

Making the Connections Improvement Fund

Research Project

Final Report

Project:

Wales Interpreter and Translation Service (WITS)

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1.1.1

Related Documents

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Business Case		V4.1	1/8/09
Communications Plan			
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Table of Contents

<u>1.</u>	<u>Purpose of Document</u>	3
<u>2.</u>	<u>Management Summary</u>	5
<u>3.</u>	<u>Background</u>	6
<u>4.</u>	<u>Project Definition</u>	6
<u>4.1</u>	<u>Project Objectives</u>	7
<u>4.2</u>	<u>Scope of project</u>	8
<u>4.3</u>	<u>Exclusions</u>	8
<u>4.4</u>	<u>Desired Outcomes</u>	8
<u>5.</u>	<u>Project Organisation Structure</u>	9
<u>6.</u>	<u>Research Methods</u>	10
<u>6.1</u>	<u>Audit of current interpreting needs</u>	10
<u>6.2</u>	<u>Baseline of existing interpreters</u>	10
<u>6.3</u>	<u>Projected interpreting and translating need</u>	11
<u>7.</u>	<u>Research Results</u>	13
<u>7.1</u>	<u>Audit of current interpreting needs</u>	13
<u>7.2</u>	<u>Baseline of existing interpreters</u>	25
<u>7.3</u>	<u>Projected interpreting need</u>	27
<u>8.</u>	<u>Conclusions</u>	35
<u>8.1</u>	<u>Response from Public service providers</u>	35
<u>8.2</u>	<u>Specific Language Needs in Wales</u>	36
<u>8.3</u>	<u>Database of Existing Interpreters</u>	37
<u>8.4</u>	<u>Options for managing future delivery</u>	37
<u>9.</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>	42
<u>10.</u>	<u>Supporting Information</u>	4343
<u>11.</u>	<u>Glossary</u>	44

Appendix A - Press Articles

Appendix B - Questionnaire

1. Purpose of Document

This document is the report to the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Making the Connections' Improvement Fund for the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS) Project.

It is to be noted that the terms 'interpreter' and 'translator' are used in accordance with the nationally recognised linguistic meanings as follows:

An interpreter is someone who converts the spoken word from one language to another orally or through sign language.

A translator is someone who converts the written word from one language to another in written form.

2. Management Summary

We are all governed by legislation that affects the way in which we provide our services. This gives us a statutory duty to make our services accessible to all, regardless of their language or communication needs.

There has been an issue around the provision of a professional interpreter and translation service in Wales for the last 10 years. As the number of asylum seekers and economic migrants increases, the need for improved language communication services continues to grow. The reality is that nearly all countries will have to deal with new arrivals, speaking perhaps yet another language and adding to their multilingual populations. Relevant press cuttings are included at Appendix A to demonstrate the impact of global migration.

Currently, many agencies in Wales are attempting to provide a quality service to individuals. However, at best this is expensive and inefficient, involving massive duplication of effort by numerous public bodies (for example CRB checks). The result is a service of often variable quality. Due to the fact that the demand outstrips the present supply, and services are paying different rates for interpreters, statutory services are competing with each other for a scarce resource. Because of this services have to resort to interpreters of unknown or insufficient standard, thereby increasing the risk of mistakes and subsequent litigation, which could all too often follow.

As the issue of foreign language interpreters is raised it is an ideal opportunity to examine language service provision in respect of the Welsh language and also services for the d/Deaf at the same time.

The centralised support and funding, which the Welsh Assembly Government has provided, has allowed the undertaking of this feasibility study to develop a multi-agency approach across all sectors (criminal justice agencies, local authorities, health services, etc.)

3. Background

In Wales we have a legal obligation under the Welsh Language Act 1993 to provide public services to our citizens in Welsh, in accordance with their own choice. The Act requires that the Welsh and English languages are treated on an equal basis.

We are also governed by other legislation that affects how we provide our services:

1. The Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 - require that citizens are treated fairly regardless of any disability they may have, e.g. deafness or blindness.
2. The Race Relations Acts 1976 and 2000 - require that citizens are treated fairly in accordance with their own particular language needs.
3. The Human Rights Act 1998 – specifically includes clauses to ensure an individual is provided with information in a language they understand

Our current arrangements means that public bodies find it difficult to comply with this legislation and to provide a consistent quality service.

This feasibility study aims to establish the facts concerning the supply and demand of face to face interpreters and other language and communication services across Wales.

4. Project Definition

4.1 Project Objectives

1. To audit current expenditure on interpreting needs in each partnership organisation including:
 - Local Authorities (in particular social services, housing, schools)
 - Primary and Secondary Health Services
 - Local Criminal Justice Boards (Police, Crown Prosecution Service, Probation, Courts Service)
 - Borders and Immigration Agency
 - Other public and voluntary agencies
2. To accurately determine a baseline of existing interpreters and translators for each language (including qualifications). And to produce a single list for the benefit of all organisations.
3. To assess the projected interpreting and translating need within Wales in order to comply with statutory obligations.
4. To encourage collaboration between all public bodies in Wales for the most effective use of public funds.
5. To present options for managing the delivery of future interpreting needs of all agencies in Wales including specifically the consideration of a one-stop shop.

4.2 Scope of project

- This project covers all of Wales
- This project covers all language and communication needs (Welsh Language, foreign languages and disability-related communication needs)

4.3 Exclusions

This project does not aim to address the detail of development and delivery of professional interpretation training (Diploma in Public Service Interpreting [DPSI] standards). A separate Welsh Assembly Government 'Communities First' funded project is examining this and this project will not duplicate those efforts.

However, the data in this report will be a valuable source of information to that project identifying language needs and potential trainees in community languages to meet the needs of services in Wales.

4.4 Desired Outcomes

A successful project will deliver:

1. Accurate data on the language needs, (including BSL), within Wales
2. Accurate data on potential interpreters in Wales
3. A drive for cultural change within partner agencies
4. Help to public service providers, to perform in a uniform and professional manner in response to citizen language and communication needs
5. Increased public confidence that current issues are being addressed
6. A co-ordinated approach between two complementary WAG-funded initiatives
7. An options appraisal to provide a solution for the present problem of demand outstripping the supply of interpreters.

5. Project Organisation Structure

The Project Executive Board has the following membership:

- Cherry Capel – WAG - Refugee Inclusion Unit
- Martin James – Cardiff Health Alliance/ Project SRO
- Tony Wilcox – Gwent Police – Chief Inspector/ Project Manager
- Christine Jenkins – Cardiff Health Alliance - Health Partnership Manager
- Nichola Evans – Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust – Head of Partnership Development
- Anne Wei – Cardiff Local Health Board - Head of Partnerships
- Conny Carnuth – Cardiff Health Alliance - Project officer
- Elsa Cowie - Interpreter / Project Manager WAG Interpreter Training project
- Dean Piper – WAG Police Liaison Officer

6. Research Methods

6.1 Audit of current interpreting needs in each organisation

The project initially approached different organisations to gain an understanding of their use of interpreters and translators. It also established the different methods of recording and storing information. Armed with this, a questionnaire was designed to secure the required information.

(A copy of the questionnaire is included at Appendix B)

Specific individuals who were most likely to be able to answer these questions were identified in each region of each agency (generally these were Diversity Officers or Communications Officers.) The questionnaire was circulated by email to appropriate staff in all of the following bodies over the whole of Wales.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| NHS Trusts | Legal Services Commission |
| Local Health Boards | UK Border Agency |
| Local Authorities | Department of Work and Pensions |
| Police | Fire Service |
| Crown Prosecution Service | Health and Safety Executive |
| Courts | Identity and Passport Service |
| Probation | Tourism services |
| Victim Support | Wales Refugee Council |
| Prisons | |

The questionnaire responses are discussed in section 7.1

6.2 Baseline of existing interpreters in Wales

Included in the questionnaire, (see 6.1 above), was a question to determine if organisations maintained their own lists of interpreters. Those that did were approached to share that information with the WITS project.

Also a public appeal was made through minority ethnic groups and organisations and also through the media, to identify people who have experience of interpreting or are multi-lingual and interested in being trained as an interpreter.

The above information was added to a spreadsheet of known qualified interpreters who already work for public services in Wales to produce data on existing interpreters and potential future interpreters in Wales. See section 7.2

6.3 Projected interpreting and translating need within Wales

The project initially examined public records produced through the Home Office and Welsh Assembly Government. Various other sources were also researched to try to secure accurate up to date linguistic information.

There is no shortage of accurate data concerning asylum seekers. However the data relates to the country of origin or nationality; it does not consider languages spoken or language needs. Also such data is known to be inaccurate as asylum seekers often claim to be from a different country in order to further their asylum claim.

Data regarding economic migration is less readily available. Records of movements within the European Union do not attempt to accurately monitor nationality movements, and certainly do not attempt to measure linguistic needs of migrants.

Accurate records of immigration/ granting citizenship in the UK are available. But once again, there is no measure of the linguistic needs of the individuals concerned.

It was therefore concluded that:

- Public records and statistics produce a very limited picture in respect of language needs of the population of Wales.
- Such information would be best gathered through measuring the amount of current use of interpreters in each language in Wales.

Each organisation was approached and asked to provide data about its annual use of interpreters, including details of the amount spent per language. However, it was found that most organisations do not maintain such records. Costs of interpreters and translators were often 'hidden' within other budgets, and those that were available often did not include the language involved. Consequently, language data gathered in this manner was limited to about 25% of the total spend.

An approach was then made to private companies who supply interpreter services in South Wales. Significantly more information was uncovered from these sources, which maintain accurate records of languages used by each organisation and costs involved.

As a result of this work, the project has produced the first accurate picture of linguistic needs in Wales, see section 7.3

7. Research Results

7.1 Results: Audit of current interpreting needs

7.1.1 NHS Trusts

Nine questionnaires were received from NHS trusts providing a full picture of views for the whole of Wales. Generally trusts have adopted a multi-pronged approach to interpreter issues. Many utilise link workers and bilingual staff; they also utilise NRPSI interpreters and those from local agencies, as well as telephone interpreter services.

Total spend data was provided as follows: **£370,046 (Cardiff and Vale); £65,684 (Gwent); and £17,899 (Cwm Taf)**. The other areas were unable to isolate interpreter costs from within other budgets.

