



Ministry of
JUSTICE

Statistics on the use of language services in courts and tribunals

Statistical bulletin, 30 January 2012
to 31 August 2012

18 October 2012



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Main findings

Introduction

The data presented in this bulletin are for face-to-face language services provided to HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), covering requests for services made and completed between the start of the national language services framework on 30 January 2012 and 31 August 2012. Requests made before 30 January were part of the pilot phase, and are not reported here. Requests are made in advance and may be subject to adjournment, delays or cancellation.

Data are not centrally held for the number of completed language requests under previous contracts and therefore it is not possible to say whether performance levels since 30 January are higher, lower or similar to those under the previous arrangements.

The bulletin covers courts, tribunals and prisons in England and Wales, and all UK tribunals not transferred to devolved governments.

The data used for these statistics is generated from management information reports taken from the web-based request system. As with any large set of data from a live management system, there may be inaccuracies and errors. This means that the data, and the statistics derived from them reported here, must be regarded as provisional, and subject to revision in later publications.

Number of requests for language services

During the period covered by this bulletin (30 January 2012 to 31 August 2012), there were 72,043 completed requests for language services covering 163 different languages. Of these requests, 53.4 per cent were for criminal cases (including Crown and magistrates' courts cases, and requests made by prisons), 38.5 per cent were for tribunal cases (including immigration and asylum), and the remaining 8.1 per cent were for civil or family cases.

The criminal courts make the greatest use of face-to-face language translation services. This in part reflects the numbers of people dealt with by the different courts and tribunals, with volumes of criminal proceedings at magistrates' courts and criminal cases heard at the Crown Court significantly higher than the number of civil and family cases heard in court and tribunal receipts.

Of the total requests, 8,222 (11.4 per cent) were cancelled by the requesting customer (HMCTS or NOMS). Of the remaining 63,821 requests, 56,818 were fulfilled or the requesting customer failed to attend – a "success rate" of 89.0 per cent over the whole period.

Statistics on the use of language services in courts and tribunals

Table 1 – Number and rates of completed language service requests by outcome, split by requester type and month: 30 January to 31 August 2012

UK ⁽¹⁾		Number of requests					
Type	Month	Fulfilled	Not fulfilled by supplier	Cancelled by customer	Did not attend		Total requests
					Supplier	Customer	
Criminal	Feb 2012	2,555	1,275	395	62	1	4,288
	Mar 2012	4,015	866	438	110	9	5,438
	Apr 2012	4,259	420	449	69	5	5,202
	May 2012	5,049	266	577	64	8	5,964
	Jun 2012	4,651	246	504	58	3	5,462
	Jul 2012	5,260	252	612	92	7	6,223
	Aug 2012	5,109	152	544	68	7	5,880
	Total Criminal		30,898	3,477	3,519	523	40
Civil & Family	Feb 2012	372	116	36	12	1	537
	Mar 2012	650	107	84	14	-	855
	Apr 2012	653	62	70	11	-	796
	May 2012	787	43	96	7	-	933
	Jun 2012	683	36	99	6	-	824
	Jul 2012	822	39	124	8	-	993
	Aug 2012	734	25	108	14	4	885
	Total Civil & Family		4,701	428	617	72	5
Tribunals	Feb 2012	964	430	257	67	-	1,718
	Mar 2012	3,349	497	660	246	3	4,755
	Apr 2012	3,105	195	540	133	3	3,976
	May 2012	3,759	203	741	98	6	4,807
	Jun 2012	3,313	120	639	93	4	4,169
	Jul 2012	3,540	108	657	128	4	4,437
	Aug 2012	3,122	74	592	111	2	3,901
	Total Tribunals		21,152	1,627	4,086	876	22
All requests	Feb 2012	3,891	1,821	688	141	2	6,543
	Mar 2012	8,014	1,470	1,182	370	12	11,048
	Apr 2012	8,017	677	1,059	213	8	9,974
	May 2012	9,595	512	1,414	169	14	11,704
	Jun 2012	8,647	402	1,242	157	7	10,455
	Jul 2012	9,622	399	1,393	228	11	11,653
	Aug 2012	8,965	251	1,244	193	13	10,666
	Total requests		56,751	5,532	8,222	1,471	67

UK ⁽¹⁾		Percentage ⁽²⁾					
Type	Month	Fulfilled	Not fulfilled by supplier	Cancelled by customer	Did not attend		Success rate
					Supplier	Customer	
Criminal	Feb 2012	59.6	29.7	9.2	1.4	0.0	65.7
	Mar 2012	73.8	15.9	8.1	2.0	0.2	80.5
	Apr 2012	81.9	8.1	8.6	1.3	0.1	89.7
	May 2012	84.7	4.5	9.7	1.1	0.1	93.9
	Jun 2012	85.2	4.5	9.2	1.1	0.1	93.9
	Jul 2012	84.5	4.0	9.8	1.5	0.1	93.9
	Aug 2012	86.9	2.6	9.3	1.2	0.1	95.9
	Total Criminal		80.3	9.0	9.2	1.4	0.1
Civil & Family	Feb 2012	69.3	21.6	6.7	2.2	0.2	74.5
	Mar 2012	76.0	12.5	9.8	1.6	-	84.3
	Apr 2012	82.0	7.8	8.8	1.4	-	89.9
	May 2012	84.4	4.6	10.3	0.8	-	94.0
	Jun 2012	82.9	4.4	12.0	0.7	-	94.2
	Jul 2012	82.8	3.9	12.5	0.8	-	94.6
	Aug 2012	82.9	2.8	12.2	1.6	0.5	95.0
	Total Civil & Family		80.7	7.4	10.6	1.2	0.1
Tribunals	Feb 2012	56.1	25.0	15.0	3.9	-	66.0
	Mar 2012	70.4	10.5	13.9	5.2	0.1	81.9
	Apr 2012	78.1	4.9	13.6	3.3	0.1	90.5
	May 2012	78.2	4.2	15.4	2.0	0.1	92.6
	Jun 2012	79.5	2.9	15.3	2.2	0.1	94.0
	Jul 2012	79.8	2.4	14.8	2.9	0.1	93.8
	Aug 2012	80.0	1.9	15.2	2.8	0.1	94.4
	Total Tribunals		76.2	5.9	14.7	3.2	0.1
All requests	Feb 2012	59.5	27.8	10.5	2.2	0.0	66.5
	Mar 2012	72.5	13.3	10.7	3.3	0.1	81.4
	Apr 2012	80.4	6.8	10.6	2.1	0.1	90.0
	May 2012	82.0	4.4	12.1	1.4	0.1	93.4
	Jun 2012	82.7	3.8	11.9	1.5	0.1	93.9
	Jul 2012	82.6	3.4	12.0	2.0	0.1	93.9
	Aug 2012	84.1	2.4	11.7	1.8	0.1	95.3
	Total requests		78.8	7.7	11.4	2.0	0.1

