



Doncaster
Council

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Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council Interpretation & Translation Service

Professional Users' Handbook



Content

	Page
Contact details	2
Introduction	3
Services provided	4
A step by step guide to using face to face interpreting services	5
A step by step guide to using translation services	8
Interpreter request form	9
Translation request form	10
Further information	11
Feedback form	12
FAQS	13
Testimonials	14



Contact Details

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday 08:40 – 17:00 (except on bank holidays)

Appointments can be booked outside of these hours, including evenings and weekends by prior arrangement.

Contact Details

Address: Doncaster Interpretation and Translation Team
Floor 3
Civic Office
Doncaster
DN1 3BU

Telephone: 08448 734073

Email: ditu@doncaster.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/get-in-touch/doncaster-interpretation-translation-unit>

Please call the above number with urgent bookings.

If you have any feedback or concerns, please email katy.scott@doncaster.gov.uk



Introduction

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council's Interpretation and translation Unit has been established since 2005 and provides services both locally and nationally to a wide range of organisations. We pride ourselves on providing a high quality service which is tailored to suit the needs of each individual organisation. We provide predominantly face to face interpreting services and translation work (including letters and leaflets, for example, health and safety at work information).

All our interpreters and translators work on a freelance basis and the team is able to cover over 40 languages, but we also have links with other organisations in order to access less commonly spoken languages. The interpreters have a vast experience in countless environments including hospitals (NHS and private), health care services, solicitors, public sector services, prisons, housing and more.

The provision of interpreters on a one to one basis will be necessary where someone does not have significant English skills and need to be able to understand their legal rights, medical advice or their financial and other responsibilities. It is particularly important for vulnerable adults and children.

It is important to use professional interpreters who are neutral, independent, professionally trained and accept the responsibility of keeping all information confidential. Family members or friends should not be used as a substitute interpreter. Using a customer's family member or friend as an interpreter can compromise the impartiality and the confidentiality of the interpretation. This can lead to a negative outcome for the customer and a sub-standard level of service. In some cultures, certain issues should remain private.

The Interpretation and Translation team's interpreters work on an 'as and when required' basis, which means notice is normally needed to make an interpreting arrangement, although we will respond to emergencies and short notice requests as best we can. It will be very helpful if you could give us as much notice as possible.

Customers, who want to access services and require an interpreter or a document in another language, should contact our service to request. All requests should be made by telephone, email or using our on-line forms via the website.



Services Provided

Interpreting (face to face)

Experienced / qualified interpreters for face to face appointments. We will select the most appropriate interpreter from our register who can meet your needs effectively, based on the details you provide regarding your specific requirements. These appointments are pre-bookable. These appointments are booked for a minimum of 60 minutes.

Translations

Translation services are provided in a range of languages. We will provide a no obligation quotation free of charge. We will then await further authorisation before carrying out the translation.

Advice/Staff development

Working with interpreters can be difficult, especially if you have no experience of using them. The team provides free advice and information around interpreting and translation issues. This covers advice on appropriate material to translate, ways of effectively disseminating translated material, language identification, cultural considerations etc.

Our team are happy to attend a team meeting to provide training to staff and/or carry out an assessment of your organisation to look at the most effective ways of using the services provided. We would also attend staff team meetings to discuss the available services, where requested.

Accessing Services

The quickest and easiest way to access our services is via our new and improved web site that you can access on <http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/get-in-touch/doncaster-interpretation-translation-unit> . You will find access to request forms for both interpreter and translation requests. There is also an enquiry form feature, should you have any questions relating to our services or have feedback for the team.

You can also contact us by telephone on 08448 734073 or by email to DITU@doncaster.gov.uk



A step by step guide to using face to face interpreting services

When you first contact Doncaster Interpretation and Translation Unit (DITU) give clear information about the proposed assignment, making sure you mention any specialist information relating to the assignment that the interpreter may need to know in advance e.g. terminology, any potential risks etc.

1. Making a request - we will need:

- The language / dialect that the client speaks, do they speak any other languages?
- When will the appointment be for (date and time)?
- How long the appointment is expected to last?
- What is the client's name (to ensure the interpreter is not known to them)
- What is the location/address for the appointment?
- Does the interpreter need to be a specific gender?
- Who the interpreter will be working with?
- Your name, email address and contact number, in case we need to contact you regarding the request.
- Purchase order number or invoicing reference

2. Before the interview:

Interpreters are advised not to enter a private property without a service provider. When attending a private property, it is normal practice to meet an interpreter outside the address before the assignment. The interpreter should not be left alone with the client(s) at any point during the session.

Ensure the correct time allocation. Plan to spend at least double the time you would spend in a monolingual interview.

Brief the interpreter wherever possible. Clarify respective roles and give brief background to the interview, deal with issues such as confidentiality, ensure that the interpreter is clear about the use of technical terms.



