

In the UK, we have a diverse blend of cultures and communities and they all offer us an insight into the different languages that they speak. Of course, English is the most widely spoken language and is the main language when it comes to interpreting but what about the other languages?

You might be considering a career in interpreting and if so, you might be wondering where the languages that you speak might sit in terms of popularity. The good news is that there are many languages spoken, so there are plenty of opportunities. Let's look at what languages are spoken in the UK and which ones are the most popular.

Welsh and Scottish

You might consider the UK as one entire nation in some respects but we also have our devolved nations such as Wales and Scotland. While many people within these countries will speak English as their first language, many people still speak the defined languages that belong to these countries.

Scots is spoken by Scottish people and many people think of it as being a dialect but then there are others that see it as a language. Amazingly, over 1.5 million people claim that they speak Scots while 50,000 also speak Gaelic which is another language that belongs to the country. Of course, as these are not widely used languages, they are mainly only spoken within the home but still, people are fluent in these languages along with English with some saying that they can speak these languages better than they can English.

When it comes to Wales, things are much the same because over a third of the country, more than 800,000 people, speak Welsh although many of them speak English fluently and use it as their first language.

Polish

Another language that is commonly spoken in the UK is Polish; this is down to Polish nationals choosing to relocate to the UK. There are nearly one million Polish people living in the UK and many of them already speak excellent English. Due to their reliance on services in the UK, many often need the services of an interpreter, especially when it comes to certain community services.

Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali and Gujarati

These languages have become prominent in the UK as they are widely spoken by migrants who relocated to the UK from countries such as Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. This is nothing new as people from the Indian subcontinent have been relocating to the UK since the 17th century although a mass migration took place during the mid-1900s as many were forced to flee civil wars. As a result, these languages are very much a part of the UK and are widely spoken.

Arabic

The number of Arabic people living in the UK has grown considerably since the last census in 2011 although the current official number is still unknown. In 2011, there were 230,000 Arabs residing in the UK although there is no doubt that this has grown, making it another language that is growing in popularity.

Dari & Pashto

As Afghan refugees have been relocating to the UK following the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban, it has meant that Persian languages are growing which means that the need for interpreters in these languages is likely to grow. This is because refugees will need access to services and support as they look to settle into the country.

Chinese

In the UK, the percentage of Chinese residents is around 0.7%. It is believed the Chinese people are hugely underrepresented in a wide range of aspects of life throughout the UK such as language services and politics. This might be down to the way in which the Chinese language is complex as well as being heavily nuanced which could mean that UK businesses might avoid approaching that UK demographic.

The Most Popular Languages Interpreted in the UK

So, now that we have an understanding of what languages are the most popular in the UK, it can also help to understand which languages are most widely used when it comes to interpreting. Of course, [interpreting](#) can take

many different forms and so, some of the languages above might be considered popular given that they are more widely used in the community. As a result, this means that the likes of Polish and Arabic might be more widely used as opposed to the likes of German and Spanish, which might be used more in the business world. However, let's take a look at the most in-demand interpreting languages.

German

Germany has one of the largest economies in the world and it is the largest economy in Europe, so it is no surprise that it is a popular choice. Businesses in the UK have links with businesses in Germany while staff travel between the two countries which means that interpreters can often be in high demand.

Arabic

Arabic is another language that is widely used in interpreting and this might be down to the fact that it is required on a community level but also in a business sense. From trade to export and natural resources, the UK has close links to Arabic countries, and this is the reason why demand has grown.

French

Much like Germany, France is a close partner of the UK when it comes to trading and business. Therefore, French-speaking employees might find themselves travelling to the UK frequently while UK residents will also travel to France on business trips. We also have close transport links with France and that is another reason why it is a language that is increasing in demand when it comes to interpreting.

Dutch

A lot of imports and exports have links with Holland so there is a natural relationship between the UK and the Dutch. While many people from Holland can actually speak English, they often then require the services of a translator in order to ensure that communication is fluid, accurate and trustworthy.

Polish

There are several links between the UK and Poland. To begin with, we have to look at those who have opted to move to the UK and those that continue to do so. While many can get by with speaking English, they are still unable to hold meaningful conversations which is hugely important when it comes to community services, health, legal and much more. As a result, interpreters are commonly required when it comes to working with Polish nationals. From a business perspective, the UK also has business links with the country and that is in the form of businesses that work with the UK and visa-versa. Furthermore, we also have many Polish drivers who arrive in the UK to transport goods who might also need interpreting assistance for many reasons.

Spanish

The UK has many close ties to Spain due to tourism and business. Products and goods move in both directions and so businesses are always working with each other which often means that interpreters are required. Spain is a growing economy which means that the country is widening its reach and that could mean that interpreters are going to be needed more.

So Which Languages Are Highest Paid?

As far as interpreting goes, the amount that interpreters are paid will depend on the languages that they speak. Interpreters can be employed by councils or government departments while they can also work for businesses and this can have a big impact on their wages.

An interpreter working in the community will find that they are earning an average of around £26,500 per year although this can increase depending on the experience and the qualifications that they have. Furthermore, they will find that they will be working with languages that are commonly found in the UK such as Arabic, Polish and Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali and Gujarati.

Should interpreters work for businesses, then their salary could be higher because they are a valued part of the business that is relied on to maintain relationships with clients and partners. Roles can differ significantly and that can also have an impact on the salary as community interpreters on the whole will work standard hours, although this can depend on the setting and the needs. For interpreters that work for businesses, they might

find that their pay is increased because they have to follow their business owners and representatives around the world, so their need is considered to be integral to the success of the business.