

Appendix 5 – Additional data and tables from the 2016 survey

This appendix contains more detailed breakdown and analysis of the data from the 2016 survey. Some of this data is summarised in charts in the main report.

Demographics

Table 7: Gender identification qualified / trainee

Do you identify as:	Qualified Interpreter	Trainee	Trainee Translator	Translator	Different register	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	34	2	0	1	1	15.4%	38
Female	177	30	1	1	3	84.6%	212
Totals	211	32	1	2	4	0	250

Professional role/s

Some respondents indicated more than one relevant professional role, for example, all of the three respondents who were deafblind interpreters were also BSL/English interpreters. So respondents were asked first to indicate all of their relevant roles¹ then to select their main role, and answer survey questions in relation to that role, unless the question gave the option otherwise (e.g. in the section related to deafblind interpreting).

Of the 250 respondents; 215 (86%) chose Sign Language Interpreter as their main role, 30 (12%) Trainee Sign Language Interpreter, 2 (1%) Sign Language Translator, 1 (1%) Trainee Sign Language Translator, and 2 'one of these roles with a different register'.

The three respondents who indicated that they were not currently working, but were either currently or had been registered or regulated to work in the UK as an interpreter from January 2015, answered an adapted selection of the overall survey questions.

We had no responses from trainee interpreters with deafblind people, and so that category has been removed from the data tables. Also, as all the deafblind interpreters chose as their main role being an interpreter, that category has been removed from the data tables as well.

Table 8: Comparing responses: list all your current registration or regulation, choose your main role?

Questions:	Are you currently registered or regulated as a: (tick all that apply)		Please choose your main role. Your answers for the rest of this survey should be about this role.	
	Count	Percent	Percent	Count
Sign Language Interpreter (NRCPD / RBSLI / SASLI / ITI)	215	86%	86%	215
Trainee Sign Language Interpreter (NRCPD / SASLI)	29	12%	12%	30
Interpreter with Deafblind People (NRCPD) / Deafblind Manual Interpreter (SASLI)	3	1%	0%	0
Sign Language Translator (NRCPD / RBSLI)	1	0%	1%	2
Trainee Sign Language Translator (NRCPD)	0	0%	0%	1
One of these roles, with a different Register (please explain)	2	1%	1%	2
	250	100%	100%	250

The breakdown of respondents' professions is broadly similar to the 2015 survey, in which 83.5% (398) were qualified interpreters, 12% (59) trainee interpreters, and 0.5% (1) a Sign Language Translator / Deaf Interpreter. The 2015 survey also had 4% (17) CSWs / signers, a category not available to 2016 respondents.

Respondents in to the 2015 survey tended to be slightly younger, with 10.5% more respondents with under 10 years' experience, and 10.5% less respondents with over 11 years' experience.

Two people chose *one of these roles, with a different Register*. The two comments were: trainee not registered due to initial expense, signature qualified BSL/English interpreter and a member of VLP.

Table 9: What qualification did you attain that enabled you to register?

What qualification did you attain that enabled you to register (for what you selected as your main role)?					
Answer Options	Qualified Interpreter	SL Translator	One of these roles, with a different register.	Response Percent	Response Count
CACDP exam	25	0	1	12.0%	26
University Degree	13	0	0	6.0%	13
Postgraduate course	99	1	2	47.2%	102
NVQ	61	1	1	29.2%	63
Other (please explain)	12	0	0	5.6%	12
Answered question	210	2	4	100%	216

The 12 'other' included: options not included in the list, combinations, and/or additional qualifications: four 4 degree programs then NVQ; two CACDP Interim Assessment Program; one Heriot Watt diploma; one University course, then Graduate Interpreter Program to qualify; one CACDP exam and Postgraduate Diploma; one Master's degree, also have university post graduate degree.

Table 10: Comparing 2015 and 2016 responses by region

The 2015 survey used the following categories: London, Central & East Anglia, West & East Midlands & Wales, North East & North West, South East, Scotland & Northern Ireland, South West. Data has been compared where possible.