Overall, NHS Trusts were extremely supportive of the WITS project as a method of tackling the issues of costs and shortages of interpreters:

“There are insufficient high quality, reasonably priced Welsh Language translators. The NHS tends to rely on the same people in South Wales who are very busy, particularly at certain times of the year e.g. at the time Annual Reports are produced.” and ***“ This service would be invaluable”*** (Abertawe Bro Morgannwg)

“Would be beneficial to have a dedicated resource with instant access to advice/support and discussion. A more local or in-house service would ensure a consistent, quality assured approach to producing information in different languages/formats.” (Welsh Ambulance Service Trust.)

“The current situation of accessing Interpreter Services is unsustainable. There is no consistency amongst agencies, no guarantees that the person you have booked has received any training or that they have been CRB checked. Rates of pay vary considerably and quality can’t be guaranteed. This places people who are at their most vulnerable in a compromising situation which is unacceptable. A

24/7 service would be much less complicated to use and easier to audit, easier to access, easier to develop standards for and be certain that governance arrangements are in place which offers greater accountability for organisations.
(Cardiff and Vale)

“In our area, the need for interpretation services is very low. However this can clearly have a knock-on effect in becoming aware of any issues/problems re such services. A recent ‘walkaround’ by Trust Board members throughout the organisation highlighted some difficulties that staff had expressed in accessing interpreters re Portuguese and Mandarin. These difficulties hadn't been made known by any other well established feedback mechanisms i.e. incident reporting.” (Cwm Taf)

“We need more Eastern European interpreters – both genders. We also need more Somali and Arabic women interpreters. Sometimes we have no option but use Agency interpreters, although very rarely, there is the issue of vetting.”
(Gwent)

“Service is extremely poor and this project is greatly welcomed. There is currently an absence of an organised approach to this issue” (Hywel Dda)

“The cost of a face-to-face interpreter is very expensive. The travelling distance is also an issue, as many translators/interpreters are based in England (Manchester and Liverpool) which is not ideal in an emergency situation.” (North Wales – Central)

“Service is rather patchy at present and a more co-ordinated approach would be very welcome.” and ***“(Currently) Inconsistent level of service and no guarantee of availability and rapid access.”*** (North West Wales)

7.1.2 Local Health Boards

16 of the 22 Local Health Boards responded to the questionnaire, (Anglesey, Blaenau Gwent, Cardiff, Carmarthen, Ceredigion, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Merthyr, Monmouthshire, Newport, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Torfaen and Wrexham). Generally, all said that the requirement for interpreters in their limited direct work with patients was low, although there was a use of Welsh language translators in support of bilingual documentation policy. Primary care contractors (GPs, dentists, pharmacists and optometrists) use telephone interpreter services in direct work with patients.

Few were able to provide realistic financial details on language services costs. The following total spend data was received:

**£70,000 (Cardiff); £18,654 (Monmouthshire); £21,000+ (Newport);
£16,801 (Pembrokeshire); £30,828 (Wrexham).**

LHBs made the following remarks regarding the issues they currently face:

“We do not have enough trained interpreters who have qualifications in interpreting. There is no consistency in the training that interpreters are offered, no statutory regulations are adhered to. Confidentiality is a serious issue and there are no interpreters for all of the languages that are currently in Newport. In various statutory and non statutory organisations family members, spouses, children and relatives are regularly being used as interpreters. (Newport)

“Lack of awareness/knowledge on qualification/registration required for these services. Availability of interpreters/translators. Statutory requirement verses local need. Cost of translation/interpretation. (Wrexham)

7.1.3 Local Authorities

16 of the 22 Local Authorities responded to the questionnaire, (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Carmarthen, Ceredigion, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Monmouthshire, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Swansea, and Wrexham).

Most Local Authorities have either in-house or contracted translation units whose main focus lies with the translation of documents and signage into or from Welsh. These units can also handle in-house need for interpreter services in Welsh. Most external need for interpretation services is provided (but not wholly exclusively) by using Language Line.

Some qualified the main areas of work as:

- Adult Services
- Child Services.
- Housing
- Education
- Asylum seekers
- Child Protection
- Mental health

Good use is made of BSL signers in public meetings as well as when required on an ad hoc basis. A significant proportion of direct public contact is facilitated through the use of telephone interpreter services. Document translation work is also common with large proportions of that work necessitating Welsh language translation.

Education providers have demonstrated specific needs. Whilst they manage education delivery in the classroom through the use of specialist teachers and bi-lingual assistants, there is still a need for professional interpreters to assist in formal and legal roles with students and parents.

The following comments were received:

“We would benefit from improved booking system that would improve service to interpreters and practitioners.” and “Booking service at weekends would improve situation with short notice calls e.g. dispersals from Home Office” (Cardiff)

“There would be advantages to this if there were a bank of vetted translators into languages other than Welsh or English to us as an organisation, especially as we have limited need at the moment and insufficient demand to go through the costly process of establishing an agreement with translators into the range of possible languages we may need. These would need to be suitably qualified and monitored for quality. If this were an all Wales provision there would be an economy of scale and the opportunity to avoid possible duplication..”
(Carmarthenshire)

“I suspect that the problem is that people who neither speak Welsh nor English do not contact the Council and may be missing out on essential services”
(Gwynedd)

“This has not been a major focus for us until last week when face to face interpretation in Vietnamese was required for the Youth Offending Team in its work with a young person.” and “Some problems are encountered when accessing local interpreters on demand. Also not all languages are available at a local level”. (Neath, Port Talbot)

“The contracted work is good for documents, phone translation, but cannot meet the face-to-face demand that we have for translators. There are very few within Mid Wales, and many translation companies that are based in the city will not send their translators this far. If they will, the travel costs make the process very expensive.” and “Generally – face-to-face translation is very expensive which means that it can only really be justified for more serious issues e.g. interview under caution etc.” and “This would be colossal help to our organisation. Language creates a barrier to people accessing our services and information

about our services, but the costs of doing this can make it a real challenge to provide consistently.” (Powys)

“We rarely pay for professional interpreters as we can’t afford them”, and, “We have our own internal list and share a list with the Asylum Seekers team. We are not in a position where we can vet the interpreters” and “It, (24/7 one stop shop) would assist with provision for out of hours access. It would be easy to provide guidance for staff on how to access interpreters. (Swansea)

Due to costs and potential delays we try to limit use of face to face interpreters and provide guidelines to staff. (Wrexham)

(Issues faced)

- ***Shortages of qualified interpreters for certain languages that cover Wales***
- ***shortages of qualified interpreters specialising in technical areas – benefits etc***
- ***delays caused by difficulties in locating suitable and available interpreter***
- ***Unquantifiable costs – unable to plan budget allocations***
- ***Checking and vetting is time consuming – although it is worthwhile and has highlighted potential problems that were avoided***
- ***Lack of evaluation from clients***
- ***Difficulty in checking quality / accuracy***
- ***Time delays***

(Wrexham)

7.1.4 Police Services

Police Forces have national guidance to use interpreters from the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) or from the Signature list (previously known as the Council for Advancement of Communication with Deaf People [CACDP]). However, these guidelines allow other interpreters to be used in appropriate circumstances.

All four Welsh Police Forces completed the questionnaire and provided records of interpreter use, including total annual cost per language. Annual spend data was obtained from all four police force areas of Wales, as follows:

	2007-2008	(2006-2007)
• South Wales	£ 335,000	(£330,000)
• North Wales	£ 163,000	(£174,000)
• Gwent	£ 161,000	(£104,000)
• Dyfed Powys	£ 133,000	(£130,000)

It transpired that all Forces were trying to use interpreters from the NRPSI list as much as possible, but with only 23 NRPSI interpreters in Wales (covering only 14 languages) this was extremely difficult. This is worse when interpreters are required urgently by detainees, victims or witnesses, (i.e. the majority of occasions).

North Wales Police reported fewer issues with identifying and booking interpreters than the other Forces. This is mainly due to the close proximity of large numbers of NRPSI interpreters in the nearby English cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham. However they did report: *“The fact that there is a fee, puts a lot off registering in my view. Also there appear to be numerous examples of sub registering such that we get a name through NRPSI but it turns out they work for another agency, and this is wrong really but by then you have to pay it. It can result in a different person turning up from that called as well, which again is a dangerous loophole which no one seems able to fully close.”*

Dyfed Powys, Gwent and South Wales Police all reported significant issues over the shortage of interpreters in Wales and subsequent difficulties with delays and costs. The following remarks were also made:

“..... with the rural areas we cover, travelling time is a major problem, could something be set up closer, individual interpreting for each of the Welsh Forces. Or even North, South, East and West. The top area of our Force is far closer to North Wales Force than South Wales.” (Dyfed Powys)

“As is well documented, the NRPSI is failing to deliver a timely service in South Wales as the majority of their interpreters reside in England. There have been a

number of qualitative issues raised with NRPSI interpreters of late which has generated a number of complaints.” (South Wales)

“In the summer of 2008 we had to drop a drink drive prosecution because an interpreter could not be produced at court. Even though the interpreter was from a global supplier of telephone interpreters, the individual lived in the USA and so it was not practicable to continue the case.” (Gwent)

7.1.5 Crown Prosecution Services

The Crown Prosecution Service has similar guidelines to the Police on interpreter use.

All four CPS areas responded to the questionnaire. They tend to rely on local Police Forces to access interpreters for them and occasionally use local private interpreter agencies and telephone interpreting agencies.

Total spend data was provided in respect of all four **CPS areas in Wales as £ 67,845**. Very limited breakdown of the cost per language was available.

Areas raised issues on the cost of interpreting service and the difficulties caused by the absence of a local interpreter service provider.

7.1.6 Courts

Since 2008 the courts have also worked under a national directive to use NRPSI interpreters whenever possible.

Courts all over Wales were sent questionnaires. In total 7 court areas responded providing information from Magistrates and Crown Courts in Gwent, South Wales and North Wales.

With most bookings being made in advance for pending trials, they reported fewer delays. Naturally they still faced the same issues of increased costs of NRPSI interpreters who have to travel from all over England. When an interpreter fails to attend

court, or the wrong interpreter attends, then courts use local private interpreting agencies.

Generally the courts were satisfied with their current arrangements. However, some issues were raised concerning costs, the absence of local interpreters, consistency of quality and confidentiality.

Court records do not separate expenditure on interpreters and as such it proved difficult to extract accurate data. Full details, including cost per language, were manually secured from Gwent Magistrates providing a total annual spend figure of £40,513. In the absence of data from other courts, estimated figures have been calculated as a percentage of police costs on the same ratio as Gwent Police to Gwent Magistrates Courts i.e. : £84,286 (South Wales); £41,011 (North Wales); £33,463 (Dyfed Powys). Cardiff Crown Courts figures have been extrapolated from part year data to provide an estimated total annual spend of £116,179.

