Guidelines for Working with

Irish Sign Language / English Interpreters

Table of Contents

1.   Irish Sign Language (ISL) and the Deaf Community

- Irish Sign Language has been estimated to be used by **about 5,000 Deaf**[1] **people** in the Republic of Ireland.[2] It is also estimated that it is used by about 40,000 people in total, including those who are related to, in relationships with, or work with Deaf people (such as interpreters, teachers, parents, service providers etc.)[3]

- Recent **Irish Censuses** have begun to report about ISL usage. The number of people (Deaf and hearing) using Irish Sign Language 'at home' in census 2011 was 2,586, and in Census 2016 it was 4,226. However, census figures are known for being unreliable in relation to sign language usage (the jump in number between 2011 and 2016 indicates this here in Ireland). Hopefully future questions and approaches within the Census will capture all ISL users and give more accurate figures.[4]

- **Sign languages are real languages.** Contrary to what you may expect, sign language is not just 'signing' each word in a normal English sentence; signed languages used by Deaf people have grammars that can be very different to that of spoken languages.

- **Sign languages differ from each other.** There are hundreds of very different signed languages around the world. Even where two countries share a spoken language, their sign languages may differ. For example, Ireland, Britain, the USA, Australia and New Zealand are all English speaking countries – but use very different sign languages (ISL, BSL, ASL, Auslan and NZSL respectively).

- **Irish Sign Language (ISL)** is the predominant signed language in the Republic of Ireland. ISL is a distinctive visual language, with its own complex grammatical and linguistic structure. It has been shown to have all the features that any language should have, in research dating back to the 1990s.[5] ISL is based on the sign language used by pupils from the deaf schools in Cabra, in Dublin City. ISL contains in itself a number of variations (see below, p. 7).[6]

- In **Northern Ireland,** many Deaf people (who previously attended a Deaf school in Belfast) use a variant of **British Sign Language (BSL)**. This is a different signed language to ISL. Both ISL and BSL have been recognised languages in Northern Ireland since 2004.[7] While some sources have stated that ISL may be used by as many as 2-3,000 Northern Irish Deaf people, reliable numbers of ISL users in the province are currently unavailable.[8]

- An influx of European and other Deaf people from other countries over the last twenty or so years means that **other signed languages are also used in Ireland** on a small scale. These include Russian Sign Language, Polish Sign Language, Latvian Sign Language, Lithuanian Sign Language and others.

---

[1] Uppercase 'Deaf' is used when referring to deaf or hard-of-hearing people who are sign language users, whose first language is a signed language, and who are part of the Deaf community - socialising with other Deaf people, feeling pride in being Deaf, and using ISL.

[2] Patrick A. Matthews, *The Irish Deaf Community, Vol 1: Survey Report, History of Education, Language and Culture* (Dublin, 1996), 10–1.

[3] 'Irish Sign Language Set to Be given Official Status', *Irish Independent*, December 14, 2017; available from https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/irish-sign-language-set-to-be-given-official-status-36407921.html; Irish Deaf Society (IDS), 'Irish Sign Language', *IDS Website*, 2020; available from https://www.irishdeafsociety.ie/irish-sign-language/; accessed 6 April 2020.

[4] Central Statistics Office, 'Databases', *Statbank*, 2016.

[5] See for example Dónall Ó Baoill and Patrick A. Matthews, *The Irish Deaf Community, Vol 2: The Structure of Irish Sign Language* (Dublin, 2000); Lorraine Leeson and John I. Saeed, *Irish Sign Language: A Cognitive Linguistic Account* (Edinburgh, 2012), among many others.

[6] School experience is highly influential on Deaf people's language use. Even if a Deaf person may not necessarily describe themselves as 'users of ISL', their school background may be helpful information to give to an interpreter or interpreting agency. Most Irish Deaf people have attended either of the two schools for deaf children in Cabra, Dublin - St Mary's (the school for girls) or St Joseph's (the school for boys). These schools have amalgamated and are now named the Holy Family School for the Deaf. Many Deaf men also may have attended the Beechpark school in Stillorgan, Co. Dublin. There are / were also deaf schools or units within mainstream units, in Cork, Limerick, Monaghan, Offaly, Tralee and others.

[7] Department of Culture Arts and Leisure Northern Ireland, *Sign Language Framework* (Belfast, 2016), 5; available from https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/dcal/Sign Language Framework Document.PDF; accessed 28 October 2016. Please note that this recognition is limited: "This recognition does not provide any statutory protection for the languages… [and t]here has been no Executive recognition or formal Executive agreed Policy or Strategy document to date."

[8] Sally Gillespie, 'Linguistic Demographics, Resources and Deficit of Opportunity: Deaf Signed Language Users in Northern Ireland' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Queens University Belfast, 2018), 41.

- **'International Sign'** (or **'IS'** for short) is a form of signing used predominantly by Deaf people at international events, such as conferences or sports competitions. It is common for separate IS interpretation to be provided, in addition to interpretation for the national signed language, at events with international participants. For example, an international Deaf event held in Northern Ireland may book interpreters working into BSL, ISL, and IS from spoken English, and vice versa.

- **Age: Deaf people of different ages can use very different forms of ISL.** This is because the way deaf children have been taught has changed hugely over the years, and this has heavily influenced Deaf people's use of ISL.

  - Since the late 1940s and 1950s, education in Irish deaf schools used the **'oral method'** or **'oralism'** – meaning the teaching of lipreading, speech skills, and promotion of the use of residual hearing. This was often accompanied by a ban on using signed language, and punishment for pupils who did so.[9]

  - However, Deaf children who were taught in Deaf schools in Ireland before the 1950s and 1960s were often taught **nearly exclusively through sign language**. This means that elderly Deaf people, who been educated through sign language, may use a variety of ISL that contains far less mouth patterns, and possibly more influence from the English language (e.g. finger-spelling, rather than signing of words). Deaf people of this age group may not be able to lip-read as well as younger Deaf people.[10]

- **Gender: Deaf men and women in Ireland used to use ISL very differently**. Though rare these days, elderly Deaf women still sometimes use a very distinct form of 'women's sign'. This has its origins in the separation of the Deaf boys' and girls' schools, the use of different sign languages in teaching, and discouraging of the students mixing.[11] There still is some gendered difference in ISL, but the ISL used by the majority of the Irish Deaf community is now generally intelligible to all Irish Deaf people.

- The changes in Irish Deaf education have affected the educational and reading level of the adult Deaf community. It is estimated that **up to 80% of the Deaf community have literacy issues.**[12] This means their understanding of written material may be limited. It is highly important to remember that **ISL is the first language of Deaf people** – in many cases, an interpreter or material in ISL is accessible in a way that written English will not be.

- **Employment issues** abound for Deaf people, as has been shown in several pieces of research.[13] In 2006, Deaf respondents experienced four times the national unemployment rate (12% for Deaf people versus the national average of 3%), and in 2015 less than half of one survey's respondents were in professional occupations. In 2017, a critical shortcoming was found to be the lack of support for ongoing provision of ISL interpreters for Deaf or hard of hearing employees; SLIS has called for the Workplace Equipment/Adaptation Grant (WEAG) to be expanded to include ISL interpreting. This contrasts starkly with the situation in the UK, where the Department for Work and

---

[9] See Patrick McDonnell and Helena Saunders, 'Sit on Your Hands: Strategies to Prevent Signing', in *Looking Back: A Reader on the History of Deaf Communities and Their Sign Languages*, ed. Renate Fischer and Harlan Lane (Hamburg, 1993), 255–60.

[10] However, it should not be assumed that any Deaf person is competent to lipread an entire conversation. Only about 30% to 45% of the English language is discernible through lip reading, while contextualization and guessing determine the remainder. See Christine Chong-hee Lieu et al., 'Communication Strategies for Nurses Interacting With Patients Who Are Deaf', *Dermatology Nursing* 19, no. 6 (2007): 541–4.

[11] See especially the work of Barbara LeMaster in this regard; 'Language Contraction, Revitalization, and Irish Women', *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (2006): 211–28; available from http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/jlin.2006.16.2.211; Barbara LeMaster, 'When Women and Men Talk Differently: Language and Policy in the Dublin Deaf Community', in *Irish Urban Cultures*, ed. Chris Curtin, Hastings Donnan, and Thomas M. Wilson (Belfast, 1993), 123–41.

[12] For an overview of Irish deaf education as at 2009, see Marc Marschark and Patricia E Spencer, *Evidence of Best Practice Models and Outcomes in the Education of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children: An International Review*, *National Council for Special Education* (Trim, Co Meath, 2009); available from https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/1_NCSE_Deaf.pdf; accessed 18 November 2019.

[13] Pauline Conroy, *Signing In, Signing Out: The Education and Employment Experiences of Deaf Adults in Ireland* (Dublin, 2006); Anne Coogan and Josephine O'Leary, *Deaf Women of Ireland: Report and Survey through Three Generations*, 2015; Citizens Information Board, *Information Provision and Access to Public and Social Services for the Deaf Community*, 2017.

Pensions' Access to Work (AtW) scheme awards an annual grant of up to €48,800 for people with disabilities; this can be claimed to defray the ongoing costs of a BSL interpreter.[14]

2.   Providing Interpreters – Legislation and National Guidelines

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted in 2006. Ireland signed the Convention in 2007, and further to its ratification in March 2018, it entered into force from 19 April 2018.[15]

The involvement of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) in the drafting of the CRPD led to five important clauses being inserted into the Convention that directly affect Deaf people's language rights:

- *Article 2 – Definition:* "'Language' includes spoken and signed languages and other forms of non-spoken languages".

- *Article 9 – Accessibility:* "States Parties shall also take appropriate measures … [t]o provide forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and **professional sign language interpreters**, to facilitate accessibility to buildings and other facilities open to the public".

- *Article 21 – Freedom of expression, opinion, and access to information:* "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice, as defined in article 2 of the present Convention, including by: … [a]ccepting and facilitating **the use of sign languages**, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of their choice by persons with disabilities in official interactions [and by]… **[r]ecognizing and promoting the use of sign languages**."

- *Article 24 – Education:* "States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including: … **[f]acilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community**; [and e]nsuring that the education of persons, and **in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind**, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development."

- *Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation leisure and sport:* "Persons with disabilities shall be entitled, on an equal basis with others, to **recognition and support of their specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign languages and deaf culture."**

Irish Sign Language Act 2017

---

[14] Citizens Information Board, *Information Provision and Access to Public and Social Services for the Deaf Community*, ed. Tom Martin and Jim McDevitt (Dublin, 2017), 26–8; available from https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/social_policy/Deaf_Community_Research_Rpt_Feb2018.pdf; accessed 18 March 2020.
[15] See National Disability Authority, 'UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities', *NDA Website*, 2014; available from http://nda.ie/Disability-overview/Legislation/UN-Convention-on-the-Rights-of-Persons-with-Disabilities.html; accessed 15 April 2020.

The Irish Sign Language Act passed into law on 24th December 2017, and is the most important piece of legislation affecting access for Deaf citizens in Ireland.[16] It lays down the entitlements of deaf citizens in terms of access to interpreting services when dealing with public bodies and availing of their services.

In the Act, **the definition of 'public body'** is the following:

a) a **Department of State** (other than, in relation to the Department of Defence, the Defence Forces) for which a Minister of the Government is responsible
b) a **local authority** within the meaning of the Local Government Act 2001
c) the **Health Service Executive**
d) a **university** or **institute of technology**
e) an **education and training board** established under section 9 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013
f) **any other person, body or organisation** established—
   (i)   by or under an enactment (other than the Companies Act 2014) or charter
   (ii)   by any scheme administered by a Minister of the Government, or
   (iii)   under the Companies Act 2014 in pursuance of powers conferred by or under another enactment, and financed wholly or partly by means of money provided, or loans made or guaranteed, by a Minister of the Government or the issue of shares held by or on behalf of a Minister of the Government;(g)a company (within the meaning of the Companies Act 2014) a majority of the shares in which are held by or on behalf of a Minister of the Government.
g) The Minister for Justice and Equality can also prescribe as a public body such other person, body, organisation or group financed wholly or partly out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas (being a person, body, organisation or group that, in the opinion of the Minister, ought, in the public interest and having regard to the provisions and intentions of this Act, to be so prescribed).

The **duty of public bodies** in relation to the Act is laid out in Section 6. It covers the provision of **free interpretation** services to deaf people seeking to avail of services provided by public bodies, or looking to access statutory entitlements. The interpretation provided can be via remote interpreting services **if the deaf person consents to this**.

6.   **(1)** A public body shall do all that is reasonable to ensure that interpretation into Irish Sign Language is provided for a person who is competent in that language and cannot hear or understand English or Irish when that person is seeking to avail of or access statutory entitlements or services provided by or under statute by that public body.

(2) The provision of interpretation shall be at no cost to the person concerned.

(3) The Minister may by regulations—

(a) provide that where a person intends to avail of Irish Sign Language services provided by a public body, the person shall give the public body such prior notification of his or her intention within such period as specified in the regulations, or

(b) provide for the procedure in relation to the provision of such services by a public body.

(4) Provision of or availing of a remote, web-based service shall, if the Irish Sign Language user consents, be sufficient to meet the obligations of a public body under this section.

The Act covers the use of **interpreters in courtroom proceedings** or **any other (criminal OR civil) legal proceedings**:

4.   **(1)** A person may use Irish Sign Language in, or in any pleading in, any court.

---

[16] Full text of the Act can be found at Oireachtas, 'Irish Sign Language Act', *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)* (Ireland, 2017); available from https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/bills/bill/2016/78/; accessed 19 December 2019.

(2) Every court has, in any proceedings before it, the duty to do all that is reasonable to ensure that any person competent in Irish Sign Language and who cannot hear or understand English or Irish appearing in or giving evidence before it may be heard in that language, if that is his or her choice, and that in being so heard the person will not be placed at any disadvantage.

(3) For the purposes of ensuring that no person is placed at a disadvantage as aforesaid, the court may cause such facilities to be made available, as it considers appropriate, for the simultaneous or consecutive interpretation of proceedings into Irish Sign Language.

The Act also covers **the qualifications and competency of ISL / English interpreters**; this refers to the Register of Interpreters funded by the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (currently via SLIS). **Please note: interpreters utilised by public bodies or courts must therefore be members of the Register of Interpreters,** regardless of which agency or organisation supplies interpreters to the public body or court.

7.   A court or a public body, in compliance with its obligations under this Act, shall not engage the services of a person providing Irish Sign Language interpretation unless the person's competence has been verified by having been accredited in accordance with an accreditation scheme funded by the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Reference is also made to the **Social Inclusion Fund** (see below, p. 11), due to be administered by SLIS, which will cover the cost of interpretation for Deaf people to attend events where provision of interpreting services are **not** already covered elsewhere in equality or other legislation or guidelines:

9.   **(1)**   The Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection may, with the consent of the Minster for Public Expenditure and Reform, out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas, provide funds to facilitate users of Irish Sign Language with regard to support in relation to access to social, educational and cultural events and services(including medical) and other activities by such users as specified in guidelines made by that Minister of the Government.

(2)   Guidelines under this section shall specify the events, services and activities to which the guidelines apply and shall make provision regarding the management and delivery of the support in relation to access to those events, services or activities by users of Irish Sign Language.

Health Services

The **HSE Patients' Charter** makes it clear that "You should be given information **in a language that you can understand**", and "should be given the opportunity to ask questions and to receive answers that you can understand.""[17]

The HSE has also produced documents that further outline the necessity for, and recommendations for the use of, interpreters in health-related services.

On Speaking Terms: Good Practice Guidelines for HSE Staff in the Provision of Interpreting Services[18]

The following are some useful points made in this document:

---

[17] Health Service Executive, *National Health Care Charter: You and Your Health Service*, 2012, 10; available from https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/person-family-engagement/national-healthcare-charter/national-healthcare-charter.pdf; accessed 15 April 2020.

[18] Full text: Health Services Executive, *On Speaking Terms: Good Practice Guidelines for HSE Staff in the Provision of Interpreting Services* (Dublin, 2009); available from https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/socialinclusion/emaspeaking.pdf; accessed 28 October 2019.

- p. 10 – "Staff should let patients know that they have the right to an interpreter to assist in communication. It should be made clear that **there is no cost to the patient** and that **staff will arrange for the interpreter** (the patient does not have to do this). **The patient can use or refuse the assigned interpreter**."

- p. 19 – "**Using family or friends to interpret is not recommended** for a number of reasons… Using family or friends to interpret must be discouraged. Attempting to 'muddle through' with a patient's family or friend is not good practice."

- p. 20 – "**Children should never be used as interpreters**. Using children as interpreters totally disregards the harmful effects it may have on the child."

- p. 21 – "**Under no circumstances should staff be asked to interpret in clinical situations**. It is unethical and unprofessional to use, or to ask, a member of staff to interpret in a clinical situation, regardless of their proficiency in the language needed. "
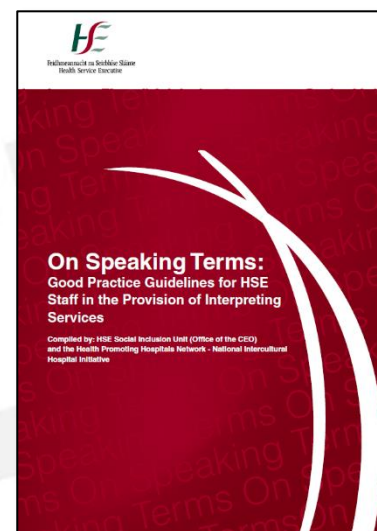
HSE National Guidelines on Accessible Health and Social Care Services[19]

The following are some useful points made in this document:

- p. 52 – "**Patients and service users are entitled to request and be provided with a qualified sign language interpreter**. While the onus is on the service user to request an interpreter, it is the **responsibility of staff to make the arrangements**.

- Staff should routinely let service users know that:
    - they have the right to an interpreter to assist in communication
    - **there is no cost to the service user**; and
    - staff will arrange for the interpreter

- It is considered good practice for services to arrange an interpreter without being prompted in cases where repeat visits are necessary or where it is known in advance that the service user needs one. Not providing a qualified sign language interpreter when delivering care to a patient or service user places the health or social care provider in a precarious situation:

    - **information may be misinterpreted or misunderstood** which may lead to a potential adverse outcome for the patient or service user; or

    - the lack of provision of a qualified sign language interpreter may result in **invalid consent for invasive medical or surgical procedures.**

- An interpreter may also be necessary if the primary carer or advocate of a patient / service user is Deaf; for example, Deaf parents with a child who can hear, or a Deaf person who is a carer for an elderly parent(s).
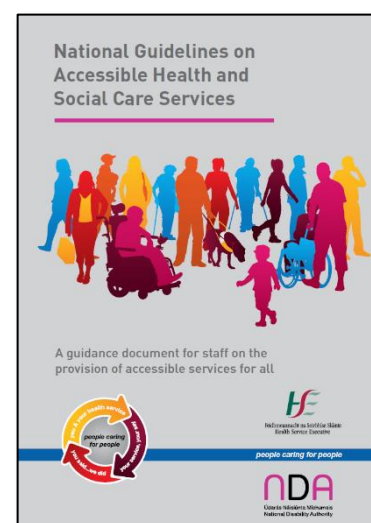
Court Proceedings and Garda Interviews

Court Proceedings

The **Irish Sign Language Act 2017** covers the use of **interpreters in courtroom proceedings** or **any other (criminal OR civil) legal proceedings**:

4.   **(1)** A person may use Irish Sign Language in, or in any pleading in, any court.

(2) Every court has, in any proceedings before it, the duty to do all that is reasonable to ensure that any person competent in Irish Sign Language and who cannot hear or understand English or Irish appearing in or giving evidence before it may be heard in that language, if that is his or her choice, and that in being so heard the person will not be placed at any disadvantage.

(3) For the purposes of ensuring that no person is placed at a disadvantage as aforesaid, the court may cause such facilities to be made available, as it considers appropriate, for the simultaneous or consecutive interpretation of proceedings into Irish Sign Language.

The right to an interpreter in criminal cases in court is clearly laid down in the **European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003.**[20]

- **Article 6** *Right to a fair trial*
  - 6(3): Everyone charged with a criminal offence has the following minimum rights:
    - (a) to be informed promptly, in a language which he understands and in detail, of the nature and cause of the accusation against him; …
    - (e) to have the free assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court.

In Irish courts, "while there is no explicit constitutional right to use any non-official language, the constitutional right to due process and the principles of natural justice entail a right to interpretation and translation for an accused who does not speak the language of the proceedings." In 1929, in ***Attorney General v. Joyce and Walsh***, the Chief Justice held that giving evidence in one's vernacular is a "requisite of natural justice, particularly in a criminal trial".[21]

The Rules of the Superior Courts, Order 120 states that "There shall be such number of interpreters as the Chief Justice and the President of the High Court respectively may from time to time, by requisition in writing addressed to the Minister for Justice, request, and such interpreters shall attend the Courts and the Offices of the Superior Courts and be available to attend those Courts as required for the hearing of any cause or matter."[22]

Garda Stations

The right to an interpreter in Garda stations is clearly laid down in the **European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003.**[23]

- **Article 5** *Right to liberty and security*

---

[20] Oireachtas, 'European Convention on Human Rights Act', *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 2003; available from http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/act/20/; accessed 15 April 2020; Pauline Kelly Melia, 'Legislation – All You Need to Know', *Kellymeliasblog*, February 18, 2020; available from https://kellymeliasblog.wordpress.com/2020/02/18/legislation-all-you-need-to-know/; accessed 15 April 2020.
[21] Órla Ryan, *Report on the Implementation of the Right to Interpretation and Translation Services in Criminal Proceedings*, ed. Grace Mulvey and Amanda Oi, 2016, 11; available from https://eulita.eu/wp/wp-content/uploads/files/Report_Right_to_Interpretation_Justicia.pdf.
[22] See Order 120, Rules of the Superior Courts:
http://www.courts.ie/rules.nsf/8652fb610b0b37a980256db700399507/6b924bdea9b16f0880256d2b0046b3a5?OpenDocument. See Ryan, *Implementation of the Right to Interpretation…*
[23] Oireachtas, 'European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003'; Melia, 'Legislation – All You Need to Know'.

       o   5 (2): Everyone who is arrested shall be informed promptly, in a language which he understands, of the reasons for his arrest and of any charge against him.

- **Article 6** *Right to a fair trial*
  - o   6(3): Everyone charged with a criminal offence has the following minimum rights:
    - ▪   (a) to be informed promptly, in a language which he understands and in detail, of the nature and cause of the accusation against him.

Regulation 12(8) of the **Criminal Justice Act 1984** (Treatment of Persons in Garda Siochána Stations) Regulations 1987 (S.I. No. 119) states:

(8)   (a) Where an arrested person is deaf or there is doubt about his hearing ability, **he shall not be questioned in relation to an offence in the absence of an interpreter, if one is reasonably available, without his written consent** (and, where he is under the age of seventeen years, the written consent of an appropriate adult) or in the circumstances specified in paragraph (7) (a) (iii).

(b) A consent shall be signed by the arrested person and be recorded in the custody record or a separate document.

(c) Where an arrested person has requested the presence of an interpreter under subparagraph (a) and one is not reasonably available, any questions shall be put to him in writing.[24]

Garda Manual of Crime Investigation Techniques (1994): "When a person who does not understand either the Irish or English language is to be questioned, it will be necessary to secure the service of an interpreter. The following procedures should be observed:

1) The person should be questioned through the interpreter who should record the statement in the language in which it is made.
2) A verbal translation should be made as the statement is taken so that any ambiguities can be rectified at the time.
3) All statements should be read over to the person making the statement and signed.
4) An official Irish or English translation should then be made and proved by the interpreter, as an exhibit with the original statement."[25]

European Arrest Warrant Act 2003, Section 13 (4): "A person arrested under a European arrest warrant shall, upon his or her arrest, be informed of his or her right to ... where appropriate, obtain, or be provided with, the services of an interpreter."[26]

Equal Status Acts

The Equal Status Acts prohibit discrimination in service provision across nine grounds: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, 'race', and membership of the Travelling community. Failure to appoint an interpreter in legal situations, particularly relating to asylum seeking processes, could contravene the Equal Status Acts.[27]

---

[24] Oireachtas, 'S.I. No. 119/1987 - Criminal Justice Act, 1984 (Treatment of Persons in Custody in Garda Síochána Stations) Regulations', *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 1987; available from http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1987/si/119/; accessed 15 April 2020; Ivana Bacik, 'Breaking the Language Barrier: Access to Justice in the New Ireland', *Judicial Studies Institute Journal* 7, no. 2 (February 2007): 109–23; available from https://www.ijsj.ie/assets/uploads/documents/pdfs/2007-Edition-02/article/breaking-the-language-barrier-access-to-justice-in-the-new-ireland.pdf.
[25] Mary Phelan, *Interpreting, Translation and Public Bodies in Ireland: The Need for Policy and Training*, National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, Advocacy Papers 5, 2007, 19; available from http://doras.dcu.ie/16924/1/Interpreting_Translation_and_Public_Bodies_in_Ireland_the_need_for_policy_and_training.pdf.
[26] See full text at Oireachtas, 'European Arrest Warrant Act', *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 2003; available from http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/act/45/section/13/enacted/en/html#sec13; accessed 15 April 2020.
[27] National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), *Developing Quality Cost Effective Interpreting & Translating Services for Government Service Providers in Ireland* (Dublin, 2008), 7; available from https://www.translatorsassociation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/National-Consultative-

Education

- In Section 2 of the **Education Act 1998,** sign language interpreting is included in the definition of "support services", which means the services which the Minister provides to students or their parents, schools or centres for education in accordance with section 7 of the Act, and "include[s] provision for students learning through Irish sign language or other sign language, including interpreting services".[28]

- The **Equal Status Act 2000 (Section 7 (2), (a-c))** prohibits schools and colleges from discriminating against students on the basis of disability. Within the Act, "educational establishment" means either

    o   "a preschool service within the meaning of Part VII of the Child Care Act, 1991

    o   a primary or post-primary school

    o   an institution providing adult, continuing or further education

    o   a university or any other third-level or higher-level institution

    whether or not supported by public funds."[29]

    Therefore **the Act applies to all education institutions, both public and private**, which are prohibited from discriminating against students with disabilities in terms of admission, terms and conditions of admission, access to any course, access to any facility or benefit provided, or any other terms or condition of participation in the establishment.

