Ministry
of Justice

Statistics on the use of language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals

Statistical bulletin, 1 January 2013
to 31 December 2015

Ministry of Justice

Contents

Introduction

The data presented in this bulletin are statistics for face-to-face language interpreter and translation services provided to HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). These services are supplied under a contract with Capita Translation and Interpreting (TI); formerly known as Applied Language Solutions (ALS). More information on the language services framework agreement can be found in **the 'Guide to language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals'**.

The information presented in this publication covers completed requests for interpreter and translation services, and 'proven' complaints in relation to the services requested, between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2015. It also covers completed 'off-contract' service requests between 1 April 2013 and 31 December 2015.

The bulletin covers courts in England and Wales, all UK tribunals not transferred to devolved governments, NOMS, Ministry of justice (MoJ) and NOMS HQ.

The statistics in this publication focus on four main areas:

- Completed language interpreter and translation services requests, broken down by requester type (criminal courts, tribunals and civil & family courts); language groups (standard, rare and special languages), regions and individual languages;

- Success rate of completed requests (which is calculated as the number of completed requests which are either fulfilled, or the customer does not attend, as a proportion of all completed requests, excluding those cancelled by the customer);

- Number of 'proven' complaints made (and complaint rate) relating to completed language interpreter and translation services requests, broken down by nature of complaints and by requester type, language groups, regions and individual languages;

- Number of completed 'off contract' service requests, broken down by requester type, language groups, and regions.

Data for completed requests and complaints relating to language interpreter and translation services are taken from the language service booking portal, managed by Capita TI.

Information about this bulletin and data included can be found in the **'Guide to language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals'** which is published alongside this bulletin. It covers the language services framework agreement, explanatory notes, data sources and data quality, revision policy, and a glossary of terms used. It also includes a list of languages covered in the bulletin.

Data are not centrally held for the number of completed services, requests and complaints under the previous contracts (before 30 January 2012). It is therefore not possible to say whether performance levels have changed pre and post 30 January 2012.

When a request cannot be supplied under the contract, it is provided 'off contract'. 'Off contract' requests are made directly by the courts and tribunals – that is, not through the language service booking portal. 'Off contract' request data is collated by the Commercial and Contract Management Directorate within Ministry of Justice (MoJ). Information on completed 'off contract' service requests has been collected since April 2013.

The next publication of statistics on the use of language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals (which will cover the first quarter of 2016) is scheduled to be published on 21 **July 2016**.

Users of the Statistics

The primary users of these statistics are Ministers and officials in central government. Other users include judges, lawyers, other government departments and non-government bodies, as well as a number of voluntary organisations and stakeholders with an interest in this area.

The structure and content of this publication are continually being reviewed to reflect user requirements. Please complete this survey to feed back your views.

www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/G8V0K/

If you have any feedback, questions or requests for further information about this statistical bulletin, please direct them to the appropriate contact given at the end of this report.

Key Findings

Completed language interpreter and translation service requests

(Completed services requests made under the contract through the web-based request system.)

The total number of completed requests for language interpreter and translation services has decreased from 162,300 completed service requests in 2013 to 160,600 in 2014 and 153,500 in 2015, an overall decrease of 5% from 2013. The main driver of the decrease was fewer requests from tribunals. The number of completed service requests in the latest quarter, Q4 2015, was 36,300, a 6% decrease since Q3 2015.

Success rate of completed requests for services

(The 'success rate' is the number of completed requests which are either fulfilled or the customer does not attend, as a proportion of all completed requests excluding those cancelled by the customer.)

The overall success rate for completed service requests for language interpreter and translation services has increased steadily from 90% in 2013 to 95% in 2014 and 97% in 2015. The success rate in the latest quarter, Q4 2015, was 98%, the highest since the contract commenced in 30 January 2012.

Number of complaints made relating to completed service requests

(Complaints related to requests made under the contract through the web-based request system.)

The total number and rate of 'proven' complaints, relating to completed service requests, have continued the downward trend since 2013. In 2015, the number of complaints was 2,100, compared to 2,900 in 2014 and 6,600 in 2013.

