

Standard Operating Procedure for Maternity Translation Services

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Target Audience:

People who need to know about this document in detail	All midwifery and medical staff working within maternity services
People who need to have a broad understanding of this document	As above
People who need to know that this document exists	As above

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Equality Impact Assessment Date & Outcome	Date: June 2025
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#CTMareingorau

RYDYN NI'N GWRANDO YN DYSGU AC YN GWELLA
WE LISTEN, LEARN AND IMPROVE

RYDYN NI'N YRIN PAWB A PHARCH
WE TREAT EVERYONE WITH RESPECT

RYDYN NI I GYD YN CYDWEITHIO FEL UN TIM
WE ALL WORK TOGETHER AS ONE TEAM

OUR VALUES HELP US BE AT OUR BEST
#CTMatourbest

Disclaimer:

If the review date of this document has passed please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date version either by contacting the author or CTM_Corporate_Governance@wales.nhs.uk



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1. Key Principles for Translation

A family member or friend should never be used to interpret any information during contact with any healthcare professional.

If appropriate translation services are not available, this should be Datix reported on every occasion due to the clinical risk it poses.

The following options should be explored prior to submitting an incident report:

- **Wales Interpreter & Translation Service/ Language Line** (Foreign Languages, BSL, DeafBlind), Big Word via WITS (Foreign Languages, BSL, DeafBlind).
- **Big Word** via WITS, telephone interpretation service foreign languages, excluding BSL/DeafBlind).
- **WCDeaf** Wales Council for Deaf (BSL / DeafBlind only)
- **OSS** Centre of Sign Sight and Sound (BSL / DeafBlind only)

It is the responsibility of the person making the appointment i.e. receptionist, midwife, booking office to book a face to face interpreter when required.

Whenever possible, establish if translation is required before any appointments are made. Make a note on the woman's record so that this can be flagged for future appointments.

Enquire with the woman /family if she has used an interpreter before. Whilst it is desirable to use the same one if requested and if available, there is no obligation on the Health Board to do so, especially if this would mean delaying the appointment.

Before booking an interpreter, establish which language and dialect is spoken. Some women may have more than one need e.g. a person with a sensory loss may need sign language.

Check that the interpreter is acceptable to the client. Some personal feelings and beliefs may impact on who the woman finds acceptable to provide the service.

2. Self-referral and initial booking appointment

On the digital self-referral system, the woman will indicate if she has any additional communication needs. This might be due to being non-English speaking, or requiring a sign language interpreter for example. If this has been indicated by the woman, this should be organised in readiness for the initial booking appointment. If a digital self-referral has not been completed, it is the responsibility of the midwife making initial contact and/ or undertaking the booking assessment to ensure adequate plans are made for translation. As stated above, this should not be undertaken by a family member or friend.

3. Subsequent antenatal appointments

If a woman has indicated she is non-English speaking, or will require sign language an interpreter should be organised in readiness for all subsequent antenatal appointments, including all sonography appointments. It is the responsibility of the person making the appointment i.e. receptionist, midwife, booking office to book an interpreter. Translation should be provided using fully accredited suppliers, including;

- **Wales Interpreter & Translation Service** (Foreign Languages, BSL, DeafBlind), Big Word via WITS (Foreign Languages, BSL, DeafBlind).
- **Big Word** via WITS, telephone interpretation service foreign languages, excluding BSL/DeafBlind).
- **WCDeaf** Wales Council for Deaf (BSL / DeafBlind only)
- **OSS** Centre of Sign Sight and Sound (BSL / DeafBlind only)

4. Planned Admission, Induction of labour (IOL), Elective Caesarean Section Birth (ELCS)

If a woman has indicated she in non-English speaking, or will require a sign language interpreter, translation services should be accessed at every opportunity.

It is the responsibility of the professional handing over care to inform the midwife/professional on the ward that the woman will require translation services. Where an IOL or ELCS is being arranged using the online booking system, it is the responsibility of the professional completing the booking to note that the woman will require translation services during her admission/procedure. This will allow for care planning prior to admission.

On admission, it is the responsibility of the allocated midwife care giver to arrange translation services at the earliest opportunity.

5. Intrapartum Care

If a woman has indicated she in non-English speaking, or will require a sign language interpreter, this should be commenced on admission to labour ward and should continue throughout the intrapartum period. It is the responsibility of the allocated midwife to seek to provide external translation using the services listed above, ensuring the chosen method adequately meets the need of the women in the correct language/dialect or sign language. Translation services should be used to seek to consent for all required procedures/intervention. No clinical procedure/intervention should be undertaken without the use of external translation services, unless in exceptional circumstances, such as an emergency admission where time has not allowed for the arrangement of an interpreter.



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6. Postnatal Care

If a woman has indicated she is non-English speaking, or will require a sign language interpreter, this should be continued throughout the postnatal period, both in a hospital and community setting. It is the responsibility of the allocated midwife/care giver to provide translation services, ensuring the chosen method adequately meets the need of the woman in the correct language/dialect or sign language. Translation services should be available at each postnatal contact/visit and should continue until the woman is discharged from midwifery care. A comprehensive handover with the health visitor should take place, explaining the translation needs of the woman and her family.

7. In the Event of an Emergency

In the event of an obstetric emergency, where there is an assumed immediate threat to the life of the woman and/or the baby, it may not be possible to access translation services in a timely manner. Where this is the case, in a time critical situation, translation may be provided by the accompanying partner, relative/friend, for the purpose of reassuring the mother and alerting the medical team of any information prevalent to the clinical situation. External translation services should be made available at the earliest opportunity.

