**The Organisation and Provision of British Sign Language/English Interpreters in England, Scotland and Wales, 2002**

There was a market review conducted in 2002. As the document is 177 pages, excluding appendices, I have created a summary focusing on project aims, methodology, and conclusions. (This summary was written for me, to support me in working with the Market Review. I am happy to share as may be of interest.)

**Project aims:**

The research project was commissioned by the former Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) in May 1999, for the Inter-Departmental Group on Disability, following the Social Services Inspectorate’s report “A Service on the Edge” (Department of Health, 1997).

The overall aims were to map current BSL/English interpreter provision, obtain information on the advantages and disadvantages of the current systems of provision, explore the experiences of interested parties, and make recommendations. Specifically:

* Describe the current organisation of BSL/English interpreters and interpreting agencies in England, Scotland and Wales.
* Map the locations of registered qualified and trainee interpreters and interpreting agencies in each of these countries.
* Obtain information on the settings in which BSL/English interpreters are used.
* Explore the experiences of users of BSL/English interpreters, BSL/English  interpreters and agencies engaged in the provision of interpreting services.
* Provide recommendations on how the current organisation of BSL/English interpreters could be improved and how current difficulties could be addressed.

**Methodology:** A mixture of desk based research, questionnaires, interviews, public meetings.Interviews and meetings held in Scotland, the North West of England, the English West Midlands, Wales, London.

**Agencies (31 agencies):**

* Copies of agencies’ recent annual reports.
* Details about the interpreters they employed, and recent types, areas and levels of activity.
* Copies of information they provided to service users.
* Detailed returns of completed and unmet bookings for a two-week period.
* Structured and tape recorded interviews (26 - including those who hadn't replied to previous information requests).

**Interpreters (372 interpreters) and organisations:**

* Postal questionnaire distributed to all CACDP & SASLI registered qualified and trainee interpreters (372 questionnaires / 223 usable replies).
* Structured and tape-recorded interviews (14 interpreters).
* Public meeting in London to which all interpreters working in London were invited (5 attended).
* Semi-structured and tape-recorded interviews with officials of national organisations of BSL/English interpreters in Britain.

**Deaf People & organisations:**

* Structured and video-recorded interviews conducted in BSL with Deaf users of interpreting services (30 people).
* Public meetings with Deaf people on their experiences of obtaining and using interpreters and their views on how interpreting services could be improved (81 Deaf people attended)
* Semi-structured and tape-recorded interviews with officials of national D/deaf organisations.

**Organisational users of interpreting services:**

* Questionnaire circulated to organisations using the services of BSL/English interpreters (168 questionnaires / 84 responded in time).
* Telephone interviews with organisations employing BSL/English interpreters and related services to illustrate aspects of good practice (3).

**Desk based research:**

* Consulted and analysed a range of information on the provision of interpreting services in Britain.

**Conclusions:** (From overall conclusions, section 7).

7.4 “There are difficulties in measuring the demand for interpreting services. This is because of variations in the ways in which requests for services were recorded, and potential double counting if more than one agency operating in an area was unable to meet the request for an interpreter.”

7.5 “The researchers identified two distinct groups of Deaf users of interpreting services: a) Deaf people employed in professional occupations who are frequent users of such services and b) the majority of Deaf people, who are not employed in professional positions, who are occasional users.”

7.8 Conclusion. “In conclusion, the research showed that there was a shortage of BSL/English interpreters in England, Scotland and Wales.”

The researchers believe that the knowledge of this shortage influenced Deaf people’s use of the existing interpreting services: when, how often and under what circumstances an interpreter was used.

The limited number of professional interpreters, the geographical variation in provision and the varying standards of interpreting skills held, as well as organisational problems in the provision of interpreting services, provides Deaf people with limited access to services and organisations.”

**Some (pretty random) issues:**

1. Despite the rigour of the Durham research, unmet demand was not possible to quantify.
2. An additional difficulty in assessing unmet demand was ‘self-denial’, i.e. that Deaf people said that they “did not bother or did not consider it worthwhile to seek the services of an interpreter as they were certain none would be available.” (5.2.5.4)
3. Geographical variation was significant.
4. The review found significant differences between the experiences of professional Deaf users of interpreting services, and other Deaf people.