

CASE STUDY

# Kent Community NHS Foundation Trust

**LanguageLine**  
Solutions®



# Providing safe and effective interpreting services in healthcare

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) in the UK provides NHS care for the local community in a number of settings including; people's own homes, nursing homes, health clinics, community hospitals, minor injury units, and in mobile units. They are one of the largest NHS community health providers in England, serving a population of approximately two million and employing more than 4,500 staff including doctors, community nurses, physiotherapists, dietitians and many other healthcare professionals.

The UK has some demographically diverse areas, and Kent is no exception. Over the last few years a high number of immigrants, especially from Eastern Europe, have settled in the area and it's essential that local communities are able to access the full range of NHS services, no matter their language. KCHFT also provides a service in London, Essex, East Sussex, and Medway. In order to achieve this, LanguageLine Solutions® provides a quality interpreting service to KCHFT.

## The Healthcare Provider

Charlotte Wood has worked for the NHS for ten years and is currently an Engagement Manager with KCHFT, working with staff, patients, and external NHS and voluntary organizations to help improve access to health services. Currently, she is responsible for the interpreting contract for KCHFT.

According to Charlotte, "Interpreting is so important in healthcare because as a trust, we need to ensure that all patients are treated equally and to do that we need to meet their specific communication requirements."

"Interpreters are very important as they allow us to be confident that our patients are making informed decisions regarding their healthcare and well-being.

It's vital that all our staff understand how to access an interpreter, whether it's face-to-face or via telephone. It's also important that staff understand what services can be provided and what contingencies are in place if a face-to-face interpreter cannot be sourced. In healthcare situations, it's important to know the difference between these two different forms of interpreting and which is the most appropriate given the circumstances. To achieve this, both LanguageLine Solutions and the trust have developed guidance which is available on the trust's intranet."

## The Interpreter

Hana Hill is a Czech and Slovak speaking interpreter currently living in Dover. Hana is registered as an interpreter with LanguageLine Solutions, and undertakes a significant number of interpreting assignments for KCHFT.

After relocating from the Czech Republic, Hana found it quite a challenge to settle in the UK at first, so she went to work at a cat sanctuary which enabled her to improve her English and obtain references.

She then discovered that there was a significant requirement for Czech and Slovak interpreters in the Kent area and undertook an Advanced English Proficiency Course, gained a Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI), and registered with LanguageLine Solutions as an interpreter.

After undertaking the role of an interpreter for eleven years, Hana is now passionate about it and very much champions interpreting best practice. Hana reiterates how “Interpreting is much more than a job as you need to have a deep insight and understanding into the culture of the people you are interpreting for.”

*“I enjoy interpreting in a healthcare environment as it’s both so challenging and very rewarding at the same time. Over time, you gain so much knowledge and experience not only in healthcare, but socially and culturally, which you are then able to use to really help patients and healthcare professionals.*

*I wanted to put my own experience of struggling to adapt to a different way of life in the UK to good use. Both the way in which healthcare is delivered in the UK, along with the timescales, is very different in comparison to the Czech Republic and Slovakia.*

*Due to this, the role of an interpreter is vital during medical consultations. It is very important for people to be able to clearly understand what is being said and what is happening during consultations, investigations and treatment. If medical consultations and discussions are not interpreted appropriately, the consequences and outcomes could be fatal.*

*Interpreters are impartial, have a high level of English, and will clearly interpret what is said on behalf of both parties. Family members, which have been used in the past, are not suitable as they could communicate their opinions, albeit with good intention; however, they are not always appropriate. If interpreters are not used appropriately and when necessary, many appointments could be wasted, and this would not just have an impact on the organization’s time, but also its finances.”*

## The Language Services Provider

It’s important that organizations delivering critical services such as healthcare, are confident that their patients can understand their condition and diagnosis in order to make informed decisions regarding any necessary investigations and/or treatment. For those who speak limited or no English, this can only be achieved with the help of qualified, experienced, and secure interpreters.

At LanguageLine Solutions, many face-to-face interpreters hold a Community Interpreting Certificate or Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) which are nationally recognized interpreting qualifications; for languages where a DPSI is not available, interpreters must provide proof of other appropriate qualifications and experience. There are different levels of security checks available, however the checks required of interpreters varies, dependent on which type of organizations interpreters are going to be assigned. At LanguageLine, Enhanced Disclosure and Security Barring (eDBS) is the very minimum security check acceptable to be a provider of services.

LanguageLine Solutions works closely with both their interpreter base and public sector customers on initiatives to improve the overall process, such as guidance on face-to-face vs. telephone interpreting, and best practice seminars.

# Let's Talk Solutions

Discover the many additional ways LanguageLine can help turn your biggest language challenges into growth opportunities with industry-leading services.

**1-800-752-6096 / [customerservice@language.com](mailto:customerservice@language.com) / [LanguageLine.com](https://www.LanguageLine.com)**