

Charnwood Borough Council Interpretation and Translation Policy

Introduction

1. Charnwood Borough Council is committed to making its services accessible to everyone who lives and works in Charnwood. We recognise that some people need the information we provide in different formats. Therefore, all people in contact with the Council who experience communication barriers are entitled to access interpreting and/or translation services appropriate to their needs.
2. The following sets out the Council's approach to interpretation and translation services.

This policy reflects the government's guidance

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/580274.pdf>.

Policy Aims

3. The aims of this policy are:

To enable service users, carers, their families, and the general public to:

- Have equal access to Council's services and information
- Have their needs identified and met
- Participate in democratic processes and consultations

To assist staff to communicate with people with specific communication needs including:

- People from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- People with disabilities (including people with sensory impairments and people with learning disabilities)

Context

4. This policy is part of Council's overall approach to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination. The Council believes that people will have improved opportunities to access jobs, social activities and services if they are able to speak English. Therefore, Charnwood Borough Council promotes learning opportunities for adults and children provided by Leicestershire County Council and Loughborough College.
 - The Adult Learning Service (<http://www.leics.gov.uk/golearn> or ring 0116 3055629 for Charnwood) and Loughborough College (**01509 618059**) provide classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

- The Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service (http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/education/going_to_school/emass) provides advice to schools and, where necessary, initial assessment service for children who have little or no English
 - The Early Years and Childcare Service (http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/education/childcare/early_years_service) provides family learning opportunities for young children and their parents and carers
 - The Adult Learning Service and Loughborough College provide courses for adults wishing to improve their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. The Service provides additional support for people who have disabilities or additional support need.
5. The Council recognises that alongside encouraging people to learn and use English, it needs to provide some interpreting and translation services. As with any policy, the Council has 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 for whom access to the Council's policies and services can make a significant contribution to the quality of their lives.

Overview

6. The Council will:
- a) Inform people with other communication needs, such as a sensory or learning disability, of the availability of public information materials in other formats.
 - b) Inform people with language needs of the availability of the Council's Interpreting and Translation service, and an external company providing telephone translation services.
 - c) Respond to requests for an interpreter and/or translation in line with our policy (see below for guidance).
 - d) Where appropriate record translation and interpreter requirements in service users/carers personal files so that their needs for any support are clear.
 - e) Where appropriate, publish on the Council's website publications that have already been translated. The Council's website already provides an integral

translation function which will enable visitors to the site to translate most non technical documents.

- f) Translate the summary of interpreting and translation policy into the community languages of the largest communities in Charnwood and publish them on Charnwood Borough Councils webpage indicating languages in alphabet of their origin
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. The Council recognise that in certain circumstances an interpreter will be required, when this is necessary the person needing that service will, in the first instance, be asked whether they would prefer to have a family member; carer or trusted friend to interpret on their behalf. This will only occur when the person is comfortable with these arrangements.
9. The Council may also be in a position to provide bilingual staff from the Council and from partner organisations such as RNIB; Youth Shelter or Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood.
10. Professionals in contact with service users with the support of their managers will need to use their judgement as to when it is appropriate to employ an interpreter.
11. The Council will give priority to using interpreters in situations where there may be issues surrounding:
- a) Potential breaches of a person's confidentiality or their vulnerability.
 - b) Possible misinterpretation (this may arise if the information being provided is of a technical nature).
 - c) Potential conflict of interest between the person and their carer/friend/family member.
 - d) Concerns about the degree of objectivity of the person acting as interpreter.
 - e) The sensitivity of the subject matter being discussed.
12. Staff will keep a record of the reasons why a non-professional interpreter is used.

Telephone Translations Services

13. The Council uses external services to provide 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.

Face-To-Face Interpreters

14. 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 communication

15. 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

16. Translating material includes translations from English into different languages, Braille, audiotape, and into different formats e.g. in electronic format such as Word, large print or signs and symbols.

17. The council website provides a 'Google translate' facility which allows an individual to have the page translated into any of the available languages.

18. Documents will not be translated as a matter of course. They will be translated if requested and subject to the criteria set out in 19 below.
19. When considering whether to arrange materials 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) Once authorised general leaflets not longer than 2 pages of A4 format will be translated on request within 10 working days.
 - b) In some instances a person will be offered an interpreter rather than translation of the document
 - c) Where appropriate translated summaries of larger documents may be offered on request
20. 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. Documents and leaflets will be translated on base of equality of treatment to all communities. Information leaflets, such as the new recycling information will be produced in plain English using visual effects such as pictures or pictograms where appropriate to make it easier to understand, including people who have poor literacy skills.
22. Once translated into any language or format public documents will be made available for use of customers and officers on the Council's webpage www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/translated_documents
23. All publications will include details of how members of 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 plain English in a prominent place using pictograms where appropriate – either the front or the back ***“To find out if this information is available in other formats, or for help understanding it in your language, please call (01509) 634560.”***

Monitoring

24. To help the Council to understand the needs of people who live and work in Charnwood monitoring arrangements will be established to collect information about the use of interpreters and translation services. This information will be used to inform reviews of this policy and service improvements.

Equality Implications

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 periodically to determine whether changes are needed to reflect changes in the diversity and/or needs of the population of Charnwood.