Which region do you live in (for 50% or more of your time)?								
Answer Options	Qualified interpreter	Trainee interpreter	Translator	Trainee Translator	Deafblind interpreter - all also listed as Qualified Interpreters	Response Count*	Response Percent by region*	2015 survey
East	11	2	0	0	2	15	6.00%	7%
East Midlands	24	2	1	0	0	27	10.80%	See below
London	45	9	0	0	0	54	21.60%	20%
North East	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.40%	22%
North West	18	1	0	0	0	19	7.60%	
Northern Ireland	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.80%	4%
Scotland	11	1	0	0	0	12	4.80%	
South East	38	8	0	0	0	46	18.40%	18%
South West	24	1	0	1	0	26	10.40%	10%
Wales	7	0	0	0	0	7	2.80%	19% incl. East Midlands
West Midlands	10	5	1	0	0	16	6.40%	
Yorkshire And The Humber	23	4	0	0	1	28	11.20%	See above
Outside of the UK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	N/A
Totals	214	33	2	1	(3)	250	100%	100%
Response % by profession	85.5%	13.2%	0.8%	0.4%	1.2%			

*not including deafblind interpreters to avoid double counting

Working patterns

Table 11: What is your normal pattern of interpreting work?

What is your normal pattern of interpreting work?						
Answer Options	Qualified	Qualified percent	Trainee	Trainee percent	Cumulative Response Percent	Response Count
Full time (most days of the week)	149	69%	16	55%	68%	165
Part time (some days of the week)	58	27%	10	34%	28%	68
Occasional (less than one day a week)	5	2%	3	10%	3%	8
No longer do interpreting work (paid)	1	0%	0	0%	0%	1
Prefer not to say	2	1%	0	0%	1%	2
Totals	215	100%	29	100%	100%%	244

Table 12: Intention to change hours interpreting and years post registration

Are you considering increasing or reducing the hours you work, or stopping working as an interpreter?					
How many years' experience do you have since you first fully registered?	Increasing hours.	Staying the same	Reducing hours.	Stopping working as an interpreter.	Response Count
Less than 5 years	7	39	11	5	62
Between 5 & 10 years	6	44	17	7	74
Between 11 & 20 years	2	31	15	12	60
Between 21 and 30 years	1	10	5	1	17
More than 30 years	0	2	0	1	3
Number answered question					216

Paid work other than interpreting:

Respondents were asked: *Do you have other paid work that is nothing to do with interpreting?*

244 respondents said whether they had other paid work nothing to do with interpreting. 73% (178) did not, 25.8% (63) did.

These 63 respondents were then asked ‘roughly how much of your annual income is derived from non-interpreting work?’. Of these 2 preferred not to say, and 4 chose ‘other’. The table below shows the breakdown for those who answered.

Table 13: percent income from non-interpreting work

Roughly how much of your annual income is derived from non-interpreting work?						
Answer Options	Qualified	Qualified percent	Trainee	Trainee percent	Response Percent	Response Count
Very little.	18	38%	1	11%	33%	19
Up to a quarter.	15	31%	3	33%	32%	18
Between a quarter and a half.	7	15%	1	11%	14%	8
Between a half and three quarters.	3	6%	1	11%	7%	4
Three quarters or more.	5	10%	3	33%	14%	8
Totals	48	100%	9	100%	100%	57

Table 14: Snapshot of the profession – number of responses from qualified interpreters

Qualified Interpreters: Below are 3 statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1-7 scale below please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.								
Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Slightly agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Slightly disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Weighted Average	Response Count
I would recommend to someone starting a career as an interpreter.								
12	43	40	22	34	28	23	4.01	202
My area / region is a good place to work as an interpreter.								
28	73	36	19	22	15	10	4.91	203
I am satisfied with my life as a professional interpreter.								
30	71	45	8	25	13	11	4.95	203

Table 15: Snapshot of the profession – number of responses from trainee interpreters

Trainee Interpreters: Below are 3 statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1-7 scale below please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.								
Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Slightly agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Slightly disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Weighted Average	Response Count
I would recommend to someone starting a career as an interpreter.								
3	12	7	1	5	2	0	5.03	30
My area / region is a good place to work as an interpreter.								
5	13	6	3	0	2	1	5.33	30
I am satisfied with my life as a professional interpreter.								
7	11	5	0	5	2	0	5.3	30

The weighted average is calculated as follows: ((number of responses x 'strongly agree' weighting) + (number of responses x 'agree' weighting) + (repeated for each of the columns)) / number of responses))

In comments, respondents said that steps being taken in order to increase hours include; accepting more work, working with more clients and agencies, and letting potential customers and agencies know of their availability.

