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Tender

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH - BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE USERS ON RAIL

Transport Focus

UK4: Tender notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-085937

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05fcce

Published 23 December 2025, 3:45pm

Scope

Reference

BSLDEC25

Description

Specification / deliverables

The appointed supplier will work with Transport Focus and SISJ partners to design and deliver qualitative research addressing how BSL users want to receive passenger information across rail environments. If quantitative work is also considered to be feasible, then we would consider also including this. The areas to be covered are:

Access and preferences

- How BSL users prefer to access information across station, onboard and digital channels.
- What constitutes an acceptable and desirable minimum viable product (MVP) for BSL

provision.

Content and language considerations

- Expectations around regional BSL dialects and whether a single "universal" version is acceptable.
- Preferences regarding interpreter choice, including lived experience of deafness.
- Views on consistency versus localisation of BSL content.

Physical and digital delivery

- Expectations for placement, prominence and visibility of BSL information within station environments.
- Integration with existing screens, boards or digital platforms.

Technology and innovation

- Perceptions of AI-generated BSL (including avatar-based and hybrid approaches).
- Acceptability of AI in different contexts, such as planned information versus disruption.
- Expectations around subtitling alongside BSL.

User diversity

- Based on demographics (age, gender, employment and income, presence of additional disabilities, region and nation, ethnic background), BSL fluency, hearing status, travel confidence, travel frequency and technology comfort.

Methodological expectations

A qualitative approach is essential. Proposals should demonstrate experience working with the d/Deaf community and may well include, some or all of:

- Short desk research to inform fieldwork design.
- Engagement with relevant stakeholders or expert organisations (such as BDA, RNID...).
- Depth interviews, accompanied journeys, focus groups or online platforms where appropriate.

- We would be open to other methods being included including quantitative surveys.

Please note that it is essential that all recruitment and fieldwork is conducted using:

- BSL-fluent moderation and appropriate interpreting support.
- Inclusive and accessible research environments and materials.

Deliverables

As a minimum, we will require a debrief presentation and a report to our publication standards (probably PowerPoint). Other outputs may be

Total value (estimated)

- £60,000 excluding VAT
- £72,000 including VAT

Below the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 February 2026 to 30 April 2026
- 3 months

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 73110000 - Research services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom
-

Participation

This procurement is reserved for

UK suppliers

Conditions of participation

Supplier requirements

We welcome bids from a wide range of suppliers including academic teams, research suppliers, consortia, independent experts, or other suitably qualified organisations with the relevant expertise. Responses must demonstrate:

- Strong experience delivering qualitative research with d/Deaf and BSL-using participants.
- Expertise in accessibility, inclusive design or transport research (rail experience desirable), including identification of sample and recruitment of research participants
- Capability to conduct research in BSL or with high-quality interpreting support.
- Experience translating complex qualitative insight into clear, actionable conclusions and make recommendations.

Particular suitability

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)

Submission

Enquiry deadline

8 January 2026, 11:59pm

Tender submission deadline

15 January 2026, 11:59pm

Submission address and any special instructions

Please email all tenders to: procurementadmin@transportfocus.org.uk

Questions may be submitted to: procurementadmin@transportfocus.org.uk

Tenders may be submitted electronically

No

Award criteria

Assessment methodology

Tenders will be assessed on the basis of:

- Quality and clarity of proposed approach, including appropriateness of methodology and sampling approach (50%)

- Relevant expertise and track record (30%)
- Value for money (20%)

Procedure

Procedure type

Below threshold - open competition

Documents

Associated tender documents

[Tender document for BSL rail information provision 231225.docx](#)

Outline of requirement: Qualitative research project with users of British Sign Language to understand requirements for information when using rail.

Contracting authority

Transport Focus

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PGBR-3271-MNXJ

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London

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United Kingdom

Email: procurementadmin@transportfocus.org.uk

Region: UKI42 - Tower Hamlets

Organisation type: Public authority - central government