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## **SignTranslate launch new hospital product**

Today SignTranslate launches its new hospital product at the Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust.

SignHealth, the national healthcare charity for deaf people has been working with the RUH to offer SignTranslate and provide Deaf Awareness training for more than 200 staff.

SignTranslate is a unique web-based service offering deaf patients access to a fully trained online interpreter who can explain treatments, procedures and diagnoses. For out of hours consultations the program also converts more than 500 medical questions into British Sign Language (BSL) video clips for the deaf patient. These questions are also available in 12 foreign languages so will be able to help patients where English is not their first language.

Steve Powell, Chief Executive of SignHealth had this to say:

*“Shortages of interpreters mean long waiting times for BSL users or the prospect of visiting a medical professional without understanding everything that’s said.*

*Communication problems cause misunderstandings, wrong diagnoses and can leave patients unsure of how to use medication. SignTranslate provides instant access to BSL interpreters ensuring that problems such as these do not happen.”*

Consultant respiratory physician, Dr Andrew Alexander has been the driving force in bringing SignTranslate to the RUH. He added:

*“My interest in healthcare for deaf people comes from having a deaf daughter. We communicate through BSL at home and I am aware of the problems deaf people have in accessing healthcare and in understanding consultations with healthcare professionals.*

*Deaf people normally rely on family and friends to interpret at hospital visits but this is often not appropriate when a private issue is being discussed. Also, family members are not usually qualified interpreters and communication in a medical consultation needs to be 100 per cent. Relying on lip reading and writing notes is inadequate.*

*By having SignTranslate at the RUH, we can ensure we provide deaf people and those who don't speak English with vital support."*

The services will be used via COWS (computers on wheels) which can be easily taken to the department where either the sign translating or foreign language assistance is needed at any time night or day.

**-Ends-**

### **Notes to editors**

#### **About SignHealth and SignTranslate**

SignHealth is the healthcare charity for d/Deaf people and is committed to bringing better healthcare and equality of service provision to d/Deaf people in the UK.

SignHealth has developed SignTranslate ([www.signtranslate.com](http://www.signtranslate.com)), a web-based program which can provide almost immediate online interpreting for short notice and same day GP appointments as well as visits to hospitals A&E. The program is currently free of charge for GPs in England.

#### **Meaning of Deaf and deaf**

Written with a lower case d 'deaf' refers to a person who is hard of hearing or cannot hear at all.

Many deaf people whose first language is sign language consider their deafness to be central to their identity, rather than a disability. Termed as Deaf with a capital D, these people are more suitably defined as a minority ethnic group than a type of disabled person. This group is bound together by language, culture and ways of experiencing the world.

#### **For more information please contact**

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