Survey of BSL/English Interpreters' Working Conditions (2017)

National Union of British Sign Language Interpreters (NUBSLI)

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Foreword

This is the third annual report on the results of NUBSLI's survey of British Sign Language (BSL) / English Interpreters' Working Conditions. NUBSLI will continue to collate and publish this data in order to monitor trends and changes in the profession.

The demographic profile of respondents in NUBSLI's 2015 and 2016 surveys are similar for gender, age, home region, and percentages of qualified and trainee interpreters as this year's results.

For the third consecutive year NUBSLI has confirmed a trend towards the driving down of interpreters' terms and working conditions by public service providers. This has reached a point respondents often described as unsustainable for them personally, and for the profession. The changes that have already taken place are having a demonstrable impact on interpreters' morale, and this is cited as a key reason for interpreters considering exiting the profession, or suggesting that they would no longer recommend interpreting as a viable career path to other people. NUBSLI intends to undertake focused work on supporting new colleagues whilst undergoing their training, to ensure knowledge and best practice is shared at this early stage.

Again, interpreters expressed fears that Deaf people living in rural or remote areas may find they are no longer able to acquire interpreting services funded by the public purse. Examples were given of travel costs being cut, or of being pressured into taking all-inclusive fees, which do not cover their costs, especially for some respondents who cited having to travel 2-3 hours for one booking. ATW was also cited as causing issues for people as travel is capped at 25ppm rather than the HMRC approved 45ppm. One interpreter told us that they now earn less than they did in 2008, and as a result are considering leaving the profession.

Another issue identified as problematic, as in previous years, was the decreasing recognition of the value of specialist skills and experience, coupled with a reduction in variable remuneration for interpreting professionals with specialist skills such as mental health or child protection. A number of respondents also identified that large, multi-language agencies tend to treat interpreters as a commodity, using a first come-first served system to fill their bookings.

NUBSLI will continue to work closely with our members to campaign for profession standard fees to be paid, and conditions to be fair, and will work to increase engagement with contract holders and commissioners in order to make clear the detrimental impact of such changes to the profession.

Emma Lipton
Chair of NUBSLI

Key Findings[1]

1. **Pressure on fees and standards: concerns about multi-language agencies**

   Respondents expressed deep concerns about the dominance of public sector work by generic, multi-language agencies with low or no quality-control systems, low rates of pay and reduced terms and conditions. These were the most frequent free text comments made by respondents.

   Concerns raised include that generic, multi-language agencies are booking the first interpreter willing to accept the agency's offered fee irrespective of their suitability or skills, the use of 'single fee' rates which are inclusive of travel but insufficient to cover travel costs and a sustainable income, and the difficulties some interpreters have had in obtaining payment of agreed costs from many agencies.

   One of these agencies in particular was singled out for their exceptionally poor practice in relation to paying invoices, with many interpreters stating that they will no longer work for that agency as a result of late, under, or non-payment.

   A sense of exhaustion from having to repeatedly argue about rates and chase payments, and a feeling of being dispirited about what this means for the sustainability of the profession as a whole, was striking in its abundance.

   It's of note that no interpreters mentioned the NHS Accessible Information Standard, which requires NHS[2] and Adult Social Care to provide full access to communication and information for Deaf people and those with communication disabilities.

2. **Delays in invoice payments by Access to Work (ATW) & difficulties resolving payment issues**

   A number of respondents commented on a recent (to December 2017) downturn in the efficiency of ATW's payment system. In particular, people reported problems with increasing numbers of invoices being disputed or lost by ATW, and paid very late, or not at all, as a result. A strikingly consistent series of comments were made about the challenge of resolving difficulties when they arise. This was noted to have been in part attributable to the new system of providing remittance notices with no information about which invoices these relate to, and the disjoint between the adviser, the payments service, the customer (the ATW award holder) and the interpreter leaving interpreters powerless to resolve issues directly.

   This is consistent with contact NUBSLI has received from members over the past year.

[1] All figures in this section are rounded to the nearest whole number.
[2] Including GPs, hospitals, opticians and dentists

3. Access to Work (ATW) cap on awards

A number of respondents expressed dismay and concern about the impact of the forthcoming cap on both Deaf people's careers, and the impact this will have on interpreters.

Whilst since the survey the cap has been raised[3], it is anticipated that any cap will lead to further pressure for interpreters to reduce their fees, terms and conditions, particularly when working with Deaf people who have additional disabilities and/or senior and professional roles requiring considerably more communication support that the cap allows.

4. Remuneration for travel costs

Respondents continued to report a downward pressure on travel costs, including the use of 'all inclusive' fees by ATW with a fixed hourly rate[4] (particularly affecting those who work in or with Deaf people in rural areas), or where travel costs are paid, these being limited to 25ppm rather than the HMRC approved rate of 45ppm. Some interpreters reported that they had stopped accepting bookings that involve extensive travel for this reason. ATW's policy on travel costs appears unclear and inconsistent.

5. Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) / Video Relay Service (VRS)

Only one VRS/VRI provider was cited by a significant number of respondents as representing best practice.

A significant number of respondents raised concerns about the (unsuitable) deployment of VRS/VRI as a cost saving measure, especially in relation to health appointments. This will be an issue to monitor as the public spending constraints continue, and the increased use by public bodies of generic, multi-language agencies results in a loss of knowledge and insight into good practice for BSL/English interpretation.

6. Intention to change working hours

Fewer interpreters reported having already reduced their hours in 2017 compared to 2016. There was no significant change in the percentage of respondents planning to reduce or stop working compared to the previous survey, which remains at a quarter of qualified respondents.

7. Trainee interpreter engagement

Only a small number of trainee interpreters (27) responded to the survey making meaningful analysis of responses difficult. Of note, in some areas no trainees responded,

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[3] In April 2018 (after the survey concluded) the cap to ATW awards was raised from 1.5 to 2 times the National Average Salary (NAS).

[4] Access to Work (ATW) say that they don't have limited hourly rates, however in practice, it is clear that they do so. The only exception to this is with some ATW customers who have personal budgets, where they may be able to pay above an ATW set hourly rate.

and of those who did respond several mentioned feeling insufficiently supported by qualified interpreters.

A potential cause for tension was identified in the comments made by some qualified interpreters, who cited concerns about trainee interpreters taking bookings from generic language agencies at unsustainable fees, and for which they were not suitably qualified (e.g. child protection meetings).

Recommendations

These recommendations address the issues raised in this, and previous NUBSLI surveys, with the aim of ensuring the long-term viability of the profession, and so meeting the needs of customers.

Government and Commissioners

1) Government (OFCOM) should prioritise formulating quality standards for VRS/VRI providers[5].

2) The NHS Accessible Information Standard (NHS AIS) provides a legal requirement for provision of communication services. Commissioners should ensure that tenders and contracts for communication services, including BSL/English interpreting, meet the requirements of the NHS AIS.

3) Government and/or Local Authorities should consider an equivalent information standard to cover provision of Social Services provision, providing equivalent good practice e.g. with regard to child protection.

   Until this happens, Local Authorities and Social Services should ensure that tenders and contracts for communication services including BSL/English interpreting are modelled on the requirements of the NHS AIS, to ensure appropriate minimum standards and safe practice.

NHS trusts; GP practices; dentists, opticians and chiropodists undertaking NHS work; and Local Authority Adult Social Care Providers.

1) Ensure that training (including in staff inductions) and resources are made available for front line staff, and those involved in patient bookings, understand their legal obligations under the NHS Accessible Information Standard (NHS AIS), and how to book appropriately registered communication support.

Agencies

1) Pay interpreters fees and travel in line with NUBSLI's Fees Guidance[6].

2) Publicly commit to respecting NUBSLI's Fees Guidance in general and/or for specific contracts[7].

3) Recognise the need for specialist interpreters to be booked for specific domains, and for those specialist skills to be recognised in variable rates of pay.

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[5] In line with best practice, standards should be co-produced and agreed with experts in the field, including Deaf customers and interpreters. The Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI) *Video Interpreting Best Practice* document is a recent evidence based resource.
https://www.asli.org.uk/app/uploads/2017/05/ASLI_Video_Interpreting_Best_Practice_VIBP-1.pdf

[6] http://www.nubsli.com/guidance/interpreter-fees/

[7] http://www.nubsli.com/nub-posts/nubsli-fees-adopted-framework-agency/

4) Ensure that contract bids take account of the need to respect NUBSLI's fees guidance when tendering.

5) Ensure that bookings allow the interpreter sufficient time to complete their appointment, allowing for typical delays, e.g. in NHS settings. For example, this would mean not booking one interpreter for multiple NHS bookings in a morning, unless there are robust local systems in place to ensure that this is achievable.

NUBSLI

1) Consider some additional direct engagement work with trainee interpreters, including potentially a trainee only survey, to better understand their concerns about relationships with qualified interpreter colleagues, and improve participation in future Market Conditions surveys.

2) Work to ensure that members know about and understand the relevance of the NHS AIS (in England[8]) in ensuring appropriate communication services are used in NHS and Adult Social Care settings, and how members can best taken action where they are not followed.

Interpreters

1) Interpreters witnessing or being told about the inappropriate use of VRS/VRI should consider signposting Deaf people to appropriate services, where they exist, and/or supporting them in raising those concerns formally (e.g. through the complaints process) with the provider or purchaser and CQC.

   Interpreters can also 'share their experience' directly with CQC, raise concerns with NRCPD, as well as NUBSLI.

2) Interpreters should consider how best to connect with trainees in their regions, for example hosting focused workshops, as well as alerting trainees to the support and resources that are already available, including the NUBSLI Buddy scheme, Freelance Guide, and Interpreter Awareness Pack.

[8] In Wales the equivalent is "*The All Wales Standards for communication and information for people with sensory loss*" in Wales: https://gov.wales/topics/health/publications/health/guidance/standards. In Scotland and NI there is no equivalent yet, and so the Equality Act is most relevant.

Introduction / Background

This report has been prepared by the National Union of British Sign Language Interpreters (NUBSLI), a branch of Unite. Members of NUBSLI include qualified and trainee British Sign Language/English interpreters, interpreters with deafblind people, Deaf interpreters and British Sign Language/English translators.

There is almost no formal data collected about trainee and qualified interpreters, translators and deafblind interpreters other than the record of the numbers and categories of communication professionals who register[9] with NRCPD[10], RBSLI[11] and SASLI[12].

The NUBSLI annual survey is intended to address this. Developing baseline data will facilitate the identification of emerging trends from the analysis of survey results over time.

It is intended that this regular report of survey results will provide an increasing evidence base for discussions and action within the interpreting profession and with the commissioners of interpreting services and those that use these services.

