

# **Guidance for the criminal, civil and family courts for booking interpreters through Applied Language Solutions (ALS)**

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# 1 Introduction

The criminal courts are no longer using the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) to contact and book interpreters directly. The civil and family courts are no longer using the central interpreter booking team (Court Business Support) to book interpreters.

Court staff will pass all new requests for interpreters through Applied Language Solutions (ALS) who are contracted to supply this service for HMCTS through the Ministry of Justice Language Services Framework Agreement.

Note: The return of short notice bookings is currently being piloted in the magistrates' courts, if you are a pilot court you should continue to book through ALS, if not then continue with your current booking arrangements until further advised.

The contract provides access to the following services:

- Face-to-face interpretation;
- Telephone interpreting;
- Translation services – written and recorded (including translation of 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.

The services are available on a 24/7 basis, 365 days a year and at any HMCTS location across England and Wales.

However, this contract does not cover the provision for supplying Welsh interpreters in courts in Wales. Existing arrangements will continue to apply and you should contact *[redacted under s.40(2) FOIA]*.

Access to the services of ALS is via the web based ALS portal, *[redacted under s.43(2) or s.31(1)(c) FOIA]*.

***[redacted under s.43(2) or s.31(1)(c) FOIA]* so all court staff who either book interpreters or confirm assignment details will use the same details. If you wish to obtain a new PIN and password or make changes to existing you should contact *[redacted under s.40(2) FOIA]*.**

*[redacted under s.43(2) or s.31(1)(c) FOIA]*.

*[redacted under s.43(2) or s.31(1)(c) FOIA]*.

## **2 Civil and Family Courts only**

In the majority of cases the parties should fund and source any interpreter themselves.

The following criteria has been devised to ensure that HMCTS only books interpreters where we are required to do so. Court staff must ensure they continue to apply this criteria, failure to do so will result in budget overspend.

Any interpreters who have not been booked according the criteria laid down will be paid for by the court itself.

### **2.1 Criteria for booking and arranging interpreters for the hearing impaired and hard of hearing**

County Court staff can arrange interpreters for the hard of hearing for civil and family hearings through the portal for all cases. For additional information on arranging interpreters for a party in small claims mediation, mediators need to refer to the Civil Courts Mediation Service Manual

### **2.2 Criteria for booking and arranging language interpreters**

County court staff can arrange language interpreters needed for civil and family hearings through the ALS portal for the following:

- **Committal cases**
- **Domestic violence cases**
- **Family cases involving children**
- **Forced Marriage Act cases**
- **Possessions**

HMCTS should ensure that anyone attending the above has the free assistance of an interpreter if he/she cannot understand or speak the language used in court.

### **2.3 Other cases where an interpreter might be provided**

In addition to the above HMCTS will provide an interpreter if that is the only way that a litigant can take part in a hearing. The relevant circumstances are:

- When the individual/s cannot speak or understand the language of the court well enough to take part in the hearing; and
- Cannot get public funding; and
- Cannot afford to fund an interpreter privately and;
- Has no family member, or friend, who can attend to interpret for them and/or is acceptable to the court.

Or

- Where the Judge directs that an interpreter must be booked as the case cannot proceed without HMCTS funding one.

For all cases there is **no** legal obligation to provide interpreters to interested parties. Satisfy yourself of the situation and find out if the person has legal representation.

In addition we are only under an obligation to provide interpreters for the duration of the actual court hearing and not for legal discussions before or after the planned start/end time of the hearing. Any variation of this will be a local management decision.

### **3 Face-to-face Interpreting Requirements – All Courts**

The level of qualifications and experience of the interpreters are now divided into three tier based needs with tier one having the highest skills:

- Tier one interpreter is able to both speak fluently in the language required and provide a written translation to a pre-determined standard.
- Tier two interpreter can provide fluent spoken interpreting services, but will not be able to provide a written translation that would suffice for justice sector needs. However, a tier two interpreter can translate written documents such as a summary of the police interview in order to read it to the defendant during the course of a trial.
- Tier three interpreters can provide a non-English interpreting service, but not to the standard of the other two tiers and would not be used for hearings with evidential requirements.

