contact PTHB's switchboard via the Convo BSL relay service; like any other caller, they can be redirected from there to any other telephone number or service within PTHB. Via this method, a BSL user is able to access any PTHB department that can be accessed via a telephone number, as an alternative to a direct telephone call. Individual departments may additionally have alternative contact methods, for example departmental email addresses.**

Please see the table below:

Service	Response
Planned Care/ Patient services	To support patients who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or British Sign Language (BSL) users, the following arrangements are in place:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception areas are equipped with hearing loop systems to support patients with hearing impairments when attending appointments. • BSL interpreters can be arranged in line with Health Board processes where a need is identified. • Planned Care services utilise standard communication methods, including written correspondence and, where appropriate, email. For outpatient clinic appointments, reminder text message communication is also used.
Primary Care providers	Convo is available via PTHB for Primary Care providers (GP surgeries, pharmacies, dentists and opticians) within Powys. Patients and services users may also be contacted by text message.
Mental Health	<p>Email and text communication is available. If the service has a service user who requires active intervention, we will commission bespoke support, e.g sign language and interpreters to engage with community services.</p> <p>1:1 enhance levels of observation on the ward in available if required.</p>
Therapies and Health Science	<p>Patients are able to email and text the service. All therapy services have the option of email and the audiology service has email and text messaging available.</p> <p>During the appointment WITS and Language line are available for clinicians to access during the appointment.</p>
Women's and Childrens	The service are able to text parents/ carers/ children/ young people rather than using the telephone.
All services	When contacting PTHB as an organisation via the Contact Us - Powys Teaching Health Board page, service users are able to access an online form, an email address and a postal address. We can also be contacted via our accounts on a range of social media platforms.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling or response to your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Should you wish an internal review, please quote the reference number and send your correspondence to the above address.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Address: Information Commissioner's Office (Wales), 2nd Floor, Churchill House, Churchill Way, Cardiff, CF10 2HH.
Telephone: 0330 414 6421

Complaints Portal: www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints

Web site: <https://ico.org.uk/>

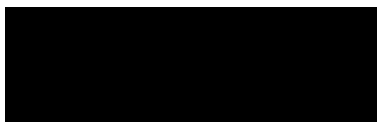
Re-use of Public Sector Information

All information supplied by the Health Board in answering a request for information (RFI) under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 will be subject to the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015.

Under the terms of the Regulations, the Health Board will licence the re-use of any or all information supplied if being used in a form and for the purpose other than which it was originally supplied. This license for re-use will be in line with the requirements of the Regulations and the licensing terms and fees as laid down by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI). Most licenses will be free; however, the Health Board reserves the right, in certain circumstances to charge a fee for the re-use of some information which it deems to be of commercial value.

Further information including a sample license terms and fees can be found at [Open Government Licence](#).

Yours sincerely



David Farnsworth
Assistant Director, Community Services Group

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yng Nghymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb y fath ohebiaeth yng Nghymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. We will reply to such correspondence in Welsh and this will not lead to a delay.