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| **Statistics on the use of language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals**  Quarterly update to 31st March 2016  Ministry of Justice |

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# 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 2013 and Q1 2016. It also covers completed ‘off-contract’ service requests between 2013 and Q1 2016.

The statistics in this bulletin focus on four main areas:

* Completed language interpreter and translation services requests, broken down by requester type (criminal courts, tribunals and civil & family courts) and service type (standard languages, rare languages and special services);
* ‘Success rate’ of completed requests (which is calculated as the number of completed service 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 complaints made (and complaint rate) relating to language interpreter and translation services requests, broken down by nature of complaints and by requester type and service type; and
* Number of completed ‘off contract’ language services requests, broken down by requester type and service type.

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’ requests data are collated by the Commercial and Contract Management Directorate within (MoJ). Information on ‘off contract’ requests for language services has been collected since April 2013.

The next quarterly bulletin on the use of language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals is scheduled to be published on the **13 October 2016**. The bulletin will cover completed service requests from 2013 to Q2 2016.

**Changes to the languages services contract**

The current Language Services contract with Capita TI, that has provided interpretation, written translation and transcription and non-spoken language services to users of the Justice System since 2012, expires on 30 October 2016. The new contractual arrangements that will come into effect on 31 October 2016 have been split into four Lots and cover Lot 1 – Face to face, telephone and video interpretation of spoken languages; Lot 2 – Translation and transcription services; Lot 3 – Non-spoken languages; Lot 4 – Independent Quality Assurance. Contracts were awarded to preferred bidders on 26 May, and will be signed in due course.

**Future publications**

We are proposing a change to how the language interpreter and translation statistics are published, to improve efficiency of our publication processes. In addition, we are also targeting an improvement in the timeliness of the release of these statistics by one month – to release statistics three months after the end of each reporting period. The proposal is to incorporate the release of statistics on the use of language interpreter and translation services into the Criminal courts statistics quarterly (CCSQ) publication, as opposed to continuing with a standalone statistical release.

The next set of statistics on the use of language interpreter and translation services statistics would be released in the usual format, as previously pre-announced, on 13 October 2016. Thereafter, the statistics would be included within CCSQ – specifically:

* The March 2017 CCSQ publication would include statistics covering the final four months of the existing language services contract;
* The June 2017 CCSQ publication would include the first set of statistics on completed requests under the new contract.
* Statistics would then continue to be released on a quarterly basis in the established, pre-announced March/June/September/December CCSQ schedule.

If you have any feedback on this proposal, please email the contact details at the back of this publication or use the survey link below.

**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. 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.**

[www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/VOGJE/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/VOGJE/)0

# Key findings

**Completed language services requests**

*Completed services requests made under the contract through the language service booking portal.*

The total number of completed requests for language interpreter and translation services increased by 5% in the last quarter, from 36,300 in Q4 2015 to 38,300 in Q1 2016. This follows a downward trend in the previous quarters, with overall numbers still lower than Q1 2015 (40,000). The main driver for this quarter’s increase was the increase in completed service requests at tribunals.

**’Success rate’ of completed service requests**

*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 requests for language interpreter and translation services has increased overall since the settlement of the mileage rate dispute between the interpreters and the contractors in May 2013. In Q1 2016, the success rate was 97%, similar to Q4 2015 (98%).

**Number of complaints made relating to completed service requests**

*Complaints related to requests made under the contract through the language service booking portal.*

The total number of complaints was 440 in Q1 2016, a small increase from 430 in Q4 2015, whilst the rate of complaints has continued to fall steadily from 2014 to just over 1% in Q1 2016.

In Q1 2016, the most common cause of complaint was ‘interpreter was late’, accounting for 37% (160) of all complaints. There were 30 ‘proven’ complaints on ‘interpreter quality’, compared with 40 complaints in Q4 2015.

Number of completed ‘off contract’ service requests

*When a request can’t be supplied under the contract, it is provided off contract. Off contract requests are made directly by courts and tribunals. Information on off contract requests for language services has been collected since April 2013.*

# The total number of off contract service requests have continued to decrease. In Q1 2016, there were 220 completed off contract service requests compared with 240 in Q4 2015, a decrease of 10%.