The complaint rate decreased to 1% in 2015 from 2% in 2014 and 4% in 2013. The complaint rate in Q4 2015 was similar to Q3 2015 at 1%.

In 2015, the most common cause of complaint was 'no interpreter available', accounting for 30% of all complaints.

Number of completed 'off contract' requests for services

(When a request can't be supplied under the contract, it is can be booked 'off contract'. 'Off contract' service requests are made directly by courts and tribunals. 'Off contract' requests for language services have been collected since April 2013.)

There has been a continued downward trend since 2013 in the number of completed 'off contract' requests. In 2015, there were 1,500 completed 'off contract' service requests, compared with 2,400 requests in 2014 and 5,100 requests in (April to December) 2013.

In Q4 2015, there were 240 'off contract' requests compared to 270 in Q3 2015.

In 2015, completed 'off contract' requests accounted for 1% of the overall completed service requests (completed requests made under the contract and completed requests made 'off contract'), the same proportion as 2014.

1. Number of completed service requests for language interpreter and translation services

This section presents statistics on the number of completed service requests made under the contract with Capita TI.

The number of completed service requests has continued to decrease. Between 2013 and 2015, the number of completed requests decreased from 162,300 to 153,500, a decrease of 5% from 2013. The main driver for the decrease was fewer service requests from tribunals.

The decrease was consistent with the decrease in the number of tribunal cases. HMCTS recorded 648,120 disposals in the 2015 financial year, which was 26% lower than the same period in 2014[1].

The number of completed service requests in the latest quarter, Q4 2015, was 36,300, a 6% decrease since Q3 2015.

Completed service requests by requester type

In 2015, criminal courts made the greatest use of face-to-face language interpreter and translation services. 57% of completed service requests were for criminal cases (Crown Court and magistrates' courts), 30% were for tribunal cases, and 13% were for civil & family court cases.

These proportions in part reflect the numbers of people dealt with by the different courts and tribunals across the country, with volume of proceedings at magistrates' courts and the Crown Court[2] higher than the number of cases heard in civil[3] & family[4] courts and tribunals.

Completed service requests have risen overall since 2013 for both criminal and civil & family courts. Whilst completed requests at tribunals rose during 2013, there has subsequently been a declining trend through to Q4 2015.
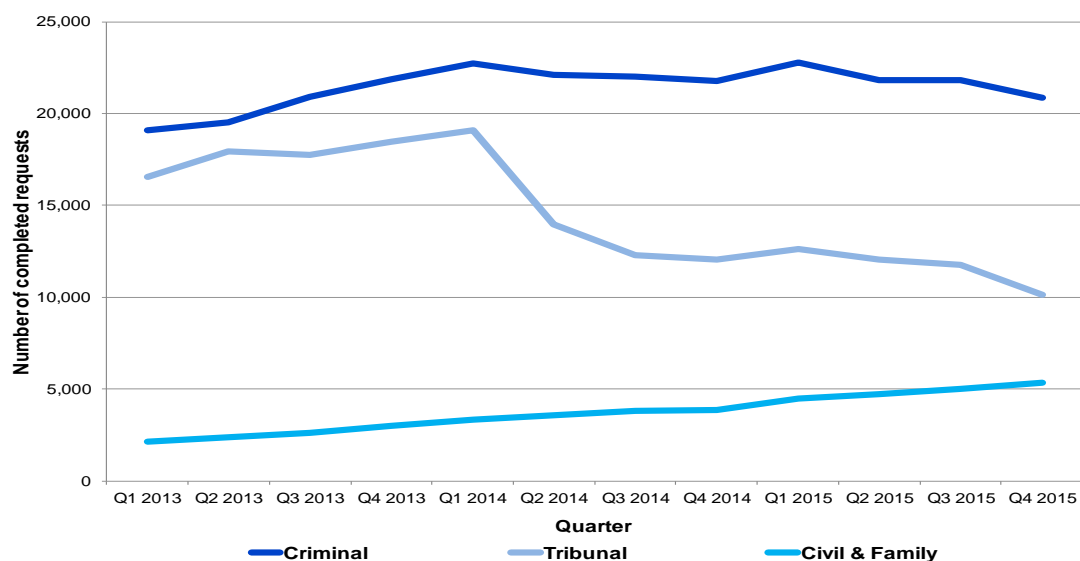
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[1] www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-and-gender-recognition-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2015

