

More Than Interpreting



CHAIR'S MESSAGE



AIDAN PETTITT
SIS Chair

CHAIR'S REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE TRUSTEE MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

When I became Chair of SIS's Management Committee 12 months ago, SIS faced another challenging year as it continued to recover from the COVID pandemic and adapt to the changing patterns of migration to the UK. Local data shows estimated figures of one in five of Brighton & Hove's residents, and one in ten in East and West Sussex, were born outside the UK. In Brighton & Hove, 6.4% of all households have at least one adult who does not speak English as their main language, in East Sussex English is not the main language for 20,000 residents and SIS interpreted in 39 different community languages in West Sussex alone.

Twelve months on, we can report huge successes as evidenced by another tremendous Customer Service Excellence (CSE) award (described on page 4 of this Report), a service recovery that has taken us very close to 100% of pre-pandemic levels, a return to face to face interpreting, continued success with tenders and yet more community and partnership initiatives.

The Management Committee is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion - principles that are core to SIS's values – so was particularly pleased to see the CSE Assessment make significant note of SIS's provision to migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum - including from the tragedy of war. Last year, the number of asylum seekers in Sussex (often accommodated by the Home Office in sub-standard buildings and lacking adequate safeguarding and support) increased, yet again, and

we are proud SIS was able to assist even more vulnerable and isolated people overcome the barriers to full participation in our communities.

Page 6 of this Report provides detail on this year's 28% increase in SIS's community interpreting sessions; page 10 describes the very significant increase in referrals to, and take up for, language support work.

We agreed with the CSE Assessor's recognition of improvements in the ways in which the needs of the people we serve are met - including through the Digital Accessibility Survey, Social Prescribing for Newcomers Initiative, Community Voices Group and SIS's excellent day-to-day provision of Community Interpreting services.

As Trustees we are required to ensure SIS remains financially solvent and compliant, has a balanced budget and adequate reserves. As the figures on page 11 of this report show, SIS increased its reserves in 2022/23 by 29% over the previous year enabling SIS to invest in the human and cyber resources needed to continue to improve our services. SIS has improved its systems including around Cyber-Essentials (page 5) and increased its staff capacity by nearly one third (page 3).

Trustees were, and are, fully aware of the economic circumstances that impact on us all and of the determination of SIS staff to meet the needs of our communities. We were very pleased to set a budget for 2023/24 that recognises the impact of inflation and fully invests in SIS's dedicated, professional, and hardworking staff and Linguists.

They were responsible for the remarkable achievements over the last 12 months; achievements that do so much to change, for the better, the lives of the people we serve.



DIRECTORS' REPORT

April 2022 – March 2023



SHAHREEN SHEBLI
SIS Director

CHALLENGE

We experienced a 'perfect storm' with cost-of-living pressures, NHS strikes, demographic change, and a digital divide exacerbating health and social inequality. The impact of poverty, debt and money worries was very visible. We translated benefit and debt advice information and provided free interpreters at advice sessions considering utility bills, benefit entitlement, support grants and access to food banks.

"I was lost with all the appointments for my health, with the council, settlement status, utility bills, food banks and isolation. The Social Prescriber helped me navigate the otherwise impossible system."

Spanish Speaking Service User

NHS dentist shortages meant more people trying to access emergency appointments. We shared case studies with NHS commissioners to show the barriers and negative impact especially for refugees and asylum seekers.

Rising interpreting demand, complex support needs, funding pressures, capacity challenges, and market competition, required difficult choices and decisions.

RESILIENCE

We have adapted to challenges and thrived.

We reviewed risk, financial controls, and business continuity plans. We used our reserves responsibly, maximised income and managed workforce requirements. Income increased by 28% and exceeded £1.25m.

The COVID pandemic and inflationary pressures affected staff morale. We listened and responded, increasing staffing capacity, reinstating wellbeing and professional development budgets, organising team bonding events, offering flexible and hybrid working and identifying internal promotion opportunities. All of this helped improve job satisfaction and staff wellbeing.

"Thank you for your support and for agreeing to me reducing my working hours. I know it will make a huge difference to my work/life balance."

SIS Staff member

RECOVERY

We won two important competitive tenders and will provide face-to-face community interpreting, telephone and video interpreting for at least 3 years.¹ This success meant we could increase sessional and travel payment rates for our Linguists.

We saw a welcome return to in person health and social care appointments, which are preferred by Service Users. 71% of all interpreting was delivered with an interpreter in the room.

