

# BSO Health and Social Care Interpreting Service Guidance for HSC Staff and Practitioners

**Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service**

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## **Introduction**

The Health and Social Care (HSC) Interpreting Service is managed and administered by the HSC Business Services Organisation (BSO) as a regional shared service to provide region-wide foreign language interpreting services to the 5 HSC Trusts and other HSC providers in Northern Ireland. The HSC Strategic Performance and Planning Group (SPPG) fully reimburse HSC Providers for interpreting costs provided through the Service.

The main aim of the Service is to improve access to Health & Social Care for Clients/Patients who do not speak English proficiently through the provision of trained, quality controlled, face to face Interpreters\* to ensure:

- clear, accurate and impartial communication between patients/clients and HSC staff and practitioners
- that the risks of misdiagnosis and litigation are minimised
- consent is truly informed
- confidentiality and respect for the dignity of service users
- reduction in the use of untrained interpreters
- that HSC Practitioners and Staff can provide a responsive and efficient service
- compliance with legislative requirements (Section 75 of the NI Act (1998) and the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997)

The main Interpreting Service office is open from 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. In the event that an Interpreter is required out of hours (after 5pm and before 8am weekdays, weekends and public holidays), HSC staff should call the Belfast HSC Trust Call Management Centre Out of Hours Service on 028 9615 8200 and give the details via phone to the OOHs Operator. Requests for Interpreters required during out of hours periods should not be submitted via the online booking system.

*\*The HSC Interpreting Service does not provide written translation or telephone interpreting services.*

## **BSO Approved Register of Interpreters**

The Interpreting Service manages a central register of 408 Self-Employed Community Interpreters covering 38 different languages (see Appendix 1). Interpreters on the approved Register are qualified, quality controlled and police (Access NI) checked. Interpreters are engaged on a sessional basis and have no normal hours of work.

To join the BSO Interpreter register, an interpreter must be bilingual; eligible to work in Northern Ireland; hold a recognised Interpreting qualification (OCN Level 4 or above); and complete a 5-day HSC Interpreting Service Induction programme. Induction training for Interpreters includes training on the BSO Terms of Engagement and specialised sessions facilitated by HSC Practitioners in speech and language therapy, mental health, domestic abuse, radiotherapy and social services.

Interpreters on the approved Register are bound by the BSO Interpreter Terms of Engagement. The Terms include commitments to confidentiality and other areas of professional practice. Any breach of the requirements may lead to removal from the approved Register. Interpreters report to the BSO Head of Interpreting in matters relating to agreed sessional work undertaken.

Registered Interpreters must:

- Adhere to the BSO Interpreting Service Terms of Engagement
- Maintain confidentiality
- Interpret fully and faithfully without anything being added or omitted
- Behave in a professional manner in relation to all aspects of their role
- Remain impartial

## **Why Provide Interpreters?**

Interpreters are needed for all new patients/clients who do not have sufficient proficiency in English language. This will range from those with no English at all, to those with intermediate level English that may well be satisfactory in social situations but not enough for health and social care situations. A way of establishing level of understanding is by asking the client to repeat back instructions and demonstrate an understanding of them. If there is a perceived lack of understanding an interpreter must be arranged. Providing an Interpreter:

- eliminates language and cultural barriers
- improves access to services
- reduces the risk of misdiagnosis, misunderstanding and non-consent
- raises awareness in relation to religious/cultural needs and different health belief systems
- enables patients to make choices
- increases patient satisfaction and reduces repeat visit

### **The Legal Case:**

The Northern Ireland Act 1998 – Good Friday Agreement

- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) places a statutory duty on designated public bodies to ensure that, consistent with their responsibilities, all functions are carried out with regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity. This is between persons of different racial groups and eight other categories.

Race Relations (NI) Order 1997

- The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 places a legal duty on the way in which establishments provide their services. The legal duty to provide services without discrimination includes the duty to ensure that services accessible to

the majority community are also accessible to members of a black and minority ethnic group. The need to communicate in languages other than English is often implicit rather than explicit. Nevertheless failing to provide interpreting facilities in relation to service provision, when it is known that there is a language barrier, could be construed as unlawful racial discrimination.

