

CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL

INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION POLICY GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTION

1. Charnwood Borough 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 & services if they are able to speak English. Therefore, it provides learning opportunities for adults & children in the following ways:
 - a) The [Adult Learning Service](#) provides classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) across the county.
 - b) The [Early Learning and Childcare Service](#) provides family learning opportunities for young children and their parents and carers.
 - c) The [Adult Learning Service](#) and [Loughborough College](#) provide courses for adults wishing to improve their speaking, listening, reading & 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 **Mission Translate**.
 - b) Respond to requests for an interpreter and/or translation in line with later sections of the 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, Bengali, Gujarati, Kurdish and BSL.

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 agreement. 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. 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 will need to use their judgement as to when it is important 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.”
11. 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
12. Staff will keep a record of the reasons when a non-professional interpreter is used.

TELEPHONE INTERPRETING

13. The Council has a contract with Mission Translate, 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 Councils Interpreting Service.

FACE TO FACE INTERPRETERS

14. Face to face interpreters include:

- a) Interpreters who speak other languages
- b) * British Sign Language & 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

15. Face to face interpreters will be used when:

- a) A person request 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 for Windows, large print or signs and symbols.

17. Documents will not be translated as a matter of course. They will be translated if requested and subject to the points below.

18. 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) 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 maybe offered on request.

19. It is important to note:

- 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.

20. Priority will be given to using resources for translation that focus on ensuring that 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 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](#).

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) 634603.”***

24. The statement will be included on all key service specific information, including all Charnwood Borough Council strategies, plans and consultation documents and may be included in other publications that Services see appropriate.

MONITORING

25. To help the Council to understand the needs of people who live and work in Charnwood monitoring arrangements will be set up 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

26. 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.

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