

Policy on Accessible Communications

Document Management No.	
Author	
Date Written	06/07/2009
Date Ratified	05/08/2009
Date for Review	
Version No.	1
Managers Handbook Reference	



South Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue
WORKING FOR A SAFER
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Policy on Translation and Interpreting Services

Contents page

Title	Page No
Introduction	2
Aims	2
Scope	3
General Principles	3
Exemption	4
Translation and Interpreting Guidance	4
A Interpreting Service – Language Line	4
B Face to Face Interpreters	5
C Providing information for members of the community with a disability	6
Appendix A Language Line Procedure	9
Appendix B Translation of a Document Procedure	10
Appendix C RNIB See It Right Clear Print Checklist	11
Appendix D Type Talk Information Sheet	12
Appendix E Language Flags	13

Policy on Translation and Interpreting Services

INTRODUCTION

1. The county of South Yorkshire is made up of a diverse community where some members of the public may not have English as their first language. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) are committed to providing an excellent public service for all our customers and to ensure that language or disability does not act as a barrier to accessing our services or information.
2. Effective communication is a key element in ensuring that everyone receives the same standard of service and this includes those whose first language is not English and users who are deaf, blind or partially sighted.
3. However, this does not indicate that SYFR is required to automatically translate all public information into community languages. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion's document 'Our Shared Future' published in 2007 and the 'Guidance for Local Authorities on Translation of Publications' published in response to this by the Department for Communities and Local Government, both promoted the importance of speaking English and advised that Local Authorities should follow a selective approach to translation.
4. This policy is part of SYFR's overall approach to promoting equality and diversity and eliminating discrimination. SYFR recognises the need to provide interpreting and translation services but as with any policy, there is a responsibility to make the best possible use of available resources. Requests for translation and interpreting services should therefore be assessed on an individual basis.
5. SYFR will seek to ensure that priority is given to making interpreting and translation services available to people in the community for whom our policies and services can or may make a significant contribution to the quality of their lives.

AIMS

6. Section 37 of SYFR's 'Integrated Equality and Diversity Scheme 2007-2010' states:
"We will publish and release all information using language appropriate to the intended audience. Our information is available in a variety of accessible formats where required."
7. The aims of this policy are to ensure that SYFR effectively delivers excellent services and information to customers who have specific communication needs by providing where appropriate, translation, interpretation and communication services and that these services are sensitive to the needs of the individual. The policy will also enable service users and the public to have equal access to our services and information. This will include:
 - clients from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds
 - disabled clients (including clients with sensory impairments and/or learning disabilities)
8. The policy will also ensure that resources are targeted to meet the needs of the local area and to ensure value for money when providing translation and interpreting services.

9. Under this policy, one or more members of the community or other organisations or South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue may request any of the following:
- Translation of any document created by SYFR
 - Interpreting services for any of the services provided by SYFR
 - Information in Braille, Large Print or audiotape format
 - Use of a hearing loop

SCOPE

10. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue will:
- Translate a list of key documents/leaflets into the main community languages spoken in South Yorkshire
 - Prioritise annually the key SYFR information to be communicated, identify the target audience and in which formats the information will be produced
 - Not translate documents/leaflets as a matter of course but will translate documents/leaflets into other community languages when requested
 - SYFR recognises the changing make up of the population in South Yorkshire and will periodically review whether changes need to be made to the languages included
 - Inform people with language needs of the availability of the SYFR's Interpreting and Translation service and telephone interpreting line (Language Line)
 - Respond in a timely manner to requests for an interpreter and/or translation in line with later sections of this guidance
 - Inform people with other communication needs, such as a sensory or learning disability, of the availability of public information materials in other formats

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

11. SYFR is committed to providing the best possible service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Details of our key delivery objectives (which include what customers can expect) are published in our Corporate Plan 2008 -2011, available on the SYFR website <http://www.syfire.gov.uk>.
12. SYFR Integrated Equality & Diversity Scheme 2007-2010 states "Our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, access to services and ensuring equality of outcomes in relation to community safety and other services is core to our success in serving our diverse communities".
13. Under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, SYFR has a statutory duty to promote race equality by having due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality and opportunity and promote good relations between people of different racial backgrounds.
14. SYFR believes that in keeping with the Disability Discrimination Act, disabled people should have the same rights, choices and opportunities under the law as those who are not disabled.

