

Communities Minister Malcolm Chisholm launches new translation and interpreting logo

Scotland takes a lead to develop “logo” to promote equal access and overcome language barriers

Monday 25th April: Today, a non-profit translation and interpreting initiative to benefit Scotland's minority communities is launched by Communities Minister Malcolm Chisholm. The "Happy to Translate" Logo Initiative is designed to improve the quality of life of people in Scotland who speak or read little of no English by helping them overcome communication barriers they face when trying to access information and services.

The initiative was born out of the need to recognise the significant increase of the number of languages spoken in Scotland, and to improve overall customer service to meet the language needs of black and minority ethnic (BME) communities.

The initiative is being developed and managed by the joint equalities programme of Trust, Hanover (Scotland) and Bield Housing Associations. The objective is to develop and pilot the logo and its accompanying operational standards, guidance, procedures and monitoring and evaluation practices. Member organisations will display the official Logo on their literature and in reception areas to indicate they will provide language assistance in the form of confidential translation and interpretation services using the initiative's best practice guidelines tool-kit.

Says Communities Minister Malcolm Chisholm, "In order to build a Scotland that is fair and just we must ensure that everyone has equal access to our public services, information and resources. For this reason I am delighted to be supporting this new translation and interpreting logo which aims to break down the barriers faced by those who experience difficulty communicating in English. I hope that this initiative will be successful in addressing some of the inequalities created by communication difficulties between people living in Scotland."

The design of the "Happy to Translate" Logo was the result of extensive consultation in 2004 in eight languages with BME communities, support staff and translation and interpreting professionals throughout Scotland. Trust, Hanover (Scotland) and Bield Housing Associations along with The City of Edinburgh Council, Lothian and Borders Police, The Moray Council, and NHS Lothian are the first organisations to commit to piloting the Logo commencing in 2005. A representative from each organisation will be on hand to participate in a signing ceremony to signify their organisation's commitment to the initiative as a way to improve service for all communities they service.

Beginning in 2006, other organisations will be encouraged to apply for membership to use the "Happy to Translate" Logo. It is hoped that over time, the Logo will be widely used by public and private organisation in Scotland to promote a multi-cultural society. Non-English speakers will benefit over time from improved access to information and services and thus enhanced social inclusion.

The "Happy to Translate" Logo Initiative is supported by £132,000 in funding from the Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland.

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