Wrexham Court use a useful technique to reduce costs: ***“We try to group non English speakers in the court on one day per week. This reduces costs to interpreters e.g. book one interpreter to attend and deal with 6 different cases as opposed to 6 interpreters attending on different days for one case.”***

7.1.7 Probation Service

The Probation Service has similar guidelines to the Police on interpreter use. Responses to the questionnaire were received from Gwent, South Wales and North Wales Probation Services. It was found that they tend to rely on local private interpreter agencies and telephone interpreting agencies.

Total spend data was provided by Gwent and South Wales Probation Services (including a language breakdown): **£ 36,162 (South Wales) and £17,541 (Gwent)**. As previously, estimates for the other two areas have been calculated as: £17,604 (North Wales) and £14,364 (Dyfed Powys).

Areas were generally satisfied with their current service providers. The usual issues were also raised: ***“Satisfactory, however costs are a significant issue, and due to the range of diverse languages requested this sometimes necessitates finding interpreters further afield. Not available in Wales region.*** (South Wales)

They went on to add: ***It (WITS) would be extremely beneficial, as at present a request is made to an administrator who then sources an interpreter, books and confirms the appointment and then raises a purchase order etc. The use of a 24/7 would allow all staff the facility to book an interpreter when speed is of importance.”***

7.1.8 Victim Support

Of the four victim support areas, only Gwent responded to the questionnaire. They stated that interpreter use was infrequent and ad hoc. However, they welcomed a centralised interpreter service which would improve their access to qualified interpreters: ***“Our services are offered between 8 am and 8pm and in the near future weekends also, the fact that’s it a one stop shop will make a straightforward and timely process”***

No usage data was available.

7.1.9 Prisons

All four prisons in Wales responded to the questionnaire. They reported that the prisons have a higher proportion of foreign nationals than the rest of society and so language services are particularly needed.

They were extremely supportive of the concept of a 24/7 one stop shop to assist them with their business which is naturally 24/7. All reported that current services were costly and difficult to access locally, restricting their ability to provide a full linguistic service. None of the prisons were able to provide any financial data on their use of interpreter services.

7.1.10 UK Border Agency (UKBA)

The UK Border Agency maintains its own UK register of 2300 interpreters. These are fully security checked and fully tested on linguistic ability.

They still find that they have shortages of specific interpreters around different areas of the country. They believe that they would continue to make use of their own national arrangements but would also like to access a WITS 24/7 service when they need an interpreter at short notice.

Due to the shortage of UKBA interpreters in Wales they are currently piloting video conferencing for interpreters. This allows them to more easily access interpreters who are based some distance from the required location.

7.1.11 Fire and Rescue Services

Of the three regions, only South Wales responded to the questionnaire. They said that their use of interpreters was limited and no cost data was available.

7.1.12 Department of Work and Pensions

DWP said that their current arrangements adequately provide for their need of interpreter services. They generally use telephone services, but did express an interest in monitoring the development of WITS to see if it could provide for them in future.

7.1.13 Voluntary Sector

The following groups were consulted to gather a representative view of the voluntary sector organisations:

Wales Strategic Migration Partnership (WSMP)

All Wales Ethnic Minority Association (AWEMA)

South East Wales Regional Equality Council (SEWREC)

Welsh Refugee Council (WRC)

Black Association of Women Step Out (BAWSO)

Displaced People in Action (DPIA)

Barnardos

Most have to provide their services on a very limited budget. To this end they maintain a list of local interpreters who will provide services for them at attractive rates or on a voluntary basis. They recognise that maintaining an accurate list is very difficult, costly

and time consuming. In view of the associated difficulties and costs of securing local interpreters they expressed a strong desire to secure quality interpreter services from a professional one stop shop in the future.

7.1.14 Identity and Passport Service

The recent drive to interview all non-British born applicants has led to a massive cost increase for the Passport Service nationally (approx. £1M p.a.). This decision is currently under review. The Welsh Passport Office expressed a desire to monitor the development of WITS with a view to it being a possible future service provider in Wales.

7.1.15 Tourism Services

No responses were received.

7.1.16 Health and Safety Executive

HSE aims to use NRPSI interpreters, but accepts that shortages mean that they have to resort to local agencies.

They complained that the quality and timeliness of their global telephone interpreter service is reducing as the requests increase.

On face to face interpreters they said, ***“We’ve found that interpreters are concentrated in the South of England and the difficulty in sourcing an interpreter increases the further North we go, particularly at short notice and for the more rare languages”*** and ***“Currently HSE’s need for interpreters in Wales is low, but another source of interpreters who met HSE’s needs would be helpful”***

7.2 Results: Baseline of existing interpreters in Wales

As a result of this research it has been established that many public bodies maintain lists of local foreign language interpreters. These lists vary considerably in quality. Some include security checks and language qualifications, others are very basic. However, the majority of organisations were very protective of their records of this “scarce resource” and lists tended to be treated as commercially sensitive material and was generally not submitted to the WITS research.

Even so, the research has uncovered approximately 1000 interpreters either living in Wales or within reasonable travelling distance. This includes:

- Approx. 400 DPSI qualified interpreters, (NRPSI) (95% outside of Wales).
- Approx. 35 Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters (AWTI),
- Approx. 50 qualified British Sign Language interpreters, (Signature).
- Approx 400 experienced though often unqualified interpreters already working for public bodies in Wales.
- Approx 200 new interpreter applicants (mostly unqualified) attracted by the WITS research.

The National Register (NRPSI) contains details of qualified foreign language interpreters in categories of 'Legal', 'Health' and 'Local Government'. Of their 2300 interpreters 24 live in Wales (1%). Thankfully, significant numbers of interpreters are located around the Birmingham and Manchester areas. The vast majority are qualified in the Legal sector further reducing the supply of professional interpreters in the Health and Local Authority sectors. There are two main reasons for this. One is the fact that legal interpreter qualifications are more readily available through the Metropolitan Police Language Tests (which are deemed to be equal to the DPSI qualification). Secondly the national agreement for criminal justice agencies encourages the use of qualified interpreters, thereby ensuring more regular paid employment for interpreters who qualify in the legal sector. The National Register covers 97 languages. However, half of those are regarded as 'rare' languages, allowing register membership without the standard qualification requirements. Indeed, for approximately 30 of those languages, there are currently no written language testing facilities at all.

However, without a centralised service or call centre associated with the register it is left to individual staff members of public service providers to identify the correct interpreter within reasonable travelling distance. Evidence from this research has shown that interpreters are regularly employed from London and the South East corner of England when there is often a nearer and more suitably qualified interpreter on the register.

The Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters (AWTI) register provides details of qualified Welsh language interpreters and translators. Those interpreters are

assessed solely in conference interpreting. AWTI have agreed to work with WITS to develop training and assessments specifically designed to meet public service needs in Wales. There is no centralised service or call centre associated with this register.

The 'Signature' register provides proof of qualifications and some contact details for qualified British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters. It also identifies the sectors that the BSL interpreters are prepared to work in. Again, there is no centralised service or call centre associated with the register, to assist staff to book the services of the most suitable BSL interpreter.

NRPSI, Signature and AWTI interpreters and translators will generally be fully qualified but some may have limited experience or 'on-the-job' training. Conversely, those interpreters who currently perform a significant proportion of the interpreting and translating work in Wales are unlikely to be qualified or trained, but may have significant work experience in this field.

All interpreters are likely to benefit from training which is aimed at improving their abilities within the specific public sector workplace environments.

This information is examined in more detail at section 8, taking account of the projected needs identified at section 7.3

7.3 Results: Projected Interpreting Need

This research measures the amount spent by each organisation on interpreting and translating services and also the amount spent on each language, during the financial year 2007/2008.

It is recognised that this information is in effect a snapshot of an ever changing situation, which continues to evolve as a result of the impact of world events on migration and asylum seeking. The data is also limited by its age, and the ability of organisations to provide information about their own use of language services.

If Wales were to have a co-ordinated service provided through a one-stop shop then this information could be accurately provided in real time, allowing the one-stop shop to identify and respond to changes in the demand for specific languages. (This situation has already been achieved in the Cambridgeshire area, where CINTRA have been providing a one-stop shop service for the past ten years.)

7.3.1 Total Annual Spend by Sector/Organisation

These results should have provided a good indication of each organisation’s proportion of the total market and the most commonly used languages. Unfortunately the research was restricted by the responses received from each public service provider. As stated previously, large numbers of bodies were unable to provide financial data on linguistic services. The absence of data regarding total spend has required estimates to be made. In the Criminal Justice arena, sufficient information was available to simply estimate the occasional missing data from the cost ratios of co-terminus criminal justice organisations.

However, in Health and Local Government this was not the case as less information was available. Consequently, potential total spends in these areas have been estimated from the Criminal Justice total spend in accordance with ratios elsewhere in the UK (Cambridgeshire). See figure 7.3a below.

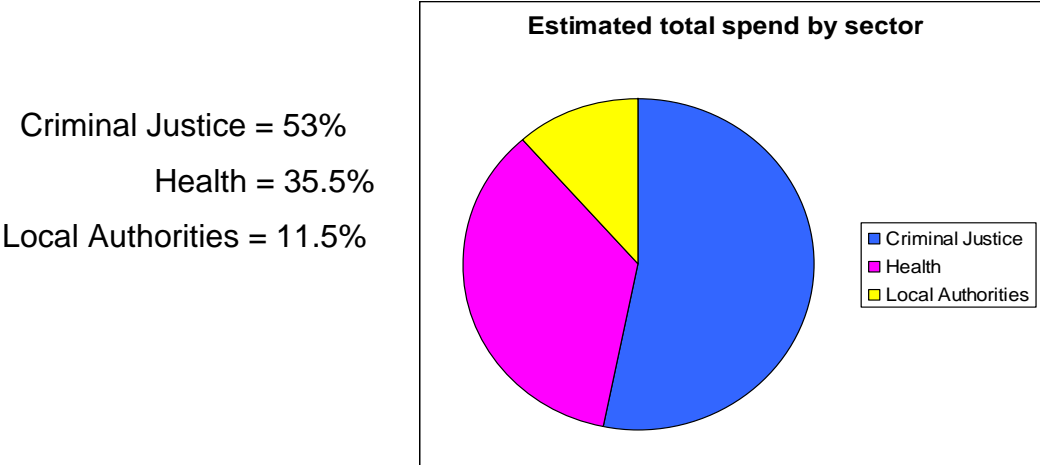


Figure 7.3a Estimated distribution of interpreter total spend in Wales by sector.

