

Proposed

DPSI Add-on Module

for

Interpreting in the Prison Service

based on a North West pilot



Background

This pilot was developed as part of a wider strategy to address language needs within the HMP Service North West area.

The strategy has several strands. These include awareness raising of cross cultural communication; cultural engagement of offenders; auditing language and intercultural needs; language service provision and within that interpreting to meet HMP needs.

In order to inform this strategy, some activity was piloted in various areas, such as for example:

1. awareness raising workshops, attended by staff from a variety of grades, including governor and deputy governor, and prisoners
2. production and circulation of guide on the cultural engagement of offenders
3. ten top tips on how to deal with interpreters
4. development of interpreter training

Interpreting and the Prison Service

Interpreting in a custodial environment presents a different set of challenges to the interpreter in comparison to other criminal justice environments.

When entering a prison establishment, the interpreter will be stepping into a closed environment with a very specific and strict set of rules and regulations and s/he will be expected to observe strict security procedures. These procedures have been put in place for the protection of staff, prisoners, visitors, and the general public.

The Interpreter on an assignment will be a visitor to the relevant prison establishment and as a visitor s/he will need to be protected. At the same time, as a visitor s/he must not undermine HMP Service procedures.

The interpreter however is there to perform a very specific task, that of enabling unbiased communication between an officer and a prisoner/offender.

This raises two important issues for both the Prison Service and the interpreter.

1. How can HMP Service ensure that the interpreter understands and complies with their environment and procedures and that they are receiving a high standard of service?

This highlighted a gap in the training of interpreters, The DPSI related training Legal option typically does not include any specific module on interpreting in a custodial sentence. The fact that this option of the training towards DPSI aims at preparing prospective interpreters to perform in the criminal justice system as a whole is not conducive to being specifically aimed at providing the in depth knowledge on HMP Service.

This in turn lead to the decision to develop a supplementary module of training aimed at providing fully qualified interpreters with additional training focusing on the custodial environment.

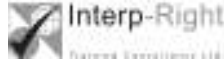
2. How can the Interpreter ensure that s/he performs in the custodial environment without compromising the Interpreters Code of Conduct?

The pilot training helped to highlight a potential issue that will be received by interpreters with a high level of surprise!

HMP Service has a strong focus the rehabilitation of offenders. As such the behaviour of prisoners throughout their sentence is closely observed, monitored and assessed. This applies to their behaviour in general to other prisoners, prison staff and to visitors.

Monitoring the behaviour of prisoners from different cultures becomes more challenging since different cultures operate under different behavioural norms, thus making it more difficult for HMP Service staff to assess behaviour of prisoners who are from a non-British background.

This difficulty is identified when the prisoner in question does not have English as a mother tongue, and has a poor command of it.



Any comment they voice in a language other than English will be difficult or indeed impossible to understand, and therefore to assess as part of a prisoner's profile of rehabilitation.

During an interpreters visit, comments may be directed at interpreters, outside of the interpreting session which may be offensive. How should the interpreter deal with them?

Interpreters become accustomed to ignoring such comments, but when interpreting in a custodial environment they will be expected to report such incidents as this will be part of the rehabilitation process. Offensive comments cannot be condoned, therefore visitors are expected/advised to report them so that the service is not perceived to condone inappropriate behaviour to visitors.

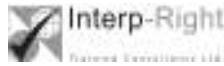
The fact that interpreting is an inter-disciplinary subject makes it increasingly important that potential conflicts of approach are dealt with in a training environment, so that the interpreting profession continues to ensure high standards of training and delivery.

The Northwest pilot

This development was funded in partnership by HMP Service Northwest Area and the Regional Language Network Northwest (RLN NW). For expert consultant on interpreting content and syllabus the services of Kirsty Heimerl-Moggan of Interpright were engaged. The course was held at the North West POELT Training Centre near Leyland.

The pilot aimed at producing a module that would be proposed to the Chartered Institute of Linguists as an Add-on module to the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting.

The pilot was delivered between 26th February and 1st March 2007 in partnership by HMP POELT Centre and by Interp-right Ltd. 13 interpreters attended the training and spoke eleven languages:



• Arabic	• Bengali	• Somali	• Chinese
• Dutch	• French	• Urdu	• Italian
• Japanese	• Portuguese	• Punjabi	

During the course trainees were introduced to the prison service; its main historical developments; its purpose, structure and importance of security.