Disability Act 2005

The Disability Act 2005 sets out requirements relating to access to buildings, services and information. Government departments and public bodies are required to make their mainstream public services accessible to people with disabilities. This includes making information available in accessible formats and providing supports to access services where possible. This legislation was enacted on 8th July 2005.

Access to services: The Disability Act 2005 states:

26.   **(1)** Where a service is provided by a public body, the head of the body shall—

(a) where practicable and appropriate, ensure that the provision of access to the service by persons with and persons without disabilities is integrated,

(b) where practicable and appropriate, provide for assistance, if requested, to persons with disabilities in accessing the service if the head is satisfied that such provision is necessary in order to ensure compliance with paragraph (a), and

(c) where appropriate, ensure the availability of persons with appropriate expertise and skills to give advice to the body about the means of ensuring that the service provided by the body is accessible to persons with disabilities.

Committee-on-Racism-and-Interculturalism-Developing-Quality-Cost-Effective-Interpreting-and-Translating-Services-2008.x75335.pdf; accessed 28 October 2019; Ryan, *Implementation of the Right to Interpretation...*

[28] Oireachtas, 'Education Act', *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 1998; available from http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/51/enacted/en/print#sec2; accessed 15 April 2020.

[29] For full text, see Oireachtas, 'Equal Status Act', *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 2000; available from http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/8/section/7/enacted/en/html#sec7; accessed 15 April 2020.

27.   **(1)** Where a service is provided to a public body, the head of the body shall **ensure that the service is accessible to persons with disabilities.**

28.   **(1)** Where a public body communicates with one or more persons, the head of the body shall ensure—

        (a) **if the communication is an oral one and the person or persons aforesaid has a hearing impairment and so requests**, or

        (b) if the communication is a written one and the person or persons aforesaid has a visual impairment and so requests,

that, as far as practicable**, the contents of the communication are communicated in a form that is accessible to the person concerned**.

Employment Equality Act

- The Employment Equality Acts **oblige employers to make reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities**. An employer must take 'appropriate measures' to meet the needs of disabled people in the workforce. This means they must make arrangements that will enable a person who has a disability to have equal opportunities when applying for work, be treated the same as co-workers, have equal opportunities for promotion, and undertake training. Such arrangements can include providing sign language interpretation.[30]

- An employer might not have to provide such accommodations if it meant that the employer would suffer a 'disproportionate burden'. However, in order to establish what a 'disproportionate burden' is for the employer, several things are taken into account. These include the financial cost of the measures involved, other costs involved, for example, staff time or impact on productivity, and the size and financial resources of the employer's business. Before an employer can claim that providing reasonable accommodation measures or facilities would place them under a 'disproportionate burden', they must look at the possibility of obtaining public funding, grants and so on. Details of some relevant funding in relation to interpreters can be seen in Section 4.

- A number of **Equality Tribunal case reports** are in relation to the provision of interpreters for Deaf people in the workplace. One case concerned the **refusal to pay for a sign language interpreter** for a day's training, and the Equality Officer found that in doing so "**the respondent discriminated against the complainant on the disability ground and failed to provide ... reasonable accommodation** in terms of sections 6(1) and 6(2)(g) and pursuant to section 8 and 16 of the [Employment Equality] Acts." It was also mentioned in the same case that the hiring of a sign language interpreter for a day's training was, in the Equality Officer's view, **not "a disproportionate burden on the employer".**[31]

- In another case of non-provision of an interpreter, this time for a workplace appeal, the Equality Officer stated that "it was the duty of the respondent to ensure that there was no impediment to the complainant's full participation and understanding of the hearing ... the non-availability of a sign language interpreter was an impediment to the complainants participation in the hearing and was in breach of his right to a fair procedures and natural justice and his right to be heard." The Equality Officer was "satisfied that without the special facilities of a sign language interpreter it was both impossible and unduly difficult for [the Deaf complainant] to fully participate in his appeal hearing before the respondent." Again, the Equality Officer in the above case

---

[30] Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission (IHREC), 'Disability and Reasonable Accommodation', *IHREC Website*, 2020; available from https://www.ihrec.ie/guides-and-tools/human-rights-and-equality-for-employers/what-does-the-law-say/disability-and-reasonable-accommodation/; accessed 15 April 2020.
[31] Equality Tribunal, 'Decision DEC-E2013-186', *Workplace Relations Commission Website*, December 19, 2013, [5.13], [6.1]; available from https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/cases/2013/december/dec-e2013-186.html; accessed 15 April 2020.

was "satisfied ... that the provision of a sign language interpreter for the complainant by the respondent would have given rise to **no more than a nominal cost** in the context of the respondent's overall budget."[32]

Northern Ireland and ISL Recognition

- Following on from the Good Friday Agreement's connections to BSL and ISL recognition, in March 2004 the then British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Paul Murphy, formally recognised British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) as languages in their own right.

- The NI Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) has since developed a **Sign Language Framework** to move things forward for access by deaf people to state services, but there is still no statutory protection, legal status or formal Northern Ireland Executive strategy, and a campaign for a Sign Language Act in Northern Ireland continues.[33]

- Nevertheless, the recognition of the two languages means that a common sight is both BSL and ISL interpreters being booked for public events where large numbers of Deaf people from both language communities are expected to attend.

3.   Interpreters: Facts and Figures

What is the correct job title?
- The correct full title is **'ISL / English interpreter',** a term which includes the language pair the interpreters works in. **'Interpreter'** is the best short title.

- **'Sign language interpreter'** is sometimes **not specific enough** – there are many sign languages around the world (and two on the island of Ireland).

- **Interpreters are not 'translating',** and **translators do not interpret**. *Interpreting* means working 'live' with people communicating in real time; *translation* means that the work is not live, for example, a recorded translation into ISL of a written English document.

- Please do not use **inaccurate terms** like
    - 'signer'
    - 'sign translator'[34]
    - 'sign expert'
    - 'sign assistant'
    - 'deaf interpreter' (this has a specific meaning; see Section 3)
    - 'interpretator', etc.

---

[32] Equality Tribunal, 'DEC-S2009-087 - Full Case Report', *Workplace Relations Commission Website*, December 21, 2009, [5.3], [5.4]; available from https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/cases/2009/december/dec-s2009-087-full-case-report.html; accessed 15 April 2020.

[33] Bronagh Byrne, 'Why We Need a Sign Language Act in Northern Ireland', *Queen's Policy Engagement Website*, September 6, 2019; available from http://qpol.qub.ac.uk/why-we-need-a-sign-language-act-in-ni/; accessed 28 October 2019; Department of Culture Arts and Leisure Northern Ireland, *Sign Language Framework*; Department for Communities, 'Sign Language', *Department for Communities Website*, 2019; available from https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/sign-language; accessed 28 October 2019.

[34] Translation is possible between ISL and English, but it involves the non-simultaneous rendition of ISL into written English or *vice versa*, rather than live interpretation. Translations of English material can be seen more frequently on Irish government websites and are a valuable form of access for Deaf people for whom English is a second language.

These terms can sometimes be used, but are inaccurate, and undermine the complex processes taking place within interpretation, and the professional status of interpreters.

Where are interpreters trained?

- The **four-year Degree in Deaf Studies programme (interpreting strand) in Trinity College Dublin's Centre for Deaf Studies**, is currently the only active training programme. It graduates a rough average of between 3 and 8 new Degree-holding ISL / English interpreters each year.[35] It should be noted that not all students who graduate from this course decide to enter interpreting. Those who do, may decide to interpret on a part-time basis.

- Previous qualifications that are no longer regularly offered, but that SLIS accept for membership of the Register, include Trinity College's Diploma in Irish Sign Language / English Interpreting, Queens University Belfast's MA in Translation and Interpreting (with ISL as one of the languages), as well as SLIS' accreditation processes. For more information see the ***Registration Process*** document.

How many interpreters are there in Ireland?

- As there has not been a central Register of interpreters until 2020, it has been difficult to say. It was estimated that there was a total of 111 trained or registered ISL / English interpreters in Ireland in the period leading up to 2016.[36] This figure overlaps with a number of 'accredited' interpreters, including Deaf interpreters, having been assessed by Irish Sign Link and SLIS through their Accreditation Processes, a total of 38 by 2006.[37] By 2009, this number was 51.[38] SLIS estimated in 2017 that a total of 75 interpreters are working in Ireland, a figure concurred with in research carried out in 2016 by Cormac Leonard.[39] Another recent estimate by the Centre for Deaf Studies indicates a total of approximately 141 qualified interpreters in Ireland.[40] Many trained or accredited interpreters have, unfortunately, left the field since being trained.

How many interpreters work part-time or full-time?

- Even with a Register, there is still no way of knowing accurately how many interpreters are still practising, and to what degree. Indeed, this figure seems to change as time passes. Research from 2017 indicated that the vast majority of interpreters work between 21 and 40 hours a week, with most in the 26-30 hours a week bracket.[41] In another piece of 2017 research, of 52 interpreters, 44% of respondents worked full-time, with 74% of respondents working at least 50% of their time as interpreters.[42] In the most recent *Member Survey* by CISLI, it was reported that 31% of respondents worked between 26 and 35 hours a week, but 44% worked between 16 and 25 hours a week.[43]

---

[35] See https://www.tcd.ie/slscs/cds/ for the Centre for Deaf Studies homepage.

[36] Lorraine Leeson and Lucia Venturi, *A Review of Literature and International Practice on National and Voluntary Registers for Sign Language Interpreters* (Dublin, 2017), 28; available from https://www.tcd.ie/slscs/assets/documents/news-events/SLIS_TCD CDS REVIEW of National Registers of Sign Language Interpreters March 2017.pdf; accessed 28 October 2019.

[37] Leeson and Venturi, *A Review of Literature...*

[38] Sign Language Interpreting Service, *2009 Accreditation Report* (Dublin, 2009).

[39] Sign Language Interpreting Service, *A National Skill Shortage in the Availability of Sign Language Interpreters* (Dublin, 2017); available from http://slis.ie/research-to-support-capacity-of-sign-language-interpreting-in-ireland/; accessed 28 October 2019; Cormac Leonard, *ISL / English Interpreter, Income Survey Report*, ed. Lisa Harvey, Catherine White, and Leanne Saurin (Drogheda, November 2016); available from https://app.box.com/s/lmx5m0z2062mklj9cinqd6yjyf501ixt; accessed 28 October 2019.

[40] Centre for Deaf Studies Twitter account @studies_centre, tweet dated 25 October 2019: "Just doing some maths here... did you know that there are approximately 141 qualified ISL/English interpreters in Ireland? Over 20 of these have graduated since 2016! That's as many as there were actually in practice back in 1994! #CDS18". https://twitter.com/studies_centre/status/1187811139679391745

[41] Holly Wescott and John Stewart, *Assessing Current Capacity of Sign Language Interpreting in Ireland* (Dublin, 2017); available from http://slis.ie/research-to-support-capacity-of-sign-language-interpreting-in-ireland/; accessed 28 October 2019.

[42] Leonard, *ISL / English Interpreter, Income Survey Report*.

[43] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, *CISLI Membership and Priority Questionnaire 2018, Final Report*, ed. Lisa Harvey, Ciara Grant, and Cormac Leonard (Dublin, 2018), 3; available from https://cisli.ie/2018/07/06/2018survey/; accessed 28 October 2019.

Do interpreters do further training?

- Obtaining a university qualification in interpreting isn't the end of the learning journey for an interpreter. As experts in two languages, they need to keep abreast of changes and additions to vocabulary and language variation – in both ISL and English. CPD (**Continuing Professional Development)** is a requirement for interpreters in Ireland to maintain their registration, and through the CPD they undertake, interpreters are constantly maintaining their skills and attempting to improve and broaden their knowledge and expertise. Some go on to undertake specialised CPD in areas such as medical or legal interpreting, while others may also pursue independent third-level study of topics such as medicine and law, which can contribute hugely to interpreting expertise. CPD can comprise of interpreter training workshops and seminars, but some professional interpreters have also pursued specialised postgraduate qualification in relevant fields, such as linguistics, interpreting theory, ethics and professionalism, and cultural and historical research.

Is there a register or professional association of interpreters?

All professional interpreters providing services public bodies are required to be a registered with the **Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI)**.

Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters

- The **Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters** will be established in 2020 **by Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS)**. This follows from relevant provisions in the *Irish Sign Language Act 2017* and the *National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021*.

- The Irish Sign Language Act 2017 states that **public bodies (as defined in the Act) must use the services of registered interpreters only** (regardless of which agency or organisation provides those interpreters).

- Registration implies **an expected standard of quality and professionalism** that the interpreter will bring to their work, and that they meet **a basic level of competence as an interpreter**.

- Please note that registration, by itself, does not guarantee an interpreter's ability to handle higher level or higher risk assignments, such as legal, medical, mental health, conference etc. **Specialisation Panels** will be established within the Register that demonstrate an interpreter's specialised knowledge in these kinds of specialised domains, through assessment or accredited training. There are Panels planned for
  - Healthcare Interpreting
  - Legal Interpreting
  - Deaf Interpreting
  - (potentially others in the future)

- Registered interpreters are issued with a **Registration Card** which should be produced and shown to service users on arrival at an assignment. The Registration Card will show an expiry date – make sure that their registration is still valid.

- Registered interpreters must follow the Register's *Code of Conduct*. This guides their behaviour, their role, and their decisions during an assignment. CISLI members will also follow CISLI's *Code of Ethics*.

- Registered interpreters must follow the Register's *Complaints and Mediation Processes*. Any service user – Deaf or hearing, paying client, service user, another registrant, or otherwise – can lodge a complaint against an interpreter with reference to the Code of Conduct. Highly serious proven complaints could lead to suspension or removal from the Register.

- Registered interpreters must commit to a minimum number of hours of **Continuing Professional Development** per year. Failure to complete CPD can lead to removal from the Register.

Interpreter Professional Associations

- As in other professions, there is a professional body of Irish Sign Language / English interpreters in Ireland. It is called the **Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters** or **CISLI** (www.cisli.ie). The majority of active, working ISL / English interpreters are Active (full voting) members of CISLI. CISLI is a full member of the **European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efsli)** and a full member of the **World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI).**

- Some ISL / English interpreters are also members of the body for interpreters and translators (spoken and signed languages) in Ireland, the **Irish Translators and Interpreters Association, ITIA.**

- Interpreters in **Northern Ireland** may be members of the equivalent bodies for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, called **ASLI (Association of Sign Language Interpreters)** or **VLP (Visual Language Professionals).**

- Interpreters can also **join international associations** such as **efsli or WASLI** as **Individual members**, although this does not confer any professional status or recognition upon them.

- Interpreter trade unions also exist, although none have been established here in Ireland. In the United Kingdom, the **National Union of British Sign Language Interpreters (NUBSLI)** exists to campaign for and safeguard interpreter working conditions.

- Interpreters who meet strict criteria in relation to conference interpreting can also become members of the **AIIC Sign Language Network,**[44] the branch of the sole international conference interpreter association AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters).

What is a 'Deaf Interpreter'?

- **Deaf Interpreters** are Deaf or hard-of-hearing professionals who possess fluency in ISL and have recognised skills in the interpretation/ translation of meaning between languages and cultures. Deaf interpreters provide supports that bridge unique cultural or linguistic barriers that have been recognised as existing within the Deaf community. For the most part, they will work alongside a 'hearing' interpreter colleague; their native and in-depth expertise and knowledge of Deaf culture and the Deaf community provides additional supports and skills to hearing interpreters, most of whom have learned ISL as a second language, and are therefore not native users of ISL.[45]

- Deaf interpreters often work *interlingually*, **(between two different languages),** as with 'hearing' interpreters. This can work in two different ways:

---

[44] See https://www.aiicsignlanguage.net/ for more information.
[45] Some hearing interpreters have Deaf ISL using parents and are thus 'native' ISL users. Recent research cited in Williamson states that only about 11% of American Sign Language interpreters and 13% of British Sign language interpreters had Deaf parents; Amy Williamson, 'Lost in the Shuffle: Deaf-Parented Interpreters and Their Paths to Interpreting Careers', *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 8, no. 1 (2016): 4–22. This is roughly equivalent to the proportion of ISL / English interpreters. From our informal calculations, we work out a total of 12 qualified or accredited interpreters in this country who have Deaf parents.

- o Working **between a written and a signed language**; for example, written English and ISL, used in autocue-type settings when interpreting broadcasts.

- o Working **between two different signed languages**; used when working with Deaf people from other countries who are not fluent in ISL, for example, between Irish Sign Language and American Sign Language.

- Deaf interpreters can also **work *intralingually*** with individuals with additional language needs – for example, **between different forms of Irish Sign Language**. These individuals have unique and specific language needs that a Deaf interpreter can better assist in meeting than a hearing interpreter working alone can. Such individuals have sometimes been called **'traditionally underserved'** members of the Deaf community.[46] Deaf interpreters also work with Deaf people who have specific needs.[47]

- Deaf interpreters may also work intralingually with Deaf service users who do not have additional disabilities, but use **forms or dialect of ISL unfamiliar to most hearing interpreters,** such as the variant of ISL used by elderly Deaf women (see p. 7 above).

- They can also work at *relaying* **ISL into a different form;** for example:

  - o tactile (hand-on-hand) signing for deafblind people
  - o platform events like conferences or performances, working with a 'feed' interpreter.

- As of early 2020, a total of 7 Deaf interpreters in Ireland have been accredited through the 2006 and 2009 Accreditation Processes (see p. 21-22 above).

- The new Register will provide new routes for this highly skilled and sought-after group of professionals to expand.

4.   Sourcing, Booking, and Paying for Interpreters

Where can I get an interpreter?
Currently, there are a number of different ways in which professional sign language interpreting services are provided in Ireland:

Freelance Interpreters
- In this common arrangement, **interpreters are self-employed sole traders**. Freelancers will invoice for their work, and look after their own tax affairs.

- Freelancers can **work directly** with paying clients, invoicing them directly. **The contract is between the paying client and the freelance interpreter**.

- Freelancers can also accept work from **an agency** (or indeed **multiple agencies** – see below), and invoice the agency after the work is complete. The agency will then invoice the paying client, and pay the freelance interpreter.

---

[46] Greg Long and David Anthony Clark, *Defining Traditionally Underserved Persons Who Are Deaf* (Chicago, 1993).
[47] See for example Ukawia Johnson, 'Deaf Plus: A Mother Reflects on Her Son's Experience', *Odyssey: New Directions in Deaf Education* 20 (2019): 44–7.

- Generally, **freelancers are not employed by agencies** - they are contracted by them for specific assignments.[48] However, when on an assignment booked through an agency, the interpreter is bound by the terms and conditions of the agency.

Interpreting Agencies

- Interpreters can be sourced for a paying client by a **private interpreting agency**; the interpreter remains a self-employed sole trader. In this arrangement, **the contract is between the paying client and the private agency**.

- Interpreter agencies are sometimes completely dedicated to **providing only sign language interpreting** services (e.g. **Bridge Interpreting**, **ISL Interpreting**). There are also some sign language-specific agencies with **sector-specific** knowledge, for example, **Overseas Interpreting**.

- Other interpreter agencies may provide **a mixture of spoken language and signed language** interpreting services.

- Interpreting agencies will generally impose an added **administration fee** on top of the interpreter's own fee, travel, etc. If in doubt, please do not hesitate to ask the agency for a quote or breakdown of the final bill for services.

- It is vital to remember that *not all* **private agencies will have** *all* **working interpreters on their books**. This is due to varying levels of working conditions, fee structures, etc. If your regular agency cannot locate an interpreter for an urgent assignment, you may have to go outside your service contract to obtain an interpreter. You may also have to go outside your service contract **if a particular interpreter is requested by you, or the service user, whom your agency does not work with.** In such cases it is important to work with your accounts departments and procurement office to ensure flexibility, and constant review of procurement processes in this regard, **to enable your service to comply with the ISL Act 2017** and other pieces of legislation.

- Private agencies are, essentially, profit-making private businesses. While many agencies possess much expertise in the area of ISL / English interpreting, **others may have varying levels of specific knowledge and expertise about the field of sign language interpreting.** If you are in any doubt, please contact an organisation with this relevant expertise such as CISLI, IDS or SLIS.

- **Service Level Agreements / Interpreting Service contracts:** Some paying clients such as universities, colleges, hospitals, the Courts Service etc. may have pre-existing service contracts with private interpreting agencies. Please note that your particular service may have a **pre-existing service contract** for sign language interpreters. This may or may not be the same agency that your service has a contract in place for, for spoken language interpreters.

- **Quality and Standards among Interpreters**: It is a requirement for all **procurement processes for interpreting services for public bodies** to be mindful and inclusive of the **new and established national standards** for ISL / English interpretation, **i.e. the new national Register**. All tendering processes for interpreting services should insist that **agencies which bid successfully should only use interpreters that are current members of the Register.** Please see *Irish Sign Language Act* 2017, section 7. We also draw attention to the Specialisation Panels within the Register, and recommend that **only members of these Specialisation Panels be utilised for legal, medical and Deaf interpreting,** regardless of whether the work is contracted to private agencies, freelance interpreters or staff interpreters.

---

[48] Some agencies may operate a system of exclusivity whereby all of an interpreter's work must be done through that agency, but this is not common practice in Ireland; interpreters are able to work for more than one agency, plus work directly with clients, as they see fit.

Referral Services and Information Points

- Referral services are free 'match-making' services that will put the paying client in touch with a freelance interpreter, but will not be involved in the actual booking or financial transaction. The best example is **Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS),** which runs a non-profit referral service for those looking to engage sign language interpreters. There is no charge for this referral service. SLIS will search for, and then put enquirers in touch with, a freelance interpreter, leaving the paying client and interpreter to take things from there. The interpreter will quote and invoice the paying client directly; SLIS has no involvement in the financial transaction. **In this arrangement, the contract is between the paying client and the freelance interpreter**.

- Occasionally, an interpreter who SLIS has put in contact with a paying client may wish to place the booking through a private interpreting agency, rather than work directly as a freelancer. **In this arrangement, the contract is now between the paying client and the private agency**. If this is the case, **there are GDPR implications**; please ensure that **the Deaf service user has given their consent** to have their information passed to the private agency.

- Other points of information for finding out about local interpreters are **CorkInterpreter.com** and **Interpreter-NE.ie**, which are locally- based website referral services for ISL / English interpreters in Cork and the northeast, respectively. Queries for an interpreter in these areas or for a particular locally-based interpreter can be put to these services, which also display profiles and contact details of local interpreters. There is no charge for using these websites, but as they are unstaffed, response times will depend on the interpreter in question. The interpreter will quote and invoice the paying client directly; **the contract is between the paying client and the freelance interpreter**.

Staff interpreters

- Some interpreters are **employed by organisations** on **permanent / temporary, part-time / full time contracts** of employment. In general these interpreters will work solely for these organisations within the hours of their contracts. While you generally will not be able to avail of these interpreters' services, **you may consider employing staff interpreters for your own organisation,** if your needs for interpretation are regular, and you have a high number of Deaf service users.

- Examples of Irish organisations with staff interpreters include:

  o **Catholic Institute for Deaf People** (a dedicated team of interpreters for hearing and Deaf staff and residents across multiple Deaf-related services)

  o **Sign Language Interpreter Service** (employs a team of interpreters on employment contracts in IRIS – Irish Remote Interpreting Service)

  o **Dublin City University** (a dedicated team of staff interpreters for a specific cohort of Deaf students / staff)

  o **Roslyn Park**[49] (a National Learning Network college in south Dublin with a large number of Deaf students)

  o **Houses of the Oireachtas** (Senior and Junior Interpreter posts for TV and live interpretation of Dáil and Seanad Éireann business)

---

[49] See https://www.rehab.ie/national-learning-network/our-centres/national-learning-network-roslyn-park-college.html.

What notice do I need to give?

