



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Collaborative Working

Planning and Delivering a Collaborative Translation Service to reduce costs

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Conwy County Borough Council provides a written translation service for Denbighshire, Wrexham and Flintshire councils as well as Cartrefi Conwy.

CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

Every organization has a three year contract with Conwy Council, and the council meets with the organization at least once a year to discuss the service.

Every council has agreed on a specific number of words for translation, based on data from previous years, with a leeway of 10% either way.

Every organization's administrative arrangements are different. Denbighshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council use the Proactis system which enables members of staff to order translation work themselves. An administration team is responsible for arranging the translation work on behalf of other members of staff at Flintshire County Council.

FINANCIAL SAVINGS

The rates for translation work are lower than those previously paid.

One council stated that it made £20,000 worth of savings in the first year of implementing this system even though the number of words translated rose compared to the previous year.

QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY

The service ensures consistency in terms of the quality of work and how quickly it is returned, which has meant a drop in the number of complaints.

As the translation service offers translation and proofreading, all services within the councils use the same group of translators which ensures more consistency in terms of accuracy and greater adherence to a corporate style.

The types of documents translated vary extensively, from semi informal letters to advice reports and technical documents. By using the translation service, consistency can be ensured in terms of style and quality due to an understanding of local government terminology.

The service also uses a translation memory which means that text which has already been translated doesn't need to be translated again. This leads to consistency in terms of style and terms and means that more words can be translated in a shorter period of time.

STABILITY

The service has now been in place for over three years and over this period there has been a definite improvement in the work of coordinating translation requests which has led to a far more consistent service.

The service prioritises translation work. For example, priority is given to press releases and committee papers. There are deadlines in place for each County, as there are internally and (as expected) the higher the word count that needs to be translated, the more time that is required to complete the work.

HOW CAN THIS WORK FOR OTHER ORGANISATIONS?

Organizations in the same sector could benefit from establishing joint translation contracts with other organizations in the field or designating one centre to be responsible for translation work for a specific field. An agreement or arrangement of this kind could:

- lead to financial savings by jointly commissioning translation work and using a translation Memory
- ensure consistency in terms of translation arrangements and the quality of the work
- ensure consistency in terms of accuracy, terminology, style and terms
- provide stability by reconciling the translation service and tailoring the service to meet the needs of the sector e.g. by prioritising specific documents.

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