Because, in most instances the courts require **a tier two interpreter**, the ALS portal has been set to default to a tier two interpreter. However, in some cases it may still be appropriate because of the nature of the case to book a tier one interpreter. ALS will send a tier two interpreter unless a tier one is specifically requested on the portal. Tier 3 interpreters will not normally be provided for in-court work.

Note: Rare languages are not tiered and court staff should seek further clarification from ALS or their line manager where necessary if they are not satisfied with the interpreter's suitability

Interpreters providing services through ALS will also be required to undergo regular enhanced CRB checks as a minimum.

**See Annex A for more details on the qualification levels.**

#### **3.1 Preparing to make a booking**

Prior to booking an interpreter, please consider if an interpreter for the required language is already on site that day, and could be used on both cases by listing sequentially in the same court room.

**The time to state on the portal is the start time that interpreters will be expected to be at the relevant venue ready to start work.**

If the interpreter is required to attend prior to the hearing taking place, ie for a pre-court conference, then the time stipulated on the portal should reflect this. For example, an interpreter is required for a hearing at 10 am and the court decides to add 15 minutes for counsel to speak to their client, the instructed start time would be 9:45 am.

Note: The 15 minutes of waiting time that had been automatically paid to interpreters through the portal has been removed, as interpreters were getting paid for this whether or not they arrived on time or were late. Therefore, HMCTS staff should not assume that interpreters will be ready to work before the time stipulated.

The interpreter will be paid from the start time on the portal. The interpreter will be considered to be late if they are not ready to work at the time stated on the portal by the court.

As a result, a court officer may decide that for certain hearing or case types, where it is imperative that the interpreter arrives in good time, the interpreter is requested a little earlier to ensure smooth running of the Justice system. This may be directed by the judiciary, but it is ultimately a delivery manager's decision as it has impact on HMCTS budgets.

When booking an interpreter court staff should have the following information:

- *[redacted under s.43(2) or s.31(1)(c) FOIA]*
- Type of Hearing
- Language/ dialect required
- Date and time the interpreter is required to be ready to start work at the venue.
- Anticipated length of hearing or trial time estimate
- Venue (if different from booking site) of the assignment
- Name and email address of person making the booking (Note: this must be a person and not a team name)
- Where or to whom the interpreter should report on arrival at the assignment location
- Tier of interpreter required (see note above)
- On occasion there may be a need to specify the gender of the interpreter required
- Any specialist requirements
- Additional useful note, such as
  - whether an interpreter is already on site and could be used for this hearing too (please state linguist name and/or reference number)
  - where the language/dialect required is not on the drop down box

[Note: adding information into the 'Additional notes to ALS' field, will route the booking through the manual process rather than the automatic process, which may slow the booking down, so only insert information into this box if it is required.]

- Job Notes and Additional Venue Information. Please add in a note here to the interpreter as required, such as, 'Security and sign in processes at this site can take 10 minutes'.

Please also be mindful of Information Assurance considerations when entering text in the case number or other free-form or free-text fields with regard to Data Protection. Please see Annex C for more information.

Failure to ensure all the appropriate information is given at the time of booking may result in the attendance of an unsuitable interpreter; incur additional financial cost; and/ or create time delays.

### 3.2 Making the booking

To make a booking court staff should log onto the following internet site: *[redacted under s.43(2) or s.31(1)(c) FOIA]*

To access the secure booking system, *[redacted under s.43(2) or s.31(1)(c) FOIA]*. A screen will appear which allows access to new bookings, existing bookings which are not yet assigned with an interpreter, bookings which have an interpreter assigned and completed jobs. There is also a new screen that details bookings requiring closure (i.e. Job times need to be entered onto the portal by MoJ staff).

If there are any problems with logging on to the portal then court staff must report this to ALS by telephoning *[redacted under s.40(2) FOIA]* and selecting **option 5** for IT technical support.