As we have seen, there is a general shortage of qualified and competent ISL / English interpreters in Ireland, particularly outside the wider Dublin area. Please bear in mind that **interpreters, and interpreting agencies, are in very high demand at virtually all points through the year.** It should be also noted that **supply of interpreters is geographically uneven,** with most being based in the greater Dublin area.

- It is recommended that you book an interpreter with as much notice as possible. **At least two weeks in advance is recommended, but is no** guarantee of availability. **Requesting services at short notice,** whether through agencies, SLIS, or directly with interpreters, may not result in successful booking of an interpreter. Nevertheless, interpreters sometimes can be cancelled last minute, and so an attempt to book should always be made.

- In situations where a repeat appointment (for example, a regular clinic visit or a subsequent court hearing) is to be booked, **it is essential that the interpreting service be booked again as soon as possible**, rather than leaving it until the last minute:

> ***Example:*** *A Deaf patient sees a consultant oncologist with an ISL interpreter, booked and paid for by the hospital. The Deaf patient is told by the consultant to come back for a repeat appointment in 4 months' time.*
>
> - Don't leave it until a week or so before the follow-up appointment to make the interpreter booking! – **Make the new booking with the agency straight away.** You are far more likely to successfully get an interpreter.
> - OR – if the Deaf patient is happy with the interpreter they have just used, **ask that interpreter if they are free for the follow-up**. If they are, you can go back to the agency with the booking already confirmed, and the Deaf person will already have met the interpreter, reducing any anxiety or stress about having to re-explain their symptoms the next time.

- In situations where lack of notice has resulted in an interpreter not being available for an assignment, **please be direct and honest with the Deaf client about the reasons** for an interpreter not being available. Please do not blame the agency or the interpreter, or give the impression that they somehow 'let down' the Deaf person, if this was not the case.

- When you book an interpreter, you will need to specify **a start and (indicative) end time** for the assignment. **Use your booking times wisely.** Where possible, try to make sure that the Deaf person's appointment is first on the list, to ensure that interpreters' time – and your money - is not wasted by the Deaf person waiting to be called. This is particularly important if you are making a booking for a medical clinic, court appearance, or appointments, where there are long queues of other people waiting to be seen.

- Remember: **you will be paying for all the interpreter's time, not just the time in which they interpret.** Interpreters are booked for particular start and end times. Assignments that run over the booking times may incur extra charges. Please discuss this with the agency and / or interpreter at time of booking.

- If your booking overruns, they may have to leave to go to another assignment, leaving you with no interpretation. If your appointment has not even started when the interpreter has to leave, you may still be liable for payment of full interpreter fees (even if no interpreting has taken place). If there is a chance the appointment may overrun, please inform the agency and/or the interpreter at time of booking, so that they can prepare.

Can we ask an interpreter to volunteer for an interpreting assignment?

- This is not recommended. Payment is an expected part of booking an interpreter service. Interpreters are professionals, who charge for their services, just as other professionals do. **Very few interpreters will work voluntarily or *pro bono*.**[50]

How much do interpreters cost?

- Interpreter fees are not determined centrally by any organisation, but are the product of habit, tradition, regional factors and agency practices. A recent piece of research by CISLI outlines average fees charged by members across a range of categories of interpreting, which should be consulted when costing services.[51] The following factors will all influence the cost of the service:

  o Whether the interpreter is **booked through an agency or not** – agencies will generally have their own administration fees, fee structures, terms and conditions

  o **What type of assignment** the interpreter is needed for. There is generally a **distinction between 'generic' and 'high skills'** assignments. The latter covers assignments in fields such as legal, healthcare / medical, mental health, conference, Masters / PhD level education, and others. Each interpreter and agency may have differing practices around this distinction, and may use further distinctions for other categories of work.

  o The **duration of the assignment** – in Ireland, interpreters and agencies generally distinguish between **half day and full day** assignments, with the general dividing line being **assignments under / over 3 hours in duration.** Full Day rates will, in general, be equivalent to twice that of Half Day rates. Other categories and structures may exist depending on the agency, the interpreter, and the exact nature of the assignment.

- Interpreters may have **additional charges** such as:

  o **travel time, travel expenses** or **mileage**
  o **overnight accommodation**
  o **preparation time**
  o **other additional charges**, depending on the details of the assignment in question.

- **VAT:** Private interpreter agencies, and some freelance interpreters, may charge VAT of 23% on top of their services.

- **Cancellation fees:** Please be aware that cancellation fees will generally be applicable if you cancel an assignment with insufficient notice. Cancellation periods, after which some form of payment will be necessary, can range from two weeks to a few days. Please consult the agency or interpreter at time of booking.

How does the payment process work?

- Most agencies and interpreters will want to send a **quote** to the organisation, so that all parties are aware of the total cost of the service, the terms and conditions of the agency or interpreter, etc. Please try to give the agency or interpreter the appropriate **contact details for your finance / accounts payable** section **before** the assignment takes place.

---

[50] An ISL interpreter group based in the Northeast cite an article by British BSL interpreter Alan Haythornthwaite, which deftly summarizes the reasons why. "Providing an interpreting service is the way we make our living. If we give away our services for free, or spend too much time responding to requests for free services, we cannot make a living." See https://interpreter-ne.ie/probono/.

[51] Leanne Saurin and Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, *Interpreter Fees Survey Report*, December 2019; available from https://cisli.ie/2019/12/10/cisli-interpreter-fees-survey-report-2019/; accessed 2 April 2020.

- **Prompt payment** of interpreters ensures their continued willingness to accept work from paying clients. As with any profession, late payments by a client can lead to other professionals divulging this to their colleagues, leading to the profession becoming less willing to work with that particular client. Whether or not you are in charge of payment of the interpreter, late payments by your organisation could mean you are less likely to be able to secure the services of an interpreter in future.

- **Please liaise with your Accounts Payable department or personnel** to ensure that payment to the interpreter is as swift and smooth as possible. The interpreter or agency should be supplied as soon as possible with the following:

    o **Contact details** and **accounts contact person** to liaise with regarding payment

    o **Purchase Order number** (if needed)

    o **Vendor Setup** form (if needed)

- The interpreter or agency should be facilitated in sending in the following documentation to your finance / accounts payable department:

    o A **Quote** for services, if applicable

    o Up to date **tax clearance certificate**

    o Form or other information required to set up the interpreter or agency as a **Vendor**

    o **Invoice** containing all relevant information needed for payment, including valid Purchase Order number and IBAN and BIC codes, where applicable

- Your accounts / finance section may need the interpreter or agency to complete paperwork to **register them as a new supplier;** please do all you can to facilitate this process.

- On completion of the assignment, an **invoice** will generally be sent to the paying client organisation. This will be from **either** the **freelance interpreter** or the **interpreting agency**, depending on who the contract was with.

- Some interpreters may accept **payment in cash or by cheque on the day**, but if you intend to do this, please alert the interpreter to this, in case they would prefer payment by a different means.

- Paying the invoice must comply with customary business practice and be paid generally within 30 days. If you are a relevant body, please be aware of your obligations under the **Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997**.[52] From the 1st January 2019, the late payment interest rate applicable to bodies under this Act is **8% per annum** (based on the ECB rate of 0.00% plus the margin of 8%) That rate equates to **a daily rate of 0.022%.**[53]

---

[52] Oireachtas, 'Prompt Payment of Accounts Act', *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 1997; available from http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1997/act/31/enacted/en/html; accessed 15 April 2020.
[53] Enterprise Ireland, https://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/About-Us/Services/Prompt-Payment-Policy/.

Are there grants or funding available elsewhere?

In most cases, Deaf people do not pay the cost of the interpreter. **Interpreting services should be paid for by the organisation or individual providing a service,** as a reasonable accommodation under the *Equal Status Act*. There can be some exceptions; a limited number of funding schemes exist whereby interpreting can be provided at no cost, viz.:

- **SLIS Primary Care Access Scheme**: For **Deaf people who attend their GP** and have a **medical card**, SLIS has secured HSE funding to book and pay for an interpreter for the appointment. The interpreter is paid in full by the HSE via SLIS. Other types of appointments can be covered by this scheme, e.g. opticians, podiatrists, etc. This service is not yet available for Deaf people without a medical card.[54]

- **SLIS Social Fund:** SLIS can arrange interpreters for **funerals** and certain **hardship cases**. In the vast majority of cases, Deaf people whose family members have passed away can avail of a funeral interpreter paid for by SLIS. The booking of the interpreter can be made by the Deaf person, the funeral director, the interpreter themselves (if approached by the Deaf person), or anyone else involved.[55]

- **SLIS Social Inclusion scheme**:

- **Job Interview Interpreter Grant**: Deaf jobseekers can apply for a Government grant to pay for **an interpreter at job interviews.** The JIIG can also be used to pay for an interpreter during the induction period, for which a maximum of three hours interpreter support is available. The JIIG can be utilised for as many interviews as a Deaf jobseeker requires. Please note:

  o A JIIG can be used only to pay for an interpreter in a job interview or an induction with a private-sector employer. The JIIG cannot be granted if the interview or induction is with a public-sector employer; in this case, the employer pays for the interpreter. Similarly, if the interview or induction is publicly funded, for example, under the Community Employment Scheme, then the interpretation costs are met by the public-sector body that is funding the employment.

  o Although the Deaf interviewee is nominally responsible for selecting and booking the interpreter, but it greatly speeds things up for the interviewer to assist in this process.[56]

- **Colleges and Universities:** the **Fund for Students with Disabilities** is an annual fund managed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), on behalf of the Department of Education and Science, to support students with disabilities in higher and further education. It covers a wide range of colleges, universities, and other educational and training institutions. The purpose of the FSD is to assist further and higher education institutions in ensuring students with disabilities have the necessary assistance and equipment to enable them access, fully participate in and successfully complete their chosen course of study. **This fund covers sign language interpreters,** but only for **full-time, registered students**, for **academic contact hours only**. At present it does not include additional services a student may require, such as tutorials, workshops within the learning development centres, clubs and societies, counselling services, etc.[57]

---

[54] For full details, visit http://slis.ie/services/#gp-access.
[55] For full details, please visit http://slis.ie/services/#social-fund.
[56] For more information see: Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 'Job Interview Interpreter Grant', *Gov.Ie Website*, 2020; available from https://www.gov.ie/en/service/4c4ce4-job-interview-interpreter-grant/; accessed 15 April 2020; Citizens Information Board, 'Job Interview Interpreter Grant', *CIB Website*, February 25, 2020; available from https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/employment_and_disability/job_interview_interpreter_grant_scheme.html; accessed 15 April 2020.
[57] Caroline McGrotty, 'The Unheard Voice in Higher Education: Research on Deaf Students and Irish Sign Language Interpreting in Higher Education', *AHEAD Journal: A Review of Inclusive Education & Employment Practices*, 2017; available from https://ahead.ie/journal/The-Unheard-Voice-in-Higher-Education-Research-on-Deaf-Students-and-Irish-Sign-Language-Interpreting-in-Higher-Education; accessed 28 October 2019; Higher Education Authority (HEA), *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019* (Dublin, 2015); available from https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/National-Plan-for-Equity-of-Access-to-Higher-Education-2015-2019.pdf; accessed 28 October 2019; 'Fund for Students with Disabilities', *Studentfinance.Ie*, 2019; available from https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/student-finance/fund-for-students-with-disabilities/; accessed 28 October 2019; Lorraine Leeson, 'Interpreters in Tertiary Educational Settings in Ireland', in *Working with the Deaf Community: Education, Mental Health and Interpreting*, ed. Lorraine Leeson and Miriam Vermeerbergen (Dublin, 2012).

- **Criminal Legal Aid:** A solicitor and client working within criminal legal aid may need to engage the services of an interpreter and/or a translator. There is a State funding scheme for sign (or spoken) language interpreters which can cover this. There are a number of conditions attached:

  o Where the Courts Service provides court interpreters, it is of critical importance that the use of interpretation/translation companies engaged by the solicitor is limited to what is absolutely necessary in defence of the client.

  o Solicitors should ensure that any invoices submitted refer only to the time during which the interpreter has acted on behalf of the defence.

  o The Criminal Legal Aid Scheme does not cover interpretation/translation services provided for in the court, as these services are covered by a separate contract arranged by the Courts Service.

  o "An interpreter must have linguistic competence, a professional attitude, an understanding of the legal process and of their duties and must be impartial and confidential."[58]

5.   Picking the Right Interpreter

- **Interpreting is a human profession.** As such, some interpreters will be more effective in a given situation than others. Given the vast complexity of many sign language interpreting assignments, and the sensitivity of many scenarios where an interpreter is required, careful consideration must be given to who the interpreter is to be – even aside from questions of skill and expertise. Irish Sign Language is an embodied language, and **interpreting is a set of human, not mechanical, processes** that mean the interpretation is constantly interacting with the linguistic, cultural, and emotional dynamics of a situation. Interpreters – despite their impartiality – are not impassive robots. They are human beings with varying levels of skill, knowledge, aptitude, and suitability for any given assignment.

- The Deaf community is very small, but **highly complex and diverse in terms of language usage**. Not all interpreters are experts in the sub-fields of vocabulary or language variation that exist within the community.

- For these reasons, it is highly important to consider in advance factors relating to both **the identity of the Deaf service user** and **the identity of the interpreter**, in order to make the most effective match, and avoid miscommunications or unsuccessful interpreted encounters.

Which Interpreter should I Use?

You should always give some thought to the interpreter that you book. Here are some important factors to consider.

- **Deaf service user's personal preference:** if a Deaf service user is more comfortable to use a certain interpreter or set of interpreters, this should always be facilitated. You can request a particular interpreter(s) from an agency, or contact the interpreter(s) yourself to secure their services.

---

[58] Department of Justice and Equality (Courts Policy Division), *Procedures Governing The Payment Of Criminal Legal Aid Fees*, 2015; available from http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE PAYMENT OF CRIMINAL LEGAL AID FEES.pdf/Files/PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE PAYMENT OF CRIMINAL LEGAL AID FEES.pdf; accessed 28 October 2019. Service providers should be aware that the rates payable to interpreters for Criminal Legal Aid have been unchanged since 2019, and are considered by the vast majority of working ISL / English interpreters to be extremely low.

- **Specialisations:** The SLIS National Register, following international and indeed Irish precedent, deals with interpreting in certain domains as specialised, particularly those where there is a particular complexity in subject matter, and / or where misinterpretation would mean potentially serious consequences for the life outcomes of users of the service. Interpreters working in such fields require excellent general ability in interpreting between ISL and English, and also particular knowledge of a field of interpreting. The National Register will establish **Specialisation Panels** for such domains of interpreting (such as **medical interpreting** and **legal interpreting**), where the Register recommends that only members of these Panels provide interpreting services for those settings. Registered interpreters who are members of these Panels will be required to demonstrate that they possess a certain level of interpreting skill plus specialised knowledge of the domain of interpreting.

- **Particular expertise**: While not recognised in the Register as a domain of Specialisation, certain other kinds of interpreting may require the interpreter to possess prior expertise, training, or study, such as the following:

  - Performance interpreting (i.e. theatre, broadcast, music)
  - Conference interpreting
  - Mental health interpreting
  - Deaf Blind interpreting
  - Interpreting for Deaf children
  - Interpreting in certain postgraduate educational settings

- **Gender and Sexuality:** Most interpreting assignments can be handled without regard to the gender of the interpreter. In certain situations, however, the Deaf service user will prefer an interpreter of the same gender, or refuse to accept an interpreter of a particular gender. These may include:

  - **medical scenarios** (especially where the Deaf service user may need to partially or completely disrobe, or discuss intimate medical details)

  - **legal scenarios** (where a Deaf service user may need to recount intimate details of past sexual activity or abuse)

  - **counselling / mental health** scenarios (for similar reasons as above).

  Please bear in mind that **the majority of ISL / English interpreters are female;** male interpreters in certain areas of Ireland may be difficult to source, and may need to travel further to the assignment. For assignments for LGBT cultural events or those that deal with sensitive aspects of LGBTQI+ health, the Deaf LGBTQ community in Ireland may have a preference for interpreters who are themselves LGBTQ and are familiar with Gay Sign Variation (GSV).

- **Age:** Like all languages, Irish Sign Language changes as time progresses. ISL has a particularly complex history over the last 75 years or so. Major changes in Deaf education have resulted in members of the Irish Deaf community using many age- and gender-based variations of ISL. There can be significant differences in how older, middle-aged and younger Deaf people use ISL. Older Deaf people are often described as using 'Old ISL', which can be misleading, but it generally means they will use far less mouth patterns and more finger spelling of words than younger Deaf people. Older Deaf women may use significantly different vocabulary items than Deaf men. For these reasons, it is important in some cases that an interpreter has a rough idea of **the age of the Deaf client** in advance, so the interpreter can judge if they have the skills in that particular variant of ISL to do the job.

- **Country of Origin:** Some Deaf people in Ireland have come from countries where a different signed language is used. This can be the case even when their country of origin is another English-speaking country. **The UK (including most of Northern Ireland), the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa all use signed languages that are <u>different from ISL</u>** and in many cases, unintelligible to someone with no experience of that language. Other signed languages that may be used by deaf people in Ireland include Russian Sign Language, Latvian Sign Language, Lithuanian Sign Language, Polish Sign Language and others. Deaf people in Ireland originating from these and other countries may be unable to understand ISL. For this reason, such Deaf service users may need an **interpreter with expertise in the other signed language**, in e.g. British Sign Language (BSL), American Sign Language (ASL), or International Sign (IS). However, while some interpreters in Ireland are skilled in the use of ASL, BSL or IS (International Sign), qualified interpreters in Ireland will generally not possess skills in e.g. Eastern European signed languages. Therefore, a **Deaf-hearing interpreter team** utilising a version of International Sign (IS) may be needed for effective communication.

- **Deaf service user's fluency in Irish Sign Language:** Because of a long and complex history of educational provision for Deaf people, not all deaf people may be fluent enough in ISL to understand, or be understood by, most interpreters. The Deaf service user may be more fluent in English, or a version of signing that is heavily influenced by English grammar (often known as **'Signed English'**). This may require the interpreter working with them to possess skills and prior experience working with 'Signed English', and this need should be signalled to the agency or interpreter before booking. Alternatively, in cases where a Deaf service user's fluency in ISL is in doubt, a **Deaf-hearing interpreting team** may assist in communication.

- **Learning difficulties / disabilities:** A Deaf service user's use of language may be non-standard if they have a learning disability or difficulty. Interpreting for a Deaf person under such circumstances is a difficult task for any interpreter.

  At the time of booking, it should be relayed to the agency or freelance interpreter that these issues are present, and an interpreter with appropriate experience, skills and training in working in such settings should be requested.

  In many such scenarios a Deaf-hearing interpreter team may be necessary for the assignment to take place. Please note: the precedent of using a Deaf-hearing interpreter team, when found to be successful, should be followed for all future assignments with the same Deaf service user.

- **Mental health issues:** A Deaf service user's use of language may be non-standard, or highly idiosyncratic, if they have any mental health issues, or are on medication for mental health issues. Interpreting for a Deaf person under such circumstances is a highly difficult task for any interpreter, and mental health interpreting is recognised as a specialised field of interpreting in other countries. (see later)

  At the time of booking, it should be relayed to the agency or freelance interpreter that these issues are present, and an interpreter with appropriate experience, skills and training in working in such settings should be requested.

  In many such scenarios a Deaf-hearing interpreter team will assist communication, and may even be necessary for the assignment to take place at all. Please note: the precedent of using a Deaf-hearing interpreter team, when found to be successful, should be followed for all future assignments with the same Deaf service user.

What if the interpreter knows the Deaf person?

- There is a high likelihood that regardless of what interpreter you pick, the Deaf service user will know them already. In Ireland, it is almost unavoidable, given the extremely small size of the Irish Deaf community - and even smaller pool of interpreters in Ireland. There will often be pre-existing relationships between many

interpreters and Deaf people, including family relationships, close friendships, workplace relationships, and others.

- When you are making the booking, **providing the name of the Deaf and hearing service users (if known)** is a clear way to ensure that the interpreter can take on the assignment with certainty there will be no conflict of interest. In terms of GDPR concerns, the Register's *Code of Conduct* assures service users that interpreters will do nothing to compromise a service user's privacy and confidentiality.
[]
- Please note that if a serious conflict of interest arises during an assignment, then the *Code of Conduct* allows for the interpreter, once they are aware of a conflict, to absent themselves from a situation. To help avoid this, please give serious consideration to passing on the name of the Deaf person to the interpreter, and indeed vice versa.

Should the Deaf service user be able to select who they want to interpret?

- Yes! Where it is feasible and permissible, **ask the Deaf person which interpreter they would be comfortable with**. Most agencies allow for a booking to request one or a number of preferred interpreters; the agency will check first that these interpreters are available, before offering the booking to someone else.

- The Deaf service user may also ask that **particular interpreters *not* be used** (whether that interpreter has previously been involved in the situation or otherwise), for the reasons given above or other reasons. **It is crucial that the wishes of the Deaf person be respected in this regard at all times.** The reasons for a service used not wanting to use a particular interpreter should be respected, and not be questioned.

Should I tell the Deaf service user who the interpreter will be?

- **Yes! - Wherever this is possible.** Regardless of how your interpreter is sourced, you should **obtain the name of the interpreter in advance**. If in doubt, check the name of the interpreter against the online Register of Interpreters.

- It is **considered best practice** to **inform the Deaf service user** of the name of the interpreter and the agency they are booked with (or if they have been booked directly / sourced via SLIS Referrals). Especially for legal and medical situations, it puts the Deaf service user at ease when they know who will be interpreting for them. They can look up the interpreter's profile page on the **online Register Directory**. If the identity, gender, or any other aspect of the interpreter is an issue, it also allows the Deaf service user to raise this with you and arrange a replacement.

- **Passing on contact details** may be necessary if, for example, the Deaf service user is presenting at a conference and wishes to arrange preparation with the interpreter in advance. However, be mindful of **GDPR considerations**. Do not give the interpreter's contact details to any service user, in advance or afterwards, unless it has been requested and the interpreter has consented. Similarly, if the interpreter for whatever reason needs the contact details of the Deaf person in advance, **please obtain consent from the Deaf service user** before passing this on.

Should I book the same interpreter for the next assignment?

- Continuity is hugely important for the comfort of the Deaf service users, and indeed everyone within the same setting. Where possible, and where the Deaf service user gives their consent, **please try to book the same interpreter for follow-up appointments, hearings, meetings** etc. You can request the same interpreter to be booked by the agency.

Will the interpreter have gone through Garda Vetting?

- For settings where the interpreter may have contact with children and / or vulnerable adults, **it is best to ensure the interpreter has undergone Garda Vetting.**

- Garda Vetting will be **a mandatory aspect of the National Register of Sign language Interpreters**, where all registrants will have undergone (or will undergo immediately upon registration) a Garda Vetting process, and this can be confirmed on their Register Directory profile page.

- Garda Vetting checks may also be **provided by interpreting agencies**. Please inquire about this when making your booking.

- If your organisation requires Garda Vetting for interpreters, and you **book a freelance interpreter directly**, please consult with the interpreter to arrange any Garda Vetting process your organisation requires.

Will the interpreter have Professional Indemnity Insurance?

- Some organisations may seek that interpreters providing a service to them possess professional indemnity insurance, malpractice insurance, public liability insurance, etc. As sign language interpreting is a very new profession, **a very small number of freelance interpreters avail of personal indemnity insurance.**

- **CISLI members** can avail of a special package with **O'Brien Finlay Insurance brokers** for €105 per year per person. This rate is exclusive to CISLI Active members, and offers indemnity cover, malpractice and public liability insurance, with total cover of up to €6,500,000.[59]

- **Private interpreting agencies** may provide their own indemnity insurance which covers all bookings through that agency. Please inquire about this when making your booking.

- If your organisation requires indemnity cover for interpreters, and you **book a freelance interpreter directly**, please consult with the interpreter to arrange any indemnification process your organisation requires.

6.   Different Arrangements for Interpreting

Depending on the type of event you need an interpreter for, there will be different configurations of interpreters needed.

Interpreters working alone

- An interpreter can work alone for most **generic, non-specialised assignments, lasting up to an hour** maximum. Beyond an hour, and possibly before this, breaks **must** be given (see Section 10).

- What may seem a 'generic' or 'straightforward' assignment to people familiar with a setting, may present all kinds of complexities to an interpreter. **Please trust the expert judgement of the interpreter** (and agency) if it is recommended to you that more than one interpreter is required for your assignment.

Interpreter Team (2 hearing interpreters)

- Two interpreters must be used for

    o   sessions that are longer than 1.5 hours in duration, or

---

[59] See CISLI Update, April 2012: https://cisli.ie/2012/04/17/cisli-member-update-april-2012/

- o information-heavy, dense or complex assignments. Again, what may seem a 'straightforward' assignment to people familiar with a setting, may present all kinds of complexities to an interpreter. **Please trust the expert judgement of the interpreter** in this regard.

- The two team interpreters will work in tandem with each other**, 'swapping'** to maintain a high quality standard of interpretation. They will take turns of anywhere **between 10 to 30 minutes each**, depending on the setting. The **'off task' interpreter** is not technically on a 'break,' but instead, monitors the output of the **'on task' interpreter,** assisting with any clarifications, or signalling if an omission or error is made.