By the end of the year, we had fully recovered to our pre-pandemic interpreting activity level. We supported 5053 Service Users - 30% more than last year.

Interpreting activity grew in East Sussex by 61%. Mental health interpreting in Eastbourne and Hellingly grew by 107% and 73% respectively – reflecting the national crisis. We experienced a 9% increase in emergency bookings with 66% conducted remotely.

"During the call, their interpreting was smooth, clear, and concise. They came across as empathic and cared about the client's experience of the call."

Alexi Filsell, Health in Mind, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

QUALITY AND ACCESS

We maintained quality, responsiveness, and excellence and received an impressive 12 Compliance Plus in our Customer Service Excellence Quality Mark, validated through customer feedback.²

26% of all non-emergency bookings gave less than or just 3 days' notice. We met 93% of these bookings – an amazing testimony to our Co-ordination Team and our Linguists.

We published stories on our website that provided insight into the technicalities, boundaries and nuances of the Linguists' role, their expert knowledge, personal attributes and behaviour.³

"The standard of her interpreting has been extremely high, often translating very complex ideas and emotive content without hesitation. She has been highly professional, empathic, and sensitive in her approach, adjusting to a therapeutic context with ease."

Fiona Rogers, Chestnut Tree House Childrens' Hospice

DIRECTORS' REPORT

April 2022 – March 2023



SHAHREEN SHEBLI
SIS Director

SIS Digital and IT interventions e.g. SMS messaging, QR codes, a Virtual Switchboard and Service User self-referral cards supported ease of access, quick response times and internal efficiency. Obtaining the externally validated Cyber Essentials Quality Mark provided confidence around our IT security.

"I have had such positive experiences that I have encouraged my team to use SIS as a first point of call. The online booking form is really straight forward and quick to use."

Amy Bailey, Senior Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner, Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust

IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

41 Voluntary Community & Social Enterprise organisations accessed SIS this year.

"It is extremely helpful to have interpreters. We are able to link with the right services and put support in place to improve their mental health and wellbeing which has given the client hope and the chance to connect to his local community."

Olivia Kain, Recovery Worker, Brighton Housing Trust Sussex

We tackled health inequality. This is showcased in the achievements of our Projects (page 8). We are much more than an interpreting service.

We provided consultancy to help embed robust equality, diversity, and inclusion practice. We fostered connections and promoted safety. We provided data, testimony of lived experience and insight to amplify Service User voices and drive action.

We strengthened access, early intervention and promoted choice and control, producing translated videos of how we can help.

We improved patient pathways through collaboration and co-production and developed community assets, enabling wider reach for local diverse communities and welcomed refugees and asylum seekers.

Our social value is substantial – for example we paid £577K in fees to Linguists.

MORE THAN AN INTERPRETING SERVICE

Last year a SIS Trustee commented **"Humanity knows no borders."**

We work with empathy, kindness, and compassion and preserve dignity.

Our achievements are underpinned by inclusivity.

