



Belfast Health and
Social Care Trust

Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service

Orla Barron

**Health and Social Inequalities Manager
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust**

Context

- Since EU enlargement, NI has witnessed a sizeable demographic change - now home to a much more diverse population
- One of most significant inequalities for ethnic minorities /migrants is the language barrier to accessing health and social care
- In 2007 BHSCT took on ownership and management of NI Health & Social Care Interpreting Service on behalf of the region
- From a legal perspective, failure to provide an interpreter in health and social care could constitute indirect racial discrimination

Demographic Trends

- Over 80000 people living in NI were born outside of the UK/Ireland (Health /Medical Card statistics -2010)
- In 2010 nearly 10% of all births were to mothers born outside UK/Ireland –HSC Trust statistics
- 3% of kids in Primary and 1% of kids in post primary with English as a second language in NI- 42 different languages -NI School Annual census '09
- In 2009, there were approximately 30,000 migrants from the Accession Countries (37% of the total migrant population)
- Polish nationals are the largest group from the Accession Countries, accounting for some 60% of migrants from A8 countries (NISRA 2009)
- Northern Ireland has received a larger number of people from Lithuania than anywhere else in the UK
- • African communities are newer arrivals, and represent diverse nationalities and backgrounds – e.g. Somalian

Legislative Framework

- Integral to NI Agreement 1998 was introduction of comprehensive equality & human rights legislation to the Statute. S75 means that equality must be mainstreamed into every function
- Human Rights Act 1998 : people should be able to access the highest attainable standard of physical/mental health
- EU Race Equality Directive 2000/43/EC- combating discrimination on grounds of race or ethnic origin
- Race Relations Order –not addressing significant barrier of language could constitute 'indirect racial discrimination'...unlawful for a public authority to discriminate against a person on grounds of race, ethnic or national origins, or in course of carrying out any functions of the authority which consist of the provision of healthcare.

Aside from the legislative requirements, why is there a need for interpreters?

- Ethical Case**
- Business Case**

INTERPRETERS: Ethical case

Not providing Interpreters means a significant proportion of minority ethnic groups do not have access to the same services in the same way as the rest of the population – impacts on equality of access

Governance issue – a patient cannot give informed consent if they do not fully understand what a procedure will involve or the potential implications

Also illustrated by the potential consequences of not providing an Interpreter. In the worse-case scenario misdiagnosis or misunderstanding, which could seriously aggravate an illness, or cause the death of a patient

INTERPRETERS: Business Case

- There is a strong business case for supplying Interpreters as costs are quickly recovered in the medium term
- Communication barriers prolong appointments, takes more staff time, with a strong potential for misdiagnosis, misunderstanding and non-consent to examination, treatment or care
- There are cases of persons who were not provided with Interpreters returning to see their GP on numerous occasions and going through various treatments until their condition was addressed
- Refusing to provide an Interpreter leaves Health and Social Care open to Litigation

Background of NIHSCIS

- The Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service was launched in June 2004
- NIHSCIS is a product of the Regional Health and Social Services Interpreting Project for Black and Minority Ethnic Groups.
- Driven by Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister, The Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure and the Department of Education.
- Aims to significantly improve access to Health and Social Care for Patients who do not speak English as a first or competent second language

NI Health & Social Care Interpreting Service

- 24 hour service
- Face to face Interpreting only
- Free-of-charge to HSC Practitioner and Patient
- Over 225,000 requests received
- 316 Trained, professional, quality-controlled interpreters
- 35 registered languages
- NIHSCIS Team Consists of the Manager, Administrator and 3 Operators