Total annual spends in Wales are estimated to be:

Police	£792,000
Crown Prosecution Service.....	£67,800
HMCS (Courts).....	£463,000
Probation.....	£85,700
Legal Services Commission... ..	£211,000
Health Sector (NHS Trusts and Local Health Boards).....	£1,080,000 (est.)
Local Authorities	£346,000 (est.)
Estimated total annual spend by public service providers.....	£ 3,046,000

The health sector and local government sectors have been estimated on the ratios in other areas of the UK (5 counties in the East Midlands – [CINTRA data]). From examination of individual responses from NHS trusts or local authorities in Wales, it is possible that those sector figures for Wales could be slightly lower or indeed somewhat higher.

In summary the total spend on linguistic services by all public bodies in Wales is estimated to be between £3M and £5M.

It must be recognised that this figure includes only the cost of the supply of the interpreter service. In reality public service providers face many other hidden costs as part of there linguistic service provision. These include:

- **Register membership (NRPSI £500 per annum)**
- **Administration costs associated with booking (each assignment may take 30 minutes to an hour of staff time, to identify and book a suitable interpreter).**
- **Administration costs associated with payment (invoices for each individual assignment have to be checked and paid and recorded on various systems).**
- **Administration costs associated with managing and maintaining a local register of interpreters (advertising, checking qualifications etc, regular updating of interpreters who are often from a transient population)**

- **Security vetting costs (each organisation should be ensuring interpreters are fit to perform their role, e.g. CRB check at £38 per person).**

7.3.2 Spend by Language

The data on spend per language is based solely on actual data responses received from those organisations that were able to provide such detailed information. (No estimates are involved).

This information is useful when determining the need for interpreters in each language. It is envisaged that future interpreter training in Wales will be specific to the type of public sector work. Therefore it is necessary to consider the most common languages in each of the sectors: Criminal Justice; Health, and; Local Authorities.

The actual data is based upon total amount of money spent on employing interpreters and translators in each particular language. It must be noted that this figure does not reflect the actual population make up by nationality, nor the number of interpreting events. That is, a total spend may represent a large number of occasions that an

interpreter is used, when used for only a short period of time (low cost events). Alternatively it may represent fewer events which are all for long periods of time (high cost events), e.g. the use of Vietnamese interpreters in the Criminal Justice System in connection with incidents of organised crime.

The total spend is also impacted upon by the geographical availability of interpreters and the costs of travelling time. For example, almost all NRPSI Vietnamese interpreters live in London and the South East of England, significantly increasing the cost of employing them.

Each of the sectors of Health, Criminal Justice and Local Authority are considered separately below.

Figure 7.3b Most commonly used languages, Health sector:

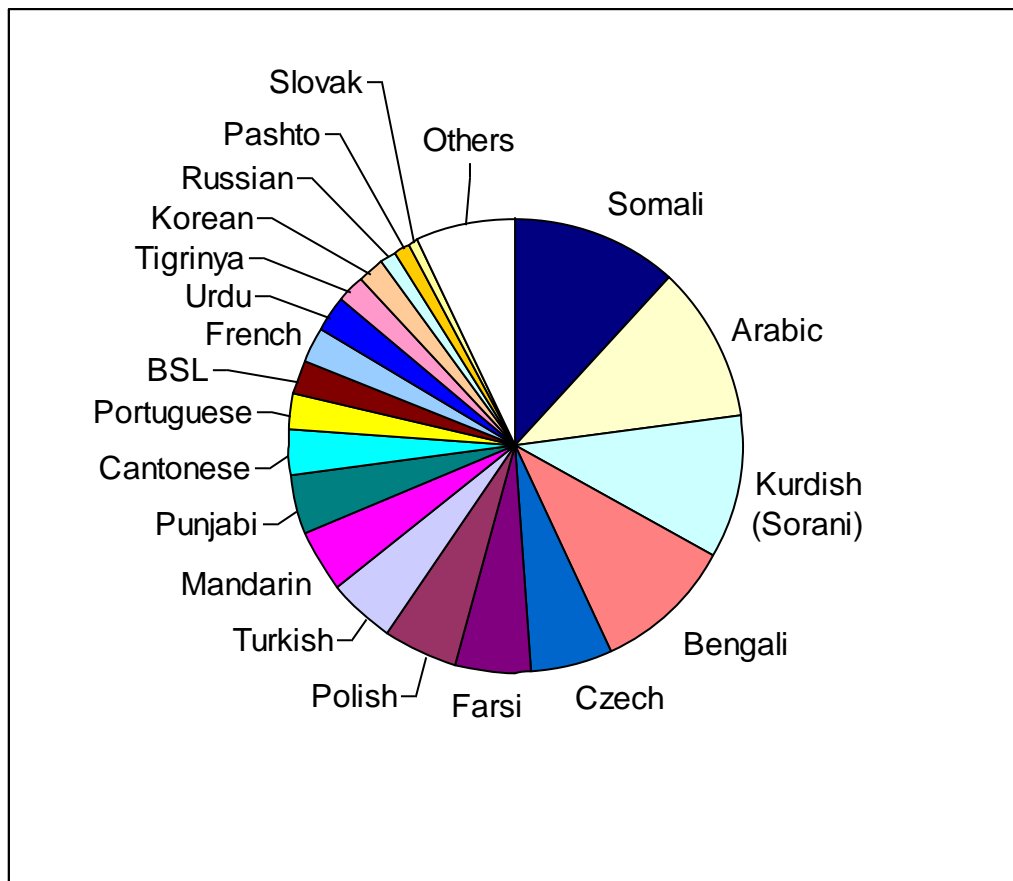


Figure 7.3b is based on total spend data of £349,000, on 59 languages. This is 32% of the estimated total spend in this sector, so it still presents a reasonably accurate picture of the language need within the health sector in Wales.

It clearly shows which interpreter languages are currently most needed in the health sector in Wales. This information together with data on the current available of specific language interpreters in Wales can be used to ensure that interpreter training can be geared towards the specific needs within this sector.

Health Sector

Top Ten languages	73% of total spend
Top Twenty languages	93% of total spend
Other languages	7% of total spend

Figure 7.3c **Most commonly used languages, Criminal Justice sector.**

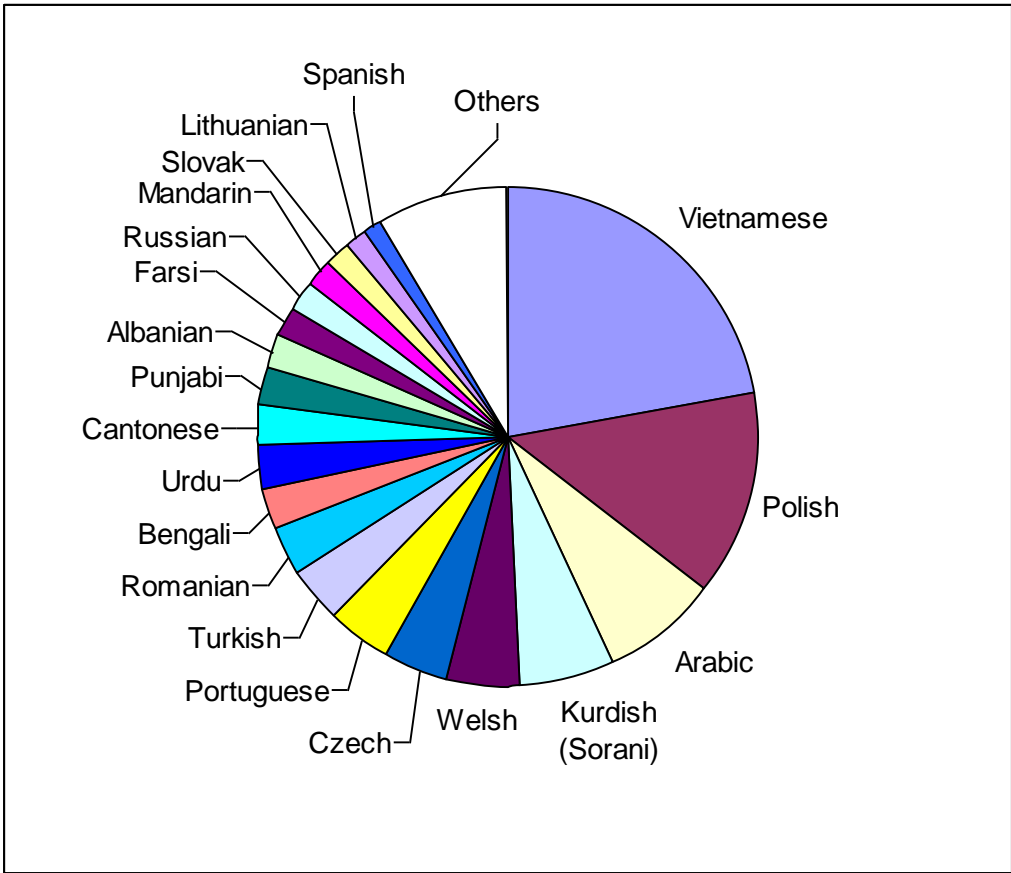


Figure 7.3c is based on total spend data of £926,000, on 60 languages. As this is 57% of the estimated total spend in this sector, it presents an accurate picture of the breakdown of language need within the criminal justice sector in Wales.

It clearly shows which interpreter languages are currently most needed in the criminal justice sector in Wales. This information together with data on the current available of specific language interpreters in Wales can then be used to ensure that interpreter training can be geared towards the specific needs within this sector.