8. Literature

If a woman has indicated she is non-English speaking, or will require a sign language interpreter, she should be provided with all pregnancy/birth/postnatal literature in her preferred language and dialect. The Cwm Taf Morgannwg maternity services website [[Maternity - Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board](#)] is available in a range of different languages, and provides information on pregnancy, birth and postnatal care. Where it is not possible to obtain literature in the woman's preferred language, translation services (listed above) should be used to ensure the woman is fully informed. It is the responsibility of the allocated midwife/care giver to make the necessary arrangements. The woman's partner or friend/relative should not be asked or expected to relay any written information to the woman.

Appendix One: Information on how to access translation services

Cwm Taf Morgannwg has an arrangement in place with the following local suppliers who are fully accredited –

- **WITS** Wales Interpreter & Translation Service (Foreign Languages / BSL / DeafBlind)
Tel: 02920 537555 Email: WITS.Queries@cardiff.gov.uk
- **BIG WORD** via **WITS** Telephone Interpretation Service (Foreign languages excluding BSL / DeafBlind)
Tel: 02920 537555 Email: WITS.Queries@cardiff.gov.uk
- **WCDeaf** Wales Council for Deaf (BSL / DeafBlind only)
Tel: 01443 485687 Email: mail@wcdeaf.org
- **COSS** Centre of Sign Sight and Sound (BSL / DeafBlind only)
Tel: 01492 530013 Email: interpreting@signsightsound.org.uk

Booking Face to Face Interpreters for Clinical Settings (Languages other than BSL and Welsh Language)

Staff who need to book a face-to-face interpreter should contact **WITS** for both advance and urgent bookings.

When making a requests for an interpreter for clinical settings, staff **must** provide the following essential information:

- a) Name of the woman (this can be withheld if considered confidential, but the hospital number must then be supplied)
- b) Language required and dialect (also, please advise if the interpreter needs to be male or female; or if a particular interpreter is requested, then you will need to provide the interpreter's name – as above this is not an obligation.)
- c) Date, time & venue of appointment (let them know if there are any specific access issues for the interpreter)
- d) Your name, telephone number and e-mail address (or the contact details of anyone else regarding any future queries or confirmation regarding the booking); and the department and location where the interpreter is required if different to (c) above
- e) Cost Centre – this is essential. Please note Directorate Managers hold these codes, see below.

f) Name of 'First Approver' on Oracle

Access codes are required when booking an interpreter and a list of Directorate cost centers, WITS codes and Big Word access codes is held in each Directorate office

If any booking has to be subsequently cancelled, please notify the supplier as soon as possible to avoid any cancellation charges.

Booking Interpreters for British Sign Language (BSL) Users

When booking a face-to-face BSL interpreter please be aware that the interpreter will need extra time with the service user prior to, and following the appointment to assist with the checking in process, any pre-assessments and follow-up discussions. Therefore, please consider this when arranging face-to-face BSL interpreter bookings.

For BSL interpreters, please make a request with **WITS** in the first instance. BSL interpreters are often in high demand and are difficult to book at short notice. If WITS are unable to provide a BSL interpreter, please make a request with either **WCDeaf** or **COSS**.

Once an interpreter booking has been agreed with one of the suppliers, please ensure that you cancel the requests with the other suppliers to avoid any duplicate bookings.

It is essential to keep track of this and, wherever possible, let the patient know that the interpreter has been booked.

Please forward details of confirmed bookings for BSL interpreters to CTUHB_BSL@wales.nhs.uk

On-line BSL Interpretation

We may be able to arrange online BSL interpretation during which women can skype an interpreter using one of the health board's designated tablets. If you would like to consider this option, please contact CTUHB_BSL@wales.nhs.uk. This option is dependent on its suitability for the woman, interpreter availability, sufficient Wi-Fi connectivity, and the availability of equipment which is held in each of the main sites. However, it can very useful for in-patient situations, emergencies or where a face to face interpreter is not available.



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Telephone Interpretation Services

Many services are now successfully using **Big Word (02920 537555)**, rather than face-to-face interpretation, and this should be considered in the first instance particularly for short, routine or less complex appointments. Staff are encouraged to assess the communication needs of the service user before booking a telephone interpreter and the decision on its suitability must be made by the clinician.

Access codes are required when booking an interpreter via Big Word and a list of Directorate cost centers, WITS codes and Big Word access codes is held in each Directorate office.

If a patient presents in healthcare premises and is unable to communicate, please use the 'point to' poster (available on Sharepoint) so that they can indicate which language they wish to use. This may be particularly useful in community settings or in unscheduled care and any other 'out of hours' situation.

Welsh Language Interpretation and Translation Services

Please contact the Welsh Language Development Service for all requests for Welsh language interpretation and translation requests:

Tel: 01443 744800 / 744910

Email: CTT_Welsh_Translation@wales.nhs.uk



Appendix Two: Checklist for Women Requiring Translation Services

This should be completed by the healthcare professional organising translation services and filed in the handheld maternity record.

Preferred language **and** dialect.....

Does the woman have any preferences about who should or should not provide translation services ie. Must be female. Yes/ No. If yes, please provide details below:

.....
.....

Translations plans for initial booking appointment.....

.....
.....

Have service user information leaflets been provided in the woman’s own language? Yes/ No

If no, what plans have been made to provide these in a timely way?.....

.....

Have clear plans been made for providing an interpreter for antenatal appointments? Yes /No

Details.....

.....

Have plans been made for providing an interpreter when admitted to birth? Yes /No

Details.....

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