- The team interpreters sometimes take **written notes** during the assignment for their own use – notes of important terms, figures or concepts mentioned during the assignment, and also used to assist in giving feedback to each other after the event. These notes will be destroyed after the event.

- It is obviously ideal that the same two interpreters are *in situ* for the entire event. Occasionally, due to issue of interpreter supply, **the interpreter team may consist of different interpreters at different times of the day.** The agency or interpreter will discuss these issues with you at time of booking.

Interpreter Team (3+ hearing interpreters)

- Certain kinds of events are best suited for teams of 3 or more interpreters. Events with multiple Deaf attendees may require a larger team of interpreters, but may not. It is far more likely that a larger team will be needed because of the complexity of the material, the length of the day, possible breakout sessions etc. Please liaise with the interpreter/agency and Deaf attendees in advance to establish exactly what the needs are. Consider factors such as:

  - o **Duration** – long or particularly intensive conferences or other long events may need more than two interpreters to facilitate breaks.

  - o **Multiple 'breakout sessions'** – if more than one Deaf person is present, and there are multiple breakout sessions that last more than thirty minutes, it is best to ensure a team of 2 interpreters is present per breakout session. Please consult with Deaf service users in advance to optimise this arrangement. **Please do not assume (or insist) that all Deaf attendees will attend the same breakout session.**

Interpreter Team (Deaf / hearing)

- o For some assignments relating to Deaf non-Irish nationals, or Deaf individuals who have little knowledge of English, it may be necessary to use the skills of a Deaf Interpreter in tandem with a hearing ISL/ English interpreter. This is particularly relevant for court work, work in Garda stations, and in mental health settings.

Remote (Video) Interpreting

Types of Remote Interpreting

Remote interpreting, or video interpreting, can be divided into two types:

- **A Video Relay Service (VRS**) makes telephone calls accessible to both hearing and deaf people. VRS works by connecting two parties in two separate locations: the hearing party using a standard telephone connection, and the deaf party using a video link (from an internet enabled device). The deaf party may also be in the same location as the interpreter. Examples of using VRS are:
  - o A deaf person calling their GP to make an appointment

       o   A hearing person contacting a deaf relative, friend or colleague
       o   A deaf person using telephone banking, or customer services telephone support

- **Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)** refers to non-telephone settings, where a remote interpreter is introduced to the conversation via a web-based video link. Typical examples of where you might see this kind of interaction are:
  - One to one staff meetings with a colleague
  - Appointments at a local authority or government office / agency
  - Last-minute healthcare appointments
  - One to one support with tutor in Classroom settings
  - **Remote meetings**, where all participants are in different locations

Remote Interpreting - General
VRI or VRS services can also be offered in the following ways:

- **IRIS (Irish Remote Interpreting Service)** – a service offered by SLIS (see below)

- **Freelance interpreters** have offered remote interpreting before on an individual basis, if their physical presence is impossible.

- **Other VRS / VRI services** exist in the United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland), including **SignLive**.[60] However, to date, ISL services appear not to have been offered on these platforms.

- Other VRI/VRS services or freelance interpreters **may use other software packages or apps** such as WhatsApp, Zoom, FaceTime, or custom downloadable apps.

Quality Issues
There are particular issues around **quality** when it comes to remote interpreting:

- **Technology:** Access to high speed broadband and a good quality webcam(s) will be essential for remote interpreting to work. Please consult with the interpreting service / interpreter and Deaf user to ensure that speed of connection and quality of transmission is sufficient before starting the remote interpreted meeting.

- **Preparation:** Preparation is just as important for VRI and VRS settings as in face to face interpreted settings.[61] Even a short meeting via VRI or VRS can be highly difficult for an interpreter if they are missing context or background information. Please treat remote interpreted settings just as you would for face-to-face settings, and provide ample preparation materials to the interpreter (see Section 7).

- **Background and Clothing:** As with face-to-face interpreting, certain backgrounds and / or clothing can cause issues for remote interpretation. Interpreting is usually done face-to-face in a 3-D manner, and the transition to a 'flat', 2-D medium means that visual cues should be as clear as possible. Try to ensure that backgrounds are dark and plain, the Deaf service user / interpreter are well lit, and that there are no visual distractions.

- **Breaks and Fatigue:** VRS and VRI-type interpreting settings can be stressful for interpreters. Due to these "high levels of stress … many interpreters experience burnout in their work as a result".[62] "**Remote interpreting causes interpreter fatigue more rapidly than with traditional face-to-face interpreting**... Fatigue factors affect the quality of the interpretation, requiring shorter lengths of time interpreting prior to alternating

---

[60] See https://signlive.co.uk/.
[61] Anne Clarke, *Evaluation of the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS)*, 2016, 14; available from https://aiic.net/page/7821/guidelines-for-positioning-of-sign-language-interpreters-in-conferences-including-web-streaming/lang/1; accessed 9 April 2020; Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, *Video Remote Interpreting*, 2010, 9; available from http://www.rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/; accessed 6 April 2020.
[62] Kathryn Bower, 'Stress and Burnout in Video Relay Service (VRS) Interpreting', *Journal of Interpretation* 24, no. 1 (2015): 14.

interpreters. If an interpreter is working alone, it may be necessary to arrange frequent rest breaks."[63] VRI and VRS interpreters may therefore need more frequent breaks than face-to-face interpreters. Please work with the interpreter and the VRS service to ensure this, as "All stakeholders involved in this industry have a responsibility to implement changes allowing interpreters to work in an environment that does not result in stress and burnout."[64]

Deaf Service User – Comfort and Consent

- In the United States and elsewhere, Deaf communities have expressed concern that over-dependence on technology for interpreting leads service providers to make inappropriate decisions about when and where to use VRI. "The deaf and hard of hearing community has become increasingly concerned about the over-reliance on this new technology without a thorough examination and dialogue on the appropriateness of the service. Moreover, because so many deaf and hard of hearing individuals have had adverse experiences in hospitals that rely on VRI technology, there have been numerous lawsuits against hospitals seeking to curtail such overuse of VRI."[65]

- Consideration must therefore be given to **Deaf service users' comfort with VRI** before offering it as an option, as well as **the needs of the interpreter**: "Research has repeatedly shown how interpreting is already a complex and imperfect exercise. Therefore, when adding technology to the interaction this must be done in a sensitive way that improves or preserves how people interact and receive public services."[66] Therefore, we recommend that **service providers consult with potential users of the service** to determine the suitability of a video service, as opposed to a face-to-face interpreter provision – which may be more appropriate for that situation.

- Especially in an Irish context, please note: **public bodies in Ireland who wish to use remote interpreting can do so, but this must be with the consent of the Deaf service user.** Public bodies should be aware of **the Irish Sign Language Act, Section 6 (4):** "Provision of or availing of a remote, web-based service shall, *if the Irish Sign Language user* consents, be sufficient to meet the obligations of a public body under this section."[67] Ensure written consent is obtained and documented before arrangements are made to book a remote interpreting service. If the Deaf ISL user does not wish to use a remote service, please arrange for a face-to-face interpreter service as above.

Remote Meetings

Especially after the global Covid-19 outbreak, many workplaces or meetings are moving to remote meetings of hearing participants which may feature Deaf employees. Interpreters can facilitate such meetings, which often utilise Zoom as the software that manages such meetings. We have included some tips for such interpreted meetings where they may be no 'face to face' contact between participants at all.

Procedures for Remote Meetings

- Begin the meeting with everyone visible on camera (e.g. use Gallery View if using Zoom).

- The Chairperson should then:
    - o   introduce themselves and the interpreters

    - o   explains how the meeting will work (i.e. these guidelines)

    - o   appoint designated persons to be visible on camera (i.e. chair & 'active visible' interpreter)

---

[63] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, *Video Remote Interpreting*.
[64] Bower, 'Stress and Burnout in VRS', 14.
[65] National Association of the Deaf and Deaf Seniors of America (DSA), *Position Statement on Minimum Standards for Video Remote Interpreting Services in Medical Settings*, *NAD Website*, July 1, 2016; available from https://www.nad.org/about-us/position-statements/minimum-standards-for-video-remote-interpreting-services-in-medical-settings/; accessed 6 April 2020.
[66] ASLI (Association of Sign Language Interpreters), *ASLI's Position Paper on the Use of Video Interpreting Services for Public Services*, April 2019, 1; available from https://asli.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ASLI-VMI-position-paper-final.pdf; accessed 6 April 2020.
[67] Oireachtas, 'Irish Sign Language Act 2017' Section 6(4).

  - asks everyone else to turn their video and audio off. Note: This supports easier visibility and focus for all, helps internet bandwidth issues and effective chairing.

- Hearing participants should use spoken English during meetings (unless you are a deaf sign language user yourself). This makes switching between ISL and English easier for the interpreters, and free up bandwidth.

- Only turn on your video and/or audio and raise your hand if you want to contribute.

- Wait until the Chairperson has given the go-ahead before you start to contribute.

- Turn your video off once you finish.[68]

Tips for Interpreted Remote Meetings

- Reinforce eye breaks for ALL participants (having cameras off supports this, reducing multiple visibility and distractions). Individuals may have to deal with multiple screens, and could be restricted in where they are positioned in their homes, due to the strength of internet connection.

- Issue more regular breaks; for meetings over an hour, have a break every 30 mins.

- Virtual meetings with mixed modalities can be challenging. Everyone should watch the interpreter, who will indicate if the contributor needs to hold/slow down for smoother information relay, for adjusting technical settings (i.e. pinned video settings), or if there is a technical breakdown.

- There are delays ['lag-time'] in relaying between ISL-English and English-ISL, and Deaf ISL users often fall behind in receiving information. The Chair must ensure inclusive practice throughout the meeting.

- ONLY interrupt if it is URGENT – e.g. if interpreters miss information, or if the internet connection fails.[69]

Suitability of VRI

VRI, whether offered through IRIS or another service, is **not suitable for all interpreted settings.** A review of the IRIS service in 2016 found that **VRI is not deemed suitable in the following**:

- Scenarios dealing with complex issues
- For multi-party conversations with no turn-taking protocols in place
- where sensitive issues are being discussed (e.g. mental health, initial meetings with a health consultant)
- when a person is receiving bad news (e.g. diagnosis of a terminal illness)
- where children are involved
- where a secondary disability or injury is present that impairs a person's ability to use technology
- where certain mental health issues are present (e.g. cognitive impairment)
- when a person is heavily medicated or intoxicated
- where sight translation is necessary (i.e. the direct interpretation from written English documents into ISL)
- where the person is unable to remain in the 'space' required for effective VRI
- for situations where acoustics for the interpreter to hear are poor or for highly visual classes (e.g. maths, art) using whiteboards.[70]

---

[68] Deafness Cognition and Language Research Centre (DCAL), *Accessible Remote Working Guide for BSL Interpreters, Deaf and Hearing Participants*, 2020; available from https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dcal/sites/dcal/files/remote_working_guidelines_dcal_april_2020.pdf; accessed 6 April 2020.

[69] Deafness Cognition and Language Research Centre (DCAL), *Accessible Remote Working Guide*.

[70] Clarke, *Evaluation of the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS)*, 15.

Some other situations where video interpreting has been defined by **ASLI (the Association of Sign Language Interpreters**, based in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) as **not appropriate for video interpreting** are:

- Settings with multiple participants, involving fast paced exchanges of turn and no formal structure, such as classroom teaching or board meetings
- Highly emotional or potentially volatile settings, such as counselling or therapy
- Settings involving a deaf user with an additional disability, such as a visual impairment or learning disability
- Police suspect/witness interviews
- Court hearings
- Psychiatric assessments
- Mental Health tribunals or discharge assessments
- Emergency Mental Health Assessment (that may involve an individual being sectioned)
- Workplace tribunals or disciplinary meetings
- Immigration interviews

In many scenarios such as those above, **face to face interpreting is the most appropriate way to provide interpretation**. Some factors that ASLI have listed to help to determine whether VRI is suitable or not are:

- The number of people participating in the call

- The speed of interaction

- The use of additional resources (e.g. power-points, handouts, documents, videos, etc.), which will be used throughout the call

- The visual and acoustic quality from the incoming caller or call receiver

- The sensitivity of the content being discussed

- The severity and long-term consequence on the individual's life once the call has ended.[71]

IRIS (Irish Remote Interpreting Service)

- The best known Irish VRI and VRS service is **IRIS, the Irish Remote Interpreting Service**. This is a service based within SLIS that uses a team of employed remote interpreters, based in video interpreting booths in the SLIS offices in Cabra's Deaf Village Ireland. Deaf service users can book online to use the VRS service either remotely, or onsite, to make telephone calls, and for particular kinds of meetings, IRIS can also offer VRI interpreting services. IRIS offers services for the following kinds of settings:

  - Phone calls (VRS service)
  - Information Enquiries
  - Parent-teacher meetings
  - Interviews
  - Phone calls to book GP appointments
  - Short meetings (where suitable, and if duration is up to about 20 minutes; see below)

  IRIS is not suitable for large meetings, assignments over 20 minutes long, or mental health settings. For health and safety reasons, IRIS assignments are allocated into 22-minute slots. This allows the interpreter necessary rest breaks in order to provide a quality service. See below.

---

[71] ASLI (Association of Sign Language Interpreters), *ASLI's Position Paper on the Use of Video Interpreting Services for Public Services*, 1–3.

- IRIS is a complementary service offered by SLIS which is not intended to replace face-to-face interpreting. Clear guidelines are given to ensure that IRIS is utilised only where appropriate. SLIS will clearly inform clients which situations a face-to-face interpreter should be used in.

- **Some types of assignment are unsuitable for IRIS**, including certain medical assignments and others. IRIS also unsuitable if the Deaf person is unable to see the screen due to illness/injury/vision difficulty. Suitability of the IRIS service will be assessed on a case by case basis. A good rule of thumb for whether an interpreted scenario can be carried out via remote (video) interpreting, is to consider the description given in a 2015 evaluation of IRIS: "**its primary use is for conversations that are relatively simple, of short duration, involving only two parties and where it is preferable not have another person in the room**."[72] See below for more guidelines regarding VRI suitability in general.

- More information on the IRIS service can be found here:
  - Website and information: https://slis.ie/iris/#remote-interpreting-iris
  - Make a booking or purchase: https://iris2.gettimely.com/

Before the IRIS appointment:[73]

- The **IRIS service is currently available through Skype for Business only.** IRIS currently **does not use other videoconferencing software or apps.** Ensure you have **sufficiently fast broadband speed** to make the call successfully. The IRIS service will be able to advise in this regard. Using wireless internet can reduce the picture quality, and is not recommended.

- Make sure you have a **working webcam, microphone** and **speaker** (built in or external).

- Don't position yourself in a noisy environment e.g. in an open plan office, as **this will interfere with sound quality.**

- Don't position the signer in an overly dark area, or in front of a window or a bright light when on camera, as **this will interfere with the visual quality.**

- Arrange and carry out a **test call** with IRIS before the actual assignment to ensure everything is working properly (screen / microphone / speakers etc). Also, be sure to read all guidance on how to use the IRIS service that will be provided when you make an appointment.

- Be sure to inform the IRIS interpreters of **all relevant background information**. For example:

  - What is the purpose of the meeting?
  - Who will be present in the room?
  - Is this being the first time the client and the Deaf client are to meet?

---

[72] Clarke, *Evaluation of the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS)*, 15.
[73] Sign Language Interpreting Service, *IRIS Best Practice*, 2020.

- Also provide the IRIS interpreter with **as much preparatory material as possible** in advance; for example, interview questions and the candidate's CV, etc. prior to an interview. If documents are to be referred to or indicated to during an assignment, please provide copies of these to the IRIS interpreter in advance; referring to documents that cannot be seen by the interpreter may render the interpreted setting inappropriate for IRIS.

- If the Deaf person is using the service while present in your location, adjust your camera so the person's signing can be clearly seen from the tip of the head to the torso (as in picture, right). This is also known as the **signing frame.**

- There is less opportunity to develop a rapport between the interpreter and other participants using a remote interpreting service. Therefore, if possible, **give the interpreter and the Deaf client a short time to familiarise themselves with each other at the outset**. A few minutes of signing time before formally beginning the assignment can help the interpreter and Deaf service user to establish a sense of, and become comfortable with, each other's signing style, and to get the best from the service. Interpreters may also use this time to explain how IRIS operates to a Deaf person using the service for the first time.

During the IRIS assignment

- The person running or chairing the meeting **should identify who is present** in the room, whether they are on/off screen.

- Anyone speaking must **identify themselves** before making their contribution. This is particularly important for larger groups in the room during an assignment.

- In order for signing to be clear, it is important that **both Deaf service users and hearing service users speak and sign at a slightly slower pace** than normal. This takes into account the possible 'lag time' introduced by the remote connection and the possibility of slower periods of internet connectivity.

- For interpreting to be effective and accurate, **one person only should speak at a time**.

- It may be necessary for the interpreter to **interrupt and clarify (both in ISL and spoken English)** in order to deliver an optimal interpretation.

- For the duration of the IRIS assignment, **should another person enter the room during the assignment**, this should be made known to the interpreter.

- Both interpreters and service users **should inform each other immediately if a technical error** causes the audio or visual quality to deteriorate. Occasionally, technical issues may mean the appointment needs to be rescheduled.

Conditions for use of IRIS

- **Service users can expect the following from IRIS interpreters** for all assignments:

  o All IRIS interpreters will be members of the National Register.

  o Interpreters will behave at all times in a professional and helpful manner, particularly with new or inexperienced users of the service.

- o Interpreters will not disclose any information that is used during the IRIS assignment, unless permission is granted from all participants in the assignment.

- o Interpreters will have a competency in the technical requirements needed for IRIS, and will inform service providers of the necessary technical requirements to ensure a successful IRIS assignment.

- o Interpreters will use additional communication aids where appropriate for the purposes of clear communication: e.g. the text chat features of Skype.

- o Interpreters will inform clients if any assignment is not suitable for IRIS.

- **Preparation is vitally important** for IRIS assignments. Interpreters require context before all assignments, and adequate time to prepare with participants beforehand. The needs for this is even more urgent with IRIS, as its remote nature means that an interpreter will not have access to the kind of preparatory conversations with participants in the way that they routinely would with face-to-face interpretation. Please facilitate interpreters in this.

- Hearing or Deaf service users are **NOT permitted to record any material (audio or video)** during the assignment.

- Interpreters also have the right to close down an IRIS assignment if they feel the assignment should not be continued. For example:

  - o If the client is not over 18 years of age, and does not have parental consent to make the IRIS call.
  - o If the interpreter suspects the assignment is being recorded.
  - o If there is a conflict of interest between any person in the assignment which would lead to a substandard performance and/or harm anyone in the session.
  - o If the client is displaying abusive behaviour.
  - o If technical issues mean that the assignment is unable to effectively be interpreted, and needs to be rescheduled.
  - o If the assignment has become too complex or convoluted to continue via IRIS and instead face-to-face interpretation is required.

7.   Preparing the Interpreter

Why is preparation important?
- It is vital in almost all interpreted settings for **the interpreter to do some preparation**. For this, in most cases, the organisation or service booking the interpreter (or else individuals more directly involved in the interpreted setting) will need to provide preparation materials or information. Interpreters, while sometimes specialising in certain areas, are by necessity 'jacks of all trades'. They work in a wide and constantly changing range of settings and cannot be expected to be experts in all. Therefore, they will require the assistance of the party booking the interpreter to help them prepare, and to help deliver an effective and professional interpretation for Deaf and hearing alike.

- A useful way to think about this is that **interpreters cannot interpret what they do not understand** - and preparation helps to ensure that understanding. If such information is not made available, then "the setting

or exchange is not conducive to the interpreter's understanding [and] the message cannot be apprehended or delivered."[74]

- Preparation is also a **health and safety consideration**: "If no preparation material is provided, it can become difficult for the interpreter to understand information due to the gap in knowledge between participants and the interpreter. This can lead to a breakdown in communication, if the interpreter cannot interpret what is not understood/known, due to lack of preparation on the part of the booking party.... [therefore l]ack of preparation results in additional physical and cognitive stress for the interpreter. The quality of the interpretation also decreases."[75]

- In some complex cases, or settings where possible conflict of interest (which may become apparent in the preparation process) is a factor, **an interpreter may withdraw their services if suitable preparation materials or relevant information is not provided.**

Can I trust the interpreter to keep our information confidential?

- **All information supplied to the interpreter is kept confidential.** All information, whether in hard copy, electronic format or discussed in the interpreter's presence, is bound by confidentiality, and will be deleted or destroyed following the assignment. See 'Ethics and the Role of the Interpreter', Section 9.

What does the interpreter need in advance of an assignment?

- The following information will be vital:

  o The **type of event or meeting** that will occur – please give as much detail as possible.

  o The **expected duration of the event or meeting**, with a rough **end-time**

  o **The venue**, with accurate and detailed information regarding room numbers, names of lecture theatres, etc. If the venue is hard to locate, consider sending a Google Maps reference or similar.

  o A **contact person** that the interpreter should meet at the venue, with contact details

- **Preparation material** will also be useful. This gives the interpreter a chance to prepare for your assignment. In fact, in most cases, this information will be **necessary** to deliver the service. The more preparation they have- the better the quality of interpreting. **Provide as much Information as you can.** This helps the agency or the interpreter decide if they have the right skill set for the assignment. Information should include who is attending and what it is about. **All details and materials will be kept in confidence**, and destroyed or deleted after use.

- The most useful preparation materials are **documents** that will either be used or referenced during the assignment. Most often, these will be **PowerPoint presentations.** Please get a copy of this material to the interpreter **at the earliest possible instance.** Even if you have only a very rough draft copy available, this will be of immense benefit.

---

[74] Terry Janzen and Donna Korpinski, 'Ethics and Professionalism in Interpreting', in *Topics in Signed Language Interpreting: Theory and Practice*, ed. Terry Janzen (Amsterdam, 2005), 188.
[75] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, *Occupational Health & Safety Policy 2017/2018* (Dublin, 2018), 9; available from https://app.box.com/s/nsbye3kcpsimez3et8q90fq5oh0fxxuc; accessed 7 November 2019.

- Preparation for certain events, such as conferences or performances, may also entail **pre-assignment telephone discussions, face-to-face discussions,** or **site visits** by the interpreter to the venue. The interpreter may need to charge extra for site visits – please discuss with the interpreter or agency in advance.

- It's always best to nominate a **contact person** – someone for the interpreter to liaise with before the assignment, and ask for when they arrive on the day. This might be more than one person – e.g. there might be someone who meets the interpreter on the day, but another who is sourcing and sending on material.

- Please let the interpreter and/or agency know at the time of booking **if the event will be broadcast, recorded, or livestreamed,** and ensure you have the permission of the interpreter(s) for same.

- If you wish to make **any last-minute changes to your booking request**, please inform the interpreter at the earliest possible opportunity, in order to facilitate your requirements.

What does the interpreter need to know about the Deaf person?

- Given the significance of confidentiality and GDPR, it is understandable that in many situations, paying clients may be reluctant to share the details of the Deaf client such as their name. However, this should not result in the interpreter being unprepared. In situations where other regulations or legislation forbid this, an anonymous **profile of the Deaf person** should instead be supplied to the interpreter or agency.

- This profile should include details such as:

    o **Age range** of Deaf person (child, adolescent, 20s, 60s etc.)

    o **Gender** of Deaf person

    o **National background** of Deaf person - whether Irish-born, or coming from another country (including the UK, USA, or other English-speaking country)

    o **Which sign language is used** by Deaf person (if known), e.g.

        ▪ Irish Sign Language
        ▪ British Sign Language
        ▪ American Sign Language
        ▪ Other (Non-users of ISL will potentially require a specialist / Deaf interpreter.)

    o Has the Deaf person **any other preferences in relation to signed language**, e.g.:

        ▪ Signed English
        ▪ a Deaf interpreter
        ▪ more 'oral' ISL
        ▪ tactile signing for deaf-blind
        ▪ if they need the interpreter to sit close to them because of a visual impairment, etc.

    o Does the Deaf person have a **visual impairment**

    o Does the Deaf person has a **physical impairment** that may affect their use of signed language

- o Any **other medical, psychological or educational issues** present which may affect how the Deaf person uses sign language and may cause difficulty in interpretation – e.g.

  - ▪ patient has any **learning disability** or **mental health issues**, meaning that a very different approach to and skills and expertise in interpreting may be required (potentially requiring a Deaf interpreter)

  - ▪ patient has **mobility issues affecting upper body / arms**, meaning their signing may be more difficult to read (potentially requiring a Deaf interpreter)

- • All such information given will be treated in confidence, as per the CISLI *Code of Ethics* and the Register's *Code of Conduct*.[76]

- • The interpreter may wish to have a brief pre-assignment discussion (where possible and appropriate) with key individuals involved in the event (the presenter, organiser, chairperson etc.) in advance of the event, in order to be fully briefed about the assignment - and therefore give as accurate and effective as possible an interpretation.

- • All such information given will be treated in confidence, as per the CISLI *Code of Ethics* and the Register's *Code of Conduct*.[77]

What do I do when the interpreter arrives?

- • Generally, interpreters will arrive a little earlier than the start time indicated for the event. Please alert the interpreter or agency if you require the interpreter to be present at a particular time.

- • The interpreter should have a **contact person** that they will meet at the venue. They should also be **introduced to the Deaf participant(s),** who they may not have met before.

- • Before the assignment, the interpreter will wish to discuss:

  - o how best to set up the session so that the Deaf participant(s) can fully access the event, including positioning, lighting, etc. (See Section 11, *'Platform Interpreting'* for some guideline)

  - o when break times will be provided

  - o how the session will be run, and go over the basics of using an interpreter etc. See Section 8, *'What do I need to do when using an interpreter?'*

Can the interpreter help to publicise my open event?

- • Yes! If you're running an event or course that's open to the general public, the interpreter can give advice on how to get the word out to the Deaf community through effective channels such as Deaf Facebook groups, Deaf organisations and newsletters, Twitter, and many others.

8.   Using Interpreters

---

[76] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, 'CISLI Code of Ethics, May 2011', *CISLI Website*, 2016; available from https://cisli.ie/home/codeofethics/; accessed 4 September 2016; Sign Language Interpreting Service, *Draft 'Code of Conduct'*, June 2019.
[77] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, 'CISLI Code of Ethics, May 2011'; Sign Language Interpreting Service, *Draft 'Code of Conduct'*.

What does the interpreter actually *do*?

- ISL/ English interpreting is necessary when two parties (usually hearing and Deaf) do not share a common language or language modality[78]. Interpreters transmit meaning between the two languages, and strive to maintain accuracy, affect, tone, intent, cultural meaning, and a host of other features of language, interaction and culture.

- **Being good at Irish Sign Language doesn't mean you can interpret. Interpreters must be trained, and should be registered.** In order that the correct information is given and received by both parties, it is essential to have a registered (i.e. trained, experienced, and professional interpreter) present. While it is to be welcomed to have hearing staff members trained in ISL, we would urge organisations to only use registered interpreters for meetings, presentations, or any serious or lengthy conversations with Deaf service users or employees, as per the Irish Sign Language Act 2017.

Can't they just interpret 'word for word'?

- **Interpreters don't – indeed, *can't* - interpret the message 'literally' or 'word for word'.** This is generally impossible: any two languages will have different grammars and ways of putting information together.

- **Interpreters generally focus on the meaning,** rather than the surface structure of what was said in the source language. They unpack and restructure that message into what can be a very different structure in the target language – but which means the same thing. The interpreter will always have to make changes to the structure and other elements of the message, in order to preserve the meaning of what has been said.

- This is the very same process that interpreters working between, for example, English and French, or English and Mandarin, undertake.

What do I need to do when using an interpreter?

What Interpreting Is

- ISL and English are very different languages. ISL is a full and complete language, and can express everything under the sun. But English and ISL often put information in completely different ways; there is often a considerable **language difference between English and ISL**. This makes interpreting between ISL and English a trickier prospect than interpreting between languages which are more structurally similar, like English and French.

- In order **to effectively interpret, interpreters must first understand**. Interpreters do not focus on the *words* they hear or see, but on the *meaning* behind them. If they don't know what is meant, it's almost impossible to effectively relay the message between Deaf and hearing parties. Hence the need for preparation, occasional clarification, and breaks.

- Interpreters will occasionally need to **interrupt and clarify** if something isn't signed, spoken or expressed clearly. Clarification ensures the interpreter has understood something - it doesn't mean they are bad at their jobs. Interpreters should clarify in a professional, unobtrusive manner with targeted questions to clarify what's not been made clear. Interpreters working in a team will first attempt to assist each other with clarifications before interrupting an event to clarify.

---

[78] In other words the way in which the person produces and receives language. Deaf people use the visual-manual modality, receiving language through sight and producing it via sign language.

- **'Lag Time' or Processing Time:** Most interpreters will work simultaneously, rather than consecutively – this means they will not wait until a speaker or signer has finished their sentence or utterance to begin interpreting; they do it at the same time.[79] Nevertheless, interpreters' work is not *truly* simultaneous. They have to go through the following steps very rapidly:

  1) listen / see the original message in the **source language**
  2) understand it
  3) consider how best to render the message in the **target language**
  4) relay this rendition in the target language.

- This process is not instantaneous. Some **processing time** or **'lag time'**[80] is unavoidable, and this can last anywhere between 2 and 10 seconds. This will mean the interpreter will always be a few seconds 'behind' the speaker or signer.

- When the structures of the two languages are similar, a shorter processing time may be possible; however, when the structures are significantly different, or if a particularly complex point is being made, a longer lag time is required.[81]

- An interpreter will also attempt to **match the affect, tone, mood, etc. of the speaker (or signer)** in their interpretation. If a person speaking has a happy, or sarcastic, or angry tone of voice, this will be matched by a happy, sarcastic, or angry signing style from the interpreter, with appropriate non-manual features in ISL to match this. The same applies if a Deaf person is signing in a nervous, confident, or amused manner – this will result in a nervous, or confident, or amused voicing over by the interpreter.

Setting the Scene
- **Positioning:** ISL is a visual language, and it is important to consult the interpreter and the Deaf person as to where is best to position the interpreter. It is best for one-to-one meetings for the hearing party to position themselves beside the interpreter, where the Deaf person can see both.

- **Eye contact** is essential for direct interpreted communication. You should maintain eye contact with the Deaf person when they are signing directly to you, rather than looking at the interpreter.

- **Lighting:** Just as speech needs to be loud enough to hear, sign language needs to be well-lit enough to see. Competing light sources can make it harder to get the message – a kind of visual 'background noise'. Discuss positioning with the interpreter, to ensure that they are well-lit, and not placed where other light sources make it difficult for a Deaf service user to see them. Also make sure that the interpreter is not blinded by a light source directed at them. Avoid placing the interpreter in a direct source of light – shadows may cause visual 'noise' for the Deaf person.

- **Backdrops:** If using a platform or a stage set up, the interpreter needs to be positioned with a neutral, plain backdrop for the interpreter, to enable clear uninterrupted vision of the signed interpretation.[82]

---

[79] However, in some scenarios, particularly legal interpreting, it has been argued that consecutive interpreting is a more accurate mode of interpretation, and this mode is frequently used in court proceedings: see Debra L. Russell, 'Interpreting in Legal Contexts: Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpretation' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Calgary, 2000); available from https://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/handle/1880/40558/5 4808Russell.pdf?sequence=1.

[80] Hilde Haualand and Anna-Lena Nilsson, 'Working with Active Interpreters: A Commentary about Interpreting Terminology and Concepts', *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 11, no. 2 (2019): 43.

[81] Dennis Cokely, 'The Effects of Lag Time on Interpreter Errors', *Sign Language Studies* 53 (1986): 341–75.

[82] Health Services Executive, *A Guide for Health Service Managers and Employees To Support Employees Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*, 2018, 3.

- **Clothing:** Interpreters should dress appropriately for assignments. The Register states that they should "[c]onduct themselves in a manner befitting the profession, including when negotiating work and contracts, getting preparation material, *choice of professional clothing* and professional demeanour."[83] Items such as loud ties, checked or patterned shirts or blouses, dangly or visually distracting earrings or facial jewellery may cause visual distraction if worn by an interpreter when working.[84]

- **Privacy:** If you are having a confidential discussion in an open space using an interpreter, you should ensure that the conversation moves to a private space, in order to maintain confidentiality. Move somewhere you cannot be overheard, or 'overseen' by other people who understand ISL.

- **Video or audio recording / broadcasting / livestreaming:** Any recording of the interpreting service will require the prior direct permission of the interpreter at all times.

Interaction while Interpreting

- **Don't speak too fast:** Speak at a normal steady pace. Interpreting is only possible if the incoming message comes at a reasonable pace, allowing an interpreter to hear / see, understand, translate and relay the message. The faster the incoming message, the faster an interpreter's brain has to work. Prolonged rapid pace will cause the interpretation to suffer. An interpreter might interrupt in this scenario, to request that the pace be slowed down.[85]

- **Don't speak too slowly:** Conversely, speaking in an exaggeratedly slow manner, or waiting for the interpreter to sign every few words, can actually make it *harder* to interpret. Speak at a normal pace which flows in a regular way. You don't need the interpreter to finish signing before going onto the next sentence, but be aware of them as you are speaking.

- **Talk directly to the Deaf Person.** Do not preface your questions with "Ask her… " or "Ask him…" Keep eye contact with the Deaf person. While you don't need to ignore the presence of the interpreter entirely (that would be rude!), it is best to keep your focus on the Deaf person with whom you are interacting.

- The interpreter will generally interpret **in the 'first person'.** For example, when the Deaf person is signing, the interpreter will say *"I went to Deaf school in Dublin"*, rather than saying *"She is saying that she went to Deaf school in Dublin"*. This may change in certain situations; for example, in a mental health situation, where the interpreter wishes the therapist to know there are certain features of the Deaf person's ISL they wish to draw attention to for the purposes of diagnosis or therapy.[86]

- The interpreter is not a participant or a consultant – **they are there to do one job; to interpret.** While the interpreter will be friendly, professional and helpful, they will generally avoid engaging in direct conversation with other parties during an assignment, unless some clarification is needed. Remember - the interpreter is there to facilitate communication between two languages at your meeting – and not as an attendee.

- **Group settings:** It is difficult enough for an interpreter to interpret one person speaking – they can't interpret more than one. There should only be one person speaking at a time, or else the interpreter will be unable to effectively render everything that is said. An interpreter might interrupt in this scenario, to request that one person speak at a times.

---

[83] Sign Language Interpreting Service, *Draft 'Code of Conduct'*, 3.
[84] See Jackie Emmart, 'Sign Language Interpreters: Attire Leaves a First & Lasting Impression', *Street Leverage*, August 2014.
[85] This has precedent in the European Parliament, where in 2016 the institution's interpreters sent a message to European MEPs to speak more slowly. 'Fast-Talking MEPs Urged to Slow down for Interpreters', *BBC News*, February 2016.
[86] Charlene Crump and Neil Glickman, 'Mental Health Interpreting with Language Dysfluent Deaf Clients', *Journal of Interpretation* 21, no. 1 (2011): 6.

- **Nodding doesn't always mean agreement:** In Deaf culture, "the use of nodding is important… When a Deaf person is nodding, it means she or he is listening and sees what you are saying. It does not necessarily mean that person is in agreement with what you are saying."[87] Please bear this in mind when asking a Deaf person a yes/no question – particularly in legal and medical settings; allow the interpreter to interpret the Deaf person's response to a question, and do not assume it from a headnod.

9.   Ethics and the Role of the Interpreter

Codes of Conduct and Codes of Ethics

- All professional interpreters should be aware of and follow a Code of Ethics. Registered interpreters in Ireland follow the National Register's ***Code of Conduct***.[88]

- Members of CISLI will also follow the CISLI ***Code of Ethics***,[89] a similar document that overlaps with the Code of Conduct.

- Members of ITIA will follow their ***Code of Practice and Professional Ethics*** and also their ***Code of Ethics for Community Interpreters.***[90]

- There may be other codes of practice held by private agencies and followed by their interpreters when they are on assignment through those agencies. These codes of practice may be specific to certain fields of interpreting, e.g. educational or medical work. If in doubt, please request information about this from the agency in advance, or ask the interpreter, and ask for a copy of same if required.

What is the Interpreter's Role?

The 'role' of the interpreter is a changing, dynamic concept that is constantly being re-evaluated. It has been extensively discussed in academic interpreting literature from around the world, with the major models of the role of the interpreter being summarised below:

- **'Helper' model:** Historically, this is the first model which interpreters saw themselves operating in. Instead of interpreting impartially and professionally everything that is signed or said, the interpreter instead could act as a participant - almost like a protective family member – changing the content of a Deaf person's contributions, omitting information if they thought Deaf people didn't need the information, engaging themselves with the doctor / Garda / employer without signing for the Deaf person. While this was often done on ostensibly well-meaning grounds, in the end, this way of being an 'interpreter' represented an unprofessional way of operating that Deaf people themselves firmly reject.

- **'Conduit' model ('Literal' interpreting):** A very different, more mechanistic, approach to how interpreters should act and work. In this model of interpreting, the interpreters is seen as merely a 'conduit', neutrally passing on all information between one language and another, having no effect on the message or the dynamics of the setting. In practice, however, this approach - for reasons related to the linguistics of both ISL

---

[87] Aimee K. Whyte et al., 'Understanding Deaf People in Counseling Contexts', *Counselling Today*, 2013.
[88] Sign Language Interpreting Service, *National Register of Sign Language Interpreters - Code of Conduct (Draft)*, May 2019.
[89] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, 'CISLI Code of Ethics, May 2011'.
[90] Irish Translators and Interpreters Association (ITIA), *Code of Practice and Professional Ethics* (Dublin, 2005); available from https://www.translatorsassociation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Code-of-Practice-and-Professional-Ethics.pdf; accessed 2 April 2010; Irish Translators and Interpreters Association (ITIA), *Code of Ethics for Community Interpreters* (Dublin, 2009); available from https://www.translatorsassociation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Code-of-Ethics-for-Community-Interpreters.pdf; accessed 2 April 2020.

and English, and the interpersonal dynamics of any interpreted situation - becomes impossible to maintain fully. Interpreters in general no longer identify with this model in most of their work. However certain situations, e.g. courtroom or Garda interpreting, may call for an approach which resembles this.

- **Cultural Mediation / Bilingual-Bicultural Model:** A more nuanced and considered framework. Here, interpreters may see as able to make certain alterations to messages, and initiate interactions themselves – but only for the purposes of bridging the cultural and linguistic gaps between communities, to enable a deeper and more effective communication.

- **'Ally' model**: A model based on a deep respect for the language and cultural experiences of Deaf people in society, but also a profound recognition of the historic oppression that has been perpetuated on them. This model recognizes that interpreters, as facilitators of communication, have power - and can use this power in a way that creates more equity between deaf and hearing people.[91]

- What the role of the interpreter is, and how interpreters see themselves working in any interpreted interaction, will now generally take into account factors such as:
    o the small size of the Deaf community, and the status and positionality of interpreters within it
    o the human and relationship-centred focus of interpreting
    o the unavoidable effect of the physical presence of the interpreter within mediated communication
    o the oppression experienced by Deaf people on a daily basis in Irish society
    o the interpreter's unique position within these varied dynamics and relationships

If in any doubt, please consult with the interpreter, the agency or CISLI in advance.

Neutrality and Impartiality

- An interpreter is generally booked to facilitate discussions and events where two languages are used. Interpreters will strive to do this to the best of their ability, but no more than this. Interpreters should not be seen as consultants or sources of advice about deafness, Deaf people or sign language. Interpreters should not be seen to take sides in interpreted settings, or offer advice to participants about what they should do. If a setting would challenge an interpreter's impartiality in some way, the interpreter can refuse to take on this work, or even cease interpreting.

- While neutrality and impartiality have for many years been seen as essential mainstays of interpreting practice, much work in recent years has taken issue with these received concepts and contrasted them with actual practice. A key text is Melanie Metzger's *Sign Language Interpreting: Deconstructing the Myth of Neutrality,* where she shows that interpreters can and do generate contributions to interpreted interactions in the process of interpreting – but as a widely accepted strategy to ensure the interpretation is successful: "an interpreter's offering 'extra' information or utterances in order to provide equal information actually *minimizes the interpreter's influence* on the interaction."[92]

Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is taken very seriously by professional interpreters, and is one of the most important headings within both the Register's Code of Conduct and CISLI's Code of Ethics.

---

[91] Cynthia B. Roy, 'The Problem with Definitions, Descriptions, and the Role Metaphors of Interpreters', *Journal of Interpretation* 6, no. 1 (1993): 127–54; Janice H. Humphrey and Bob J. Alcorn, *So You Want to Be an Interpreter?: An Introduction to Sign Language Interpreting*, 3rd ed. (Amarillo, Texas, 2001); Anna Witter-Merithew, 'From Benevolent Care Taker to Ally: The Evolving Role of Sign Language Interpreters in the United States of America', *Gebärdensprachdolmetschen Theorie & Praxis*, no. 4 (1999): 55–64; available from http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/From-Benevolent-Caretaker.pdf.
[92] Melanie Metzger, *Sign Language Interpreting: Deconstructing the Myth of Neutrality* (Washington, D.C., 1999), 157.

- o *See:* **Register** *Code of Conduct***:** "Registrants will respect the privacy of service users, and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service. They should keep strictly confidential all information they gain access to as a result of an assignment. Information about interpreting assignments should not be shared through any medium, such as social media, email, or personal conversations, without clear prior consent from the relevant service users involved in the assignment."

- o **CISLI** *Code of Ethics***:** "Members will respect the privacy of consumers and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service. Members may be released from this obligation only with their consumers' authorisation or when ordered by law." [93]

- o **Confidentiality is also ensured in legislation for interpreters working in Garda stations.** The Garda Síochána Act 2005 Article 62 (1) states: "A person who is or was a member of the Garda Síochána or of its civilian staff or who is or was engaged under contract or other arrangement to work with or for the Garda Síochána shall not disclose, in or outside the State, any information obtained in the course of carrying out duties of that person's office, employment, contract or other arrangement if the person knows the disclosure of that information is likely to have a harmful effect."[94] Therefore, an interpreter who discloses sensitive information about an assignment in a Garda station could be liable on summary conviction to a fine of up to €3,000 and/or a prison term of up to twelve months. If convicted on indictment the interpreter could be fined up to €50,000 and/or imprisoned for up to five years. It is unclear if interpreters who work in Garda stations are aware of this legislation.[95]

- Interpreters are however **bound to disclose certain information in particular circumstances**:

  - o When the life or safety of someone is in danger, particularly a child or vulnerable adult;

  - o when legally required e.g. for reasons of child protection;

  - o if an interpreter is later called as a witness in a criminal trial and requested to testify in court about an assignment in which they interpreted.

    - o *See: CISLI Code of Ethics, 1.1 'Confidentiality':* "Members may be released from this obligation only with their consumers' authorisation or when ordered by law."[96]

    - o *Register, Code of Conduct, 'Confidentiality':* "We recognise that very occasionally interpreters may need to reveal such information when engaging with the Complaints & Mediation process or due to legal or moral obligations. For example, if someone at risk to themselves or others."[97]

- They also may, while fully respecting the privacy and confidentiality of all parties, consult with others in relation to these situations:
  - o Consulting with interpreting agencies or clients regarding the content of assignments and identity of parties present, to ensure a skills profile match and to avoid any potential conflicts of interest;

---

[93] Sign Language Interpreting Service, *Draft 'Code of Conduct'*; Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, 'CISLI Code of Ethics, May 2011'.
[94] Oireachtas, 'Garda Síochána Act', *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 2005; available from www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/20/section/62/; accessed 15 April 2020.
[95] Melia, 'Legislation – All You Need to Know'.
[96] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, 'CISLI Code of Ethics, May 2011'.
[97] Sign Language Interpreting Service, *Code of Conduct*.

- o Consulting between outgoing and incoming interpreters within a particular setting, in relation to the content and linguistic or interpersonal features of that setting, to ensure smooth transition between interpreters and continuity of service for all parties.

  - o ***See: CISLI Code of Ethics*** *'Confidentiality':* "Where necessary, a member may exchange pertinent information with a colleague in order to provide consistent quality of service. This will be done in a manner that protects the information and the consumers."[98]

  - o ***Register, Code of Conduct,*** *'Confidentiality':* "The Code does not prohibit an interpreter engaging with those involved in an assignment, in order to prepare for an upcoming interpreting assignment or to reflect on the delivery of an assignment. For example, contacting hospital staff prior to an appointment to get relevant information on the medical process or the terminology that will be used. Interpreters must ensure this is done in way that protects the information and the relevant service users. When necessary, an interpreter may need to disclose some information to another party (for example another interpreter or agency) to provide consistent quality of service or within the recognised structures of professional support and training. Interpreters must ensure this is done in a way that that protects the information and the relevant service users."[99]

- Please do not allow **fears around confidentiality** of materials **become a barrier to the interpreter receiving vital preparation information**. Be assured that any material given to the interpreter to assist them in preparing for an assignment will be kept in confidence, for the use of the interpreter only, and should be deleted or destroyed after an event. The strict provisions around same in the ***Code of Conduct / CISLI Code of Ethics***, and the robust Complaints Process that the Register follows in the case of breaches of confidentiality (as well as any agreements or contracts between interpreting agency and paying client) should put all such fears at rest.

Complaints

- All registered interpreters must agree to abide by a Code of Conduct held by the Register. Making a Complaint to the Register, using the **Complaints Process,** is recommended if you are not happy with how the interpreter has handled an assignment.

- Please note that while you can make a complaint against a registered interpreter at any time within three months of an incident or behaviour, we recommend that all other avenues to resolve a situation be pursued before embarking on a formal complaint, including:

  - o Discussing the situation with the Deaf service user
  - o Discussing the situation with the interpreter, being forthright as to why you are unhappy with their conduct
  - o Pursuing a complaint with the relevant private agency (this can be done simultaneously with pursuing a complaint with the Register)

- Complaints Processes are generally pursued by the Register with reference to the **Code of Conduct**. Please familiarise yourself with this Code, to check if there are grounds for complaint to the Register.

-

10.   Health & Safety for Interpreters

---

[98] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, 'CISLI Code of Ethics, May 2011'.
[99] Sign Language Interpreting Service, *Code of Conduct*.

Why do interpreters need breaks?

Breaks should **always** be provided to working interpreters. This is for two reasons:

Effects on Quality of Interpreting

- Interpreting is a highly demanding cognitive task, and it is only natural that interpreters would need a break. "Like a marathon runner who must maintain liquid intake at regular intervals during the race and not wait until thirst sets in, an interpreter needs regular breaks to ward off processing fatigue, after which the mental faculties would be impaired."[100]

- But it's not just about the interpreter getting tired; it's about **the interpreter being able to maintain their ability to do the job.** Research into spoken language interpreting has shown that "turns … lasting longer than 30 minutes… [has negative effects] on the quality of an interpreter's output and on his attitude towards the task." And sometimes interpreters aren't aware themselves that they need a break. An increase in errors caused by fatigue, or a decline in quality, may not be noticed by the interpreter: "while on task interpreters do not seem to be sufficiently aware of the decline in quality that occurs in the course of prolonged turns so as to quit when given the opportunity to do so."[101] This has led one research into interpreting quality to state that "interpreters cannot necessarily be trusted to make the right decision with regard to time on task, beyond what has been established as a sound working condition by the profession over time."[102]

Physiological and Psychological Stress

- The immediate danger is to the interpreter's physical and mental health. "Injury can occur among sign language interpreters due to forceful, speedy, repetitive movements of signing whilst working under the pressure of the intense mental processing involved in interpreting, often combined with insufficient rest breaks and awkward positioning. The continuous occurrence of these factors can place an interpreter at risk of injury."[103] One of these kinds of injuries, common among overworked interpreters, is **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) -** a stress-related, cumulative type of injury resulting from constant repetitive movements.[104]

When does an interpreter need a break?

- For the reasons given above, it is essential in all interpreting assignments that breaks should be provided to working interpreters. A good rule of thumb to follow is to **provide breaks at least every 35 to 45 minutes.**

- For **particularly intense assignments**, where information is more dense, technical, or delivered at a faster pace than usual, more frequent breaks will be required. Please liaise directly with your interpreter regarding breaks, and respect the judgement of the interpreter at all times in this regard.

- Breaks should be 10 minutes or more; 5-minute break times are generally insufficient.

- **The role of the chairperson** is very important at meetings in relation to awareness of the need for interpreter breaks. The **responsibility for calling for breaks should be with the Chair,** not with the interpreter. Ensure the chair of the meeting is aware of this at the outset and follows through on it.

---

[100] National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators, *Team Interpreting In The Courtroom*, *Najit Position Paper*, 2007, 2; available from https://najit.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Team-Interpreting_052007.pdf.

[101] Barbara Moser-Mercer, Alexander Künzli, and Marina Korac, 'Prolonged Turns in Interpreting: Effects on Quality, Physiological and Psychological Stress (Pilot Study)', *Interpreting* 3, no. 1 (1998): 62.

[102] Moser-Mercer, Künzli, and Korac, 'Prolonged Turns in Interpreting'.

[103] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, *Occupational Health & Safety Policy 2017/2018*.

[104] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, *Self-Care for Interpreters: Prevention and Care of Repetitive Strain Injuries*, 2007, 1; available from https://rid.org/about-rid/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/; accessed 6 April 2020.

- It goes without saying that such **breaks should be for all participants;** if things continue without an interpreter, then the deaf person is immediately placed at a disadvantage.

- Please resist the urge to 'plough through the session without a break, so we can all finish early'! This not only puts the interpreter under physical and cognitive stress (as outlined above) but also puts the interpreter in a very difficult position of having to insist on a break against the wishes of possibly a full room of people. Respect the needs of the interpreter.

