

# Guide to quality assurance of the MoJ language services contract



# Contents

<b>1</b>	Introduction	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	Complaints	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	The Register	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	Assessments	<b>6</b>
<b>4.1</b>	Mystery Shopping	<b>6</b>
<b>4.1.1</b>	Face to face interpreting	<b>6</b>
<b>4.1.2</b>	Telephone interpreting	<b>8</b>
<b>4.1.3</b>	Translation and transcription	<b>9</b>
<b>4.2</b>	Spot Check	<b>10</b>
<b>4.2.1</b>	Face to face interpreting	<b>10</b>
<b>4.2.2</b>	Telephone interpreting	<b>10</b>
<b>4.2.3</b>	Translation and transcription	<b>10</b>
<b>4.3</b>	In-person	<b>10</b>
<b>4.3.1</b>	In-person assessment process	<b>11</b>
<b>4.3.2</b>	Appeals process	<b>11</b>
<b>4.4</b>	Assessors	<b>12</b>
<b>5</b>	Contact details	<b>12</b>



# 1. Introduction

The Language Shop's role for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is to provide quality assurance across the translation and interpreting services provided by thebigword and Clarion UK, working to ensure services are of a high standard, accurate and safe throughout the life of the contracts.

We have a number of different responsibilities. These include investigating complaints made to us or the supplier about the quality of its services. We carry out audits of the suppliers on an annual basis as well as customer satisfaction surveys to ensure users are happy with the services they receive. Our most significant role is to assess Language Professionals' work, either during or after it has been carried out, depending on the type of service. We also undertake evaluations of Language Professionals' performance on request and in person.

This guide aims to provide Language Professionals, stakeholders and MoJ end users with more detail about our role: what to expect, what services we will be providing and your role in quality assurance.

If you have any questions, please either visit <https://moj.languageshop.org> or contact us directly at [moj.languageshop@newham.gov.uk](mailto:moj.languageshop@newham.gov.uk).

# 2. Complaint

Feedback, both positive and negative, is integral to the quality assurance role. The Language Shop has developed an independent complaints process, which is accessible and open to any party.

- In the first instance we suggest complaints be made directly to the Language Service Suppliers. Visit <https://www.thebigword.com/moj/index.html> for complaints about Language Professionals supplied by thebigword and [www.clarion-uk.com/complaints](https://www.clarion-uk.com/complaints) for those provided by Clarion.
- All complaints made to Language Service Suppliers concerning Language Professionals' quality or conduct will be referred to The Language Shop for appropriate action.
- Complaints can also be made to The Language Shop, by visiting <https://moj.languageshop.org/complaint>. This could be preferable in cases where you feel neutrality is important, or if you have already complained to a supplier and feel dissatisfied with the response. If you prefer to complain directly to us for any reason at all, please do so.

- When leaving a complaint, please provide as many details as possible, including the booking reference, any related previous complaint references, the name or registration number of the Language Professional, the time and date of the incident and as much information about the problem as you can.
- We do not encourage making the same complaint to us and a Language Service Supplier at the same time. However, if you choose to do so please let us know and provide any relevant complaint reference numbers so that we can ensure a single joined-up response.
- Complaints concerning a Language Professional's quality and competence will trigger a Spot Check or In-person assessment of the Language Professional.
- We hope that you will not need to, but you can also make complaints about our own services via our website at <https://moj.languageshop.org>.

## 3. The Register

The Language Shop holds a Register of Language Professionals on behalf of the MoJ. Only those Language Professionals whose details are included on this Register are permitted to work on MoJ bookings made under the Language Services Framework. Language Service Suppliers thebigword and Clarion UK are responsible for ensuring that details of all the Language Professionals who they wish to use on MoJ bookings are on the Register.

There are two versions of the Register: a Full Register and the Summary Register. The **Full Register** contains full details of the Language Professionals and is available to a limited number of MoJ contract management staff, The Language Shop and the organisation that the Language Professionals work for.

The **Summary Register** contains only the following information for each Language Professional:

- The Language Shop Register ID given to that Language Professional.
- Details of the languages they work in.
- Their professional memberships.
- Security clearance.

This version of the Register is available by request through our website: <https://moj.languageshop.org/search>.

