# Face to Face Interpreting Panel Transition Plan for Eligible Agencies

This transition plan provides agencies with the information required to sign up to the Panel Arrangement for the provision of face to face interpreting. This panel is an Open Syndicated Agreement (OSA) which has been implemented by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

## Context

The Language Assistance Services Programme was established in 2017 to implement the recommendations of a comprehensive review of the provision of interpreting and other language assistance services across the public sector. The programme, which is co-led by MBIE and DIA, has a vision to provide equitable access to public services and information for people with limited/no English language proficiency in New Zealand, such as former refugees and migrants.

Language assistance services - interpreting and translation - are critical to bridge the communication gap and ensure people with limited language skills can access public services and information. Interpreting and translation services are also particularly important for newly arrived refugees and migrants, some of whom have insufficient English language skills to operate independently, integrate quickly into New Zealand life and achieve self-sufficiency.

As part of the programme MBIE has established a new national model for agencies to access face to face interpreting services more effectively and efficiently across New Zealand.

The new model is underpinned by a panel of 13 professional language service providers streamed by geographical location, language group (community languages, te reo Māori and sign language) and where appropriate speciality (health interpreting, legal interpreting or no speciality). These providers have access to hundreds of interpreters, and will support approximately 200 languages.

## Definitions

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| Document | Definition |
| Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) | Signed between MBIE and an eligible agency to allow access to commercially sensitive information such as Price Book, Lead Agency Agreement, and Participating Agency Agreement. |
| Lead Agency Agreement (LAA) | Signed between MBIE and each Panel Provider when the contractual relationship is formed. |
| Participating Agency Agreement (PAA) | The agreement signed between a participating agency and MBIE. |

## Eligibility and joining process

The Panel Agreement for Face to Face Interpreting is available to agencies within the public sector, including Public Service departments, non-Public Service departments (such as the New Zealand Police), Crown Entities, State-owned enterprises and local authorities.

**Eligibility**

* In general, if an agency has previously signed-up to an All of Government or Syndicated (including Telephone and Video Interpreting) contract then it is eligible to join the OSA as a Participating Agency
* For more information about eligibility visit the [NZGP website](https://www.procurement.govt.nz/about-us/mandate-and-eligibility/eligible-agencies-procurement/) or email [New Zealand Government Procurement](https://www.procurement.govt.nz/about-us/contact-us/email-us/) for eligibility assessment
* Once confirmed, the request to join is sent to the MBIE [LAS@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:LAS@mbie.govt.nz).
* The joining agency will receive a Confidentiality Deed to sign and return to MBIE
* MBIE will then send information to help the agency decide whether they should join the agreement
* MBIE will then send the Participating Agency Agreement (PAA)
* The joining agency is to populate the PAA and send it back to [LAS@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:LAS@mbie.govt.nz). Only one PAA is required, which gives access to all of the providers on the panel.

## Agency interpreting requirements

Participating Agency is to analyse information about their usage of interpreting services, such as:

* Which language groups are required (community languages, sign language or te reo Maori)
* Are there any specific languages that are particularly important?
* List of locations needed for each language
* Does the agency need a speciality? (health, legal or no speciality)
* Review priorities: eg languages, locations, IT integration, response times etc

## How to select a provider

Agencies can select a provider based on the best fit for purpose, through undertaking a fair evaluation of the panel and selection of the provider who has the right capacity and capability to fulfil the opportunity and offers the best public value at the time of the purchase.

Guided by agencies’ requirements search the [Face to Face Interpreting MBIE website](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/cross-government-functions/language-assistance-services/face-to-face-interpreting-service-2/). Once results are available:

* Review provider-on-a-page information for results
* Review provider’s pricing
* Consider value for money
* Shortlist a few providers

## Contact with providers and relationship

* Contact selected provider(s)
* Inform provider of Participating Agencies’ requirements and invite them send you further information on how they can meet the requirements
* Repeat process with other selected language service providers
* Select one or more ‘go to’ providers
* No contract with language service providers is required, this is governed by the Leading Agency Agreement and Participating Agency Agreement but an exchange of emails might be appropriate
* Arrangement with a language service provider can be reviewed, changed or stopped at any time. Agencies should treat providers fairly; for example by giving adequate notice of decisions affecting them.

## Roles and responsibilities

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| Role | Responsibilities |
| Participating Agency | **Contract user**  Participating agencies maintain day-to-day operational relationships with their selected provider(s). Participating agencies’ key responsibilities include:   * Fulfilling obligations set out in the contract and applicable services order * Managing strategic and operational relationship with provider(s) and their performance * Notifying provider of any and all relevant policies, guidelines and procedures of the Participating Agency. This includes security clearances and any other compliance checks required by the agency * Escalating any disputes with provider or other non-performance issues to the MBIE team * Working together with the provider and the MBIE team to continuously improve the delivery of face to face interpreting services * Adopting a working approach that is collaborative, open, transparent, ethical and honest * Monitoring provider performance against PAA |
| Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment | * Lead Agency * Managing Variations and Renewals to the LAA * Signing up new participating agencies * Monitoring agency and provider satisfaction of the services * Dispute Resolution that is escalated by either a provider or a participating agency * Updating guidance and tools. |
| Panel Providers | **Provider of Services**  Key responsibilities of each provider under the Panel solution include:   * Providing services to participating agencies and complying with the service level agreements * Complying with relevant policies and guidance provided by participating agencies * Supporting transition of eligible agencies to the Face to Face Interpreting panel * Ensuring participating agencies have been provided all applicable rules and other documentation * Providing account management to participating agency * Providing contract management to the Lead Agency * Promoting Face to Face Interpreting panel solution to eligible agencies. |

## How do I manage the provider relationship?

Participating agencies will continue to be responsible for managing their provider relationships from an operational perspective.