

# Haringey Council's approach to Translation and Interpreting

## STRATEGY

June 2009

## **1. Introduction**

Haringey Council recognises the importance of good communication with every citizen, group and organisation it works with, or provides services for.

Haringey Council is committed to providing quality and value for money. Wherever possible the information provided to service users is fully accessible, relevant and timely. A key principle of the corporate communications strategy is that information and communication channels should be equally accessible and relevant to all groups of the community, irrespective of personal background.

To enable this to happen, Haringey Council should develop a strategic and coherent approach whereby we:

- make a commitment – to the provision of accessible information and appropriate communication support
- know our communities – continue to carry out community profiling and identifying minority ethnic and other groups by culture, religion, age, gender, language usage and literacy rates
- ascertain information needs – and communication needs in relation to individual services and citizens
- ensure access to interpreting, translation and communication support for disabled people and people for whom English is not a suitable language of communication
- make sure communities are aware of their rights and entitlements by outlining arrangements for the provision of communication support facilities and how to access them and promoting these both within the council and amongst our citizens
- consult regularly with service users to ensure that the communication support facilities are meeting their needs.

For translation and interpretation definitions, please see Appendix 1.

## **2. Purpose and aim**

The aim of this strategy is to set out our approach and recommendations that will:

- enhance the way we communicate with our new and long standing communities to ensure effective and timely access to services through appropriate translation and interpreting.
- reflect the guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

## **3. Background**

3.1 The diversity of Haringey is reflected in the fact that in addition to English there are approximately 130 languages spoken by pupils in Haringey schools. It is often said that Haringey is an outer London borough with inner London challenges. It ranks as the fifth most deprived borough in London and the country.

Haringey has many small, newer communities as well as established; mainly Caribbean, African and Asian communities. Haringey is also home to other communities who may face communication barriers; because of the barriers experienced by some of these groups, they have limited access to information and services and so participate less fully in the life of the borough.

3.2 Encouraging lifetime well-being, at home, work, play and learning is a key priority for Haringey. The council wants to make Haringey a place where people can flourish, and where people want to live work and play, where they can fulfil their potential.

Continuing to promote integration between different ethnic communities plays a key role in this and communities sharing a common language can also play a part. However, every citizen has the same rights to access public services, regardless of their proficiency in English.

3.3 The council's communications strategy sets out the principles we should apply to our communications and consultation:

It states that our dialogue (communication and consultation) with local people should:

- Create appropriate resident input into decisions
- Be open and honest about why we make decisions
- Show community leadership
- Operate at the most local level possible within resource constraints
- Group services based on their target audience
- Describe outcomes ahead of policies
- Represent our community
- Be clear about how to contact us
- Contribute to an understanding of how the council is making a difference
- to quality of life
- Improve how informed and engaged people feel
- Demonstrate our customer focus

We should do this in ways that:

- Are accessible to our community
- Are cost efficient
- Use methods most relevant to the audience
- Comply with publicity code and legal constraints

- Connect to key assessments, place survey, residents survey, CAA

3.4 This translation and interpretation strategy aims to ensure adequate services are available for those in the process of developing their proficiency in English and for those for whom learning English is not an option.

3.5 In June 2007, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion published 'Our Shared Future', setting out practical ways in which local authorities could help to build strong communities by promoting cohesion and integration locally.

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion found that there were five main pro-active reasons for provision of translation and interpretation. Although their report is about language translation, the principles also apply for people with low levels of literacy and for disabled people:

- ensure non English speaking residents are able to access essential services, e.g. education, safety campaigns
- ensure people can take part in the democratic process, for example registering to vote
- support local community groups, or intermediaries working directly with new migrants or non English speaking communities
- enable people to function effectively as citizens in society and to be able to get along with others by ensuring that they understand the rules, e.g. parking controls, rubbish collection
- ensure compliance with legislation and ensure that no one is disadvantaged because of their inability to communicate verbally, or non verbally.

The Commission also found that around 60 per cent of people believe that the biggest barrier to "being English" was not speaking the language, and good English language skills are vital to finding jobs and participating in society. It is clear that the provision of appropriate translation and interpreting helps the council to foster community cohesion; however we need to get the right balance.

3.6 Some non English speaking communities do not read their own language. This lack of literacy means that translated material is often of little benefit and makes learning the intricate structures of the English language difficult. This also explains the preference for interpretation over translated services (see 6.2).

While arguments have been made for fewer translations, our key concern is that we provide services in a way that meets the needs of our citizens and delivers value for money.

Given the importance of language skills to integrating and accessing the labour market, translation and interpretation clients could be informed about opportunities to learn English. This approach would encourage community integration between our long term and future English speaking residents.

## **4. Research**

To develop this strategy, the council has carried out research with staff, partners, users of the Translation and Interpreting Service and a number of non English speaking communities.

We assessed the channels of communication preferred by members of the public and stakeholders for the delivery of key messages, and also got a view of how those providing services assess the need for and effectiveness of translation and interpretation.