[2]https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2015

[3]https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-justice-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2015

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-court-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2015

Figure 1: Number of completed language interpreter and translation service requests, by requester type, Q1 2013 to Q4 2015

Completed service requests by language group

In 2015, 90% (137,600) of all completed service requests were for standard languages, 8% (12,600) were for rare languages and 2% (3,300) were for special services. These were similar proportions to 2014.

Completed service requests by region

'*Region' in this publication means the region of the court requesting the service. Occasionally, courts will allow a service to take place at a secondary venue. It is assumed that this is the same region as the requesting court, but there may be a small number of occasions where this is not true.*

Between 2014 and 2015, volumes of completed service requests decreased across regions with the exception of Wales which recorded an increase and Scotland which remained similar across years.

Table 1: Completed language service requests, by region, 2014 and 2015

Region	2014	2015	Percentage Change (+/-)
Total	160,602	153,471	-4.4
London	43,792	41,528	-5.2
Midlands	28,294	26,414	-6.6
North East	16,364	14,937	-8.7
Northern Ireland	307	243	-20.8
North West	14,506	13,964	-3.7
Scotland	2,146	2,152	0.3
South East	43,524	41,556	-4.5
South West	6,638	6,366	-4.1
Wales	5,031	6,311	25.4

Completed service requests by language

In 2015, the three language interpreters most requested by criminal courts were Polish at 22% (19,000), Romanian at 14% (11,900), and Lithuanian at 8% (7,000), the same three most requested interpreters as 2014.

In tribunals, the three most requested language interpreters were Urdu at 10% (4,600), Arabic - all variants at 8% (3,700) and Punjabi - all variants at 7% (3,100), also similar to 2014.

In civil and family courts, the three most requested interpreters were Polish at 18% (3,400), Urdu at 12% (2,400) and Punjabi - all variants at 6% (1,200), again the same three most requested interpreters as 2014.
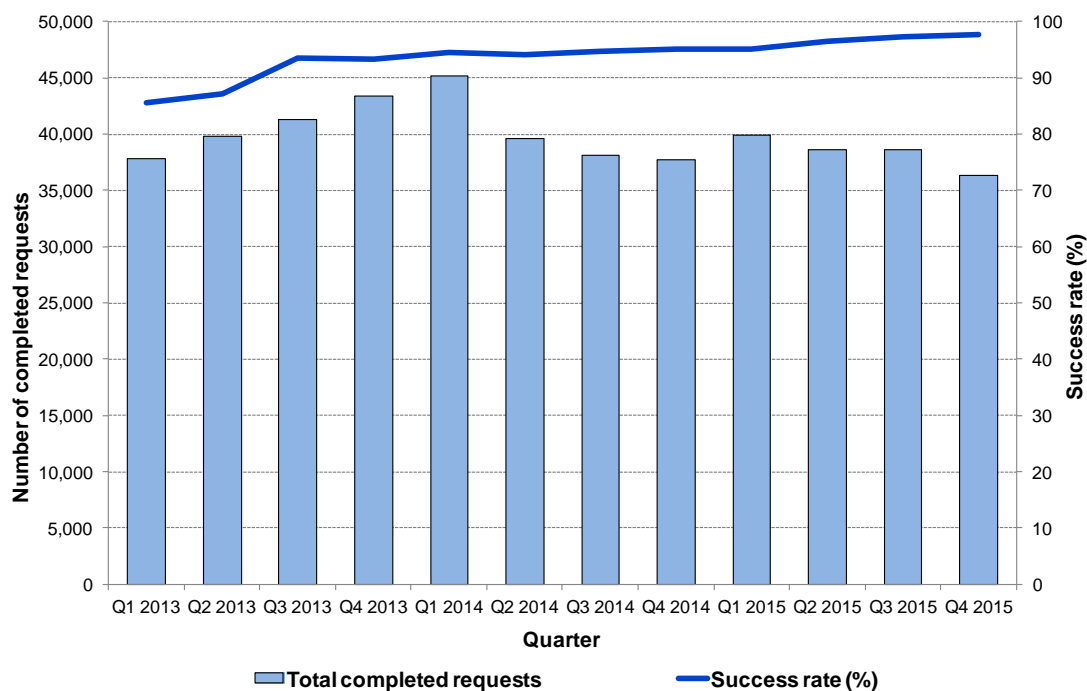
2: Success rate of completed requests for language interpreter and translation services

