

Speakers of other languages: Guidance

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Help to overcome language barriers

For claimants whose first language is not English or Welsh (for those living in Wales), agents must use the Interpreter or Translation Service (whichever of these is right for the claimant), when trying to communicate with them.

For information and assistance on communicating with claimants whose first or preferred language is not English, refer to the Interpreter Services, Language Services or Welsh language communications guidance.

Where linked pages mention the Labour Market System (LMS), other benefits or using other systems as appropriate, use the Universal Learning guidance and the Universal Credit Service instead.

When a claimant needs support with translation services, it must be recorded in the Service.

Language services

Registration and access

Agents must register on the online portal in order to access interpreting services. See [How to access Language Services](#) and [How to use the Telephone Interpreting Service](#).

For improvements, general enquiries and complaint escalations, see [Contacts](#), [general enquiries](#), [complaints escalations](#), [invoicing arrangements](#) and [VRS change control process](#).

For miscellaneous information regarding interpretation services, see [DA Language User guides](#)

For agents who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired, see [Support for staff needing non-spoken interpreters as a workplace adjustment](#).

Face-to-face service

For face-to face or group meetings, see [How to use face to face interpretation service](#) (for external customers only, including British Sign Language).

Translation services

For the translation of documents or letters from and into English, see Translation services.

Video calls

For claimants who wish to contact DWP using a video connection, see Video Relay Service.

Claimant's own interpreter (family or friends)

Any claimant accessing a DWP benefit or service can use their own interpreter if they choose (for example, a family member or friend).

Family members or friends cannot be paid for interpreting.

If the agent has any doubts about the competency of the interpreter, the claimant must be made aware that DWP can supply an interpreter qualified in the required language (in the case of British Sign Language (BSL) at level 6). If this is declined, record this on the claimant's account.

It is also important for agents to be vigilant and watch for signs of domestic abuse and modern slavery which may be characterised by coercive and controlling behaviour.

For more information and guidance, see Customer's own interpreter/friends and relatives, Customer brings their own interpreter and Dealing with suspicions of modern slavery.

Welsh language

For Welsh language services for people living in Wales, See Welsh Language Unit Uned Yr Iaith Gymraeg and Welsh language communications: Guidance.