A number of significant market interventions and changes have affected and continue to affect the interpreting profession and their customers. These include:

- Access to Work (ATW): the cap on the maximum award offered[13], problems with payments, inclusion of travel costs into already reduced fees, reduced funding of second interpreters where required[14].

  During the year that this survey focusses on, Deaf people whose budgets were above the cap in October 2015 were expecting to come to the end of their transitional protection in April 2018, and have their ATW support reduced. This had an impact on them and the interpreters they work with.

- Tenders for interpreting services increasingly won by generic, multi-language agencies who then offer the work to interpreters at below sustainable market rates[15], resulting in downward pressure on fees and less beneficial terms and conditions.

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[9] NB registration is voluntary as there is no legal requirement for interpreters or translators to be registered. However some contracts and the NHS AIS require registered interpreters to be used, or as close as require as makes little difference.

[10] National Register of Communication Professionals with Deaf People.

[11] Regulatory Body for Sign Language Interpreters and Translators.

[12] Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters.

[13] In April 2018 (after the survey concluded) the cap to ATW awards was raised from 1.5 to 2 times the National Average Salary (NAS). Whilst NUBSLI recognises this, we remain strongly opposed to a cap in any form, as it most negatively impacts on those Deaf people with dual disabilities, e.g. deafblind, and those in the most senior or professional roles, which often require more communication support.

[14] As described by the Work and Pensions Committee report December 2014. http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/work-and-pensions-committee/news/ATW-report-substantive/

[15] As described by the Justice select Committee report February 2013. http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/justice-committee/news/interpreters-and-als-report/ and National Audit Office January 2014. https://www.nao.org.uk/report/the-ministry-of-justices-contract-for-language-services-progress-update/

- Growth in the number of agencies offering sign language interpretation, and a particular increase in the involvement of non-specialist spoken language agencies[16].

NUBSLI is aware that these changes are having an impact on interpreters and the interpreting profession via contact from interpreters, discussions in meetings, forums and e-groups, individual and collective boycotts of specific agencies and/or contracts [17]. Through this survey we can measure and quantify the impact of these changes over time.

Methods

Data were collected via an online self-report survey. The survey was publicised to BSL/English interpreters, deafblind interpreters and translators via various organisational and e-group channels and social media including; NUBSLI, e-newsli[18], and ASLI[19], SASLI and VLP forums[20]. The survey was open for responses from 18th December 2017 to 31st January 2018.

The 2017 survey was designed to replicate the 2016 survey, with as few changes to questions as possible, in order to measure trends and changes.

Wording of questions was designed to avoid bias, and skip logic was incorporated to ensure that respondents were only presented with questions relevant to their previous answers. Appendix three provides a full list of the survey questions[21].

Data

Of the 426 respondents who started the survey, 333 completed the whole survey by answering the final compulsory question. As it is not possible to identify which, if any, of the 93 respondents who did not complete, took the survey again, only the data of respondents who completed the survey has been analysed.

The number of responses to particular questions varies according to whether the questions are compulsory or optional, which respondents are included in the analysis, how many people answered them, the options they selected and any additional comments they provided.

Four of the 426 respondents who started the survey indicated that they weren't currently working as any of the listed professions. Two then went on to answer a subset of the survey questions for people who may have left the professions. Their responses are not included in the data reported unless otherwise specified.

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[16] E.g. in 2002 there were 31 agencies involved in coordinating sign language interpreting services with 372 qualified and trainee interpreters (The Organisation and Provision of British Sign Language/English Interpreters in England, Scotland and Wales, 2002). In 2016 evidence to the DWP Market Review lists over 170 organisations coordinating interpreting with 1,255 qualified and trainee interpreters.

[17] For brevity, throughout the report 'interpreters' will be used to refer to all of the categories of professionals participating in the survey, unless otherwise specified.

[18] An e-group for interpreters.

[19] The Association of Sign Language Interpreters.

[20] Visual Language Professionals.

[21] For more information on methods, see Appendix 6: How we did it.

Four of the 333 respondents were Translators, and two Trainee Translators. Other than in the section reporting on translation, their responses are not included in the data reported unless otherwise specified.

The three Registered Deafblind Interpreters chose as their main role 'Registered BSL Interpreter', and therefore these respondents' answers were as BSL/English interpreters, not as deafblind interpreters. This means the only data reported for deafblind interpreters is demographic, although there is a section reporting on interpreter's experience of deafblind interpreting.

Given this, for compulsory questions, the response number will be 329 where the data being presented is for qualified and trainee interpreters only, and more where responses from other professions are reported.

Interpreters' comments presented in this report come only from those respondents who gave explicit consent for them to be used in this way. Discussion of the results includes a representative proportion of these written comments.

For simplicity, interpreters are referred to as either qualified or trainee throughout the report.

Results & discussion

333 respondents completed the 2017 survey, 250 in 2016, and 485 in 2015.

Surveys like this are designed to present a snapshot of the interpreting profession, provide the opportunity to look at short term market reactions to market interventions, and over time identify any broader shifts and trends.

26%[22] of registered sign language interpreters took part in the survey, however only 10% of trainee sign language interpreters did, with wide variations across the regions, from 30% in the South East to none from several regions[23]. Due to the low number of responses from trainees, we have identified themes raised from their responses with caution.

Demographics

The breakdown of respondents' professions is; 89% qualified interpreters, 7% trainee interpreters, 1% deafblind interpreters, 1% translators, 1% trainee translators; which is broadly similar to the previous survey, although 3% more respondents were qualified, and 2% fewer were trainees compared to the 2016 survey[24].

The 306 qualified respondents were asked how many years' experience they had since first registering.

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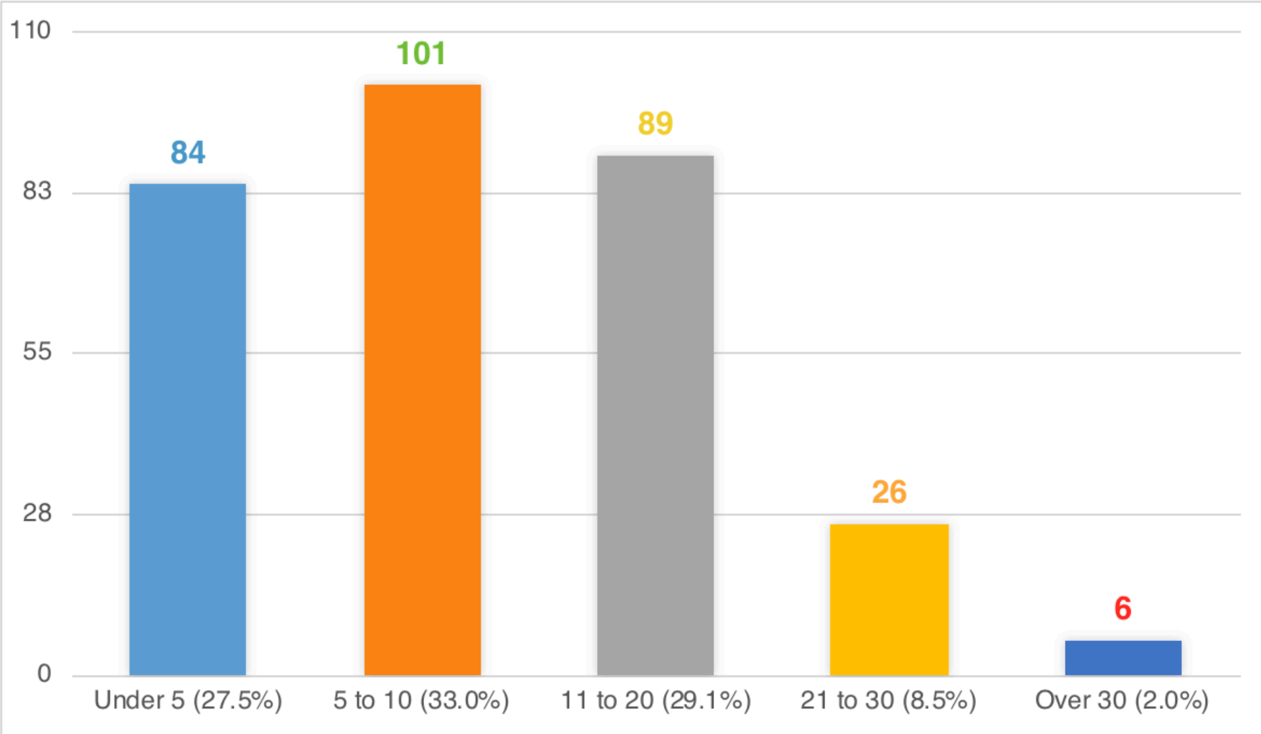
[22] Most percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.
[23] See Appendix 1 for breakdown of respondents by region and register (NRCPD, RBSLI, SASLI).
[24] See Table 8, Appendix 5 - 2017 data for more details. NB these percentages include all the roles that people selected, not just their main role.

Chart 1: Years' experience since first registered after qualifying



The gender of respondents was 84% female, 15.3% male, closely matching the profession's gender make up of 83% female, 17% male in 2014[25]. Two respondents identified as transgender.

Table 1: What is your age?