This section presents statistics on the 'success rate' of completed service requests for language interpreter and translations

The 'success rate' provides a measure of the successful completion of legitimate requests – it is calculated as the number of completed requests which are either fulfilled or the customer does not attend, as a proportion of all completed requests excluding those cancelled by the customer.

The overall 'success rate' for completed service requests for language interpreter and translation services has increased steadily from 90% in 2013 to 95% in 2014 and 97% in 2015. The success rate in the latest quarter, Q4 2015, was 98%, the highest since the contract commenced in 30 January 2012.

Figure 2: Number of completed language service requests and overall success rate, Q1 2013 to Q4 2015
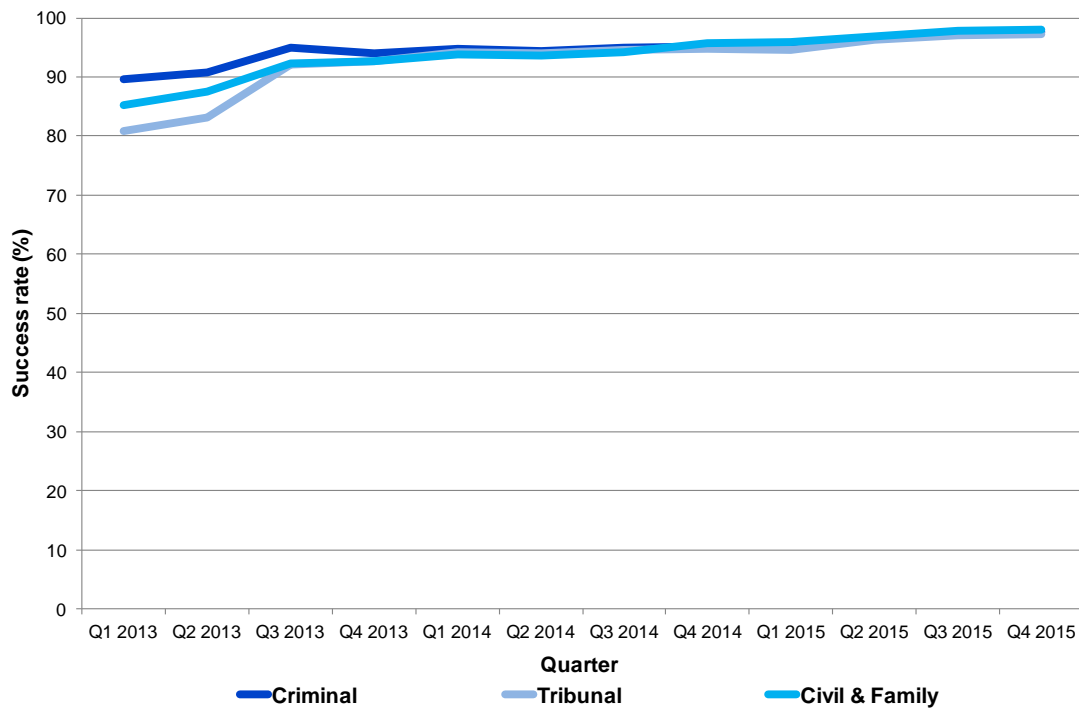

Success rate trend since 2013

In Q1 2013, the success rate was 86% – this coincided with the dispute between the contractor and the interpreters over the reduction of mileage rate paid to interpreters. In Q3 2013, the success rate increased to 94%, after the settlement of the mileage rate dispute in May 2013, and remained relatively steady until Q1 2015, after which it slowly increased to 98% in Q4 2015.

