

## **NUBSLI evidence for the market review of British Sign Language and communications provision for people who are deaf or have hearing loss – VRS / VRI**

44 people responded to the four questions about VRS/VRI in NUBSLI's survey. The responses have been shared with the market review as agreed. This is NUBSLI's evidence, drawing from the responses and other feedback and discussion with members.

### **Working patterns**

None of the respondents reported working full time in VRS/VRI - the majority reported working somewhere between one day per week and one day per month. The number working as staff interpreters for a VRS/VRI provider either from home or in a call centre, and the number doing the same work on a freelance basis, were very similar. Half of respondents said that they work freelance from home using their own computer.

### **Situational suitability**

Many respondents commented on the importance of using VRS/VRI for the right situations, and expressed concerns that VRS/VRI technology could be seen as replacing the need for face-to-face interpreting.

*One said "VRS/VRI is a great service, but should never replace face to face interpreting. VRS/VRI should be used in the same way a hearing person uses the phone... it should not be used for team meetings, hospitals, doctor appointments, AtW and office support. Deaf people need to interact and bond with people in the office. This is taken away if they are using VRS/VRI..."*

*Another said "I think it definitely has its benefits, but it is not just a panacea that the Government can roll out in order to save money."*

### **Good Practice**

When asked for examples of good practice, all respondents who named a provider named Significan't UK's SignVideo service. One said *"SignVideo are the best example of a VRS/VRI service in the UK, in my opinion. They take the time to ensure that the interpreters used in the call centres are adequately skilled. They have a very high benchmark when it comes to the skill of the interpreters that they use. This in turn gives the end users (Deaf and Hearing) a high quality service and value for money."*

It would be useful to identify what are the good practice standards that Significan't adhere to, to support the development of good practice standards across all VRS/VRI providers, in order that they can be incorporated into contractual requirements e.g. under the proposed CCS national framework agreement for interpreting, and when providing support through ATW.

The Association of Sign Language Interpreters' (ASLI) Video Interpreting Best Practice Guidelines were also mentioned by several respondents as being a useful source of information.