

Using interpreters at clinics

Clinics on the LawWorks Clinics Network support clients from a range of diverse backgrounds, including clients where English is not their first language, deaf clients and those with learning difficulties or mental health issues who, although have the legal capacity to consent, may need support in communicating their views and needs.

We have therefore created this resource to bring together information about some of the different translation/interpretation models that clinics on the LawWorks network are currently using and provide information about some available services currently used by clinics.

Interpretation models used by clinics

Although some clinics cannot provide access to an interpreter, some interpretation methods commonly used by clinics are set out below.

Free interpretation

- Reliance on staff or students who speak different languages to interpret for clients.
- Asking the client to bring a friend or family member to the appointment to interpret for them.

Paid for interpretation

- Dial-in interpreters (over the phone) with no pre-booking required.
- Pre-booked interpreters who can join a client appointment remotely or in-person.

Interpretation/translation services

LanguageLine

[LanguageLine](#) is a paid for service working with people who have limited English or are deaf and hard of hearing. They offer face-to-face, telephone and online interpretation, BSL interpretation and they have a LanguageLine App. They also offer document translation services.

Clear Voice

[Clear Voice](#) is a paid for service providing a range of services including telephone, video and face-to-face interpreting. The telephone interpreting system is instant, does not need to be pre-booked and covers over 200+ languages.

LanguageServe

[LanguageServe](#) is a paid for service exclusively focused on community service based interpreting and translation. They offer face to face, online telephone and BSL interpreting in addition to document translation services. The telephone interpreting service does not need to be pre-booked.

Translators Without Borders

[Translators without Borders](#) is a global community of over 100,000 language volunteers offering language services to humanitarian and development organizations worldwide. Registered charities can partner with them registered charities can partner with them. Although they are not able to translate legal documents (eg: letters of advice), they may be useful for assistance with translating general clinic documents such as marketing leaflets, appointment confirmation letters and signposting documents.

They have some useful resources including a tip sheet on [Interpretation and sensitive topics](#).

Respond Crisis Translation

[Respond Crisis Translation](#) provide trained, trauma-informed, and compassionate volunteer translators to support NGOs, nonprofits, human rights groups, asylum lawyers, and migrants with any translation or interpreting support they need. Their work is free of charge for individuals, families, and grassroots organisers and on a sliding scale for those with a budget.

BPP Legal Translation Services

[BPP Legal Translation Service](#) involves BPP students helping with:

- Translation of documents, which can be certified if required
- Interpretation services in person (at appointments, meetings, court hearings etc)
- Interpretation services from a distance (e.g. via the telephone)

Pro Bono Expert Support

[Pro Bono Expert Support](#) is a scheme jointly delivered by the National Pro Bono Centre and Pro Bono Connect to offer litigation support services from experts to pro bono cases. The experts involved in the scheme are from various disciplines including interpreters.

The scheme is only available for cases where the lawyer involved is assisting on a pro bono basis.

For more information and to obtain a request form, please contact pbexpertsupport@nationalprobonocentre.org.uk.

SignVideo

[SignVideo](#) is a remote interpreting company offering Video Relay Services, Video Remote Interpreting and BSL/English Translation Services.

The Video Relay Services enables a deaf person to connect to an interpreter via a video call. The interpreter will phone a hearing person on behalf of the deaf person and relay the conversation. The Video Remote Interpreting involves a video call being made to an interpreter who will then translate the face-to-face conversation between the deaf person and an individual.

Corporate clients can sign up to the service to enable BSL clients to make VRS calls to the business' phone line through SignVideo interpreters.

Signly

[Signly](#) is a browser extension that adds sign language to websites. It allows people who are hearing impaired to self-serve making access to sign language easy.

Welsh Language Commissioner

[The Welsh Language Commissioner](#) have a useful [resource](#) on bilingual drafting, translation and using Welsh face to face.

Charity Translators

[Charity Translators](#) offer dedicated and tailored advice & guidance to charities and community groups about languages, translation, and interpreting.

Specifically in relation to Ukraine, they provide [translated template documents](#) to allow you to create an English language version of a document from a standard Ukrainian document (e.g: birth certificate).

Independent Citizen Advocacy

A citizen can independently volunteer to speak up for a person with learning disabilities, representing them as their 'citizen advocate'. The individual being spoken up for is known as the 'advocacy partner' and is usually a person who actively requires help in making their wishes, choices and decisions made known, otherwise the advocacy partner risks being ignored. Citizen advocates undertake this role independently and on a voluntary basis (without payment). The partnership is based on trust, loyalty and confidentiality. The citizen advocate communicates their advocacy partner's wishes, decisions, choices and opinions in an unbiased way, exercising no influence of their own. Advocacy schemes are now running to help match voluntary citizen advocates and their partners.

Feedback

If you have any suggestions, or feedback about this document please email clinics@lawworks.org.uk