British Sign Language Interpreting in Scotland: The Landscape Review

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The Research

- a ScotGov funded scoping study of the BSL/English interpreting landscape in Scotland

- to provide detailed information to contribute towards actions 7, 8 and 9 from the BSL National Plan 2017-2023

Timescale

- January 2019 – planning
- February – launch of interpreter survey
- April – survey of public bodies
- April/June– interviews
- May/August - analysis
- October 2019 – final report

The Data

- survey of BSL/English interpreters and follow-up interviews

- published responses to the BSL Bill and BSL National Plan consultations

- interviews with BSL stakeholders

- interviews with interpreting stakeholders

- survey of public bodies

Public Bodies

- 48 public bodies responded to online survey to all public bodies (national bodies, local authorities, NHS Boards, Health and Social Care Partnerships, FE and HE establishments)

- FOIs to all local authorities

- email correspondence with FE/HE and some other authorities

Public Bodies

Main concerns relate to:

- lack of availability of interpreters
- booking interpreters being time-consuming
- inconsistent quality and professionalism

Availability

- geographic challenges
- financial impact
- increasing demand
- continuity challenging
- work placements

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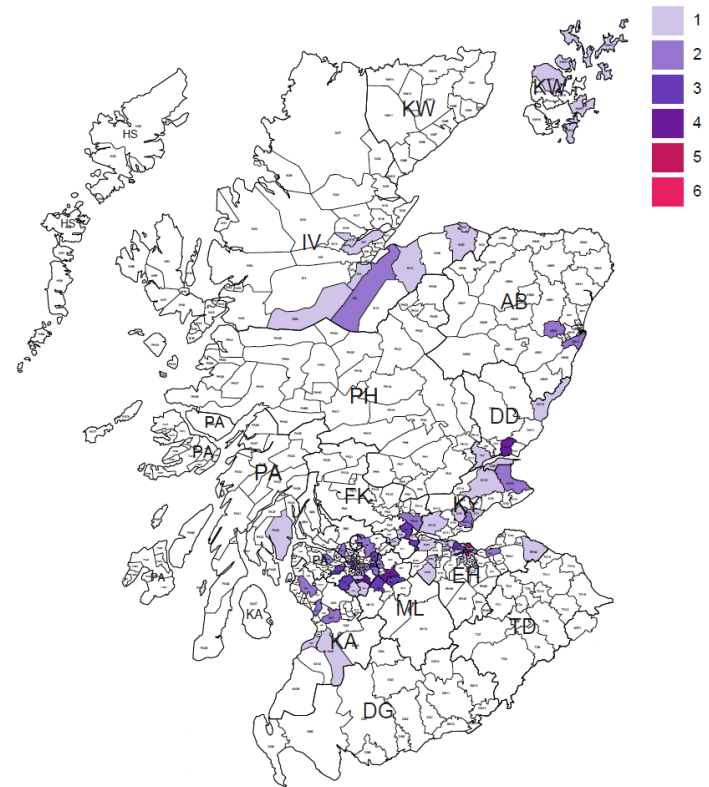
Time and Effort

- time-consuming
- timetable changes
- dealing with variation in fees/T&Cs
- potential for a central information base and booking system

Inconsistency

- interpreter knowledge and ability to work at university level

- lack of yearly intake
- staff knowledge base lost
- interpreter time/contacts lost
- starting from scratch

Interpreters

69 respondents to the online survey, including 48 registered interpreters (representing 45% of registered interpreters at the time of the survey)

12 follow-up semi-structured interviews.

Interpreters

- geographic shortages
- GDPR & IR35
- terms and conditions
- preference for direct bookings
- more support for NQIs

Other data

Common themes

- geographic inconsistency of provision
- difficulty getting interpreters at short notice
- lack of clarity about interpreter registration and/or qualifications
- inconsistent quality of interpreters
- support of newly qualified interpreters
- concern about lack of BSL tutors

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