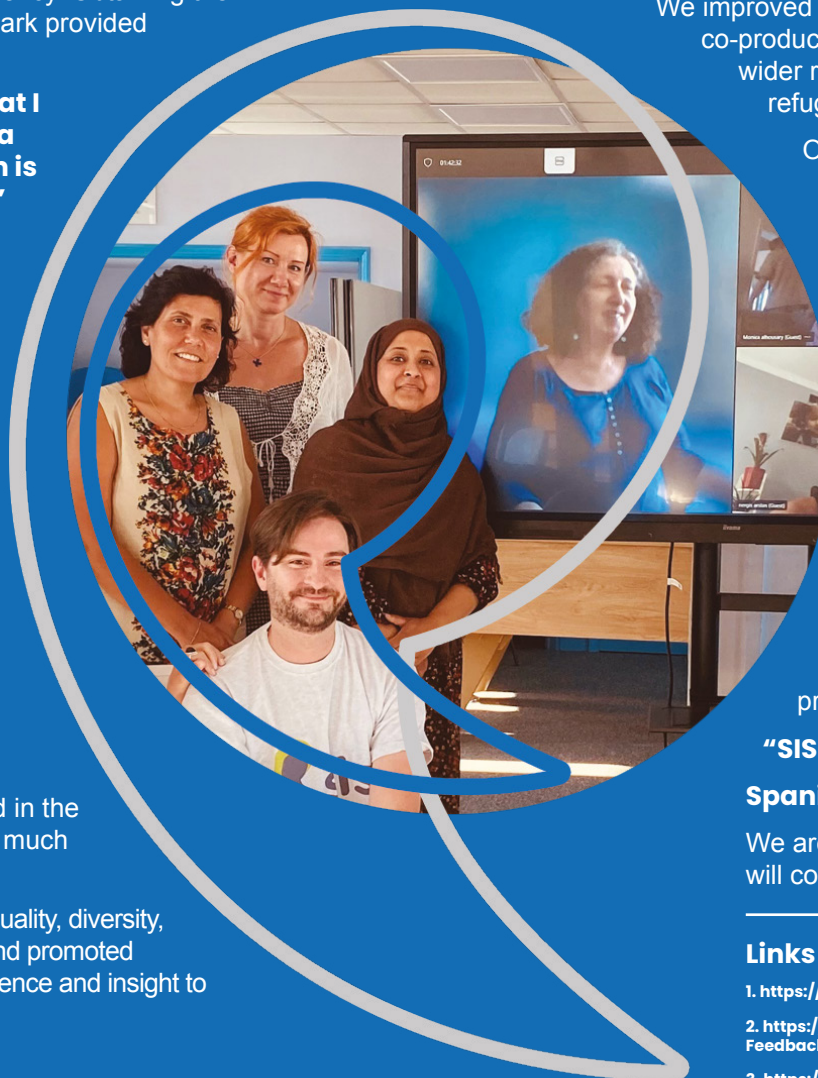
We demonstrate **"where there is a will there is a way"** and motivate others to apply similarly.

Service Users see us as more than a trusted provider of interpreting services.

"SIS has become a family to me"

Spanish Speaking Service User

We are humbled and gratified by such sentiment and will continue to do our best.



Links

- [1. https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/news/tender-success](https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/news/tender-success)
- [2. https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Positive-Feedback-2022-23.pdf](https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Positive-Feedback-2022-23.pdf)
- [3. https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/sis-stories](https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/sis-stories)

ACCREDITATIONS



ARRAN EVANS
SIS Director



MATT EVENDEN
Digital Manager

WHAT COMES AFTER REMARKABLE?

Last year our independent assessor for Customer Service Excellence spoke of our **“remarkable achievement”** in gaining 11 areas of Compliance Plus.

This year we have 12, retaining 10 and adding 2:

- An in-depth understanding of the characteristics of current and potential customer groups based on recent and reliable information.
- Customer facing staff insights, and experiences are incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning.

Compliance Plus is not automatic. Significant detailed evidence must be provided and tested.

We worked with multiple challenges; NHS appointment backlogs, NHS strikes, increased staff sickness, dispersal of more asylum seekers to unsuitable accommodation, displacement of people from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Sudan and other countries, demographic shifts, cost of living crisis, mental health crisis, a competitive re-tender, increasing interpreting need, a wider service offer and re-balancing hybrid working.

We are deeply proud of our collective achievement in delivering language services at the heart of our communities.

Congratulations to everyone involved in SIS who works so hard to deliver our services, Linguists, Co-ordinators, Trustees, Managers, Administrators, Project Workers, Digital Team, and Directors.

Having emerged from the pandemic stronger, better, and fairer we are now investing to grow!¹

SIS IS CYBER-ESSENTIALS ACCREDITED

SIS works closely with many organisations and stores sensitive data on our computer systems, and as such we take our cyber-security seriously. Cyber security is how individuals and organisations reduce the risk of cyber-attack. Cyber security’s core function is to protect the devices we all use (smartphones, laptops, tablets, and computers), and the services we access – both online and at work – from theft or damage.

SIS is accredited with Cyber-Essentials², a government-backed, industry-supported scheme to help organisations protect themselves against common online threats.

The process involves rigorous checks on our computer systems, hardware, software, policies and processes to ensure they are compliant with the latest National Cyber Security Centre guidelines.

This year, as well as scrutiny of our office-based systems, the assessment has looked at hybrid working (a mix of working from an office and from home) to ensure that any connection to our business data is secure.

This is an annual procedure that the Digital Team will undertake to ensure that we have reduced the risk to our data and systems by cyber-attacks.