Court staff will select '**make a booking**' and enter the interpreter and hearing requirements. Then they will click '**create**' – for further information please refer to the ALS Portal user guide, *Customer Portal v1,4 User Guide September 2012*

The ALS system automatically begins the process of identifying the most appropriate and available interpreters and forwarding them appropriate details so they can consider whether they wish to accept the job.

Court staff should, wherever possible, use the portal to book interpreters. Please note even if the booking is urgent i.e. the interpreter is required for the same day then this does not mean that court staff cannot use the portal. This is because the same automated process will take place whether the booking is made through the portal or by telephone. Portal bookings are quicker as there is no need to telephone through the information to an ALS call handler who will need to enter all assignment details on to the booking system in the same way as court staff using the portal.

However, staff can also contact ALS *[redacted under s.40(2) FOIA]* if there is no means of booking via the portal such as IT failure. There are additional charges for arranging bookings by telephone unless the booking has to be made because the portal is not working.

Once the booking has been submitted, if any changes arise or an error was made, then court staff should ring ALS to make the change or correction on the number given above. There is no charge for changing a booking by telephone.

### 3.3 More than one interpreter required for the same hearing

Court staff must be satisfied that more than one interpreter is required at the hearing. If more than one interpreter is required then court staff must set up a separate booking for each interpreter required. It is recommended that a cross reference is entered in the additional notes to ALS box.

### 3.4 Booking an interpreter for a 'same day' hearing

Court staff should still use the portal to make the booking, ensuring that the time required is realistic for an interpreter to arrive at the court. If an interpreter has not accepted the assignment after 28 minutes then ALS will call the court with an update. The search for an interpreter will widen and ALS will telephone the court every 30 minutes with an update. Once an interpreter has been assigned, ALS will provide an ETA (estimated time of arrival) which can now be seen on the portal on the jobs assigned page.

### **3.5 Viewing the status of all interpreter bookings requested by the court**

All bookings where an interpreter has been assigned are shown under the 'Assigned jobs' tab.

All bookings without an interpreter assigned are shown under the 'Unassigned jobs' tab.

Release 1.4 of the portal provides a search facility. Please refer to the portal user guide, Customer Portal v1,4 User Guide September 2012 for more information.

### **3.6 Processing the booking by ALS**

ALS allocates a unique reference number for each booking received. The job can be viewed under the "unassigned" tab on the portal.

Once an interpreter has been assigned, a confirmation email is sent to the generic e mail account at the site. The e mail contains a link to the unique job reference number in the portal which allows the user to view the details of the assigned interpreter i.e. their photo identification details.

If ALS has difficulties providing a suitable interpreter for that hearing then the court will be advised in line with agreed timescales detailed below. ALS activity for each job is detailed in the "Job Activity" available through the portal. Please refer to the portal user guide for more information.

Court staff will be able to view the 'job activity' through the portal, showing the actions taken by ALS to fill the booking. The 'job activity' is accessed by calling up the specific booking under the job reference number allocated. Please refer to the portal user guide for more information.

The timescales are as follows:

- Any non trial hearings will be contacted 48 hours before the listed hearing date
- Any hearings where custody time limits need to be extended will be contacted 72 hours before the listed hearing. Court staff must mark it as needing this length of time.
- Trials with a fixed date with a time estimate of 3 days or less will be contacted 5 working days before the listed hearing date
- Trials with a fixed date with a time estimate of 4 – 10 days will be contacted 10 working days before the listed hearing date
- Trials with a fixed date with a time estimate of 2 – 4 weeks will be contacted 15 working days before the listed hearing date
- Trials with a fixed date with a time estimate of 4 weeks or more will be contacted 20 working days before the listed hearing date

For booking requests that cannot be fulfilled, ALS will contact the member of court staff by telephone as follows:

- Any hearings listed for the next day will be contacted by 2:30 pm on the day before the requirement.
- Crown Court only: Warned list trials which are listed for trial the next day will be contacted by 2:30 pm on the day the booking request is made

If a job is unable to be filled, court staff will immediately inform a senior officer at the court and the judiciary. The senior officer at the court in conjunction with the judiciary will make a decision as to next steps.