Criminal Justice Sector

Top Ten languages	72% of total spend
Top Twenty languages	92% of total spend
Other languages	8% of total spend

Figure 7.3d **Most commonly used languages, Local Authorities sector.**

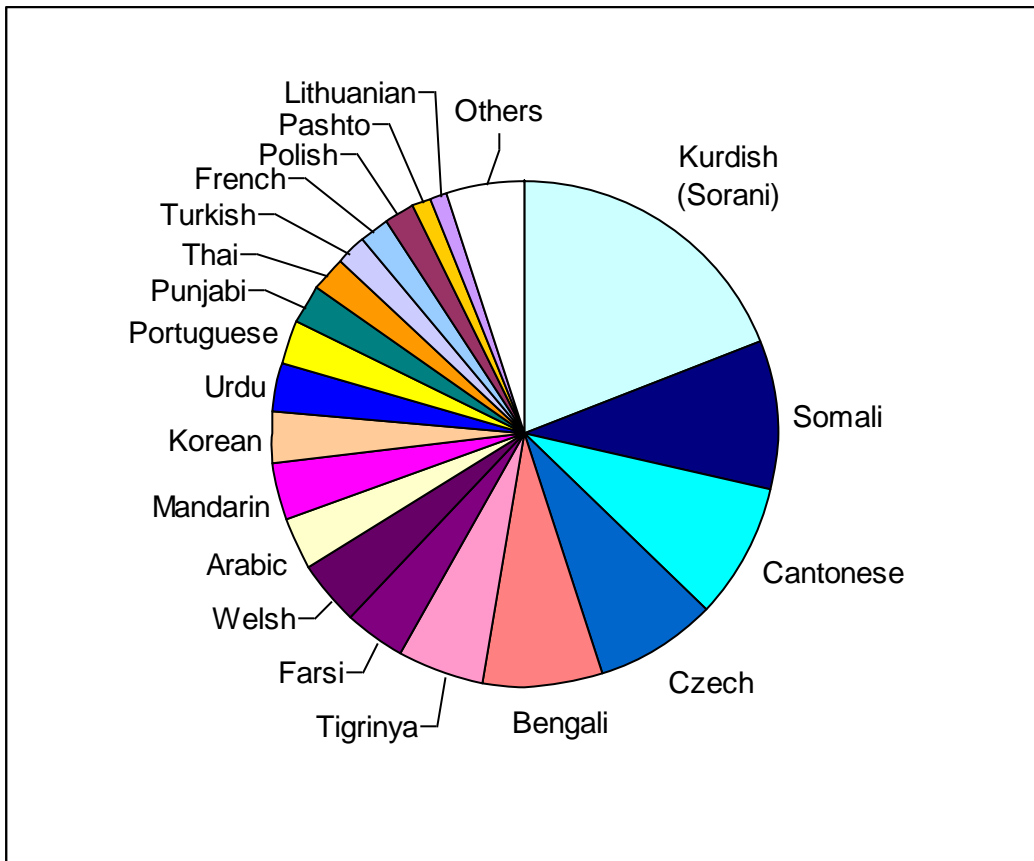


Figure 7.3d is based on total spend data of £102,000, on 43 languages. This is 29% of the estimated total spend in this sector, so it still presents a reasonably accurate picture of the breakdown of language need within the local authority sector in Wales.

It clearly shows which interpreter languages are currently most needed in the local authority sector in Wales. This information together with data on the current available of specific language interpreters in Wales can then be used to ensure that interpreter training can be geared towards the specific needs within this sector.

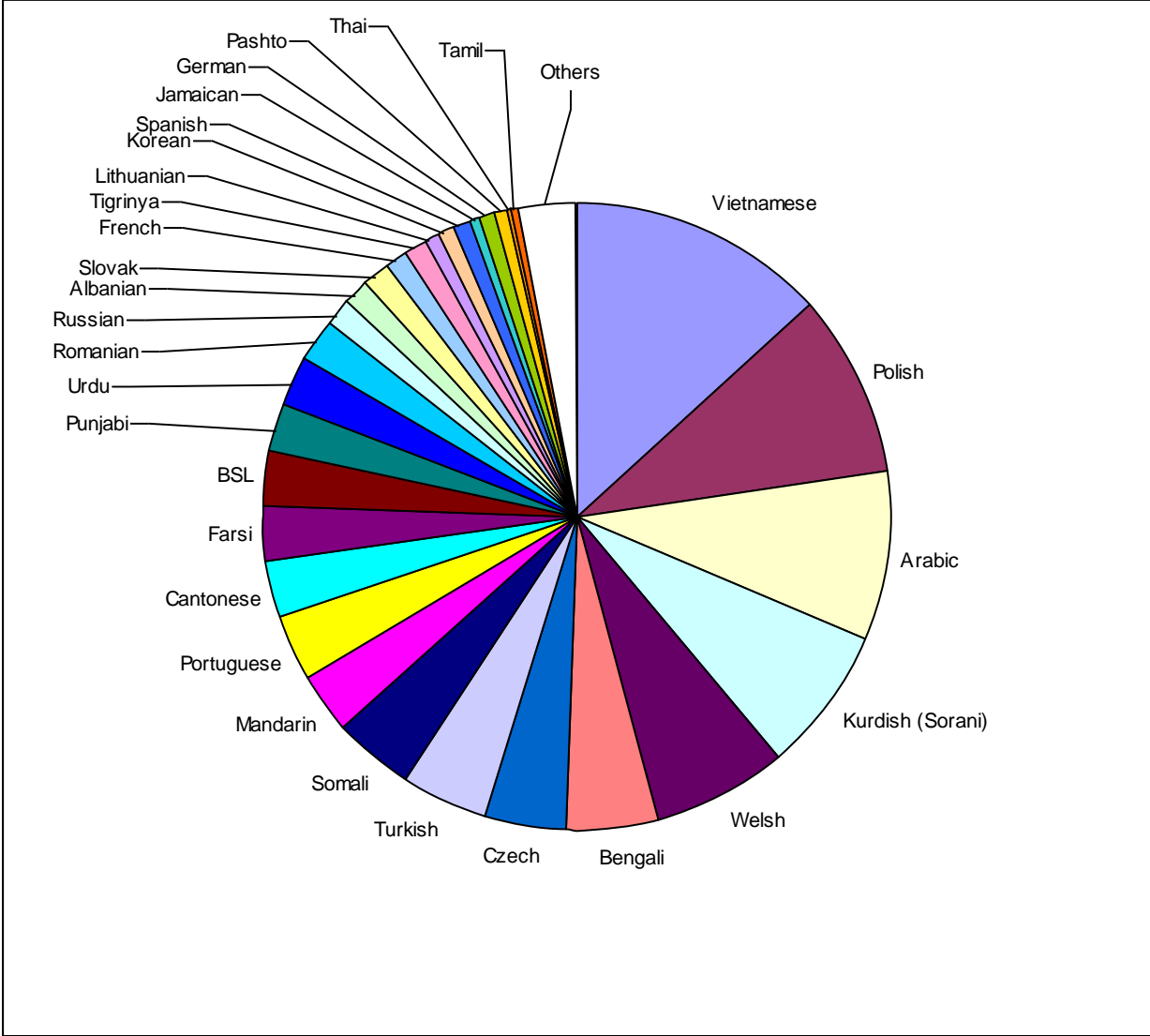
Local Authority Sector

Top Ten languages	73% of total spend
Top Twenty languages	95% of total spend
Other languages	5% of total spend

The below pie chart is based on total spend data of almost £1,600,000 on 74 languages. (It is accepted that this 'total picture' data may be skewed by the large

amount of information provided by the criminal justice sector compared to the health service and local authorities.)

Fig 7.3e Most commonly used languages for all sectors combined.



8. Conclusions

8.1 Response from the Public Service Providers in Wales

This work has shows an overwhelming support for a high quality and co-ordinated interpreter service in Wales providing for public service providers. Organisations are seeking easy access to a supplier of quality interpreters at a reasonable price.

NHS Trusts and Local Health Boards are experiencing difficulties accessing interpreters, with issues with costs and quality widely reported. They would welcome co-ordinated provision of interpreter services which comply with national minimum standards, centralised CRB checking processes, consistent booking fees and consistency in cost, all providing greater accountability and safer services for patients.

In the Criminal Justice Sector the Police Forces in Wales are experiencing significant issues with delays, quality, security and cost. These are less in North Wales due to the proximity of Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham. Forces would welcome a centralised interpreter service.

In the Crown Prosecution Service interpreters are generally secured through police or co-located Witness Care Units. CPS Areas would similarly welcome a centralised service. The courts recently moved to NRPSI and Signature (CACDP) interpreters in line with national guidance. The implications of this are being felt in respect of increased cost due to the absence of locally qualified interpreters.

The Probation Services, Victim Support and prisons are all finding current arrangements to be costly with no guarantee on quality. They would welcome a centralised service.

Local Authorities experience is mixed, with many reporting difficulties accessing appropriately trained, vetted and experienced interpreters. Issues of availability, volatile costs and variable quality have been reported. Respondents indicated a welcoming for a centralised service.

8.2 Specific Language Needs in Wales

This work has produced the first clear picture of language services being utilised in Wales across the different sectors of public service. Comparing the current top ten most used languages in each sector shows that different sectors are experiencing different language needs. This is also likely to be true for different regions of Wales. (Without full data from all areas and all bodies it is difficult to draw too many firm

conclusions.) However, it is clear that different languages are needed in each sector. Figure 8.2a below shows the comparison of the top ten languages in each sector.

	Criminal Justice	Health	Local Authority
Most Used language	Vietnamese	Somali	Kurdish (Sorani)
2 nd Most Used language	Polish	Arabic	Somali
3 rd Most Used language	Arabic	Kurdish (Sorani)	Cantonese
4 th Most Used language	Kurdish (Sorani)	Bengali	Czech
5 th Most Used language	Welsh	Czech	Bengali
6 th Most Used language	Czech	Farsi	Tigrinya
7 th Most Used language	Portuguese	Polish	Farsi
8 th Most Used language	Turkish	Turkish	Welsh
9 th Most Used language	Romanian	Mandarin	Arabic
10 th Most Used language	Bengali	Punjabi	Mandarin

Future interpreter training should be specific to the particular sector. It is essential that such training is geared towards those languages and regions where shortages in the above languages have been identified, concentrating on the top ten languages shown above. Clearly this position is constantly changing as the populations change, and thus the situation must be constantly monitored and reviewed.

The public service Welsh language needs are often quite different to those for foreign language. Any future service provision by a one-stop shop would need to take account of this, and liaise closely with the Welsh Language Board and the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters.

Work with representatives of Deaf organisations has demonstrated that, like foreign language interpreters, BSL signers would welcome training within the specific work environments of the public sectors. Feedback indicates that this would increase the number of BSL interpreters who would be willing to work with the public services, in accordance with the needs of those public services. There is a clear need for a future service provider to develop appropriate training for BSL signers.

8.3 Database of Existing Interpreters

The database of interpreters and potential interpreters developed through this research should be used in conjunction with the specific language needs identified at section 8.2 to inform future interpreter training in Wales.

For example, training initially needs to concentrate on the most used languages in each sector. The availability of interpreters in each particular language throughout Wales will determine the need to train interpreters in that language and in which areas they are most needed.