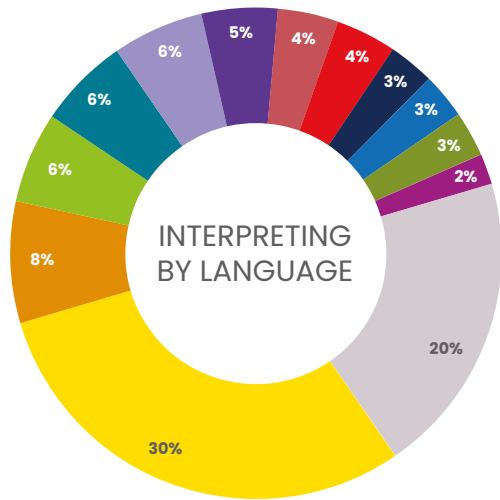
Links

1. <https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/news/what-comes-after-remarkable>

2. <https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/news/sis-is-cyber-essentials-accredited>

COMMUNITY INTERPRETING

APRIL 2022- MARCH 2023

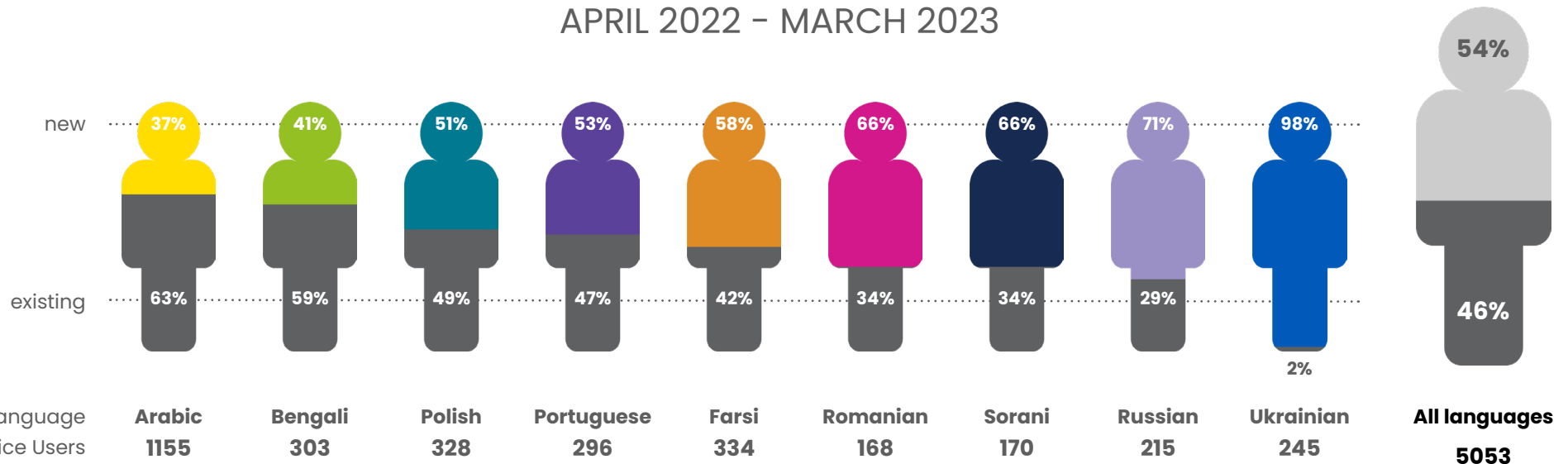


LANGUAGE	SESSIONS	
	2022/23	2021/22
Arabic	5460	4445
Farsi	1525	874
Bengali	1181	982
Polish	1073	1105
Russian	1060	442
Portuguese	963	937
Spanish	724	505
Cantonese	663	438
Sorani	595	422
Turkish	490	478
Italian	453	571
Mandarin	446	348
All Other	3674	2706
TOTAL	18307	14253



