

APPENDIX I

Section 1

Language support for people who do not use English as a first language – evidence of need

This short paper provides an overview of snapshot evidence to support proposals that have been made, aimed at improving access to interpreting and translation services. “Language Support Service” report to Partnership Forum on 19 September 2000.

The proposal is that statutory agencies work together to develop a countywide interpreting and translation service.

The difficulties that people from minority ethnic communities in Buckinghamshire experience due to lack of access to professional interpreting services is well documented. However, where research has been undertaken, this has tended to focus on narrow and quite specific areas of service. Moreover, it is fair to say that, until quite recently, most of the statutory agencies have not been as rigorous as they are now in monitoring the ethnicity of service users and those enquiring about services. It is therefore, difficult to quantify with accuracy:

- the numbers of people from minority ethnic backgrounds using local council and health services
- the extent to which interpreting services are required
- the numbers of people who do not receive services to which they are entitled because an interpreter isn’t available.

What follows is a snapshot of various situations which might help to give a broad indication of levels of need, but will, more importantly, provide a qualitative insight into the experiences of Buckinghamshire residents in their contact with statutory agencies.

1. The following is a list of recent reports which all highlight the need for improved interpreting and translation services, better access to such services and a co-ordinated approach by the statutory agencies in Buckinghamshire:

- Chesham Minority Ethnic Health and Social Care Needs July 1999
- Survey of Mental Health Services for Minority Ethnic Communities October 1999
- Access Across Services June 1999
- Interpreter/translation Group Report HFA Aylesbury Vale January 1998
- Business Case for Improved Interpreter Provision June 1999

- Provision of Interpreter Services in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes June 1999
- Asian Women's Experiences of Maternity Services in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes August 1998
- Communicating with our ethnic minorities: How should we do it? 1996
- Access to Health: A Minority Ethnic Perspective April 1994
- Access Across Services: Conference Report June 1997

2. National initiatives, such as CRE Standards and the Macpherson Report, compel us to seek to improve the level and quality of interpreting services.
3. There is not significant provision of bilingual (Asian languages/English) staff in statutory agencies. Where staff are employed, they normally have a specific role attached to a particular team or area of service. If they are used as interpreters by other teams in the organisation this means that they are pulled away from their principal role and the work suffers.

Bilingual staff only meet the need for local languages and interpreters are required for other language situations.

Bilingual staff are not routinely available to meet out of hours situations.

4. In a recent survey of 11-16 year olds at a school in Buckinghamshire, 65% of the young people with a Pakistani ethnic origin said that they helped their parents with interpreting and translating. 53% said that they helped their mother or father go to the doctor. This compares with 2.6% and 25.7% respectively for white young people. Whilst the figures need to be treated with caution in terms of understanding the particular situations where young people are interpreting or accompanying parents to the doctor, this nevertheless indicates there is some level of interpreting activity that would be more appropriate for a professional interpreter.
5. A recent report on the needs of Minority Carers in Aylesbury Vale notes *"that the use of professional interpreters is still the exception rather than the rule. Family members continue to be used widely even when it is blatantly obviously inappropriate."* Tarun Pamneja, Aylesbury Val Carers Association.
6. A proposal was submitted to the Partnership Forum, which put forward a model for consideration that required agencies to pay an annual retention fee plus interpreting fees. From consultation, it emerged that potential partners were not happy with this approach. The revised model is set out below.

Section 2

Multi-agency Interpreting and Translating Language Support Service: A proposal for a pilot for Buckinghamshire

The core of the service is the Social Services Interpreting and Translation Service which it is proposed will be adopted formally as the County Council Interpreting and Translation Service.

This service is currently funded to the level of £45,000 from Social Services, with an additional £12,000 from the Education Department to meet specific identified needs.

The proposal is that partner agencies make a contribution of **£8,000** for 2001/2002 to the existing service. This represents a contribution of **£4,000** to cover additional administration costs to service the increased workload and training and agency support for additional interpreters. Each organisation will then have **£4,000** available to pay for interpreting fees and expenses.