The next steps to be considered are either: can the court source an interpreter directly or list the case for an application to adjourn. The operational manager will alert the Cluster Manager if they think it is appropriate to do so.

If ALS is able to provide an interpreter at a lower tier than requested for the hearing then the senior officer at the court must consult with the judiciary, who will make the final decision as to whether this is acceptable. If this is not acceptable, then the steps as outlined above need to be considered.

If ALS is able to provide an interpreter of the appropriate tier on the day but not at the time requested then court staff should consider if the hearing can be moved to the later or earlier time. It is worth noting that there may be greater interpreter availability in the afternoons. However, consultation with the judiciary should also be considered especially if the hearing/trial is reserved.

### **3.7 Changes to the time an interpreter is required**

If the interpreter is required to attend court for a later or possibly an earlier time than requested at the time of the booking, court staff should ring ALS as soon as this is known so they can notify the interpreter. The interpreter will be notified by ALS by text and an e mail of the change. There is no charge for changes to the booking.

### **3.8 Cancellations**

Court staff should telephone ALS to notify of any cancellations and quote the unique job reference number. The court will not be charged for any cancellations provided the interpreter has not already arrived at the courthouse. If the interpreter has arrived then the court will be charged a cancellation charge of one hour.

Close – unfilled or Customer Cancelled.

Close – unfilled has to be in accordance with timescales detailed in 3.6

### **3.9 Interpreters booked on behalf of the court by the police**

The police will still book interpreters on behalf of the court where the defendant was remanded in custody to appear at the court within 48 hours. ALS will assign the interpreter in



the normal way and send an e mail confirmation to the court to the generic e mail address. Court staff can see if an interpreter has been booked as it will show on the assigned or unassigned job screens.

### **3.10 On the day of the hearing**

Interpreters will not be expected to arrive on site early; only to ensure that they are ready to work at the time specified on the portal. On arrival at court the interpreter will present their ALS identity card to court staff and if necessary this can be checked against the identity information held on the ALS portal. If there are still doubts then court staff should ring ALS to confirm.

If the interpreter arrives at court early for the assignment, court staff should record the agreed assignment start time as the time of arrival.

If the interpreter has not arrived on site and is therefore not ready to work at the agreed start time and as a result the hearing is, or is likely to be, delayed, then court staff should ring ALS who will make urgent enquiries as to the whereabouts of the interpreter. ALS will keep the court updated by telephone every 30 minutes.

If the interpreter is not ready to work at the time specified on the portal, court staff should record the actual time, to the minute, that the interpreter reports to the site or court staff in the courtroom as ready to work.

If a hearing is moved to a later time on the day i.e. the parties are not ready so the case is adjourned from 11 am to 2 pm then the interpreter must inform ALS of the time change. The interpreter will stay on site until the assignment is concluded and is responsible for keeping ALS updated. The interpreter is also expected to keep ALS informed of any expected impact on subsequent jobs, such as if the interpreter is booked on another job elsewhere later in the day.

If an interpreter is required to attend for future hearings on the same case then the new booking for the next hearing must be organised with ALS. It must not be made directly with the interpreter as they will not be paid for assignments which are not managed through the portal. Court staff must specify the attendance of the named interpreter when making the booking request through the portal.

### **3.11 Overrunning trials or hearings**

If the trial or hearing will last longer than the original time estimate given, then the interpreter will be responsible for notifying ALS.

If the interpreter's morning job is running late and they know that they are booked for a different hearing in the afternoon, the interpreter must call ALS to inform them as soon as they are able.

### **3.12 How ALS communicates interpreter changes to us on the day**

If the interpreter assigned to the hearing notifies ALS that they can not attend then ALS will telephone the court staff who made the original booking immediately. ALS will provide the court with updates every 30 minutes on the progress of supplying a replacement interpreter.