15. This policy will assist SYFR in providing an excellent public service for all our customers and to ensure that language does not act as a barrier to accessing our services or information.

EXEMPTION

16. SYFR is not responsible for the translation of information material provided by other agencies unless by prior arrangements e.g. joint public information leaflets.

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING GUIDANCE

A. Interpreting Service - Language Line

17. SYFR currently utilise the service provider Language Line, which supplies a 'pay as you go' telephone interpreting service. Language Line is currently utilised for community safety work such as Home Safety Checks and this facility is to be made available for all staff to use where they identify a need to provide a translation service. For example, it can be used for:

- Emergencies where it would take too long to get a face to face interpreter
- All first point of contact enquiries where a person is unable to communicate effectively in English
- Arranging an appointment

Training

18. All Community Safety Teams have received training in the use of Language Line. The provision of Language Line phone facilities to support Home Safety Checks has been piloted successfully by Sheffield Central Fire Station and this is to be further expanded to all operational staff and reception staff during 2009/10. Training can also be provided to any other area of the Service by request to the SYFR Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Advocate.

Advice and Guidance

19. When required, the SYFR BME Advocate is to be contacted in the first instance for advice and guidance on use of this facility. The following information sheets which explain the Home Safety Check language line process are available on the Service Intranet:
 - Home Safety Check Procedure – Language Barrier
 - Home Safety Check Introduction – Language Flags

How to Use Language Line

20. Prior to contacting Language Line the member of staff should:
 - Identify the language required – you may find the language flag identification sheet useful at Appendix E
 - Prepare a set of questions you wish to ask the person via the interpreter
 - Estimate how long the translation may take
21. See flowchart at Appendix A.

Staff with access to Language Line:

- Contact Language Line with ID code and request translation service
- On conclusion, complete a web basket/stock request for order to be raised

Staff without access to Language Line:

- SYFR Office Hours Mon-Fri 0900-1700 hours
Contact Eyre Street Reception extension 0.
- SYFR Outside Office Hours Weekends and Mon-Fri 1700 to 0900 hours
Contact a member of Control staff extension 2400.
- Contact the relevant area dependant on the time of day
- A member of staff will provide the Language Line telephone number and ID code required to activate an interpretation
- Dial the language line number and request the language your client speaks
- When the interpreter is connected, use your speakerphone if available or pass your handset back and forth to the person
- Finally ask the interpreter to thank the person

B. Face to Face Interpreters

22. Face to Face interpreters can be used when:

- A person cannot communicate in English at all
- A person has limited conversation skills in English
- A person cannot follow group discussions or has difficulty in expressing feelings and thoughts in English
- The person requires information and it is not available in the language required in written form

23. SYFR have arrangements with the translation and interpreting services of the 4 South Yorkshire Metropolitan Borough Councils to accommodate requests from customers. If a member of staff identifies that they may need to provide a face to face interpreter they should contact the BME Advocate and/or the Supplies Officer for guidance in identifying a preferred supplier of this service.

Translating information

24. 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 graphics.

25. Apart from the key documents/leaflets identified corporately, documents should not be translated as a matter of course. When considering whether to translate material, staff should take into account the aims of this policy and the resources available. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion suggests the following checklist when considering what, why and how to translate:

- ***Is it essential that the document be translated?*** What is your evidence of need or demand for this translation and that people will be disadvantaged without this translation? Who is the target audience? Are you using the right data to select the languages to translate this material into and is this data being updated in relation to local changes?

- **Does the document need to be translated in full?** Should it first be simplified into a plain English version? Would a short summary be more appropriate? Could it be translated on request rather than proactively? Could this message be better delivered by engaging with community groups directly or through our partners, or by using alternative media?
 - **Have you considered the cost/benefit analysis for this translation?** Will these materials be used in full, or is it likely that this form of communication will sit on a shelf? What would be the cost to SYFR of not translating this material?
 - **Have you explored whether our partner agencies might already have these materials available in translated form?** Is there national best practice?
26. Priority will be given to using resources for translation that focus on the health and safety needs of individuals ensuring that people have equal access to services. This includes:
- 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.
27. When all these areas have been explored and there is still a requirement to translate a document, the Service's BME Advocate and/or the Supplies Officer should be contacted for advice on the most appropriate language supplier of the service required and approval and funding for the translation should be sought through your Head of Function/Station Manager (see flowchart at Appendix B).

