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## **Cantonese Patients Switch On to Video Translation Link**

Edinburgh's Cantonese community is to get help with visits to the doctor's surgery using a pioneering translation service by video link launched today.

The pilot project, thought to be the first of its kind in the UK, is designed to allow interpreters to offer their services to more people by cutting down their travelling time to individual appointments.

Instead of booking interpreters to attend GP consultations, Cantonese patients using the Polwarth Surgery will be encouraged to use videoconferencing equipment in the treatment room.

This will connect the patient to an interpreter based at the Council's Interpretation and Translation Service, where staff translate more than 37 languages to help people access Council and Lothian NHS services.

The patient will see the interpreter on a two-way video screen and speak through him or her as normal using a built-in microphone. To ensure patient confidentiality, the interpreter is alone in the videoconferencing room and the conversation is not recorded.

The project is being funded by the Scottish Executive through the Modernising Government Fund and run by the City of Edinburgh Council in conjunction with BT Scotland and Lothian Primary Care NHS Trust.

Councillor Donald Wilson, the Executive Member for Communications and Business at the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "While we are focusing on the Cantonese community at the moment, if the pilot is as successful as we hope, it will be evaluated to see how it can be widened to other communities and languages. We hope to prove how technology can help the public sector use its resources more effectively by becoming more flexible."

Linda Blackmore, the practice manager at Polwarth Surgery, said: "The comfort factor for the patient is that the video link is almost as good as having the translator in the treatment room with you. It also means patients may have less time to wait for the interpreter to find an available slot in their diary and travel to the surgery"

Brendan Dick, the general manager for BT Scotland, said: "This is a great example of technology being used innovatively and delivered in partnership with the private sector ultimately for the benefit of citizens."

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