What is your age?						
Answer Options	**Qualified Interpreter**	**Trainee Interpreter**	**Deafblind Interpreter**	**SL Translator**	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
18-20	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0
21-29	21	5	0	0	7.8%	26
30-39	84	11	0	1	28.8%	96
40-49	93	6	0	1	30%	100
50-59	77	4	0	2	24.9%	83
60 or older	27	1	0	0	8.4%	28
Totals	**302**	**27**	**0**	**4**	**100.0%**	**333**
Number respondents answered question						**333**

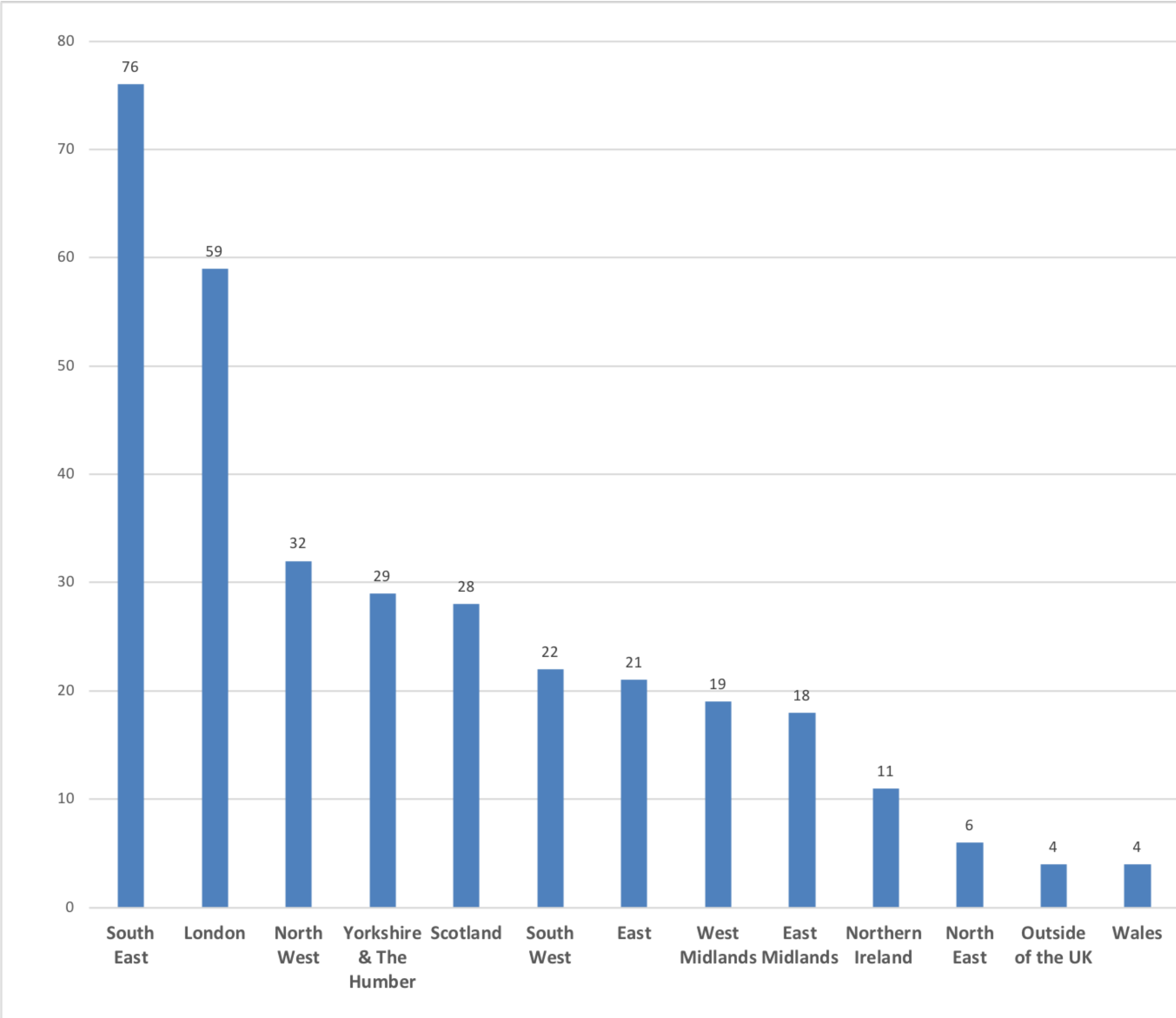
[25] Rachel Mapson, Who Are We – demographics of the interpreting profession, NEWSLI, 2014

Respondents' ages ranged from 21-29 (7.8%), peaking at 40-49 (30%) to 60 or older (8.4%). Again broadly matching the profession's age profile in 2014.[26]

321 people identified as hearing and five as Deaf, with seven identifying as other.

The regional breakdown for respondents' home is broadly similar between the 2015, 2016 and 2017 surveys[27].

Chart 2: in what region do you live?



Four people selected 'outside of the UK', but only one named their country of residence.

Respondents could optionally tell us whether they were a NUBSLI member or not. Of the 321 respondents who did, 207 (64.4% of those who answered) were, and 114 (35.5%) were not. This is similar to the 2016 survey.

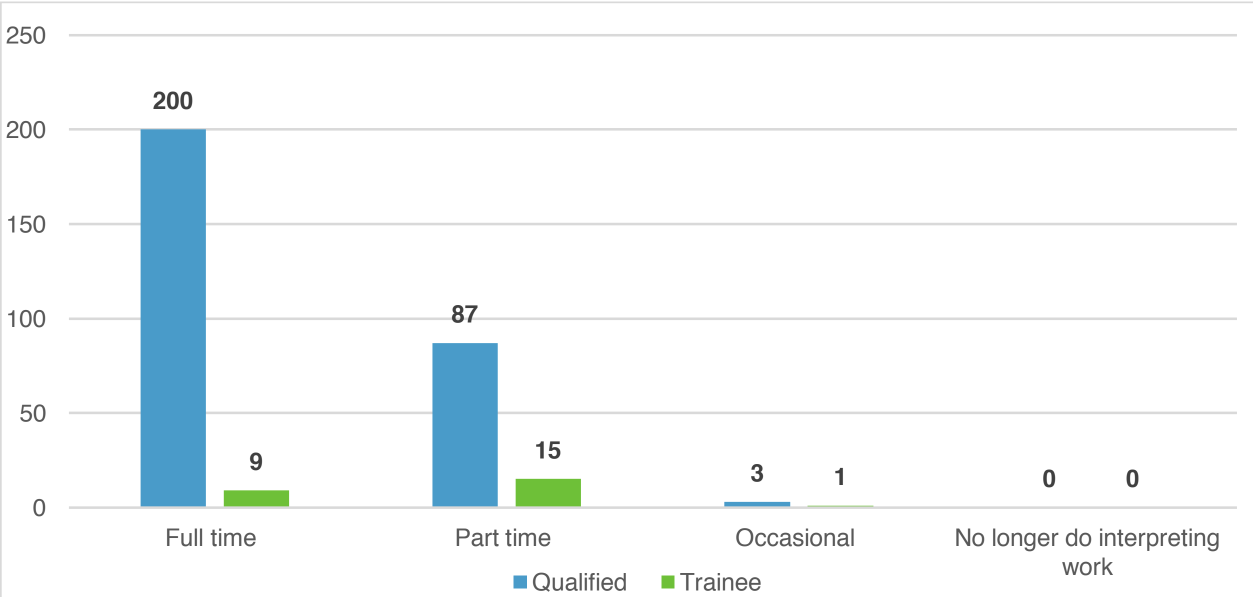
[26] Ditto
[27] See Table 10, Appendix 5.

Working patterns

We have seen no overall change in working patterns for qualified interpreter respondents since the last survey with a roughly 2:1 ratio of interpreters working full time to part-time.

However, the percentage of trainee interpreters working part time compared to full time was reversed from the 2016 to 2017 survey (55% FT :33% PT in 2016, 33% FT : 55% PT in 2017)[28].

Chart 3a: What is your normal pattern work (Qualified / Trainee Interpreters)



Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) and Video Remote Service (VRS)

We have looked at this data in more detail this year, including re-analysing the 2016 data and providing it in comparison to the more detailed 2017 data, as this is likely to be an area of development over the coming years. We have not identified any trends, as it is too soon to do so.

25% of respondents said that they carry out VRI /VRS[29] as part of their work as an interpreter. Respondents involved in providing these services were asked about their normal pattern for this work[30]. The majority reported working between one day per week and one day per month. Two respondents reported working 30 hours a week (equivalent to full time).

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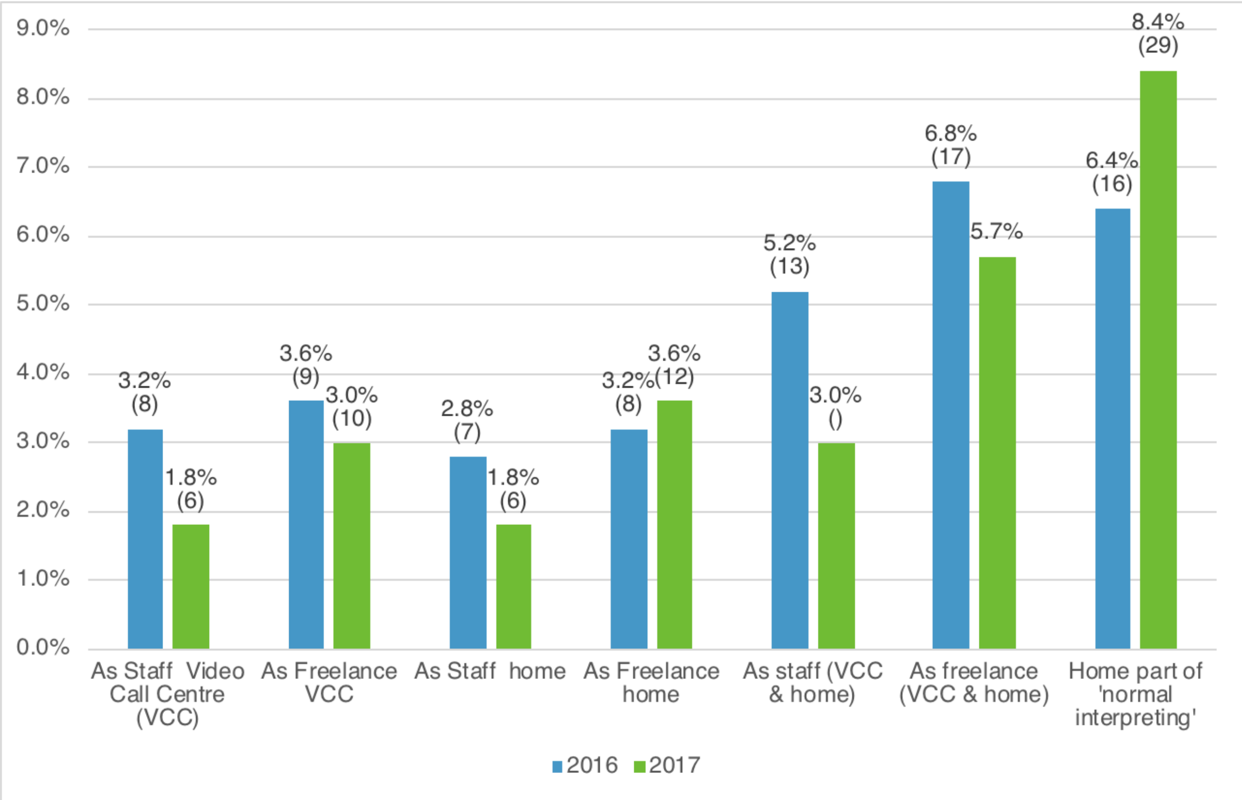
[28] Given the small number of trainee respondents, it cannot be assumed that this is a generalisable finding.
[29] Video Remote Interpreting and Video Relay Service.
[30] Whilst 25% said they carry out such work, 16% then were able to provide an average number of hours a week. Those who didn't had either recently stopped doing such work, did it so sporadically that they couldn't give a figure, or did so in situations that didn't match the options available, e.g. work interpreting 'remotely' to a client in the same building, or provided remote interpreting in a different context.