CISLI's ***Occupational Health and Safety Policy*** states that "[a]dequate breaks are essential for anything between 45mins to 1.5hrs, beyond which 2 interpreters must be used."[105] Internationally, standards in relation to interpreter breaks are even higher. The ***International Standards Organisation (ISO) 13611 Guidelines for community interpreting*** recommends that "for long assignments, provide the community interpreter with a break after a **maximum of 60 min** if interpreting consecutively, **or 15 min to 30 min if interpreting simultaneously**. Alternatively, allow for the commissioning of more than one community interpreter. Otherwise, fatigue can take a toll on accuracy and jeopardize quality".[106]

When do I need two (or more) interpreters?

- CISLI's **Occupational Health and Safety Policy** outlines the following situations where two or more interpreters may be needed:
  - In an international setting, or when there are more than two languages or foreign (sign) languages used in the setting…
  - At conferences or large events.
  - Where the Deaf person has a main responsibility during the event, e.g. president, presenter, leader.
  - Where the content is highly technical or of an academic nature.
  - Where Deaf participants with different communication needs, or deaf blind participants, are attending.
  - In a range of specific settings; for example where some of the Deaf participants are participating in a panel discussion, and others are in the audience. In this setting, a minimum of four interpreters are needed: two teams of two interpreters each.[107]

- To these settings, we can add:
  - Conferences or seminars with **breakout sessions** and **more than one Deaf attendee** – to enable attendees to go to whichever breakout sessions they wish, rather than have to go together. If breakout sessions are longer than about 45 minutes, these will also require more than one interpreter.

- Please bear in mind that the number of interpreters required is not necessarily linked to how many Deaf attended there are at an event. The key factors are **the duration of the event** and **the complexity of the event**.

11.   Specialised Domains of Interpreting

---

[105] *Ibid.*
[106] International Standards Organisation, *ISO 13611:2014, 'Guidelines for Community Interpreting'*, 2014; available from https://www.iso.org/standard/54082.html; accessed 7 November 2019.
[107] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, *Occupational Health & Safety Policy 2017/2018*.

Medical Interpreting

Definition

For the purposes of these guidelines, we define 'Medical Interpreting' as a**ny setting within a (public or private) hospital, clinic, GP appointments, or others setting where the health of a patient is to be discussed, inclusive of mental health settings.**

Please be aware of the HSE guidance documents, ***On Speaking Terms*** and the **HSE** *National Guidelines on Accessible Health and Social Care Services.* Both these documents make many references to the correct use of sign language interpreters, and they should be followed closely.

Providing Interpreters for Medical Scenarios

- We encourage hospital frontline and professional staff to learn basic Irish Sign Language, using resources such as the Irish Deaf Society's *Basic Medical Signs* book and DVD.[108] Learning basic ISL is suitable for basic interactions, e.g. greetings to Deaf patients, to inform them they can have an interpreter, and for emergencies (in order to get information required immediately, before the interpreter arrives). However, **for any consultation or complex medical discussion, an interpreter will be required.**

- Consider making an enquiry about whether a patient requires an ISL interpreter **part of the hospital or medical service's patient registration process.** The hospital or medical service can inquire into whether the patient, and/or the patient's accompanying companion(s) such as partner or family member, are Deaf or hard of hearing, and whether the patient expects to have any visitors who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Information obtained in this way should be maintained in the patient's medical chart and files, in paper or electronic form. The patient or companion should subsequently be given the opportunity to indicate additional communication needs (e.g. deaf-blind, requires a BSL or other sign language interpreter etc.) [109]

- Medical staff should routinely let Deaf patients know that they **are entitled to request and be provided with a qualified sign language interpreter,** regardless of how well medical staff feel communication has been going. This also applies more widely **for Deaf service users** (such as Deaf parents, partners, primary carers and advocates).

- **Not providing a qualified sign language interpreter** when delivering care to a patient or service user places the health or social care provider in a precarious situation:

    - **information may be misinterpreted or misunderstood,** leading to potential adverse outcomes for the Deaf patient or service user

    - the absence of a qualified sign language interpreter may result in **invalid consent for invasive medical or surgical procedures.**

- Deaf patients and service users should also be informed that **the patient does not have to cover the cost of the interpreter.**

- For new patients to a clinic or patients who have not interacted with a medical service before, **the responsibility is generally on the Deaf patient to request an interpreter** beforehand. However, it is the **responsibility of staff to arrange the interpreter** (the patient does not have to do this). It is also good practice

---

[108] Irish Deaf Society (IDS), *Basic Medical Signs* (Dublin, 2007).
[109] National Association of the Deaf, *NAD Model Policy for Effective Communication in Hospitals* (Silver Spring, Maryland, USA, 2020); available from https://www.nad.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Model-Hospital-Policy.pdf; accessed 15 April 2020.

to arrange an interpreter for the Deaf patient automatically without being prompted, if it's a recurring appointment, or where it is known in advance that the service user needs one. Deaf people may not know that they can have an interpreter, or that they have to request an interpreter. Therefore medical staff should take an active, rather than reactive, role in interpreting provision, especially in medical settings when the Deaf person may be unwell.

Who should – and should NOT - interpret?

- Using family or friends of Deaf patients to interpret is **not recommended**.

- Children of deaf patients should **never** be used as interpreters.

- Medical staff members – regardless of their skill in ISL – should **never** be asked to interpret in clinical situations. It is unethical and unprofessional.

- If your service falls under the definition of a 'public body' in Section 1 of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017, there is an obligation to ensure the **interpreters are members of the National Register**.

- **Not all registered interpreters can do medical work.** Medical interpreting requires interpreters to possess specific skills and competencies above those of generic, entry-level interpreters. It is crucial that interpreters in medical settings are not just registered, but have experience of interpreting in medical settings, or at least have completed CPD training in medical interpreting. The agency or organisation that sources your interpreters should be able to stand over the skill level and expertise of the professionals they send in these scenarios.

- Even given the above, **there is no obligation on the Deaf patient to use the particular interpreter provided,** and the patient should be allowed to request a different interpreter. Their wishes in this respect should always be respected. Forcing a Deaf patient to use an interpreter they do not wish to be present in a medical situation puts the patient under undue stress and frustration.

- The new Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters will eventually feature a Healthcare Interpreting Specialisation Panel of registered interpreters with recognised skills in interpreting in medical contexts. The Register will recommend that **only members of the Healthcare Interpreting panel** be used to interpret in such contexts.

Deaf Interpreters in Medical Settings

It has become common practice for some non-deaf interpreters to work alongside Deaf interpreters in hospital or other medical settings (see above, Section 3 for information on Deaf interpreters). This may be due to the Deaf person's idiolectal use of ISL, because they use another signed language other than ISL, because of mental health or learning difficulties, etc.

Interpreter Preparation and Information – Medical Interpreting

- When booking an interpreter, the agency or the interpreter themselves may request more information about the patient or medical scenario in advance. **While being mindful of GDPR and privacy concerns, it is vital to assist in this process**. An unprepared interpreter will potentially result in an interpretation that has errors, or a discovery that the interpreter is the wrong person for the job when it is too late to source a replacement.
- Even if names of patients cannot be given, try to give a **patient profile**, including the vital points below. (For Deaf partners / relatives of patients etc., please give the below information for that Deaf person where you can, but including the relevant information for the patient.)

- o **Age range** of Deaf patient (child, adolescent, 20s, 60s etc.)

- o **Gender** of patient

- o **National background** of patient - whether Irish-born, or coming from another country (including the UK, USA, or other English-speaking country)

- o **Which sign language used** by patient (if known), e.g.

  - Irish Sign Language
  - British Sign Language
  - American Sign Language
  - Other (Non-users of ISL will potentially require a specialist / Deaf interpreter.)

- o The **type of appointment or procedure** that will occur

- o The **expected duration of the appointment or procedure**, with a rough **end-time**

- o The **patient's MRN** or other **patient reference codes or numbers** (this will make it easier for the interpreter / agency to invoice for the assignment)

- o The Deaf person may wish to **choose the gender of the interpreter**, if the medical scenario is of a sensitive nature (e.g. maternity / gynaecology, disrobing involved, etc.)

- o **Any other preferences in relation to signed language** the Deaf person has expressed, e.g.:

  - Signed English
  - a Deaf interpreter
  - more 'oral' ISL
  - tactile signing for deaf-blind
  - if they need the interpreter to sit close to them because of a visual impairment, etc.

- o Does the Deaf person have a **visual impairment**

- o Does the Deaf person has a **physical impairment** that may affect their use of signed language

- o Any **other medical, psychological or educational issues** present which may affect how the Deaf person uses sign language and may cause difficulty in interpretation – e.g.
  - patient is on **strong medication**, meaning their signing or comprehension may be unclear

  - patient has any **learning disability** or **mental health issues**, meaning that a very different approach to and skills and expertise in interpreting may be required (potentially requiring a Deaf interpreter)

  - patient has **mobility issues affecting upper body / arms**, meaning their signing may be more difficult to read (potentially requiring a Deaf interpreter)

- o The interpreter may also wish to have a brief discussion with the doctor, specialist, or nurse in advance of the appointment, in order to be fully briefed about the medical situation and therefore give as accurate a picture as possible in their interpretation.

   o   All such information given will be treated in confidence, as per the CISLI *Code of Ethics* and the Register's *Code of Conduct*.[110]

- Deaf patients and GPs can avail of free interpretation services by contacting SLIS about their GP Access scheme. Visit https://slis.ie/services/#gp-access for more information.

Mental Health Interpreting

Definition

'Mental health interpreting' covers a wide range of situations, from informal counselling-type scenarios to forensic psychiatric evaluations.

Deaf People and Mental Health – Important Considerations

- **Access to mental health services can be particularly problematic for Deaf people**. Historically, mental health service provision for Deaf people in Ireland, along with awareness of the Deaf community, has been poor.[111] It was recognised in *A Vision for Change* in 2006 that "deaf individuals ... [just lie] people from other countries and cultures, require specific knowledge and understanding on the part of those delivering mental health services, in terms of their culture and other characteristics."[112] However, many issues still arise from lack of awareness of the particular needs and issues surrounding Deaf people and their language and culture. One Deaf user of mental health services in Ireland said, "as a deaf person who relies on Irish Sign Language, it has been a nightmare for me. None of the psychiatrists or mental health staff in these units could sign, and my requests for Irish Sign Language interpreters were more often ignored than heeded."[113] Other research has pointed out that the attitudes of professionals in refusing to work with interpreters can be problematic. The importance of providing an appropriately skilled and qualified sign language interpreter in mental health contexts has been noted, as well as allowing the patient to select their choice of interpreter.[114]

- There is also evidence of **higher rates of mental health issues** among people who are deaf, than among hearing individuals: "data for deaf communities show high rates of common mental health disorders, with difficulties in getting access to health and little knowledge of health issues caused by communication problems".[115] A 2010 study into length of stays in acute psychiatric inpatient units found that "deaf inpatients' average length of hospital stay is twice that of hearing inpatients", with strong evidence to suggest that "the length of hospital stay for a deaf inpatient may not necessarily be for medical reasons per se, but the consequence of a shortage of appropriate community-based services that meet the specific needs of deaf mental health service users."[116] Sign language interpreters are most certainly an essential step towards providing access to appropriate community-based services for deaf people with mental health issues.

- Deaf patients experience fear, mistrust, and frustration in these kinds of mental health settings. However, they also appreciate efforts from care providers to improve communication, and especially the provision of appropriately skilled interpreter services in mental health settings. **Effective working relationships with**

---

[110] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, 'CISLI Code of Ethics, May 2011'; Sign Language Interpreting Service, *Draft 'Code of Conduct'*.

[111] Brendan Kelly, *Hearing Voices: The History of Psychiatry in Ireland* (Dublin, 2016), 267–70. See also Jim O'Boyle, 'Psychiatric Services for the Adult Deaf', in *The Psychiatric Services - Planning for the Future*, ed. Study Group on the Development of the Psychiatric Services (Dublin, 1984), 154–8.

[112] Expert Group on Mental Health Policy, *A Vision for Change* (Dublin, 2006), 40; available from https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/mentalhealth/mental-health---a-vision-for-change.pdf; accessed 15 April 2020.

[113] Karen Sinnott, '"What Was Particularly Scary about These Voices Is I Am Deaf and Don't Normally Hear People Talking"', *TheJournal.Ie*, November 11, 2017; available from https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/karen-sinnott-voices-deaf-sign-language-3687334-Nov2017/; accessed 15 April 2020.

[114] Margaret du Feu and Cathy Chovaz, *Mental Health and Deafness* (Oxford, 2014), 138–40.

[115] Johannes Fellinger, Daniel Holzinger, and Robert Pollard, 'Mental Health of Deaf People', *The Lancet* 379, no. 9820 (2012): 1042.

[116] Di Baines, Neil Patterson, and Sally Austen, 'An Investigation into the Length of Hospital Stay for Deaf Mental Health Service Users', *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 15, no. 2 (2010): 183.

interpreters have been found to greatly enhance medical practice for deaf people. It has also been shown that Deaf patients with access to interpreters use more preventive services, and receive more psychiatric and substance-misuse counselling, than do deaf patients who rely on note-writing with physicians.[117]

- Working with any patient who uses a different language poses many challenges for mental health professionals, who "depend heavily on language form and content for diagnosis and treatment", and "[n]uances in communication, including affective tone and subtleties of language structure, may be significant for diagnosis and treatment effectiveness."[118] Making a connection with the patient poses new challenges, as the clinician will be "working through an interpreter [and] has the difficult task of establishing rapport with a patient with whom they are not talking directly in the same language."[119] The very presence of the interpreter will affect that rapport; the mental health professional will be part of a triadic dynamic that includes an interpreter, differing significantly from direct, one-to-one relationships with clients they are used to. There is a "growing understanding of the influence of an interpreter's presence on the development and dynamics of that relationship. This may raise distinct issues pertaining to confidentiality, vicarious trauma, transference, and countertransference."[120]

- **Working with Deaf community members in mental health settings** often presents particular specific unique challenges. Communication may be impacted by cognitive, emotional, behavioural or social factors.[121] Significantly, many deaf people who use mental health services can be described as *dysfluent*; they are not skilled users of a signed language. In other cases, while "the underlying problem may be that the person has not mastered the language", it may actually be the case "that the person has a form of mental illness or a brain condition which effects thinking and therefore language."[122] Some deaf individuals may even present as *alinguistic,* or not having fluency in any language, signed or spoken.

- In general, mental health services may be quite phonocentric, focusing on working with hearing patients and asking them questions that are based on a world of sound. **Deaf people's life experiences and bank of knowledge can potentially be quite different**. For example, questions to a Deaf person about whether they 'hear voices' can be problematic. Deaf people can, in fact, experience a voice telling them what to do, but it is not actually heard but rather *felt*; what is important is that the Deaf person is asked *if they feel someone is telling them what to do.[123]* Talk to the interpreter about these issues in advance of the consultation.

- **Thought disorders** or **disordered ISL language use** may also be present, but not come across clearly in interpreted consultations with Deaf patients. The work of the interpreter generally proceeds on the basis of an underlying meaning being present; in a non-mental health setting, "interpreters will do their best to maximise meaningful communication". However, this approach runs into problems when interpreting for Deaf people presenting with thought disorders, as it can "disguise symptoms in a mental health assessment… word for word interpretation into [English] speech in [e.g. ISL] sign word order will sound thought disordered, even when it is not."[124] Much risk is involved in such situations for an interpreter to simply say (as they normally would) what *they* think the Deaf person means. It is therefore highly important that the interpreter and mental health professional collaborate, discuss and negotiate in advance, where such issues can be pre-empted in consultation and explored in debriefing. An example of an alternative approach may be that the interpreter relays the Deaf person's signing 'word for word' - and then subsequently, gives their own interpretation as to

---

[117] Fellinger, Holzinger, and Pollard, 'Mental Health of Deaf People', 1040.

[118] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, *Interpreting in Mental Health Settings*, 2007; available from https://rid.org/about-rid/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/.

[119] du Feu and Chovaz, *Mental Health and Deafness*, 143.

[120] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, *Interpreting in Mental Health Settings*.

[121] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, *Interpreting in Mental Health Settings*.

[122] Crump and Glickman, 'Mental Health Interpreting with Language Dysfluent Deaf Clients', 1.

[123] Robin Paijmans, Jim Cromwell, and Sally Austen, 'Do Profoundly Prelingually Deaf Patients with Psychosis Really Hear Voices?', *American Annals of the Deaf* 151, no. 1 (2006): 42–8.

[124] du Feu and Chovaz, *Mental Health and Deafness*, 143.

what they think the patient means. The professional can then ask the Deaf person *'Do you mean…?'*, in order to get further clarity.

Who should – and should NOT - interpret?

- In mental health settings, as in all other interpreting scenarios, using family or friends of Deaf patients to interpret is **not recommended**. Family or friends may have the language capabilities, but not the emotional capacity, to cope in these situations with a loved one. Children of deaf patients should **never** be used as interpreters. Mental health staff members – regardless of their skill in ISL – should **never** be asked to **interpret** in clinical situations.

- If your service falls under the definition of a 'public body' in Section 1 of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017, there is an obligation to ensure the **interpreters are members of the National Register**. [125]

- **Not all registered interpreters can do mental health interpreting work.** This domain of interpreting requires interpreters to possess specific skills and competencies above those of generic, entry-level interpreters. It is crucial that interpreters in mental health settings are not just registered, but have experience of interpreting in mental health settings, or at least have completed CPD training in mental health interpreting. The agency or organisation that sources your interpreters should be able to stand over the skill level and expertise of the professionals they send in these scenarios.

- **The relevant knowledge, experience, and qualification of the interpreter** is paramount. Prior knowledge of the mental health field is a must: "There is a wide range of mental health settings and services which are provided across the continuum of age, ethnicity and cultural identity... To perform effectively in these settings, interpreters require knowledge about the diversity of mental healthcare environments, including the goals and norms of specific settings and interventions. Interpreters should be familiar with the types of mental health professionals who are present in various settings, their roles, their communication goals and their treatment methodologies."[126]

- It is similarly vital that **the interpreter's own personal attributes** are aligned to this kind of work setting: "It is essential that interpreters possess personal and psychological strengths necessary to be effective in mental health work along with the ability to consistently and critically assess one's skills and the impact of one's behavioral and translation decisions."[127] The challenges posed by mental health interpreting "increases the need for self-awareness on the part of the interpreter and for strategies for managing the potential interference of one's own biases, judgments and sensitivities in the therapeutic process."[128] This is why it is essential the interpreter's skill set be an appropriate fit with the Deaf client's needs if the therapeutic process is to successful.

- The interpreter and mental health professional should also be aware of **Deaf cultural features** that may impact upon the interpreted setting. For example, **eye contact** is necessary in signed communication, and sometimes, use of eye gaze between the interpreter or mental health professional and Deaf patient can affect the patient's response. Constant eye-gaze can cause a Deaf patient to feel under pressure to answer a question, or they may inadvertently seek approval by giving the 'correct' answer, as opposed to their true answer.

- *Deaf Interpreters in Mental Health Settings:* It has become common practice for some non-deaf interpreters to work alongside Deaf interpreters in mental health settings (see above, Section 3 for information on Deaf interpreters). This may be due to the Deaf person's idiolectal use of ISL or because they use another signed

---

[125] The National Register may decide to implement a Specialisation Panel for the field of mental health interpreting in the future.
[126] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, *Interpreting in Mental Health Settings*.
[127] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, *Interpreting in Mental Health Settings*.
[128] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, *Interpreting in Mental Health Settings*.

language other than ISL, as well as any specific mental health or learning difficulties the Deaf service user may present with. Appropriately qualified Deaf interpreters will have "an extensive knowledge and understanding of deafness, the deaf community, and/or Deaf culture and can bring added expertise into uniquely difficult interpreting situations."[129] Deaf people respond very well to other Deaf professionals, given the shared understanding of language and experience of being Deaf. The advantages in using Deaf interpreters are summed up well in this quote about Deaf BSL interpreters:

> "If a deaf child or their family's language use is not within the usual developmental milestones for BSL (for example BSL is not their first language, or they are from another country), if they have significantly delayed language skills, have minimal language skills, or idiosyncratic language, then a deaf Interpreter can attune to their use of language due to their knowledge of sign language, shared lived experiences, and culture; therefore, they relay information meaningfully, making adjustments for example to account for 'native accent/regional variances'."[130]

Interpreter Preparation and Information – Mental Health Interpreting

- When booking an interpreter, the agency or the interpreter themselves may request more information about the patient or medical scenario in advance. **While being mindful of GDPR and privacy concerns, it is vital to assist in this process**. An unprepared interpreter will potentially result in an interpretation that has errors, or a discovery that the interpreter is the wrong person for the job when it is too late to source a replacement at short notice - thus causing further frustration and mental health risk to the Deaf patient.

- Even if names of patients cannot be given, try to give a **patient profile**, including the vital points below. (For Deaf partners / relatives of patients etc., please give the below information for that Deaf person where you can, but including the relevant information for the patient.)

    o **Age range** of Deaf patient (child, adolescent, 20s, 60s etc.)

    o **Gender** of patient

    o **National background** of patient - whether Irish-born, or coming from another country (including the UK, USA, or other English-speaking country)

    o **Which sign language used** by patient (if known), e.g.

        ▪ Irish Sign Language
        ▪ British Sign Language
        ▪ American Sign Language
        ▪ Other (Non-users of ISL will potentially require a specialist / Deaf interpreter.)

    o The **type of appointment or procedure** that will occur

    o The **expected duration of the appointment or procedure**, with a rough **end-time**

    o The **patient's MRN** or other **patient reference codes or numbers** (this will make it easier for the interpreter / agency to invoice for the assignment)

---

[129] du Feu and Chovaz, *Mental Health and Deafness*, 86–7.
[130] Vicci Ackroyd and Barry Wright, 'Working with British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreters: Lessons from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in the U.K.', *Journal of Communication in Healthcare: Strategies, Media and Engagement in Global Health* 11, no. 3 (2018): 195–204.

o   The Deaf person may wish to **choose the gender of the interpreter**, if the medical scenario is of a sensitive nature (e.g. maternity / gynaecology, disrobing involved, etc.)

o   **Any other preferences in relation to signed language** the Deaf person has expressed, e.g.:

   ▪   Signed English
   ▪   a Deaf interpreter
   ▪   more 'oral' ISL
   ▪   tactile signing for deaf-blind
   ▪   if they need the interpreter to sit close to them because of a visual impairment, etc.

o   Does the Deaf person have a **visual impairment**

o   Does the Deaf person has a **physical impairment** that may affect their use of signed language

o   Any **other medical, psychological or educational issues** present which may affect how the Deaf person uses sign language and may cause difficulty in interpretation – e.g.
   ▪   patient is on **strong medication**, meaning their signing or comprehension may be unclear

   ▪   patient has any **learning disability** or **mental health issues**, meaning that a very different approach to and skills and expertise in interpreting may be required (potentially requiring a Deaf interpreter)

   ▪   patient has **mobility issues affecting upper body / arms**, meaning their signing may be more difficult to read (potentially requiring a Deaf interpreter)

o   The interpreter should also have a discussion with the professional who will be with the Deaf patient, to be fully briefed about the medical situation and therefore give as accurate a picture as possible in their interpretation. They will also use this consultation to determine if the issue to be discussed is of a sensitive nature (for example, rape or sexual abuse), as the Interpreter may not be willing or able to interpret effectively on this issue. See Section 9, 'Ethics and the Role of the Interpreter'.

o   All information given in paper form, electronically, or verbally in pre-consultation, will be treated in confidence, as per the CISLI *Code of Ethics* and the Register's *Code of Conduct*.[131]

Working with Interpreters in Mental Health Settings

•   Considering **the interpreter as an integral part of a mental healthcare team** is key to success in interpreted settings such as these. "In the most effective clinical environments, interpreters are seen as members of the mental healthcare team. An interpreter's conduct and decision-making therefore should align with the goals and processes of the setting and the clinician(s)."[132] This approach allows the interpreter to clarify the role they will be adopting during the session, so that it is understood by the professional(s) within the team.

•   **Consultation before the interpreted event** is a very important part of this approach, allowing the interpreter to highlight any noteworthy language issues that arose, or any potential ethical issues that are impinging on the work of the interpreter. It is recommended that "[i]nterpreters and therapists take the time to prepare for sessions, and also take the opportunity to debrief after each session, to ensure that: (i) therapeutic goals are clear; (ii) linguistic and cultural issues can be discussed; and (iii) emotional and psychological reactions can be

---

[131] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, 'CISLI Code of Ethics, May 2011'; Sign Language Interpreting Service, *Draft 'Code of Conduct'*.
[132] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, *Interpreting in Mental Health Settings*.

shown and discussed."[133] In booking interpreters for mental health settings, time must also be allowed for **debriefing sessions** where feasible, preferably at the venue before they leave.