'-' = Nil

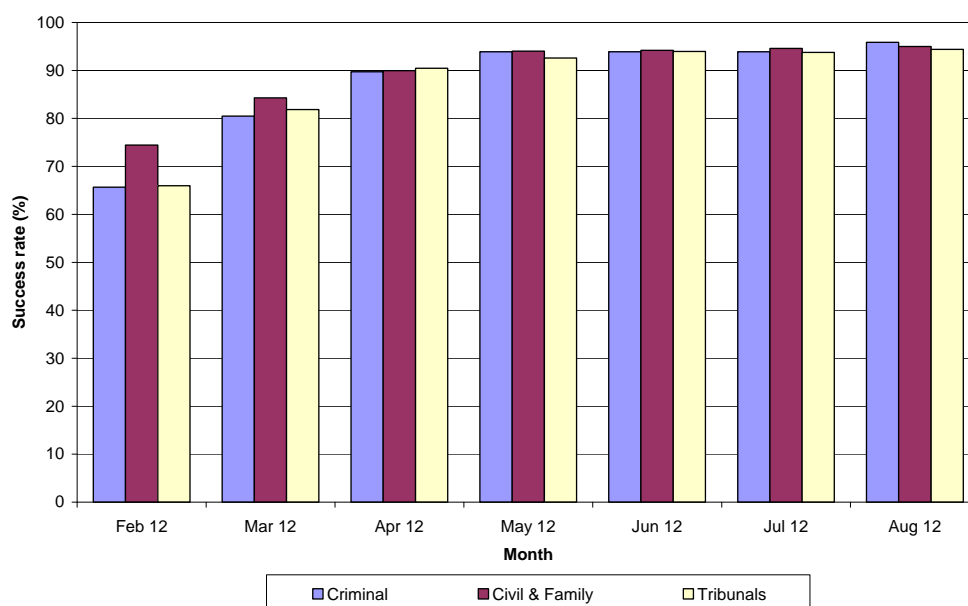
(1) Courts in England and Wales, and all UK tribunals not transferred to devolved governments.

(2) Completion rates for outcomes (such as the fulfilled rate) in the table are the proportion of a particular category of completion (such as fulfilled) as a proportion of the total completed. The "success rate" is different. It is calculated as: (Fulfilled + Did not attend Customer) / (Fulfilled + Not fulfilled by supplier + Did not attend Supplier + Did not attend Customer).

Presenting a single success figure hides a very marked trend over the seven months of increasing success rates for requests for languages translation services.

- In the first month of the contract (January 30 to February 29 2012), the contractor Applied Language Services (ALS) was able to fulfil the request or the requesting customer failed to attend for 66.5 per cent of all requests. By the seventh month of the contract (August 2012), this rate had increased to 95.3 per cent.
- This increasing trend was broadly similar across the different requester types. For example, language service requests for criminal courts and prisons were fulfilled or the requesting customer failed to attend 65.7 per cent of the time in the first month of the contract but, by August 2012, this rate had increased to 95.9 per cent.

Figure 1 – Success rates for completed language service requests, by month and requester type, February to August 2012



In the period covered by this bulletin, requests were made covering 163 different languages (the full list of languages is presented in Annex B). Four languages (Polish, Romanian, Urdu and Lithuanian) accounted for more than a third of all language requests received.

- In criminal cases (requests made by Crown and magistrates' courts and prisons), the most frequently requested language was Polish (7,535 requests);
- Similarly, Polish was also the most frequently requested language at civil and family courts (1,112 requests);
- The most frequently requested language at tribunals was Urdu (3,064 requests).

For the 20 most requested languages overall, the success rates for requests made by criminal courts and prisons over the whole period varied across languages, between 78.4 and 97.4 per cent. The range was similar for the

other requester types – between 73.1 and 98.5 per cent at civil and family courts, and 74.3 to 97.0 at tribunals.

The lowest success rates (below 80 per cent) for criminal cases were for Lithuanian and Czech. At civil and family courts, the lowest success rates were for Slovak and Vietnamese, and at tribunals Lithuanian, Vietnamese and Slovak.

Complaints

There were 3,937 complaints recorded relating to completed requests made within the time period. The majority of the complaints came from tribunals (2,256, 57.3 per cent), with the most common reason for complaint being that the interpreter was late getting to the assignment (589 complaints, 26.1 per cent of complaints by tribunals). At criminal courts and prisons, the most common reason for complaint was that there was no interpreter available (34.6 per cent of complaints by these requesters).