We were keen to know what communication channels are already available, the situations when translation and interpretation are needed, what information needs to be translated and how best to promote and support the learning of English in the Borough. The research showed that the work of the council to achieve this is welcomed and in a large measure successful, however there are a number of areas where there is scope for improvement.

## **5. Legal implications**

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 place a duty on the Council to promote race equality and disability equality respectively.

The Race Relations Amendment Act states that it is unlawful for a provider of services to discriminate racially against people using those services. The Act also states that councils have a specific duty to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different groups.

The Disability Discrimination Act places similar obligations upon the Council. In addition the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires any organisation providing goods and services to the public to make reasonable adjustments in the delivery of goods and services so that disabled people have equal right of access. The DDA 2005 places a positive duty on local authorities to promote disability equality, to eliminate discrimination against disabled people and to take measures to facilitate disabled people taking part in public life.

The council also has a statutory duty under the Children Act 2004 to take all reasonable steps to promote and safeguard the well being of children and young people which include ensuring that appropriate services – including Translation and Interpreting – are provided.

## **6. The service**

### **6.1 The service currently delivered**

Haringey Council delivers extensive translation and interpretation services. We constantly monitor the most requested languages and translate range of

materials into most community languages not just the top six or top ten.

Additionally translation panels are put on English language leaflets inviting readers to ask for a copy translated into their language. Individual letters, etc. can be translated on request.

Extensive interpretation is provided both by booking services and by making interpreters available from specific locations at specific times. New interpreters recruited must hold either a Certificate in Community Interpreting at Level 3 or a Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) from the Chartered Institute of Linguistics. Interpreters who have been with the service for a number of years may not have these qualifications. Our interpreters must also hold appropriate public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

Training has been given to interpreters in interpretation for mental health services and child protection services.

## 6.2 Usage of the Current Service

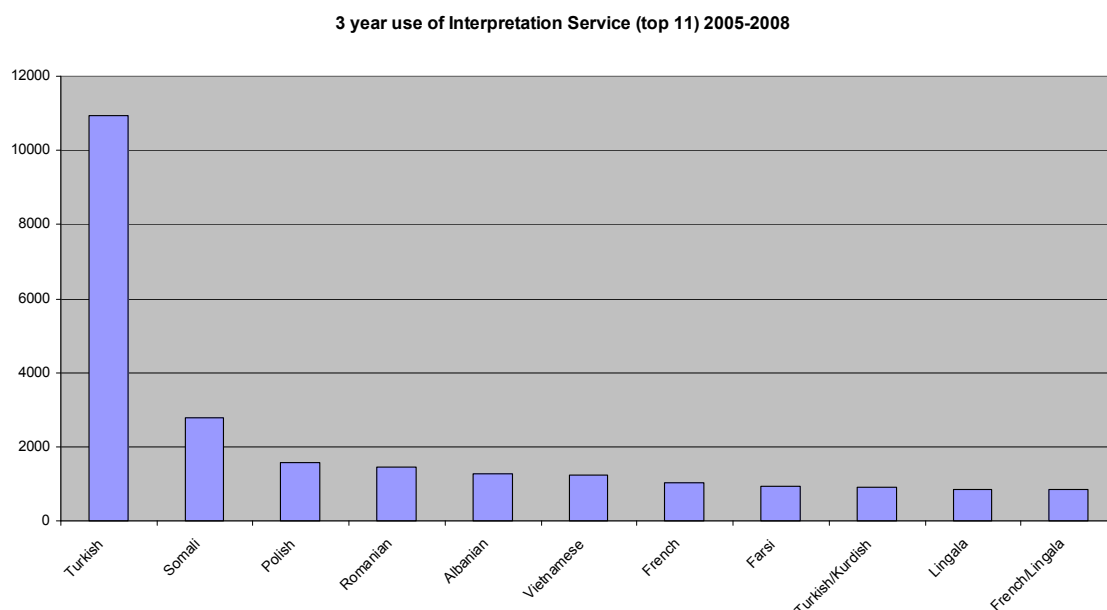
In 2007/2008 the Council spent £461k on Translation (£140k) and Interpreting (£321k). Homes for Haringey spent £65k. The Translation and Interpretation service budget for 2009/10 has £178k direct costs (largely staffing) and £112k overheads.

### Interpretation Services 2005 - 2008:

Between 10,200 and 11,000 requests per year were received for an average of 54 languages in three years 2005 to 2008 with no clear trend. The most requested 11 languages are shown in the chart below.