- There may be **ethical considerations** for the interpreter that a mental health professional may need to be aware of. For example, a brief chat with a Deaf client in the waiting room in advance may be beneficial for an interpreter in many ways. However, it may lead to vital information being disclosed to the interpreter that is not later disclosed by the Deaf client to the mental health professional. This may also occur if the Deaf client and interpreter leave the session together. The interpreter will encourage the Deaf person to relay this information to the professional, and can only disclose information themselves if legally bound to do so e.g. if it relates to risk to life, or harm to a child.[134]

- Issues around **specialised mental health clinical vocabulary use** are important to remember when using interpreters. Because "there is a unique vocabulary, as well as specialized and deliberate techniques of speaking in therapeutic relationships," interpreters will invariably "encounter words and phrases that have a specific psychiatric meaning … distinct from how the general public uses these same terms". Therefore it is crucial that interpreters in mental health settings are not just registered, but have experience of such mental health settings, or – ideally – have completed CPD or a qualification in mental health interpreting. [135]

- Even apart from specialised terminology and phrasing, what is concise and generally understood in English may need to be expanded on and 'unpacked' in ISL. For example, there is no general and universal ISL sign for *medication*; so "the interpreter has to explain that he or she must ask about tablets, liquids, inhalers, patches, and injections at different sites."[136] This necessitates the therapist understanding that interpreters do not interpret 'literally', and work with the interpreter to pursue strategies that will lead to effective, culturally–sensitive therapeutic communication.

- While interpreters generally **interpret in the first person** (i.e. saying 'I did…' instead of 'She says that she did…'), this strategy may change in certain mental health settings. Specifically, the interpreter may wish the therapist to draw attention to certain features of the Deaf person's ISL for the purposes of diagnosis or therapy. This can arise because "many deaf persons ... are dysfluent because of sign language deprivation. In extreme cases, their language skills can be so poor that they are incoherent or barely able to communicate an idea, even to native signers." When using the first-person approach breaks down, the interpreter can incorporate **third person narrative** (i.e. 'He is saying that…') and **descriptive** (e.g. 'She is making a sign which looks lie …) strategies, which can be used to comment on the person's language, as well as paralinguistics."[137]

- Mental health interpreting can be physically, mentally and emotionally draining for interpreters. A duty of care extends to freelance ISL interpreters working in traumatic settings. Where possible, they should be given a chance to avail of **supervision and / or counselling**. There may be some possibilities via your organisation or the service providing interpreters, e.g. the Citizens Information Board may be able to provide their EAP counselling availability to interpreters working through SLIS. The absence of such facilities may mean less willingness for interpreters to undertake this kind of work, and perhaps even a decrease in the availability of ISL interpreters in this field.

Legal Interpreting

---

[133] Andy Cornes and Jemina Napier, 'Challenges of Mental Health Interpreting When Working with Deaf Patients', *Australasian Psychiatry* 13, no. 4 (December 2005): 406.

[134] du Feu and Chovaz, *Mental Health and Deafness*, 144.

[135] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, *Interpreting in Mental Health Settings*.

[136] du Feu and Chovaz, *Mental Health and Deafness*, 142.

[137] REF https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=joi p. 6

Definition

- For the purposes of these guidelines, we define 'Legal Interpreting' as: **Any courtroom or tribunal setting, any consultation between a service user and their legal representatives (e.g. solicitor or barrister), any Garda interview or interrogation, or any interpreting work in a prison or other custodial setting.**

- Legal interpreting covers a wide range of areas and scenarios in interpreting. Examples include **court proceedings** for **criminal**, **civil** and **family law** cases; **Gardai Interviews** of deaf suspects; the taking of **Garda Statements** from Deaf witnesses; **legal consultations** with solicitors and barristers; **interpreting in prison** for Deaf people in custody; and **workplace tribunals or hearings** such as the Workplace Relations Commission.

Who should – and should NOT - interpret?

- Using family or friends of Deaf people to interpret in legal settings is **not recommended**. Children of deaf people should **never** be used as interpreters in legal settings.

- Court staff members or Gardaí – regardless of their skill in ISL – should **never** be asked to interpret in legal situations. It is unethical and unprofessional.

- If your service falls under the definition of a 'public body' in Section 1 of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017, there is an obligation to ensure the **interpreters are members of the National Register**.

- Not all registered interpreters can do legal work. First of all, not all interpreters can handle the **specialised legal use of language, jargon and specific vocabulary** used in the courtroom or in legal consultations. It is crucial that interpreters in legal settings are not just registered, but have experience of interpreting legal settings, or at least have completed CPD training in legal interpreting or – ideally – possess a qualification in law or legal interpreting. The agency or organisation that sources your interpreters should be able to stand over the skill level and expertise of the professionals they send in these scenarios.

- The new Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters will eventually feature a **Legal Interpreting Specialisation Panel** of registered interpreters with recognised skills in interpreting in legal contexts. The Register will recommend that **only members of the Legal Interpreting panel** be used to interpret in such contexts.

Challenges of Legal Interpreting

- **Interpreting in any legal setting poses unique issues for interpreters** working between two languages and cultures. Interpreters in these settings face "intercultural communication challenges … in terms of what interpreters need to do to ensure that minority language users have access to justice… such as (lack of) understanding of legal terminology or legal procedures, lack of equivalence between languages for key legal concepts and subsequent issues concerning the translation choices that can be made, struggles with how to interrupt, clarify, repair or manage communication, and how interpreters present themselves and their role to legal personnel."[138]

- For these reasons, **preparation for the interpreter** is as important – perhaps even more so – in legal interpreting as it is in other domains.
  - For **Garda settings**, it should be made very clear to the interpreter in advance of the assignment whether it will be an interview with a witness or a suspect, and what crime the Deaf suspect has allegedly committed.

---

[138] Jemina Napier and Tobias Haug, 'Justisigns: A European Overview of Sign Language Interpreting Provision in Legal Settings', *Journal of Law, Social Justice & Global Development*, no. 2 (January 16, 2017): 2.

o   For **court cases**, interpreters should be made aware of **the type of case** that will be heard in court; whether it is set for a full hearing, 'up for mention', an arraignment, or other type of hearing. The solicitor for the Deaf person should be put in contact with the interpreter in advance of the court date.

Interpreter Preparation and Information – Legal Interpreting

- When booking an interpreter, the agency or the interpreter themselves may request more information about the Deaf service user (whether they are a defendant, witness, plaintiff, party to proceedings, etc.) in advance. **While being mindful of GDPR and privacy concerns, it is vital to assist in this process**. An unprepared interpreter will potentially result in an interpretation that has errors, or a discovery that the interpreter is the wrong person for the job when it is too late to source a replacement.

- Even if names of Deaf individuals involved cannot be given, try to give a **Deaf service user profile**, including these vital points below. (Where this information is not known, please put the interpreter in touch with the Deaf person's solicitor in advance.)

  o   **Age range** of the Deaf person (child, adolescent, 20s, 60s etc.)

  o   **Gender** of Deaf person

  o   **National background** of Deaf person - whether Irish-born, or coming from another country (including the UK, USA, or other English-speaking country)

  o   **Which sign language used** by the Deaf person (if known), e.g.

      ▪ Irish Sign Language
      ▪ British Sign Language
      ▪ American Sign Language
      ▪ Other (Non-users of ISL will potentially require a specialist / Deaf interpreter.)

  o   The **type of event (meeting with representative, legal proceedings, interview, trial or hearing)** that will occur

  o   Any **court case reference codes or numbers** (this will make it easier for the interpreter / agency to invoice for the assignment)

  o   The **expected duration of the event**, with a rough **end-time**

  o   The Deaf person may wish to **choose the gender of the interpreter**, if the case is of a sensitive nature (e.g. sexual assault, sexual abuse, domestic violence)

  o   **Any other preferences in relation to signed language** the Deaf person has expressed, e.g.:

      ▪ Signed English
      ▪ a Deaf interpreter
      ▪ more 'oral' ISL
      ▪ tactile signing for deaf-blind
      ▪ if they need the interpreter to sit close to them because of a visual impairment, etc.

  o   Does the Deaf person have a **visual impairment**

- o Does the Deaf person has a **physical impairment** that may affect their use of signed language

- o Any **other medical, psychological or educational issues** present which may affect how the Deaf person uses sign language and may cause difficulty in interpretation – e.g.

  - ▪ If Deaf person has any **learning disability** or **mental health issues**, meaning that a very different approach to and skills and expertise in interpreting may be required (potentially requiring a Deaf interpreter)

  - ▪ If Deaf person has **mobility issues affecting upper body / arms**, meaning their signing may be more difficult to read (potentially requiring a Deaf interpreter)

- o The interpreter may also wish to have a brief discussion (where possible and appropriate) with the Deaf person's solicitor, Garda involved in the case, court clerk, etc. in advance of the event, in order to be fully briefed about the legal situation and therefore give as accurate a picture as possible in their interpretation.

- o All such information given will be treated in confidence, as per the CISLI *Code of Ethics* and the Register's *Code of Conduct*.[139]

Who should Interpret? – Some Legal Considerations

- Using the same interpreter in the same case, for both a Garda interview, and subsequent court proceedings, is **not recommended**. This risks what is referred to as **'contamination'** and can be regarded as an undesirable situation, as the interpreter may add information recalled from the police interview which was not actually uttered in court.[140]

- There are also other factors to consider in relation to **conflict of interest** for the interpreter. "Prior personal or professional involvement of the interpreter with any of the parties that may interfere with the objectivity of the interpreter can create a conflict of interest or appearance of impropriety. Interpreting during any previous investigative processes (even if that particular witness is not called upon to testify) prior to a court case can also create a conflict of interest for an interpreter when accepting the role of Proceedings Interpreter."[141]

Who should Interpret? – Using an Interpreter Team

- Many legal interpreting assignments will **require more than one interpreter**. This will depend on many factors including:
  - the length of the assignment
  - number of deaf consumers
  - varieties of communication modalities and language used by multiple deaf and hard of hearing parties
  - the complexity of the subject matter and situation
  - whether interpreters with distinct functions are required (see below)

- **Interpreters working alone** in legal situations **can be prone to fatigue,** and thus **an increased rate of errors.**[142] "Scholarship from the field of interpreting suggests that mental fatigue sets in after approximately 30 minutes of sustained simultaneous interpretation, resulting in the marked loss of accuracy."[143] This is a non-trivial factor

---

[139] Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters, 'CISLI Code of Ethics, May 2011'; Sign Language Interpreting Service, *Draft 'Code of Conduct'*.
[140] Irish Translators and Interpreters Association (ITIA), *Working Group on the Jurisdiction of the Courts* (Dublin, 2002).
[141] Karen Newby and Jason Weald, eds., *Best Practices for BSL/English Interpreters Working in Legal Settings* (2015).
[142] Mirta Vidal, 'New Study on Fatigue Confirms Need for Working in Teams', *Proteus: The Newsletter of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators* VI, no. 1 (1997): 1, 4–7; available from https://najit.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ProteusWinter1997.pdf.
[143] National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers, *Factsheet: The Use of Interpreting Teams in the Courtroom*, 2015; available from http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Fact_Sheet_American_Sign_Language_Interpreter_Teams.pdf; accessed 18 March 2020.

that has a serious risk of leading to injustice: "Unrecognised errors in legal interpreting constitute a risk, both to the deaf party and the administration of justice", and so, to ensure continued accuracy and effective interpretation, "team interpreting is necessary to reduce the rate of error within the interpretation due to mental fatigue."[144] The non-active co-interpreter acts as "an external monitor of performance; the more serious the consequences of interpreter miscues are to the consumer (e.g. a legal setting), the more essential is such external monitoring. This external monitoring can only be provided by another interpreter, because competence in both SL and TL is necessary to identify miscues."[145]

- It should be remembered that the 'non-active' interpreter is not actually 'off duty', but rather, "the interpreter is actively monitoring the working interpreter's accuracy and making necessary adjustments. At times, these adjustments need to be made immediately, and the non--working team interpreter may (non-obtrusively) sign or speak to the working interpreter, in order to adjust the interpretation. At other times, the team interpreter might make a written note and discuss the point with her team interpreter at a break. Rarely, the interpreters might seek permission to confer with each other to adjust the interpretation for accuracy."[146]

Court Proceedings – Distinct Functions of Interpreters

- **Legal proceedings which involve two or more Deaf parties should not utilise the services of a single interpreter**. As part of its recommendations on best practice for legal interpreters, the Association of Sign Language Interpreters (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) recommends that "It is best practice for legal interpreters to be placed according to distinct functions when interpreting within court or administrative proceedings."[147] These functions can be described as **Proceedings Interpreters** and **Counsel (or Table) Interpreters.**

- This division of interpreting duties is implemented in Northern Ireland, where the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) has made it clear to the Law Society of Northern Ireland that "[d]efence representatives are expected to access and fund their own interpreting for court hearings and are requested not to make application to the court for the use of the in-court interpreter."[148]

Proceedings Interpreters[149]
- are officers of the court
- should be paid for by the Courts Service, regardless of type of court (criminal, civil, family law etc) – see Irish Sign Language Act 2017, Section 7
- swear an oath to interpret accurately and to protect the integrity of the interpreted proceedings
- interpret **all aspects of the open court process**, such as all open court dialogue and witness testimony from both sides of the case
- in Civil or Family Law Cases (with adversarial deaf parties), interpret the open court process for opposing deaf parties, including witness testimony for both sides of the case

---

[144] Newby and Weald, *Best Practises (BSL)*.
[145] Cokely, 'The Effects of Lag Time on Interpreter Errors'.
[146] National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers, *Use of Interpreting Teams in the Courtroom*.
[147] "Court and legal personnel are sometimes under the assumption that one interpreter is sufficient to interpret any and all parts of a court or legal proceeding involving a deaf person... Yet, depending on the number of deaf people involved in the court case and the role of each deaf person in the case, one interpreter will most likely not be sufficient. Ethical, procedural and legal conflicts can occur that will adversely affect the integrity of the interpreting process when interpreters do not maintain distinct roles for the various functions of court interpreting." Newby, Karen & Jason Weald (2015), *Best Practices For BSL/English Interpreters Working In Legal Settings,* p. 22. Available from https://zakon.co.uk/admin/resources/downloads/asli-best-practice-for-bsl-interpreting-in-legal-settings.pdf
[148] Letter from Patricia McKee, NICTS Contracts Branch, to Law Society of Northern Ireland, 17 August 2017. Jeff McConnell, personal communication.
[149] Kellie Stewart, Anna Witter-Merithew, and Margaret Cobb, *Best Practices: American Sign Language and English Interpretation within Court and Legal Settings*, March 2009, 24–6; Newby and Weald, *Best Practises (BSL)*.

- in Criminal cases (for deaf witnesses), provide interpretation for the open court process and witness testimony
- can effectively interpret for more than one deaf party during the open court process or witness testimony (with exceptions if there is diverse use of language, particular language needs etc.)
- **do not engage in interpreting between a deaf party and their lawyers**
- must be visible to both a deaf party(s) and any deaf witness called
- must be able to face the deaf person when interpreting.

Counsel or Table Interpreters[150]

- should be, in Criminal Cases, paid for by the solicitor or via the **Criminal Legal Aid scheme** (see Section 4)
- should be, in Civil Cases, paid for by the Courts Service on commencement of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017, Section 7; are currently paid for by one or other party, often paid back in full after a settlement reached
- provide a Deaf party access to their lawyers prior to, during, and following a court proceeding
- **do not take an oath in court** and **do not interpret open court proceedings**
- usually sit behind their client's counsel, and interpret privileged communications that may arise between the deaf party and their lawyer

Each Deaf party or defendant should have their own table interpreter(s): "When there are multiple deaf defendants or parties involved in a court case, unless each defendant or party has access to a separate Table Interpreter, he or she would not have an effective means of communicating with his or her legal team prior to, during, or following the proceeding".[151]

Deaf Interpreters in Court

It has become common practice for some non-deaf interpreters to work alongside Deaf interpreters in courtroom or other legal settings (see above, Section 3 for information on Deaf interpreters). This may be due to the Deaf person's idiolectal use of ISL, because they use another signed language other than ISL, because of mental health or learning difficulties, etc. It is considered best practice to collaborate with deaf interpreters in many court and legal settings because "deaf interpreters are able to enhance the accuracy, meaning. and effectiveness of the interpretation."[152] In fact, in some countries like the United States, it is rapidly becoming best practice to utilise Deaf / hearing interpreters for *any* legal proceedings:

> Courts assume that because a court interpreter can sign, the court interpreter can also interpret in a manner that is understandable to the deaf litigant. However, many certified interpreters who can hear are not fluent in ASL, have insufficient exposure to legal settings and will not have the knowledge or the linguistic skill required to satisfy the oath to interpret the proceedings accurately. The deaf interpreter ensures that the court interpreter is able to achieve the level of accuracy required in legal settings. Hence, the model discussed here to protect the rights of deaf litigants is more inclusive and efficient than the typical spoken language interpreter model. Deaf interpreters, assisted by court interpreters who can hear, are the reasonable accommodation that ensures that most deaf litigants, not just those with specific language challenges, are afforded full and equal access to justice.[153]

- ***An interpreter can be called to testify as a witness, for settings in which they have interpreted.*** Britain's Crown Prosecution Service are briefed about this: "If a defendant has been interviewed through an interpreter and there is any contention as to what was said during that interview, evidence will be required from interpreter. Evidence from the police officer in this regard amounts to hearsay. If the interpreter used at the

---

[150]Newby and Weald, *Best Practises (BSL)*; Stewart, Witter-Merithew, and Cobb, *Best Practices (ASL)*.

[151] Stewart, Witter-Merithew, and Cobb, *Best Practices (ASL)*.

[152] Stewart, Witter-Merithew, and Cobb, *Best Practices (ASL)*.

[153] National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers and Carla Mathers, *Deaf Interpreters in Court: An Accommodation That Is More than Reasonable*, March 2009, 6–7.

police station is to be called as a prosecution witness, a separate interpreter is to be used for court. If an interpreter is required to give evidence, he or she should be given an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of any record of interview at which they were present."[154]

- ***An interpreter may not be all that is needed to ensure a Deaf person can fully access the legal proceeding.*** Please note that due to a range of factors around education of deaf children, language acquisition, policy and usage, mental health and intellectual disability, **the provision of an interpreter may not necessarily ensure that legal proceedings or processes are accessible to all Deaf individuals.** The reasons for this have eloquently been described in the USA by Lavigne and Vernon: "There are defendants … all over the country that have interpreters with them every step of the way yet remain unable to comprehend a system that sends them to prison or takes away their children. One wonders how this is possible… too often environment, education, and biology conspire against a deaf person and deprive her of the opportunity to acquire a solid base of language of any kind, be it English or ASL. This language deficiency will invariably interfere with communication about most abstract matters such as the law and will throw communication in the courtroom or the lawyer's office into a tailspin."[155] Please consider the use of Deaf interpreters (as mentioned above) or Deaf advocates, and consult with the interpreting team.

Interpreting in Garda Settings: Recording

- ***The Deaf interviewee should be video-recorded during a Garda interview.*** It is common, and considered good practice, to video-record the interviews of Deaf individuals in Garda custody. In the UK, "It is best practice to video record the interpretation of the caution given to a deaf individual prior to being questioned by law enforcement personnel."[156] Not only the original ISL of the suspect should be recorded but also, the interpretation into ISL of the interpreter: "It is best practice to create a video recording of a deaf person's statement, interview, testimony … etc., ***and the interpretation of that interaction,*** when the deaf person's statement and/or the interpretation has the potential to become evidence or necessitate future analysis in a court or legal matter… Without a [visual] record of the deaf person's statement, the interpretation of the deaf person's statement is all that remains. Although interpreters take precautions to reduce the potential risk of error in an interpretation, that risk does persist. Capturing the original statement of the deaf person on video is essential for preserving any evidence for a legal challenge that might arise during a court or legal proceeding."[157]

- ***The interpreter should also be video-recorded during a Garda interview of a suspect.*** In the UK this is recommended. "Recording the interpretation is essential for preserving any evidence or future need for analysis of the interpretation that might arise during a court or legal proceeding... it is important that the technology capture a simultaneous, full, and clear view of both the statement and the interpretation for later analysis - this means both the video and audio being recorded simultaneously. If logistics prohibit obtaining a full and clear view of both the deaf person and the interpreter simultaneously on the screen, separate video cameras - one of the deaf person's statement and one of the interpretation - will be necessary to produce a clear video with audio recording of each."

- ***Other interpreted legal scenarios, such as interviews of Deaf witnesses, could also be video-recorded.*** Serious thought should also be given to audio and video recording of Deaf witness interviews. In fact, given the many factors around quality of interpretation and the widely varying needs of the Deaf community, there have been

---

[154] Crown Prosecution Service, *Criminal Investigations: Use of Interpreters, Version 1.0*, September 2019, 6.
[155] Michele Lavigne and McCay Vernon, 'An Interpreter Isn't Enough: Deafness, Language, and Due Process', *Wisconsin Law Review*, no. 5 (2003): 848.
[156] Newby and Weald, *Best Practises (BSL)*, 37.
[157] Newby and Weald, *Best Practises (BSL)*.

calls elsewhere for *every interpreted legal scenario* to be video recorded: "Until such time as policy that takes into account the heterogeneity of deaf people and their communication needs are created, a policy that makes deaf people part of the decision-making process rather than a victim of it, deaf people must begin to demand that courts, police, and other legal authorities videotape all proceedings in which there is a sign language interpreter. This will provide deaf people and the courts with recourse when the interpretation is in question."[158] This is also an issue in relation to spoken language interpreting: "The current lack of any recording of witness interviews creates room for abuse of the judicial process [in Ireland]."[159]

Platform Interpreting[160]

Definition

For the purposes of these guidelines, we define 'Platform Interpreting' as **interpreting at large-scale meetings, seminars, conferences, symposia, or other similar events where there are large numbers of attendees. Platform interpreting may or may not be of an academic, specialised, or linguistically complex nature.**

Before the Event

- Full-day conferences generally require **(a minimum of) two or three interpreters**. This is especially if there are breakout sessions/workshops.

- Conference advertising, registration or booking applications should note that Irish Sign Language Interpretation will be provided on request. Setting a response date to indicate the need for an interpreter may assist in the resource planning for the event. If your event is a public one, consider asking the interpreter, interpreting agencies, and especially Deaf organisations, to assist in spreading the word in the Deaf community about the interpreted event.

- **All presentations and materials should be forwarded to the interpreter team ahead of the event** to ensure interpreters are thoroughly familiar with the topics. These will be an advantage to the interpretation in all cases. For some types of conference, such materials will be necessary to deliver the service. Please send relevant material (conference schedule, presentations, papers etc.) directly to the interpreters as soon possible, as well as paper copies of all the session documents on arrival.

- **Any videos or audio clips should also be made available** to the interpreters well in advance. Please consider subtitling your video clips to ensure maximum accessibility for all attendees.

- Where possible, interpreters will meet or consult with the speaker(s) to ask questions relating to the presentations. As the interpreters will in many cases not be an expert in the field the speaker is presenting on, please facilitate this **pre-assignment consultation** by offering to put presenters and interpreters in contact with each other.

- If the venue of the conference is particularly large or if there is a lot of activity going on onstage, the interpreters may wish to conduct a **site visit** to discuss with floor managers or coordinators the best place to stand, lighting, and other issues. Please facilitate such site visits.

---

[158] Jeremy L. Brunson, 'Your Case Will Now Be Heard: Sign Language Interpreters as Problematic Accommodations in Legal Interactions', *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 13, no. 1 (2008): 91.

[159] Karolina Jarmołowska, 'Chinese Whispers: Taking a Witness Statement from a Non-English Speaker in an Irish Garda Station', *Translation Ireland* 18, no. 2 (2010): 11–23.

[160] AIIC Sign Language Network, 'Guidelines for Positioning of Sign Language Interpreters in Conferences, Including Web-Streaming', *AIIC Website*, December 2016; available from https://aiic.net/page/7821/guidelines-for-positioning-of-sign-language-interpreters-in-conferences-including-web-streaming/lang/1; accessed 9 April 2020.

- Consider reserving some seats in the venue for Deaf participants to enable them to access the interpreter(s) more easily. On the day of the conference, it may also be helpful to have an interpreter at the registration desk for when the Deaf participants arrive.

Positioning

- Sign language interpreters should be placed at the front of the venue in a location, where they are easily visible from anywhere in the venue.