# In Q1 2016, completed off contract service requests accounted for less than one per cent (0.6%) of total completed service requests (completed service requests made under the contract and completed requests made directly by the courts). 1. Number of completed service requests for language interpreter and translation services

*This section presents statistics on the number of completed requests for language services made under the contract with Capita TI and booked through the language service booking portal.*

In Q1 2016, there were a total of 38,300 completed service requests for language interpreter and translation services – an increase of 2,000 when compared with Q4 2015, although the numbers are still lower compared to the same quarter a year ago (40,000 in Q1 2015).

The main driver for the increase was the increase in completed service requests at tribunals, an increase of 15% since the last quarter (Q4 2015) and back to a similar level as Q3 2015.

**Completed service requests by requester type**

In Q1 2016, criminal courts made the greatest use of face-to-face language interpreter and translation services. 55% of completed service requests were for criminal cases (including Crown Court and magistrates’ courts completed cases), 30% were for tribunal cases, and 14% were for civil & family court cases.

These proportions in part reflect the numbers of people dealt with by the different courts and tribunals, with volume of proceedings at magistrates’ courts and the Crown Court[[1]](#footnote-1) higher than the number of cases heard in civil[[2]](#footnote-2) & family[[3]](#footnote-3) courts and tribunals[[4]](#footnote-4).

Figure 1: Total number of completed language service requests, by requester type, Q1 2013 to Q1 2016

Figure 1: Total number of completed language service requests, by requester type, Q1 2013 to Q1 2016 

Completed service requests have risen overall since Q1 2013 for both criminal and civil & family courts, whilst completed requests at tribunals have fallen since Q1 2014.

**Completed service requests by service type**

In Q1 2016, 89% (34,200) of all completed services requests were for languages in the standard language group, 9% (3,300) were for languages in the rare language group and 2% (620) were for special services.

**Completed service requests by outcome**

In Q1 2016, 14% (5,500) of all completed service requests were cancelled as a result of customer action (this category includes ‘Cancelled by customer’ and ‘Customer did not attend’) – a decrease of one percentage point compared with Q4 2015.

Cancellations varied little by requester type, but did vary by service type – with 14% (4,700) of completed service requests for standard languages cancelled as a result of customer action in Q1 2016, compared to 18% (570) for rare languages and 20% (120) for special services.

In Q1 2016, there was no change in the proportion of service requests not fulfilled as a result of suppliers’ action (this includes categories ‘Not fulfilled by supplier’ and ‘Supplier did not attend’) compared with Q4 2015. Of the total completed service requests in Q1 2016, 2% (840) were not fulfilled by the contractor.

# 2: ‘Success rate’ of completed requests for language interpreter and translation services

*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 success rate in Q1 2016 was 97%, a similar rate to Q4 2015 (98%).

**Success rate trend since 2013**

In the first quarter of 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. Since the first quarter of 2014, the success rate has increased to 97%.

**Figure 2: Number of completed language service requests and overall success rate, Q1 2013 to Q1 2016**

Figure 2: Number of completed language service requests and overall success rate, Q1 2013 to Q1 2016

**Success rate by service type**

Success rates varied across different service types. In Q1 2016, standard language group completed service requests had a success rate of 98%, whilst rare languages and special services had a success rate of 92%.

**Success rate by requester type**

Success rates were similar across the different requester types. In Q1 2016, criminal and civil & family courts both had a success rate of 98%, compared to 97% at tribunals.

**Figure 3: Success rate (%) by requester type, Q1 2013 to Q1 2016**

Figure 3: Success rate (%) by requester type, Q1 2013 to Q1 2016

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

*Complaints related to requests made under the contract through the language service booking portal.*

*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.*

In Q1 2016, there were 440 ‘proven’ complaints relating to completed requests, a small increase of 3% from Q4 2015 (430 complaints).

**Figure 4: Number of complaints and complaint rate, Q1 2013 to Q1 2016**

Figure 4: Number of complaints and complaint rate, Q1 2013 to Q1 2016

The most common cause of complaint was ‘interpreter was late’. In Q1 2016, this accounted for 37% (160) of all complaints made, an increase of six percentage points from Q4 2015.