### 3.13 Closing the booking

At the conclusion of the assignment, court staff must update the portal with the start and finish times to the nearest minute onto the portal.

Courts will need to make a decision as to who is responsible for doing this and as an example, in Crown Courts this function may be undertaken by the court clerk.

To enter the times court staff will either:

- *[redacted under s.43(2) or s.31(1)(c) FOIA]* manually identify the assignment; OR
- Open the confirmation email from ALS and click the hyperlink in the body of the message to automatically access the correct record.

As an example, the interpreter is instructed to be ready to work for a 10 am hearing which does not start until 10:35 am and the hearing concludes at 11:25 am. The portal will be updated with a start time of 10am and an end time of 11:25 am (where the interpreter arrived on time). If the interpreter arrives late, their actual arrival time, not the booked time, is recorded on the portal and a complaint is logged.

Where a hearing continues into the afternoon, the interpreter assigned will be required to take a 30 minute lunch break for which they will not be paid. Court staff should log a morning start and finish time and an afternoon start and finish time, allowing a 30 minute break, even if the actual court lunch lasted longer.

Eg. The morning hearing was 10am-1pm and restarted at 2pm until 3pm, the times logged on the portal will be 10am-1.30pm and 2-3pm.

The timings for the assignment should be recorded by HMCTS staff within 72 hours of the assignment being completed.

The interpreter will also carry a time sheet with them which they will ask court staff to sign to confirm the start and finish times of the assignment. Please ensure that interpreters booked through ALS are not given a HMCTS claim form to complete. Interpreters are required to keep their timesheets as a record of their hours worked.

If the assignment is not closed on the portal by court staff within 72 hours, the interpreter will have access to enter start and finish times themselves. Therefore, it is important that court staff update the portal with the assignment times rather than the interpreter. ALS will obtain from the interpreter a copy of the timesheet authorised by court staff in case of any payment disputes.

Any jobs that remain open after the 72 hours will be monitored and sites contacted for timely closure.

Note: A financial assurance SOP is expected to be released in Autumn 2012, which will clarify the processes required in courts with regard to the signing of timesheets and closing down bookings on the portal.

### 3.14 Recording the times for part heard trials

It is important for part heard trials that court staff enter the timings for the interpreter on the portal on a daily basis. Please note that once the daily timings have been entered then the system will automatically save the information. Therefore, court staff should only use the complete **job button** once the trial is concluded.

### **3.15 Feedback and formal complaints process**

ALS welcomes feedback on the individual interpreters after each assignment.

After court staff have entered the assignment times and completed the job, the user is taken through to a feedback page. The user is encouraged to give feedback on the interpreter provided. This is for ALS and our own internal purposes as we strive to improve the service delivered to customers.

If you require guidance on completing feedback or raising a complaint, please refer to the portal user guidance v1.4.

ALS also has a formal complaints process for reporting complaints which is outlined in Annex B.

It is important that in the first instance any complaints are logged through the portal. If the response to the complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily or to the required timescale then it should be escalated to their Relationship Manager within ALS and copied to MoJ Procurement: *[redacted under s.40(2) FOIA]*.

## **4 Annex A - Quality and Skills Assessment for Interpreters and Translators**

### **Face to Face foreign language interpreters:**

Unless otherwise stated the qualification requirements set out for each tier below must be in the language in which the interpreter will be working. Interpreters who wish to interpret in additional languages must meet the qualification criteria in each of those additional languages

#### **Tier One**

The interpreter must have one or more of the following:

- Chartered Institute of Linguists Diploma in Public Service Interpreting, DPSI, (English Law Option);
- Chartered Institute of Linguists Certificate in Community Interpreting, CCI (the forerunner to the DPSI);
- Metropolitan Police Test (post 1997) together with either a DPSI (Health or Local Government Option) or an Honours Degree or higher in Interpreting

Or

- Registration with the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (full or interim status);
- Membership of Association of Police and Court Interpreters;
- Membership of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (Police Court Interpreter level).

Together with (in all cases):

- At least 100 hours public sector interpreting experience;
- References; and
- A pass at the assessment centre to the tier one standard.

#### **Tier Two**

The interpreter must have one or more of the following:

- 'Partial DPSI' (English Law option) i.e. the interpreter must have passed all modules with the exception of component 3b (written translation from English);
- A degree in linguistics, English philology, Modern Languages or MA in Teaching of English, or other language related diplomas where English figures as part of the course completed.

Together with (in all cases):

- Previous or current employment in criminal justice services in their countries of origin, legal training in the UK or abroad, or other exposure to criminal justice work through other channels is also acceptable (volunteer and/or paid work in the community for police services or work for Victim Support, for example);
- University level education (any degree);
- At least 100 hours public sector interpreting experience;
- References; and

- A pass at the assessment centre to the tier two standard.

### **Tier Three**

The interpreter must have one or more of the following:

- Demonstrable experience in the public sector with appropriate linguistic background;
- Formalised basic interpreter training including one of the following: the WEA programmes, Bi-Lingual Skills Certificates, Community Level Interpreting Degrees under the NVQ certification system.

Together with

- References; and
- A pass at the assessment centre to the tier three standard

It is also desirable for tier three interpreters to have at least 100 hours public sector interpreting experience.

### **Rare languages**

In the case of rare languages where the DPSI or equivalent qualification is not available, the interpreter must have the Cambridge Proficiency in English Certificate, or NRPSI registration (rare language category) 100 hours of public sector interpreting experience, evidence of continuous professional development, references and a pass at the assessment centre.

## 5 Annex B - Complaint Process

### Process

- A complaint should be logged directly onto the portal where it is visible against the booking made.
- ALS receives a daily complaint report where all new complaints are listed.
- The complaint handling team review each complaint and contact the customer to discuss their complaint with them.
- The complaint is categorised and a response is provided by the complaint handler onto the portal (and followed up by letter where appropriate).
- The complaint team provide to management a daily overview of the complaints received and the actions taken.

### Investigation

- The types of complaint are varied, but are categorised as follows:
  1. ALS Failed to supply an interpreter
  2. DNA (interpreter did not attend)
  3. Late (Interpreter was late)
  4. Wrong times entered in time-sheet
  5. Poor interpreting skills
  6. Lacking cultural understanding of MoJ behavioural expectations
  7. Contact Centre communications were poor
  8. Short notice cancellation by interpreter.
  9. Portal Issues (technical)
  10. Incorrect tier / language assigned
  11. Other
- Complaint types 2-6 and 8 are discussed with the Linguist Relations team who will make contact with the interpreter to find out what has occurred. Depending on the outcome of that conversation, action is taken to deal with the interpreter if required (see mitigation). A determination is made and the complaint is classified as being the interpreters fault or not their fault.
- Complaint types 1, 7,10, and 11 are discussed with the Contact Centre Manager who will investigate the complaint in detail and address the specific concerns where appropriate. Number 1 is one of the statistics that guides our interpreter recruitment efforts.
- Complaint type 9 is discussed with the IT team to establish if the issue logged is an unknown IT issue or user error. Depending on the outcome, the IT will fix the IT issue or the Relationship Manager is contacted to discuss the user error with the customer.

### Mitigation

- All complaints and complaint types are monitored on a daily basis by a process expert.
- The process expert identifies the root cause of the problem and aims to resolve the root cause of the issue through process improvement. A couple of examples are:
  - CJS workshops to address interpreter behaviour.

- Review of the finance process, in conjunction with the Finance Director to address incorrect start and finish times being entered.
- No interpreter available, investigate why to establish if more could have been done to find an interpreter by the assigning team.
- The mitigation process for categories 2-6 and 8 is the introduction of the “three strikes and you’re out” process which sees interpreters removed from the ALS supplier list where they consistently deliver a poor performance. Part of this process is the opportunity for them to attend the CJS workshops where they are supported in making them aware of the importance of their role.
- The mitigation process for 1, 7, 10 and 11 is with the process expert and the Contact Centre Manager who will investigate these complaints and assess if the process can be improved to ensure the complaint need not re-occur. Whilst this is not always possible, the Contact Centre Manager will ensure that the communication process is effective.

