

# Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service



Kaukab Stewart  
Convener  
Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice  
Committee

Chief Executive's Office  
Parliament House  
Parliament Square  
Edinburgh  
EH1 1RQ

By email to: [EHRCJ.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:EHRCJ.committee@parliament.scot)

7 August 2023

Dear Kaukab,

## **Petition PE1787 on The Use of Makaton Sign Language in the Legal System**

Thank you for your recent correspondence of June 2023 regarding the above matter.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service recognises the need and responsibility to provide accessible services to all our users.

Over the past 18 months one request was received for the provision of a Makaton interpreter in relation to a summary criminal case. As an interpreter could not be sourced alternative arrangements were made to allow the case to proceed.

We currently have access to two types of contracted interpreting services:

- (1) to provide comprehensive face to face, video and telephone spoken language interpreting services, and document translation and transcription services (contracts with three suppliers who provide all of these services);
- (2) British Sign Language to ensure access for deaf and deafblind persons who are British Sign Language users.

One of our contracted suppliers has a limited supply of Makaton interpreters, albeit this is dependant to the location and the notice period given. Equally there are BSL interpreters that are able to adapt and to work with hearing users that use Makaton, given the experience they have with those with additional needs.

Our Equality Outcomes for the period 2023-2027 prioritises the need to provide services that are accessible and suitable to all who need and use them. As the use

of Makaton becomes more wide spread this will include identifying opportunities to expand access to Makaton interpreters, both in our courts and tribunals.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information.

Yours sincerely

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