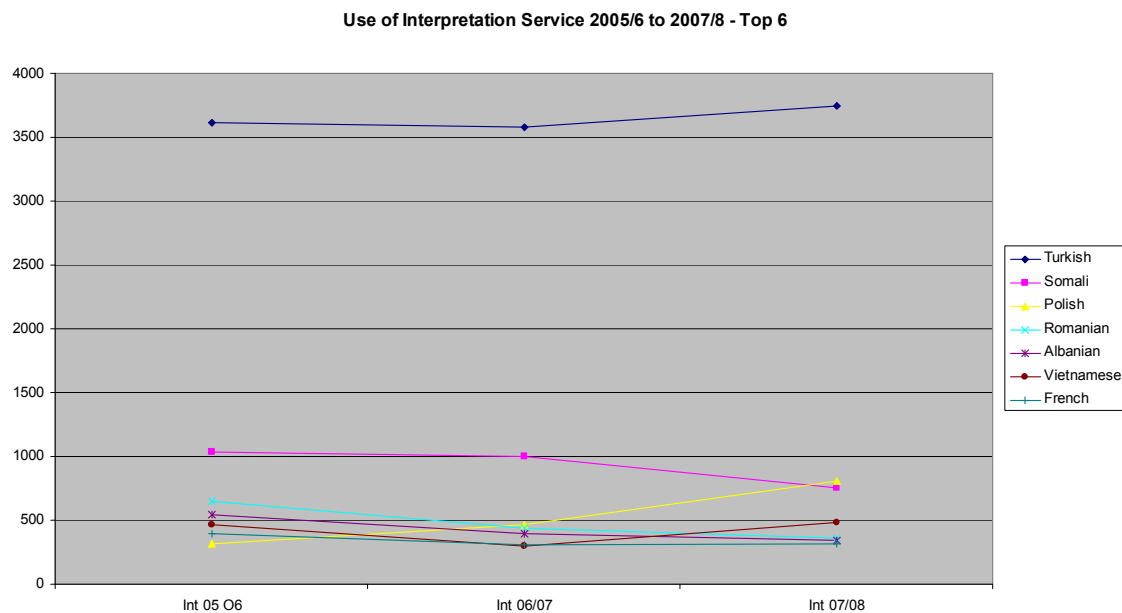
**Chart 1**

### Interpretation Service: Most used 11 languages over three year period.



**Chart 2**

## Interpretation Service: Most used six languages - trend over three year period



### Observations:

- The pattern is a simple one and changes very little. The need is consistently dominated by Turkish.
- The most significant trends among the frequently requested languages are the fall in demand for Somali, mirrored by a rise in demand for Polish.

### Trends observed which are not illustrated by the charts.

- There is a marked fall over the period in requests for Turkish/Kurdish, though requests simply for Turkish have increased
- Demand for Bulgarian has doubled in the period
- The need for BSL appears regularly in the most requested 15 languages. It is growing and was the seventh most needed language in 2007/2008.

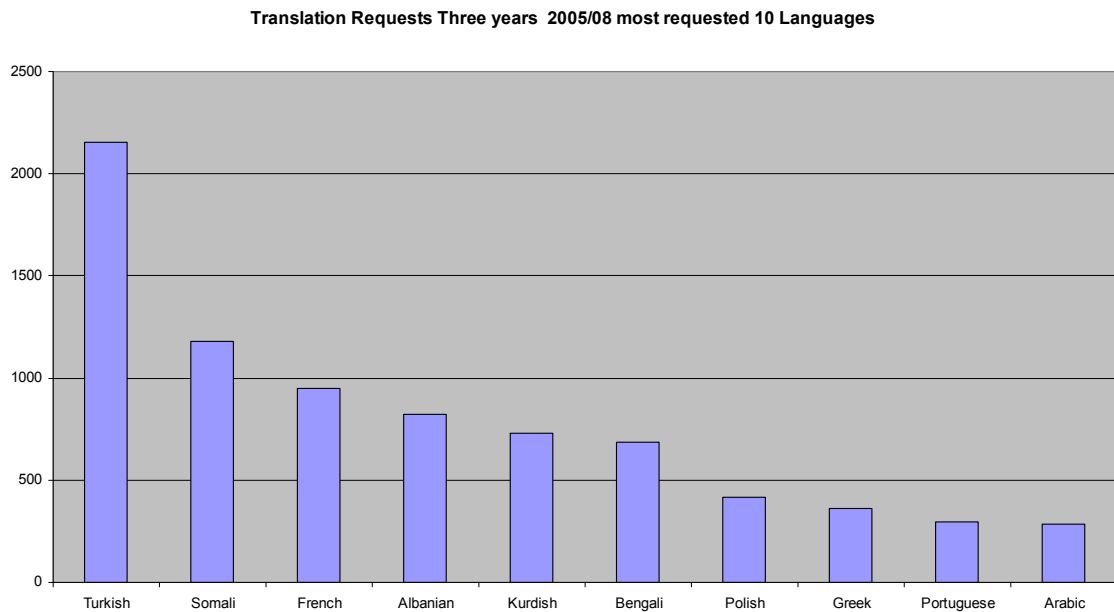
## Translation Service 2005 - 2008

An average of 48 languages were requested in each year. There is a significant and continuing decline in the number of requests – 3544 in 05/06 to 2534 in 07/08. However, this is not wholly reflected in the number of words, which although it has fallen somewhat has not shown the same progressive decline, there having been a 26% increase in the average number of words to be translated per document.

The most requested ten languages are shown in the chart below.

