

Policy	Office of the Public Guardian Language Services Policy	
Approved by:	Public Guardian; Natalie Siegel-Brown	
Date effective	February 2017	
Review date	February 2018	
Application	The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) Language Services Policy is applicable across all areas of the OPG	
Related	<i>Booking an interpreter practice direction</i> <i>Working with interpreters practice guide</i>	

The *OPG Language Service Policy* is to be read in conjunction with the *booking an interpreter procedural guide*. An additional resource – OPG’s *working with interpreters practice guide* has been developed to support this policy and practice direction.

1. Relevant Legislation

This policy is supported by the following policies and legislation:

- *The Public Guardian Act 2014;*
- *Queensland Language Services Policy & Guidelines 2016; and*
- *Queensland Multicultural Recognition Act 2016 and Multicultural Queensland Charter.*

2. Purpose

OPG is committed to protecting and promoting the rights and interests of Queensland’s vulnerable youth and adults with impaired capacity.

We recognise that a number of clients seeking our services do not have adequate English proficiency to access these services. All OPG clients will have fair access to our services regardless of ethnicity and language ability through an interpreter.

3. Context

Queenslanders hold more than 100 religious beliefs, speak over 220 languages, and come from more than 220 countries. Approximately ten percent of Queenslanders speak a language other than English at home. The 2011 Census reported over one-third of Queenslanders were either born overseas and/or have at least one parent born overseas.

The Multicultural Affairs Queensland *Language Services Guidelines* (Pg.1) outlines the importance for Queensland government agencies to adopt effective language services to:

- help people overcome complex systems;
- ensure that inappropriate or inadequate services are not provided due to misunderstanding of customers’ needs;
- ensure health, legal requirements and administrative processes are met;
- reduce the risk of re-victimisation;

- reduce the risk of litigation related to inadequate service provision; and
- enhance the quality of program and service delivery.

OPG is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible to all clients, including those who are not able to communicate adequately in English.

4. Policy Principles

OPG, in alignment with *Queensland Government Language Services Policy* (Qld LSP), will:

- deliver effective, efficient and inclusive services by providing interpreters for clients with limited English proficiency;
- work towards ensuring publicly available material concerning OPG services, including factsheets, guides and posters are available in languages other than English, or in a format that is readily translated;
- inform its clients, and the general public, that a qualified interpreter will be provided as required verbally and by displaying the National Interpreter Symbol;
- ensure staff, especially staff working directly with clients, are familiar with the rationale for engaging, and the role of, an interpreter – giving particular consideration to section 4.1 of the associated practice guide relating to ascertaining when an interpreter may be required;
- maintain a register of accredited interpreters;
- implement and maintain a booking system for engaging interpreters;
- will make Queensland Interpreter Cards publicly available;
- maintain a register of language proficiency of staff with the aim of utilising their skills in the planning for and implementation of language services;
- engage NAATI accredited interpreters through recognised and accredited language service providers (currently TIS National);
- support interpreters by providing pre-briefing and debriefing meetings; and
- maximise the use of plain English in its publications (factsheets and guides) and in our communication with clients.

5. Implementation

- This policy is to be communicated to all staff prior to commencement by the Public Guardian and will be made available to all staff via OPG Intranet.
- This policy is to be revisited annually through the OPG policy and practice working group, and in accordance with the Office of the Public Guardian’s risk management framework.
- All program staff are required to read and understand this policy document. Support and clarification is available through management.
- An engaging with interpreter practice paper is developed to support staff to fulfil national best practice principles when engaging interpreters.
- The following team members will have additional responsibilities:

Reporting team	Report annually on interpreter figures to Executive (as per Qld LSP reporting and performance monitoring measures)
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Administration team	Ensure all bookings are completed in accordance with interpreter procedure Maintain a register of interpreter requests
Program managers	Communicate this policy and associated procedures to program staff
Communications team	Make multilingual factsheets available for client groups
Human Resources	Expand staff profiles to include proficiency in other languages

6. Performance monitoring

The following measures will be reviewed annually by the policy and practice working group:

- The number of interpreter sessions booked;
- The number of interpreter sessions cancelled;
- The number of multilingual factsheets available; and
- That all offices have the Queensland Interpreter Card' publicly displayed.

Version #	Approved By and Role	Date	Summary of Changes from Last Version	E-docs Document Number
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2				#
1	Natalie Siegel-Brown, Public Guardian	Insert date DD/MM/YY		#3489978