Website Accessibility

28. The SYFR website is currently being developed to provide the following accessibility functions:
- Alternative font sizes
 - Alternative colours for visually impaired customers
 - Information in community languages
 - Page reader software
29. These accessibility functions have also been provided for the web based Corporate Plan.

C. Providing information for members of the community with a disability

Blind and Partially Sighted People

30. Members of the community should be able to receive information that is accessible to them. The Disability Discrimination Act means there is now a legal duty to meet the information needs of our blind and partially sighted customers and to ensure that they can access the information and services that we provide.
31. People with sight problems use a variety of methods for accessing information and communicating. Because people lose their sight at different times of their lives and because eye conditions result in a different levels and types of damage to vision, there is no one solution that everyone uses. The same person may use a variety of reading and writing formats.

32. The SYFR standard for creating a typed written document is to use the Arial Font with a type size of 11 but when creating documents the Royal National Institute for the Blind 'See it Right' clear print check list can be used to aid design and can be found at Appendix C. This gives recommendations for creating or adapting documents for partially sighted people.
33. Further advice can be obtained from the SYFR Disability Advocate on the services available.

Large Print

34. Any written document can be requested in large print. If a request is received, staff must always take time to discuss the requirements of the individual and work through the checklist mentioned above under Translating Information. Always ensure that the needs behind the request are fully understood and agreed as this could save time and expense.

Hard Of Hearing

35. In normal office hours portable hearing loop systems are available at HQ Eyre Street Reception and the Training and Development Centre. These work in conjunction with hearing aids and an individual will usually be proactive in making a request to use a hearing loop.
36. The Community Engagement Advisors (CEA's) hold a supply of clipboards which have a portable hearing loop system installed within them which allows the person wearing a hearing aid to receive and communicate whilst a meeting is taking place.
37. Three CEAs are currently taking level one British sign language to help communicate and overcome barriers when completing Home Safety Check and fitting deaf alarm equipment for those with hearing impairments.

Typetalk

38. RNID Typetalk is the Royal National Institute for the Deaf's national telephone relay service for deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, deafblind and speech-impaired people.
39. It lets deaf and hard of hearing people use a textphone to access any services that are available on standard telephone systems.
40. Typetalk provides a link between any textphone user and a hearing person. The link is a highly trained RNID Typetalk operator who provides a discreet and confidential service. If you are deaf, all you need is a textphone, which is a specially adapted telephone with a keyboard.
41. The SYFR Disability Advocate should be contacted for guidance on accessing this facility and an information sheet can be found at Appendix D.

Fire Safety documents currently available for people with disabilities

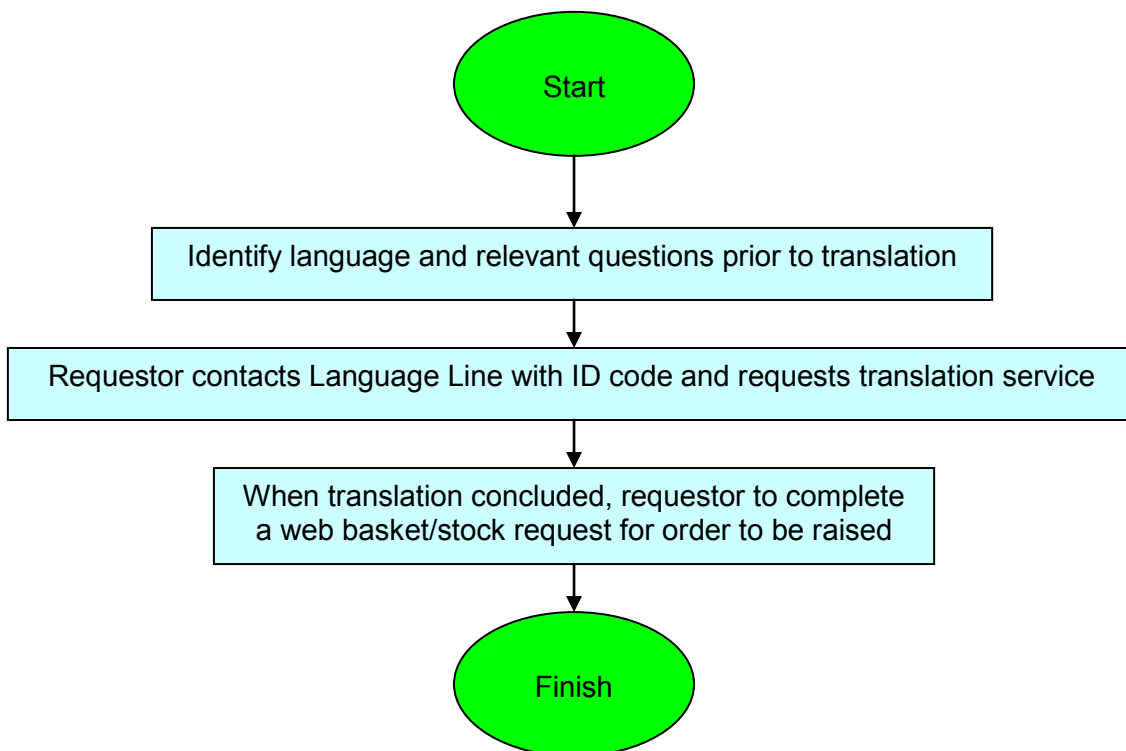
- Braille - Fire Safety in the Home
 - Easy Read- Fire Safety in the Home
 - Audiotape - Fire Safety in the Home
 - Fire Safety for People with Sight, Hearing or Mobility difficulties (relating to the disability)
 - Home Fire Safety Risk Assessment 2 (HFSRA2) Advice to Households
Available in 8 other languages: Arabic, Farsi, Mandarin, Polish, Russian, Slovak, Somali and Urdu.
42. The Disability Advocate is currently working with our partner agencies to create a sign language DVD giving advice on Fire Safety in the Home.
43. The website <http://firekills.direct.gov.uk> is a useful resource of fire safety information.

