

PATIENT EXPERIENCE COUNCIL

Paper No:
Title of paper: Annual Use of Interpreting Service Report 2022
Purpose: for information, discussion and assurance
Summary This paper details the use of interpreting services during 2022 and includes costs, issues, recommendations and next steps
Corporate objectives met or risks addressed: Patient experience communication
Financial implications: None as a direct consequence of this paper
Stakeholders: patients, families, carers and staff
Recommendation(s): for information and assurance
Presenting officer: Cheryl Farmer, Head of Patient Inclusion and Experience
Date of meeting: 1 st February 2023

Introduction

The Trust moved to a new provider of foreign language interpretation and translation services, DA Languages based in central Manchester, on 6th January 2020 following a robust procurement process which concentrated on the quality of the service provided in addition to reducing costs. The contract with DA Languages includes the 'Standards for Interpreting Services' developed in collaboration with local CCG's and Trusts to ensure that all interpreters provided have the relevant qualifications and experience to enable them to work in a medical setting and provide our patients with a quality service.

We use Prestige Network as a secondary provider of foreign language services to fill any requests for interpreters that DA languages cannot fulfil.

British Sign Language, and other non-spoken interpretation services continue to be provided by St Helens Deafness Resource Centre.

Total costs for providing foreign language services provided by DA languages:

Fig. 1. Total cost of services provided 2022:

Service Type	Volume	Spend
Interpreting	4146	£225,497.43
Telephone Interpreting	2050	£33,540.90
Video Remote Interpreting	37	£3,713.18
Translation	37	£2,594.40
All Service types total	6270	£265,345.91

Fig 2. Total cost of services provided 2021:

Service type	volume	Spend (£'s)
Face to face	3,011	79,066.20
Telephone	2,414	16,201.90
Translation	18	645.31
Video	19	1,617.40
Total cost	5,642	97,780.21

Fig 3. Costs of interpreting services from DA Languages 2020

Service type	Volume	Spend (£'s)
Face to face	2,116	59,047.98
Telephone	897	7,762.45
Translation	15	2,209.82
Total cost	3,028	69,020.25

The Trust's spend on interpreting and translation services during 2022 was significantly higher than in the previous two years (see figs 2&3).

This significant increase in spend, in part, reflects the increase in the number of services procured during 2022 with:

- 1,135 more face to face interpreters
- -365 more telephone interpreters
- 37 video interpreters
- 37 translations carried out

Part way through 2022 DA languages introduced a huge increase in costs for their services and some costs eg. Out of hours service and travel expenses for all bookings which were not included in our original contract with them.

We are currently in discussions with DA regarding these price increases and the service they are providing.

We know nationally that there has been a reduction of the number of interpreters working in the UK during the last 18-24 months with both Brexit and Covid having an impact on the number of people working as interpreters and the way remaining interpreters prefer to work has changed.

During Covid many interpreters changed from attending face to face appointments to working on the telephone service as there was no travelling and no risk of infection from coming onsite, and many continue to work in this way and don't do face to face sessions.

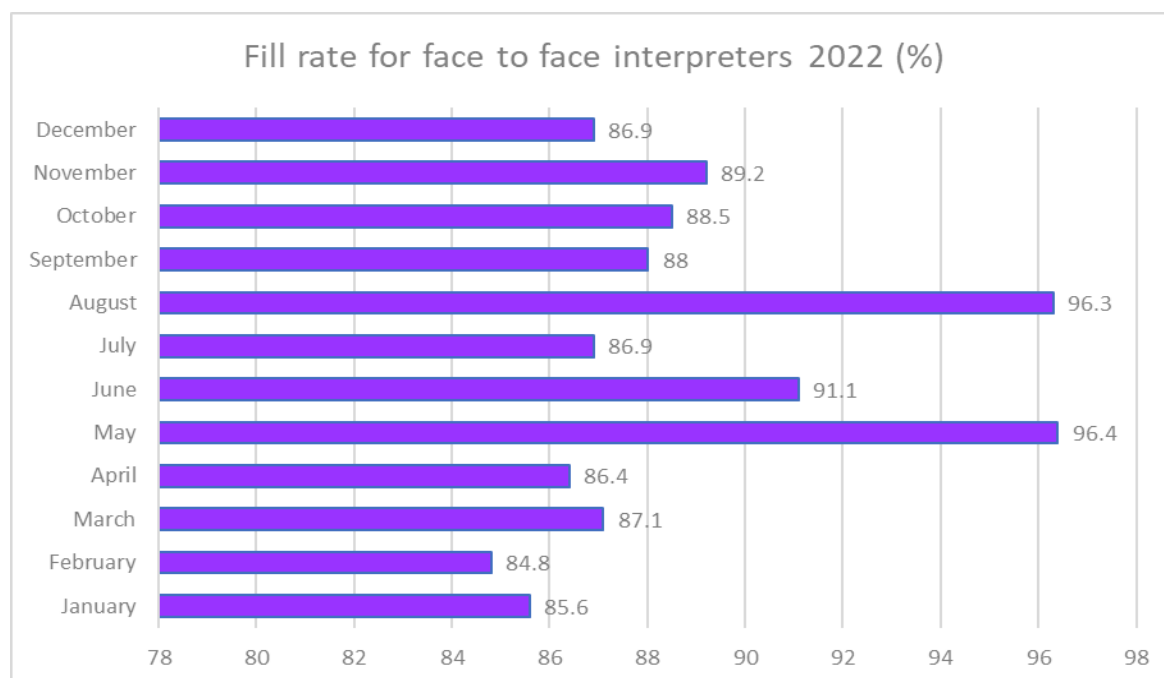
Video interpreting can be an excellent alternative to face to face interpreters, and although DA keep pushing the Trust to use this service, which we have introduced in some areas where it has worked very well, there are issues with their app and availability of interpreters who provide this service that DA need to address in order for us to see the full benefits of video interpreters.

Fulfilment Rates (F2F)

The KPI in our contract for fill rate is 95%, which DA have only met twice in the last 12 months, their average fill rate is 88.9%.

Per month DA are unable to fulfil between 40-50 requests for face to face interpreters, and these requests then have to be filled by the telephone service, which is not always appropriate or Prestige Network if they have an available interpreter.

Fig 4. Fulfilment rates



The Trust have been holding regular meetings with senior members of staff from DA languages and have an improvement plan in place to try and improve the service we are currently receiving and ensure that this improvement continues throughout the time they are contracted as our provider of these services.

Some of the issues DA have highlighted with us include:

- Late requests for an interpreter – it is accepted that there will be occasions when a patient has to attend at short notice, but for all routine patients if requests to book an interpreter are sent as early as possible there is more chance of the booking being accepted/filled.
- Late cancellations
- Failing to cancel if appointment is changed/cancelled

Top languages requested in 2022

Top languages requested in 2021	Top languages requested 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Polish2. Arabic3. Romanian4. Kurdish/Kurdish Sorani5. Cantonese6. Tamil7. Portuguese8. Hungarian9. Pashtu10. Bulgarian	Polish Arabic Romanian Cantonese Kurdish Portuguese Tamil Farsi Turkish Russian

Prestige Network

Prestige Network are our secondary provider which we use when DA Languages are not able to fulfil the request with a face to face interpreter and a telephone interpreter is not suitable.

In total we booked 74 interpreters in 2022 from prestige at a cost of £12,661.62.

Deafness resource centre St Helens

Time period 2022	Number of interpreters	Cost (£'s)
Jan – March	54	5,325
April - June	69	8,278
July - September	96	11,475
October - December	92	12,580

Total cost for 2022 = £37,658 which is approx. double what we paid for BSL interpreters in 2021.

The deafness resource centre in St Helens have increased their prices in line with their regulatory body's guidance, and we have used significantly more BSL interpreters 311 in 2022 compared to the 184 in 2021.

The majority of these bookings were for outpatients appointments and maternity services.

There is ongoing work with the Emergency Departments and Wards around responding to Accessible Information alerts on Careflow and ensuring the appropriate support is provided when needed.

Deaf Awareness half day courses are being funded for staff to attend onsite, to both raise awareness of the needs of d/Deaf patients, and to highlight some of the myths surrounding d/Deaf patients eg. They must be able to lip read, they can understand everything I am saying to them, and.... don't worry about getting an interpreter I've got a pen and some paper I can write everything down!

The Deafness Resource Centre continue to provide the Trust with an exceptional service to both the Trust and to our patients, most of whom they have worked with over many years.

Complaints regarding interpreting services:

Foreign language interpreters:

Several complaints were raised by patients who felt the interpreter had not interpreted information correctly

All these were escalated to DA languages and remedial action was taken with the interpreters involved including:

- Reassessment of interpreting skills
- Suspension of work until additional training was undertaken and the interpreter successfully passed an assessment

BSL interpreters:

No complaints were received regarding the skills of the interpreter

Several complaints received from the Deafness Resource Centre regarding patients not being supported by an interpreter including:

- Patients with an alert on Careflow stating they need a BSL interpreter not being provided with an interpreter
- **Inpatients** – some in for several days not being provided with an interpreter because staff felt they could lip read, or communicating on paper with patients
- **ED** – staff not contacting the Deafness Resource Centre to secure an interpreter for a patient, patients having to contact the Centre themselves to ask for an interpreter to be sent to support them
- **Interpreters not being booked for important discussions with patients** eg Discharge planning, the delivery of medical information re condition, treatment, prognosis
- **Patients ringing DRC to arrange own interpreters** – when staff fail to book an interpreter for them

Next steps:

- Introduction of virtual on demand/booked in advance video interpreting services onto wards – trialling with the wards booking the most interpreters utilising the patient experience phones
- Once trial on wards is complete, roll out the virtual services to areas where telephone interpreting services are not a viable option eg. ED and endoscopy
- Inpatient bookings moving to Careflow Connect allowing full details of any bookings to be stored in the patients record
- Assessment of patients language skills/needs to be carried out on admission to ensure that interpreters are booked for those patients who need them
- Continued fortnightly improvement meetings with DA languages to ensure we receive the service our patients deserve
- Circulation of training video produced for STHK by the Deafness Resource Centre showing how best to support a person needing a BSL interpreter
- Cleansing the accessible information alerts and making sure all inappropriate alert are put on the system
- HoPIE to deliver training to staff on the Accessible Information Standard, accessible information alerts and what information should be included in an alert

Recommendations for staff booking interpreting services:

- **Book in advance** - Where possible, interpreters should be booked well in advance of the patients appointment to give the provider the best opportunity to source the required linguist
- **Cancellations** – if areas no longer require an interpreter they should cancel their request as soon as possible, late cancellations (less than 24 hours before time of booking) will be charged at the full rate of the hours originally booked (ie if you book for 5 hours then cancel late your area will be charged for 5 hours).
- **Fill in the booking form correctly** – make sure that you provide all the information when making a booking, including your budget code and the language correctly – any omissions

or mistakes will be sent back to the area requesting the interpreter and lead to delays in your booking(s)

- **Double bookings** – check to see if an interpreter has already been booked, if two interpreters arrive for the same booking your area will be charged the full hourly cost for both
- **Out of hours BSL interpreters** – ALL staff can call the Deafness Resource Centre and request an interpreter attends out of hours
- **Emergency BSL interpreters** - ALL staff can call the Deafness Resource Centre and request an interpreter attends in an emergency situation
- **Consider the telephone/video services** – if a face to face interpreter is not available
- **CHECK ALERTS on Careflow for BSL interpreters** – if we have been informed that a BSL interpreter is needed for a patient an accessible information alert will have been applied on Careflow – **please check these alerts if it states a BSL interpreter is needed then one must be requested, it is not a suitable alternative to write things down on paper to communicate with a person whose first language is BSL**