

Update December 2009

On 7th December 2009 Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS) started providing full linguistic services 24 hours a day. **Organisations can now request interpreters or translators via telephone on 02920 8575000 or by email to wits@gwent.pnn.police.uk**

The WITS project is designed to improve access to public services for people who may otherwise face communication difficulties. It will provide linguistic services in foreign languages, Welsh and British Sign Language (BSL). It was initially developed through a multi-agency partnership approach by Cardiff Council, Gwent Police and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

WITS will provide an improved quality of service from interpreters and translators by:

1. ensuring all of its linguists are fully security vetted to police standards
2. ensuring all of its linguists possess recognised qualifications or have passed a WITS language test.
3. ensuring all of its linguists receive free training in professional interpreting and the Code of Conduct.
4. providing continued professional development opportunities to its linguists by offering them free sector specific training courses, provided in conjunction with the professions served (health, legal or, local government).
5. providing interpreters to organisations in line with their own specific requirements as agreed in their Service Level Agreement with WITS.

WITS will also improve the quality of service and efficiency by providing a one-stop shop with a booking service working 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Public service staff can telephone or email a request for linguistic services, greatly simplifying the process of obtaining linguistic services for our front line staff.

Further, WITS will provide a single monthly invoice to each organisation in a format approved by that organisation, in order to ease their financial administration processes in respect of linguistic services.

In essence the one stop shop should deliver improved quality interpreters and translators who have been security vetted to national police employment standards (higher than CRB), linguistically assessed and trained in professional interpreting. It should also deliver the following financial benefits to service providers:

- Reduced travelling time achieved through training of local interpreters (one Welsh police force has reported that approximately half of its current spend goes on travelling time and expenses). This will not only save on interpreter fees but also reduce staff costs when waiting for an interpreter.
- Reduced booking costs. Currently frontline staff or designated booking staff in each organisation have to make numerous calls to source and book an interpreter. The one stop shop replaces this with one simple phone call.
- Reduced finance administration costs of handling all payment claims, a single monthly invoice will be provided.

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