8.4 Options for managing future delivery

Three options are put forward below:

- 8.4.1 Offers no change to existing practices
- 8.4.2 Restricts use to professional interpreters only. This would mean that staff would have to identify and book interpreters only from the official national registers such as NRPSI (foreign language), AWTI (Welsh language), and Signature (BSL Signers for the deaf).
- 8.4.3 Proposes a ‘One-Stop Shop’ for Wales. This would provide a 24/7 call centre to assist with all booking and administration arrangements. It would be responsible for monitoring changes of language need, and for training and security vetting all interpreters and translators.

8.4.1 No Change

A continuation of existing practices has the below advantages and disadvantages:

	Advantage	Disadvantage
Quality Control	NRPSI/Signature/AWTI appear well qualified.	Local agency providers appear to provide little or no quality control
Security Checks	NRPSI/ Signature interpreters are generally security checked	Local agency providers appear to provide little or no security checks
Cost	Local Agencies costs vary widely, but can sometimes be reasonable.	NRPSI interpreters generally live significant distances from Wales, often

		doubling costs.
Availability	Local Agencies can generally provide an interpreter within a reasonable time.	NRPSI interpreters generally live significant distances from Wales, causing lengthy delays.
Service to Public	Local agency interpreters likely to avoid delays. NRPSI interpreters will provide quality interpreting with confidentiality assured.	Delays caused by NRPSI interpreters. Unknown quality/ confidentiality of local agency interpreters.
Service to own Staff	One phone call to a local interpreter agency will generally secure an interpreter	There are no agencies for NRPSI or Signature or AWTI qualified interpreters. As a result staff are required to make numerous phone calls to secure an interpreter.
Public Liability Insurance	Professional interpreters/ agencies may have their own.	Generally it is unlikely that private interpreters will have such insurance.
Local Employment	Local people can secure employment in local agencies.	Local interpreter agency pay rates are often poor.
Impact on Interpreters		National qualifications often too expensive for local people. Employment opportunities are limited.
Green Impact		Qualified interpreters are unnecessarily travelling great distances across the UK.

This is not really an option as too many public service providers are already complaining that existing services do not meet their needs.

8.4.2 Only use Professional Interpreters

This option could be achieved by directing all public service providers in Wales to only use qualified interpreters on nationally approved registers

	Advantage	Disadvantage
Quality Control	NRPSI/ Signature /AWTI appear well qualified.	May have little practical experience
Security Checks	NRPSI/ Signature interpreters are generally security checked	

Cost		NRPSI interpreters generally live significant distances from Wales, often doubling costs.
Availability		NRPSI interpreters generally live significant distances from Wales, causing lengthy delays.
Service to Public	NRPSI interpreters will provide quality interpreting with confidentiality assured.	Delays caused by NRPSI interpreters.
Service to own Staff		There are no agencies for NRPSI or Signature or AWTI qualified interpreters. As a result staff are required to make numerous phone calls to secure an interpreter.
Public Liability Insurance	Professional interpreters should have their own insurance.	
Local Employment		Past experience has shown local people do not find it cost effective to gain qualifications and join a national database.
Impact on Interpreters	Qualified interpreters in England etc will be fully employed.	
Green Impact		Qualified interpreters are unnecessarily travelling great distances across the UK.

This option would place even more pressure on the already limited supply of professional interpreters. It offers no suitable alternative service when a professional interpreter cannot be located. Currently, where this has already been adopted, this policy results in organisations engaging interpreters from untried sources, if a professional cannot be quickly found.

8.4.3 Set up a 'One-Stop Shop'

	Advantage	Disadvantage
Quality Control	Quality guaranteed through qualifications and local training	
Security Checks	Full security checks provided by local Police Forces	
Cost	Costs kept below national guidelines saving money for public service providers	
Availability	Nearest available qualified interpreter will	

	always be guaranteed. Future changes in language needs can be easily measured by a single centralised provider.	
Service to Public	Delays reduced, quality and confidentiality improved.	
Service to own Staff	One phone call to a 24/7 call centre will secure an interpreter	
Public Liability Insurance	Guaranteed to be in place	
Local Employment	Local people can secure training and employment through this one stop shop.	
Impact on Interpreters	Training to enable local people to secure qualifications and employment. Regular employment offered to qualified interpreters	Hourly rates of pay likely to be lower, but this is countered by regularity of employment.
Green Impact	Travelling distances greatly reduced and kept to a minimum.	

This is the only option which monitors the changing needs in Wales and then responds to those changes by training new interpreters in the languages that are needed. It is the only option which provides a professional 24/7 call centre and booking service. This reduces delays providing a better service to the public and saves staff time. It would provide a guarantee that each interpreter has been properly security vetted. It allows costs to be standardised and controlled in line with organisations needs. By running a single centralised service, charges per hour can be maintained at current levels and the call centre and training can be funded from within those rates. In short, once established, the service would be self funding. It also offers further savings to organisations who would be able to reduce administration costs in relation to payment procedures.

This concept is not new and is based on the model developed in Cambridgeshire. Cintra, (formerly Cambridgeshire Interpreting and Translation Agency) began life in 1995 as a pilot project, set up and funded by Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge and Huntingdon Health Authority and North West Anglia Health Authority.

The project was set up because of community and voluntary sector pressure and a recognition of the needs of multi-ethnic communities by the founding service providers. It was designed to explore how interpreting and translating services could best be provided for these public sector agencies at a time of growing inward migration.

Cintra Ltd became a separate company limited by guarantee, and the core funding from its founders ceased, although they have all remained clients of Cintra Ltd. Cintra now receives no core funding and generates all its revenue from its trading activities.

Cintra is now one of the United Kingdom's leading public service interpreting organisations, offering a complete interpreting and translation service to the public sector in the East of England and the East Midlands. Cintra is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, with a Board of Directors drawn from its stakeholder and professional constituency. Cintra celebrated its tenth anniversary as a company in 2007, and has played a major role at national level in helping to develop the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) and quality standards and training for interpreters.

9. Recommendations:

The One Stop Shop offers the best solution for Wales for the reasons set out at 8.4.3 above. If this model is supported then a business case will be developed to pilot a One-Stop Shop service. This will allow concept testing and improvements to be put in place before the service is rolled out across the whole of Wales. The research demonstrates that there is an existing need for this service improvement. The pilot should be started without delay, making best use of this research while it is still fresh and most valid.

9.1 It is recommended that the Wales Assembly Government support the development of a business case for 12 month pilot scheme for a ‘One-Stop Shop’ as suggested at option 8.4.3 above, with a target commencement date of 1/6/09.

The pilot ‘One-Stop Shop’ will

- Improve access to public services for vulnerable communities thereby improving public confidence
- Provide improved local employment opportunities at this difficult time in the jobs market. There will be increased employment of
 - local interpreters
 - staff of the one-stop shop, and
 - staff at local training establishments involved in interpreter training.
- Redirect public spending back into the local economy of Wales
- Provide an opportunity for financial savings for public service providers through:
 - reduced fees for interpreter and translation services
 - reduced costs of administrative services in booking interpreters
 - reduced costs of finance administration (one monthly bill instead of a single invoice for every interpreting assignment.)
 - No charges for CRB security vetting for each organisation.
- Reduce the carbon footprint of Welsh interpreter services.
- Provide interpreters with sector specific training and an opportunity to gain employment whilst continuing to prepare for full professional qualifications.

In order to be viable and realistic, the pilot needs to include a significant number of public service providers. The pilot should include Gwent Police and Cardiff Health Alliance, the two areas that have already provided financial support to the project. Once established the service could be extended across the whole of Wales at the earliest opportunity in response to the Wales wide need identified by this project.

9.2 It is recommended that the next task of the project is to identify potential partners for the pilot scheme in order to develop a consortium approach.

This research has identified practices that vary widely between service providers, and also within those providers across Wales. In some organisations there appears to be a need for national guidance regarding the manner that they should utilise interpreter and translator services. Without such clear guidance, practices are often adopted which may often fail to comply with the Human Rights Act or other relevant legislation. This can unnecessarily introduce significant risks to the organisations concerned.

9.3 It is recommended that the Wales Assembly Government ensures the development of standardised practices for each public service provider. (This work is already being considered by the WAG Refugee Inclusion Unit)

10. Supporting Information

- National Agreement on use of Interpreters: <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-publications/publication/operation>
- Cardiff Communities First Project: www.archive.cardiff.gov.uk/SPNR/Communities_first/area%20bulletins/April%2005/CF%20updateMar-April%2005.pdf
- CINTRA Language Services www.colc.co.uk/cambridge/cintra

11. Glossary

Glossary of Terms/Abbreviations

Term	Explanation
AWTI	Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRB check	Criminal Records Bureau check conducted on individuals to confirm their suitability for employment
HMCS	Her Majesty’s Courts Service

Interpreter	Someone who converts the spoken word from one language to another orally or through sign language.
Language Line/ The Big word	Private companies offering telephone interpreting service
NRPSI	National Register of Public service Interpreters, set up by the Institute of Linguists as a list of fully qualified interpreters
RNID	Royal National Institute for the Deaf, provides alternative lists of qualified interpreters for the deaf
Signature	Previously known as the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP), they maintain lists of qualified interpreters/signers for the deaf
SRO	Senior Responsible Officer, with overall responsibility for delivering the project
Translator	Someone who converts the written word from one language to another in written form.
WITS	Wales Interpreter and Translation Service

Appendix A

Recent Press Cuttings

Thousands spent on NHS interpreters

18 December 2008

East Anglia's health service is spending thousands of pounds a year on interpreting for foreign patients and deaf people.

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn says it will have spent more than £70,000 on interpreters for its patients this financial year, which is taking money away from patient care. The cost would have paid for 11 hip replacements or 80 cataract operations. The cost for the 2007-8 financial year was £56,000.

Meanwhile, the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital is spending around £100,000 a year on interpretation. The cost for 2007-8 is £97,000, up from £85,000 the year before. The cost for this financial year is expected to be

£96,000. NHS Norfolk spent £163,000 last year and expects to spend £161,000 this financial year. The James Paget University Hospital in Gorleston is budgeting £28,000.

The language most often requested at the QEH is Lithuanian, with 233 requests, followed by Russian and Polish. At the N&N, Portuguese is the most popular language. But British Sign Language interpretation is also increasing - there were 22 requests in the last financial year.

Hospital spokesman Richard Humphries said: "The costs are going up and up and up. We are not complaining about having to use interpreters, but it is annoying because it slows down the system. It is not helping us at all because we are trying to save money so we can channel everything into patient care. But it is essential to do the interpreting to make sure they understand the treatment and that we can get their medical history." Most of QEH interpreting is done by the Norfolk-based Intran partner-ship. The N&N uses Intran, Cambridge-based Cintra and inter-national company Language Line. Most interpreting is done over the phone, with some face-to-face work when necessary.