The present interpreting service co-ordinator will manage the additional administrative staff and will organise and co-ordinate interpreter training and support.

Each partner agency will be eligible to nominate a representative to an advisory group that will help to shape and move the service forward.

It is proposed that the year 2001/2002 should be considered a pilot. The interpreting service will be in a position to record and monitor use of the service by partners.

This will provide information that will enable us to develop achievable plans to take the service forward. It will indicate areas of unmet need and how the service can be shaped to meet the needs of local people.

It will also enable the service to make more accurate forecasts regarding each agency's levels of use. This means that it will be possible to calculate future contributions more accurately.

Section 3

Summary of proposed financial arrangement for 2001/2002

County Council contribution:

	Social Services	£ 45,000 (plus usual annual incr.)
	Education Dept	£ to be decided
Contribution from 6 partners		£ 48,000 (i.e. £8,000 from each organisation)
1 partner ⁱ		£ 8,000 (in kind, i.e. office accommodation)

from the £48,000

£28,000 will be available to the 7 partners. Each will be entitled to draw interpreting services to the level of **£4,000**, to include interpreters' fees and travel expenses.

£20,000 will be available to employ additional **0.7** administrative support and to fund additional interpreter training and other running costs.

The current level of interpreter fees is £15 per hour for the first hour and £13 per hour, or part hour, thereafter, plus travel expenses and travelling time. (There is also a £10 management fee payable on each interpreting request from an outside agency. It is likely that one-off purchases from agencies outside the scheme may pay a higher management fee in the future).

For each contributing partner, £4,000 will buy approximately 200 hours of interpreting, allowing for travelling expenses.

Costs will be higher than the current £15 if a more unusual language is needed and an interpreter needs to be accessed from outside Buckinghamshire.

Conversely, it is anticipated that hourly rates may be reduced to £10 per hour for interpreters who work regular planned sessions over several months to cover surgery or other clinic settings.

Telephone conference fees are charged at £15 per hour, but are calculated on units of 20 minutes.

Partners who are considering joining the service, who think that their take up is likely to exceed 200 hours in a year, may wish to consider a budget total of £10,000, keeping £2,000 ring fenced to fund any arising interpreter needs that exceed their £4,000 contribution.

The County Council may be asked to consider relocation for the existing service, and also the possibility of this service as a self-referral service. This could mean an increased demand for professional interpreters over and above

the levels that agencies currently experience. This is difficult to anticipate and quantify. Careful monitoring of any agreed changes to the current service will need to take place during the pilot period.

The revised model and associated costs have been based on suggestions during consultation with potential partners, following the Partnership Forum meeting in September.

The model is based upon a minimum of 6 partners contributing £8,000 to the budget and a seventh partner offering office space and accommodation.

Seven partners will be eligible to draw interpreting to the level of £4,000.

Seven partners, 6 making budgetary contributions and 1 contributing in kind, represent the viable minimum for the pilot as it is outlined above. If, after this report has been circulated, there are less than that number of potential partners willing to participate, then the way forward will need to be reviewed. If there are more than 7 partners then the financial viability of the pilot will be assured.

As was stated in the original Partnership Forum report, if the pilot is successfully established it is intended to seek European Social Funding. This would be used to develop the training programme for new and established interpreters. In addition, further funding would be sought from other sources to develop the language support service further.

The County Council will ensure that any changes and partnership development to its current service will not result in any dilution or disruption of services to its own clients and service users. The Council is, however, committed to working with partners across the county reinforce good practice in relation to access to language support services.

ⁱ During consultation it emerged that a change of location for the current service would signal positive intention to be more accessible to the community. In addition accommodation pressures affecting the current service would make it difficult to add an additional administrator to the team in its present location. One of the potential partners is willing to offer accommodation as their contribution for the short term.