

Thursday 10 December 2015

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# Overcoming the Language Barrier

For

Living in Harmony, North Edinburgh



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WORKING TOGETHER TO RAISE STANDARDS

# Elite Linguists - who we are

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- Social enterprise – profits go back into company to meet social aim to:
  - raise standards in PSI across Scotland
- Operational from April 2010
- Provides:
  - interpreting and translation services
  - learning and development on PSI
- Set up and run by interpreters and translators



# Interpreting

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# A right not a favour

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- ❑ Public service interpreting and translation is about equality and human rights
- ❑ The right to understand and be understood
- ❑ The right to equality of access to services and information

# Exercise 1: Race equality quiz

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1. What percentage of the Scotland population is from an minority ethnic background?
2. What percentage of Edinburgh's population is from a minority ethnic background?
3. How many languages (not including English, Scots, Gaelic or BSL) are currently spoken in Scotland?
4. What are the 'top six' immigrant languages in Scotland?

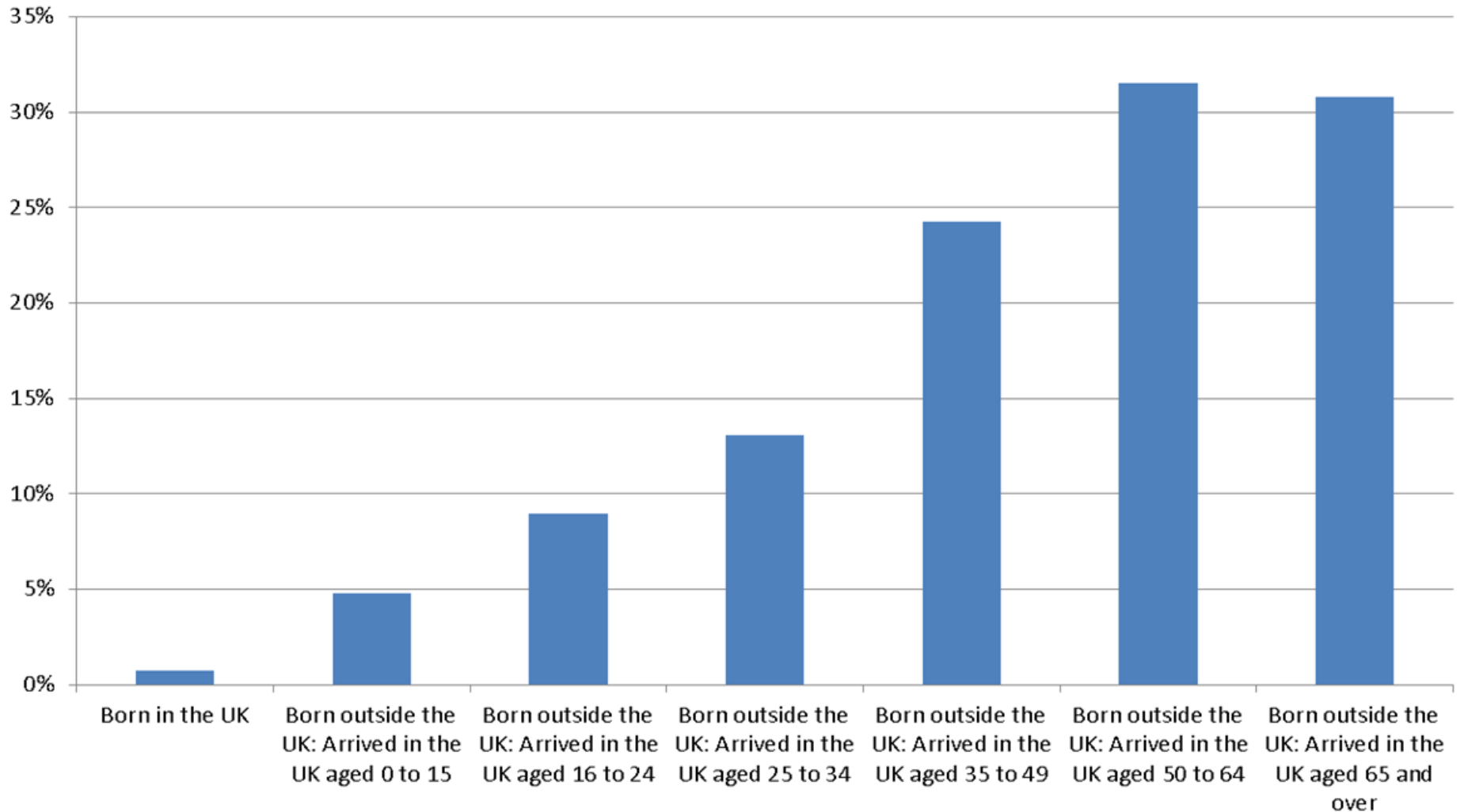
# Know your communities/needs

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- 3.98% of Scotland's population is from Black Minority Ethnic (BME) groups
  - (This figures does not include 4.19% who are White Polish, White Irish, White Gypsy/ Traveller or White Other)
- BME figure:
  - 5.98% for Dundee
  - 8.11% for Aberdeen
  - 8.28% for Edinburgh
  - 11.58% for Glasgow

# Proficiency in English by age of arrival

Proportion of population who are not able to speak English well or at all by age of arrival in the UK



# Different ways of bridging the Language Gap

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**Official** – in familiar surroundings, speaks English, has power

Advocate



Challenges discrimination, gives advice & information to enable choice and informed decisions; empowers

**Professional Interpreter**



Facilitates linguistic and cultural communication; remains neutral

Family and Friends



Accuracy and confidentiality may not be guaranteed

**Client** – in unfamiliar surroundings, speaks little or no English, feels powerless



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# Why use interpreters?