Jennifer Downie, equality and diversity manager and lead on Intran for NHS Norfolk, said: "While Intran continues to provide excellent value for money, the partnership continues to negotiate the cost of the translation services to ensure we get the most cost-effective service and continue to receive the highest standards."

Jonathan Cook, director of corporate services at NHS Norfolk, said: "Without Intran, people who are not fluent in English would not be able to fully-access the healthcare provisions which they are legally entitled to and patient safety could be compromised through a lack of understanding."

Other public bodies, including police, probation services and councils, also have large bills for interpreting. Norfolk police spent more than £360,000 last year, while Suffolk police spent £849,617 on foreign language speakers, of which £196,664 was on interpreters.

Cost of interpreters at Derby City General Hospital rises

Thursday, January 01, 2009

THE cost of interpreting for hospital patients who do not speak English has risen by more than £30,000. Derby Hospitals NHS Trust spent £211,133 on interpreting services from April 2007 and March 2008, with hundreds of patients in need of help every month. This compared with £180,200 the previous year. Rachel Murfin, who is in charge of the service, said the rise was partly due to an increased use of professional interpreters rather than relying on patients' family members and friends.

But she said there were also more Slovakian, Czech and Polish people being treated at Derby City General Hospital and Derbyshire Royal Infirmary.

She said: "While the patient might want someone who speaks English to be with them, we want also a paid interpreter to be present, so there's a shift towards caution there. It's not a formal change in policy as such and we've not actually encountered a problem.

"I suspect it might get more expensive because interpreters of certain languages, such as Slovakian, are very much in-demand so they can put their fees up."

In November, the hospitals used interpreters in 504 sessions, compared with 464 the previous year. In October, the figure was 548 compared with 470, and in September it was 507 compared with 388. The trust employs two full-time interpreters who offer face-to-face and telephone interpretation in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi, which are languages most in demand. The hospitals pay by the hour for agency staff who speak all other languages.

Interpreters are provided for about 80 languages, although some are only encountered once every few months.

One of the hospital's two interpreters is Nazlee Choudhry, who said that in the 10 years that she had worked as an interpreter, demand had grown immensely.

She said: "We work with the older generations of people that have come from abroad and then there are the younger people who can speak English but their partners need access to interpreters.

"So, for example, with the Kurdish community we saw a trend where at first we were getting requests from male patients but then the demand shifted to female patients.

"Often, these were women who had come to England after marrying Kurdish men, and needed interpreters during pregnancy and then to help them access children's services.

"A lot of patients have a command of English but are reluctant to use it because they are shy or embarrassed or because medical language is complicated and they want to know what the doctor is saying."

Welsh cops' £2m translation costs revealed

Feb 10 2008 Wales On Sunday

WELSH police forces have spent more than £2m on language translators since the start of the Millennium.

Figures released to Wales on Sunday reveal the police have been forced to spend increasing amounts of taxpayers' money on interpreters for obscure languages such as Sylheti, Tongan and Berber*.

But the true figure is likely to be much higher as the nation's largest force – South Wales Police – could only provide figures for the past two years.

David Davies, Conservative MP for Monmouth, slammed the costs as a waste of money. "As soon as you arrest people who speak perfectly good English they clam up at a moment's notice," said Mr Davies, who is also a special constable. "It's just yet another cost of mass immigration. "It's ridiculous for the Government to say immigration has been good from an economic point of view when they have not been able to add up the costs – and translation is one of them. "It's a huge cost and a large part of the police budget when they should be putting police out on the beat. "Some are coming from Eastern Europe and causing immense problems and demanding translation as soon as they are arrested."

He insisted his comments were not racist, pointing out that Britain's highest-ranking black policeman, Kent Chief Constable Mike Fuller, warned last month his force was struggling to cope with "migration surges".

Mark Wallace, Campaign Director of the Taxpayers' Alliance, also criticised the cost.

“At a time when every penny is sorely needed for frontline policing in the fight against crime, translation is a vast drain on budgets,” he said.

The only force able to provide a language-by-language breakdown was Gwent Police, whose figures showed that, in the past year alone, they spent almost £6,900 on Vietnamese translators, £6,850 on Arabic and £4,350 on Urdu. But they also had to call in experts in other languages such as Lithuanian, Moldovan and Slovak.

One force said the numbers of new immigrants moving to its area had caused an increase in spending on translation services.

A spokeswoman for North Wales Police, which has spent £530,356 since 2000, said: “There’s a range of reasons why this figure is increasing. “There’s an increase in the number of immigrants who are coming in over the years and they are both victims and offenders.”

Dyfed-Powys Police spent £482,470 and Gwent Police spent £358,061, while South Wales Police spent £737,000 in just two years.

According to UK Government figures, the cost of translating and interpreting for residents of Wales and England is increasing on a yearly basis and is conservatively estimated to cost at least £100m a year.

Police spend up to £21m on translation services across Wales and England, while local councils spend up to £25m. Meanwhile, the courts system spends more than £10m, not counting the cost of legal aid.

* In case you're wondering, Sylheti is spoken in north-eastern Bangladesh and Berber in parts of Morocco and Algeria.

Price hike for police translator

Friday, 07 November 2008

THE cost of hiring interpreters for foreign criminals by Cumbria's cops has shot up by 400 per cent in five years – the biggest rise in the country. Cash shelled out for translators has risen from £17,460 in 2003 to £88,073.

Cumbria's force says the rocketing figures are down to having to bring interpreters in from other parts of the country, which is expensive.

Cumbria Inspector Dave Willetts said: “We have seen an increase in the number of people moving to Cumbria from all over the world. “Traditionally we have not had a large number of interpreters living or working in the county, so we have had to utilise professionals from other parts of the county, which is expensive. “As a result the local police, County Council and NHS have worked together to develop a local bank of interpreters, who have been operating for the last two months, and will provide a large proportion of our translation needs and should see a reduction in the associated costs going forward.”

Nationally the cost overall has risen by two thirds in the past five years, but for some individual forces, including Cumbria, the amount has increased by 400 per cent.

David Ruffley, Conservative shadow police minister, said the cost of translators was unacceptable and was putting a strain on police budgets. He said: "These figures suggest we are importing more foreign criminals. As a result, police budgets are being hit. "The government law and order policy is simply not doing enough to get resources for proper policing so they can get out on the streets and confront crime. Money spent on bureaucracy and processes means less for the bobby on the beat."

In total the costs have risen from £13,580,599 in 2004 to £22,178,040 in 2008 – a rise of 63 per cent, according to the figures obtained under the Freedom of Information act.

A Home Office spokesperson said: "The Home Secretary met Chief Constables earlier in the year to discuss the impact of migration on policing, which is why we have set up the Migration Impacts Forum to discuss these issues. "That is also why we are undergoing the biggest shake up of the immigration system and border security for over 45 years.

Under our new Australian-style Points System, skilled workers wanting to come to the UK will also need to have an acceptable level of English. "In addition we are asking migrants to pay a little extra towards a fund of tens of millions of pounds to help services deal with the short term pressures of migration."

Police interpreter fees hit £290,000 a year

Friday, October 31, 2008

A SHARP rise in the number of foreign people arrested in the Westcountry has led to the police bill for interpreters more than doubling in just five years. Devon and Cornwall Police now spend almost £290,000 a year on translation services which the Tories claim is eating into budgets for front-line services. The Government has begun forcing immigrants to pay an impact levy to help public services deal with the extra costs of widespread migration. The annual influx of migrant workers into the Westcountry increased by 260 per cent between 2002 and 2008. Some 40,000 people were given national insurance numbers in Devon and Cornwall in the five-year period, with many more moving to the region without registering to work.

In 2003-04, Devon and Cornwall Police spent £123,000 on interpreters but by last year, the figure had reached £282,000, a 129 per cent rise. The figure peaked in 2006-07 at £320,000. The rise in the Westcountry is significantly higher than the average 63 per cent for England and Wales.

Shadow police minister David Ruffley said: "These figures suggest we are importing more foreign criminals and consequently spending already stretched police budgets on translations rather than on more front-line policing of our streets. Migration into the UK has put even greater strain on already tight police force budgets." He added that the figures were further evidence of a need for a new border police force. Concern has been raised repeatedly about the "porous" nature of the UK's borders, with

particular criticism aimed at the lack of checks at ports and airports in the Westcountry. Customs chiefs have shifted resources towards major entry points like Dover and Heathrow as part of so-called “intelligence-led” operations. Tory leader David Cameron vowed to create a new 30,000-strong border police force to deal with illegal immigrant, smugglers, traffickers and terrorists.

Earlier this year, it emerged that since 2003, more than 3,000 foreign nationals had been arrested by Devon and Cornwall Police. The number has more than doubled in just four years – from 338 in 2003 to 859 in 2006, the last full year for which figures are available.

Schools, hospitals, housing and even libraries are said to be struggling to cope with the pressures of increased immigration. But the Government has insisted that efforts are being stepped up to ensure public services do not struggle with increased demand.

Last night, the Home Office said Home Secretary Jacqui Smith had met chief constables to discuss the impact of migration on policing. The Migration Impacts Forum had been set up to discuss these issues. “That is also why we are undergoing the biggest shake-up of the immigration system and border security for more than 45 years. Under our new Australian-style points system, skilled workers wanting to come to the UK will also need to have an acceptable level of English. “In addition, we are asking migrants to pay a little extra towards a fund of tens of millions of pounds to help services deal with short-term pressures of migration.”

Migrant surge pushes police bill for translators up to £22m

29th October 2008

Tory police spokesman David Ruffley unearthed the details of the 60 per cent increase on police bills for translators

Police spending on translators has rocketed by more than 60 per cent to £22 million a year following the recent influx of migrants.

Some forces have seen their bill for interpreters increase by more than 400 per cent, as parts of Britain previously untouched by mass migration experienced large numbers of new arrivals from Eastern Europe.

The Conservatives said the cash - which comes direct from taxpayers - was being drained from other priorities, such as fighting crime.

Shadow police minister David Ruffley, who unearthed details of the the astonishing increase, said: 'These figures suggest we are importing more foreign criminals.

'As a result, police budgets are being hit and the sums involved could be better spent on more frontline policing of our streets.'

Using Freedom of Information requests, Mr Ruffley discovered the police's translation bill had soared from £13,580,599 in 2003/04 - the year before the EU expanded eastwards - to £22,178,040 last year.

