

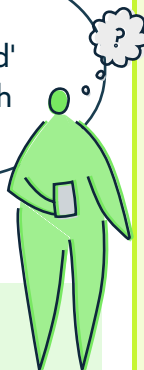
# Translated health information matters

## Identifying people's needs

- Ask users their preferred language and format
- Get to know language, dialect and literacy needs
- Prioritise resources for translation by user needs

up to **1 million**  
people cannot speak  
English well or at all<sup>1</sup>

They have a lower  
proportion of 'good'  
health than English  
speakers<sup>2</sup>



## Producing translated materials

- Start with health literacy friendly materials
- Work with trusted voices in the community
- Ensure material is culturally appropriate
- Think about visual content as well as words
- Make sure information is accurate
- Pilot translations with representative users
- Common terms, like the NHS, might need explaining in translated materials

**Association of Translation Companies (ATC) membership is the mark of quality language services.** View the ATC guide to translation for charities [here](#).

## Translators – the options

### Professional translators

- ✓ Considered the gold standard
- ✓ Adapt to specific scenarios
- ✓ Proactive checking
- ✓ Greater awareness of cultural sensitivities
- ✗ Greater cost

### Informal language support (friends, family, volunteers)

- ✓ Value should not be underestimated
- ✗ Places a burden on those providing
- ✗ Not appropriate in formal healthcare settings

### Language technology (computer-aided translation)

- ✓ Free or low cost option
- ✗ Less likely to be accurate for specialised contexts
- ✗ Less likely to make intuitive connections
- ✗ Many non-European languages are not supported or are less accurate
- ✗ May be issues with clinical quality assurance



## References

1. [www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/english-language-skills/latest](http://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/english-language-skills/latest)
2. [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/articles/detailedanalysisenglishlanguageproficiencyinenglandandwales/2013-08-30](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/articles/detailedanalysisenglishlanguageproficiencyinenglandandwales/2013-08-30)

Further resources: a. PIF member recommendations for translations into Welsh

b. PIF Health Literacy Matters poster c. PIF Co-production Matters poster

Published by the Patient Information Forum Ltd. February 2022.

Review date: February 2024.