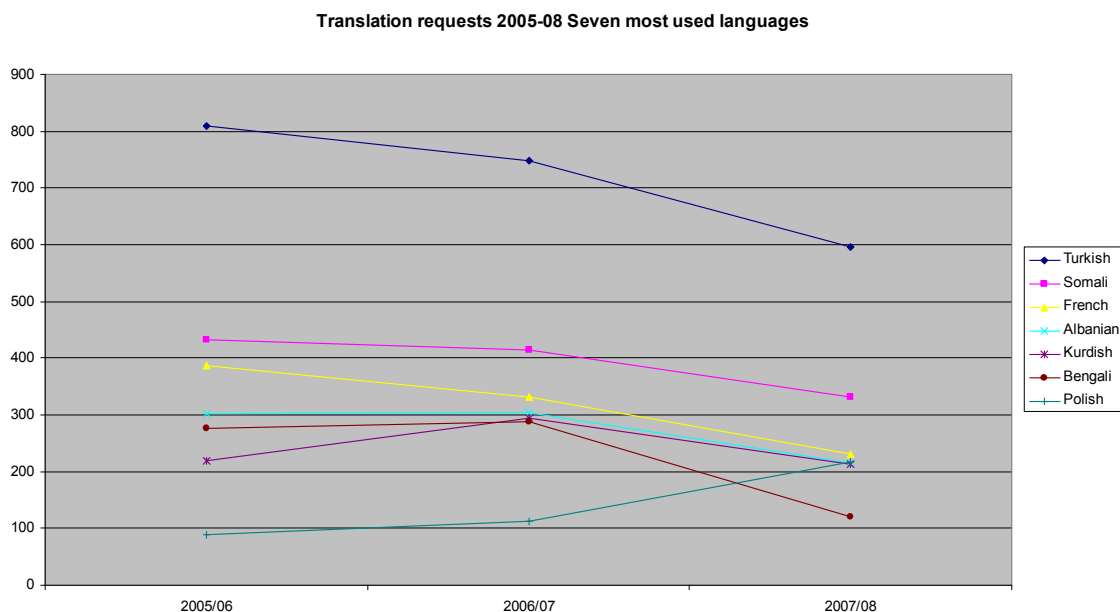
### Chart 3

#### Translation Service: most requested languages



### Chart 4

#### Translation Service: most used seven languages - trend over three year period



Although Turkish is once more the dominant language, it is less dominant than in the use of interpretation services.

#### Usage of Translation and Interpreting services by directorates

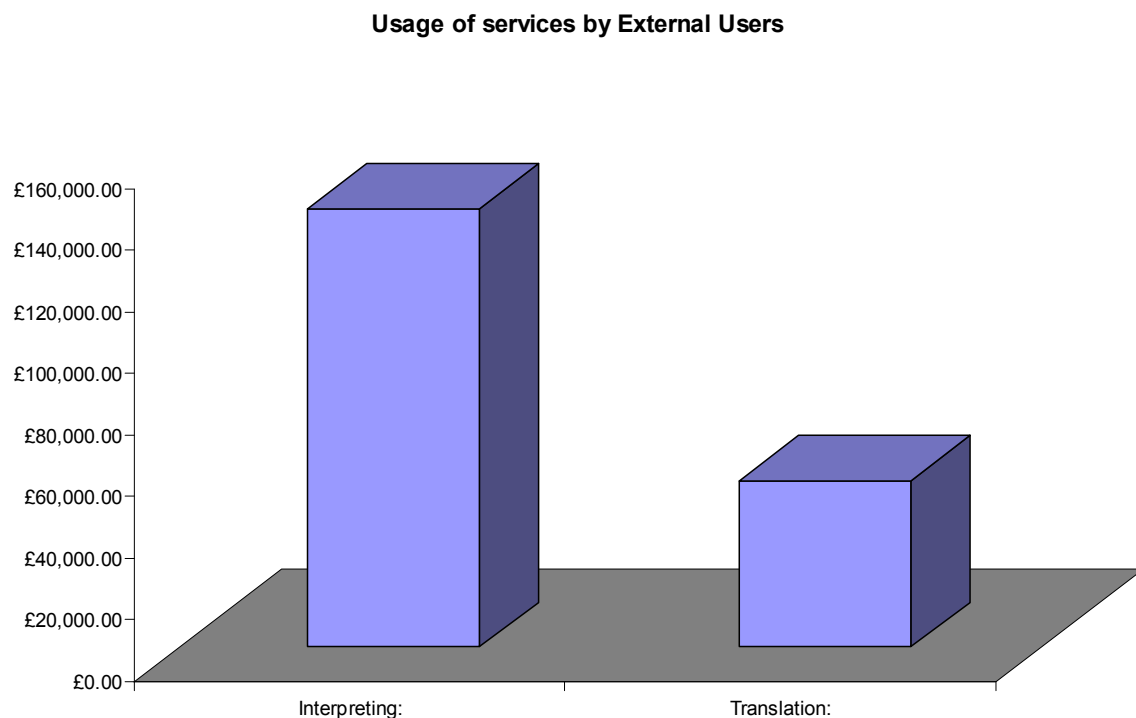
Please see Appendix 2 for a breakdown of service use by council directorate.



