

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION POLICY GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTION

1. Leicestershire County Council is committed to delivering services to people in a fair way. Effective communication is an essential part of quality services. All people in contact with the Council who experience communication barriers are entitled to access interpreting and translation services.
2. The following sets out the Council's policy on interpretation and translation.

POLICY AIMS

3. The aims of this policy are:
 - a) To assist staff to communicate with people with specific communication needs including:
 - people from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds
 - disabled people (including people with sensory impairments and people with learning disabilities)
 - b) To enable service users, carers, their families, and the general public to:
 - have equal access to the Council's services and information
 - have their needs identified and met
 - participate in and contribute to the services they receive

CONTEXT

4. This policy is part of the Council's overall approach to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. The Council believes that people will have improved opportunities to access jobs and services if they are able to speak English. Therefore, it provides learning opportunities for adults and children in the following ways:
 - a) The Adult Learning Service provide classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) across the county

- b) The Ethnic Minority & Traveller Achievement Support Service provides advice to schools and, where necessary, initial assessment services for children who have little or no English
 - c) The Early Learning and Childcare Service provides family learning opportunities for young children and their parents and carers
 - d) The Adult Learning Service provides courses for adults wishing to improve their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. The Service provides additional support for people who have a disability or additional support need
5. The Council recognises that alongside the above services to enable people to learn and use English, it needs to provide interpreting and translation services. As with any policy, the Council has a responsibility to make the best possible use of available resources. Through this policy, it will seek to ensure that priority is given to making interpreting and translation services available to people in the community for whom the Council's policies and services can or may make a significant contribution to the quality of their lives.

OVERVIEW

6. The Council will:
- a) Inform people with language needs of the availability of the Council's Interpreting and Translation services provided by thebigword.
 - b) Respond to requests for an interpreter and/or translation in line with the later sections of this guidance
 - c) Inform people with other communications needs, such as a sensory or learning disability, of the availability of public information materials in other formats.
 - d) Where appropriate record translation and interpreter requirements in service users/carers personal files so that their needs for any support are clear.
 - e) Prioritise annually the key Council information to be communicated, identify the target audience and in which formats the information will be produced.
 - f) The five main community languages in Leicestershire at the time of this policy being prepared are Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali, Polish and Chinese. However, the most requested languages for face to face interpretation and translation are Polish, Pashto, BSL, Bengali and Punjabi.

7. The Council is not responsible for the translation of information material provided by other agencies, unless by prior arrangement e.g. joint public information leaflets.

INTERPRETING

Use of Bilingual Staff, Carers and Family Members

8. As a rule, **the council does not advocate the use of friends / family / carers to interpret for individuals.** However, the Council recognises that in certain situations bilingual staff, carers or family members may be willing to interpret for people whose first language is not English. In some instances, the person may be comfortable with this sort of arrangement. For example, they may trust a family member or friend to interpret on their behalf. **Please refer to point 10 (see below) prior to agreeing to such an arrangement.**
9. Professionals in contact with service users will need to use their judgement as to when it is appropriate to employ an interpreter. Recommendation 18 of The Victoria Climbié Inquiry by Lord Laming emphasises the importance of doing this:

“When communication with a child is necessary for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting that child's welfare, and the first language of that child is not English, an interpreter must be used. In cases where the use of an interpreter is dispensed with, the reasons for so doing must be recorded in the child's notes/case file.”
10. The Council will therefore ask staff to consider using interpreters in the following situations where there may be issues surrounding:
 - a) Potential breaches of a person's confidentiality
 - b) Possible misinterpretation (this may arise if the information being provided is of a technical nature)
 - c) Conflict of interest between the person and their carer/friend/family member
 - d) The degree of objectivity of the person acting as interpreter
 - e) The sensitivity of the subject matter being discussed
11. Staff will keep a record of the reasons when a non-professional interpreter is used.

thebigword – Telephone Interpreting

12. The Council has a contract with thebigword , which provides (among other services) a telephone interpreting service. This service is available for all staff to use. It will be used for:
 - a) All first point of contact enquiries where a person is unable to communicate effectively in English.
 - b) Gathering information from a person to book an interpreter.
 - c) Arranging an appointment.
 - d) Emergencies where it would take too long to get an interpreter.
 - e) If a language is required that is not obtainable through the Council's Interpreting Service.

thebigword - Face-To-Face Interpreters

13. Face to face interpreters include:
 - a) Interpreters who speak other languages
 - b) *British Sign Language and Sign Supported interpreters for deaf people.
 - c) Lip speakers
 - d) Makaton signers for people who have learning disabilities
 - e) Deaf Blind communicators

*BSL interpreters must be NRCPD registered in order to comply with the council's commitment to the BSL Charter
14. Face to face interpreters will be used when:
 - a) A person requests an interpreter
 - b) A person cannot communicate in English at all
 - c) A person has limited conversation skills in English
 - d) A person cannot follow group discussions or has difficulty in expressing feelings and thoughts in English
 - e) The person requires information and it is not available in the language required in written form

TRANSLATING MATERIAL

15. Translating material includes translations from English into different languages, Braille, audiotape, and into different formats e.g. in electronic format such as Word for Windows, large print or signs and symbols.
16. Documents will not be translated as a matter of course. They will be translated if requested and subject to the points below.
17. When considering whether to arrange for material to be translated staff will take into account of the policy aims set out in paragraph 3 of this policy and the resource considerations referred to in paragraph 5. In practice this means:
 - a) In many circumstances, the most effective way of responding to a request is not to translate the document but to arrange for an interpreter to talk/sign through the original document with the individual and to answer any questions.
 - b) In some instances a person is interested in particular parts of a document, but not necessarily all of it. This is an example of where it would be more appropriate for the service of an interpreter to be offered rather than translating a whole document.
 - c) Generally, large documents such as plans, policies and reports will not be translated, as the cost implications would be prohibitive. Summaries of such documents may be translated and, if necessary supplemented with the provision of an interpreter.
 - d) There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate to translate larger documents but it is anticipated that these will be exceptional and that there will be clear reasons why alternative means of communication are not feasible.
18. Priority will be given to using resources for translation that focus on ensuring that people have equal access to services. This will include:
 - a) Information prepared specifically for an individual, such as a letter or other document containing information about a service that the individual is to receive.
 - b) Information about services that people will need if they are to make use of them effectively or are to know about them in the first place.
21. All publications will include details of how members of the public can request information in the document in other formats e.g. Braille, tape or an alternative language. This statement will appear on the publication in English in a prominent place – either the front or the back.

22. The statement will be included on all key service specific information, including all County Council strategies, plans and consultation documents and may be included in other publications that departments see appropriate.
23. Where a Department has information it needs to routinely communicate to all service user groups, staff will be encouraged to seek advice from the Account Manager at thebigword.

MONITORING

24. To help the Council to understand the needs of the local population monitoring arrangements will be set up to collect information about the use of interpreters and translation. This information will be used to inform reviews of the policy.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

25. The purpose of this policy is to promote equality of access to information and services for all sections of the community. The policy will be reviewed annually to determine whether changes are needed to reflect changes in the diversity and/or needs of the local population.

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