The complaint rate (the number of complaints divided by the number of completed requests) has fallen over time. The rate of complaints at criminal courts and prisons decreased from 9.9 per cent in February 2012 to 1.4 per cent in August. Similarly, the complaint rate at civil and family courts decreased from 5.8 per cent to 0.6 per cent, and at tribunals from 17.1 to 5.2 per cent.

Table 2 – Complaint rate by month, split by requester type, February to August 2012

UK ⁽¹⁾ Type	Feb 2012	Mar 2012	Apr 2012	May 2012	Jun 2012	Jul 2012	Aug 2012
Criminal	9.9	6.9	5.0	2.7	2.1	2.0	1.4
Civil & Family	5.8	5.3	2.5	2.0	0.8	0.6	0.6
Tribunals	17.1	11.6	7.1	7.3	7.4	6.1	5.2

(1) Courts in England and Wales, and all UK tribunals not transferred to devolved governments.

(2) The number of complaints divided by the number of completed requests

Background

New framework for language services

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has established the Language Services Framework Agreement which will have an initial period of four years. Services are delivered by Applied Language Solutions in accordance with a standard set of terms and conditions. This allows eligible participants to procure the services they require without recourse to further competition.

The framework agreement creates an overarching relationship between the service provider (Applied Language Solutions) and collaborative partners in the Criminal Justice System through which the language services required can be satisfied.

Criminal courts in the North-West began to use services under the terms of the contract from 12 December 2011 onwards. The remaining courts, tribunals and prisons used the services from 30 January 2012 onwards.

Services provided under the framework

Applied Language Solutions provides interpretation, translation, sign and other non-defined language support services to MoJ, HM Courts & Tribunals Service and NOMS prisons. The service is not available for use by Probation Trusts but the framework agreement is available.

- Face-to-face interpretation that can be divided into three tier-based needs.
 - Tier One: the interpreter is able to both speak fluently in the language required and is also able to provide a written translation to a pre-determined standard.
 - Tier Two: the interpreter can provide fluent spoken interpreting services, but will not be able to provide a written translation that would suffice for justice sector needs.
 - Tier Three: the interpreter can provide an interpreting service, but not to the standard that would be required for court, tribunal or other evidential requirements; this may be used, for example, in community-based settings.
- Telephone interpreting;
- Translation services – written (including Braille and Easy-read) and recorded (including transcription);
- Services for the deaf and deaf blind (including, but not limited to, British Sign Language, Sign Supported English, Note Taking, Finger Spelling and Lip Speaking); and,
- Other non-defined language support services as and when they arise.

Translation of Welsh in Wales is not included in the framework.

Statistics covered in this bulletin

The contractor provides a range of management reports through a web-based portal. These include: the number of interpreters available, details of complaints received, gaps in the availability of languages and performance against key performance indicators.

This bulletin provides summary statistics on face-to-face services provided to HM Courts & Tribunals Service and NOMS prisons, covering the time period from 30 January 2012 to 31 August 2012. The statistics are taken from the reports provided by the contractor from their web-based portal of the numbers of assignments and details of complaints received. The data are a snapshot of the system on 20 September 2012.

In this bulletin, the time that the language service is provided is taken to be the starting time for the request, even if the request extended over several days. The location for the service at courts is assumed to be in the region of the requesting court. Courts may request services to be delivered at secondary locations, but this is assumed to be rarely outside the region. Tribunals are more likely to request services to be provided away from their main location; for example, some Scottish tribunals have taken place in Northern Ireland.

The classifications used in this bulletin, such as 'complete' and 'fulfilled', are taken directly from the management system, and are decided according to the rules laid down by the contractor. A glossary list of terms used in this bulletin can be found at Annex A.

A small amount of data has been corrected in the process of preparing this bulletin, namely correcting certain spelling mistakes and typographical errors in the names of languages.

Comparisons with figures in the initial bulletin

As the data are taken from a live management system, the data should be considered provisional, correct as at 20 September 2012. Any updates or corrections to the data will be reported in the next bulletin. In particular, the status of requests for services near the end of the reporting period may be updated, and complaints may be raised after 31 August relating to services provided before that date.

For this reason, some differences will be observed between the February to April figures in this bulletin and those published in the initial bulletin published in May 2012, based on a snapshot of the system on 8 May 2012. The majority of differences occur in April figures.

Further, February to April figures for the criminal class in this bulletin will be impacted by the inclusion of requests made by NOMS prisons, which were not included in the May 2012 bulletin.

This bulletin provides statistics on 27,565 completed languages service requests during the months February to April 2012, compared with 26,059 completed requests during the period in the May 2012 bulletin. Of the additional 1,506 requests included, 85 were made by NOMS prisons.

Numbers of requests dealt with

Requests are made in advance via a web-based portal, by email or by telephone. There is no minimum period of notice, and some requests are made less than an hour before they are needed. The supplier will attempt to assign a translator for the requested service, and once the service has been provided, or the date for the requested service has passed, the request may be closed by the requesting court or tribunal. If the request is not closed by the court or tribunal within 48 hours of completion, the translator involved may close the request.

Requests completed according to the framework agreement are called 'fulfilled' in this bulletin. However, requests may be cancelled by the customer (i.e. the court) or the supplier (Applied Language Solutions) may not be able to provide the requested service (called 'not fulfilled' in this bulletin). Requests may also fail because either the supplier (translator or interpreter) or customer does not attend (or arrives so late that the job is cancelled). These terms are defined in the glossary at Annex A.

This bulletin presents statistics on completed requests as classified on the management system. However, requests may be subject to adjournment, delays or cancellation, and any data taken from a live management system is subject to continual change and updating. Therefore the statistics presented here are provisional and subject to revision in future publications. Requests made before 31 August 2012 for language services to take place after 31 August 2012 will be included in future bulletins.