The 54 respondents provided an average of 4:37[31] hours a week VRS / VRI a week, with an average of 7:20 hours a week from people working as staff or freelance for VRS / VRI providers.

This compares to the 2016 data, where 39 respondents provided an average of 5:38 hours a week VRS / VRI a week, with an average of 8:09 hours a week from people working as staff or freelance for VRS / VRI providers.

Chart 3b: How many hours a week do you provide remote interpreting? [32 33]



Paid work nothing to do with interpreting:

Respondents told us whether or not they also had paid work that is nothing to do with interpreting: 75.1% (248) did not, 24.8% (82) did, which is similar to the 2016 survey.[34]. Those who did were asked roughly what proportion this was of their overall income. The proportion of interpreters that mainly earn their income from interpreting work was just under two thirds. Less than 10% earn more than three quarters of their income from work other than interpreting.

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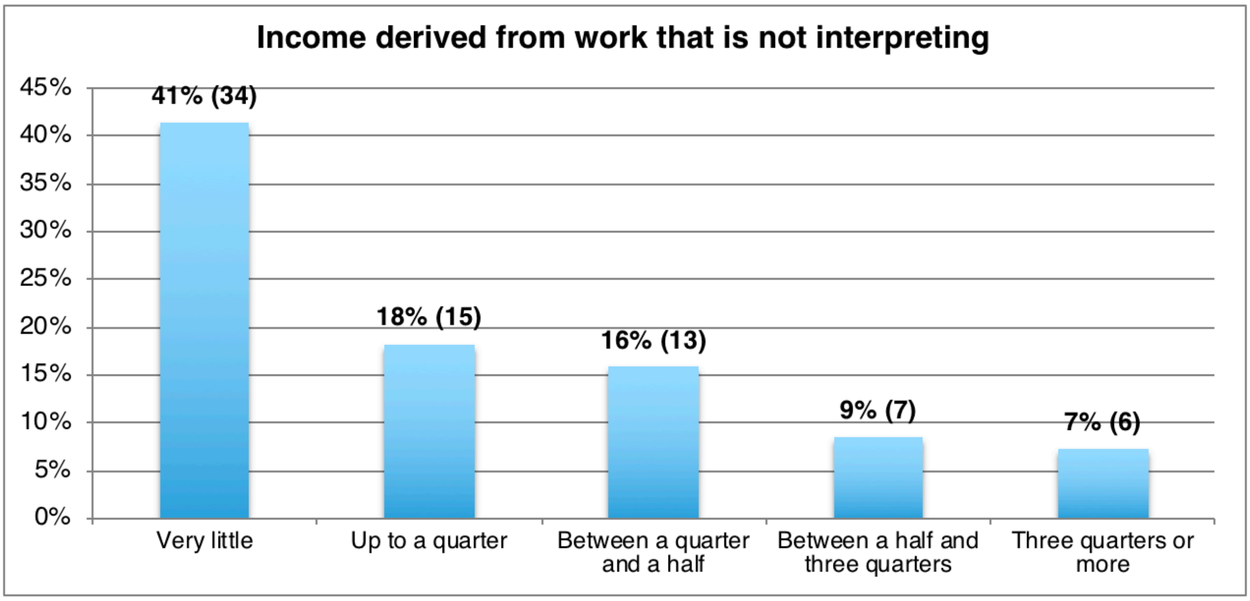
[31] Averages are calculated against the total number of people who provided numbers of hours.

[32] The full question option wording: *Provide VRI / VRI working freelance from your home using your own computer - as part of your normal interpreting work with clients*.

[33] The percentages are of the total number of respondents (2016 - 250, 2017 - 333). The percentages of staff in VCC & home, and of freelance, in VCC & home are adjusted for those who do both.

[34] CF 73% (178) did not and 25.8% (63) did, from 2016 survey.

Chart 4: What percentage of your income is not interpreting?



A snapshot of the 'mood of the profession'

One aim of this NUBSLI survey is to judge the impact of changes to working conditions on the '*mood of the profession*'. Three questions were designed to cover these key areas[35]. The intention is to continue to include these questions in future surveys to help us better understand changes over time. Interpreters indicated their responses to these three statements using a 7 point Likert scale from Strongly Agree (7) to Strongly Disagree (1). Data is presented first as weighted average scores (chart 5), then as a comparison of the percentage of responses of qualified and trainee interpreters (charts 6, 7,and 8)[36].

Chart 5: Snapshot of the mood of the profession

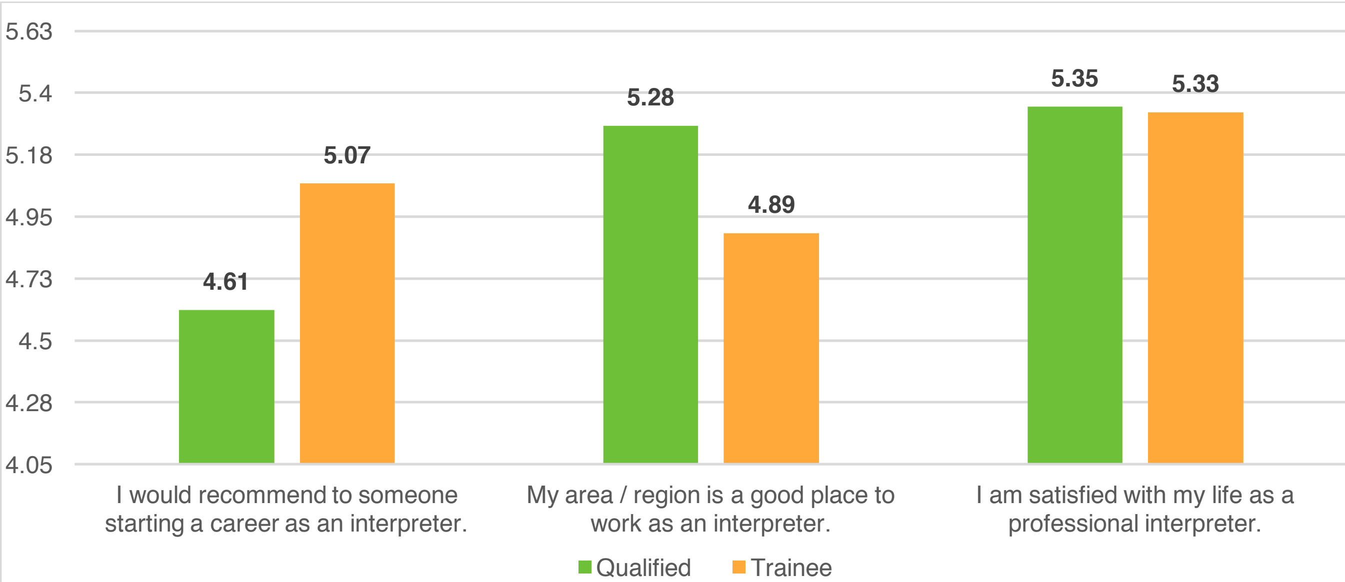
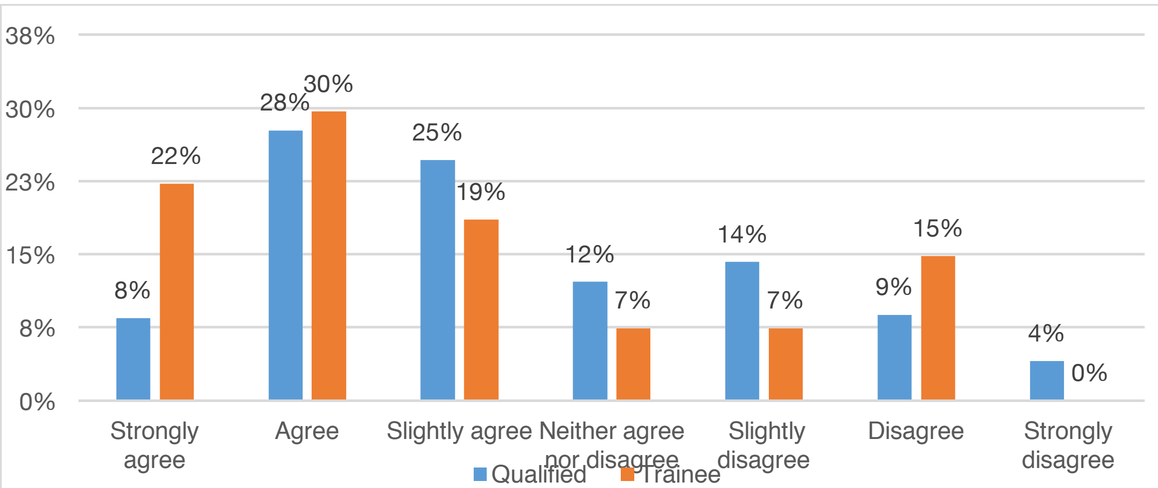


Chart 6: I would recommend to someone starting a career as an interpreter



[35] The model used for this question structure is that of the Subjective Wellbeing Scale (SWS). However, whilst the NUBSLI questions have been piloted they not been in any statistical sense validated.
[36] For the weighted average formulae see Appendix 6.