In Cumbria, the cost of interpretation and translation services has risen by 404 per cent in five years, from £17,460 in 2003/04 to £88,073.

In Thames Valley, there has been a 127 per cent rise, from £477,273 in 2003/04 to £1,082,083 in 2007/08. In Greater Manchester the cost of interpretation and translation services has risen by 75 per cent in five years, to £956,461.

The Met is the biggest spender, forking out almost £10million last year.

The final bill is likely to be more than £25m, as only 43 of the 51 police forces in the United Kingdom fully responded to the FOI request.

Taxpayers spend £176K on interpreters

December 2008

Foreign defendants in Black Country courts are costing taxpayers tens of thousands of pounds a year in interpreters' fees, the Express & Star can reveal today.

Figures obtained through the Freedom of Information Act show that more than £75,000 has been spent in the past year paying for the services at magistrates courts in Sandwell, with more than £50,000 a year in Wolverhampton and £45,000 in Walsall. Interpreters are used by the courts in order to translate for non-English speaking defendants.

Nearly £200,000 has been spent in the past two years paying for the services at West Bromwich and Warley Magistrates Courts.

Almost £71,500 was spent in the financial year from April 2006 to March 2007, with that figure rising to more than £75,500 in 2007-08. So far this year, more than £30,322 has been spent on interpreters between April and September, according to latest figures.

Those figures do not include extra fees spent on more serious cases involving Sandwell defendants which are then dealt with in Wolverhampton and Birmingham Crown Courts.

The amount spent on interpreters exceeds that spent at magistrates court in neighbouring Wolverhampton, where the court has to fork out an average of £55,000 a year.

In Walsall, the more than £45,581 was spent in the calendar year 2007, a rise of £9,000 a year since the expansion of the European Union in 2004, which led to an increase in foreign workers from countries including Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Victoria Stead, governance officer for Her Majesty's Court Service in the West Midlands, said: "The rates we pay interpreters have not risen significantly over the last five years. The changes in the costs are due to the changes in demand for interpreters in court cases."

Fiona McEvoy, for pressure group the Taxpayer's Alliance, said: "We should concentrate on making sure people can learn the language rather than getting taxpayers to dip into their pockets, which are becoming more and more empty."

"It would not only help reduce the substantial amount of money being spent on translation costs, but would also encourage a more cohesive society," the spokeswoman added.

Andiamo! Commissions Investigation Into Acute Shortage of British Sign Language Interpreters

May 11, 2008 -- Aware of the acute shortage of British Sign Language interpreters - Andiamo took the opportunity to find out more about the issues surrounding this problem. Project Controller, Kate Stansfield reports:

"In April 2007, CACDP reported that 469 BSL-English Interpreters were registered with them in England and Wales: this means that there is roughly 1 registered interpreter for every 106 Deaf people who need them."

This is a staggering statistic and one of many important observations made in the recent report on the current provision of BSL/English Interpreters within Yorkshire and the Humber. The report, commissioned by the Regional Language Network Yorkshire & The Humber, was officially launched by its author, Helen Tagg, on 13 December 2007.

The Projects Team at Andiamo! are acutely aware of the reality of the current shortage of BSL/English interpreters. Requests from clients for these interpreters are often difficult to satisfy due to interpreters almost always being fully-booked. Keen to learn more about the issues surrounding the provision of BSL/English interpreters, the invitation from the RLN to attend the launch at Centenary House in Leeds appeared to offer the perfect opportunity.

Attended by BSL/English interpreters, sign language tutors, members of the Deaf community and staff from the Leeds Deaf and Blind Society, amongst others, the day began with an overview of the report by its author Helen Tagg. Helen began by highlighting the importance of producing such a report – stressing the public and private sector's need to conform with disability legislation, and by emphasising the effect of the lack of BSL/English interpreters on the Deaf community in terms of social exclusion.

Next followed a fascinating insight into the reasons behind the shortage of interpreters. What emerged was a picture of a long and expensive route to the career of BSL/English interpreter, of a lack of information at national level concerning the number of Deaf people using BSL and of poor communication and coordination between the different communities involved.

Moira murder case 'hampered by shortage of translators'

January 2009

SERIOUS CONCERNS have been raised over whether there will be enough Slovak interpreters competent in Scottish law to handle a high-profile murder trial which is due to begin in a matter of weeks.

Sources within the industry fear the lack of Slovak speakers holding the minimum qualification demanded by the authorities for court interpreting could be an issue during the prosecution of Marek Harcar, a Slovakian man, who is due to stand trial in March, accused of the rape and murder of the businesswoman Moira Jones.

Miss Jones, 35, was found in the undergrowth of a wooded area of Queen's Park by a ranger on May 29. The prosecution, which will be led by the Lord Advocate Elish Angiolini QC, say that she allegedly suffered a sustained attack and robbery by Harcar, 33, after he forced her into the park from outside her flat in Queen's Drive.

He is alleged to have later fled to the Czech Republic and onto Slovakia. There are 12 Slovaks and two Czechs among the 165 witnesses, including police officers from Slovakia. One witness will be asked to give evidence from the country via video link, and the Crown Office said last month it will have to cast its net wider outside Scotland for high-quality interpreters.

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) last month emailed leading Scottish-based agencies, seeking interpreters who hold the industry benchmark Diploma In Public Service Interpreting (Scottish legal option) for the case. It prefers those working in the court system to have this qualification.

According to industry sources, the problems facing the prosecution in the Moira Jones case are exacerbated by the fact there are so few Slovak interpreters with the qualification. Most of those that do have it have already been involved in providing interpreting or translation work on behalf of the police during the murder investigation last year, thereby ruling them out of further involvement.

One Slovak interpreter said the Crown Office would have great difficulty in finding suitable interpreters with the qualification who could also be available for the duration of what could be a lengthy trial.

The source said: "The COPFS seem to be approaching one agency after another and what might happen is that some of the agencies will attempt to send unqualified people. They are struggling to get interpreters and have plenty of Slovak witnesses.

"The agencies have received emails checking on our availability because they have been told there is a very big case coming up in March.' The Crown are approaching smaller agencies now."

Professor Guillermo Makin, a professor at the Universidad de Belgrano in Argentina, and an associate of the Centre of Latin American Studies, at Cambridge University, who is an expert on the issue, said: "If you offer the court Czech and they are Slovak, the court is in breach of the Human Rights Act, which demands everybody is entitled to a fair trial.

"No wonder they are struggling. It is one thing getting a Slovak to interpret for one day, but this trial looks like it will last several weeks."

Chief Justice suggests center to pool interpreter resources

Saturday, January 17, 2009

The state's top judge is proposing a plan to deal with those using the court system who don't speak or understand English very well. Iowa Supreme Court Chief Justice Marsha Ternus says Iowa's population has become more and more diverse, and that's showing in the court system.

Ternus says due to Iowa's increasingly diverse population, more and more people who don't understand English are ending up in court, and that makes interpreters an essential court service. Ternus says federal law mandates that everyone have access to interpreters to be provided proper legal representation. She says noncompliance can result in a loss of federal funding, and while she says the court has adopted measures to ensure the courts use well qualified interpreters, they struggle to provide interpreters for civil cases, cases in rural areas, and interpreters in areas other than Spanish.

Ternus says other state agencies and the state school systems are facing the same situation and she suggests the state create an organization to help everyone. Ternus suggests a statewide language interpreters center that pools and coordinates interpreter resources. She says having a central point for the services can better meet the demand for different languages, ensure quality control, and manage costs through economies of scale. Ternus says this is the time to move ahead with this plan.

"The fact that the state's financial resources are limited is only more reason that the state should explore this collaborative solution, perhaps through a legislative interim study committee," Ternus says, "by pooling our experiences and resources, however limited, we can surely accomplish more than we do with

each government entity and private business struggling to on their own." Ternus made her comments during her annual "State of the Judiciary" address to legislators Wednesday.

New courses to train legal interpreters

29 October 2008

Barnfield hopes to help meet national shortfall

Two new courses for legal interpreters are being launched at Luton's Barnfield College, to help meet the national shortfall in the profession. The Certificate in Bilingual Skills will start on November 6 and a Diploma in Public Service Interpreting course will begin next year.

Beds Police Authority chairman, Peter Conniff, warned last year that he was seeking additional funding to deal with the influx of immigrants. And Cambridgeshire Police estimate their translation costs have risen by £800,000 per year.

Tutor of the new courses David Farrer said: "The certificate course will run for 22 weeks. Competency in English and the chosen language is needed at GCSE-level or the equivalent. Confidence in the two languages and confidentiality are the key words.

WITS Report 0209 v1.3

"The demand-led course will develop on-the-spot spoken translation skills and written skills in both languages. Those who qualify should be in a position to be employed in the legal, prison, medical or social services fields where there are serious shortages of trained interpreters."

Appendix B



Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS)

Please complete this questionnaire and return it to the Project team. Contact details can be found at the end.

Agency.....

Position/Name **Date**.....

- 1. Do you use face to face interpreters in your agency? If so, please explain the type of work involved.

- 2. Do you use telephone interpreters in your agency? If so, please explain the type of work involved.**

- 3. Do you use translators (document translation.) in your agency? If so, please explain the type of work involved.**

- 4. Who do you book language services through?** (please give details of different providers of different services, e.g. face to face/ telephone/ written translation)

- 5. Which of the following do you use to meet your interpretation needs?**
Professional interpreters. Children/Young People/Students. Parents/Family.
Other community members. Bilingual work colleagues.
Comment on roles in which they are used:

- 6. What is the average rate you pay for a professional Interpreter/ Translator?**
(please explain any different rates)

- 7. Does your agency recruit / select / vet interpreters or maintain its own list of interpreters? If so, please provide brief details.**

- 8. What qualifications do you require your interpreters to have? Does this vary for differing roles?**

- 9. What level of security do your interpreters need to be vetted to?**
e.g. Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) or Counter Terrorism Checks (CTC) **Does this vary for differing roles?**

- 10. How well does your current interpreter service provide for your needs?**

- 11. What sort of issues do you currently face regarding the use of Interpreters/Translators?**

- 12. Please provide details of any examples of good practice regarding the use of interpreters by your organisation.**

- 13. Would your organisation benefit through improved use of technology? (e.g. video conferencing)**

- 14. How would a 24/7 one stop shop for interpreter services help your organisation?**

- 15. If possible, please provide data of your interpreter use for the last 3 financial years broken down by cost and language. (NB if you require our assistance to gather/ analyse data we will be happy to assist.)**