

Standard Operating Procedure

SOP Title	Language Support Services
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Language support services

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) relates to the use of language support services for GPs and St Catherine's Hospice to support service users utilising healthcare provider services that are commissioned by Chorley and South Ribble Clinical Commissioning Group (CSR CCG) and Greater Preston Clinical Commissioning Group (GP CCG).
- 1.2 The SOP also focuses on the use of language support services for CCG corporate requirements, such as the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

2.0 Why do we need to use language support services?

- 2.1 The Equality Act (2010) requires public authorities to eliminate or minimise potential disadvantages to service users when accessing health and care services.
- 2.2 To do this for people with hearing loss, learning disabilities or people who do not speak English as their first language, we need to provide a reasonable adjustment.
- 2.3 A reasonable adjustment is when we take steps to meet the needs of people, such as service users, families and carers and support them to effectively access the service, have an equitable experience to other service users and improve their health and care outcomes.
 - The adjustment we need to take for people with hearing loss is to provide a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.
 - The adjustment that we need to take for people who do not speak English as a first language is to provide a translator.
 - The adjustment that we need to take for people who have a learning disability is to provide information in an easy to understand language and easy read written format.

3.0 What are healthcare providers responsible for?

- 3.1 The healthcare provider has full responsibility to show due regard to all service users with a language or communication barrier and provide the appropriate language support service and patient information.

4.0 What are the benefits to providing language support services?

- 4.1 People who do not speak English as their first language who are not provided with a translator; people with hearing loss who are not provided with an interpreter; and people with learning disabilities and who are not accompanied by their care worker, are subject to the following concerns:
 - **Cost saving:** The NHS incurs higher charges and longer stays in hospital than for other service users, increasing the cost of patient care.
 - **Patient safety:** Without effective communication, there is a risk to patient safety through a lack of comprehension and opportunity for patient choice.

- **Efficient:** service users are less likely to attend appointments without support. 'Did Not Attend' (DNA) costs increase. DNA expenses are currently estimated to cost the NHS over 1 billion per annum.
- **Accessible:** return to emergency care more frequently, increasing the cost of patient care.
- **Responsive:** patients have informed us that they wait for an emergency to seek health care, as they fear a situation where they cannot clearly communicate.
- **Patient care:** translators, interpreters and care workers ease the tension and frustration experienced by service users. Thus improves the quality of patient care. It can also aid the GP in developing a trusting rapport with the patient.
- **Compliance:** the risk of litigation is significantly increased if care is not provided in line with equality, human rights and regulatory frameworks.

5.0 Good practice guidance for the use of language support services

5.1 The CCGs recommend the following process for good practice when using language support services:

- It is important to ensure that all patients are supported to use their care worker, translator or interpreter on their first appointment, where possible, without an associate (friend or family member) present. This will provide the patient with an opportunity to agree if they would like an associate present at future appointments.
- Language support services should be used for all appointments when the patient needs to communicate their health requirements to a clinician and receive information on how to address their needs.
- The language support service appointment should be booked as soon as the patient has made their appointment or the requirement for language support services is identified.
- If the person booking the appointment is not sure about the patient's first language, there are posters and cards provided to all GP practices that the patient can point to that will identify what language they class as their first language.
- The patient will be empowered to self-care.

6.0 The risks of not using language support services

6.1 The CCGs have highlighted a number of risks when services do not use language support services:

- The patient cannot make an informed decision without the correct information. There are risks to the quality of the information being shared with the patient by an associate, which may not be as accurate as a qualified translator / interpreter.
- If using an associate, the service user may be unintentionally or intentionally be misled, resulting in the patient making a decision that is not in their best interest which may lead to a safeguarding concern.
- There may be a privacy or dignity issue if the patient is forced to disclose information to the associate in order to seek medical treatment. If the associate is a vulnerable person, such as a child, this could also lead to a safeguarding concern.

- There is a risk of litigation for the provider if the provision of care is not in line with current equality legislation.

7.0 The process for booking language support services for CCG events

7.1 When the CCGs are holding public events, there is a need to ask attendees if they have any additional requirements, such as BSL interpreters, hearing loops, etc. to ensure that access to events is equitable and in line with the Accessible Information Standard.

8.0 The Accessible Information Standard

8.1 The Accessible Information Standard aims to ensure that people who have a disability or sensory loss receive information that they can access and understand, for example in large print, braille or via email, and professional communication support if they need it, for example from a British Sign Language interpreter.