Chart 7: My area / region is a good place to work as an interpreter

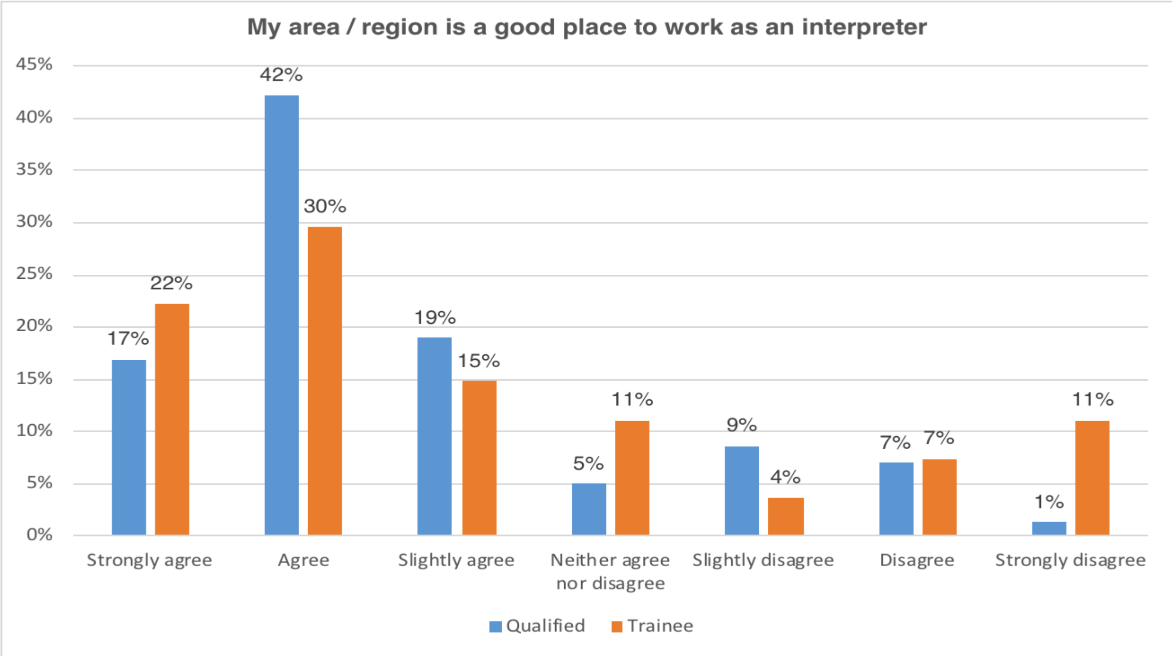
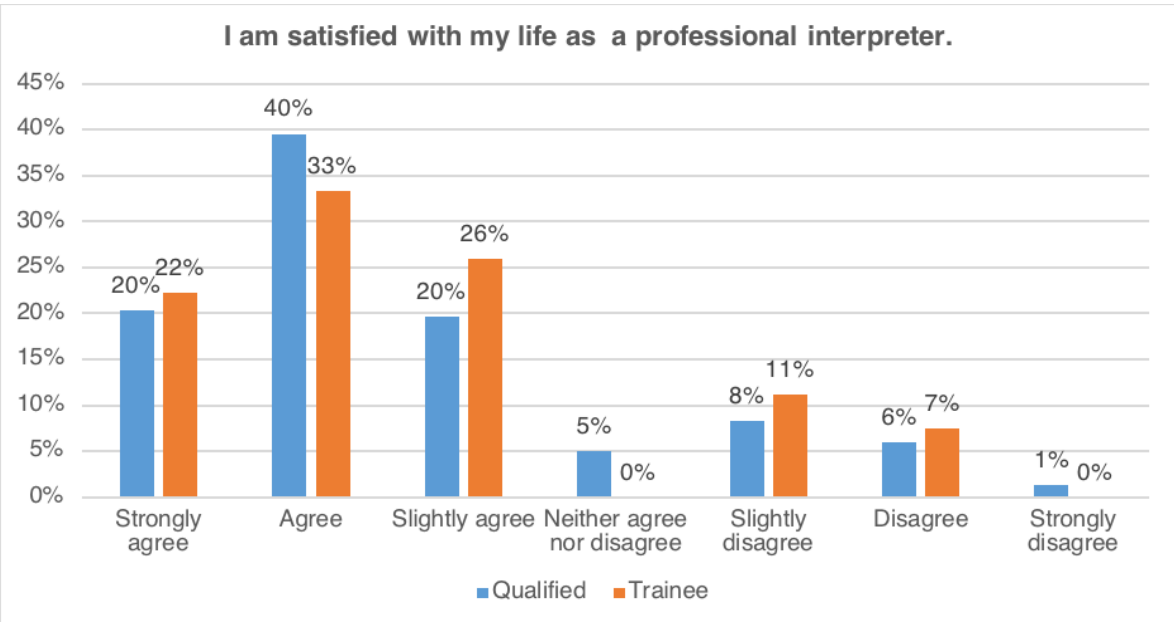


Chart 8: I am satisfied with my life as a professional interpreter



Comments

Loving the work that they do was a feature of the majority of responses from interpreters, however almost none of the narrative responses were wholly or unequivocally positive.

Similarly to the 2016 survey results, concerns about downward pressure on fees, erosion of terms and conditions, and the domination of non-specialist agencies over some kinds of work featured in the majority of interpreters' comments. The financial concerns raised detracted from positive perceptions of the profession. Many interpreters described a feeling of exhaustion from '*battling*' over terms and conditions and fees, despite loving the role of interpreter.

"*Becoming a sign language interpreter was a childhood dream and I was absolutely over the moon when I gained my postgraduate degree and became a Registered Sign Language Interpreter (RSLI). The issues around pay, both agencies and ATW, make it extremely frustrating and difficult being an interpreter and has made me question where I can financially afford to stay in the profession. That's an awful situation to be put into as I love my job.*"

"I now earn less than in 2008. I have not increased my fees since 2008 which means I have taken a wage cut … I rarely do any medical interpreting because most agencies only pay £60-70 inclusive for a medical appointment and I can't afford to work for so little. My job satisfaction comes entirely from the variety in my work and the verbal appreciation expressed by my clients. I feel grossly undervalued and under-recompensed financially and there is no financial recognition of my experience and specialist expertise."

"Interpreting is rewarding but recent government changes and Access to work issues with capped budgets makes things awkward sometimes with clients if you need to charge the fee you have always charged."

"I know the landscape is changing which is why I'd never recommend interpreting as a career, but on a day to day basis working with deaf people I love it."

"I have been interpreting for a long time now and back in the day it was a fantastic career/very rewarding but today all the agencies call the shots and asking us to work for nothing, well it certainly feels that way. Also I [am] *constantly on the phone chasing invoices up which are never paid within the 28 days. Sometimes I have not been paid for up to 4 or 5 months."*

"*Fed up with dealing with agencies who constantly drive my fees downwards. The main agency who has the public service contacts in* [county] *will not adhere to NUBSLI cancellation periods which means that I become reluctant to work for them … can younger colleagues really sustain an interpreter* [income] *for the rest of their working lives like this?*"

Comparison with 2016

The weighted analysis of the *mood of the profession* indicates that Qualified interpreters were feeling somewhat more positive in 2017 compared with the mood in 2016, and Trainee interpreters were very slightly more positive[37]. Having said that, this is a question where real trends will only emerge over time.

[37] Responses from trainees are reported, but not commented on, due to low numbers

Changes in interpreters' working patterns

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the amount of interpreting they do or intend to do, and their motivations for any change. These results are summarised in Tables 2a, 2b and 3.

Changes already made

Of the 302 qualified interpreters[38] who answered the question about changes already made, 53.3% reported no change, 25.1% have reduced their hours interpreting, and 21.2% increased. I.e. 3.9% more reported a decrease than increase. This compares to 13.5% more who reported a decrease than increase in 2016[39].

Table 2a: Have you increased or reduced the hours you spend interpreting, since July 2016?[40]

Have you increased or reduced the hours you spend interpreting, since July 2016?						
Answer Options	**Qualified**	**Qualified percent (as % of SLIs)**	**Trainee**	**Trainee percent (as % of TSLIs)**	**Response Percent (as % of SLIs & TSLIs)**	**Response Count**
My hours interpreting have stayed roughly the same.	161	53.3%	10	37%	52%	171
Already reduced my hours interpreting.	76	25.1%	5	18.5%	25%	81
Already increased my hours interpreting.	64	21.2%	10	37%	22%	74
N/A	1	0.3%	2	7.4%	1%	3
Total	302	100%	27	100%	100%	329

Respondents who had already reduced hours (rather than intended or planned to) were asked their main reasons for doing this. Respondents were able to select multiple reasons[41]. The five main reasons were:

- Problems with agencies;
- Difficulties finding work that pays enough;
- Difficulties finding or unable to find enough work;
- Other
- Caring responsibilities/study research (joint 5th)

[38] Responses from trainees are reported in the tables, but not commented on, due to low numbers.

[39] 2016 - 49.8% reported no change, 29.8% have reduced their hours interpreting, and 16.3% increased.

[40] Following feedback the question was clarified with the addition of "*Note: if you are thinking about, or have made plans to, increase or reduce your hours, but haven't yet done so, select 'My hours interpreting have stayed roughly the same' to this question. The next question asks about your intentions and plans for the future*." For a full comparison of the changes, please see Table 23 appendix 6

[41] See Table 16 Appendix 5. Also see Appendix 6 for discussion of methodological issues.

The majority of respondents who indicated '*other*' reasons for reducing/stopping work said either that this was for a better work/life balance in order to improve mental or physical wellbeing, or due to disillusionment with diminishing opportunities and reduced pay as a result of agencies taking large contracts.

Interpreters intending to reduce hours or stop working were most likely to have retrained or studied, reduced their interpreting hours (without replacing the income), or looked for alternative employment[42]. These were also the top three actions in the 2016 survey, although in the reverse order[43].

Four respondents (not included in the 333) indicated that they are no longer working as interpreters. Two then went on to answers questions about this. Their main reasons being for one, there being not enough work, and for the other, feeling undervalued, and not having a supportive working community. One plans to return to interpreting in the future.

Planning or considering changes

Of the 302 qualified interpreters[44] who answered the question about plans and intent to make changes, 62.3% reported no intent to make changes, 32.1% plans or intent to reduce or stop interpreting, and 5.6% to increase hours. I.e. 26.5% more report intent to reduce or stop rather than increase. This compares to 27%[45] who reported intent to reduce or stop rather than increase in 2016.

Table 2b: Are you considering and/or planning to increase or reduce the hours you work, or to stop working as an interpreter?[46]

Are you considering and/or planning to increase or reduce the hours you work, or to stop working as an interpreter?						
Answer Options	**Qualified**	**Qualified percent**	**Trainee**	**Trainee percent**	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Neither increase nor reduce hours, nor stop working as an interpreter.	188	62.3%	14	51.9%	61%	202
Reducing hours.	72	23.8%	5	18.5%	23%	77
Stopping working as an interpreter.	25	8.3%	3	11.1%	8.5%	28
Increasing hours.	17	5.6%	5	18.5%	6.5%	22
Total	302	100%	27	100%	100%	329

[42] Please see Table 16 Appendix 5
[43] Please see Table 16 Appendix 5 2016 survey.
[44] Responses from trainees are reported in the tables, but not commented on, due to low numbers.
[45] Calculated for qualified interpreters from the 2016 data - 58% no intent to make changes, 22% reduce, 12% stop, 7% increase.
[46] Following feedback the question was clarified with the addition of the words "*and/or planning*" The question in 2016 was "Are you considering increasing or reducing the hours you work, or stopping working as an interpreter?" For a full comparison of the changes, please see Table 23 appendix 6.

Respondents who intended to reduce hours or stop interpreting were asked why[47]. The three main reasons given were:

- I want to do something else (diversifying)
- Agencies where I work pay too little and/or have unacceptable T&Cs, so I don't take work from them
- The future of the BSL interpreting profession feels uncertain

As for the last two surveys, the main reasons given were connected to feelings of insecurity, being undervalued both financially and professionally, and the desire or need to explore other types of work or income, and this is reflected in the narrative comments made throughout the survey.

