

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION POLICY

Responsible Officer

Head of People Services and Communications

Aim of the Policy

Phoenix is committed to providing excellent customer service to all of our residents, and to taking every action possible to safeguard our residents. As a community gateway, we also want all residents to have the opportunity to be involved and influence our services.

We may occasionally need to translate documents and provide interpretation services for people who have difficulties understanding written or spoken English or who have hearing impairments. We may also need to supply materials in alternative, accessible formats for people with visual impairments or learning disabilities.

The policy seeks to:

- encourage staff to proactively plan to meet customers needs and ensure that staff have the knowledge of how and when to access interpretation and translation services
- ensure residents are aware of the services available to them and ensure our legal and moral duties as a landlord are fulfilled.

Our aim is to:

- ensure measures are in place to support communication with non-English speakers, people for whom English is a second language, for those who are deaf, blind or partially sighted and for those with learning disabilities
- deliver the best possible value for money for residents and support our residents to be part of the Phoenix community. That includes supporting and encouraging residents to learn English if they do not have English as a first language.

The policy supports our strategic objective “Sustainability – for our business and our community”.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to communications and contact between Phoenix Community Housing employees (or other representatives of the organisation) and residents.

The Policy

- 1.1 All documents intended for distribution to more than 50 households are approved by the Communications Team. Members of the Communications Team work with our Residents Communication Group to ensure these documents are:
 - written in plain English that is jargon free

- free of any acronyms
 - produced in our corporate font (Arial for letters, Calibri for other written documents) at size 12 or above.
- 1.2 Documents will be offered in translation or in alternative formats on request. However, depending on the nature of the service and the translation, the format requested and the budget available, Phoenix may decide to present information using other methods/resources, such as through an interpreter, and reserves the right to refuse requests. We will assess the impact when we refuse a request, final authority for refusals will rest with the Head of People Services and Communications. We will hold a file of all translated standard documents or documents provided in alternative formats.
 - 1.3 We will record at tenancy sign-up whether residents have English as a first language and whether they have family members with English as a first language, with whom they have regular contact and who can act as informal translators/interpreters.
 - 1.4 As part of the tenancy sign-up process we will record any disabilities, including visual or hearing impairments, preferred methods of communications and whether residents request information in alternative formats, such as Braille, large print and audio.
 - 1.5 Details of residents' communication needs will be recorded on our housing management system or customer relationship management system and regularly updated based on information provided by residents.
 - 1.6 Where staff have any doubt, at sign-up or during future contacts, whether residents are able to fully understand information, they will arrange for a telephone / face to face interpreter from our designated supplier to assess any ongoing translation/interpretation needs and to signpost relevant support/English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.
 - 1.7 We will always agree interpretation services for anyone reporting domestic abuse, hate crimes or other crimes.
 - 1.8 We will retain and regularly update a staff language pool, based on existing fluency in languages other than English, to provide 'as and when' face to face or telephone interpretation.
 - 1.9 When promoting events we will highlight translation and interpretation services. However, they may not be available at events unless requested in advance
 - 1.10 We will ensure that, to the best of our ability, all websites managed by Phoenix meet the highest possibility accessibility standards in line with World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines.
 - 1.11 We will allocate an annual budget for translation and interpretation services. Large print copies of documents will be provided as part of our operational budgets based on residents' needs/preferences as recorded on our systems.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or whenever there are changes to best practice or legislation.

Legislation

Equality Act 2010.

Reference to other documents and associated policies and procedures

Including:

- Communications Strategy
- Customer Access Strategy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Phoenix Standards

Definitions

Term/acronym	Description
Resident	Includes tenants, freeholders and leaseholders.
Phoenix	Phoenix Community Housing.

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