

Lost in translation: the UK is losing translation companies

Analysis by business database companydata.com: 601 UK translation companies closed in 2025 against 546 newly registered, the first negative year on record.

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translation: the [UK](#) is losing [translation companies](#)

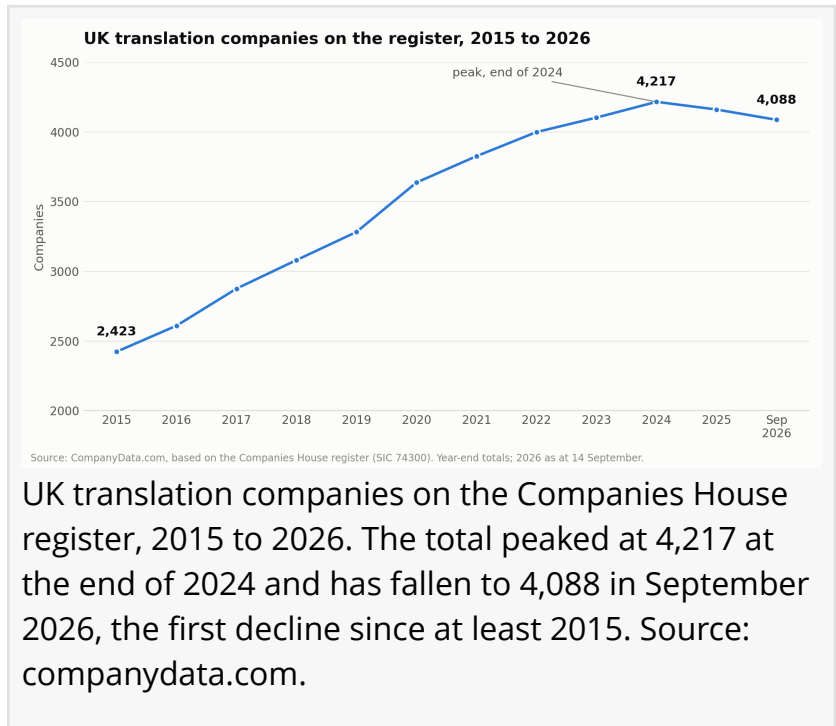
Britain's translation industry has stopped growing. New analysis by international business database companydata.com shows that the number of active translation

companies in the UK has fallen in 2026 for the first time since at least 2015. The country now counts 4,088 translation companies, down from a peak of 4,217 at the end of 2024.

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The gap has been narrowing for years and it has now closed. Until 2024, more translation companies opened than shut. Last year that flipped, and this year the gap is wider still.”

Uttam Ramdaras, Data Analyst



UK translation companies on the Companies House register, 2015 to 2026. The total peaked at 4,217 at the end of 2024 and has fallen to 4,088 in September 2026, the first decline since at least 2015. Source: companydata.com.

Behind the turn is a reversal in the flow. In 2025, 601 translation companies were struck off the Companies House register against 546 newly incorporated, the first year in which closures outnumbered new arrivals. This year the gap is wider still: 361 companies registered between January and mid-September, while 436 closed.

For ten years the register did nothing but fill up, from 2,423 companies at the end of 2015 to 4,217 at the end of 2024, a run the pandemic barely interrupted. 2025 broke it. Of the companies on the register today, 1,922 do nothing but translate; the rest combine it with other work.

What happened to the work

Translators felt it before the register did. In a 2024 survey by the Chartered Institute of Linguists, more than 70 percent of freelance translators and interpreters said their workload had fallen. Half called the drop significant. In a Society of Authors survey the same year, 36 percent of translators said they had already lost work to generative AI and 77 percent expected it to cut their income.

What is left pays less. A UK freelance translator working through an agency gets around 7.5 pence a word for general text, and that rate is still

sliding. This year's European Language Industry Survey found every part of the industry agreeing that prices fell again in 2025, with no rebound expected. Increasingly the job is not translating at all but checking what a machine produced first, and that pays about a third less. Almost two thirds of independent translators now work with machine output in some form.

