

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

1. Leicestershire County Council is committed to delivering services to people in a fair way. Effective communication in people's preferred languages is essential for them to receive a high quality of service from the Council.
2. This Interpretation and Translation Policy is part of the Council's responsibilities under equality legislation to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

AIMS

3. The aims of this policy are:
 - a) To ensure that the Council's services and information are accessible to people from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds or who have specific communication needs
 - b) To enable service users, carers, families and the general public to have equal access to the Council's services, have their needs identified and met, and participate in and contribute to the services they receive

OVERVIEW

4. The Council believes that people's access to jobs and services is significantly improved by being able to speak English. Learning services are available for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) as well as courses for adults wishing to improve their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Family learning opportunities are also available for young children and their parents and carers.
5. For all other language needs, including where ESOL and other learning provision is not appropriate or available, the Council will arrange for interpretation and translation services to be provided so that people in the community can be informed about any council policies and services that affect them.
6. The Council will also ensure that information can be provided in other accessible formats as required.

COMMITMENT

6. The Council will:
 - a) Always ask people what their preferred form of communication is
 - b) Respond to requests for interpretation and translation in accordance with the following sections of this policy

- c) Where appropriate, ensure that interpreter and translation requirements are recorded in service users' / carers personal files so that their support needs are clear.
- d) Inform people with other communication needs, such as a sensory or learning disability, of the availability of public information in other formats including easy read, Braille, audiotape, text or video-based formats
- e) Include a statement in English on the front or back cover of Council publications – including service-specific information, strategies, plans, consultation documents and other relevant publications – about how they can be obtained in other languages and formats.

SPOKEN INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION SERVICES

- 7. The Council provides Interpretation and Translation services through a contracted supplier. The services currently available are face-to-face interpreters (including registered interpreters for non-spoken languages for Deaf and hearing-impaired people) and telephone interpreting.
- 8. **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
- 9. **The Council does not generally advocate the use of friends / family / carers to interpret for a person whose first language is not English.** However, in certain situations, bi-lingual staff, carers or family members may be willing to interpret for a person whose first language is not English if the person is comfortable with this arrangement and trusts the person who will act as an interpreter.
- 10. The Council will always require staff to consider using a professional interpreter in the following situations where there may be issues surrounding any or all of:
 - a) The nature of the interview or assessment requires an objective and qualified person to act as an interpreter
 - 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) Potential breaches of a person's confidentiality
 - e) The sensitivity of the subject matter being discussed
11. Staff will keep a record in service users' notes or case files of any circumstances and the specific reasons when:
- a) A non-professional interpreter is used
 - b) The use of an interpreter is dispensed with – Recommendation 18 of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry (2003) is particularly relevant in this respect¹
12. **Telephone interpreters** will be used for:
- a) Interviews or assessments where face-to-face interpretation is not necessary or cannot be provided safely for either the service user or the interpreter
 - b) First point of contact enquiries where a person is unable to communicate effectively in English
 - c) Gathering information from a person to enable staff to book a face-to-face interpreter
 - d) Arranging an appointment
 - e) Emergencies where it would take too long to get a face-to-face interpreter
 - e) If a language is required that is not obtainable through the face-to-face service.

WRITTEN TRANSLATION SERVICES

13. This service includes translating material from English into different languages, Braille and audiotape, other formats in hard copy or in electronic format such as Word for Windows, large print or signs and symbols. Requests for translations of documents and other written information will be considered in relation to whether:
- a) Arranging for an interpreter to talk or sign through the original document with the person and to answer any questions would be more helpful to them than translating the whole document
 - b) A person requires part(s) of a document but not necessarily all of it – again it may be better to use an interpreter rather than translate the whole document

¹ "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."

- c) It is practical or cost-effective to translate large or complex documents such as formal plans, policies and reports – however, summaries of such documents may be translated and, if necessary, supplemented with the provision of an interpreter
 - d) There are any exceptional circumstances where it is appropriate to translate larger documents or clear reasons why alternative means of communication are not feasible
14. 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

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

15. 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 any amendments are needed to reflect changes in the diversity and / or needs of the local population that have been identified through the Council's equality monitoring processes.

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