

Deaf Enhanced Support Service – 28 June 2021.

Following feedback from patients, carers and primary care providers as part of a patient engagement exercise at the end of 2020, NHS England has been developing plans to improve access to interpreting and translation services across the East of England.

As a result of this feedback, NHSE has developed a pilot for a new service to provide enhanced support to deaf patients. The objective of the pilot is to reduce barriers deaf patients currently face **when booking appointments** with GPs, dentists, opticians and pharmacists, by enabling them to access an interpreter to book their primary care appointment for them.

The pilot aims to go live in mid-July 2021 and will run across the whole of the East of England until March 2022. The service will be available between 8.00 am – 6.30 pm on weekdays and weekends, bank holidays and public holidays. The service is designed to complement existing services and is a pilot to allow for evaluation to inform longer-term commissioning plans.

Interpreting and translation services for primary care have historically been commissioned in a patchwork way by CCGs and NHSE across the region, which has resulted in variations in access. The pilot will be a region-wide service for all deaf patients with a key requirement being regional wide provision, which will help improve health inclusion and ensure equity of access.

Following an Expression of Interest process, DA Languages has been selected to run this pilot. A panel considered a range of criteria, including the ability to provide a regional service.

NHSE will now work with DA Languages to ensure partnership working with local grassroots organisations to ensure that patients are effectively supported to access the service.

Separate to this pilot, work is taking place to commission a consistent translation and interpreting service, for both sensory impaired and non-English speaking patients across the East of England, covering GPs, pharmacies, opticians and dentists. This is for NHS care **when attending appointments**.

If you have further questions or need further clarity, please contact england.qpeast@nhs.net