The majority of the 76 respondents (74 qualified, 2 trainees) who were considering reducing their hours and/or stopping had taken action in order to achieve this (see tables below). Those who hadn't yet taken action used the open text 'other' text box to indicate that they were still 'contemplating' what they would do. The steps taken are given in the tables below. Respondents could select all that applied.

Table 16: Steps taken to reduce your hours as an interpreter

In order to reduce your hours as an interpreter, what steps have you taken? (Select all that apply).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Looked for alternative work (paid or voluntary).	38.8%	19
Reduced work hours, without replacing with other income.	30.6%	15
Retrained or studied for alternative work.	28.6%	14
Applied for alternative work (paid or voluntary).	14.3%	7
Study, not directly linked to getting alternative work.	6.1%	3
Developing other self-employed work (from other)	4.1%	2
Other (please explain)	10.2%	5
Number answered question		49

Table 17: Steps taken to stop working as an interpreter

In order to stop working as an interpreter, what steps have you taken? (Select all that apply).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Looked for alternative work (paid or voluntary).	60.7%	17
Retrained or studied for alternative work.	21.4%	6
Applied for alternative work (paid or voluntary).	14.3%	4
Studied, not directly linked to getting alternative work.	10.7%	3
N/A	10.7%	3
Stopped working as an interpreter, without replacing with other income.	3.6%	1
Other (please specify)	25.0%	7
Number answered question		28

For comparison see table below showing results from the comparable question in Appendix 6².

² Numbers and percentages differ slightly from those published in the 2015 survey, as for comparability the table and percentages excludes those who identified only as CSWs and signers, and the percentage is calculated as a percentage of those who have said they are leaving the profession.

Table 18: Main and second reasons³ for intending to reduce or stop working as an interpreter.

(If you are considering reducing your hours or stopping work as an interpreter) This is because (select top 5 that apply)			
Answer Options	Weighted (1st choice + 50% 2nd choice)	Main reason (response count)	2nd reason (response count)
The future of the BSL interpreting profession feels uncertain.	29.5	20	19
Agencies where I work pay too little and/or have unacceptable T&Cs, so I don't take work from them.	14.5	8	13
I don't feel respected / valued as a professional.	14	8	12
I am not able to earn enough from interpreting.	9.5	5	9
I want to do something else (diversifying).	9.5	8	3
I do not have enough work.	7	7	0
I am retiring (or am reducing hours towards retirement)	7	6	2
Concerns about regulation and/or registration.	4	3	2
The profession lacks a supportive working community.	2.5	1	3
I have had / have a work related injury / disability (e.g. ULD, RSI, etc.)	2.5	2	1
I have or will have caring responsibilities.	1.5	1	1
I am pregnant.	1	1	0
I am / have been ill.	0.5	0	1
Other (complete box below).	7	6	2
Number answered question		77	

The survey also asked respondents whether they had already increased or reduced the hours they spend interpreting (rather than just intended to, or had taken steps towards doing so) since January 2015, i.e. the date of the last survey⁴. See table below.

³ The question asked for the top 5 reasons. However, the inclusion of all 5 choices rather than the first and second choices made marginal difference to the ranking, but made the data harder to read.

⁴ Interpreters who had already stopped interpreting were not asked this question as they answered the separate subset of questions.

