



# Outsource Typing

Virtual Assistant & Transcription Service

## Advice on Choosing a Transcription Service

To make the process of selecting the right service for you as easy as possible, you should consider approaching any new, potential transcription service by obtaining answers to these important questions.

Top things to note:

- The cheapest service isn't always best
- Be wary of companies offering super-fast turnaround times
- The importance of security and how your data is processed

A top quality, professional transcript can take a little longer to prepare for you and may cost a bit more, but is worth it in the long run as it will save you both time and money in having instantly usable and referenceable transcripts, rather than a transcript you need to edit or amend later on – or worse, needs completely redone.

### Background Experience

#### ***Can the service provide proof of experience or industry knowledge?***

Are they able to offer up case studies of projects or transcription work undertaken previously?

Does their website contain client reviews?

Can they provide you with a Service Level Agreement (SLA)?

#### ***Who completes the work and where are they based?***

For some, a service that uses voice recognition software to transcribe is adequate enough. For those seeking an accurate and thoroughly researched transcript, however, it is not. Voice transcription software can be glitchy and problematic. It requires a lot of patience in the beginning and a lot of training to get used to your voice. However, it can never really understand *what* is being said – the meaning and the emotion behind it.



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There are a lot of new companies emerging that offer tempting low rates and seemingly impressive turnaround times, but if you're looking for quality, we recommend that you always find out if your work will be completed by a human audio typist.

Our transcribers come from varied backgrounds in all sectors, and are time-served and thoroughly vetted to ensure we only hire the best, most self-reliant people that show initiative and are motivated to provide you with the best service.

Our staff are also all UK-based – we never send transcripts overseas for completion. Our transcribers have English as their first language and can transcribe all dialects, to include difficult audio and strong foreign accents.

## Research

### *How much editing will I require to undertake on my returned transcripts?*

You should be asking if the service will research terms, acronyms, place names, person names, etc., or if they will simply leave these for you to research at a later date. Our service includes this in the price quoted upfront – there are no hidden costs.

Our qualified proofreaders also fully proof your documents at no extra cost to ensure they are accurate and of a professional standard.

We will listen carefully to the audio as many times as is necessary to ensure that we transcribe **everything** that is said to avoid leaving gaps in the text. Where we are unable to discern, we will provide a timestamp (to allow easy reference) and/or a best guess at an inaudible word(s) to assist you.

## Confidentiality and Security

### *Are they happy to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) or Confidentiality Agreement?*

It's also a good idea to ask for details of their own confidentiality and security policies and staff Agreements so you can gauge the likely attitude to protecting your data. How is data stored/transferred? What methods do they use to submit work to transcriber staff? Are these methods secure/what security levels are used? Can they easily direct you to the security information/is this available on their website?



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Their website should also contain a privacy policy, terms and conditions and a cookies policy. If it doesn't have this, it's an indicator that they haven't fully audited under the new GDPR, and this should be a big red flag.

## ***Are they registered under the Data Protection Act?***

Ask for their registration number and double-check it is valid and current with the [checker tool on the ICO website](#). (You do not need to enter all of the details in the boxes, just the registration number will bring up the results.)

## **Availability**

### ***Can they provide you with details of their typical availability? Have they given you an indication of when you will receive the finished work?***

Before you go ahead and hand a project or piece of work over to a service, **always** find out if they can work to your deadline. If you don't have a deadline in mind, we would strongly advise that you put one in place and that this is discussed upfront before any work is handed over to the service.

We consider it as best practice to keep in touch and update our clients regularly on task/project progress, particularly for longer-term projects, so they can feel at ease that the work is being prioritised and undertaken within the deadline, and so they're not left in the dark when it comes to progress.

We've never missed a deadline and are always realistic with our recommendations. Be wary of services that make unrealistic promises on large workloads.

## **Advice and Guidance**

### ***Are they able to explain clearly how their processes will work for you?***

If you're not sure what you want, are they able to talk you through how the service works, what you will expect to receive at the end of it, offer a tailored approach? If not, ask for clarification. If they are still unable to provide a clear and easily understood breakdown of how everything works, move on to the next service!



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## Price

### ***Are they able to provide a clear breakdown of costs to you?***

Transcription costs are easy to work out and what's even better is once you have the quote for the audio, as it's charged 'per audio minute', you always know **exactly** how much it's going to cost upfront. No hidden surprises when you get the bill!

'Per audio minute' means a charging rate based on the length of the audio file. For example, if you dictate a digital audio file with a duration of 0:21:03 (i.e. 21 mins and 3 sec), this would be rounded down to 21 minutes and charged at the per audio minute rate quoted to you. Let's say you have been quoted £1.00 per audio minute, the total charge for this file will be £21.

Expect a reputable service to ask you for a sample of the audio before they provide you with a quote. There may be a charging scale, depending on the audio quality – expect to pay a bit more for poorer quality audio with lots of background noise, foreign accents, multi-participant interviews, etc. Audio comes in all shapes and sizes and can often be challenging, even when all care has been taken to produce good recording conditions. If a service blindly offers you a rate without enquiring first, this should be another red flag. A potentially disastrous situation would be they offer you a rate without reviewing the audio and then are either unable to proceed with it due to poor quality or at a later stage demand more money for completion. We see this unprofessional type of situation happen a lot with other services.

### **And finally...**

Any reputable and experienced service will be happy to and should readily be able to answer all of the above for you. You'll then be armed and ready with all the crucial information to help you make a decision or pass over the facts to your decision maker within your company.

Finding a reliable transcription service could be one of the best things you do for your business or personal life! A transcription service can save you time and money, and you'll have direct access to a valuable resource, enabling you to claim back precious hours, which leaves you free to focus on what's important to you, all the while knowing your work is in safe hands!

For further information on what types of tasks a transcription service can assist with, [click here](#) to find out more.