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lack of prioritisation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people has contributed to this unequal take-up”.

Although it was already known that language barriers contribute to generally lower take up of vaccines in BAME groups⁵, and alarm among health professionals was widespread as early as April 2020⁶, there was an apparent lack of preparedness to provide effective translations, including culturally-appropriate amendments, to reach all communities:

- In June 2020, Public Health England stated that the 119 phone line offered translations in “over 200 languages” and the COVID-19 App was made available in 12 languages and adopted more use of images.⁷
- Also in June 2020, the Cabinet Office informed Baroness Coussins that its strategy for communications in other languages included “ethnic and specialist media outlets” and “spokespeople from relevant communities” and partnerships.⁸
- However, the Cabinet Office also stated that translations were confined to only nine core languages with “other information” in an additional five.⁹
- The APPG noted a BBC report in July 2020 that found translation of guidance was delayed for weeks¹⁰, and that dissemination of information relied on local authorities who were not able to “keep up with the rapid changes of guidance”.¹¹
- The APPG noted that the ineffectiveness of the approach was apparent in areas such as Bradford where the BBC found severe confusion among multilingual populations stemming from a lack of official communication and an apparent link to risky behaviours, outbreaks, and extended lockdown periods.¹²

⁵ Appendix 5: Forster et al., 2016. Ethnicity-specific factors influencing childhood immunisation decisions among Black and Asian Minority Ethnic groups in the UK: a systematic review of qualitative research. *J Epidemiol Community Health*. 71(6). 544-549 (As quoted in SAGE, 2020: Factors influencing COVID-19 vaccine uptake among minority ethnic groups - 17 December 2020.) <https://jech.bmj.com/content/71/6/544>

⁶ “Language issues and deprivation may result in [people from minority backgrounds] struggling to access healthcare, which is even more challenging since our practice doors closed.” Dr Shaba Nabi writing for Pulse Magazine, 17 April 2020. <https://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/views/coronavirus/some-covid-19-victims-are-more-equal-than-others/>

⁷ Appendix 6: Public Health England, 2021. Public Health England and NHS Test and Trace: our role in the Roadmap out of lockdown. Delivery plan April to June 2021. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1011020/NHS_Test_and_Trace_delivery_plan.pdf

⁸ Appendix 7: Correspondence Baroness Coussins and Cabinet Office, June 2020.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ BBC News reported new advice published in May 2020 was still not translated by the end of July: BBC News, 28 July 2020. Coronavirus: Safety fears over lack of translated virus advice. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53537062>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² BBC News, 21 December 2020. Covid: Language barrier in Bradford 'put A

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The APPG noted an apparent policy contradiction in Government's Quarterly report on progress to address COVID-19 health inequalities (October 2020) in that its 12th Recommendation was "improving public health communication" to "hard to reach groups" including "people from ethnic minority backgrounds"; but also included a footnote that "translation into foreign languages is discouraged except in extraordinary circumstances because it conflicts with the government's approach to integration which relies on English language use".¹³

The APPG agrees with the analysis of Burns et al.¹⁴ of the need for health care which is inclusive of migrants and asylum seekers, including co-designing interventions and messaging and addressing

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[Module 3: Impact of Covid-19 on healthcare systems](#)

[Module 5: Government procurement \(re: systems for procuring appropriate and effective](#)

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[Module 1: Resilience and preparedness \(re: evidence indicating a systemic lack of preparedness with regard to protecting students' access to GCSEs and A levels\).](#)

On 2 July 2020, the DfE published *Guidance for full opening: schools*, which included a list of subjects expected to be taught in primary schools, which omitted modern languages (despite languages being a statutory Key Stage 2 subject).

The APPG almost immediately received reports from stakeholders that schools used this guidance as a reason to cancel languages provision.³³

Following Ministerial clarification³⁴ that languages remained a statutory part of the curriculum, it was left to subject associations, unions and teacher groups to reassure teachers.

The APPG believes there is a high risk that many primary schools took the guidance at face value and reduced or discontinued languages provision at Key Stage 2 as a result. In January 2021, one in five primary schools had suspended language teaching due to the pandemic³⁵; and 66% of primary schools reported Covid-19 restrictions were impacting their languages provision.³⁶

The APPG urges the Inquiry to recognise that in pressurised situations, unclear messaging from the DfE and other authorities can lead to provision being discontinued, especially in the case of vulnerable subjects like languages. Messaging should be clear and not be open to misinterpretation.