Courts and prisons

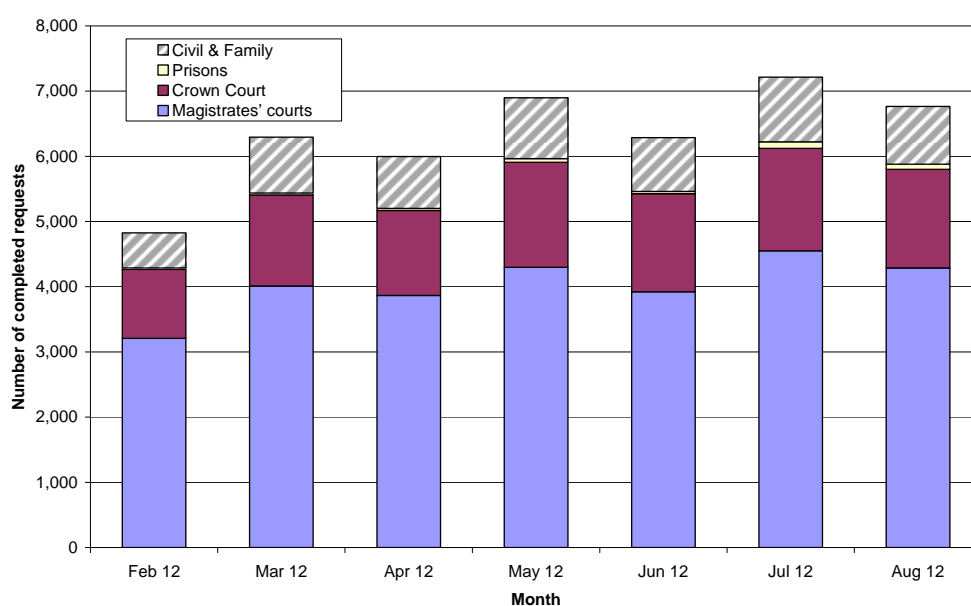
Statistics for two groups of requester types are presented:

- 'Criminal', comprising of criminal courts (includes magistrates' courts and Crown Court, including the Central Criminal Court and criminal appeals at the Royal Courts of Justice – see note (1) to Table 3 in the accompanying Excel workbook) and at NOMS prisons;
- Civil and family (includes family courts, County Courts, and other civil and family courts of various types, such as the Administrative Court at the Royal Courts of Justice, Civil Justice Centres etc – see note (1) to Table 5 in the accompanying Excel workbook).

Tables 3 (criminal) and 5 (civil and family) show the number of completed language service requests for each requester type, split by outcome, region and month. Tables 4 and 6 convert these outcomes into rates when compared to total completed requests, including an overall "success rate".

Criminal cases accounted for 38,457 languages services requests over the period, 53.4 per cent of the total languages requests covered by this bulletin. The criminal courts make the greatest use of face-to-face language translation services. This in part reflects the numbers of people dealt with by the different courts and tribunals, with volumes of criminal proceedings at magistrates' courts and criminal cases heard at the Crown Court significantly higher than the number of civil and family cases heard in court and tribunal receipts. Caseload statistics for criminal, civil and family courts and tribunals can be accessed in the *Court Statistics Quarterly* and *Quarterly Tribunal Statistics* bulletins, both published on the Ministry of Justice website.

Figure 2 – Number of completed language service requests for courts and prisons, by month, split by type of requester, 30 January to 31 August 2012



The requests are classified according to the starting date for the requested service. Language services under a single request may be provided for several days. If the service extends over the end of a month, it will be classed as happening in the month when it started.

Of the total criminal requests, 3,519 (9.2 per cent) were cancelled by the requesting customer (HMCTS or NOMS). Of the remaining 34,938 requests, 30,938 were either fulfilled or the person for whom the translation service had been requested (the 'customer') failed to attend – a success rate of 88.6 per cent over the whole period.

Civil and family courts accounted for 5,823 languages services requests, 8.1 per cent of total requests. Of these, 617 (10.6 per cent) were cancelled by the requesting customer, and 4,706 of the remaining 5,206 requests were either fulfilled or the customer failed to attend – a success rate of 90.4 per cent.

'Region' in the tables means the region of the court requesting the service. Occasionally, a court will request 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.

Table 3 shows that London courts and prisons used language services the most in criminal cases (11,978 requests, 31.1 per cent of all criminal requests). Similarly, Table 5 shows that London courts accounted for the highest proportion of civil and family requests (2,464, 42.3 per cent of all civil and family requests). Tables 4 and 6 show the success rate (and the proportion fulfilled) is highest in the North West region for all types of court.

Success rates have increased over time for each type of court and prisons. There has been little change in customer cancellation or non-attendance levels, but the number of non-fulfilled requests has reduced considerably – from 1,275 requests not fulfilled in February for criminal cases down to 152 in August, and from 116 non-fulfilled in February to 25 in August for civil and family court requests. Tables 4 and 6 show that, in general, the success rate increased from month to month between February and June and has levelled off since. In the case of prisons, there were too few language service requests for reliable trends in success rate from month to month to be seen (Table 4) – it may be more reliable to look at trends from quarter to quarter for prisons.

Tables 9 (criminal) and 11 (civil and family) show the number of completed language service requests for each requester type, split by outcome and top 20 languages requested. Tables 10 and 12 convert these outcomes into rates when compared to total completed requests, including an overall “success rate”.

In criminal cases, the most frequently requested language was Polish (7,535 requests), followed by Romanian (5,252), Lithuanian (3,644), Russian (2,299) and Urdu (1,597). These five languages together accounted for over half of completed requests for languages services for criminal courts and prisons. Specifically in prisons, 229 of the 354 requests (64.7 per cent) were for British Sign Language.