## Usage of services by External Users

The majority of external bookings for translation and interpretation services come from the TPCT, voluntary groups, housing associations and Homes for Haringey.

**Chart 5**



and that of interpretation service. External users dominate the use of interpretation services whereas they use only a little over a third of the translation service.

### 6.3 Performance of service currently delivered

Other services or external agencies use the Translation and Interpreting Service to book translation and interpreting services on behalf of their clients. The person who books the service is then asked to give feedback on the service they have received.

The Translation and Interpreting customer feedback form was introduced in July 2008 and to date we have received 136 responses. Twenty-two gave feedback about a translation request of which 85 per cent were happy with the service and 114 received were in relation to interpretation, of which 95 per cent were happy with the service received. The overall satisfaction with the Translation and Interpreting Service is currently at 97 per cent.

Currently we have no mechanism in place to measure end user satisfaction with the translation or interpreting they received. The recommendations in this strategy address this.

### 6.4 Braille services

The T&I service transcribes documents into Braille, although there are very few requests from residents or organisations. One reason for this is that a

very small proportion of people with sight impairment read Braille. It is a requirement of the DDA that an 'on-request' Braille service is made available.

## **7. Links to Family Learning**

Research has shown that families are our first and most important teachers, and that parental support is a key factor throughout a child's education. Children spend only 15% of their waking hours in school, which leaves 85% spent at home, with huge potential for learning.

'Children whose parents support their learning and take a keen interest in their education do better at school and in later life'<sup>1</sup>

'Family learning can have wide cost benefits: impact on health, family relations, lifelong, learning and active citizenship'<sup>2</sup>

Family learning helps adult family members to gain confidence to provide vital help for their children, and also helps to promote good relationships within families. It offers a second chance for parents to return to learning, to develop their own skills and to be aware of all the other learning opportunities on offer. It helps:

- parents/carers develop the skills and confidence necessary to support their children's learning
- parents/carers to be directly involved in their children's learning through working together in a structured session, using books, games and other resources
- to look at the vocabulary of the school world, and understand Literacy and Numeracy strategies
- parents/carers with ICT, Basic Skills and ESOL needs.

In Haringey, Family Learning courses take place in a number of schools, community and children centres predominantly in the East of the borough. Haringey Adult Learning Service work very closely with the Children and Young People's Service to provide these courses where there is most need and demand. The work being done is of great benefit to the community and continues even though grants from the Learning Skills Council have been frozen for three years.

Interpreters are not widely used because costs can be prohibitive as at some sessions four or five different language interpreters would be needed. However ESOL tutors are used to dealing with people where little or no English is spoken. The use of Interpreters would only be justified when communicating with a specific language target group.

This Translation and Interpreting Strategy will continue to support Family Learning through translations and the provision of Interpreters when

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<sup>1</sup> DfES, 2004 Delivering Skills for Life

<sup>2</sup> Family Learning, Agenda for Action, Campaign for Learning, 2004

necessary and will look to establish stronger ties with community organisations.

## **8. Links to the Personalisation Agenda**

Personalisation is a social care approach meaning that “every person who receives support, whether provided by statutory services or funded by themselves, will have choice and control over the shape of that support in all care settings.”<sup>3</sup>

Self-assessment will give service users the opportunity to assess their own care and support needs and every person who receives support, whether provided by statutory services or funded by themselves, will be empowered to shape their own lives, the services they receive in all care settings and control over how the money allocated to their care is spent.

Haringey Council and its partners will all play a vital role in transforming social care services, taking into account housing, benefits, leisure, transport and health needs.

Being able to communicate effectively with staff and service providers is crucial for all people using social care services; it enables people to express their wishes, understand what is going on around them and feel connected to others. Having access to support that enables communication underpins individuals’ human rights to be treated with dignity and respect and to take personal decisions.

Translation and Interpreting plays a vital role in ensuring that services are accessible by individuals and a social care setting is no exception. This strategy will ensure that the Translation and Interpreting Service continues to provide the valuable support needed to enhance the way services are provided and assist individuals to have their independence. As the personalisation agenda comes to the fore Translation and Interpreting Services will work with services to ensure that relevant communication support is in place for individuals.

## **9. Access to Services Days**

The Neighbourhood Management Team undertakes a targeted programme of Access to Services days for ‘hard to reach’ communities, to provide relevant service information, strengthen links with minority ethnic community organisations and gain feedback on how services and access to services could be improved. The events, which are advertised in the relevant minority ethnic media, are well-attended, with positive feedback.

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Health

Translation/interpreting in appropriate languages has been important both in promoting the events and ensuring their success, and it is recommended that the Translation and Interpreting Service continues to work closely with Neighbourhood Management services on this programme.

## **10. Recommendations**

Each recommendation begins with a summary in italics before expanding into further detail where necessary.

