

ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP on MODERN LANGUAGES



Chair: Dame Nia Griffith MP (Lab); Co-Chair: Baroness Coussins (CB);
Vice-Chairs: Tonia Antoniazzi MP (Lab); Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury (Con).

NHS Constitution 10 Year Review
39 Victoria Street
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All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages to the NHS Constitution 10 Year Review

Background

The purpose of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Modern Languages is to explore the benefits of learning and using languages throughout the UK and to provide a parliamentary forum for information exchange and consultation on languages and linguists; and to encourage and support policies and action improving the take-up of languages in schools, further and higher education, in the workplace and in the community. The Chair of the APPG on Modern Languages is Dame Nia Griffith MP (Labour), the Co-Chair is Baroness Coussins (Crossbench) and the Vice Chairs are Tonia Antoniazzi MP (Labour) and Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury (Conservative).

The APPG on Modern Language makes the following recommendations to the 10 Year Review (NB a version of this text was submitted via the online consultation on 24 May):

1. The NHS Constitution should enshrine the right to be able to understand and to be understood when English is not the first language to assist in their treatment and care.
2. The NHS Constitution should do so by adopting the same or equivalent language to the proposed government amendment to the wording of the Victims Code i.e. specifying that language services should include access to professional and qualified public service interpreters. (Reference: Baroness Coussins and Justice Minister Lord Bellamy, Victims and Prisoners Bill 16 April 2024: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2024-04-16/debates/5047DA2C-E4B3-422A-B9B9-114A936DF1DA/VictimsAndPrisonersBill>).
3. This can be added to existing provisions in the NHS Constitution, for example in the section about 'Informed Choice' (under Patients and the public: your rights and the NHS pledges to you):
 - Inform you about the healthcare services available to you, locally and nationally.
 - Offer you easily accessible, reliable and relevant information in a form you can understand, and support to use it. This will enable you to participate fully in your own healthcare decisions and to support you in making choices. This will include information on the range and quality of clinical services where there is robust and accurate information available.
4. The APPG on Modern Languages can provide evidence of the impact of failings in communication in healthcare settings and public health.
5. The APPG on Modern Languages would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss with Ministers and DHSC officials how these rights – or relevant alternatives or equivalents - could be included in the revisions and enhancements to the NHS Constitution - following the reconstitution of the APPG after the next parliament is in place.

Baroness COUSSINS
Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages