

PROCUREMENT OPTIONS TEMPLATE

Name of Service: Sign Language and Interpreting Service – Nottinghamshire Deaf Society. The service provides BSL sign language interpreters to deaf citizens and to health/social care professionals, to facilitate the effective communication of deaf people with health professionals and council services and for staff from these services to communicate with Nottingham City’s and Nottinghamshire County’s deaf community. This is a joint contract between Nottingham City Council, Notts County Council, and Nottingham City CCG on behalf of all Notts County CCGs. The service provides around 950 drop-in appointments and 900 booked appointments each year.

<u>CURRENT SERVICE</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>EVIDENCE</u>
<p>STRATEGIC FIT What is the model of provision that is required within the review area?</p>	LL	All services have a statutory obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that ‘reasonable adjustments’ are made to enable deaf people to use their services. Sign Language and Interpreting Service supports services to achieve this. Jointly commissioning the service allows for the economies of scale, and provides an integrated service for Deaf citizens.
<p>To what extent does the current service accord with the new model of provision? If it is not an exact fit to what alterations to the service specification would be required (i.e. minor, moderate, substantial)</p>	LL	<p>The service fits with the desired model by providing flexible support to deaf citizens. The service can be booked by either the citizen or the service provider. Drop-in advice sessions are available to the citizen. Online support via Skype is available outside office hours.</p> <p>The provider is keen to develop the service to utilise advances in technology and increase the amount of appointment available online. This would represent increased value for money to both the commissioners and the provider.</p>
<p>Is the service difficult to specify or quantify?</p>	LL	<p>No - the overarching aim of the service is to provide high quality, comprehensive and effective BSL interpretation to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity of access to primary health and social care services for those citizens who are profoundly deaf and who live, or are registered with a GP within Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County. • Deaf people to live independently and to actively engage in the community • Early intervention to services in order to prevent health and social care needs from escalating

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to information providing choice and control to improve life outcomes for people from the deaf community • Effective engagement in consultation about local services and issues <p>The service does this through providing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A drop-in direct access service to enable Deaf people to directly access signing and interpretation provision. 2. Access to a range of sign language interpreters who can support Deaf people to engage with primary health providers local authority provision within the City and the County 3. Access to a range of sign language interpreters for City and County primary health providers and local authority services to book registered sign language interpreters to enable Deaf people to engage effectively with these services. This includes engagement and participation events and activities. 4. Access to sign language interpreters on an emergency basis including out of hours support on a defined basis <p>Primary health providers include; primary care settings such as GPs, dentists and opticians. It does not include hospital and outpatient support. (The provider has a separate contract with NUH).</p>
<p>PROPERTY & LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS Is the current location of service (area and property) appropriate for the service/client group?</p>	<p>LL</p>	<p>Yes, the location of the Deaf Society community centre is relatively central, and accessible by public transport. The centre is well known by, and has long-standing associations with, the deaf community of Nottinghamshire since 1930s. This is especially important given the older average age of service user group.</p>
<p>Is it likely that there are alternative buildings readily available within the City where the service could be delivered? What would be the implications of relocation? E.g. capital investment, impact on service users?</p>	<p>LL</p>	<p>Yes the provider has considered re-location, and has identified that this may potentially result in some long term cost savings to the provider. Due to the historic significance of the community centre to the deaf community, the provider has consulted with the service users and taken the strategic direction to remain in the current building and make commercial use of it.</p> <p>The business/management team is co-located with the service users.</p>
<p>What are the neighbourhood considerations?</p>	<p>LL</p>	<p>No noted impact on current neighbourhood. The location of Deaf Society</p>