### Monitoring

- A dashboard containing complaint information is provided to Procurement on a weekly basis tracking the complaint trends to ensure the right focus is given to move trends downwards.

## 6 Annex C – Information Assurance

Information assurance guidance on data entry (use of free-form and free-text fields) on the portal

Entering information to request an interpreter via the ALS portal is a business process that is providing a service to support existing judicial processes. The ALS service itself is not the process which records case material, charges, sensitive issues, etc. In the normal course of events the need for an interpreter (and the fact that a judicial or criminal justice event is occurring) is not in itself additionally embarrassing or harmful to an individual.

However, there will be situations where identifying an individual may put the individual (or the interpreter) at risk of harm or embarrassment. For instance cases involving murder, rape, violence, gang-related involvement, terrorism, child-related offences, and children themselves possibly need increased sensitivity and protection.

Each HMCTS court or tribunal jurisdiction has their own guidance on what information is available to the public and users of the ALS portal should follow this guidance in relation to data entry on the portal, bearing in mind the information in the public domain at the time the data is entered on the portal.

### **Suggested guidance on the use of the free-form field for providing notes to ALS**

The free-form notes field should be used only to provide essential additional information to ALS to help them to meet the customer's needs for translation and interpreter services. In most cases the use of the field won't be necessary. Where the free-form field is used, the user must be sure that there is a real need and benefit in providing the information, and be aware that there may be Data Protection and Information Assurance issues if data is inappropriately processed.

Please note that the Additional Notes and Complaints fields are exclusive to ALS but the Job Briefing notes go directly to the interpreter. Users need to be aware that this constitutes a data sharing arrangement and needs to be limited to information that is essential to the purpose.

There is a risk that information provided on the freeform field could be associated with data already being provided to ALS to provide a greater chance for someone acting against the customer's interest to:

- specifically identify the customer,
- identify the customer as belonging to a specific group, or,
- identify that the customer has specific vulnerabilities,

There are three types of entries currently appearing in the free-form field:



1. Entries that are useful to ALS and the interpreter, and are therefore justified. Some actual examples are;
  - video link hearing. please arrive promptly
  - Case is a day and a half trial, so interpreter will be required for the whole day on 26/06/2012 and the morning of 27/06/2012
  - Linked files with OA/30----/2011, OA/30----/2011
  - Please try to rebook Mr Joe Bloggs who was interpreter on last date as language is Arabic Lebanese
  - Non English speaker from Cameroon - African French required
  - Judge directs that Interpreter MUST be Mrs. R----- N----- - ref LIN/4E-----DD
  - Claimant is deaf
  - Maybe needed for other cases
  
- 2) Entries that repeat information that is already provided to ALS in the request or which is unnecessary. These do no harm in Data Protection terms but could be avoided. Some actual examples are:
  - language is SRI LANKA
  - Defendant is Brazilian with no knowledge of English
  - Report to main reception and check the daily list to see which court the case is listed in.
  - The hearing will be in Court 8
  
- 3) Entries which provide information that could cause harm or embarrassment to the customer or to another party, and actually aren't required by the process but could be damaging. Some actual examples are:
  - Theft from shop is the crime
  - HARASSMENT
  - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
  - MET Police Booking- For burglary offence
  - This is an ongoing murder trial, the current interpreter can not attend on Monday afternoon. Please DO NOT USE Mr I----- A---- (LIN/9---/VH----) for this case
  - Now wishes to pursue special reasons argument misled by insurance/sister
  - Assault a girl under 13
  - Required as soon as possible as defendant in custody (Offence Fraudulent Evasion)
  - this is an application to reopen the case (motoring offences)

**The important issue for users is to decide whether entries in the free-form field are actually necessary and, if they are, whether they could be used to identify and harm or embarrass the individual. If uncertain, seek advice from your line manager.**