Success rate by requester type

Success rates were similar across the different requester types. In 2015, criminal courts had a success rate of 97%, an increase of two percentage points compared with 2014. Tribunals had a success rate of 96%, an increase of two percentage points compared with 2014, whilst civil & family courts had a success rate of 97%, an increase of three percentage points when compared with 2014.

Figure 3: Success rate (%) by requester type, Q1 2013 to Q4 2015

Success rate by region

In 2015, London and Midlands had the highest success rate at 98%, followed by the North East at 96%. Northern Ireland, which only covers requests from tribunals, had the lowest success rate in 2015 at 63%, although this was based on 200 service requests.

Table 2: Success rate (%) by region, 2014 and 2015

Region	2014	2015	Change in percentage points (+/-)
Total	**94.6**	**96.6**	**2.0**
London	96.7	97.7	**1.1**
Midlands	96.3	97.8	**1.5**
North East	93.6	95.7	**2.1**
Northern Ireland	69.2	62.9	**-6.3**
North West	96.3	97.5	**1.3**
Scotland	94.4	94.8	**0.5**
South East	93.5	96.6	**3.2**
South West	87.0	91.4	**4.4**
Wales	85.8	90.6	**4.9**

Languages with at least 97% success rate

In 2015, 17 standard languages out of a total of 221 languages recorded achieved at least a 97% success rate. In 2014, six standard languages out of 226 languages recorded achieved at least a 97% success rate.

None of the languages in the rare group and special services group achieved 97% success rate in 2014 and 2015.

Table 3 : Languages with 97% and over success rate, 2014 and 2015

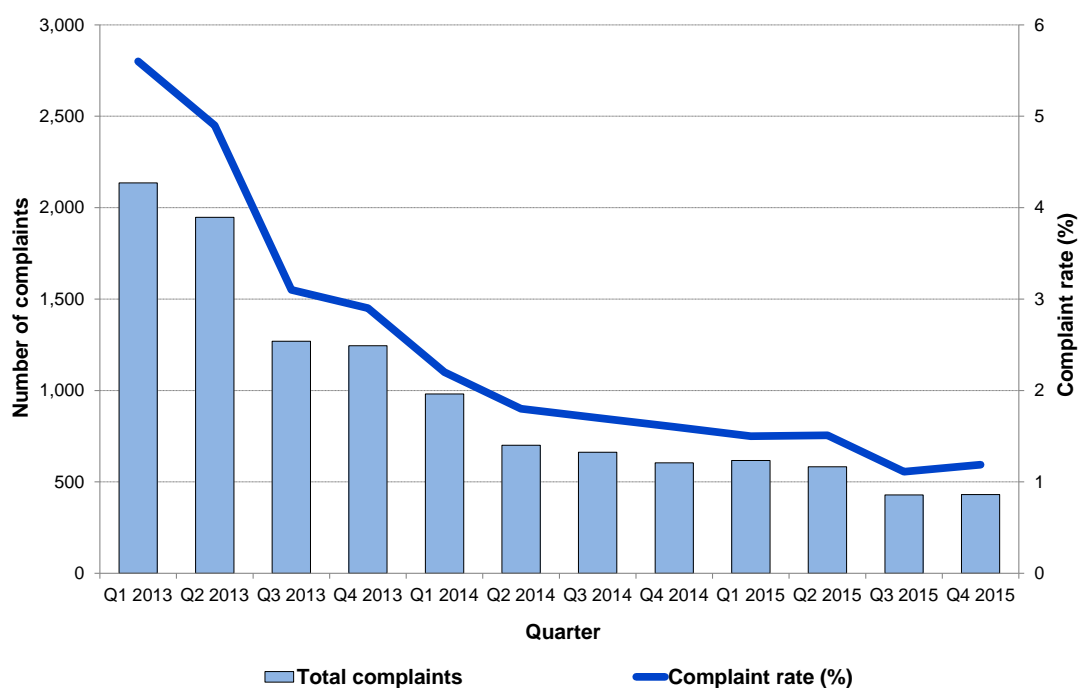| 2014	Success rate %	2015	Success rate %
Russian	98.5	Russian	99.3
Farsi	98.2	Urdu	98.8
Dari (all variant)	98.0	Farsi	98.8
Polish	98.0	Ukrainian	98.7
Urdu	97.9	Polish	98.5
Arabic (all variants)	97.3	Bulgarian	98.4
		Dari (all variant)	98.4
		Punjabi (all variants)	98.4
		Pashto (all variants)	98.2
		Arabic (all variants)	98.1
		Mandarin	98.0
		Lithuanian	97.8
		French (all variants)	97.7
		Hindi	97.7
		Turkish	97.6
		Tamil	97.4
		Romanian	97.3