<p>What is the evidence of impact (or lack of) in the current neighbourhood? What are the potential implications of relocation?</p>		<p>community centre includes other offices and businesses. If relocated, provider would need to ensure that any alternative location would need to be suitable for both management, and service users passing through, and that this would not be disruptive to residents.</p>																																										
<p>What arrangements are in place with the landlord regarding provision of support by another organisation? What is the potential for achieving agreement with the landlord to secure the property for the purpose of tendering the support service?</p>	<p>LL</p>	<p>In line with the historic link between the Nottinghamshire Deaf Society and their premises, the provider is undertaking a long term programme of maintenance and re-investment in the building. The premises are a source of identity and pride to both the provider and the deaf community. Therefore it would not be viable to ask NDS to give up their location to an alternative provider to deliver this service.</p>																																										
<p>CURRENT PERFORMANCE Assessment of the performance under the current contract. Is performance good or could it be improved to acceptable level through contract management? (Include particular reference to: comparative number of citizens accommodated and the level of positive outcomes delivered): benchmarking should be undertaken with both City and other LA's where possible; findings of any quality assessment undertaken.</p>	<p>LL</p>	<p>There are no issues with the performance of the service. Quarterly monitoring has shown that the service meets the needs of the service users. The following table is a summary of performance against the targets in the contract during 2014/15.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="949 676 1899 1310"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="3">Performance Indicator</th> <th colspan="3">2014/15</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="3">Total</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Target</th> <th>Actual</th> <th>Perf</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>The percentage of users who rated their satisfaction 'good' or 'better'</td> <td>85%</td> <td>96%</td> <td>112%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of episodes of support provided: CITY</td> <td>400</td> <td>599</td> <td>150%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of episodes of support provided: COUNTY</td> <td>276</td> <td>355</td> <td>129%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of different individuals supported: CITY</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>121</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of different individuals supported: COUNTY</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>99</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of interpreting requests from and for Nottinghamshire County Council</td> <td>220</td> <td>394</td> <td>179%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of interpreting requests from and for Nottinghamshire County Council</td> <td>200</td> <td>182</td> <td>91%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of face-to-face appointments lasted:</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>965</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The service employs 6 interpreters. Calculations of average hourly costs are complex due to the variable and intensive nature of signing. Length of sessions can</p>	Performance Indicator	2014/15			Total			Target	Actual	Perf	The percentage of users who rated their satisfaction 'good' or 'better'	85%	96%	112%	Number of episodes of support provided: CITY	400	599	150%	Number of episodes of support provided: COUNTY	276	355	129%	Number of different individuals supported: CITY	N/A	121		Number of different individuals supported: COUNTY	N/A	99		Number of interpreting requests from and for Nottinghamshire County Council	220	394	179%	Number of interpreting requests from and for Nottinghamshire County Council	200	182	91%	Number of face-to-face appointments lasted:	N/A	965	
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mean that multiple interpreters are required, specialist knowledge is required for some areas (for example health, legal advice), and travel time is a factor. This can mean that costs per hour are quite high. Analysis of costs seems to indicate that interpreters are paid approximately £20.55 per hour, which is in line with prices charged by other sign language interpreting service providers (average costs are £20-40 per hour).

The table below shows costs to local authorities in other areas –

Local Authority	Service	Cost – office hours	Cost – out of hours
Bristol City Council	BSL Interpreting	£45 per hour	£55 per hour emergency
	Telephone interpreting	£1 per minute	
Brent Borough Council	BSL Interpreting	£35 per hour	£52.50 after 5.30pm/£70 weekends
	Telephone interpreting	£35 per hour	
Leeds City Council	BSL Interpreting	£45 per hour	£60 per hour
Herefordshire Council	BSL Interpreting	£22 per hour	£27 per hour
	Telephone interpreting	£3 per 15 mins	£3.50 per 15 mins out of hours

VALUE FOR MONEY

Does current service offer value for money based on hourly rate and weekly unit price in relation to relevant benchmarking comparisons and considering quality and performance issues? If not what is the prospect of renegotiating the service cost?

LL

Quality of service is high and it meets the outcomes required. Comparisons of service – hourly costs below assume the maximum number of hours per session for face to face sessions.