#### The Ethical Case:

- Not providing Interpreters means a significant proportion of minority ethnic groups do not have access to services in the same way as the rest of the population.
- Potential consequences of not providing an interpreter includes misdiagnosis or misunderstanding could seriously aggravate an illness, or cause the death of a patient.
- For Patients with limited English proficiency informed consent can only be gained with the use of a trained interpreter (face to face or telephone).

#### The Business Case:

- Communication barriers prolong appointments, with a strong potential for misdiagnosis, misunderstandings and non-consent to examination, treatment or care. There are cases of persons who were not provided with interpreters returning to see Practitioners on numerous occasions and going through various treatments until their condition was addressed.
- The costs of numerous repeat appointments, prolonging appointments, or unnecessary admission to hospital outweigh the costs of obtaining an interpreter in the first instance.
- Providing trained interpreters also protects against the costs of litigation that otherwise may occur.

## **Dangers of using Untrained Interpreters (Family Members/Friends)**

Interpreting is a specific skill and profession. Using an untrained person as an 'interpreter' is bad practice and can be dangerous. Risks of using untrained Interpreters include:

- Lack of fluency
- Inaccurate Interpreting or lack of Interpreting Skills
- No obligation to maintain confidentiality, honesty and impartiality
- Lack of knowledge in the subject matter and terminology
- Possible misuse of trust, power and information (domestic abuse/human trafficking)
- Information may be withheld (for example if deemed embarrassing)
- Consent for examination, treatment or care could be compromised if the Patient has not been given the correct information
- Conflict of Interest

Interpreting places an unnecessary strain on family members who may be worried about the potential consequences if they misunderstand or misinterpret what is said. If a client insists that they want to use a friend or family member as an interpreter it is essential to inform them of the importance and their right to a professional interpreter. HSC Staff and Practitioners should highlight that the service is confidential and free of charge to the client.

Friends, relatives or other persons should not be used as interpreters unless in an emergency (until Staff get access to the telephone interpreting service or a face to face Interpreter) for very routine administration tasks such as setting up an appointment.

It is not good practice to use a member of the hospital or health centre staff as an Interpreter (except in emergency situations). These members of staff were employed to do a particular job, not to act as Interpreters.

## The Role of the HSC Interpreter

The role of a HSC Interpreter is to:

- facilitate communication with appropriate cultural sensitivity. HSC Interpreters are required to:
- be bilingual and to know how to interpret
- interpret accurately
- remain impartial
- maintain confidentiality
- resist the temptation to speak for the patient
- clarify cultural nuances
- be aware of cultural or circumstantial issues
- challenge incidents of racism or discrimination
- signpost client/patients
- prepare in advance of the appointment – terminology, location etc.
- contact the Patient in advance to confirm their appointment (if requested on the referral)
- arrive 5 – 10 minutes in advance and make the Practitioner/Receptionist aware of their arrival
- contact the interpreting service if to report any issues at the appointment

HSC Interpreters must not:

- Transport Patients to/from appointments
- Provide advice or counselling
- Add their own opinion
- Give out their telephone number
- Provide written translation - *Interpreters may provide sight translation of a brief letter or leaflet*
- Interpret for family members or friends
- Enter the Patient's home without a HSC Practitioner



## **Good Practice Pointers when Working with an Interpreter**

- allow time for introductions
- sit in a triangle formation
- arrange a pre-interview for complex sessions
- interpreting is not always word for word – no direct equivalents; different concepts, grammatical structure and word order
- be mindful of tone of voice and stress
- speak clearly, slowly and be specific with questions
- use short, concise sentences and avoid complex grammar
- use direct speech – the professional talks directly to the client e.g. using the first person in speech
- ask the Patient if they have any questions to avoid misunderstandings
- avoid relying on body language
- the interpreter may take notes
- ask the Patient to repeat back instructions to ensure full understanding
- flag up the need for an interpreter if you are making a referral
- ask the Interpreter to say behind for a de-brief the session was particularly challenging/complex
- in complex cases it may be beneficial to request the same Interpreter for follow-up appointments

## How to book a HSC Interpreter

Interpreter Bookings must be submitted via the online HSC Interpreting Service System\* <http://interpreting.hscni.net/NIIR.Website/>

*\*HSC staff should call the Belfast HSC Trust Call Management Centre on 028 9615 8200 to request an Interpreter during out of ours periods.*

The System can be located via any of the HSC Trust Intranet sites, Primary Care Intranet, and Dental and Optometry Portals.