Equality implications

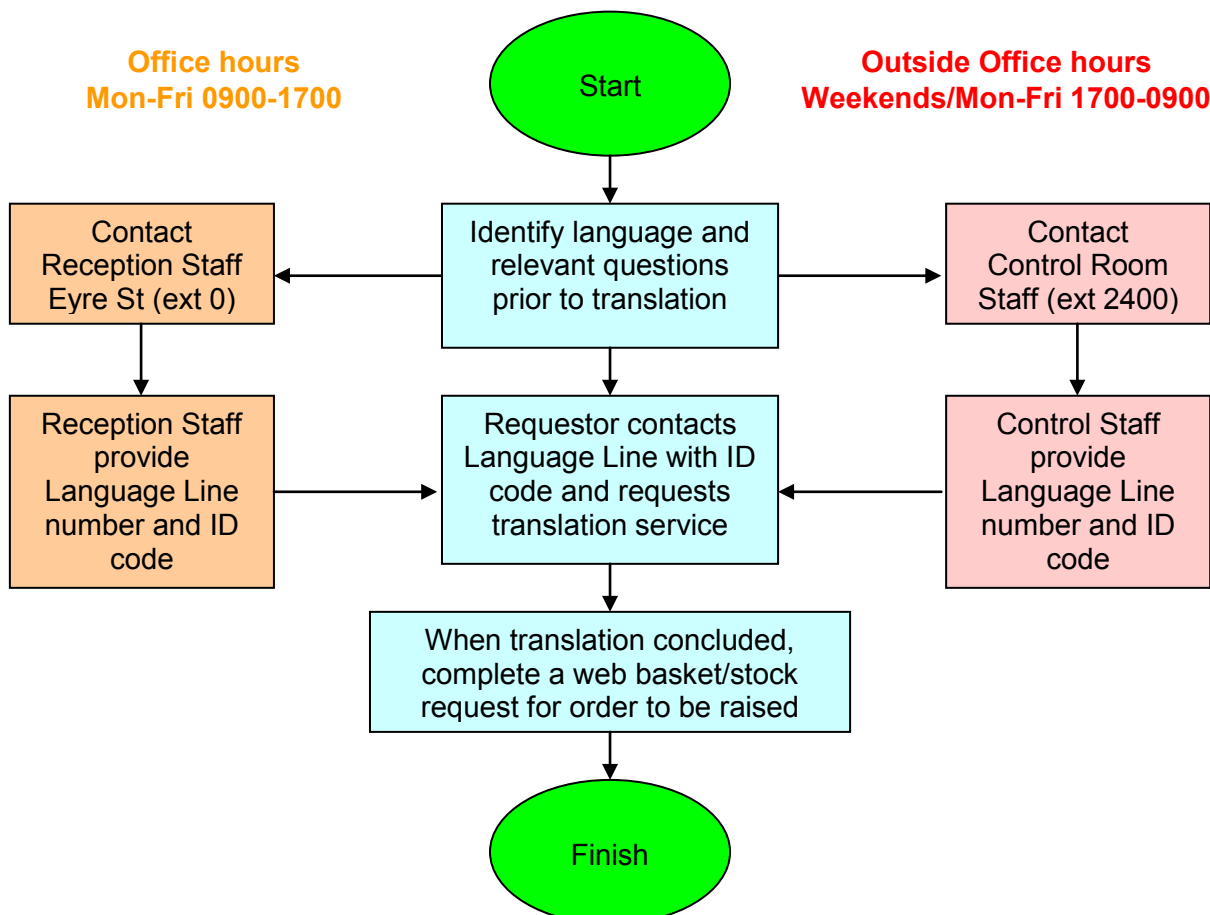
44. The purpose of this policy is to promote equality of access to information and services for all sections of the community, and an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment on it has been carried out, available on the SYFR website. The policy will be reviewed annually to determine whether changes are needed to reflect changes in the diversity and/or needs of the local population.