### ***10.1 Haringey Council's new Citizen Welcome Pack -***

*Develop a simple and inexpensive pack giving detailed information on how to access services, rights and responsibilities, sign post to community organisations, details on English lessons etc.* This pack should be developed for all new residents of the Borough, but available also for existing residents.

This should be produced in conjunction with our voluntary and community organisations, the police, NHS and other partnership organisations, possibly through the HSP. This document will be provided in appropriate languages with some English and should convey as much information as feasible in picture format to reinforce messages.

The welcome will also be available on DVD. There would be a choice of languages with English large print language scrolls along the bottom. This will include a number of services that can be viewed in the comfort of their own home, or on line.

We anticipate the cost for this to be an initial £75k. This would be produced every two years and will contain high level information for example:

'Haringey wants to be one of the greenest boroughs in London therefore we ask all of our residents to recycle wherever possible. You will have a recycling service that collects from you once a week and it is your responsibility to find out when your recycling gets collected and what you can recycle.'

### ***10.2 Translation and Interpreting corporate policy -***

*Agree, produce and distribute a short and simple policy setting out the types of material that should be translated.* This will be done with legal guidance on what the Council's responsibilities under Race Relations, Disability Discrimination and Human Rights legislation are and will be compacted by recent research carried out within the Borough.

Decisions on translation must be linked to an assessment of how and why information is being communicated. In the first instance information should be set out in an accessible style, as 16% of adults in England cannot read or write with confidence. Public documents, including reports to members can be checked for their readability to ensure the information they contain is easily

understood by visiting the Literacy Trust website.<sup>4</sup>

### **10.3 Ensure staff training is in place –**

*We need to ensure that all front-line staff trained in equality issues and are made aware of the interpretation and translation service and policy.*

### **10.4 Develop an ESOL strategy -**

*That the Council should engage with all ESOL providers in the Borough and our voluntary and community organisations to develop a medium and long term strategy for learning English in Haringey. This will be lead by the relevant department.*

An ESOL strategy should take advantage of VCOs being prepared to host classes and provide childcare. Evidence suggests that this is much more effective in encouraging women to attend than a crèche provided from outside the community at a college.

The strategy should ensure that there is a single source of information describing all the ways to access ESOL classes in the Borough should be compiled and kept up to date and used by all providers to ensure learners have access to the course most likely to successfully recruit them and retain their attendance. This should include information on costs, crèches and cultural sensitivities of courses and venues. It must also include courses available in the Borough provided from outside the Borough – for instance the courses sourced from Waltham Forest.

### **10.5 Review translated material -**

*Use existing communications networks with other London Boroughs and our partners to review translated material.* This should aim to share translations, make use of other councils' and partners' material and develop a reduced range of material which can serve more than one need. Depending on the amount of relevant translated material a central bank of translated material could be set up. This network or part of it could be used to begin a longer term review of the value of specific translated material for each community.

### **10.6 Utilise the Web -**

*Translated key documents and service summaries will be put on the web with the functionality to view them in different languages.*

### **10.7 Pilot new approaches -**

*We will pilot and evaluate a revised approach to translation panels and translation requests.*

Translation panels will not be included on all marketing material instead we will pilot prompts in community languages, for example, "This leaflet is about x...It is important because it helps you to....If you need further advice in your own language, contact z". It will also include a line on learning English and

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<sup>4</sup> Public document written in English should be aimed at people with a reading age of under 11 years old to enable the widest possible group of readers to be included.

where to access English classes.

Together with other ALMO's Homes for Haringey have successfully piloted using interpreters to make a telephone call to people requesting translation. Their experience has suggested that often a request for a translated document – e.g. a pest control policy, is actually a request for a service and can be dealt with much more quickly, effectively and cheaply by the interpreter. Based on this and evidenced from our research we will carry out a pilot study using the telephone to check, in the service users' language, to see if they actually want:

- a translation of the document
- to be given information or
- to seek access to a service.

It will be made clear that translation is available if that is what is needed. This should be assessed primarily against criterion of delivering a quicker, more effective service. The cost of doing this versus the cost of delivering the translation and likelihood of having to deal with the service request through an interpreter subsequently should also be examined.

Translation panels included on publications will ask customers for a contact telephone number and their preferred language. When the Translation and Interpretation service receive the request, instead of translating the document, arrangements will be made for an interpreter to call the customer to determine whether it is a service or information request.

The information returned to the service in this pilot e.g. customer name, customer address, telephone number and preferred language will be shared with Customer Services to store in the CRM to build the Council data base adding to the 'single customer view'.

### **10.8 Work in partnership –**

*We will work more closely on delivering and promoting translation and interpretation with partners including Voluntary and Community Organisations, community radio and community newspapers.*

Our research has shown that our voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) are keen to work with the council to provide effective translation and interpreting for Haringey. We should explore links with local voluntary organisations to develop interpretation and translation schemes.

Wherever possible we should encourage the use of community radio for our longstanding communities. London Turkish and London Greek Radio are widely listened to and can be used to give appropriate targeted information about council services.

