

Translation and Interpretation Policy

In order for all our customers to access services appropriately it is essential that we have a policy to cover all communication needs. This policy covers the different language needs in Taunton Deane, including British Sign Language and also covers the need for different formats to be readily available to people with disabilities, eg in CD rom, audiotape or Braille.

Our Aim

We will aim to provide a translation and interpreting service where:

- There is face-to-face interaction between our customers and the Council.
- Core information about accessing services needs to be provided
- We need to consult with our customers to take into account views opinions and complaints

To ensure that our translation service develops to meet local need we will monitor take up so that we can identify the number of different languages requested and compare which services have received a greater demand for translations.

We will work with other district councils and the county council to develop a uniform approach to translating and interpreting.

Our Standards

Our customers will be able to gain access to telephone and face-to-face interpreters if needed.

Customers will be able to receive appropriate communication support for meetings they attend in council offices or in the community.

The needs of customers will be respected regarding who acts as interpreter. This will include providing professional interpreters when, because of confidentiality, it may not be appropriate to allow an adult family member or friend to act as an interpreter.

It is not acceptable to use children as interpreters.

All professional interpreters provided by the council will provide a confidential service.

We will work to ensure that all documents available to our customers will contain an Access Statement offering the opportunity to have a document translated or made available in a different format.

We will write our documents in Plain English, which should make things easier for translation purposes. However due to the technical nature of some of the subjects we need to tell our customers about, not all our documents can be translated appropriately. In some cases it may be necessary to have a summary version available for translation.