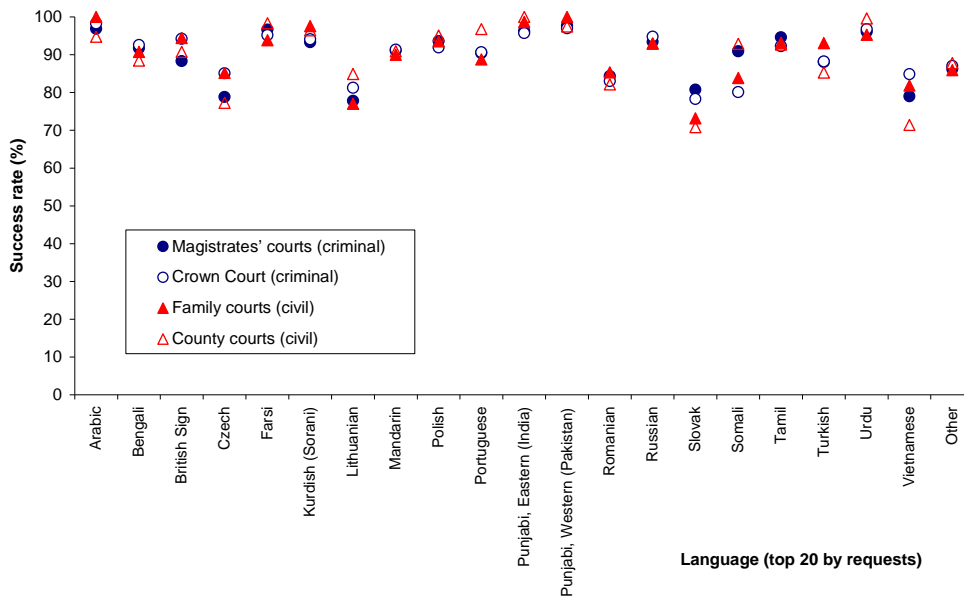
The success rates for requests made by criminal courts and prisons across the seven months vary across languages between 78.4 and 97.4 per cent. The highest success rates (above 95 per cent) were for Punjabi, Western (Pakistan), Arabic, Urdu, Farsi and Punjabi, Eastern (India). The lowest success rates (below 85 per cent) were for Romanian, Vietnamese, Slovak, Lithuanian and Czech, with the latter two below 80 per cent success rate.

At civil and family courts, the most frequently requested language again was Polish (1,112 requests), followed by Romanian (586), Urdu (441), Turkish (259) and Lithuanian (233). These five languages together accounted for 45.2 per cent of completed language requests for civil and family courts.

The range of success rates across languages was similar in civil and family court requests as for criminal cases – between 73.1 and 98.5 per cent. The highest success rates (above 95 per cent) were for Punjabi, Western (Pakistan), Punjabi, Eastern (India), Urdu, Kurdish (Sorani), Farsi and Arabic. The lowest success rates (below 85 per cent) were for Romanian, Czech, Lithuanian, Slovak and Vietnamese, with the latter two below 80 per cent success rate. It is worth noting that virtually the same languages appear on the most/least successful language lists for criminal and civil and family cases.

Figure 3 illustrates the success rates for the top 20 languages requested overall, split by type of court. The figure does not show prisons data as request numbers are small for all languages aside from British Sign Language.

Figure 3 – Success rate by top 20 languages, split by type of court, 30 January to 31 August 2012



The numbers of ‘cracked’ or ‘ineffective’ trials, with a breakdown of key reasons for ineffective trials, are published in *Court Statistics Quarterly* on the department’s web site¹. An ineffective trial does not commence on the due date and requires re-listing. In contrast, a cracked trial does not commence on the day and the trial is not re-listed, as the case has reached a conclusion. Cracked trials are usually the result of an acceptable plea being entered by the defendant on the day, or where the prosecution offers no evidence against the defendant.

The table below provides provisional figures on the effectiveness of magistrates’ court and Crown Court trial hearings in the first two quarters of 2012 (January to June), including numbers of ‘ineffective’ trials due to the unavailability of interpreters.

Effectiveness of magistrates' courts' trial hearings in England and Wales, Q1 and Q2 2012

Year	Quarter	Total	Effective trials		Cracked trials		Ineffective trials		of which: Key reason for ineffective trial	
			Number	Percentage of total trials	Number	Percentage of total trials	Number	Percentage of total trials	Interpreter availability	Percentage of total trials
2012	Q1	43,110	19,159	44%	16,714	39%	7,237	17%	182	0.42%
	Q2	37,776	16,742	44%	14,776	39%	6,258	17%	163	0.43%

Effectiveness of Crown Court trial hearings in England and Wales, Q1 and Q2 2012

Year	Quarter	Total	Effective trials		Cracked trials		Ineffective trials		of which: Key reason for ineffective trial	
			Number	Percentage of total trials	Number	Percentage of total trials	Number	Percentage of total trials	Interpreter availability	Percentage of total trials
2012	Q1	11,007	5,221	47%	4,251	39%	1,535	14%	11	0.10%
	Q2	9,192	4,446	48%	3,406	37%	1,340	15%	6	0.07%

Note: All figures are provisional - final 2012 figures to be published in *Judicial and Court Statistics* in June 2013.

Publication source: *Courts Statistics Quarterly*, April to June 2012

Data sources: Cracked and ineffective trial monitoring form, HM Courts and Tribunals Service's Performance Database. HM Courts and Tribunals Service CREST system.

¹ www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/courts-and-sentencing/judicial-quarterly

Tribunals

Statistics for four types of tribunal are presented:

- Employment Tribunal,
- Immigration and Asylum Tribunal,
- Social Security and Child Support Tribunal,
- Special Tribunals (Asylum Support Tribunal, Care standards Tribunal, First-tier Tax Tribunal, Mental Health, Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal, Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal and War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Tribunal).

