



Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals

NHS Foundation Trust

Trust Headquarters

Chief Nurse

Royal Albert Edward Infirmary

Wigan Lane

Wigan

WN1 2NN

T: 01942 773291

E: kevin.parker-evans@wwl.nhs.uk

Ref: FOI/2025/10761

Date Received: 16th May 2025

Response Due: 16th June 2025

Date: 23rd May 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

With reference to your request for information received on 16th May 2025, I can confirm in accordance with Section 1 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 that we do hold the information you have requested. A response to each part of your request is provided below.

In your request you asked:

I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

1. What is the policy on communicating with a woman on the maternity ward to explain her care options when her first language is not English, or she cannot speak English?

We utilise a Trust wide policy for interpreting and translation. The policy is intended for all staff working in the Trust and applies to all situations where a service user does not have English as their first language, has a disability or sensory loss, and assistance is required to communicate, or where it is necessary to translate information into other languages or formats.

2. Are interpretation services available to support these patients? If so, please provide the following details:

Yes.

- **A description of the interpretation services available (e.g., in-person interpreters, telephone interpreting, video interpreting, google translate, AI translating software, family members translating etc).**

Services available include telephone interpreters and face to face interpreters.

- **The order of preference for these services, from most to least preferred on the maternity ward.**

Telephone interpretation is considered the first option for service users.

Face to face interpreters will be provided if specific Trust criteria is met, including: patient who use non-verbal communication e.g., British Sign Language, children (under 18), vulnerable adults e.g., learning disability, mental patient, patients who have communication, cognitive or learning disabilities, bereavement or breaking significant news, in areas where telephone interpreters cannot be facilitated e.g., MRI unit, where conversation needs to be recorded for legal reason.

- **Whether interpretation services are available 24/7.**

Attempts can be made to access telephone interpreters 24/7. There are occasions when waiting times may be long/the service is unable to provide an interpreter for the required language.

- **Whether family members are ever used for interpretation, and under what circumstances (if any).**

- In the interests of accuracy, confidentiality and accountability, the use of family or friends is not acceptable in clinical situations. The patient should always be offered the services of a professional interpreter and the reasons for this explained.
- There may be some service users who simply refuse to use an interpreter. The Trust cannot force a person to use an accredited interpreter however, the member of staff dealing with the situation will need to explain the risks for not using one, using a telephone interpreter.
- Under no circumstances should a child under the age of 18 be used as an interpreter.
- In an emergency situation, it may be necessary to use staff members and adult family members to help communicate basic information about care or personal history, but they should not be used to interpret clinical information, medical terminology or to facilitate decision making about clinical care. An interpreter must be requested at the earliest opportunity.
- In the event of an emergency situation, consent or treatment decisions must be made in the patient's best interests by a clinician and should not be delayed waiting for an interpreter. This should be fully documented in the health record of the patient. An interpreter must then attend at the earliest opportunity.

If you are not entirely satisfied with this response, please do not hesitate to contact the Information Governance Department via the email address provided. If we do not hear from you within 40 days, we will assume that we have been able to accommodate your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Yours sincerely,



KEVIN PARKER-EVANS

Kevin Parker-Evans MBA, FCMJ, CMgr. RN Dip HE

Chief Nursing Officer & Director of Infection Prevention and Control

PLEASE NOTE:

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you should write to: Information Governance Department, Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust, Suite 9, Buckingham Row, Brick Kiln Lane, Wigan, WN1 1XX.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Helpline number: 0303 123 111