

## LSA Circular 20/19

18 September 2019

Dear Practitioner,

- i. **Change of Service provider for Face to Face Interpreting and Translating Services in Legal Aid Cases**
- ii. **Change to requests for interpreters if there is no case on LAMS, see paragraphs 18-21**

This is to advise that the Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland ('the Agency') will be changing service provider in relation to the contract for Face to Face Interpreting and Translating Services, with effect from **Wednesday 18 September 2019.**

2. The new supplier is **Diversity NI.**
3. This contract will replace the current arrangements for engaging the services of a face to face in **all** legal aid cases.

### Supplier Details

4. The contract is with:

Diversity NI  
178 Upper Newtownards Road  
Belfast  
BT4 3ES

5. The contract manager details are:

**Contract manager: Paolina Hawthorne**  
**Email :** [booking@diversityni.co.uk](mailto:booking@diversityni.co.uk)  
**Telephone :** **028 9047 3737**

## Range of Services

6. The contract provides for face to face language interpreting services for spoken languages.
7. The contract provides for a wide range of languages. If, however, a practitioner experiences any difficulties in the booking process they should contact the Contract Manager, Paolina Hawthorne, to discuss. Please aim to provide as much notice as possible to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be made. The Agency recognises the need to book advance slots for a number of languages where there are a limited number of interpreters. For the avoidance of doubt, practitioners should indicate in their request why an advance booking is necessary.
8. The Agency also has an ongoing contract with 'Flex Language Services' for transcription/translation and 'The Big Word' for telephone interpretation. Please continue to follow the existing booking process for same or contact the Agency for further information.
9. Please be advised that for other hearing/visually impairment communication, the Agency has an ongoing contract with 'Action for Hearing Loss'. For any specific bookings please contact 0845 685 8000 stating that your request will be for the Legal Services Agency NI. 'Action on Hearing Loss' will supply you with an Agreement to Pay Form which is to be uploaded as a supporting document on to the LAMS case.

## Moving onto the Contract Arrangements

10. Any face to face interpreting work required from 18 September 2019 onwards **must** be booked via 'Diversity NI'. Prior authority from the Agency must be obtained in advance, in line with current practice. Any face to face interpreting/translation work required up to 17 September 2019 should continue to be made via 'FLEX'.
11. For clarification, **any bookings made for interpreters required from 18 September 2019 onwards, the Agency will only grant authority for interpreting services to be provided by 'Diversity NI'**. The Agency will not authorise bookings for 18 September 2019 onwards, for any other firms or individuals previously engaged by solicitors, save for very limited circumstances. Please contact the Agency on the contact details below if you have any specific needs in relation to this.

12. If a practitioner has any face to face interpreting/translation work booked with 'FLEX' for after 17 September 2019, they should ensure this is cancelled directly with 'FLEX'. A new booking should then be made with 'Diversity NI', the practitioner should ensure that the Agency is made aware of the change.
13. As a contract will be in place from 18 September 2019, the Agency will not be in a position to authorise fees for any other firm/interpreter engaged in face to face interpreting after 17 September 2019. Practitioners are asked to note that any such fees submitted will not be accepted for payment.
14. Practitioners should refer to '[LAMS Guidance – How to apply for an interpreter authority](#)' dated 23 August 2019, which is available on the Legal Services Agency website and can be located under the '[LSANI guidance for LAMS](#)' page.

### **Out of hours and Emergency Requests**

15. Routinely, all interpreting/translating sessions will take place during normal business hours Monday to Friday (8.00am to 6.00pm). However, it is recognised that there will be occasions when an interpreter/translator may be required to work outside of the normal working day e.g. weekends, bank holidays and after 6.00pm.
16. 'Diversity NI' is contracted to provide services outside of normal business hours (subject to the solicitor having obtained the prior authority from the Agency to engage an interpreter/translator).
17. For emergency out of office hours and weekend services, the practitioner should contact 'Diversity NI' directly. While routinely, prior authority must be granted by the Agency before a booking for an interpreter can be confirmed with 'Diversity NI', it is recognised this may not be possible for emergency out of hours or weekend services. In such cases, the practitioner should make contact directly with 'Diversity NI' and follow up with the Agency at the first opportunity i.e. next day/Monday morning to allow the proper authorisation to be put in place.

**Diversity NI - Telephone number for emergency requests: 02890 473737**

18. The current transitional 'case critical' arrangements end on 30 September 2019.

19. If the interpreter is sought for a case which is on LAMS, practitioners must use LAMS to seek authorisation for an interpreter. However, if the interpreter is sought for a matter which is not on LAMS, the new email facility must be used from 18 September 2019 onwards.

**New email facility:** [interpreters@lsani.gov.uk](mailto:interpreters@lsani.gov.uk)

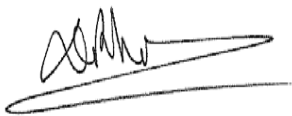
20. As soon as an interpreter is authorised through the case critical email, the practitioner must proceed immediately to submit a request on LAMS for advice and assistance, representation lower or higher courts as appropriate. Thereafter the practitioner must submit the request on LAMS for the interpreter authority which they secured through the case critical email. The case critical authority for the interpreter should be attached in support of the request when submitted on LAMS.

21. The Agency will require practitioners to ensure that all necessary applications are submitted onto LAMS within the 10 working days outlined in [circular 14/19](#).

If you have any queries, please contact Tracey Blair, LSA Organisational Contract Manager:

**Email:** [interpreters@lsani.gov.uk](mailto:interpreters@lsani.gov.uk)  
**Telephone:** 02890408888

Yours faithfully,



**Paul Andrews**  
**Chief Executive**