3: Number and rate of complaints made relating to completed service requests

This section presents statistics on the number of complaints for services provided by the Capita TI and the complaint rate.

The complaint rate is calculated as the number of complaints lodged relating to the requests completed in a given period, which enables complaint volumes to be considered in the context of changing volumes of requests.

The total number of 'proven' complaints has continued the downward trend since 2013. In 2015, there were 2,100 'proven' complaints relating to completed service requests, a decrease of 30% when compared with 2014 and 69% when compared with 2013.

Figure 5: Number of complaints and rate, Q1 2013 to Q4 2015
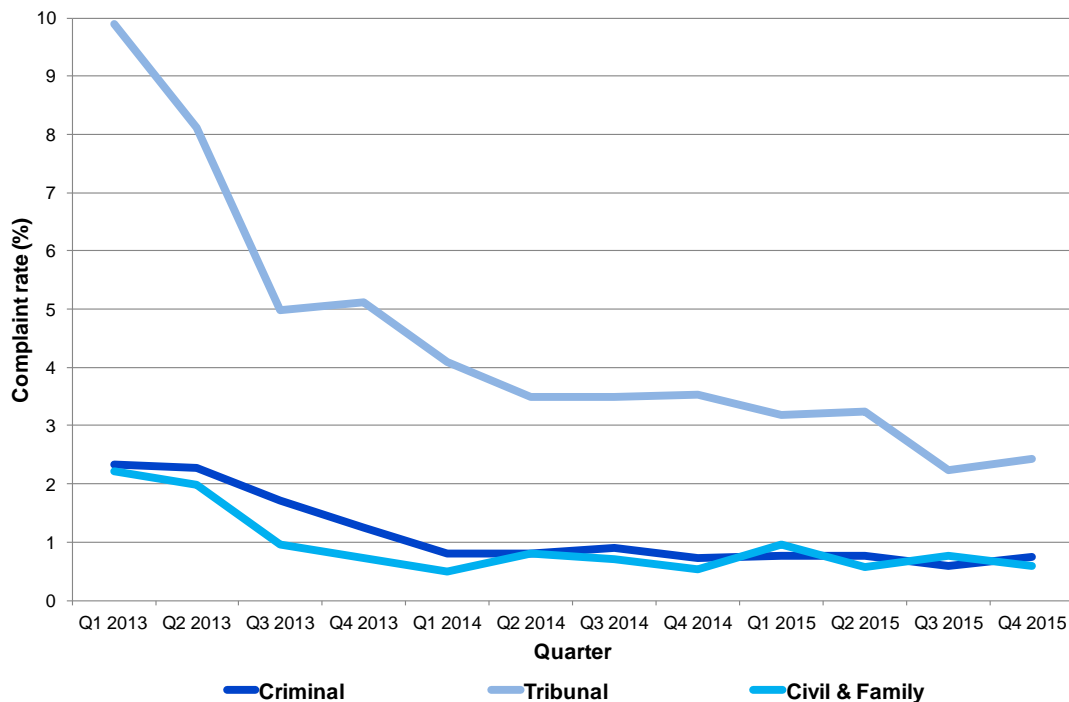