Not everyone is losing. RWS Holdings, Britain's largest listed language services company, grew half-year revenue by around 5 percent to roughly 360 million pounds and lifted adjusted pre-tax profit from 18 million to 24 million pounds.

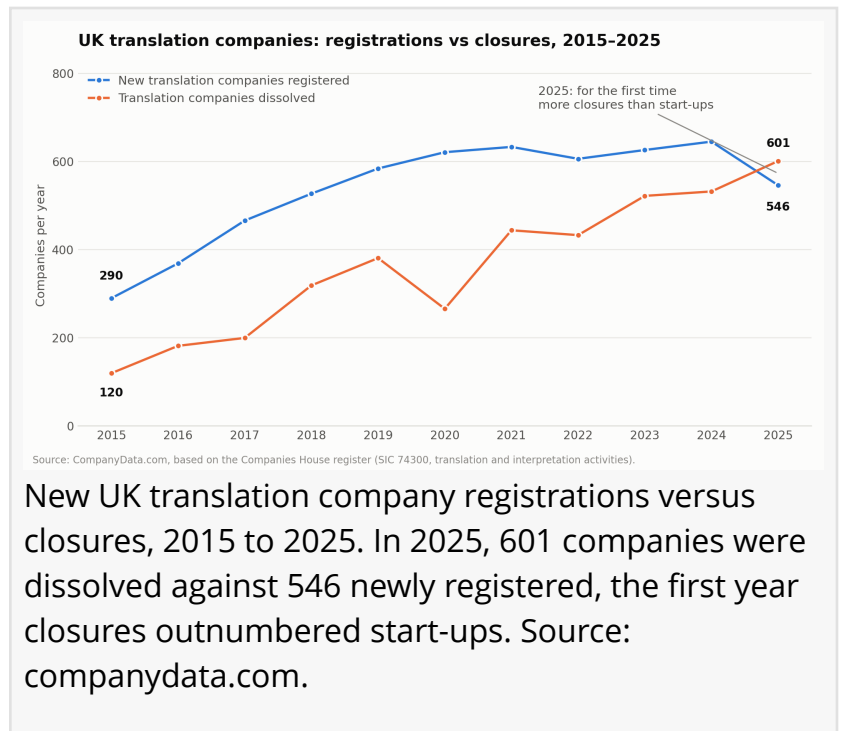
Not just a British problem

The UK is not an outlier. The number of translation companies here has fallen 1.8 percent since January. Across Europe the decline is steeper: 39,869 translation companies remain, down 2.5 percent this year.

Uttam Ramdaras, Data Analyst at companydata.com, said: "The gap has been narrowing for years and it has now closed. Until 2024, more translation companies opened than shut. Last year that flipped, and this year the gap is wider still. You cannot read motive from a register, but the timing is hard to ignore. Anyone can get a usable translation out of a free AI model in seconds, and the businesses that used to do that work are coming off the register."

About companydata.com

Companydata.com is an international business database covering 376 million companies in 200 countries, built on official trade registers such as the UK's Companies House. From its Amsterdam headquarters, the company delivers this data as datasets and through its [real-time](#)



[company data API](#), used for identity verification, market research, CRM and compliance. Its sector statistics are regularly cited by national and trade media across Europe and the US.

Notes to editors

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Methodology: companydata.com analysed UK business records and counted the number of currently active translation companies at the end of each year from 2015 to 2025, plus the position as of 14 September 2026. Figures cover companies listing SIC code 74300, translation and interpretation activities, on the Companies House register. Registrations are counted by incorporation date and closures by dissolution date; year-end totals are reconstructed from both. 2026 figures are year to date. The register covers incorporated companies only, so self-employed translators trading as sole traders are not included. Closure figures for 2020 are depressed because Companies House suspended strike-off action during the pandemic. International comparisons are based on the same database.

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