Table 3: Main reasons for intending to reduce or stop working as an interpreter[48]

[47] See Table 18 Appendix 5 for Table showing first, second and weighted choices.
[48] 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.

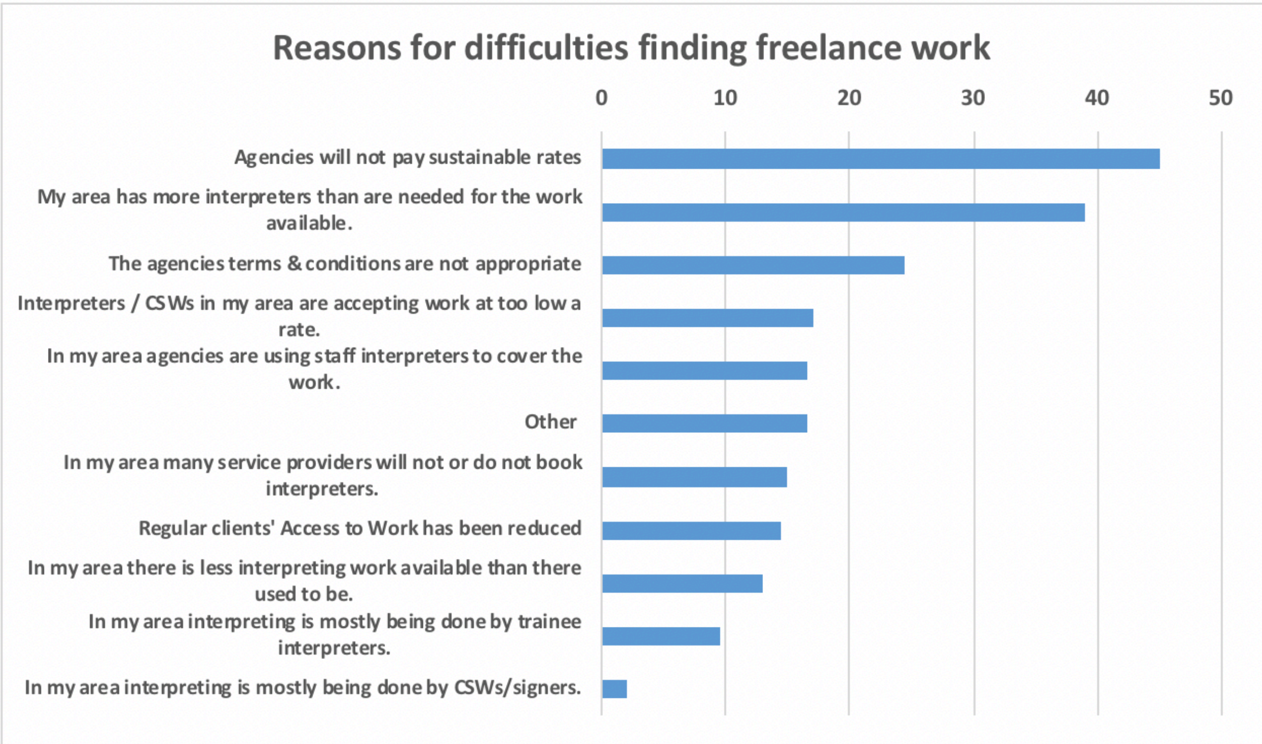
Difficulties finding (appropriate) work

Survey participants provided a number of reasons behind the difficulty in obtaining appropriate work as freelancer interpreters. Their responses are summarised in chart 10.

The three main reasons chosen by respondents were the rates of pay, and terms and conditions offered by agencies being unsustainable or inadequate, and that the area has more interpreters than work available.

The main reason given by respondents, that '*agencies will not pay sustainable rates, so I cannot accept this work*', was also the most selected reason chosen in the related question in both the 2015 and 2016 surveys.

Chart 10: If you have difficulty finding freelance interpreting / translation work, why do you think that is?



Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) and Video Remote Services (VRS)

Concerns were raised about the risk that VRS/VRI could be, or is being used inappropriately:

"*Derriford Hospital in Plymouth are using* [VRI provider] *to interpret for pre-booked medical appointments and I have heard reports of it being used in wholly unsuitable situations (gynaecology and oncology appointments, cataract surgery!). I am very concerned about the fear and stress this is causing Deaf people in Plymouth, particularly those with complex needs or the older generation who cannot cope with this type of technology. Also, the added value of having a live interpreter is disregarded by the health professionals who think having 'an app for that' is wonderful.*"

"*More information is needed for purchasers of the service about the situations for which VRS/ VRI are appropriate. It isn't a cure all to availability and travel costs.*"

"*I believe it is being used too much in situations where a face to face interpreter should be booked. I fear it is being used (and will be used more so in the future) to save money at the cost of quality communication.*"

The use of VRS/VRI in inappropriate settings or assignments is a concern to monitor in future surveys, bearing in mind ongoing public spending constraints and the downward pressures on costs. Interpreters witnessing the inappropriate use of VRS/VRI ought to consider whether to raise those concerns formally with the provider or purchaser, or with the CQC, NRCPD and/or NUBSLI, or support Deaf people to do so through a formal complaint.

The survey also elicited comments about good practice in relation to VRS/VRI. SignVideo was cited by 18 of the 64 respondents commenting on good practice: no other VRS/VRI providers were cited.[49] (Note that these comments are about SignVideo's approach with regard to customers and their work with interpreters.)

"*Ethical employer and strong team working with individual autonomy to terminate and/or transfer call when we feel face to face or other specialists are required to ensure customer gets the best service.*"

"*SignVideo are a great example of an ethically run VRS/VRI provider with community at the centre of everything they do, and interpreters selected by skill not price.*"

"*Sign video are a company with a very good reputation and good working practice for interpreters.*"

"*SignVideo provide a supportive working environment for video interpreters, as have an established interpreting team managed by interpreters. As a company, they strive to make sure only interpreters with the appropriate experience, skills and aptitude are recruited to do video interpreting.*"

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[49] Whilst we wouldn't normally name a company, given the numbers of people who cited SignVideo as an example of good practice, and that that was the only company named, it seems appropriate to do so.

Access to Work (ATW)

Many BSL interpreters work with Deaf clients in their workplaces, with funding for this from the ATW scheme. For some interpreters this type of work may form a significant portion of their working hours/income. Approximately 90% of respondents to this survey do or have previously done ATW funded interpreting. [50]

Of those, 25.5%, reported that they had reduced or stopped ATW funded work since 2016, whilst only 8.4% increased this work. Half of respondents reported no change.

Table 5: Have you increased, reduced or stopped working with Access to Work clients?

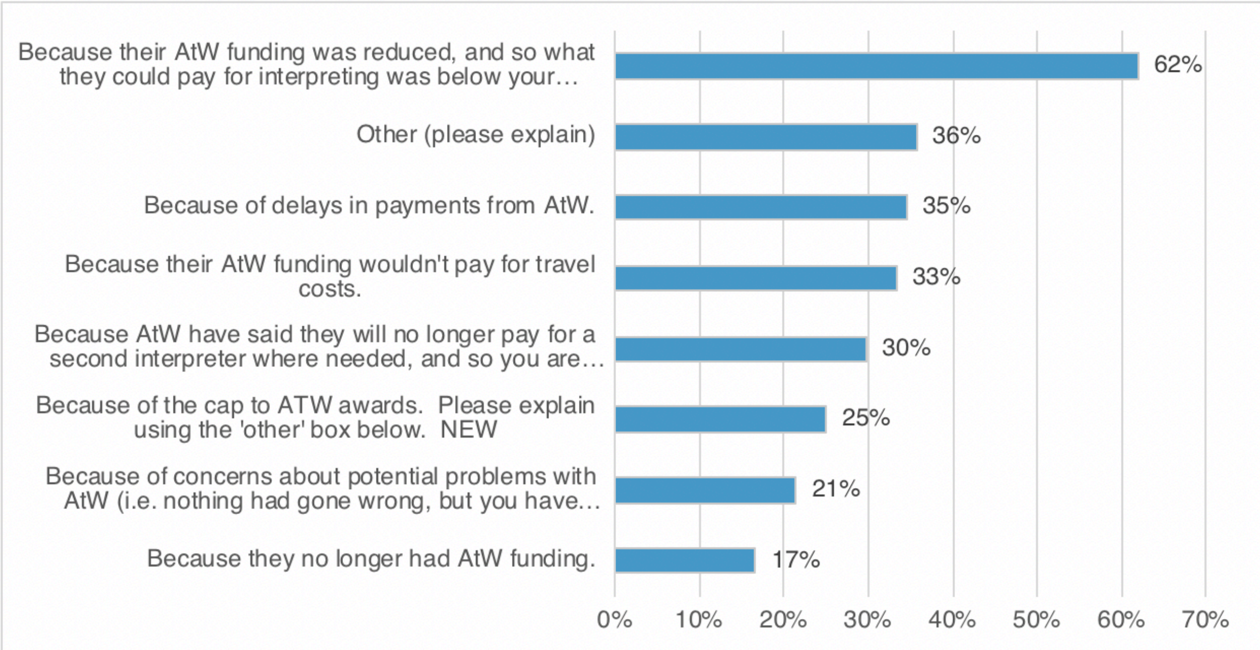
Have you increased, reduced or stopped working with Access to Work clients (between July 2016 and now)?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Reduced	24.0%	80
Neither - stayed the same	50.5%	168
Increased	8.4%	28
Stopped	1.5%	5
Response count		**281**

The main reason for having reduced or stopped ATW work, which is the same as in 2016, is that there has been a reduction in the daily rate of pay that falls below the interpreter's minimum rate. Two thirds of respondents chose this as a reason.

Whilst less interpreters report reducing or stopping ATW work in 2017 than 2016 (49.75%) the reasons for this are unclear, and could be positive, negative or a mixture. For example, it could be that those interpreters who felt they needed to reduce ATW work had already done so in 2016, meaning there were less interpreters left likely to do so this year, and/or that ATW work has been less problematic this year.

[50] This information was shown in Table 5 in the 2016 report. It has been removed as providing no useful information beyond the figures provided.

Chart 11: Why have you reduced or stopped work with Access to Work clients?[51]



The next most common reason for reducing ATW funded work is that there are delays in payments from ATW, although the rate of selection of this response has fallen since the previous survey when problems with payments from ATW appear to have been more severe (connected to systemic problems with awards rather than regular payment issues).

But there seems to have been an increase in difficulties with remittances from mid to late 2017, when this survey was conducted.