Complaint rate trend since 2013

Overall, the complaint rate has declined from 4% in 2013 to 1% in 2015. In Q1 2013, the period when the contractor reduced the mileage rate paid to interpreters, the complaint rate was 6%. This was followed by a decrease to 3% in Q4 2013, which corresponded to the settlement of the mileage rate. Throughout 2014 and into 2015, the complaint rate has fallen from just over 2% in Q1 2014 to just over 1% in Q4 2015.

Complaints by requester type

In 2015, the majority of complaints came from tribunals (1,300), which accounted for 63% of all complaints made in the year. In 2015, tribunals' complaint rate was 3%, a decrease from 4% in 2014. The most common complaint at tribunals in 2015 were 'no interpreter was available' (450) and 'interpreter was late' (440).

The criminal court complaint rate and civil and family court complaint rate were both under 1% in 2015, similar proportions to 2014.

Figure 6: Complaint rate by requester type, Q1 2013 to Q4 2015

Complaints by reason

The most common complaint in 2015 was 'no interpreter available'. It accounted for 30% (620) of all complaints made, a decrease from 46% (1,300) in 2014. 'Other interpreter issue'[5] represented 14% of all complaints in 2015, an increase from 3% in 2014.

Complaints by region

In 2015, the South East had the highest number of complaints (550), 27% of all complaints reported.

Northern Ireland, which only covers tribunal requests, had the highest complaint rate of 28% in 2015, although this was based on 69 complaints. London and the Midlands had the lowest complaint rates at 1% in 2015.

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[5] 'Other interpreter issue' includes the following: 'Incorrect job closure status resulting in a charge'; 'incorrect tier / language assigned'; 'lacking cultural understanding of behavioural expectations' and 'other'.

Table 5: Number and rate of complaints by region, 2014 and 2015

Region	2014		2015		Change in rate (percentage points (+/-))
	Total complaints	Complaint rate %	Total complaints	Complaint rate %	
All Region	2,947	1.8	2,060	1.3	-0.5
London	451	1.0	363	0.9	-0.2
Midlands	399	1.4	233	0.9	-0.5
North East	416	2.5	246	1.6	-0.9
Northern Ireland	62	20.2	69	28.4	8.2
North West	276	1.9	148	1.1	-0.8
Scotland	107	5.0	112	5.2	0.2
South East	850	2.0	551	1.3	-0.6
South West	139	2.1	103	1.6	-0.5
Wales	247	4.9	235	3.7	-1.2

4: Number of 'off contract' requests for language interpreter and translation services

This section presents statistics on completed 'off contract' language interpreter and translation service requests.

'Off contract' bookings are requests for translation and interpretation services made outside the Capita TI contract. Bookings for the service are made directly by the courts and tribunals – that is, not through the language service booking portal.