Main Activities of NIHSCIS

Provide free, ongoing training for Interpreters – health & social care-related

Convening specialist training for interpreters in complex areas

Provide training for Health and Social Care Staff

Create and manage central register of Trained Interpreters

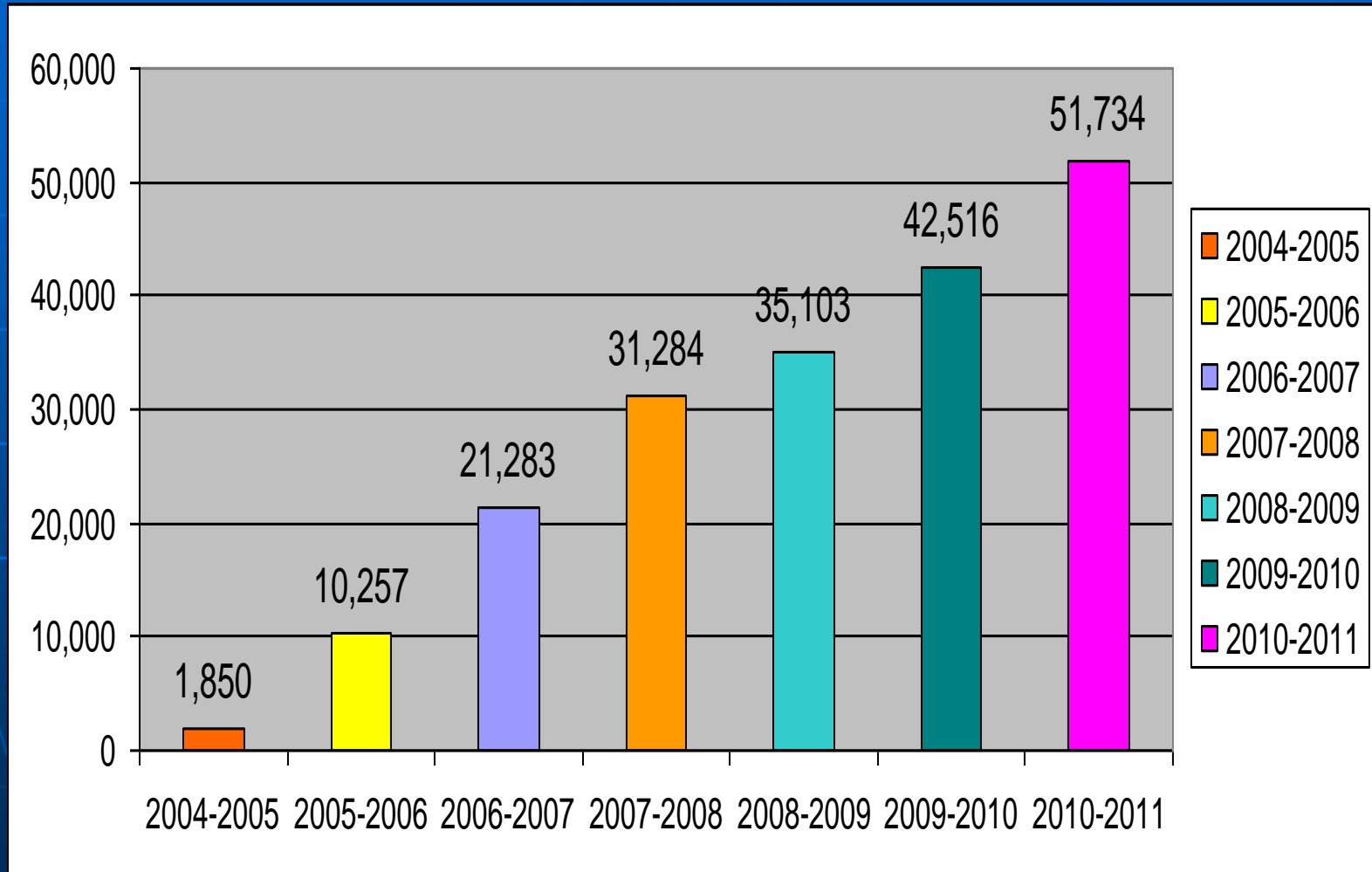
Increase awareness and promote service to ensure staff and service users are cognisant of respective rights and responsibilities

Continuous Programme delivered through 5 annual Sessions to 4th Year medical students on the General Practitioner Module – QUB

NIHSCIS Top 10 Languages

1. Polish
2. Lithuanian
3. Portuguese
4. Chinese - Mandarin
5. Chinese - Cantonese
6. Slovak
7. Romanian
8. Tetum
9. Russian
10. Latvian

