



**DIVERSITY
VOICE**



Bringing Communities Together



What We Do



Diversity Voice is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) committed to providing quality support to the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities who live or work in South West of England.



We work with children, families, and the wider community to promote integration and social cohesion as well as broad cultural awareness of diversity. We also provide a translation and interpreting service. Based in Bridgwater, Somerset, we offer advice, welfare support, education, training and English classes and help support social, cultural and community activities.



WHAT WE DO



Diversity Voice works in partnership with Councils, Police Authorities, Schools, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Trade Union Congress, the Voluntary Sector and others. Our funding is from grants, donations, and local government contracts and, as a registered charity, we are a non-profit organisation, which means that any additional income over expenditure is ploughed back into our community services. We rely on the generosity of supporters like you either to fundraise or to make a donation. If you would like to make a one-off donation please contact us (see back for contact details).



All of our projects are dependent on funding, so we really appreciate your generosity.

Linkworker Service

Delivered for more than 9 years. This service is funded by Somerset County Council (SCC) with contributions made by participating schools.

We are able to support all services run by SCC for children and young people. With our long experience of working with schools and parents we are able to help them support their children's education. We also support Somerset Children's Social Care through translation, interpreting and training services.



LINKWORKER SERVICE

Our Aims are:

- to facilitate communication between schools and immigrant children and families
- to help children and young people moving from abroad to quickly settle into their new school environment, so that they can achieve their full potential.

Our Services include:

- translating school documents and forms
- providing face to face interpreting (e.g. at parents' evenings or to address concerns about progress, attendance or behaviour)
- supporting the completion of school admission forms or other written information



To access or request this service, please contact us by email at:

linkworker@diversityvoice.org.uk

For emergencies only please ring our office number.

- explaining how the English/Polish Education system works and providing relevant advice and support
- conversations with parents and family support
- providing support on a pupil's first day at a new school
- helping teachers find out about pupils' or families' needs

- preparing and running GCSE Polish courses
- EAL support such as pronunciation, spelling and blending words to maximise English improvement based on the needs of the pupil and our assessment of the child's native language skills
- cultural training for teachers plus in-house Polish classes for staff.



Early Years Support Workers

Funded by SCC through the Dedicated Schools Grant, we can offer support for Early Years providers, children and parents throughout Somerset. Being based in Somerset, we work closely with local authorities, GET SET Services, and other voluntary sector organisations and education providers.



Our Aims:

- to facilitate communication between Early Years providers and immigrant children and families
- to help children moving from abroad to settle into their new environment quickly so that they can achieve their full potential.

Our Services:

- liaising between parents and Early Years providers in order to exchange necessary information
- helping providers to find out about individual children or family circumstances, so that their needs can be effectively addressed children's or family's needs and communicate important information
- providing face-to-face interpreting and written translation
- helping assess the child's language abilities and conceptual development
- explaining how the English/Polish Early Years and school systems work and providing advice and support, particularly at points of transition.
- raising awareness of cultural differences
- providing support on a child's first day at pre-school
- the service is free of charge to Early Years providers within Somerset



To access or request this service, please contact us by email at:

earlyyears@diversityvoice.org.uk

In emergencies only, please ring our office number.

Community Language Classes

Diversity Voice welcomes people of all nationalities to our community-based English language classes. Our qualified English native speaker teachers have specialist experience in delivering lessons in English as a second language.

Some of our teachers have worked or spent time in other countries, so they understand the difficulties that migrants face. On our courses, students learn language skills as well as gaining a nunderstanding of English culture and tradition.



Lessons

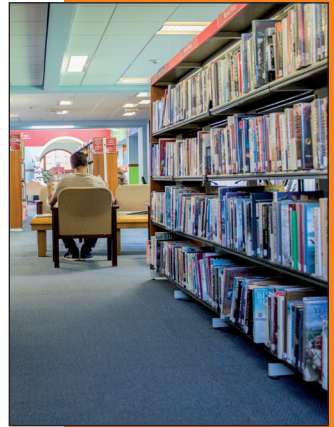
Although we do not teach to an exam syllabus, the content of lessons is carefully planned to meet the needs of each class. We aim to provide students with practical language skills that will help them in their everyday life here in England. We use a method called „communicative language teaching”, which focuses on learning functional language. An important aspect of the way we teach is that only English is used in the classroom, by both teacher and learners. We teach up to intermediate level and can provide information on private, college and Skills and Learning providers, who offer lessons to students who wish to progress further.

How to enrol

1. To enrol on a course emailing us at: admin@diversityvoice.org.uk.
2. You will then be assessed so we can place you in the correct class.
3. If necessary you may need to pay a course fee although most courses are free of charge.

Lessons are scheduled in 6 -10 week blocks and students join a course at the start. We would like students to attend the full course but they should be able to attend 75% of lessons as a minimum requirement. While we understand that you may sometimes have other commitments, irregular attendance causes problems for both teachers and learners. We have a maximum of 10 learners in each class. If you are taking a course, or waiting for one to start, you can also join our conversation classes on a drop-in basis.

All course materials are provided free of charge. Simply bring a pen, paper, folder in which to keep your work and a smile! These classes were previously funded by the South West Community Foundation, the European Social Fund, Somerset Community Foundation and Somerset Skills and Learning.



Translation and Interpreting

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING



Diversity Voice provides Translation and Interpreting services for individuals and organisations across South West of England. We have the expertise to interpret for the majority of languages spoken in the South West.