Data for completed 'off contract' service requests in 2013 covers the 9 months from April to December
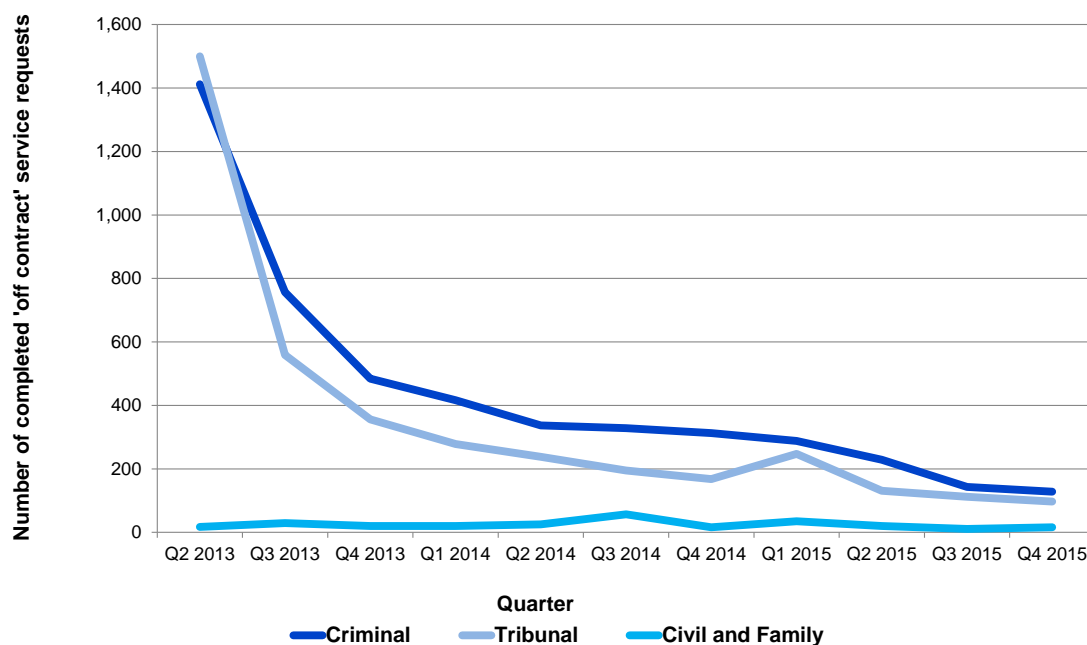
In 2015, 1,500 completed 'off contract' service requests were made by all courts and tribunals compared with 2,400 in 2014 and 5,100 in the last three quarters of 2013. In Q4 2015, there were 240 'off contract' requests compared to 270 in Q3 2015.

Completed 'off contract' service requests in 2015 accounted for 1% of all completed service requests, the same proportion as 2014 but a drop from 3% in 2013.

Completed 'off contract' service requests by requester type

In 2015, criminal courts accounted for 54% of all completed 'off contract' requests, tribunals accounted for 40% and civil and family courts accounted for 6%.

Figure 7: Number of completed 'off contract' service requests by requester type, Q2 2013 to Q4 2015

Completed 'off contract' service requests by region

In 2015, the South East region accounted for 27% of all 'off-contract' service requests made, London accounted for 22%, and Wales accounted for 20% of 'off contract' service requests. Together the three regions accounted for over two thirds of 'off-contract requests' made in 2015.

Completed 'off contract' service requests by language group

In 2015, the standard language group accounted for 68% (1,000) of all 'off contract' service requests, whilst rare languages accounted for 32% (480). Within the standard language group, criminal courts accounted for 69% of all 'off contract' service requests. However, within the rare language group, tribunals accounted for the majority (70%) of completed 'off contract' service requests.

List of accompanying tables

Accompanying this publication are the following tables:

Table 1:   Number and rate of completed service requests by outcome, requester type and service type, 2013 to 2015

Table 2:   Number and rate of complaints by category of complaint, requester type and service type, 2013 to 2015

Table 3:   Number and rate of completed 'off contract' service requests, by requester type and service type, 2013 to 2015

Table 4:   Number and rate of completed language service requests by outcome, requester type, region, 2013 to 2015

Table 5:   Number and rate of completed language service requests by outcome, requester type, language, 2013

Table 6:   Number and rate of completed language service requests by outcome, requester type, language, 2014

Table 7:   Number and rate of completed language service requests by outcome, requester type, language, 2015

Table 8:   Number and rate of complaints by category of complaint, region and requester type, 2013 to 2015

Table 9:   Number and rate of complaints by category of complaint, requester type, language, 2013

Table 10:   Number and rate of complaints by category of complaint, requester type, language, 2014

Table 11:   Total number and rate of complaints by category of complaint, requester type, language, 2015

Table 12   Total number of 'off contract' completed requests by region, requester type, 2013 to 2015

Table 13:   Total number of 'off Contract' completed requests, by language, requester type, 2013 to 2015

Contacts

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