

Please can you provide the following information regarding language services.

- 1) Please confirm your overall spend on interpreting, translation and transcription services for the following financial years: 2021-22 and 2022-23

2012-22 £124,705.09
2022-23 £120,847.00

- 2) Who is your incumbent supplier(s) for language services? If you have more than one supplier, which services does each one provide to you?

Language Line Solutions – Spoken language
Topp Language Solutions - BSL

- 3) If you have a separate British Sign Language/non-spoken supplier, who is this?

We do not have a separate supplier

- 4) If you have a separate transcription supplier, who is this?

We do not have a separate supplier

- 5) Do you have any in-house interpreters/translators?

No

- 6) When is your current language services contract(s) due to expire, a) without extensions and b) with all possible extensions?

Contract 225 – Interpreter Services (Hearing) – current provider ‘Topp Language Solutions Ltd’

The initial contract period for this service will be 3 years commencing on the 1st September 2018 to 31st August 2021 with the option to utilise 2 separate contract extensions (1 year each) following annual service reviews and funding being agreed.

Therefore, its contractual term ended 31st August 2023 and we are aiming to commission a new contract.

Commissioners have extended the contract for one year via a procurement waiver in order to review the services and consider their intentions. So, 31 August 24 would be the contractual end.

Language Line Solutions Limited

Start date unknown due to staff turnover and is renewed on an annual basis.

- 7) Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the contract manager responsible for language services?

Joanne Mitchell, Assistant Director
Customer Experience & Support
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- 8) Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the person responsible for your language services budget?

As above

9) Could you please provide the following data for 2023:

Total number of face-to-face interpreting assignments (spoken language) and hours completed

Total number of face-to-face interpreting assignments (non-spoken language) and hours completed

Total number of telephone interpreting calls and minutes completed

Total number of video interpreting calls (spoken language) and minutes completed

Total number of video interpreting calls (non-spoken language) and minutes completed

Total number of document translations and words translated

Total number of audio transcriptions and total audio duration

We do not hold the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) relieves a public authority from the obligation to comply with a request for information where the estimated time required to locate, review and extract the information exceeds a certain threshold set out in Regulations.

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/3244) set out the rules in relation to the cost limit (otherwise called the "appropriate limit"). These Regulations are published by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) and are viewable on their web site from this link: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20043244_en.pdf

The Regulations set out the cost limit for Government departments and for other public authorities. For local government, Regulation 3 states that the cost limit is £450 and Regulation 4(4) states that the prescribed hourly rate is £25. Regulation 4(4) further provides that where the local authority estimates the time taken to gather the information would exceed this limit (which based on the prescribed hourly rate, equates to 18 officer hours), it may refuse the request under section 12 of FoIA.

I am satisfied the cost limit applies to your request and will explain why this is the case.

We are unable to provide this breakdown as we do not capture this information in the format required.

50 invoices for Language Line
11 invoices for Topp Language

It takes approx. 20-30 mins to download an invoice, review the content and record the breakdown below for each one. This is based on the time taken on one invoice for Topp Language.

January 2023 – Topp Language

Face to face (non spoken / BSL) 57 units

Video interpreting (non spoken / BSL) 21 units

Total time required to provide an accurate breakdown for 61 invoices based on 30 mins each, would be in excess of the 18 officer hours stipulated to in the FOI Act.

10) What were your top 20 highest-volume languages for interpreting/translation requests in 2023?

Farsi, Amharic, Romanian, Tigrigna, Pashto, Urdu, Bulgarian, Portuguese, Pashto, Arabic, Polish, Sorani, Turkish and Oromo

- 11) Can you please provide the fill rate % you received for the following services in 2023:
- Face-to-face interpreting
 - Telephone interpreting
 - Video interpreting
 - Document translation
 - Audio transcription
- 12) What languages has your provider been unable to source in the last 12 months?
- 13) Have service credits been applied on your language services contract in the last 12 months? If so, what performance failure was this linked to?
- 14) What social value has been delivered as part of this contract in the last 12 months?
- 15) If your contract was awarded through a tender process, can you please provide a copy of the winning bidder's tender?
- Unable to provide breakdown – see Q9
- We do not capture this information
- No
- We do not capture this information
- Contract 225 – Interpreter Services (Hearing) – current provider 'Topp Language Solutions Ltd'**
- Information requested was provided to us in confidence and therefore commercially sensitive to the third party.
- Furthermore the disclosure of tender documents by rivals could hinder competitive tendering as it could reduce the number of bidders who are prepared to put forward their trade secrets in future tender submissions. This would not be in the Council's interest (especially where there are only few competitors in the particular market).
- We have a robust system in place to manage the procurement of contracts, however the detail behind the actual tender documents and providing commercially sensitive information of both the successful bidder and ourselves would have no further value within the public domain to assure the public that the process was done correctly.
- Having considered the balance of the public interest, the Council's decision is therefore to withhold the information under Section 43(2) of the FOI Act.

- 16) What are your contracted rates for each of the following services?
- Spoken face-to-face interpreting: hourly rate
Non-spoken face-to-face interpreting: hourly rate
Telephone interpreting: per minute rate
Spoken video interpreting: per minute rate
Non-spoken video interpreting:
Document translation: per word rate
Audio transcription: per audio minute rate
- 17) Has your provider of language services increased their charge rate to you in the last 12 months?
- 18) What is the Authority's typical route to market?
- 19) Does the Authority currently have any interpreter on wheel devices as part of their current contract? If yes please advise how many and if these are provided free of charge or paid for by the Authority.
- 20) Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the person responsible for the language services budget?
- 21) Could you please provide the name, phone number and email address of the person in charge of procurement for the Authority?
- We believe that disclosure of this information would prejudice the commercial interests of the supplier.
- The supplier has stated that the charges payable are commercially confidential and not what they would share with anyone other than the contracted parties and that the charges should not be disclosed as it is market sensitive information.
- We agree that disclosure would be likely to prejudice the contracted parties' commercial interests and that the exemption under s43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is engaged.
- A public interest test has been conducted and we have concluded that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.
- Yes
- Unless a Public Buying Organisation Framework are utilised this opportunity will be advertised via the procurement portal known as 'The Chest' (www.the-chest.org.uk).
- No
- As at Q8
- Mark Holden
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