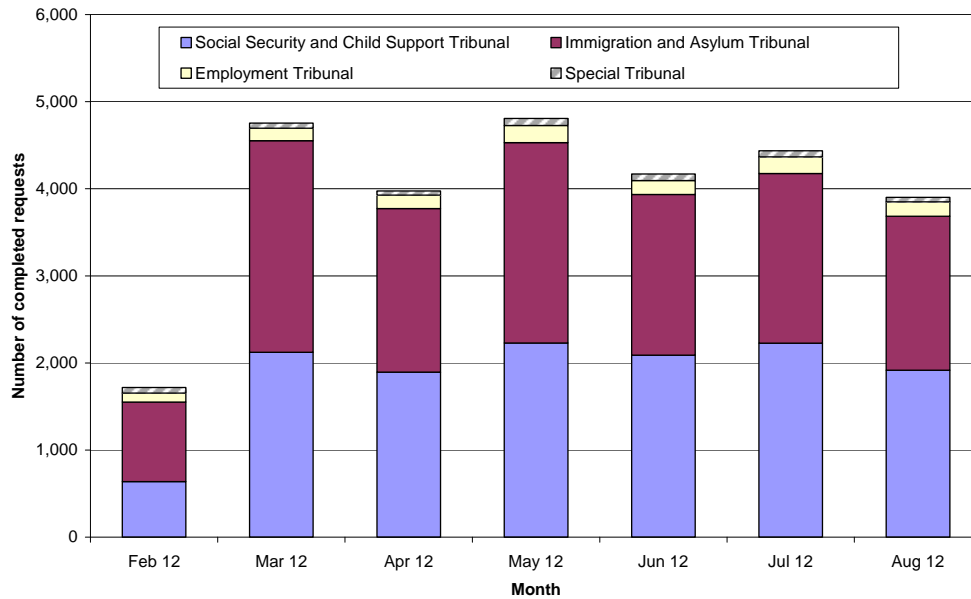
Table 7 shows the number of completed language service requests for each tribunal type, split by outcome, region and month. Table 8 converts these outcomes into rates when compared to total completed requests, including an overall “success rate”.

Tribunals accounted for 27,763 languages services requests over the period, 38.5 per cent of the total languages requests covered by this bulletin.

Table 7 shows that the Social Security and Child Support Tribunal and the Immigration and Asylum Tribunal made most use of language services, with 47.2 and 47.1 per cent of total tribunals requests respectively. The differences between the types of tribunal are more marked when the total volume of cases is considered. During the six months January to June 2012, there were 84,500 Employment Tribunal receipts, 51,000 Immigration and Asylum Tribunal receipts and 204,100 Social Security and Child Support Tribunal receipts². As may be expected, Immigration and Asylum Tribunals have the highest demand for language services of any court or tribunal relative to caseload.

² ‘Quarterly Tribunals Statistics’: 1 April to 30 June 2012, Ministry of Justice statistics bulletin, 27 September 2012. Note figures for April 2012 to June 2012 are provisional.

Figure 4 – Number of completed language service requests for tribunals by month of completion, split by type of tribunal, 30 January to 31 August 2012



Of the total tribunal requests, 4,086 (14.7 per cent) were cancelled by the requesting tribunal. Of the remaining 23,677 requests, 21,174 were either fulfilled or the customer failed to attend – a success rate of 89.4 per cent over the whole period.

Table 7 shows that London Immigration and Asylum Tribunals and Midlands Social Security and Child Support Tribunals used language services the most (4,733 and 5,756 requests respectively). In the same way as for criminal and civil and family requests, Table 8 shows the success rate (and the proportion fulfilled) is highest in the North West region for tribunals overall.

Success rates have increased over time for each type of tribunal. Again, there has been little change in customer cancellation or non-attendance levels, but the number of non-fulfilled requests has reduced considerably – from 430 tribunal language requests not fulfilled in February down to 74 in August. Table 8 shows that, in general, the success rate for tribunals also increased from month to month between February and June and has levelled off since.

The success rates do not vary greatly between different types of tribunal and are similar to the success rate for criminal courts. The exception is the proportion of fulfilled requests for Employment Tribunals, which is low (56.7 per cent) compared with other tribunals (68.4 per cent for Special Tribunals, 72.1 per cent for Immigration and Asylum, and 82.2 per cent for Social Security and Child Support). This is chiefly because the customer cancellation rate for the employment tribunals is high, at 36.0 per cent overall.

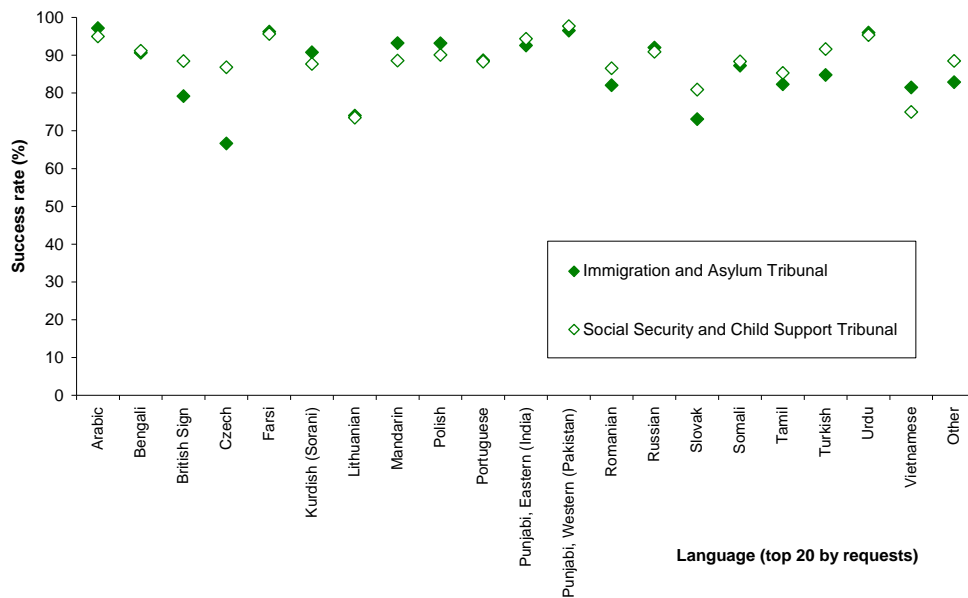
Table 13 shows the number of completed language service requests for each requester type, split by outcome and top 20 languages requested. Table 14 converts these outcomes into rates when compared to total completed requests, including an overall “success rate”.