Nottinghamshire Deaf Society No. of sessions -	Sessions per year 2014/15	Hours per year 2014/15
Duty - drop in - City	599	599
Duty - drop in - County	355	355
Face to face - up to 2 hrs	888	1776
Face to face - up to 4 hrs	77	308
Yearly cost £170,000		
	£55.96 per hour	
	or £88.59 per intervention	

		<p>NDS sign language service is in the upper price range compared to services provided in some other local authority areas. It's possible that a lower price could be obtained by commissioning sign language services as part of wider language and interpretation services. There is a risk in doing so, that a general language provider would be unable to adequately meet service users' needs, generating complaints and dissatisfaction. This model has been poorly received by service users in the past, and the ability of general language providers to deliver sign language interpreting has been called into question.</p> <p>There is a recent example of a local health provider commissioned sign language services as part of a wider language and interpretation service to increase value for money. The outcomes were extremely poor and the health provider experienced a high volume of complaints from deaf service users. This led to the health provider terminating the contract and making spot contract arrangements with NDS.</p> <p>There is added value in having the provider co-located with the service users. The premises are a long-standing hub for the deaf community, and the provider is integral to, and highly responsive to the needs of the community. This added value cannot be adequately reflected in the cost of the service.</p> <p>Analysis of the proportionate levels of activity across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County appear reflective of the of contract values.</p> <p>Recent discussions with Nottinghamshire Deaf Society have made it clear that their unit costs cannot be reduced at this time, therefore re-negotiated a lower service cost would mean reducing the volume of work required and/or imposing a cap. The provider is working to expand use of technology in delivering the service, and as more sessions are able to take place via Skype it's likely that unit costs will be reduced.</p>
<p>How likely is it that the cost of the service may increase as a result of tendering – how is this evidenced?</p>	<p>LL</p>	<p>The service costs are not likely to change significantly as a result of tendering (see above costings). The provider has identified that unit costs are not reducible at this time. There is no guarantee that bids from other providers would offer significantly improved value for money.</p>

<p>DEGREE OF COMPETITON & MARKET MATURITY Is the market sufficiently developed with enough providers to guarantee true competition?</p>	<p>LL</p>	<p>Yes – there are a number of sign language and translation services that could meet this need, however Nottinghamshire Deaf Society are the sole provider who have experience of the local dialect. The quality of the service currently provided is high. It's likely that any reduction in costs would only be achieved by reduction in either volume of activity or in quality of service.</p>
<p>Business / Best Value reasons for requesting Exemption from NCC Contract Regulations to allow for service to be delivered by a particular provider</p>	<p>LL</p>	<p>In order to achieve better value for money a competitive tender would be better placed in 1-2 years when both providers and Nottingham City Council have developed better facilities for utilising technology in interpreting sessions.</p>
<p>LEGAL, REGULATORY & RISK EU/NCC financial regs & TUPE, NCC provision. What are the risks of tendering/not tendering including: citizens, landlord issues, capacity/resources for tendering</p>	<p>KL/AJ</p>	<p>Legal advice is that to extend the contract <i>does</i> take it over the EU procurement threshold, however the value of the extension itself is below the EU procurement threshold. The risk of a legal challenge is perceived to be very low.</p>
<p>CONCLUSION: COSTS AND BENEFITS OF TENDERING Does the recommendation relating to other service provision within the review area have a bearing/impact on the proposed recommendation relating to this service?</p>	<p>LL</p>	<p>There is limited other relevant service provision – there is one other small value contract to support the Nottinghamshire deaf community centre. This contract is also due to end, and an exemption from tendering is recommended on the grounds that there is no other appropriate provider.</p>
<p>In view of all the factors considered, are the anticipated costs & risks of tendering disproportionate to the anticipated benefits?</p>	<p>LL</p>	<p><u>Yes. Recommend extending the contract for a further 2 years.</u></p>