8.2 The Accessible Information Standard requires organisations that provide NHS or adult social care to:

- Ask people if they have any information or communication needs, and find out how to meet their needs.
- Record those needs clearly and in a set way.
- Highlight or flag the person's file or notes so it is clear that they have information or communication needs and how to meet those needs.
- Share people's information and communication needs with other providers of NHS and adult social care, when they have consent or permission to do so.
- Take steps to ensure that people receive information which they can access and understand, and receive communication support if they need it.

9.0 Can providers use any provider?

9.1 The CCGs along-side other partner organisations have undertaken a rigorous process to identify and utilise the following language support services.

9.2 We have identified three language support providers:

- Cosign Ltd for BSL interpretation.
- Language Line Solutions for telephone translations.
- Lifeline Language Services Ltd for face to face services.

9.3 The provider services we commission have the right to use any qualified translators and interpreters of their choice. However, the liability and payment for language support services that have not been identified by the CCGs will be the responsibility and accountability of the provider.

10.0 The CCGs are funding language support services

10.1 The CCGs in central Lancashire have currently agreed to fund interpreters and translators for:

- GP appointments in central Lancashire.
- Clinical appointments at St Catherine's Hospice.

10.2 The CCGs have put caveats on this agreement:

- All BSL interpreters will be required to be face to face, unless there is an opportunity to use digital technology.
- All translation conversations should be offered as a telephone appointment, unless the clinician has identified a clinical need for which the patient would require a face to face translator.

10.3 The GP practices and St Catherine's Hospice are required to manage the booking of the language support service appointment.

10.4 The CCGs are directly invoiced from the language support service provider for this service.

10.5 Written translations are available from Life Line Language Services Ltd at a cost to the GP practice or St Catherine's Hospice.

11.0 Booking language support services

11.1 Anyone can book the language support services to support the patient with their appointment, including the patient or their associate. However, this may be difficult for the patient and they may require support to do this.

11.2 The language support services provider will need the following information to allocate a translator or interpreter:

- The allocated code for the service / GP Practice.
- Date of the appointment / event.
- Start and end time of the appointment / event (note if this is more than 2-3 hours, two interpreters will be required).
- Client details for appointments (name, date of birth, full address).
- Client details for events.
- Type of appointment / event, such as GP, dentist, etc. with the nature of the visit (what part of the body, tests, results, admission, etc).
- Minutes of previous meetings, event agenda, etc. to enable the interpreter to keep the nature of the event in context.
- Is there a preference for a male or female interpreter?
- Is there any preparation needed for the appointment / event?
- The full address, including postcode and directions, if possible.
- Booking contact name and details and preferred form of contact (email, telephone, fax, letter, etc).
- If the appointment / event is cancelled or you no longer require an interpreter please contact the language support service as soon as possible to cancel the interpreter.

12.0 Cancellation of the language support service booking

12.1 The more notice you can give to the language support services, the more likely it will be that they can meet the needs of your service users.

13.0 CCG approved language support services

13.1 For British Sign Language support (BSL) for people with hearing loss, hearing and sightless and people who lip read.

- **Cosign Ltd**

Address: 44 Stony Hill Avenue, South Shore, Blackpool, FY4 1PR

Telephone: 01204 811 392 (Voice/Text/Fax)

Email: office@cosign.org.uk

Website: www.cosign.org.uk

13.2 For telephone translation services for people requiring support to translate English to another spoken language.

- **Language Line Solutions**

Telephone: 0800 169 2879

Email: enquiries@languageline.co.uk

Website: www.languageline.com/uk

Translation codes:

Chorley and South Ribble **287483**

Greater Preston **290718**

13.3 For face to face translation services for people requiring support to translate English to another spoken language, where the service user had been identified as requiring a face to face appointment based on clinical need.

- **Life Line Language Services Ltd**

Victoria House, 9-11 Ormskirk Road, Preston, PR1 2QP

Telephone: 01772 558 858

Email: ines@lifelinelanguageservices.co.uk

Website: For more information www.lifelinelanguageservices.co.uk

14.0 Additional support

14.1 If you have any concerns with the language support services or need advice on how to access these services, please contact the CCGs' Equality and Diversity Lead on **01772 214 396 or 07824 306 762.**