No personal information, such as names, addresses and contact details, is included on the Register.

If a Language Professional fails any of our quality assessments, they may be suspended or removed from the Register (further details are provided later in this document). In either case, the details of the Language Professional will be removed from the Summary Register until they are reinstated.

#### **What Language Professionals need to know:**

- The Language Service Supplier you work for should have sought your consent to include your details on the Register. You therefore do not need to take any action.
- The information on the full Register is only available to a limited number of individuals and is held on secure servers by The Language Shop.
- It is not your responsibility to ensure your details are included on the Register. The Language Service Supplier that you work for will do this on your behalf. If your contact details change, please ensure that you inform your Language Service Supplier immediately so that they can update the Register.

#### **What MoJ service users need to know:**

- The Register must hold the details of every Language Professional that is deployed under the Language Services contract.
- Every Language Professional will have a Register ID that will be printed on their ID badge.
- If you know the Register ID of a Language Professional, you can use our website to confirm that they are currently active on the Register and find details of the languages they work in and any professional memberships they hold.  
You can apply for access to do this on our website at <https://moj.languageshop.org/search>.
- If you suspect that a Language Professional whose details are not on the Register is working on the Language Services contract, please contact The Language Shop by visiting <https://moj.languageshop.org/feedback>.



## 4. Assessments

The Language Shop ensures that quality remains high across all departments. Assessments of Language Professionals are our primary tool for measuring quality across all departments, service types and languages. The assessment process and methodology employed will differ depending on what type of service is being assessed (translation, face to face booking etc.) and what has triggered the assessment (a complaint, a random selection or a request by a service user or supplier). This section of the guide explains how each type is carried out.

### 4.1. Mystery Shopping assessments

These are assessments, planned in advance, sampling a range of booking types, languages and Language Professionals across the contract.

Part of the mystery shopping assessment is to confirm that the Language Professional has the correct credentials on the Register for the booking in question. This is a desk-based exercise to confirm that the qualifications, level of experience and security clearance are suitable for the job the Language Professional is working on.

The methodology and assessment criteria for the assessment itself are specific to the type of booking, as follows:

#### 4.1.1 Face to face interpreting

- An assessor will attend an interpreter's booking and carry out an assessment of that interpreter to ensure that they meet the required standard for that booking.
- The assessment will not be announced to the interpreter in advance, however it is likely in some circumstances that the interpreter will know they are being assessed, during or shortly before their assignment.
- The assessor will position him or herself to see and hear sufficiently to allow an assessment to take place. This may be in the public gallery if, for example, the booking takes place in a court, or it might be much closer to the interpreter. If it is not possible to see and hear sufficiently, the assessment will not be completed.
- The assessor will use a prescribed set of assessment criteria, which result in an overall pass or fail. There is no score for any assessment other than pass or fail.
- The assessment criteria broadly fall into the following key areas:
  - Adherence to MoJ Language Professional Code of Conduct
  - Subject matter knowledge
  - Interpreting technique and accuracy
  - Language ability.
- In general, a failure will be caused by something that has a material detrimental impact on the assignment.
- There is no fixed duration for an assessment. The assessor will remain as long as is needed. This may vary significantly depending on the amount of interpreting taking place; they may not be present at the start or remain until the end of a booking.

- Assessments may also be made by review of audio recorded by the MoJ in courts. The same assessment criteria will be used.

### Language Professionals need to know:

- You will be informed by us or the agency you work for as to the outcome of every assessment.
- There is nothing you need to do differently for an assessment. Just complete your assignment in the normal way.
- If you realise before or during an assignment that you are being assessed, try not to worry. We are not trying to catch you out.
- If you have been assessed once before, this does not mean you will not be assessed again.
- If you are assessed more than once, this does not necessarily mean that we are concerned about your performance.
- You will be provided with feedback if you fail an assessment so that you can identify areas for development (see In-person assessment process for the next steps following an assessment failure).

