

## Response to Request for Information

Reference      FOI 003424  
Date            02 April 2019

### *Language and BSL Interpretation Services*

#### Request:

I am writing to make a request in line with the Freedom of Information Act for information regarding language and BSL interpretation services within your Council.

The following questions refer to any interpretation from another language into English, or from English to another language as well as BSL interpretation.

For the last 3 financial years (**2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19**), please could you provide the following:

1. What suppliers have the Council been using for Interpretation Services?

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
AA Global Language Services	Communication Plus (Faircom Plus)	Communication Plus (Faircom Plus)
Faircomplus Ltd t/a Communication Plus	D A Languages Ltd	D A Lanaguages Ltd
Hu Hui Ward	Faircomplus Ltd t/a Communication Plus	Milton Keynes Council
Language Line Services	Leicester Housing Association	PA Housing
Leicester Housing Association	Premium Linguistic Services	The Bigword Interpreting Serv. Ltd
MIYG Ltd	The Bigword Interpreting Serv Ltd	
Premium Linguistic Services	Zebra Uno Ltd	
The Bigword Interpreting Serv. Ltd		
Yarrington Ltd		

2. Could you provide the total annual spend for interpreter services in each of the past 3 financial years (**2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19**) to date as well as broken down by language / BSL?

2016/17	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
BSL	Info not held	Info not held	£12,344

Translation	£79,265	£75,232	£86,096
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\*figure for 2016/17 and 2017/18 for BSL maybe included in the Translation total as this was not split out during those years.

3. Which languages did the interpreters support the Council with?
- a) Please list each language in order of highest to lowest in terms of use/bookings  
See attached.
- b) Please list how many times/bookings the interpreters worked for you in each language?  
The Council considers that the information you have requested, which we have identified above, is exempt from disclosure under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 43(2) of the Act permits the Council to withhold information if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person, including the public authority holding it.

We should explain that, under Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Council considers that to disclose the information you have requested, at this stage, would prejudice the commercial interests of the parties involved and this information is therefore exempt from disclosure.

This information is commercially sensitive to the suppliers and it is important to their competitiveness that they are able to remain as a participant in the market.

When considering public interest for and against disclosure of this requested information, the Council considers that the public interest in withholding the information from disclosure to the wider world outweighs the public interest in disclosure. The reason for this is by releasing the information it would be potentially damaging to the business of the supplier to share their information with third parties and would likely prejudice the commercial interest of the parties concerned.

The Council considers that it would not be in the public interest to release this information as it is likely to be damaging to the business of the supplier. It might also have a negative impact on fair competition in future tender processes and that it is not common knowledge and would likely be used by competitors in a particular market to gain a competitive advantage. The Council also considers that disclosure of such information would be damaging to the Council's commercial interest as it would be likely to:

- (a) discourage companies/individuals from providing the Council with commercially sensitive information in the future or undertaking contracts with the Council;

- (b) adversely affect the Council's bargaining position during future contractual negotiations.

In applying the public interest test the Council gave careful consideration to the arguments for and against disclosure. When considering factors which would favour disclosing the information, the Council had to assess whether disclosure of the information would:

- Allow for more informed debate on the issue;
- Promote accountability and transparency for our decisions and in our spending of public money; and
- Assist the public to understand and challenge our decisions.

Against these considerations the Council had to balance the likelihood of disclosure having an adverse affect on the commercial interest of the suppliers concerned and the Council itself.

Having taken into account the arguments for and against disclosure, the Council decided that the public interest in this case is best served by maintaining the exemption and by not disclosing the information requested, at this stage.

The Council considers that the possible benefits of disclosure are outweighed by the real risk of causing prejudice to the commercial interests of the suppliers concerned and the Council itself. In this case there is an overriding public interest in ensuring that companies are able to compete fairly and in ensuring there is competition for public sector contracts.

Language Overview from Bookings Between January 2018 - March 2019	
Language	Volume
Punjabi	700
Romanian	452
Polish	315
Czech	179
Urdu	170
Mirपुरi (Pahari, Pahari-Pothowari, Pothohari, Potohari, Potwari)	166
Slovak	135
Arabic	120
Kurdish / Kurdish Sorani	114
BSL (British Sign Language)	112
Kurdish Sorani	111
Vietnamese	106
Lithuanian	100
Russian	81
Albanian	75
Spanish	42
Portuguese	39
Mandarin	31
Italian	29
Gujarati	28
Bengali	28
Amharic	24
Tigrinya	23
Hungarian	21
Twi	19
Chinese Mandarin	18
Iraqi Arabic	14
French	13
Pashtu	11
Lingala	11
English	10
Latvian	10
Pashto	9
Sudanese Arabic	8
Sinhalese	8
Bulgarian	6
Kurdish Bahdini	5
Dari	5
Hindi	5
Mirपुरi	4
N/A	4
Farsi (Persian)	3
Tamil	2
Cantonese	2
Aromanian (Armina, Armini, Arumanian, Arumenian, Macedo Romanian, Macedo-Rumanian, Vlach)	2
Farsi	2
Kurdish Bahdini	2
Armenian	2
Malayalam	2
Hands on BSL	2
Somali	2
Yoruba	2
Dhaka	1
Sign Support English	1
Croatian	1
Malinke	1
Thai	1
Sicilian	1
German	1
Swahili	1
Oromo (Afan)	1
Tagalog (Filipino)	1
Shona	1
Indonesian	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3396</b>

Top 15 Languages	
Language	Volume
Punjabi	700
Romanian	452
Polish	315
Czech	179
Urdu	170
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Slovak	135
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