Northern Ireland Interpreters New Registration


Login


Username

Password

[Forgotten password?](#)

Login

 Health and Social Care

 Northern Ireland Health & Social Care Interpreting Service

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If you do not have an Interpreting System Account you will need to register your details in order to book an Interpreter:

- HSC Staff/Practices must provide their @hscni.net or Practice email address – cannot be gmail or hotmail
- Details must be accurate – the self-registration will be rejected if adequate information is not provided
- The Manager’s name/email must be different to the “Your Email Address” on the self-registration form.
- The system username will be the email address provided in the “Your Login Email Address” section of the Self-registration form

- Users will receive a “confirm your details” email immediately after registering – they must confirm/edit the details in this email in order for the registration to flow through to BSO.
- Users will receive a notification email if the account is approved/rejected (normally within 2-3 working days of the request being submitted)

To register click here <http://interpreting.hscni.net/NIIR.Website/> and select **New Registration** in the top right-hand corner of the screen.

System User guides are available via Intranet sites or by emailing [interpreting@hscni.net](mailto:interpreting@hscni.net) . Guides include:

- How to Self-Register
- How to log into the system (includes forgotten passwords and locked accounts)
- How to generate your barcode
- How to book an interpreter
- How to cancel a booking
- How to create an appointment venue
- How to add a Practitioner

Locked Accounts - Users will be locked out of the system if they enter their username/password incorrectly three times. Users must email [RIS.SystemAdmin@hscni.net](mailto:RIS.SystemAdmin@hscni.net) to request a password reset (this is a separate Team in BSO). You will receive an email once your account has been unlocked prompting you to reset your password

## **Cancellations**

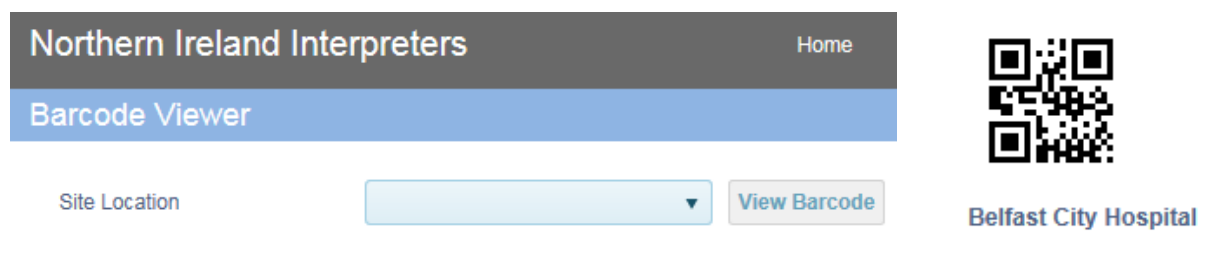
Please remember to cancel your Interpreter booking if the appointment is no longer going ahead. Interpreters will be paid if a booking is cancelled on the same day as an appointment. HSC Staff and Practitioner should cancel their bookings via the online system. To cancel within 24 hours of the appointment start time, please

contact the interpreting office on: [interpreting@hscni.net](mailto:interpreting@hscni.net) or 028 9536 3777 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday).

## **Confirming an Interpreter's Attendance**

Interpreters are required to scan a unique Departmental barcode at the end of the appointment using an Interpreting Service App on their mobile phone.

The Departmental barcode can be found within your online system user account under "User Management – Get Barcodes". The barcode must match the booking details on your request.