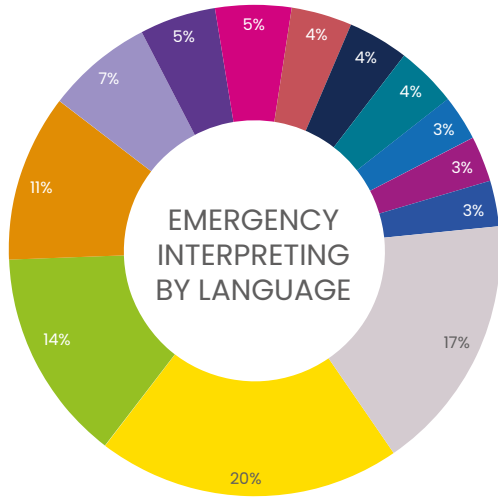
NEW VS EXISTING SERVICE USERS

APRIL 2022 - MARCH 2023



EMERGENCY INTERPRETING

APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

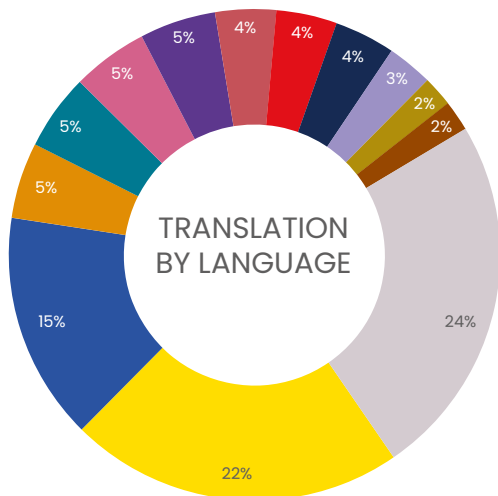


LANGUAGE	SESSIONS
Arabic	64
Bengali	46
Farsi	36
Russian	21
Portuguese	17
Romanian	16
Spanish	12
Sorani	11
Polish	11
Turkish	9
Mandarin	8
Ukrainian	8
All Other	56
TOTAL	315

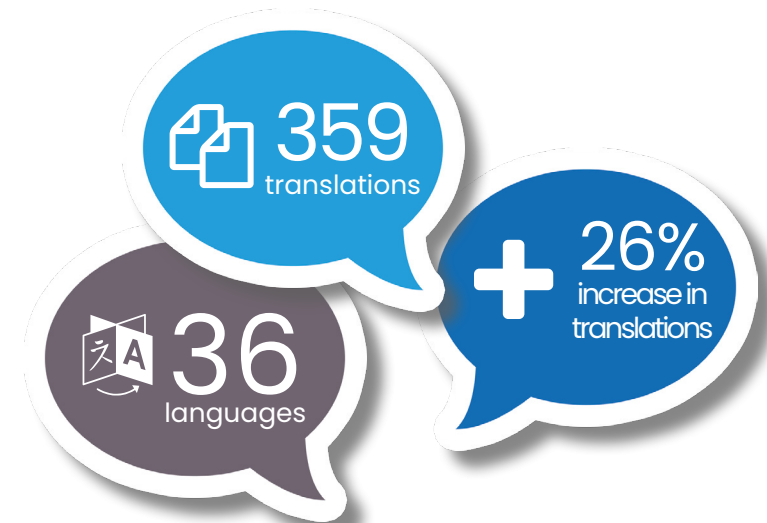


COMMUNITY TRANSLATION

APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023



LANGUAGE	WORDS
Arabic	54060
Ukrainian	38440
Farsi	12908
Polish	12859
Hungarian	12569
Portuguese	12208
Spanish	10927
Cantonese	10550
Sorani	8468
Russian	8177
Dari	6103
Urdu	5154
All Other	59852
TOTAL	252275





VIKKI GIMSON
Quality Assurance
Manager

PROJECTS UPDATE

It has been 10 years since our first Service User Day which became the catalyst for SIS to deliver **“More than Interpreting”**. The Service Users that attended expressed needs which went beyond the boundaries of impartial Community Interpreting.

In the intervening period, by partnering with other expert local organisations, and using culturally informed, innovative approaches, we have developed, piloted, progressed and strengthened a suite of joined-up services, to meet those needs. We operate a “no wrong door” referral system to smooth the pathways to support.

Funding uncertainties have, at times, made it challenging to provide continuity of service delivery and we are reliant on a team of Volunteer Linguists¹ to provide the foundation for these additional services. We are extremely grateful for their dedication and continued support, giving their time and expertise for free, particularly in the context of the cost of living crisis.

Service Users asked for **“Additional Help and Support”**; we provide Social Prescribing and Advocacy.

SIS provides tiered support depending on need; Volunteers triage referrals and deliver immediate support, Bilingual Link Workers and Advocates provide intensive, targeted casework.

Via presentations to groups of NHS professionals, we raised the profile of specialist Social Prescribing, stressing the importance of a shared identity and common lived experience between Service User and caseworker to engender understanding and rapport building, creating a safe space to discuss issues and challenges.

Uptake has increased by an average 35% each year; from 125 referrals in 2017/18 to 546 referrals in 2022/23.