The pilot course included role play of interpreting situations in a custodial environment based on real scenarios. Overall the four day training involved a focused delivery by HMP NW POELT Trainers and one morning of contextualised interpreter training delivered by Interp-right Ltd and also a guided visit of a prison establishment. On evaluation however, both POELT and Interp-right trainers agreed that role play should be integrated throughout the course for more successful contextualisation, and also that the guided visit to an HMP establishment should take place on the first day of the course. This will allow trainees to contextualise information received and role play scenarios more successfully.

Training was supplement with a comprehensive pack which included relevant information on the Prison Service, the RLN NW's Ten Top Tips for Interpreters and Ten Top Tips for HMP Service on How to deal with Interpreters.

The partnership established in the development of this pilot reinforces the commitment by all partners and sets an excellent example of best practice that would be recognised and promoted.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The development and successful piloting of the proposed Add-on for Interpreting in the Prison Service represents a very important step forward in the true recognition of Public Service Interpreting as a Profession, outside language and educational circles. This recognition has to have the engagement of the various areas of the Public Sector which form part of the client base and who will benefit from a high standard of service.

The success and take-up of this pilot pre-empts its success and take-up, were it to be approved as the Add-on for Interpreting in the Prison Service.

This approval would help secure the continued commitment of the HMP Service NW area and it would stimulate the roll out of the Add-on to other areas in the country with an equal or higher need for fully qualified Interpreters.

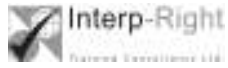
This cross-curricular collaboration will also go a long way to ensure the continuous and embedded awareness of the importance of Interpreting.

The Regional Language Network NW and its partners HMP Service North West Area and Interp-right Ltd would strongly recommend that this piloted module be formally recognised as a DPSI Add-on with appropriate certification and be rolled out nationally.

Syllabus

Outlining the Prison Service	The Development of the Prison Service	
	Principles of the Prison Service	
	Prison Staff hierarchy	Titles Organisational Structure Roles
Prison Life	Categories of Prisoners	
	Prisoner Reception	
	A Typical Prison Day	
Prison Procedures	Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme (EIPS)	
	Offences Against Discipline	Prison Rule 51 (25 offences)
		Laying the Charge (48 hrs)
	Adjudication	Placing a Prisoner on Report
		Loss of Association/Privileges
		Stoppage of Earnings Loss of Remission etc.
Partnerships		
Establishment Structure	Roles of Those Working in the Prison Service	Governor
		Prison Officers
		OSGs (Operational Support Grades)
		Non-operational Staff Within Prison
Prison Officer Entry Level Training (POELT)	Structure of the Training and the Development of Interpersonal Skills	
	Diversity Awareness	Issues Surrounding Diversity

		and Race
	Substance Misuse	
	Public Protection	
	Visits	
	Communicable Diseases	
	Mental Health Awareness	
	Self Harm and Suicide	
	Violence Reduction	
	C & R and the "Use of Force"	
	POELT Course Evaluation	
Introduction to the "3 Elements of Security"	Physical security aids	Handcuffs
		Escort Chains and Other Restraints
		CCTV
		Metal Detectors etc.
	Procedural Security	Body Searching Methods
		Accommodation Fabric Checks
		Procedures for Conducting Searches
		Escorting
		Radio Procedures (Security, Accuracy, Discipline)
		Roll checks
		Locking and Unlocking
		Key Checks
	Dynamic Security	Staff Guidelines
	Security Response Levels to Terrorist Threats	Normal
		Heightened
		Exceptional
	Searches	Rub Down Searches
		Full Searches (also Strip Search)
		Cell Searches
		Vehicle Searches
	Unauthorized Articles	
Incident Situation	(Pre Incident)	
	(Post Incident)	Area Fire
		Assault, Murder
		Cell Fire, Area Fire
		Escape Over Wall
		Exercise Yard
		Fight
		Hostage



		Hostage on the Move
		Passive Demonstration
		Person Hanging
		Prisoner Escape
		Prisoner Missing
		Riot
		Rooftop Protests
		Suicide/Self-harm
		Suspect Package
		Tool Missing
		Weapon Find
	Incident Command Structure	
Prison Visit	Prison Visit Debrief	