The most frequently requested language by tribunals was Urdu (3,064 requests), followed by Arabic (1,831), Farsi (1,668), Somali (1,661), and Polish (1,512). These five languages together accounted for 35.1 per cent of completed requests for languages services for tribunals.

The success rates for requests made by tribunals over the whole period vary across languages between 74.3 and 97.0 per cent. The highest success rates (above 95 per cent) were for Punjabi, Western (Pakistan), Arabic, Farsi and Urdu – again, similar to the successful languages for criminal and civil and family requests. The lowest success rates (below 85 per cent) were for Romanian, Tamil, Slovak, Vietnamese and Lithuanian, with the latter three below 80 per cent success rate.

Figure 5 illustrates the success rates for the top 20 languages requested overall, split by the main two types of tribunal.

Figure 5 – Success rate by top 20 languages, split by Immigration and Asylum Tribunal and Social Security and Child Support Tribunal, 30 January to 31 August 2012



Complaints

There were 3,937 complaints recorded relating to completed requests made between 30 January and 31 August 2012.

Two different schemes for categorising complaints have been used. Under the earlier classification scheme, complaints were simply described as 'closed' once they were dealt with. A more advanced scheme has been introduced that can classify complaints as founded, unfounded or duplicates (complaints submitted twice in error), and only founded complaints are reported to the Ministry of Justice. It is not possible to break down the 'closed' complaints further, so this bulletin reports all complaints, which will include a small number of unfounded or duplicate complaints from the earlier classification scheme.

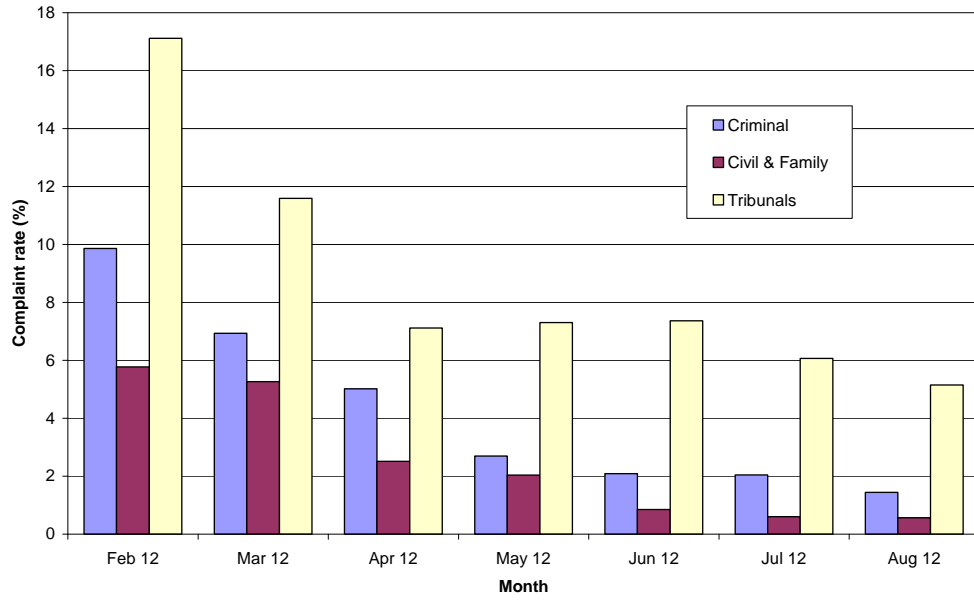
The majority of the complaints came from tribunals (2,256, 57.3 per cent), with the most common reason for complaint being that the interpreter was late getting to the assignment (589 complaints, 26.1 per cent of complaints by tribunals). At criminal courts, prisons and civil and family courts, the most common reason for complaint was that there was no interpreter available (34.4 per cent of complaints by these requesters combined).

The number of complaints per region is shown in Table 15 (criminal courts and prisons), Table 16 (civil and family courts) and Table 17 (tribunals). The number of complaints per month is shown in Table 18 (criminal courts and prisons), Table 19 (civil and family courts) and Table 20 (tribunals), with Table 2 providing an overall summary.

The complaint rate (the percentage of completed languages service requests with complaints) varies by requester type and from region to region. The highest rate of complaints at criminal courts and prisons came from the South West and North West (7.5 and 7.2 per cent of completed requests respectively). Complaint rates at tribunals are on average higher than at criminal courts and prisons, and the highest rate of complaints at tribunals came from the North East and London (11.6 and 10.6 per cent of completed requests respectively). There are too few complaints arising from civil and family courts for meaningful regional comparisons to be made.

The complaint rate has fallen over time. The rate of complaints at criminal courts and prisons decreased from 9.9 per cent in February 2012 to 1.4 per cent in August. Similarly, the complaint rate at civil and family courts decreased from 5.8 per cent to 0.6 per cent, and at tribunals from 17.1 to 5.2 per cent. This may indicate that there were initial difficulties when the service started that have been resolved over the first few months.