The presenting issues vary widely but casework has always needed to focus on the basic security issues of housing, benefits/debt and access to health/social care services.

Our wealth of experience enabled us to mobilise quickly in April 2022 to support the Homes for Ukraine guests with their integration needs.²

“I’m over the moon with the outcome [improved economic wellbeing]. If not for you I would never know about this and I would be sitting at home unable to do anything, relying on my grand-daughter and children to support me financially.”

Ukrainian Speaking Service User

Service Users asked for **“Better Information”**; we provide Health Promotion.

The SIS website underpins all our Health Promotion work. We host specific website pages in 23 languages,³ six of which were added in the past year to reflect changing demographics.

The pages are designed to optimise customer experience. QR codes, promoted on our translated referral cards⁴ help Service Users navigate to the pages where we have uploaded over 600 translated resources organised by category.

“We were impressed with how easy it was to navigate the SIS website. It’s definitely a simpler and less time-consuming way to communicate with SIS, request services and access the resources.”

Portuguese Speaking Service User





VIKKI GIMSON
Quality Assurance
Manager

PROJECTS UPDATE

We distribute this information further using a range of tools; email, social media and SMS alerts. We are able to reach up to 5000 Service Users.

We have created videos in 11 community languages to explain people’s rights to interpreting and how they can self-refer. These have been viewed over 1500 times on our YouTube channel.⁵

“The SIS video explaining the service was very clear. It’s good to tell everyone it’s free and explain why it’s important to use professional interpreters not family members and friends.”

Italian Speaking Service User

Service Users asked for **“A Voice in Public Services”**; we provide Community Research and Community Engagement.

SIS has trained Linguists in Community Research to support our Services Users to be involved in public service consultations and participatory research. Their work fosters integration by inclusion, enabling Service Users to talk about their experiences and empowers them to make suggestions and recommendations.

Service Users can contribute to routine engagement initiatives (so feedback is received at a time when services are being reviewed and developed) e.g. Health Visitor Service and also highlight what is most important to them, investigating issues identified at a grassroots level e.g. Digital Literacy and Inclusion Survey.⁶

Service Users asked for **“Additional Social Interaction”**; we provide Befriending.

Migrants are especially vulnerable to loneliness and isolation. Our telephone befriending service matches people with a shared culture and language, to create friendships through a weekly phone call. The self-esteem and confidence built through these interactions is invaluable.

“We stopped having calls because the Service User gradually did not need befriending calls anymore. She started to make new friends and connections.”

Polish Bilingual Telephone Befriending Volunteer

Matches have had the option to meet face to face this year if both parties are amenable. A small group of Farsi Speaking Service Users attended the Together Co seasonal celebration.

We have received wonderful feedback from both Volunteer Befrienders and Service Users about the wellbeing benefits of the scheme.

“I would like to thank you for this project, it is great. It came at the right time for me. I was very depressed and it really helped me with my mood.”

Scheme member

THE FUTURE

We are keen to secure the longer-term future of all our services. We want to continue to offer an integrated pathway for people to access health and social care services.

NHS Sussex is working on several transformation plans. We are working with them to try to raise the voice and needs of our Service Users. To ensure their investment in what is proven to work to reduce health inequalities.

Links

1. <https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/news/thank-you-to-all-our-volunteers>
2. <https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/news/report-on-the-first-year-of-the-ukrainian-support-service>
3. <https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/service-users>
4. <https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/languagecards>
5. <https://www.youtube.com/@sussexinterpretingservices/videos>
6. <https://sussexinterpreting.org.uk/news/digital-inclusion-and-literacy-survey-of-sis-service-users>

