



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
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helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.defra.gov.uk

Your ref:
Our ref: RFI 5969
Date: 22 November 2013

Dear,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: SERVICES FOR DEAF PEOPLE

Thank you for your request for information about services for deaf people, which we received on 5 November. As you know, we have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked:

- a) *What communication support do the department, and the agencies and public bodies supported by the department, provide for deaf and hard of hearing people to access their services?*
- b) *Do the department, and the agencies and public bodies supported by the department, provide NRCPD registered communication professionals for deaf people to access their services?*
- c) *How many people have requested the use of a sign language interpreter to access services offered by the department, and the agencies and public bodies supported by the department, in the past year?*

The information you requested is as follows. The answer covers Defra and its five Executive Agencies, which are:

Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA)
Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)
Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA)
Rural Payments Agency (RPA)
Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)



Defra's Non Departmental Public Bodies are responsible for answering their own FOIA requests so are not included.

(A)

Core Defra does not provide services directly to the public; enquiries by members of the public can be made by telephone, email and letter. There are Text phones in place for Deaf people to communicate with core Defra. This enables telephone communication with the Defra helpline.

Hearing Loops are in place in various sites for example, 3 RPA main sites – Workington/Carlisle & Reading, Induction Loop in Northallerton, and CEFAS in Lowestoft.

Defra and its Agencies look at individual cases and situations assessing requirements on a needs basis. If a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter is required, we will put a plan in place to meet that need.

Deaf people are supported through the recruitment process and operate the two tick scheme. BSL interpreters are provided and reasonable adjustments are made if required. Deaf employees are provided with appropriate communication adjustments, e.g. interpreters or note takers.

Defra has provided internal Deaf awareness sessions for staff and has an internal Disability Network for support and guidance. Membership of the network is open across Defra and its Agencies. The Defra intranet site provides Deaf awareness information & guidance.

(B)

Defra has access to interpreters through two companies: Remark; and Action on Hearing Loss. These services are paid for through local budgets within Defra. Any reasonable adjustments for employees are funded via Access to Work in AHVLA, CEFAS, FERA, RPA and VMD and in Defra via local budgets.

Defra works with the Employers' Forum on Disability and other relevant external BSL charities and organisations to ensure appropriate support is put in place and to support communication requirements.

(C)

Defra and its Agencies have not had any recorded external requests for the use of a sign language interpreter over the past year.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Tarran

Direct Line 020 7979 8583

Email ann.tarran@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF