

Interpreter on Wheels (IOW)

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General Medical Council guidance states that all possible efforts must be made to ensure effective communication with patients. This includes arrangements to meet patients' communication needs in languages other than English.

Section 13G of the National Health Service Act 2006 (“NHS Act”) states that NHS England, ‘in the exercise of its functions, must have regard to the need to reduce inequalities between patients with respect to: · Their ability to access health services; and · The outcomes achieved for them by the provision of health services.



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Language is very important to providing optimal patient care. Working with language interpreters and translators can reduce communication barriers between practitioner and patient. It has been shown to improve safety with respect to diagnosis and prescription.

A person with good conversational fluency in English may not be able to understand, discuss or read health-related information proficiently in English. They may be reluctant to request or accept professional interpreting and translation services due to fear of costs, inconvenience, or concerns about confidentiality.



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Working with professional interpreters will:

- ensure accuracy and impartiality of interpreting
- minimise legal risk of misinterpretation of important clinical information (for example informed consent to undergo clinical treatments and procedures)
- minimise safeguarding risk (for example for victims of human trafficking, where the trafficker may introduce themselves as family member or friend and speak on behalf of the patient)



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- allow family members and friends to attend appointments and support the patient (emotionally and with decision-making) without the added pressure of needing to interpret
- foster trust with the patient



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In Stoke on Trent almost 17% of the population is ethnically diverse, and may require access to communication support in languages other than English.





Since the pandemic, the Trust's interpreter provider is consistently unable to meet the KPI for face-to-face interpretation services- sometimes a low as 60%.

Feedback suggests interpreters just do not want to attend hospital sites.



What's the Problem?



- In 2021 there were 6 incidents reported using Datix; 2022 there were 8; 2023 there were just 6. These numbers did not fit with the scale of the issue we were being told about by staff and reports from our ethnically diverse communities.
- The awareness of how to access interpreter services in some areas/wards, assessed during the Trusts "Care Excellence Framework" audits was very low with not all staff know how or when to access the services in their current format.



*Enabling Communication,
Empowering Relationships*



Authenticate Your Device

Interpreter on Wheels (IOW)



The "Insight" Interpreter on Wheels (IOW) and App system has enabled wider, faster accessibility to qualified interpreters of over 200 different foreign and non-spoken languages 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, ensuring safe, inclusive access to all services across the whole acute Trust and community satellite clinics

Implementing the IOW

It became clear that with promotion, communication and training across the Trust, there could be a huge demand for "Trevor" (as we affectionately named the IOW).

A dedicated process for loaning and tracking the machine to ensure accessibility 24 hours a day, including out of hours, was developed and implemented and the use of IOW was included in the amended and updated Trust Interpretation Policy.

Trevor – Lives at Royal Stoke Hospital



Tina – Lives at County Hospital



Feedback

“Can I thank you for helping to make this happen...being able to communicate so easily with them is so important and we are really grateful.”

Feedback

“Amazing piece of equipment! Easy to use and felt much better than the telephone”



“What a Fabulous device!!”

“The Insight Interpreter has generated quite a lot of interest.. very excited about the prospect of us using this facility at UHNM.”

“Such a positive piece of equipment”

“Much better than the telephone”

Staff Feedback

Patient story



On receipt of the first IOW a patient was identified on a surgical ward who was not having his BSL interpretation needs met.

The IOW was loaned to the ward, supported by a cascade trainer and very quickly, the value of this service was recognised.

B S L

What has been the impact of the IOW?



SINCE THE LAUNCH OF THE "INSIGHT" APP AND IOW, ACCESS TO QUALIFIED INTERPRETERS IS ON-DEMAND. WE HAVE RECEIVED JUST 2 INCIDENT REPORTS IN 12 MONTHS AROUND THE LACK OF AN ON-DEMAND LANGUAGE BEING AVAILABLE WHILST USING IOW.



NO FEEDBACK OF ANY PROCEDURES OR OUTPATIENT APPOINTMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN CANCELLED AS A RESULT OF A LACK AVAILABLE INTERPRETER.



IN 12 MONTHS:
OVER 3958 OF VIDEO MINUTES
11,929 AUDIO MINUTES USING
OVER 45 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES.
ALMOST 265 HOURS OF
INTERPRETATION THAT OUR PATIENTS
AND VISITORS MAY NOT HAVE HAD
ACCESS TO IN THE PAST.

The Future and key learning points

Since implementation, we have worked with Language Line and now have 24 machines across the 2 main sites.

Ensuring there is appropriate access out of hours if the machines are kept in a centralised area.

Ensure consistency and repetition of Comms- there is the potential that the novelty may wear off with the IOW machines. The message of their availability and use needs to be regularly reinforced repeatedly