**Complaint rates since 2013**

Overall, the complaint rate has declined from 4% in 2013 to 1% in Q1 2016. 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, 2015 and into Q1 2016, the complaint rate has fallen from just over 2% in Q1 2014 to just over 1% in Q1 2016.

**Complaints by requester type**

In Q1 2016, the majority of complaints came from tribunals (280), which accounted for 62% of all complaints made in the quarter. The complaint rate for tribunals was 2%, the same as Q4 2015. The most common complaint at tribunals was that the ‘interpreter was late’.

The complaint rate at criminal courts was less than 1% in Q1 2016, no change from Q4 2015. This is consistent with statistics published by MoJ on the proportion of ineffective trials in the criminal courts for which interpreter availability is recorded as the reason for the trial being ineffective. In Q1 2016, interpreter availability accounted for less than one percent (110) of the total number of ineffective trials in the Crown Court and magistrates’ courts combined[[5]](#footnote-5).

The civil & family court complaint rate fluctuated over the period but has been under 1% since Q2 2013.

**Figure 5: Complaint rate by requester type, Q1 2013 to Q1 2016**

Figure 5: Complaint rate by requester type, Q1 2013 to Q1 2016 

**Complaints by service type**

In Q1 2016, the standard language group had the highest number of complaints, with 81% (360) of all complaints. This group, however, had the lowest complaint rate at 1% in the quarter, similar to Q4 2015.

The rare language group had a complaint rate of 2% in Q1 2016, although the number of complaints accounted for only 16% (70) of all complaints in the quarter.

The special services group complaint rate was 2% in Q1 2016 (14 complaints) and accounted for 3% of all complaints.

# **4. Number of completed ‘off contract’ requests for language interpreter and translation services**

*Completed ‘off contract’ requests are requests for language services made outside the Capita TI contract. Requests for the service are made directly by the courts and tribunals – that is, not through the language service booking portal. Information on off contract requests for language services has been collected since April 2013.*

Off contract requests have continued to decrease. In Q1 2016, 220 completed off contract service requests were made by all courts and tribunals, compared with 240 in Q4 2015, a decrease of 10% from Q4 2015.

Completed ‘off contract’ service requests accounted for less than one percent (0.6%) of all completed service requests for language interpreter and translation services in Q1 2016 (completed service requests made under the contract and completed service requests made directly by the courts and tribunals), similar to Q4 2015.

**Completed ‘off contract’ services requests by requester type and service type**

In Q1 2016, criminal courts accounted for 52% (110) of all completed off contract service requests for language interpreter and translation services. Tribunals accounted for 41% (90), while civil & family courts accounted for 6% (10).

**Figure 6: Number of completed ‘off contract’ requests by requester type, Q2 2013 to Q1 2016**

Figure 6: Number of completed ‘off contract’ requests by requester type, Q2 2013 to Q1 2016 

In Q1 2016, the standard language group accounted for 51% (110), of all completed off contract service requests for language interpreter and translation services. Within the standard language group, criminal courts accounted for around three quarters of all completed off contract service requests. However, within the rare language group, tribunals accounted for the majority (around two thirds) 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, by requester type and service type, 2013 to Q1 2016

Table 2 Number and rate of complaints by category of complaint, by requester type and service type, 2013 to Q1 2016

Table 3 Number and rate of completed "off contract" service requests by service type and requester type, 2013 to Q1 2016

## Contacts

Press enquiries on the contents of the bulletin should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:

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Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to the Justice Statistics

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General enquiries about the statistical work of the Ministry of Justice can be e-mailed to: [statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from:

[www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system](http://statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system)

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[statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk).

1. [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-justice-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016-and-the-royal-courts-of-justice-2015](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-justice-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016-and-the-royal-courts-of-justice-2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-court-statistics-quarterly](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-court-statistics-quarterly) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recognition-certificate-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recognition-certificate-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Key reasons for ineffective trials in magistrates’ courts and the Crown Court can be accessed in the *Criminal court statistics quarterly* publication on the Ministry of Justice website:

   [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)