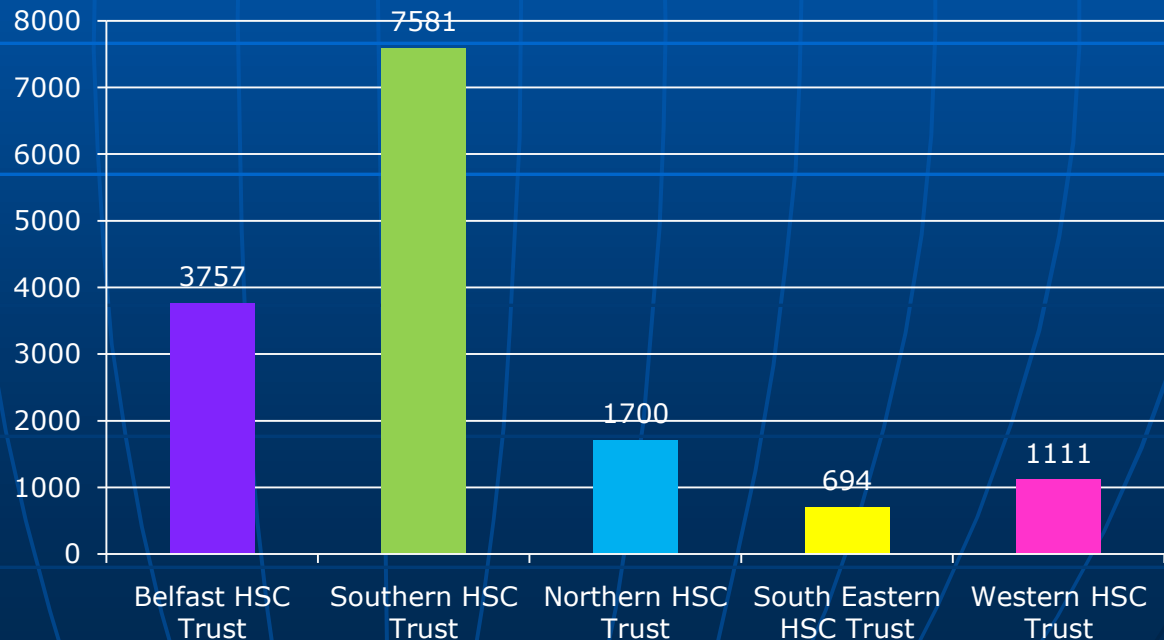
Statistics –Requests per Year



Requests per Trust – 1st July to 30th September 2011

Belfast HSC Trust	3757
Southern HSC Trust	7581
Northern HSC Trust	1700
South Eastern HSC Trust	694
Western HSC Trust	1111

Total 14843 – biggest number of requests received ever



The Future

- Delivery of Community Interpreter Programme OCN Level 4
- Map and anticipate demand and recruit new applicants
- Proposed HSC Board Review of NI HSC Interpreting Service
- Outcome of the Patient / Client Survey
- Bi-Annual Conference and Report – Proposed Interpreting Awards
- Develop specialised pool of Interpreters available for complex assignments
- Design and develop promotional leaflet for patients / clients on interpreting services expectations

Personal Testimonies

"The importance of an interpreter became apparent to me when I saw the Polish lady who was due to undergo surgery, visibly relax when the interpreter arrived. She could finally communicate effectively & ask the questions she wanted. At such a stressful time, there was one less worry"... **General Surgery staff nurse**

"The Interpreters are professional, caring, sensitive and responsive. They strive to provide a personalised and accessible Service to all Patients. The Service has improved access for disadvantaged groups, removed language barriers and eliminated the major cause of dysfunctional health encounters"Health Visitor

*"It was my first time having a baby and I was really worried. I was so relieved when the midwife got an interpreter and felt very reassured by understanding what was going on & that my baby was ok"..**Maternity patient***

To conclude, a few quotations:

Understanding is a two way street
Eleanor Roosevelt

To listen well, is as powerful a means of influence as to talk well, and is as essential to all true conversation" **Chinese Proverb**

Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing.
Rollo May

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.
Nelson Mandela