"ATW went through a period of good practice and would send out [payments] regularly, but then they have stalled again and I am having to wait.".

"ATW slower than previously as from the middle of 2017."

"*ATW take longer than before to pay*".

Concerns about delayed payments was only marginally more commonly selected than ATW's decision not to pay travel costs, and concerns about ATW's refusal to fund co-interpreters (meaning that Deaf people were increasingly likely to ask interpreters to work on their own where two interpreters were needed).

A quarter of respondents noted that the cap had led to a reduction in ATW work. Whilst the cap was increased[52] after the period covered by the survey, the new cap will still affect some Deaf people with additional disabilities and who due to the nature of their work have communication support needs significantly above the cap, and so we continue to evaluate this data.

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[51] The most select option at the top of the chart is, in full: *Because their ATW funding was reduced, and so what they could pay for interpreting was below your minimum rate.*

[52] In April 2018 (after the survey concluded) the cap to ATW awards was raised from 1.5 to 2 times the National Average Salary (NAS).

In the ‘other’ reason comments, issues with continued reductions in rates of pay and ATW awards due to the cap were cited, along with the loss of work due to the client moving or losing their job, and concerns about risks of non-payment.

The 28 interpreters who had increased their ATW work mostly did so due to increasing the amount of freelance work taken overall, or due to established client relationships meaning they were offered more work.

Agencies, terms & conditions, and contracts

Throughout the survey respondents commented on agencies’ terms & conditions and contracts. As discussed above, many respondents who were reducing or stopping interpreting, or having difficulties finding appropriately paid and coordinated work, said that the suppression of pay, and terms and conditions, by spoken language agencies was one of the main reasons.

Several of the survey questions were designed to elicit information about work via agencies, their terms and conditions, recognition of specialist expertise, and payments for travel expenses and travel time. Interpreters were also asked how the booking of interpreters had changed over the past 5-10 years.

The impact of framework agreements and single contracts

There were a very large number of concerns raised about the way that assignments were advertised and filled through large spoken-language agencies (providing services through framework agreements and contracts), mirroring concerns raised in previous years:

“I am no longer confident that it will suffice as my long term profession .... the community interpreting is just a mess since all the contracts are going out to such a mish mash of multi-language contracts. It’s a choice of taking infrequent work from ethical sources for reasonable pay, undercutting others to get more work, or settling for horrendous terms with companies who don’t know what they are doing, don’t care about us or our community, and might just go bust before they pay the pittance we have been forced to agree to.”

“*Big agencies are winning contracts on unsustainable terms for interpreters.*”

By and large, more positive comments were made about smaller agencies that specialise in BSL/English interpreting. These agencies were more likely to be commended for meeting interpreters’ fees and terms and conditions, and for understanding the need to match the interpreter to the assignment.

“*There are a couple of smaller specialist agencies who match skills to jobs and who help interpreters to hone those skills and specialisms. But they are rare.*”

“*The community and medical specialisms are not recognised by most agencies at all who have entered into contracts which operate on a 2 hour fee basis so that I will not work for them. Islington Interpreting Service are an example of good practice. They engage an interpreter for a full* *day, paying accordingly, but endeavour to use them as much as possible across the day … This only works because the agency is run by interpreters with integrity who understand the type of work and the space needed between bookings. They will not put too many appointments into the day which would over-commit the interpreter or jeopardise access needs. They also only engage RSLI because the community setting can often mean appointments linked to mental health or child protection type issues. The market place beyond specialist agencies and direct clients does not understand the need to engage appropriate interpreters at appropriate rates of pay."*

"*There are agencies who appreciate appropriate experience, although the majority just seem to want to fill assignments.'*

Remuneration for Travel

Remuneration for travel is an issue for 40% of the survey respondents.

Table 6: In what type of location do you mainly work?

In what type of location do you mainly work (i.e. more than 50% of your time)?						
Answer Options	**Qualified interpreter**	**Trainee interpreter**	**Deafblind interpreter**	**SL & Trainee Translator**	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Urban / City	245	21	2	3 / 2	82%	273
50:50 Urban / Rural (if roughly equal)	49	3	1	1 / 0	16%	54
Rural	7	0	0	0 / 0	2%	7
Total (categories)	**301**	**24**	**3**	**4 / 2**	**99%**	**331**

The main concerns raised were the same as in the previous survey: that is simply that 'all inclusive' fees are being offered which are below sustainable rates. This is true for both ATW and agencies. Where travel is reimbursed separately, it is offered at 25ppm rather than the HMRC approved rate of 45ppm.

"*Working in remote areas, I can spend three hours' travelling but will* <u>*not*</u> *be remunerated for it. It makes the job not viable from a financial perspective. The ATW rate of 25p per mile is simply inadequate, again particularly when working in remote areas."*

"[The problem is] *constantly having to ask for 45 pence per mile. Some agencies refuse to pay it. Means having to negotiate on most jobs with the agency who have the contract for most public service work in Devon on every single job thereby increasing admin time and stress levels. Means the cost of travel is being subsidised by me if I agree to 40 pence per mile. All ATW jobs only pay 25 pence per mile so I always subsidise these jobs which means I earn a lower net income."*

A number of interpreters said that they now restrict their work to a certain locality for the same reason.

"*Not everyone will pay for mileage or train fare; this means I will mostly work locally to my home address.*"

Some expressed concern for the ability of Deaf people in rural or remote areas to achieve full access, as they will find it harder to book appropriately skilled and experienced interpreters for their work.

Many raised concerns about agencies booking interpreters on a '*first come first served*' basis, rather than taking a more active coordination role and choosing a suitable local interpreter. This was cited as resulting in local interpreters familiar with the client or context being passed over in favour of an interpreter from some distance away, who may or may not be suitably experienced for the assignment.

Respondents provided some examples of good practice in relation to travel costs. In particular, that a number of specialist and long-standing sign language agencies and councils continue to pay travel costs, with some also paying fees for significant travel time.

The percentage of respondents working over 50% of their time in rural areas, or approximately 50% of their time in urban and rural areas, has decreased from 23.3% 2016 to 18% 2017[53]. We will continue to look at this in future years, as it may reflect a trend related to inadequate funding and payment for travel costs and time.

Recognition and remuneration for specialist skills

Respondents were asked to comment on the development, recognition and remuneration of interpreters with specialist skills[54].

The vast majority of respondents that commented said that there is little recognition of or understanding of specialist interpreting skills. Many mentioned that the large, non-specialist agencies who cover specialist areas such as health and child protection, work do not pay rates that reflect the specialist skills involved in this type of work, indeed often paying much lower rates than freelance interpreters charge. The small number of examples of good practice submitted related to local or specialist sign language agencies. These agencies were noted for matching the job role to the interpreter's skills, and for offering terms and conditions broadly in line with those interpreters would receive on the open market.

"*There is no logic to how we are booked now things are no longer local. It seems to be nothing more than a price war. Good practice is the local agencies who know us and the clients. They remember who you know or what you did. What you are best at. Flexible enough to swap people round if they are better matched elsewhere. Mostly it is left entirely to the interpreter's own judgement whether they should do the job. But we are often lacking info or sometimes deliberately misled to get the job covered*[55]."

[53] 2016 3.7% rural, 19.6% 50:50, 2017 2% rural, 17% 50:50.
[54] 328 people responded to these questions.
[55] This reference to being misled pertains to not being given adequate information about a booking to make an informed choice about the interpreter's suitability for it. This was raised by a number of respondents.

"*The market doesn't work to be honest in most aspects … Most governmental, general agency, BSL agency and even many interpreters in general chase the pound signs. I fear there is only a relative small percentage of us left that actually care. Wow, how sad is that view. I do hope I am wrong.*"

"*Seems that speed in filling the job is the essence, not matching the job with the person with the right skills. Lots of examples of bad practice whereby newly qualified [*interpreters*] are doing child protection,* [Team Around the Child] *meetings, CAMHS work etc. No handover, no continuity and the agency who has the main contract never asks for advice about jobs. They allocate and that is that.*"

"*Good practice comes from the Deaf professionals I work with who always understand the need to pay appropriately. Regrettably on occasion they are hampered by ATW limited budgets and this will get worse when the cap is introduced in April 2018."*

"*Pffft!*" In many ways this response encapsulates the responses of many of the respondents, who regard the larger (primarily) spoken language agencies, and therefore their customers, as being completely uninterested in relevant specialist skills or experience. They see a 'bums on seats' approach, regardless of the need for a differentiated service to adequately meet different service and customer needs[56].

Deafblind interpreting

Registration

Whilst few respondents were registered as deafblind interpreters, 140 respondents said they interpret or have interpreted with deafblind people. Many interpreters commented that they had not been aware that the client was deafblind until they arrived at the booking, and reported not having been formally trained in any form of deafblind communication methods.

Two respondents said that they had tried and failed to find suitable training courses:

"*I am very keen to become a registered deafblind interpreter however there is currently no way to achieve this as no courses are available in line with the NRCPD registration mapping.*"

"*I have looked for courses to acquire formal skills, but even though I live in London, have only been able to find basic courses such as Signature Level 1 Deafblind Awareness, which is really not much use.*

The impact of Direct Payments

The survey asked respondents whether changes to deafblind people's Direct Payments, which took place in 2016, have affected the interpreting work they do with them. Approximately 55 respondents indicated that they undertook work paid for through Direct Payments, of 140 who work with deafblind people.

[56] Another example of the provision by agencies of an undifferentiated service that fails to identify or meet key customer needs.

The majority indicated that their work had not altered as a result of changes to Direct Payments. Only 3 respondents indicated a substantial reduction in working with this client group, and 3 reported a slight reduction in the work they took on. Two reported slightly increasing Direct Payment funded work. It appears that the changes in working practices reported in the previous survey have remained largely the same in the absence of any changes to funding.

"*I have one regular client but only started after July 2016. The pay is rubbish but I consider it my 'voluntary' work*."

"*I had taken on some work (visual field) interpreting but was forced to accept a lower payment than I should have charged, therefore I am unable to accept jobs*."

Access to Work

We asked whether changes to deafblind people's Access to Work funding had affected the interpreting work respondents did.

Similarly to the impact of Direct Payments, there was little impact on the amount of ATW funded work for the 32 respondents, with only 8 reporting a reduction and 1 reporting a slight increase. Several respondents commented that they were anticipating the cap having an effect on the work that they currently do, come April 2018, and that ATW's refusal to pay travel costs made it even less financially viable for the few qualified deafblind interpreters to cover the distances needed to work with deafblind clients.