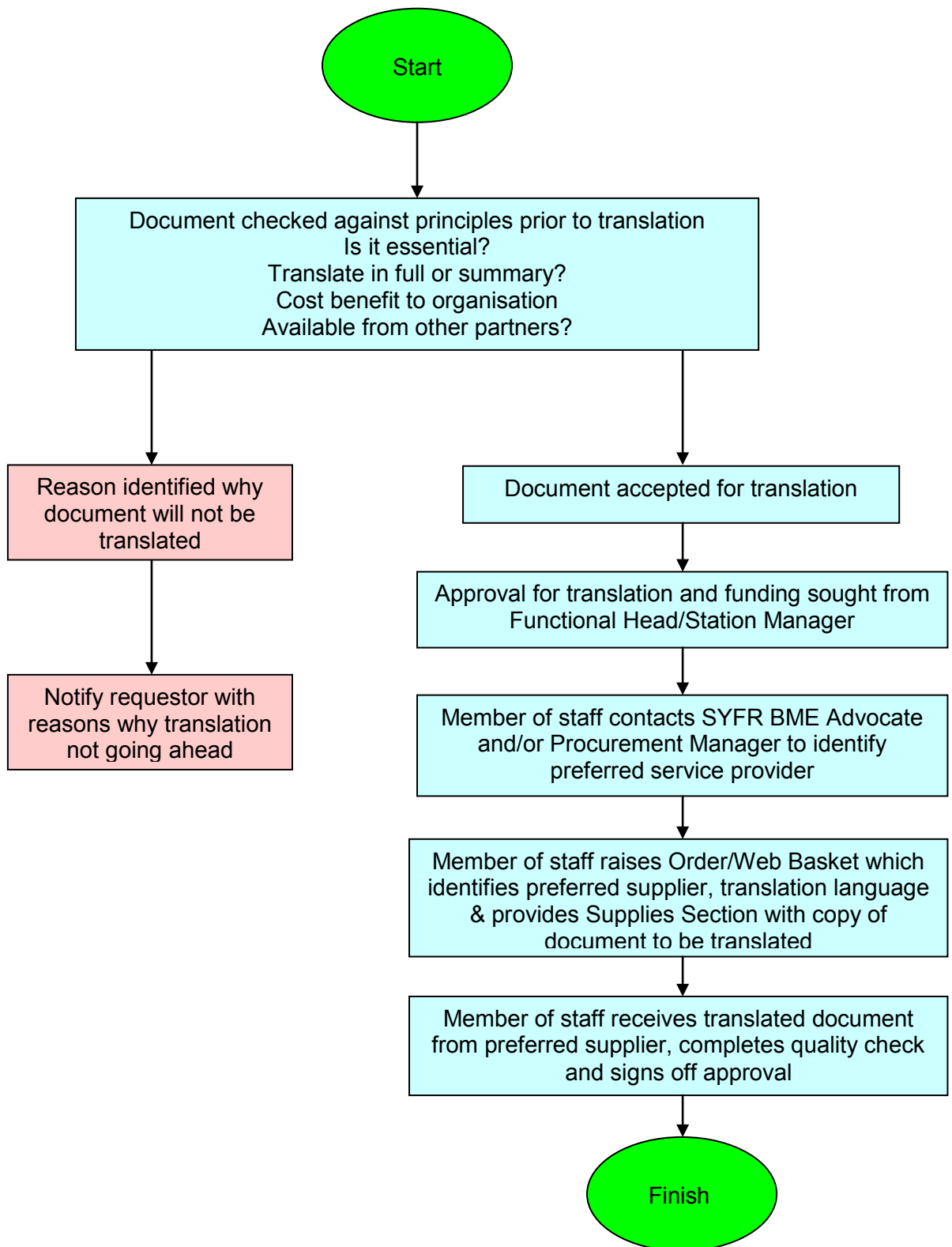
LANGUAGE LINE

Procedure for staff requesting interpretation service who have access to language line



Procedure for staff requesting interpretation service who do not have access to language line



Procedure for requesting translation of a document

RNIB See It Right Clear Print Checklist

Clear print is a design approach recommended by the Royal National Institute for the Blind which considers the needs of people with sight problems.

- Simple and clear typeface is used for words and numbers – Arial is appropriate, avoid highly stylised typefaces such as those with ornamental, decorative and handwriting styles. Numbers 3, 5, 8 and 0 can be easily misread
- Type size is 12 point (as on this page) or ideally 14 point
- Text is left aligned – this enables the same amount of space between each word
- Layout is consistent and logical
- Words are not split between lines
- No large blocks of capital letters – A word or two in capitals is fine
- No italics – use an alternative method for emphasis
- No words are underlined – use an alternative method for emphasis
- No text is laid over the top of an image or texture
- Paper, lamination or encapsulation is not glossy – choose uncoated paper
- Paper is thick enough to minimise the amount of show through from the other side – minimum 90g
- Leading is not cramped – The space between one line of type and the next (known as leading) generally should be 1.5 to 2 times the space between words on a line (as in this paragraph)
- Good contrast between text and the background - black text on a white background provides best contrast. When reversing text and using white type, make sure the background colour is dark enough to provide sufficient contrast.
- Line space between paragraphs – this makes reading easier
- All text is set horizontally – avoid fitting text around images or setting text vertically or setting text over images or textures
- Adequate gutter between columns – make sure the margin between the columns clearly separates them
- Allow extra space on forms as partially sighted people tend to have handwriting that is larger than average