2.3 Covid-19 exacerbated existing challenges facing languages:

[Relevance to Inquiry Modules:](#)

[Module 1: Resilience and preparedness \(re: lack of a strategic approach to ensure resilience of the subject\).](#)

[Module 5: Government procurement \(re: procurement of assessment via awarding bodies\)](#)

- 2.3.1 International experiences were interrupted for schools (trips and recruiting language assistants) and universities (year abroad, Horizon 2020 and recruiting lecturers).
- In 2021, 64% per cent of primary schools and 38% of state secondary schools had no international activities within their school, a huge increase on previous years.³⁷

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- QAA's Year Abroad Guidelines (29 May 2020) shows the many and varied issues and complications regarding Covid and the year abroad for universities.
 - Trends show that international experiences were already under pressure following the UK's exit from the European Union.³⁸
- 2.3.2 The shift to online learning has been complicated for a subject centred on communicative skills.
- In particular, the development of the 'virtual year abroad' was welcome but challenging, and seen to reduce the attractiveness of the subject at degree level.^{39 40}
- 2.3.3 The pandemic's impact on language provision disproportionately affected deprived areas.⁴¹
- This exacerbates the established trend that socioeconomic disadvantage is correlated with restricted access to languages at school.^{42 43}
- 2.3.4 Oral exams were not included in the GCSEs in 2021. The APPG considers this, alongside the loss of international experiences, removed much of the real-world application of language learning from prospective students.
- 2.3.5 The

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Appendix 19.1

Letter from Polish Education Society to the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education.
29 April 2020.

Location: Secretariat, APPG on Modern Languages

Appendix 19.2

Polish Education Society, 2020. Data for parliamentary consultation regarding exams/Covid-19

Location: Secretariat, APPG on Modern Languages

Appendix 19.3

Summary of the information received from Polish exam centres. April 2020.

Location: Secretariat, APPG on Modern Languages

Appendix 20

APPG on Modern Languages, 2020. Response to Ofqual's Consultation on exceptional arrangements for exam grading and assessment in 2020 from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages (APPG MFL).

Location: Secretariat, APPG on Modern Languages

Appendix 21

APPG on Modern Languages, 2021. Response to Ofqual's Consultation on how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in Summer 2021 from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages (APPG MFL).

Location: Secretariat, APPG on Modern Languages

Appendix 22

Letter from Baroness Coussins (Co-Chair, APPG on Modern Languages) to Ofqual Chair, 2021.

Location: Secretariat, APPG on Modern Languages

Appendix 23

ASCL, 2021. Guidance on supporting entries for 'community' GCSE language Awards for summer 2021

Location: Secretariat, APPG on Modern Languages

Appendix 24

ASCL, 2021. Supporting Students with Home, Heritage and Community Languages:

Information on supporting students entering for home, heritage and community language qualifications.

www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Help%20and%20advice/Curriculum%20and%20assessment/Supporting-students-with-home-heritage-and-community-languages.pdf

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Locat on: Secretariat, APPG on Modern Languages

Appendix 37

Nuf eld Family Justice Observatory, 2020. Remote hearings in the family justice system: a rapid consultation.

www.nufeldfo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/nfo_remote_hearings_20200507-2-.pdf

Appendix 38

The Legal Education Foundation, 2021. Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on tribunals: The experience of tribunal judges.

<https://research.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/FINAL-Tribunal-Judges-Survey-Report-02-June-2021-.pdf>

Appendix 39

Magistrates' Association, 2022. Magistrates' courts and Covid-19.

<https://www.magistrates-association.org.uk/Portals/0/Magistrates%27%20Courts%20and%20Covid-19%20SCREEN.pdf>

Appendix 40

Chartered Institute of Linguists, 2020. Mini Guide for video mediated interpreting (VMI) in Court.

Locat on: Secretariat, APPG on Modern Languages

Appendix 41

Association of Translation Companies and Chartered Institute of Linguists, 2020. Remote Interpreting Best Practice Checklists.

<https://www.ciol.org.uk/sites/default/files/Interpreting%20Checklist-FNL.pdf>

Appendix 42

Lord Ahmad to Baroness Coussins, 2 June 2020.

https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2020-0288/letter_from_Lord_Ahmad_of_Wimbledon_to_Baroness_Coussins.pdf

Appendix 43

UCML open letter in support of the British Council, May 2020.

Locat on: <https://university-council-for-languages.org/british-council/>