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- ❑ Person-centred
- ❑ Overcomes language and communication barriers
- ❑ Recognises the positives of speaking more than one language
- ❑ Respects diversity
- ❑ Everyone benefits
- ❑ Minimises risk

# Before... Interpreting.....After

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Think about initial contact by telephone, written word or in person to your building

Assess needs and expectations, arrange appointment, **explain what will happen**

Seek feedback about satisfaction levels or complaints

# Legal and Policy Context

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- ❑ Race Relations Act 1976
- ❑ Human Rights Act 1998
- ❑ **Scotland Act** **1998**
- ❑ Equality Act 2010
  
- ❑ Scottish Government: TICS good practice guidelines
- ❑ Councils: Best value and language plans
- ❑ NHS Scotland: *Competency Framework for Interpreting* (developed by Elite Linguists)

# Role of the interpreter

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- Our definition: To facilitate effective communication between non-English speaking service users and the English-speaking service providers in an impartial, professional manner
- Key point: interpreter is there for both parties

# What can an official expect of an interpreter?

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## Reasonably:

- To be capable in both languages
- To be well prepared and able to interpret accurately
- To be impartial
- To be punctual
- To be professional
- To use 1<sup>st</sup> person

## Unreasonably:

- To be a linguistic 'expert'
- To be familiar with agency jargon and detailed procedures
- To work in your favour
- To offer personal support to service user
- To wait around for hours!



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# What would the interpreter like from the official?

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- As much relevant information as possible PRIOR to appointment
  - Language/dialect, gender, specific health information, additional stress factors etc
- Some awareness of cross cultural issues
- Care with own use of language – e.g. no idioms:
  - 'He has come out of his shell'
  - 'Have you been throwing up?'
  - 'Your daughter let the cat out of the bag'
  - 'I just want to touch base'



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## Make it clear and simple

[avoid acronyms, abbreviations, jargon...]

Humour  
is not  
universal

Every  
culture  
has a  
'normal'

Verbal  
and non-  
verbal  
both  
important



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# Translation 1

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1. Translation is extra to interpreting and other communication services, not a substitute
2. It does not mean simply swapping one word for another into the target language – the finished article needs to be meaningful to the reader
  - Lots of words/concepts have no direct equivalent
  - Accessibility is crucial – full translation v. summary v. easy read version v. rewrite.....?
3. ALWAYS include equality proofing



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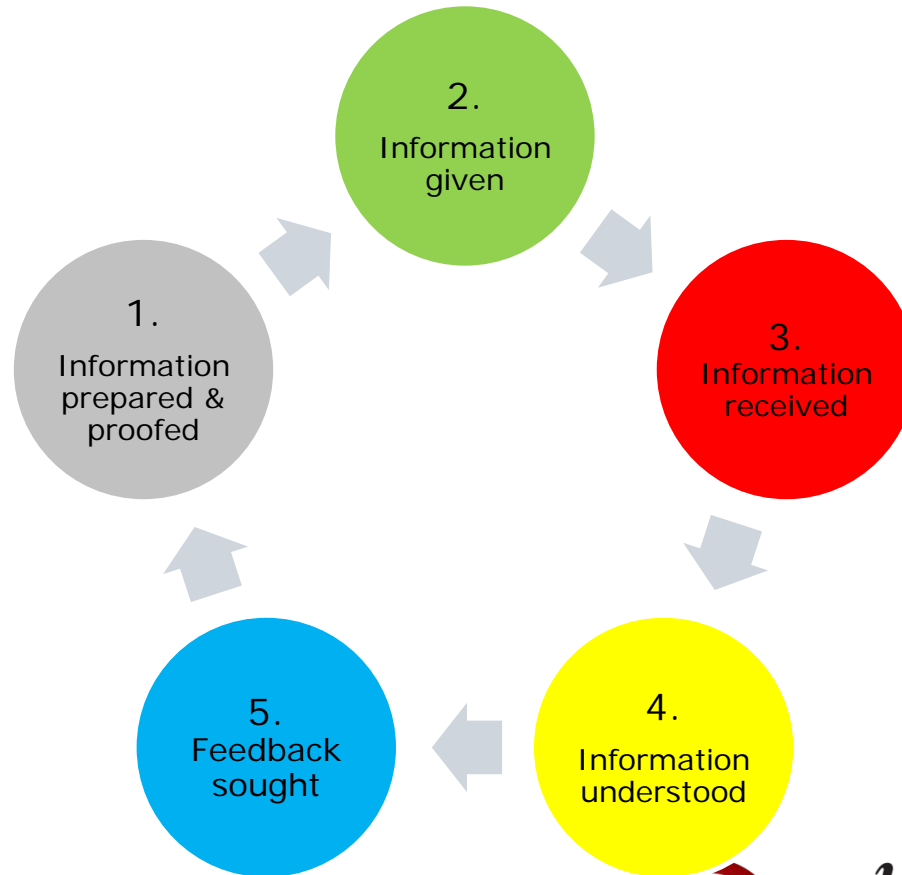
# Translation 2

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4. Bilingual materials can be helpful
5. Circulation and follow up – no point including a telephone number if.....
6. Partner up/collaborative working/less duplication & waste of resources
7. Consider alternatives – phone texts/apps
8. EVALUATE IMPACT

# Communication Cycle

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# Other barriers to communication?

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Semantics but also.....

- Culture
- Attitudes
- Environment
- Discrimination

# Elite Linguists is here to help!

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