- No information is conveyed solely through the use of images, diagrams or colour

TYPE TALK INFORMATION SHEET

In the first instance you should contact the SYFR Disability Advocate for guidance prior to using this service.

How it works

If you are deaf and are calling a hearing person

If you are deaf you should dial 18001 followed by the full telephone number from your textphone. If the call is answered by a hearing person, a Typetalk operator is brought into the call. However, if the call is answered by another textphone user, the connection is direct with no need to involve an operator.

If you are hearing

If you are hearing, dial 18002 followed by the full telephone number to make a call to a textphone.

During the call

Once connected, the textphone user types a message from their keyboard and the operator reads it word for word to the hearing person. The hearing person then verbally responds, and the Typetalk operator types exactly what is said so that the deaf person can read the conversation on their textphone display panel.

All calls are confidential and the service operates around the clock, so you can make calls at any time, day or night.

Customer support

Contact Type Talk for more information or assistance. You can get in touch during these hours:

- Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm
- Saturday and Sunday, 9am to 5pm.

Telephone: 0800 7311888

Textphone: 0800 500888



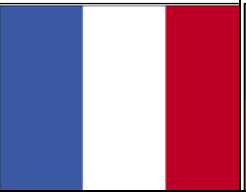



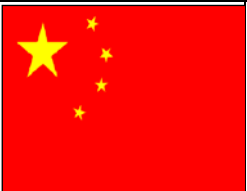



Fax: 0151 7098119

Email: helpline@rnid-typetalk.org.uk

Website: www.rnid-typetalk.org.uk/(external link, opens new browser window)

Language Flags

These language flags can be used when face to face with a member of the public where you may need to identify the language used to communicate essential information.

Urdu Gujarati	Hindi Punjabi	French	Polish	Kurdish
				
Farsi	Cantonese Mandarin	Bangladeshi	Somaliland	Spanish
				

Arabic Speaking Countries

Algeria	Bahrain	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan
				
Kuwait	Lebanon	Libya	Mauritania	Morocco
				
Oman	Palestine	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	Sudan
				
Syria	Tunisia	United Arab Emirates	Yemen	
				