Figure 6 – Complaint rate by month and requester type, February to August 2012



Data Sources and Data Quality

Data for this bulletin are taken from the interpreter's booking portal managed by Applied Language Solutions. Raw data from the booking portal has been provided, covering the period 30 January 2012 to 31 August 2012 for completed requests.

All requests for translation services are booked by HM Courts & Tribunal Service staff, who are responsible for closing completed requests within 48 hours of the booking being concluded. If it goes beyond 48 hours, the interpreter is permitted to close down the booking, as this is the mechanism by which they are paid. Officials in the Ministry of Justice routinely spot check the data to ensure that no cases are removed and that data received matches with information already held. HM Courts & Tribunal Service staff can see this information and, if they do not agree, it is reported through the complaints process.

All bookings closed by interpreters are scrutinised by HM Courts & Tribunal Service staff, and any discrepancies are reviewed with the Ministry of Justice Contract Manager and Applied Language Solutions with the necessary action taken.

Annex A – Glossary

Descriptions of outcomes of requests dealt with

Fulfilled

The supplier (Applied Language Solutions) provided an interpreter or translator as requested by the court or tribunal.

Not fulfilled by supplier

The supplier (Applied Language Solutions) has been unable to fill the booking request.

Cancelled by customer

The customer (i.e. the court or tribunal) no longer requires an interpreter and has cancelled the booking request.

Customer did not attend

The interpreter arrived at the requested location for the service but the customer (as specified by the court or tribunal) did not attend.

Supplier did not attend

The interpreter was assigned and booked by the supplier (Applied Language Solutions), but failed to attend.

Categories of complaints

Interpreter did not attend

The assigned interpreter did not go to the assignment and did not inform anyone.

Interpreter quality

The quality of the interpreting skills is being questioned.

Interpreter was late

The assigned interpreter was late getting to the assignment.

No interpreter available

The supplier was unable to provide an interpreter.

Operational issue

Operational issues include: incorrect tier assigned (the customer has requested a specific tier of assignment and an incorrectly tiered interpreter was assigned), issues with the web-based request portal, occasions when the customer has not been able to request one of the services that the supplier supplies and other occasions when the supplier has not supplied the service that is expected.

Other Interpreter issue

Any areas concerning the interpreter which are not covered elsewhere, e.g. dress code.

Time sheet error

Either the customer or the interpreter has closed the assignment's time sheet entry down incorrectly.

Unknown

This includes complaints where no category was recorded in the data.

Others terms used in this bulletin

Cracked trial

Cracked trials are usually the result of an acceptable plea being entered by the defendant on the day, or where the prosecution offers no evidence against the defendant.

Ineffective trial

An ineffective trial does not commence on the due date and requires re-listing. In contrast, a cracked trial does not commence on the day and the trial is not re-listed, as the case has reached a conclusion.

Success rate

This is calculated as the number of completed requests that count as successful supply of the service:

i.e. 'Fulfilled' plus 'Customer did not attend', divided by the total relevant completed language service requests excluding those requests cancelled by the customer.

Annex B – List of languages

One hundred and sixty three separate languages were requested between 30 January and 31 August 2012:

Acholi; Afrikaans; Akan; Albanian; Albanian (Kosovo); Algerian; Amharic; Arabic; Arabic (Classical); Arabic (Modern Standard); Arabic (North African); Aramaic; Armenian; Azerbaijani (North); Azerbaijani (Southern); Azeri; Balochi - Eastern; Balochi - Southern; Balochi - Western; Bamanankan; Bengali; Bilen; Bosnian; Bravanese; British Sign; Bulgarian; Burmese; Cantonese; Catalan; Cebuano; Chechen; Chin; Creole - English; Creole - French; Croatian; Czech; Danish; Dari; Deafblind (BSL Hands on/ hand-under-hand); Deafblind (BSL Visual Frame); Deafblind (Clear Speech Communicator); Deafblind (Large Print communicator); Deafblind Manual; Dinka - North Western; Dutch; Edo; English (Pidgin); English (US); Estonian; Farsi; Filipino; Finnish; Flemish; French; French (Algerian); French (Belgium); French (Canada); French (Congolese); Fula; Ga; Georgian; German; German (Austrian); German (Swiss); Greek; GuaranÃ- (Ava); Gujarati; Hakka; Hausa; Hebrew; Herero; Hindi; Hindko; Hungarian; Igbo; Ilocano; Indonesian; Italian; Jamaican Patois; Japanese; Jola-Fonyi; Kashmiri; Khmer; Kibajuni; Kikongo; Kikuyu; Kinyarwanda; Kirundi; Korean; Krio; Kurdish (Bahdini); Kurdish (Kurmanji); Kurdish (Sorani); Lao; Latvian; Lingala; Lipspeak (English); Lithuanian; Luganda; Macedonian; Macedonian Gorani; Malagasy; Malay; Malayalam; Maldivian; Maltese; Mandarin; Mandinka; Maninka; Marathi; Mirpuri; Mongolian; Ndebele - Northern; Ndebele - Southern; Nepalese; Norwegian; Oromo (Central); Palantypists; Pashto; Pashto (Afghanistan); Pashto (Pakistan); Polish; Portuguese; Potwari; Punjabi; Punjabi, Eastern (India); Punjabi, Western (Pakistan); Roma; Romanian; Romany; Russian; Serbian; Shona; Sign Supported English; Sinhala; Slovak; Slovenian; Somali; Spanish; Susu; Swahili; Swedish; Sylheti; Tagalog; Tamil; Telugu; Thai; Tibetan; Tigre; Tigrinya; Tswana; Turkish; Turkmen; Twi; Ukrainian; Unspecified rare language; Urdu; Uzbek (Northern); Vietnamese; Wolof; Yiddish; Yoruba; Zulu.

Explanatory notes

Symbols and conventions

The following symbols have been used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

‘-’ = Nil

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