SIS Projects Team works in formal partnerships with



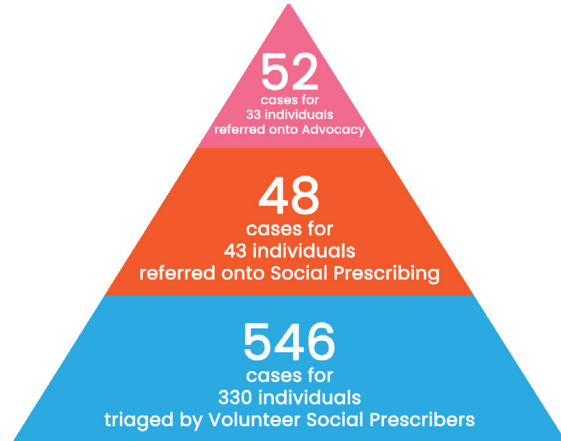
With thanks for SIS Projects Funding to



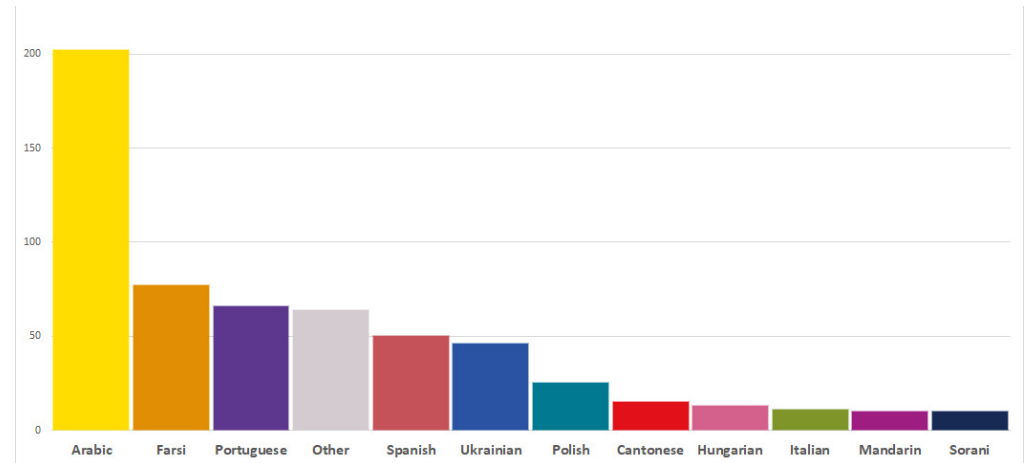
PROJECTS

APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

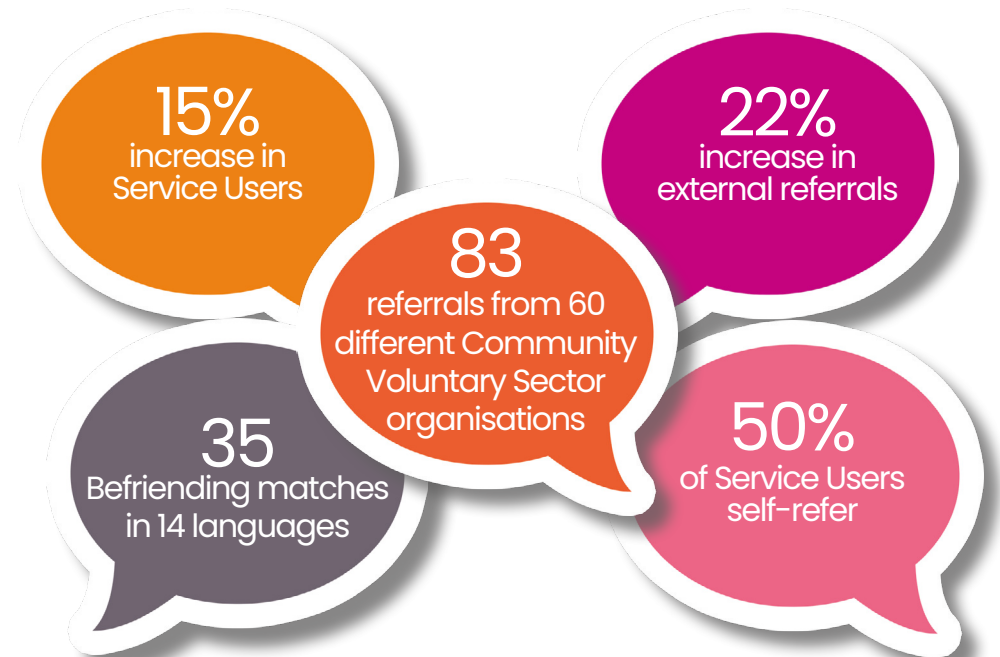
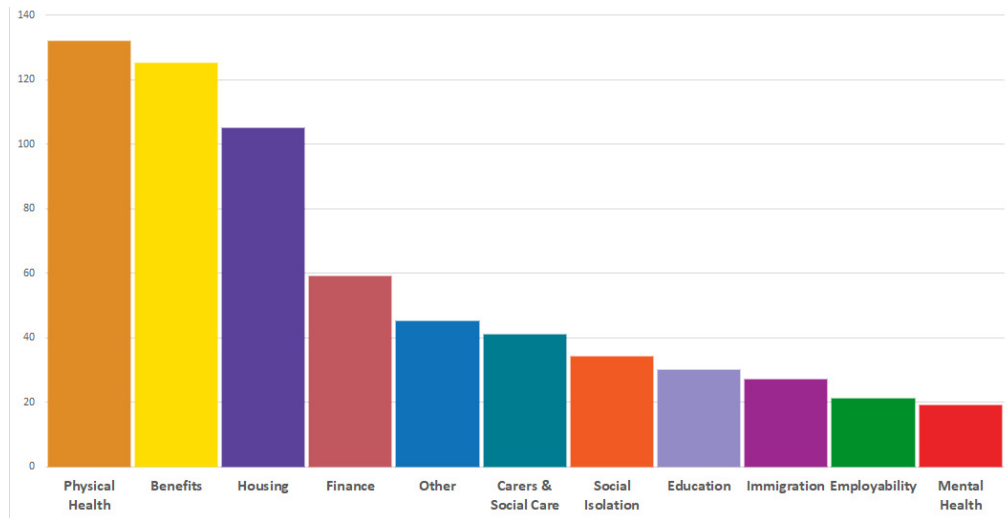
NUMBER OF SERVICE USERS SUPPORTED