Table 19: Increased or reduced hours interpreting

Have you increased or reduced the hours you spend interpreting, since January 2015.						
Answer Options	Qualified	Qualified percent	Trainee	Trainee percent	Response Percent	Response Count
Neither - stayed the same	107	50%	18	62%	51.2%	125
Reduced	64	30%	2	7%	27.0%	66
Increased	35	16%	8	28%	17.6%	43
N/A or Other (please explain)	9	4%	1	3%	4.1%	10
Totals	215	100%	29	100%	100%	244

244 interpreters answered this question, with 51.2% reporting no change, 27% having reduced their hours interpreting, and 17.6% increased. This is 9.4% more saying that they have reduced rather than increased. This was more likely to be true of interpreters than trainees, 50% no change, 30% reduced, 16% increase, 14% more having reduced their hours than increased.

For those who had indicated they had reduced their hours, Table 20 indicates their reasons for doing so.

Table 20: Reasons interpreters increased or reduced interpreting

Why have you reduced the hours you spend interpreting (since January 2015)? (Please select all that apply).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Difficulties with AtW bookings.	43.3%	29
Problems with agencies.	38.8%	26
Difficulties finding or unable to find enough work.	37.3%	25
Difficulties finding work that pays enough.	34.3%	23
Difficulties finding appropriate work.	23.9%	16
Just wanted to do other work, more variety.	13.4%	9
Study / research.	11.9%	8
I am retiring (or reducing hours towards retirement)	10.4%	7
Ill health.	10.4%	7
Pregnancy / adoption.	7.5%	5
Caring responsibilities.	6.0%	4
I have / have had a work related injury / disability (e.g. ULD, RSI, etc.)	3.0%	2
Voluntary work (e.g. with NUBSLI, ASLI, VLP, or general voluntary work).	1.5%	1
Other (please explain)	26.9%	18
Number answered question		66

Table 21: Reasons interpreters have difficulty finding freelance interpreting / translation work

If you have difficulty finding freelance interpreting / translation work, why do you think that is? Please select up to 5 reasons in order of impact on your work.			
Answer Options	Weighted (1st choice + 50% 2nd choice)	Main reason (response count)	2nd reason (response count)
Agencies will not pay sustainable rates, so I cannot accept this work.	44.5	32	25
My area has more interpreters (qualified and trainees) than are needed for the work available.	29.5	23	13
Regular clients' Access to Work has been reduced, and so I can no longer afford to take the work.	24.5	15	19
In my area agencies are using staff interpreters to cover the work.	19.5	13	13
The agencies terms & conditions are not appropriate, so I cannot accept the work.	18	10	16
Interpreters / CSWs in my area are accepting work at too low a rate.	13	7	12
In my area there is less interpreting work available than there used to be.	11.5	8	7
In my area many service providers will not or do not book interpreters.	11	8	6
In my area interpreting is mostly being done by CSWs/signers.	7	4	6
In my area interpreting is mostly being done by trainee interpreters.	6.5	4	5
Other (complete box below).	4	3	2
Total answered question		127	124

ATW

Table 22: Reasons interpreters reduced or stopped Access to Work interpreting

Why have you reduced or stopped work with Access to Work clients? (Select all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Because their AtW funding was reduced, and so what they could pay for interpreting was below your minimum rate.	66.3%	63
Because of delays in payments from AtW.	47.4%	45
Because their AtW funding wouldn't pay for travel costs.	36.8%	35
Because they no longer had AtW funding.	35.8%	34
Because AtW have said they will no longer pay for a second interpreter where needed, and so you are doing more work on your own, when two interpreters are needed.	31.6%	30
Because of concerns about potential problems with AtW (i.e. nothing had gone wrong, but you have changed your work to reduce potential risk).	27.4%	26
Other (please explain)	18.9%	18
Number answered question		95

Translation and translators

Survey question: *Do you do translation work as a specific job role (rather than just as part of normal interpreting practice) between English and BSL?*

25 respondents (of the 250 who completed the survey) answered yes, of whom 3 are Deaf interpreters / translators and 22 hearing, 1 is a Sign Language Translator (SLT) and 1 a Trainee SLT (TSLT). 12 work as staff for a translation company, and 14 are freelance or work for their own company, including the 3 Deaf respondents.