Again wherever possible we should encourage the use of community newspapers to give appropriate targeted information on council services to our new and longstanding communities. There are a number of titles that

cover our Turkish, Greek, Somali, and Polish communities.

#### **10.9 Clarify the role of interpreters -**

*Review the published description of the interpreters' role and circulate to interpreters and staff who will commission them. The use and cost of interpretation will be monitored to ensure it is effectively used.*

Their position is neither as advocate for the client nor as advocate for the Council.

#### **10.10 Build in evaluation -**

*In order to make sure our approach is effective we will continue to monitor the requests for the translation of documents, collect feedback from customers through customer feedback forms and end users through the residents' survey.*

We will conduct an annual review of translation and interpreting with community organisations as a forum for feedback. We will also ensure that there is greater transparency in explaining the complaints policy as properly channelled complaints are an extremely valuable source of performance information.

We will introduce translation and interpreting end user surveys to be sent out bi-annually to seek feedback on the service they received and the value and benefit of providing this service.

All translation and interpreting requests will go through the Translations and Interpreting Service who will monitor the uptake of, and funds spent on Translation and Interpreting. This information will be collated and will allow effective monitoring of the demand for particular languages.

Within a 12 month period we would expect to see a fall in the amount of translation requests which will then lead to Council wide cash efficiency saving.

### **11.0 Outcomes**

This strategy and recommendations will lead to a number of outcomes in support of the LAA and the council's commitment to ensuring that wherever possible the information provided to service users is fully accessible, relevant and timely.

The continued provision of translation and interpreting services using a targeted approach will ensure that we reduce barriers to those in our communities who do not speak English and ensure continued access to council information and services from which they might otherwise be excluded.

Similarly, enabling people to acquire the English language will reduce barriers by enabling them to use the language skill to access more opportunities in the

wider society and build social relationships and interactions with people other than of their own linguistic background, thus helping foster greater cohesion in the wider Haringey community and the UK at large.

This will have a positive impact on the National Indicators: % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area and % of people who feel that they can influence decision in their locality.

## **12.0 Resources**

It is anticipated that this can be achieved through existing staff resources within Communications and Consultation Unit with the Marketing Communications and Translation and Interpreting teams working closely. Other services across the council and partner organisations will be engaged with to assist in the preparation of various content.

Costs for the production of the Welcome pack and other relevant collateral will be shared between the services and our partners. However we will aim to help cover costs by selling relevant and appropriate advertising to organisations that benefit and add value to our citizens.

Translation and Interpreting is a traded service of which there is no central budget from which savings will be realised and captured. However any reduction in Translation and Interpreting will produce savings in the relevant service budgets. With sufficient decreases in volume resourcing within the central Translation and Interpreting team can be reviewed.



## **Appendix 1**

### **Definitions: translation and interpreting**

#### **3.1 Face-to-face interpreting**

This involves a minimum of three people (the officer(s), the client(s) and the interpreter) meeting at a prearranged place and time.

Face-to-face interpreting also includes British Sign Language or other sign language interpreting, lip-speakers, sign-supported English, use of a speech-to-text reporter and others.

#### **3.2 Telephone interpreting**

This is where three or more people (the officer(s), client(s) and the interpreter) have a telephone conversation.

#### **3.3 <sup>5</sup>Translation**

This refers to the conversion of written documents into another language either as text, audio or video. It also refers to translations of written text into British Sign Language (or other sign language) on CD/Video/Online for sign language users, or to translations into Braille or other forms of communication.

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<sup>5</sup> NB. The reference to translation for the purpose of this document refers to the conversion of written documents into another language as text only.

## Appendix 2

A breakdown of the usage of translation and interpretation services by council directorates is included at appendix 3.