Co-working

Interpreting work with deafblind people can be particularly intensive and tiring, especially when using hands-on or deafblind manual. In order to ensure interpreters stay healthy and maintain a high level of accuracy, they need to take regular breaks by swapping with a co-worker.

We asked "*In your experience, where two interpreters are needed to co-work for Deafblind interpreting, how often does this happen*?"

Of the 61 respondents to this question, just over a third said that this never or almost never happens. 17 said that it happens some of the time, and a third said that a co-worker is provided usually or always.

Translation and translators

Respondents were asked if they did "*translation work as a specific job role (rather than just as part of normal interpreting practice)*". Of the 17 respondents, 3 are Deaf, 5 are staff for a translation company, and 13 are self-employed or run their own companies.

Respondents to the question '*are there any problems with the area of translation*?' predominantly commented on the downward pressure on fees, and the lack of recognition of translation as a unique skill that takes time and care to get right. This mirrors the previous year's responses.

"*My problem is that some companies would rather use translators who charge less and are not* *qualified, which means it's difficult for me to find work - they don't look into qualifications they just accept the lowest price they find. Also, some companies who use qualified translators are happy to pay the cost for the filming, but are not happy to pay the additional costs associated with preparation time etc."*

"[There is a] *lack of understand as to what translations is. Corporate plans/ consultation documents as requested for translation as an after-thought so are expected to be turned around in an unrealistic time frame."*

Conclusion

Similar to last year, perhaps the most significant issue of concern is the impact of the increasing dominance of spoken language agencies, through framework agreements and contracts for public sector interpreting. Such agencies are reported to drive down fees, terms and conditions; fail to recognise the specialist skills and experience required for particular settings and customers; and in some cases are reported to be using unqualified signers in place of registered interpreters.

Ultimately this reduces the sustainability of interpreters' work, and provides a service that doesn't meet Deaf and hearing customers' needs, whilst to those who are unable to assess the skill level of the interpreter, appears to do so.

This downward pressure on terms and conditions, and the booking of interpreters that are insufficiently skilled or qualified, is having a negative impact on the morale of the interpreting profession, and making highly skilled interpreters consider whether they can continue to pursue a career in the field.

Whilst it is arguable that the downward pressure on terms and conditions ensures best value for the public purse, the model of procurement adopted fails to make best use of local and specialist interpreters, incurring unnecessary travel costs and reducing the suitability of communication service provision.

Ultimately, it will not be of benefit to the public purse if the number of people entering or remaining in the interpreting profession falls in consequence of these factors, and it will not benefit the Deaf community if the quality of sign language interpreting in public services declines.

Acknowledgements & thanks

Thank you to all who participated in this survey. Your responses underpin all that is useful in this report.

I would also like to thank:

Rachel Mapson for her patient support and ongoing advice on all aspects of the 2016 survey, on which this was based. The interpreters who piloted various versions of the 2016 survey, and provided their feedback.

Morgan Phillips, for her work and support with analysing the data and writing this report, and putting up with me doing the same.

The NUBSLI committee and Catherine Hale for their work on the previous surveys.

And you, reading this, and for any action you may take in order to contribute to the ongoing viability of our rewarding and essential profession.

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NUBSLI would also like to thank Darren Townsend-Handscomb for the huge amount of work put in to make this report happen.

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Appendices

Appendices 1 and 2 are below. Appendices 3 to 6 are available to download from the NUBSLI website[57].

Appendix 1 – Interpreter & Trainee Interpreter respondents by region (Table 7a & 7b)

Appendix 2 – NUBSLI guidance on pay and conditions for British Sign Language/English interpreters

Appendix 3a – Notes re Survey questions

Appendix 3b – Survey questions

Appendix 4 – List of charts and tables

Appendix 5 – Additional data and tables from the 2017 survey

Appendix 6 – How we did this; additional information on the survey methodology and data analysis

[57] http://www.nubsli.com/guidance/survey-of-bsl-english-interpreters-working-conditions-2017

Appendix 1 - Table 7a: Interpreter respondents by region

Region	NRCPD SLI	RBSLI Registrants	SASLI Full Member	Total registered in a region	No. responded to survey	Responses from a region as % of interpreters in that region	Responses from a region as % of overall responses
London	111	2		113	55	48.67%	18.21%
Yorkshire & Humberside	80	5		85	29	34.12%	9.6%
South West	86	3		89	20	22.47%	6.62%
South East	181	1		182	67	36.81%	22.19%
East Midlands	118	5		123	18	14.63%	5.96%
Wales	46			46	4	8.70%	1.32%
East	78			78	19	24.36%	6.29%
North West	131	4		135	30	22.22%	9.93%
Scotland	55		73	128	26	20.31%	8.61%
West Mid	113	1		114	15	13.16%	4.97%
NI	27			27	11	40.74%	3.64%
NE	36	3		39	6	15.38%	1.99%
Outside of the UK	1			1	2	N/A	N/A
Total	**1063**	**24**	**73**	**1159**	**302**	**26.03%**	**26.03%**

Appendix 1 - Table 7b: Trainee Interpreter respondents by region

Region	NRCPD TSLI	N/A	SASLI Trainee Member	Total registered in a region	No. responded to survey	Responses from a region as % of interpreters in that region	Responses from a region as % of overall responses
London	35			35	4	11.43%	14.81%
Yorkshire & Humberside	15			15	0	0.00%	0.00%
SE	30			30	9	30.00%	33.33%
Wales	3			3	0	0.00%	0.00%
East	19			19	2	10.53%	7.41%
East Midlands	18			18	0	0.00%	0.00%
South West	12			12	2	16.67%	7.41%
North West	37			37	2	5.41%	7.41%
Scotland	16		7	23	2	8.70%	7.41%
West Mid	64			64	4	6.25%	14.81%
NI	9			9	0	0.00%	0.00%
NE	3			3	0	0.00%	0.00%
Outside of the UK					2	N/A	N/A
Total	**261**		**7**	**268**	**27**	**10.07%**	**10.07%**

Notes on Table 7a & 7b, Interpreter & Trainee respondents by region.

There is a small risk of double counting, as it is possible that some people are registered with more than one register.

The column in the 2016 table labelled '% of total who responded' has been more clearly labelled in the 2017 table as 'Responses from a region as % of interpreters in that region'.

An additional column has been added to show 'Responses from a region as % of overall responses'.

The total percentage at the bottom of the two left hand columns is the total number of responses from SLIs or TSLIs as a percentage of the overall number of people registered.

Appendix 2 – NUBSLI guidance on pay and conditions for British Sign Language/English interpreters

Freelance fees for interpreting engagements for BSL/English interpreters (1/1/17 to 31/3/18)

These figures are guidance only to the fees that NUBSLI members are likely to charge.

Please note that higher rates may be charged to reflect the experience and specialist knowledge of the interpreter or translator.

Freelance fees
BSL/English interpreters generally work in half or full day sessions. However, a call out fee may be charged if an assignment is local to the interpreter or short in duration. View interpreter fees guidance.

Specialist work
Specialist work may incur a higher fee. This includes any assignment which requires additional training, specific expertise and/or a substantial amount of preparation. This may include work such as: mental health, legal, child protection, theatre/performance, television and conferences.

Interpreter provision
Due to the physical and mental demands of interpreting, two interpreters may be required depending on the duration and/or intensity of the work involved. Interpreters will discuss this with you at the time of booking. Larger teams may be called for in specialist settings, such as conferences and Crown Court.

Evening and weekend rates
Interpreting during evening hours, at weekends, or on public holidays will usually be charged at the higher rate of time and a half.

Recording
BSL/English Interpreters reserve the right to decline to be filmed or otherwise recorded whilst working (except when such recording is inherent within legal proceedings). Any consent to recordings intended for broadcast or publication is likely to incur an additional fee.

Cancellation charges
0 - 7 days prior to date of assignment: 100% of agreed fee
8 - 14 days prior to date of assignment: 50% of agreed fee

Travel and accommodation expenses
Travel expenses will be paid to cover travel to and from the assignment, and for any travel required as part of the booking. This will be charged at £0.45 per mile for travel by car, or at standard fare rate for public transport.

When an assignment requires an overnight stay, reasonable accommodation expenses will be paid.

Interpreters reserve the right to charge for travel time.

Terms of payment
Payment to be made in full within 30 days of receipt of invoice. After 30 days, charges will be applied as per Late Payment Legislation.

Trainee interpreters
Interpreting assignments of a legal nature or those with higher possible risk implications are not suitable for trainees to undertake. The types of domain this could include are: court, law, police, mental health,

child protection, conferences and any work involving the signing of any legal documentation (not an exhaustive list).

Further to this, it is advisable to discuss the details and potential complexity of an assignment with individual trainee interpreters to ensure that they are sufficiently experienced to undertake the work.

Freelance fees guide for fully qualified interpreters (RSLI) and trainee interpreters (TSLI) or equivalent:

Central & East Anglia	**RSLI/TSLI**
Minimum call out fee	£90/£80
Half day	£120/£110
Full day	£240/£210
London	**RSLI/TSLI**
Minimum call out fee	£100/£90
Half day	£130/£120
Full day	£260/£240
Midlands	**RSLI/TSLI**
Minimum call out fee	£90/£80
Half day	£120/£100
Full day	£240/£200
North East	**RSLI/TSLI**
Minimum call out fee	£90/£75
Half day	£100/£85
Full day	£210/£175
North West	**RSLI/TSLI**
Minimum call out fee	£90/£75
Half day	£110/£90
Full day	£220/£180
South East	**RSLI/TSLI**
Minimum call out fee	£90/£80

Half day	£130/£120
Full day	£260/£230
South West	**RSLI/TSLI**
Minimum call out fee	£90/£80
Half day	£120/£100
Full day	£240/£200
Yorkshire & Humber	**RSLI/TSLI**
Minimum call out fee	£90/£75
Half day	£120/£90
Full day	£240/£180
Northern Ireland	**RSLI/TSLI**
Minimum call out fee	£70/£60
Half day	£110/£90
Full day	£250/£180
Scotland	**RSLI/TSLI**
Minimum call out fee	£75/£60
Half day	£110/£90
Full day	£220/£180
Wales	**RSLI/TSLI**
Minimum call out fee	£90/£80
Half day	£120/£100
Full day	£240/£200

Appendix 3a – Notes re survey questions

Appendix 3b – Survey questions

Appendix 4 – List of charts and tables

Appendix 5 – Additional data and tables from the 2017 survey

Appendix 6 – How we did this; additional information on the survey methodology and data analysis

Appendices 3 to 6 are available to download from the NUBSLI website[58].

[58] http://www.nubsli.com/guidance/survey-of-bsl-english-interpreters-working-conditions-2017