Choose a quiet location to hold the interview. Arrange the seating so that you and the client are seated opposite each other and the interpreter is at the end. This enables you to speak directly with the client and means that the interpreter is not perceived as being on one 'side' or the other.

3. During the interview

Allow the interpreter to introduce themselves to the client. Explain who you are and what your job is. Make sure that the client understands any other professionals who may be involved.

Speak clearly and directly to the customer, rather than saying to the interpreter, "Tell him that..." This will make the interview go more smoothly and will enhance the feeling that you are talking to each other directly. Explain fully structures and procedures, which the client may be unfamiliar with.

Remember that there is often no direct equivalent of some services, such as probation or social services, in other countries. Like with the services, there is not always an exact equivalent word so the interpreter may need to explain the term. Also, one word in English sometimes translates to two or three in another language. Therefore, this can result in an interpreter talking in longer sentences. You can always ask an interpreter for clarification if you are concerned at any point.

Conduct the entire interview yourself by asking questions directly. The interpreter is not qualified to know what information to look for or how to process the information received. Ask the client if you are not sure of his or her own relevant attitudes, perceptions or cultural norms. Do not ask the interpreter.

Everything said will be interpreted; whatever is not to be interpreted should not be said. Please pause at the end of every two to three sentences (never in the middle of a sentence) to allow the interpreter to interpret after you have spoken. The interpreter may need to interrupt if they feel they are being given too much information and not enough time to interpret the details. Give the interpreter time to understand your message and interpret the information.

Reduce the use of jargon as much as possible. Speak in simple and precise language. Be prepared to repeat, explain or rephrase your message for the client or interpreter's benefit.

For the communication to be effective, check understanding regularly by asking open questions.



At the end of the interview, a summary of what has been discussed and clarification of the next practical steps to be taken may be helpful. Check whether the client has understood everything and if they want to ask any questions.

At all times, you should remember that the interpreter is an independent professional. They are not there to offer opinions on the matters being discussed. Do not ask the interpreter to comment on the issues and do not say anything that you do not wish the interpreter to say in the language of the client. This puts the interpreter in an embarrassing position and may prevent him/her from carrying out their job.

Interpreters should not be asked to work non-stop for extended periods of time. For assignments longer than one hour, service providers should ensure that interpreters are offered a short break at least once every half an hour.

4. After the interview

Complete the necessary forms to ensure the interpreter's payment.

Report any feedback, comments or complaints to the Doncaster Interpretation and Translation Unit. The team welcomes any feedback (compliments/complaints/suggestions) and there is a section on the interpreter's claim form for this to be completed.

If you need an interpreter again for a future appointment, please ring the Interpretation and Translation Team. **DO NOT** book the interpreter directly.

Charges & Cancellations

A minimum 1 hour charge is applicable for face to face interpreter requests. Charges are at a standard price 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday. An out of hour's rate will apply for hours outside of this, weekends and bank holidays.

If bookings are cancelled with more than 24 hours' notice (working days), no charges will apply. If less than 24 hours' notice (working days) is given, full charges are applicable. A clear working day is defined as 08:40 to 17.00 Monday – Friday (excluding bank holidays). Cancellation charges may vary if outsourced agencies are used for certain bookings.



A step by step guide to using translation services

You can request translation services through the team:

Email the team, attaching the document to be translated and giving the following details:

- Your name
- Your organisation name and address
- Your telephone number
- The language the document is in.
- Required language to be translated to
- When the translation is needed – any specific deadline
- What field the document covers

If you are a new customer we will need you to provide us with details of your organisation, including postal address, email and contact numbers for invoicing purposes. If you require any reference or PO numbers adding to your invoice please also state them at the time of making a request.

- Keep a copy of the document and send one copy to the team via email to ditu@doncaster.gov.uk.
- Format the document how you want it before sending as we are unable to format documents.
- Send the document in Microsoft word format.
- We can accept other formats other than Microsoft word but they may incur higher charges or on occasions we might be unable to provide a quote.
- Once we receive the document we will work on providing you a quotation for the work.
- When we have the quotation we will email this to you immediately.
- We will then need you to reply to the quotation to authorise us to begin the translation of the document(s).
- When the document(s) have been translated, the team will return the translation to you via email and will keep a copy on file.

Cancellations

If a translation is cancelled and the work has already started, you will be charged for the total cost of the translation.



Interpreter booking request form
Translation request form

Your Details	
Full name of the person making the request	
Organisation name and address	
Contact number	
Email address	
Booking Details	
Language required	
Date interpreter required	
Time the interpreter is required	
Duration the interpreter required for	
Where is the location of the appointment	
Full name of the person working with the interpreter	
The name of the non-English speaker (to ensure they are not known to the interpreter)	
What is the nature of the appointment	
Your reference / Purchase order number	



Your Details	
Full name of the person making the request	
Organisation name and address	
Contact number	
Email address	
Your reference / Purchase order number	
Booking Details	
Language the document is in.	
Language(s) required for the translation	
Type of document (i.e. letter, report etc.)	
File name	
When is the document required for	



Monitoring & Feedback

We value and encourage customer feedback about our staff and interpreters, whether it is positive or negative. All feedback should be sent to ditu@doncaster.gov.uk in the first instance.