Chart a

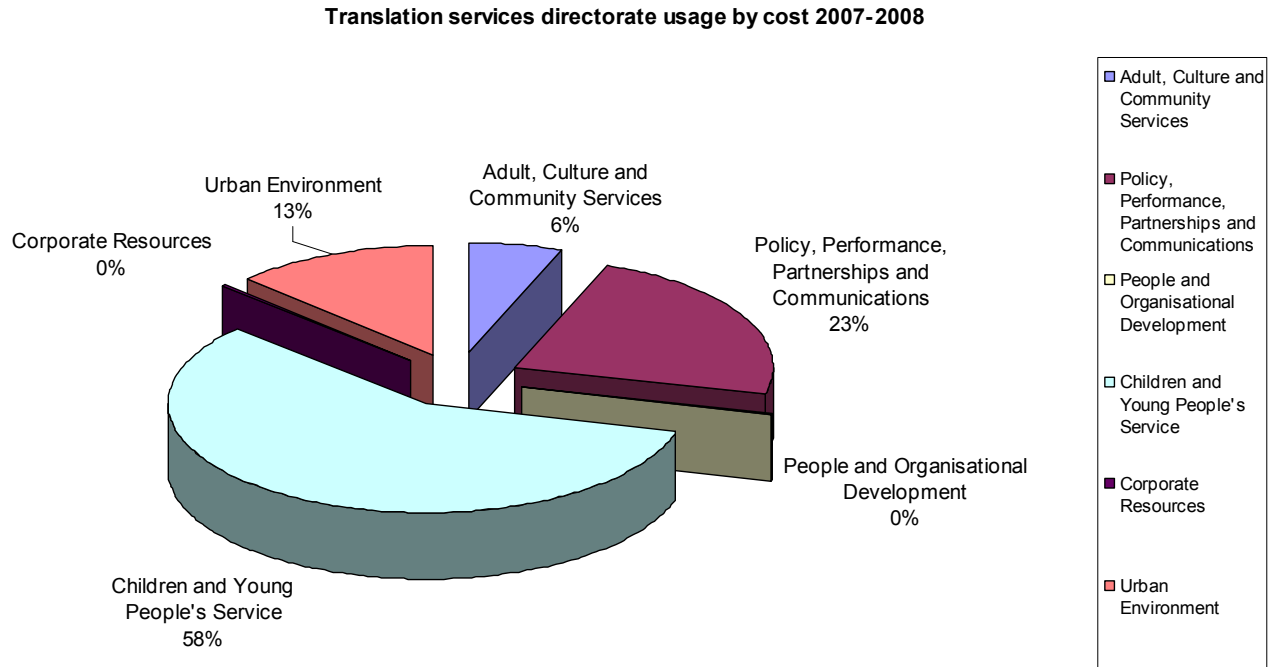
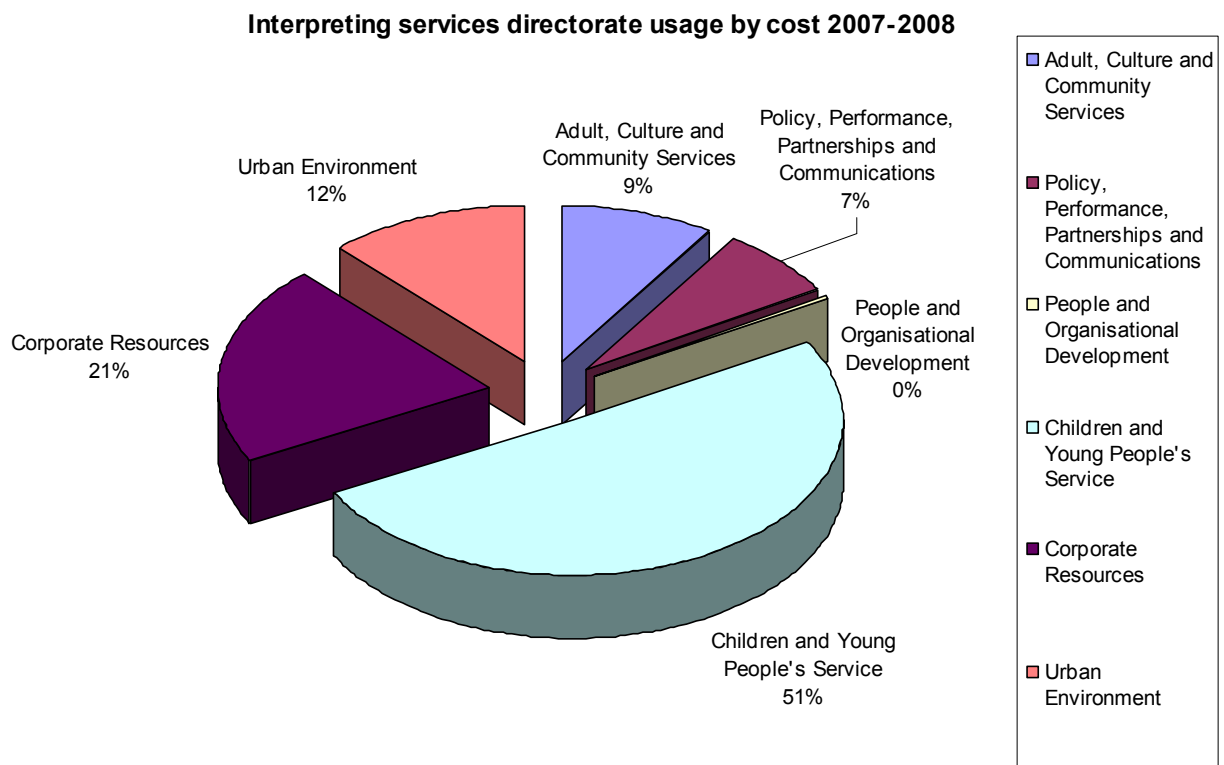


Chart b



There is a marked difference between the usage of Translation services and Interpretation services, most markedly by users identifying their directorate as Corporate Resources. 21per cent of interpreting work originates in that department, while the amount of translation required is minimal.

Corporate information translated includes the A-Z of services, council tax booklet and legal documents. Requests for translation of service information ranges from recycling leaflets and CPZ consultations to social work reports and letters.

The majority of interpreting work is carried out where a meeting is necessary such as social work case conferences, fraud investigations and trading standards discussions with traders.