Our principles for translation and interpreting

- We use translators who either work in their mother tongue or have relevant qualifications in translation and at least two years' experience.
- We always source an appropriate specialist for technical and medical translations.
- We aim to provide an interpreter within close proximity to the required venue, thus reducing travel time and ensuring continuity where possible.
- Our interpreters follow the Code of Conduct containing an impartiality and confidentiality statement issued by Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI). We value our people and offer them continuous professional development opportunities to maximise their skills and knowledge. For specific projects, our interpreters will sign a confidentiality agreement form if required.

Our Service – Our Promise:

We are: **Local**
Professional
Value for Money

Document Translation

We provide general, technical and medical document translation covering the vast majority of languages spoken in the South West. We translate diplomas, certificates, and legal documents for courts.

Our services include Face-to-Face interpreters but we can also offer telephone interpreting for shorter meetings, lasting less than 30 minutes, which may be more appropriate and cost-effective. Please contact us for further details if you would like to use this service.

We aim to help bridge cultural differences and can assist with individual cases relating to culture, countries and languages.

Our interpreters can help with specialist support for issues relating to R2R, HRT, accessing benefits, debt problems, accommodation and accessing language courses. Please request this as an additional service.



Lingo-Link

*New Experience!
New Friendships!*

Would you like to learn a foreign language or more about a foreign country or culture?

Lingo-Link has proved successful over a number of years with over 100 participants in South Somerset alone. Not only does it benefit the individuals who participate but we also believe it is good for local communities, helping with integration and social cohesion. The project is now offered across Somerset thanks to Somerset Community Foundation, South West Community Foundation and Somerset Skills and Learning. So, imagine being in a new country where you don't speak the language fluently and don't fully understand the local culture. If only you had a friendly guide who could help you get to grips with it all. Well, that's what Lingo-Link is trying to do.

Organised by Diversity Voice, we offer individuals the opportunity to be a guide for someone in that situation. At the same time, individuals may wish to learn about the language, country, culture and customs of the home country of the person new to the UK. If there is a particular country or language that you are interested in then we will try and arrange for you to meet with a suitable Lingo Link partner.

We aim to organise meetings within your local area and we can arrange the first meeting for you. You can choose where you would prefer to meet (such as in a coffee shop, café or pub – we recommend somewhere public), how often you meet, and how the two of you want to use the sessions.

If you are interested in participating in this project then please email us at: lingolink@diversityvoice.org.uk giving us your telephone number, and the town where you live or would prefer to meet. Please also let us know your native language and which language/country you would

be interested in learning about. We will then find you a suitable partner, send you their details and coordinate a mutually agreeable first meeting.



LINGO-LINK

Benefits Advice

This project will support parents who failed the Right to Reside (R2R) Test and Habitual Residency Test (HRT).

These tests can stop parents from accessing social security benefits. Central Government has recently introduced complex new rules for R2R and HRT, which might lead to situations where a family might be exempt from R2R and HRT however, due to a complicated legal process, they might not be able to provide enough evidence. Our support will enable us to meet parents with an interpreter where necessary and support a complicated appeal process with advice regarding what they should do in the meantime.

Diversity Voice has run a number of training sessions for professionals and organisations in R2R and HRT. If your organisation would like us to run a training session in-house for professional staff we would be happy to discuss it with you. We would need to have at least 10 learners for the training.

To access our service, please e-mail us at HRT@diversityvoice.org.uk with contact details of your service, description of the issues, contact details of the family (if appropriate) and we will contact you in the next 10 working days. Self-referrals are welcome. Please note that there is restricted funding for this work but we will be able to inform you about any entitlement.



We can also provide advice regarding social housing rights, claiming benefits, employment rights etc. Please contact us for more information.

Other Services



Consultations

Diversity Voice is experienced in undertaking consultations with the BME community on behalf of a range of public sector organisations such as Somerset County Council, District Councils and Health Authorities. We can consult on a wide range of topics including:

- Adult Social Care
- Children's Social Care
- Pre School Services
- Health Services
- Education Services
- District and County Councils



If any public body is interested in commissioning us to undertake consultations with the BME community on their behalf then please contact us to discuss your requirements. Please email us at admin@diversityvoice.org.uk



Training

Diversity Voice runs training on a wide variety of topics including equality issues, the culture and traditions of other countries and the culture of The UK. Training can be arranged for groups of staff to help achieve the harmonious integration of your workforce.

If you are interested in us running a course on your behalf or would just like to find out more please email us at: **admin@diversityvoice.org.uk**

School and Early Years Forum

Diversity Voice has a School and Early Years Forum on their website where expatriates can exchange information on children's centres, nurseries, schools and other information about social and cultural events. The forum is user-friendly and is aimed at the whole family.

If you want to ask advice or ask a question, you can do it here. For this Forum to be dynamic it needs to be used so please feel free to ask questions and share experiences.

We would appreciate any comments you may have about the forum or suggestions on how it might be improved. The forum can be reached at:

<http://www.diversityvoice.com/en/forum-en.html>



Our contact details



**DIVERSITY
VOICE**

Victoria Park Community Centre
Victoria Park Drive
Bridgwater, TA6 7AS
Tel: 03000 750 105
Fax: 03000 750 106

For general enquires regarding translation and interpreting, training, language classes and welfare right advice please contact
admin@diversityvoice.org.uk
www.diversityvoice.org.uk

For schools and Children's Social Care
and other services under Somerset
linkworker@diversityvoice.org.uk

For pre-schools and Get Set Services
earlyyears@diversityvoice.org.uk

Our Community Website including
Educational Forum
www.diversityvoice.com



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