### What MoJ service users need to know

- If special access is required, which may include arranging for our assessor to be in a position from which the interpreter can be seen and heard, we will notify you in advance by email.
- **It is vital that, if you receive information about an assessment and you are not responsible for access arrangements, you pass the email on to the relevant person.**
- If access for an assessor will not be possible due to the nature of the booking or venue, please inform The Language Shop as soon as possible. This is crucial to the assessment process.
- If you need to inform anyone else about the assessment (such as a judge in a court hearing), it is your responsibility to do so. Please inform them that the assessor will be taking notes and, where allowed, may be using a laptop or tablet.
- We will assume access has been arranged and relevant parties have been sufficiently notified unless we hear otherwise from you.
- Our assessments will provide the best results when the Language Professional has no knowledge in advance that they are going to take place. Please therefore do not alert them to the assessment.

#### 4.1.2 Telephone interpreting

- Assessors will usually assess telephone interpreting by listening to recorded calls.
- As with face-to-face assessments, the assessor will use a prescribed set of assessment criteria, which result in an overall pass or fail. There is no score for any assessment other than pass or fail.
- The assessment criteria broadly fall into the following key areas:
  - Adherence to MoJ Language Professional Code of Conduct
  - Subject matter knowledge
  - Interpreting technique and accuracy
  - Language ability.
- The assessment will also take into account the potential impact of poor line quality and background noise on a Language Professional's performance. The Language Professional will not be penalised for environmental interference that is beyond his or her control.
- In general, a failure is caused by something that has a material detrimental impact on the assignment. Minor errors and those that are corrected will not result in a failure.

#### What Language Professionals need to know:

- You will be informed by us or thebigword as to the outcome of every assessment.
- If you have been assessed once before, this does not mean you will not be assessed again.
- If you are assessed more than once, this does not necessarily mean that we are concerned about your performance.
- You will be provided with feedback if you fail an assessment so that you can identify areas for development (see In-person assessment process for the next steps following an assessment failure).

#### What MoJ service users need to know:

- In order for a call to be assessed, it will first need to be recorded. When placing the request for an interpreter via thebigword's telephone booking service, select the option to record the call.



#### 4.1.3 Translation and transcription

Translations and transcriptions will be assessed by reviewing completed translations, with reference to the source materials and any other instructions given to the Language Professional.

- Each assessment will result in either pass or fail.
- The assessment methodology is based on an independent standard called MQM (Multidimensional Quality Metrics), which is an EU-backed translation quality assessment framework. We have adapted this framework to minimise the impact of factors relating to style or preferential word-choice and focused on whether the translation or transcription is accurate and fit for purpose. Formatting such as bold, italic or choice of font is ignored for the purposes of the assessment, unless it has a material impact on the understanding or meaning of the text.
- When evaluating a translation or transcription, the assessor logs critical errors and omissions. The assessor objectively logs the number, type and severity of errors and this determines whether the result is a pass or a fail. This helps to remove bias or subjectivity: it is a mathematical decision based on error rate, not a personal view of whether the assessor liked the translation.
- The assessor will use a prescribed set of assessment criteria and measure the number of errors in the final document against these criteria. These errors will be defined as minor, major or critical. One critical error in a document will result in a fail. The number of other errors resulting in a fail will depend on the word count being assessed.
- Errors are classified into one of three primary types:
  - Mechanical (e.g spelling, grammar)
  - Accuracy (e.g mistranslation, omission)
  - Content (e.g inconsistent, unintelligible).

#### What Language Professionals need to know:

- You will be informed by us or thebigword as to the outcome of every assessment.
- If your work has been assessed before, this does not mean you will not be assessed again.
- If your work is assessed more than once, this does not necessarily mean that we are concerned about your performance.
- The assessment process has been specifically designed to focus on objective issues, such as missing information, incorrect translations and wording which materially changes the meaning of the text. The assessors do not take into consideration matters of style, tone of voice or preferential choices of terminology. To ensure successful assessments, Language Professionals should spell-check and proofread their work and ensure that there are no critical errors or omissions.

## 4.2. Spot Check Assessments

Spot Check assessments follow the same structure as Mystery Shopping assessments. The key difference is that they are targeted at a specific Language Professional, at the request of the MoJ or in response to a complaint.

### 4.2.1 Face to face bookings

The Spot Check will be carried out at an upcoming suitable booking of the Language Professional or by the use of recorded audio, where available.

### 4.2.2 Telephone interpreting

This could be carried out on any recorded call that the Language Professional has interpreted. If the Spot Check was requested in response to a complaint, the call relating to the complaint will be assessed, if available. Where no previously recorded calls are available, the Language Professional may be required to undertake an In-person assessment (see description below).

### 4.2.3 Translation and transcription

Any previous translation could be assessed. If the Spot Check was generated in response to a complaint, the translation relating to that complaint will be reviewed.

#### What MoJ commissioners need to know:

- You can request Spot Check assessments of a Language Professional at any time by completing the form you will find on our website at <https://moj.languageshop.org/spot-check>.
- They can be used to quality check a Language Professional who you may have concerns about.
- They may also be employed in advance of a crucial assignment to ensure that the Language Professional you intend to use meets the required standard.

## 4.3. In-person assessments

A Language Professional will usually be required to undertake an In-person assessment in the case of a failed planned Mystery Shopping or Spot Check interpreting assessment. Translators who fail a Mystery Shopping assessment will complete a new project which will be assessed. An In-person assessment may be requested at any time or used in place of a Spot Check where a complaint is received.

Failure of a Mystery Shopping assessment results in that Language Professional being suspended from the Register until such time as they pass an In-person assessment (or in the case of a translators, a second piece of work).

#### 4.3.1 In-person assessment process

- The Language Professional will be invited to attend a role-play assessment carried out by a native speaker and one other individual.
- Face to face interpreters will be given a choice between attending in-person or via video link.
- The In-person assessment will be carried out over the phone in the instance of a failed Telephone Interpreting Mystery Shopping assessment.
- A date and time for the assessment will be offered within 10 days of failing the Mystery Shopping assessment in most cases.
- Failure to attend an agreed In-person assessment appointment without prior notice will result in failure of the assessment.
- Where a Language Professional passes an In-Person assessment, they will be reinstated on the Register such that they can continue to work across the Language Services contract.
- Failure of an In-person assessment will normally result in removal from the Register. The Language Professional will be provided with a development plan and may, at the complete discretion of MoJ, be invited to attend a further assessment at some point in the future.

#### What Language Professionals need to know:

- If you choose to undertake a video assessment, it will be your responsibility to ensure you have the appropriate equipment, software and internet connection to take part. The requirements will be set out clearly in advance of the assessment.
- The costs of your time and travel for an In-person assessment will not be paid by The Language Shop.

#### 4.3.2 Appeals process

This provides a mechanism for Language Professionals to appeal a failed assessment. Guidance on how to appeal will be provided to Language Professionals at this stage in the process. To find out more, email [moj.languageshop@newham.gov.uk](mailto:moj.languageshop@newham.gov.uk).

##### *Failed Mystery Shopping/Spot Check assessment*

The process of appealing a failed Mystery Shopping assessment is to attend an In-person assessment for further evaluation.

#### *Failed In-person assessment*

If an appeal is made concerning the outcome of an In-Person assessment, another assessor may carry out a review of that assessment. In addition, a further In-person assessment may be carried out, however the full cost of this second In-person assessment is likely to be payable by the Language Professional, if it upholds the findings of the first.

## **4.4. Assessors**

All our assessors are freelance Language Professionals, skilled and experienced in the language they are assessing and the type of work MoJ Language Professionals are carrying out. They will be trained by The Language Shop in the specific assessment methodologies we are employing, and their work regularly checked to ensure consistency.

Before and after every assessment, our assessors will be required to formally confirm that they are aware of no conflict of interest that would prevent them from carrying out that assessment. This includes confirmation that they are not assessing a Language Professional with whom they have a personal or financial relationship, and that they have no personal interests in the assignment or anyone else involved in it.

Should a possible conflict be declared, the impact will be assessed and the result of the associated assessment may be disregarded.

Many Language Professionals operating in the same language and region know one another. This does not necessarily indicate a conflict of interest and each situation will be considered individually.

## **5. Further information**

Please visit our website for further information: <https://moj.languageshop.org>

To contact us directly, please call **020 3373 4000**

or email [moj.languageshop@newham.gov.uk](mailto:moj.languageshop@newham.gov.uk).