The screenshot shows the 'Northern Ireland Interpreters' website interface. At the top, there is a dark grey navigation bar with 'Northern Ireland Interpreters' on the left and 'Home' on the right. Below this is a blue bar with the text 'Barcode Viewer'. Underneath, there is a 'Site Location' label, a light blue dropdown menu, and a 'View Barcode' button. To the right of the interface is a QR code and the text 'Belfast City Hospital'.

Interpreters will request the barcode at the end of the session. Please ensure the barcode is available for the Interpreter to scan and that this information is communicated widely within your Department.

If the appointment is taking place at a Client's home you will need to select "at clients home" at step 3 of the booking process AND also select where YOU are based from the appointment venue drop down list – this links to the barcode that you should bring to the appointment for the Interpreter to scan. This also applies to bookings taking place "at other location".

It is the responsibility of the Department to manage their barcode. Suggestions include printing the barcode and keeping it on the back of private consultation room doors, holding it behind reception areas, keeping it in Staff ID passes or logging into

the system and scanning from the computer screen. If you have any queries regarding the barcode please contact the Interpreting Service.

## **Feedback**

The HSC Interpreting Service welcomes feedback to ensure a high-quality standard of service for HSC Practitioners, Patients and Clients. If you have any feedback or concerns please contact the Interpreting Service on: **Tel:** (028) 9536 3777 **Email:** [interpreting@hscni.net](mailto:interpreting@hscni.net)

## **Complaints**

The Business Services Organisation has responsibility for dealing with complaints associated with the HSC Interpreting Service. Wherever possible, complaints and issues of concern should be resolved informally at the time of the matter arising. For issues that cannot be resolved informally please send your complaint to [complaints.bso@hscni.net](mailto:complaints.bso@hscni.net)

In handling any complaints of issues of concern the following principles will be applied as appropriate:

- All issues will be treated seriously, fairly and openly
- All complaints will be resolved within the stipulated timescales
- Complaints from clients or practitioners should normally be made in writing within 3 months from the alleged issue occurring
- Clients/Patients are encouraged to submit their complaint in their own language. BSO will obtain an independent translation
- All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 2 working days of receipt (subject to translation)
- All complaints, processes and outcomes will be recorded in writing
- In linguistic matter, advice will be sought from sources of linguistic expertise

## Telephone vs Face to Face Interpreting

### NIHSC Interpreting Service Access Guidance and Criteria

#### When to use telephone interpreting

- Primary Care appointments
- When the content to be discussed is relatively simple
- When it is preferable not to have another person in the room i.e. when anonymity or modesty might be a consideration
- When there are health issues such as highly infectious diseases
- When the appointment is 30 minutes or less, especially a primary care appointment
- For quick inpatient sessions i.e. doctors rounds
- For follow up appointments when a face to face interpreter is not essential
- In an emergency situation where time is limited
- To aid the booking of an appointment and establish patient's needs
- When a face to face interpreter cannot be made available
  
- **NB:** cost is £0.57 per minute\*.

#### When to use face to face interpreting

- For a new patient's/client's initial visit
- When the appointment is over 30 minutes
- When the appointment is sensitive in nature i.e. delivering test results which may be distressing
- Consultations involving two or more participants i.e. family conferences
- When the patient/client has specific communication needs and/or where non-verbal cues are needed
- When the patient/client indicates that they are not comfortable with telephone interpreting
- For any sight translation where a document needs to be read to the patient/client
  
- **NB:** cost is £20 +£5 prep for 1-60 minutes and £0.33 per minute thereafter (plus mileage)\*
- **Out of Hours:** cost is £30 for 1-60 minutes and £0.50 per minute thereafter (plus mileage)\*

*\*Telephone Interpreting is provided by the Big Word Telephone Interpreting Service (for further information or to obtain your access/pin/language codes please contact your local Equality Department or Practice Support Manager). SPPG covers the cost of all HSC Telephone Interpreting.*

## **Exceptions\*\***

It is recommended that the below service areas use a face to face interpreter due to the nature of the services, however the requester may determine, based on the guidance, that a telephone interpreter may be sufficient in particular situations.

