



London Ambulance Service



NHS Trust

On-line Translation

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The Problem

With ever increasing travel and migration, call handlers cannot rely on the caller, or someone with them, being able to speak English

Even if every call handler could speak a second language, we cannot guarantee that we can talk to you in your own Language.



What is the Emergency?

Even good conversational skills in a second language may not be enough to talk to someone describing a complex medical problem

Some call handlers still struggle with that in English!



Does anyone speak Urdu?

- Is it acceptable to hope that someone can speak a language?
- How do you audit a conversation in a foreign language?
- What quality controls can you put in place?



Time to pass calls like this may cost lives

Delays looking for an interpreter can put lives at risk

You need to know where to go for translation services.



The London Ambulance Service regularly has callers for whom English is not the first language

Over 250 languages are spoken in London, making the capital the most linguistically diverse city in the world
More than 25% of school children do not have English as their first language

We also have visitors from all over the world, most of whom will be more comfortable talking in their native tongue.



It is more than identifying the country

Many countries have a variety of languages and dialects

Many will consider themselves British if you ask where they come from!



Common Languages

In a survey of 850,000 children in London schools the question about first language spoken at home was asked (2002)

The most common languages spoken are

English 608,500 (72%)

Bengali & Silheti 40,400 (5%)

Panjabi 29,800 (4%)

Gujerati 28,600 (3%)

Hindi/Urdu 26,000 (3%)

Turkish 15,600 (2%)

Arabic 11,000 (1%)

English-based Creoles 10,700 (1%)

Yorubu (Nigeria) 10,400 (1%)

Somali 8,300 (1%)

37 languages spoken by over 500 pupils.



Not just call handlers

The interpreter can stay on the telephone and assist emergency crews when they arrive

This is usually preferable to using a family member as the patient may not want children involved in medical problems.



Not an advert

There are several companies that offer medical translation services

Most will be able to supply a range of different languages

Some will manage sign language via videolinks

Often they have staff trained to identify the language being spoken.



Other methods

Phrasebooks

Electronic translation

Both have problems if you do not understand the answer!



A vision

Any person dialling 112 should be able to access help without language being a barrier.



Any Questions?



Thank You

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