The DITU team will send an electronic version of the feedback form, after each face to face booking request is complete. This will be emailed to the person initially requesting the service.

General

DITU will endeavour to clarify any ambiguity on the booking form, but is under no obligation to correct any mistakes in forms of any documents submitted by the customer.

Double bookings created as a result of the customer supplying more than one booking form will be charged for unless cancelled outside of the 24 hours of the assignment.

Any errors such as incorrect venue or date given resulting in the assignment being cancelled or not going ahead, the organisation will be charged. It is the organisations responsibility to check the confirmation email to ensure all the details are correct.

If we are unable to provide an interpreter from our register we can source the services from an external provider. The costs for these will be higher and we will endeavour to source the most cost effective option. We will speak to the requester and obtain authorisation prior to using this option.

Interpreters are instructed not to enter a private property without the customer representative. When attending a private property it is normal practice to meet an interpreter outside the address before the assignment.

The interpreter should not be left alone with the client at any time.



Feedback form

DITU value your feedback and suggestions in ways we can improve our service.

Your name _____

Organisation _____ Tel. _____

Date _____

<i>*please indicate by ticking the box for each question how satisfied you were with the service</i>	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Not acceptable
How would you rate the helpfulness of the member of staff who dealt with your booking					
How clear was the information and advice you received					
How would you rate the accessibility of the service					
How was the interpreters timekeeping					
How was the interpreters professional attitude					
How was the interpreters competency in English					
Overall how well was the session completed					
Any further comments you wish to make					



FAQS

- Q.** How do I know that an interpreter has been booked?
- A.** Once an interpreter has been booked you will be emailed confirmation and this will state the details of the session including the interpreter's name.
- Q.** The interpreter speaks shorter or longer than I have spoken in English, why is this?
- A.** In some language, the meaning of the interpretations may result in them talking a shorter or longer length of time. In some instances, there may not be a word in their language so they will need to explain in a different manner.
- Q.** I'm delayed in getting to the venue of the session, what should I do?
- A.** If it is safe to do so, please ring DITU to inform us of the delay and give us an estimated time of arrival. We will then inform the interpreter.
- Q.** The interpreter hasn't arrived for the appointment, what should I do?
- A.** If the interpreter hasn't arrived please ring our team so we can contact them to find out what has happened. We will update you on what the problem is and the estimated time of arrival.
- Q.** The customer didn't arrive for the session, what should I do?
- A.** Please sign the interpreter's timesheet stating the session didn't go ahead due to the customer's non-attendance.
- Q.** What is the role of the interpreter in the session?
- A.** An interpreters role it to solely interpret what is being said from one language to another. They are instructed to not provide any advice or guidance on cultural issues or be involved with the details of the session.
- Q.** How much notice do I need to give for booking an interpreter?
- A.** Although we are able to take bookings with short notice it is advisable to give as much notice as possible. Interpreters work on a freelance basis so can get booked up.



Testimonials

Here are some quotes from our service users, regarding the services we have provided them:

Community Psychological Therapy Service

"We continue to use your service for requests for translators and have found the service extremely helpful. Each time I have had to request an interpreter I felt the staff were very friendly and forthcoming. We have had some short notice appointments to fill and have yet to have been unsuccessful. Each interpreter we have used has been upmost professional and maybe don't always get the feedback they also deserve. Each request is promptly dealt with and emailed confirmation is quick in being received."

HMP Doncaster

"We have been using Doncaster Interpretation Translation Unit (DMBC), for a number of years, a professional excellent service provider. Providing interpreters of a very high standard, who are punctual, professional and maintain confidentiality in our challenging environment. We would recommend their services to any professional body."

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council Social Worker

"I have found the service very accessing, easy to use and very efficient. The staff I have worked with or booked through have been very friendly and easy to work with."

Howells Solicitors

"I found the staff to be very professional and helpful I was able to secure an interpreter without any difficulties and the interpretation we received was of a high standard. I would have no hesitation in using your services again."

Doncaster Access Team

"I have always found the Doncaster Interpretation Translation Unit the most helpful and pleasant people. If they cannot find the interpreter we need they contact us straight away to inform us and suggest if another date/time could be possible."

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council Legal Team

"The Interpretation Unit is very good, they are very organised and efficient. The interpreters are very professional and reliable."

Doncaster Drug & Alcohol Service

"We are extremely happy with the service from the DITU. The staff are always friendly and happy to help and the interpreters always turn up on time."