LANGUAGE UPTAKE FOR SUPPORT WORK



SUPPORT ISSUES WE HELPED WITH





KEITH BRAID
Finance Officer

FINANCE REPORT

April 2022 – March 2023

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

(INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

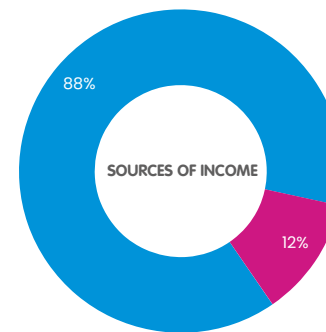
	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM				
Donations and legacies	1,294,861		1,294,861	997,107
Other trading activities	143		143	473
Investment income	328		328	4
Other income	-		-	10,670
TOTAL	1,295,332		1,295,332	1,008,254
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	1,202,177		1,202,177	968,700
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	93,155		93,155	39,554
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds brought forward	317,833		317,833	278,279
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	410,988		410,988	317,833

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

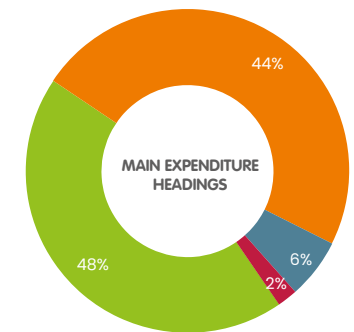
	2023 £		2022 £	
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Assets		1,270		0
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	423,485		161,482	
Cash at bank	192,072		317,066	
	<u>615,557</u>		<u>478,548</u>	
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	<u>(205,839)</u>		<u>(160,715)</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		409,718		317,833
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		410,988		317,833
NET ASSETS				
FUNDS		410,988		317,833
Unrestricted funds		410,988		317,833
TOTAL FUNDS		410,988		317,833

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime. Our audit carried out by: Chariot House Ltd, Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors, 44 Grand Parade, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 9QA

- Last financial year (2022/23) saw yet another large increase in turnover of 28% compared to the previous year (2021/22). This was the result of both further increases in the number of sessions as the lockdowns receded into the past, and also an increase in income per session as a result of new pricing.
- There was also a corresponding rise in our expenditure which was some 24% higher than the previous year, largely due to the increased levels of work undertaken and an increase in rates paid to our Self-Employed Sessional Linguists.
- The result of all this was a net surplus of £93,155 (compared to a surplus of £39,544 the previous year). This represents an increase in net income of some £53,611. As a result it looks like the organisation has finally emerged from the pandemic and is starting to breathe again.
- During the current year (2023/24) we aim to at least break even, but we have been affected by various strikes and inflation is still high, so there may yet be unforeseen forces at play which upset our financial plans. Overall though, things look more optimistic than in the recent past. Maybe we are once again "At the still point of the turning world" (T S Eliot: 'Burnt Norton').
- An audit has been carried out by our auditors, Chariot House Ltd. A copy of the full report is available from our office.



contract fees 88%
project grants 12%



interpreting fees 48%
staffing costs 44%
administration 6%
premises costs 2%

STAFF DIRECTORY



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Your co-operation is appreciated. All reasonable requests will be granted.