- Mental Health i.e. Psychiatry, Learning Disability, psychology
- Social Services i.e. Child Case Conferences, Child Protection
- Domestic Abuse
- Maternity/Fertility Appointments
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Cancer Services
- Family Trauma Centre
- Northern Ireland New Entrant Screening (NINES)

**\*\*Please note that this list is not exhaustive and clinical decision should be followed**

## **Telephone Interpreting**

The Big Word Telephone Interpreting Service (TBW) is the contracted provider of HSC telephone interpreting in NI. TBW provides telephone interpreting for HSC Practitioners in Northern Ireland. Telephone interpreting can be used for relatively simple and brief appointments, and in an emergency. The Health and Social Care Board covers the cost of all HSC Telephone Interpreting.

Staff/Practitioners must have a departmental/Practice access code in order to access a telephone interpreter via Big Word. To obtain your access code please contact your local HSC Trust Equality Unit or Practice Support Manager (Primary Care).

### **Instructions for Practitioners to use TBW:**

For 2 way Calls (Patient and Practitioner at same venue):



For quick access follow these simple steps:

- 1 Dial **0333 344 9473**
- 2 Enter your access code: followed by the # key
- 3 Enter the language code from the list below, followed by the # key:

Albanian	702	Hindi	994	Nepali	741	Tagalog	762
Amharic	91	Hungarian	724	Oromo	796	Tamil	729
Arabic	92	Italian	995	Pashto	98	Tetun	551
Bahasa Indonesia	727	Japanese	96	Polish	5	Thai	992
Bengali	706	Kirundi	70	Portuguese	996	Tigrinya	773
Bulgarian	707	Korean	3	Punjabi	749	Turkish	764
Cantonese	93	Kurdish (Kurmanji)	520	Romanian	750	Twi	709
Czech	710	Kurdish (Sorani)	730	Russian	997	Ukrainian	765
Farsi (Afghan)	712	Kurdish(Bahdini)	731	Serbo-Croat	752	Urdu	999
Farsi (Persian)	94	Language Identifier	700	Sinhala	754	Vietnamese	2
French	95	Latvian	733	Slovak	755	Yoruba	794
Georgian	784	Lingala	734	Somali	757	Zulu	770
German	4	Lithuanian	735	Spanish	1	More Languages	700
Greek	993	Mandarin	97	Sudanese	542	Unknown	0
Gujarati	738	Mandinka	739	Swahili	998		
Hebrew	722	Mirpuri	533	Sylheti	526		

For 3-way calls (Patient, Practitioner at different venues):

To initiate a three way call:

- 4 Wait for the linguist to answer and explain you are dialing in a 3<sup>rd</sup> party. To dial the third party, **press the \* key then press 1**; enter the number you wish to dial and confirm the number when prompted.
- 5 If the user does not answer the call you can leave a voicemail or **press the \* key then press 3** to redial the same number.
- 6 To try a different number or release the third party call, **press the \* key then press 2** . **Press the \* key and then press 1** to start a new 3 way call.
- 7 **Press the \* key then 9** at any point to listen to the instructions again.

If you have any questions please contact the Help Desk **03333 449 479** or email: [ukgovinterpreting@thebigword.com](mailto:ukgovinterpreting@thebigword.com)

***The Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) covers the cost of all HSC Telephone Interpreting.***

## **Written Translations**

For guidance on how to access written translations please contact your local HSC Trust Equality Unit or Practice Support Manager. Please note there is a cost associated with written translations.

## **Working Well with Interpreters Training**

The HSC Interpreting Service delivers a rolling programme of “Working Well with Interpreters” training sessions to Health and Social Care Staff and Practitioners. The training covers:

1. An Introduction to the Health and Social Care Interpreting Service
2. Demand for Interpreters
3. Case for providing Interpreters
4. The dangers of using Untrained Interpreters
5. To role of Community Interpreters
6. Good practice guidance on working with Interpreters
7. Systems and procedures for booking Interpreters
8. Guidance on Telephone Interpreting

To arrange a session please email [interpreting@hscni.net](mailto:interpreting@hscni.net)

*For further clarification on any of the information contained in this document please contact the Interpreting Service on: Tel: (028) 9536 3777 Email:*

*[interpreting@hscni.net](mailto:interpreting@hscni.net)*