- The active interpreter(s) (i.e. the interpreter currently signing) should be **placed on stage** or alternatively on a **raised platform.** This is because interpreters should be higher than the general audience, so everyone can see them. The active interpreter in each team stands next to the panel or speaker / chairperson.
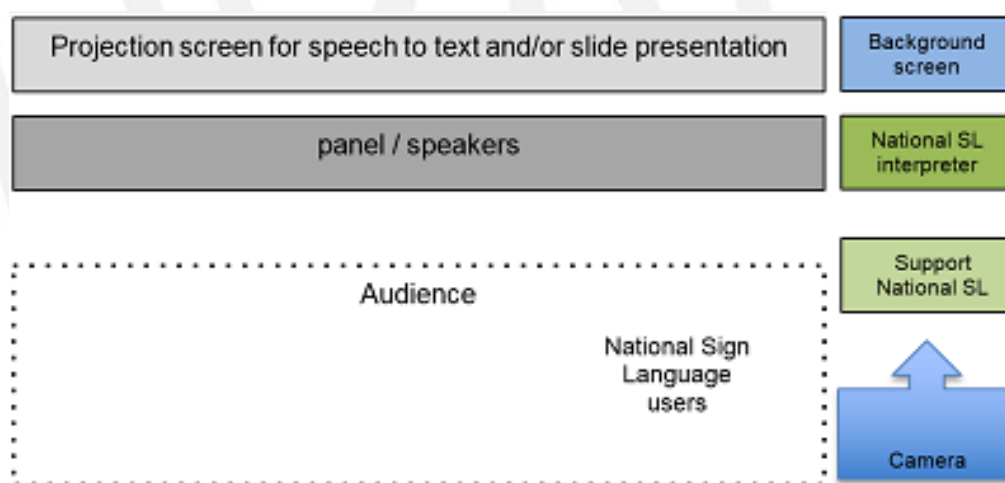
Optimum placement for sign language interpreters at a conference-style event.
Shows placement for one sign languages being used.[161]

- If there are **two signed languages** (for example, Irish Sign Language and International Sign), the interpreters should not stand next to each other, but if possible, on either side of the stage facing the audience. The supporting interpreter(s) sits facing the active interpreter. There must be sufficient space for the teams to work together and they must be able to see each other.
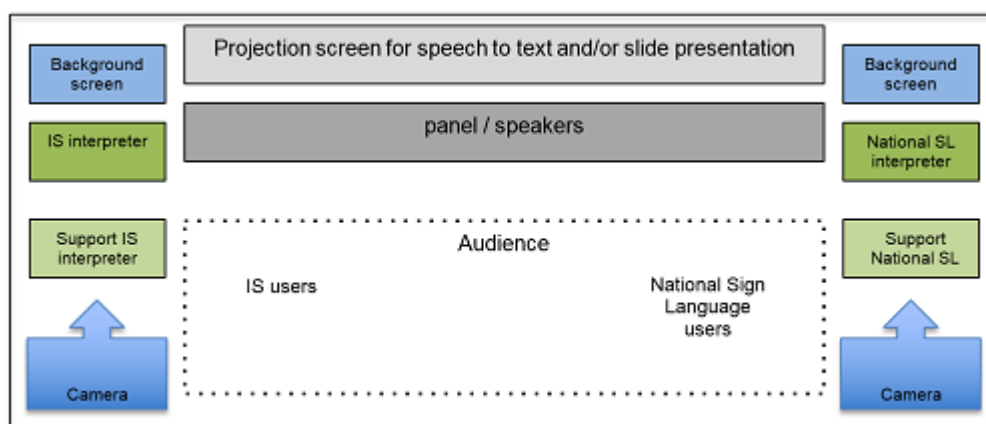
Optimum placement for sign language interpreters at a conference-style event.
Shows placement for two sign languages being used, e.g. Irish Sign Language and British Sign Language.[162]

---

[161] AIIC Sign Language Network, 'Guidelines...' Taken from .
[162] Taken from AIIC Sign Language Network, 'Guidelines...'

- The active interpreter needs a space of approximately 1.5 x 1.5 metres minimum (2.0 x 2.0 maximum). The supporting interpreter is seated approx. 1 – 3 metres in front of the active interpreter.

- Active interpreters will swap with their team members every 15-20 minutes, or depending on when speakers or presentations are scheduled for. Please consult with interpreters in relation to seating and swapping to ensure that swaps can be done smoothly and safely for all concerned.

Visibility

- Sign language interpreters must be able to see any sign language users in the room and the users must be able to see them. The distance between interpreters and sign language users should be no more than approx. 10 metres, with no visual distractions in sightline.

- It is important that the area behind the sign language interpreter is not visually distracting. For example, there should be no highly patterned backgrounds or poor backlighting, windows, or bright screens. The background should be a solid colour.

- People should not be able to walk in front of or behind the interpreter.

Lighting

- There should be sufficient (indirect) lighting on the active interpreter, especially on the hands and face, casting no shadows on the face. Lighting should ideally be cool beam, to ensure the interpreter is working in a pleasant temperature.

- Lighting should not be directly in the interpreter's face, as this is distracting. Flash photography near the interpreter should be avoided.

Monitor(s)

- A **visual monitor** should be placed where the interpreter can see it. This visual monitor will mirror the display of the large screen in the room, including any real-time captioning. This setup ensures that the interpreter will not need to turn around to see the text on the screen.

- A second or third monitor will be needed when interpreters are working directly from real time captioning, and/or from one sign language to another sign language (e.g. a Deaf interpreter working from a BSL video into ISL). Occasionally a full monitor setup will be required, which consists of
  o Monitor 1: Slides of presentation
  o Monitor 2: Real time captioning
  o Monitor 3: Live video feed of source sign language.

Audio

- If audio headsets are made available to conference participants for interpreted content (e.g. a Spanish language speaker presenting at an Irish conference), **wireless headsets are required** for all interpreters in the team and one spare. This avoids trailing cables, and ensures that the interpreters' equipment is for their use only. Headset receivers should easily attach to clothing and use, for example, Radio Frequency (FM) rather than infra-red transmission (the latter can lead to signal distortion when signing). Please ensure sufficient replacement batteries are provided.

- Where Deaf attendees are presenting or ask questions, good audio quality **handheld microphones** are necessary. The sign language interpreter works more easily with a handheld wireless microphone (rather than an attached table-top microphone, lapel microphone, or headset combo), as they can turn easily towards deaf signers in the audience, as well as signers giving presentations at the front of the conference room. Microphones must also be provided to any spoken language interpreters in booths, so that they can receive clear audio input from the sign language interpreter if a Deaf person makes a presentation or asks a question

Resources for Interpreters

- **Chairs** should be supplied for active and supporting interpreters. For each interpreter on the team, a chair should be placed facing the position of the active interpreter. The chairs should ideally be non-revolving, and have either a low armrest or none at all. They should also be ergonomically adjustable to suit the working interpreters.

- A **table** should also be supplied. The table should be situated next to the interpreters' chairs to place documents and notes. Water should also be provided to the interpreter team.

- If an event is lengthy, especially if it is a multi-day event, consider arranging an **interpreter preparation room** where the interpreters can relax, go through and discuss prep materials, etc.

Recording or Livestreaming of Interpretation

- **A**ny recording, live streaming, archiving etc. of the interpreting service will require the **prior direct permission of the interpreter at all times.** Please ensure that the interpreter is aware that the event will be broadcast, recorded, or streamed at the time of booking.

- Please consult with the interpreter (and any Deaf attendees) about the **positioning of the interpreter within the frame**, to ensure that the end result is legible and accessible for Deaf viewers.

ISL Presentations or Questions

- A **Deaf attendee** may be involved in the conference **as a presenter**, or with **a comment or question**. The sign language interpreters in the conference room will then provide interpretation when needed, using their microphones.

- If proceedings are being recorded, and / or relayed to video screens at the front of the venue, **the camera should be on the Deaf person** as they present or ask their question - NOT on the interpreter working into spoken language. When the Deaf person's presentation or question begins, the image of the interpreter must be removed from the screen to be replaced by the signer (unless the signer is also being interpreted into another sign language).

12.   References

Ackroyd, Vicci, and Barry Wright. 'Working with British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreters: Lessons from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in the U.K.' *Journal of Communication in Healthcare: Strategies, Media and Engagement in Global Health* 11, no. 3 (2018): 195–204.

AIIC Sign Language Network. 'Guidelines for Positioning of Sign Language Interpreters in Conferences, Including Web-Streaming'. *AIIC Website*, December 2016. https://aiic.net/page/7821/guidelines-for-positioning-of-sign-language-interpreters-in-conferences-including-web-streaming/lang/1.

ASLI (Association of Sign Language Interpreters). *ASLI's Position Paper on the Use of Video Interpreting Services for Public Services*, April 2019. https://asli.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ASLI-VMI-position-paper-final.pdf.

Bacik, Ivana. 'Breaking the Language Barrier: Access to Justice in the New Ireland'. *Judicial Studies Institute Journal* 7, no. 2 (February 2007): 109–23. https://www.ijsj.ie/assets/uploads/documents/pdfs/2007-Edition-02/article/breaking-the-language-barrier-access-to-justice-in-the-new-ireland.pdf.

Baines, Di, Neil Patterson, and Sally Austen. 'An Investigation into the Length of Hospital Stay for Deaf Mental Health Service Users'. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 15, no. 2 (2010): 179–84.

Bower, Kathryn. 'Stress and Burnout in Video Relay Service (VRS) Interpreting'. *Journal of Interpretation* 24, no. 1 (2015).

Brunson, Jeremy L. 'Your Case Will Now Be Heard: Sign Language Interpreters as Problematic Accommodations in Legal Interactions'. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 13, no. 1 (2008): 77–91.

Byrne, Bronagh. 'Why We Need a Sign Language Act in Northern Ireland'. *Queen's Policy Engagement Website*, September 6, 2019. http://qpol.qub.ac.uk/why-we-need-a-sign-language-act-in-ni/.

Central Statistics Office. 'Databases'. *Statbank*, 2016.

Citizens Information Board. *Information Provision and Access to Public and Social Services for the Deaf Community*, 2017.

_____ *Information Provision and Access to Public and Social Services for the Deaf Community*. Edited by Tom Martin and Jim McDevitt. Dublin, 2017. https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/social_policy/Deaf_Community_Research_Rpt_Feb2018.pdf.

_____ 'Job Interview Interpreter Grant'. *CIB Website*, February 25, 2020. https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/employment_and_disability/job_interview_interpreter_grant_scheme.html.

Clarke, Anne. *Evaluation of the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS)*, 2016. https://aiic.net/page/7821/guidelines-for-positioning-of-sign-language-interpreters-in-conferences-including-web-streaming/lang/1.

Cokely, Dennis. 'The Effects of Lag Time on Interpreter Errors'. *Sign Language Studies* 53 (1986): 341–75.

Conroy, Pauline. *Signing In, Signing Out: The Education and Employment Experiences of Deaf Adults in Ireland*. Dublin, 2006.

Coogan, Anne, and Josephine O'Leary. *Deaf Women of Ireland: Report and Survey through Three Generations*, 2015.

Cornes, Andy, and Jemina Napier. 'Challenges of Mental Health Interpreting When Working with Deaf Patients'. *Australasian Psychiatry* 13, no. 4 (December 2005): 403–8.

Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters. 'CISLI Code of Ethics, May 2011'. *CISLI Website*, 2016. https://cisli.ie/home/codeofethics/.

_____ *CISLI Membership and Priority Questionnaire 2018, Final Report*. Edited by Lisa Harvey, Ciara Grant, and Cormac Leonard. Dublin, 2018. https://cisli.ie/2018/07/06/2018survey/.

_____ *Occupational Health & Safety Policy 2017/2018*. Dublin, 2018.
https://app.box.com/s/nsbye3kcpsimez3et8q90fq5oh0fxxuc.

Crown Prosecution Service. *Criminal Investigations: Use of Interpreters, Version 1.0*, September 2019.

Crump, Charlene, and Neil Glickman. 'Mental Health Interpreting with Language Dysfluent Deaf Clients'. *Journal of Interpretation* 21, no. 1 (2011): 3.

Deafness Cognition and Language Research Centre (DCAL). *Accessible Remote Working Guide for BSL Interpreters, Deaf and Hearing Participants*, 2020.
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dcal/sites/dcal/files/remote_working_guidelines_dcal_april_2020.pdf.

Department for Communities. 'Sign Language'. *Department for Communities Website*, 2019.
https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/sign-language.

Department of Culture Arts and Leisure Northern Ireland. *Sign Language Framework*. Belfast, 2016.
https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/dcal/Sign Language Framework Document.PDF.

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. 'Job Interview Interpreter Grant'. *Gov.Ie Website*, 2020.
https://www.gov.ie/en/service/4c4ce4-job-interview-interpreter-grant/.

Department of Justice and Equality (Courts Policy Division). *Procedures Governing The Payment Of Criminal Legal Aid Fees*, 2015. http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE PAYMENT OF CRIMINAL LEGAL AID FEES.pdf/Files/PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE PAYMENT OF CRIMINAL LEGAL AID FEES.pdf.

Emmart, Jackie. 'Sign Language Interpreters: Attire Leaves a First & Lasting Impression'. *Street Leverage*, August 2014.

Equality Tribunal. 'DEC-S2009-087 - Full Case Report'. *Workplace Relations Commission Website*, December 21, 2009.
https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/cases/2009/december/dec-s2009-087-full-case-report.html.

_____ 'Decision DEC-E2013-186'. *Workplace Relations Commission Website*, December 19, 2013.
https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/cases/2013/december/dec-e2013-186.html.

Expert Group on Mental Health Policy. *A Vision for Change*. Dublin, 2006.
https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/mentalhealth/mental-health---a-vision-for-change.pdf.

'Fast-Talking MEPs Urged to Slow down for Interpreters'. *BBC News*, February 2016.

Fellinger, Johannes, Daniel Holzinger, and Robert Pollard. 'Mental Health of Deaf People'. *The Lancet* 379, no. 9820 (2012): 1037–44.

du Feu, Margaret, and Cathy Chovaz. *Mental Health and Deafness*. Oxford, 2014.

'Fund for Students with Disabilities'. *Studentfinance.Ie*, 2019. https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/student-finance/fund-for-students-with-disabilities/.

Gillespie, Sally. 'Linguistic Demographics, Resources and Deficit of Opportunity: Deaf Signed Language Users in Northern Ireland'. Unpublished PhD thesis, Queens University Belfast, 2018.

Haualand, Hilde, and Anna-Lena Nilsson. 'Working with Active Interpreters: A Commentary about Interpreting Terminology and Concepts'. *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 11, no. 2 (2019): 40–5.

Health Service Executive National Advocacy Unit, and National Disability Authority. *National Guidelines on Accessible Health and Social Care Services*. Dublin, 2016.
https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/yourhealthservice/access/natguideaccessibleservices/natguideaccessibleservices.pdf.

Health Service Executive. *National Health Care Charter: You and Your Health Service*, 2012.
https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/person-family-engagement/national-healthcare-charter/national-healthcare-charter.pdf.

Health Services Executive. *A Guide for Health Service Managers and Employees To Support Employees Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*, 2018.

_____ *On Speaking Terms: Good Practice Guidelines for HSE Staff in the Provision of Interpreting Services*. Dublin, 2009. https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/socialinclusion/emaspeaking.pdf.

Higher Education Authority (HEA). *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019*. Dublin, 2015. https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/National-Plan-for-Equity-of-Access-to-Higher-Education-2015-2019.pdf.

Humphrey, Janice H., and Bob J. Alcorn. *So You Want to Be an Interpreter?: An Introduction to Sign Language Interpreting*. 3rd ed. Amarillo, Texas, 2001.

International Standards Organisation. *ISO 13611:2014, 'Guidelines for Community Interpreting'*, 2014. https://www.iso.org/standard/54082.html.

Irish Deaf Society (IDS). *Basic Medical Signs*. Dublin, 2007.

_____ 'Irish Sign Language'. *IDS Website*, 2020. https://www.irishdeafsociety.ie/irish-sign-language/.

Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission (IHREC). 'Disability and Reasonable Accommodation'. *IHREC Website*, 2020. https://www.ihrec.ie/guides-and-tools/human-rights-and-equality-for-employers/what-does-the-law-say/disability-and-reasonable-accommodation/.

'Irish Sign Language Set to Be given Official Status'. *Irish Independent*, December 14, 2017. https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/irish-sign-language-set-to-be-given-official-status-36407921.html.

Irish Translators and Interpreters Association (ITIA). *Code of Ethics for Community Interpreters*. Dublin, 2009. https://www.translatorsassociation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Code-of-Ethics-for-Community-Interpreters.pdf.

_____ *Code of Practice and Professional Ethics*. Dublin, 2005. https://www.translatorsassociation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Code-of-Practice-and-Professional-Ethics.pdf.

_____ *Working Group on the Jurisdiction of the Courts*. Dublin, 2002.

Janzen, Terry, and Donna Korpinski. 'Ethics and Professionalism in Interpreting'. In *Topics in Signed Language Interpreting: Theory and Practice*, edited by Terry Janzen. Amsterdam, 2005.

Jarmołowska, Karolina. 'Chinese Whispers: Taking a Witness Statement from a Non-English Speaker in an Irish Garda Station'. *Translation Ireland* 18, no. 2 (2010): 11–23.

Johnson, Ukawia. 'Deaf Plus: A Mother Reflects on Her Son's Experience'. *Odyssey: New Directions in Deaf Education* 20 (2019): 44–7.

Kelly, Brendan. *Hearing Voices: The History of Psychiatry in Ireland*. Dublin, 2016.

Lavigne, Michele, and McCay Vernon. 'An Interpreter Isn't Enough: Deafness, Language, and Due Process'. *Wisconsin Law Review*, no. 5 (2003): 843–936.

Leeson, Lorraine. 'Interpreters in Tertiary Educational Settings in Ireland'. In *Working with the Deaf Community: Education, Mental Health and Interpreting*, edited by Lorraine Leeson and Miriam Vermeerbergen. Dublin, 2012.

Leeson, Lorraine, and John I. Saeed. *Irish Sign Language: A Cognitive Linguistic Account*. Edinburgh, 2012.

Leeson, Lorraine, and Lucia Venturi. *A Review of Literature and International Practice on National and Voluntary Registers for Sign Language Interpreters*. Dublin, 2017. https://www.tcd.ie/slscs/assets/documents/news-events/SLIS_TCD CDS REVIEW of National Registers of Sign Language Interpreters March 2017.pdf.

LeMaster, Barbara. 'Language Contraction, Revitalization, and Irish Women'. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (2006): 211–28. http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/jlin.2006.16.2.211.

_____ 'When Women and Men Talk Differently: Language and Policy in the Dublin Deaf Community'. In *Irish Urban*

Cultures, edited by Chris Curtin, Hastings Donnan, and Thomas M. Wilson, 123–41. Belfast, 1993.

Leonard, Cormac. *ISL / English Interpreter, Income Survey Report*. Edited by Lisa Harvey, Catherine White, and Leanne Saurin. Drogheda, November 2016. https://app.box.com/s/lmx5m0z2062mklj9cinqd6yjyf501ixt.

Lieu, Christine Chong-hee, Georgia Robins Sadler, Judith T. Fullerton, and Paulette Deyo Stohlmann. 'Communication Strategies for Nurses Interacting With Patients Who Are Deaf'. *Dermatology Nursing* 19, no. 6 (2007): 541–4.

Long, Greg, and David Anthony Clark. *Defining Traditionally Underserved Persons Who Are Deaf*. Chicago, 1993.

Marschark, Marc, and Patricia E Spencer. *Evidence of Best Practice Models and Outcomes in the Education of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children: An International Review*. *National Council for Special Education*. Trim, Co Meath, 2009. https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/1_NCSE_Deaf.pdf.

Matthews, Patrick A. *The Irish Deaf Community, Vol 1: Survey Report, History of Education, Language and Culture*. Dublin, 1996.

McDonnell, Patrick, and Helena Saunders. 'Sit on Your Hands: Strategies to Prevent Signing'. In *Looking Back: A Reader on the History of Deaf Communities and Their Sign Languages*, edited by Renate Fischer and Harlan Lane, 255–60. Hamburg, 1993.

McGrotty, Caroline. 'The Unheard Voice in Higher Education: Research on Deaf Students and Irish Sign Language Interpreting in Higher Education'. *AHEAD Journal: A Review of Inclusive Education & Employment Practices*, 2017. https://ahead.ie/journal/The-Unheard-Voice-in-Higher-Education-Research-on-Deaf-Students-and-Irish-Sign-Language-Interpreting-in-Higher-Education.

Melia, Pauline Kelly. 'Legislation – All You Need to Know'. *Kellymeliasblog*, February 18, 2020. https://kellymeliasblog.wordpress.com/2020/02/18/legislation-all-you-need-to-know/.

Metzger, Melanie. *Sign Language Interpreting: Deconstructing the Myth of Neutrality*. Washington, D.C., 1999.

Moser-Mercer, Barbara, Alexander Künzli, and Marina Korac. 'Prolonged Turns in Interpreting: Effects on Quality, Physiological and Psychological Stress (Pilot Study)'. *Interpreting* 3, no. 1 (1998): 47–64.

Napier, Jemina, and Tobias Haug. 'Justisigns: A European Overview of Sign Language Interpreting Provision in Legal Settings'. *Journal of Law, Social Justice & Global Development*, no. 2 (January 16, 2017).

National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators. *Team Interpreting In The Courtroom*. *Najit Position Paper*, 2007. https://najit.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Team-Interpreting_052007.pdf.

National Association of the Deaf, and Deaf Seniors of America (DSA). *Position Statement on Minimum Standards for Video Remote Interpreting Services in Medical Settings*. *NAD Website*, July 1, 2016. https://www.nad.org/about-us/position-statements/minimum-standards-for-video-remote-interpreting-services-in-medical-settings/.

National Association of the Deaf. *NAD Model Policy for Effective Communication in Hospitals*. Silver Spring, Maryland, USA, 2020. https://www.nad.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Model-Hospital-Policy.pdf.

National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers. *Factsheet: The Use of Interpreting Teams in the Courtroom*, 2015. http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Fact_Sheet_American_Sign_Language_Interpreter_Teams.pdf.

National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers, and Carla Mathers. *Deaf Interpreters in Court: An Accommodation That Is More than Reasonable*, March 2009.

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI). *Developing Quality Cost Effective Interpreting & Translating Services for Government Service Providers in Ireland*. Dublin, 2008. https://www.translatorsassociation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/National-Consultative-Committee-on-Racism-and-Interculturalism-Developing-Quality-Cost-Effective-Interpreting-and-Translating-Services-2008.x75335.pdf.

National Disability Authority. 'UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'. *NDA Website*, 2014. http://nda.ie/Disability-overview/Legislation/UN-Convention-on-the-Rights-of-Persons-with-Disabilities.html.

Newby, Karen, and Jason Weald, eds. *Best Practices for BSL/English Interpreters Working in Legal Settings*. 2015.

O'Boyle, Jim. 'Psychiatric Services for the Adult Deaf'. In *The Psychiatric Services - Planning for the Future*, edited by Study Group on the Development of the Psychiatric Services, 154–8. Dublin, 1984.

Ó Baoill, Dónall, and Patrick A. Matthews. *The Irish Deaf Community, Vol 2: The Structure of Irish Sign Language*. Dublin, 2000.

Oireachtas. 'Education Act'. *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 1998. http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/51/enacted/en/print#sec2.

_____ 'Equal Status Act'. *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 2000. http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/8/section/7/enacted/en/html#sec7.

_____ 'European Arrest Warrant Act'. *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 2003. http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/act/45/section/13/enacted/en/html#sec13.

_____ 'European Convention on Human Rights Act'. *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 2003. http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/act/20/.

_____ 'Garda Síochána Act'. *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 2005. www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/20/section/62/.

_____ 'Irish Sign Language Act'. *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*. Ireland, 2017. https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/bills/bill/2016/78/.

_____ 'Prompt Payment of Accounts Act'. *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 1997. http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1997/act/31/enacted/en/html.

_____ 'S.I. No. 119/1987 - Criminal Justice Act, 1984 (Treatment of Persons in Custody in Garda Síochána Stations) Regulations'. *Electronic Irish Statute Book (EISB)*, 1987. http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1987/si/119/.

Paijmans, Robin, Jim Cromwell, and Sally Austen. 'Do Profoundly Prelingually Deaf Patients with Psychosis Really Hear Voices?' *American Annals of the Deaf* 151, no. 1 (2006): 42–8.

Phelan, Mary. *Interpreting, Translation and Public Bodies in Ireland: The Need for Policy and Training*. *National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism*. Advocacy Papers 5, 2007. http://doras.dcu.ie/16924/1/Interpreting_Translation_and_Public_Bodies_in_Ireland_the_need_for_policy_and_training.pdf.

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. *Interpreting in Mental Health Settings*, 2007. https://rid.org/about-rid/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/.

_____ *Self-Care for Interpreters: Prevention and Care of Repetitive Strain Injuries*, 2007. https://rid.org/about-rid/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/.

_____ *Video Remote Interpreting*, 2010. http://www.rid.org/about-interpreting/standard-practice-papers/.

Roy, Cynthia B. 'The Problem with Definitions, Descriptions, and the Role Metaphors of Interpreters'. *Journal of Interpretation* 6, no. 1 (1993): 127–54.

Russell, Debra L. 'Interpreting in Legal Contexts: Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpretation'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Calgary, 2000. https://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/handle/1880/40558/54808Russell.pdf?sequence=1.

Ryan, Órla. *Report on the Implementation of the Right to Interpretation and Translation Services in Criminal Proceedings*. Edited by Grace Mulvey and Amanda Oi, 2016. https://eulita.eu/wp/wp-content/uploads/files/Report_Right_to_Interpretation_Justicia.pdf.

Saurin, Leanne, and Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters. *Interpreter Fees Survey Report*, December 2019. https://cisli.ie/2019/12/10/cisli-interpreter-fees-survey-report-2019/.

Sign Language Interpreting Service. *2009 Accreditation Report*. Dublin, 2009.

_____ *A National Skill Shortage in the Availability of Sign Language Interpreters*. Dublin, 2017. http://slis.ie/research-to-support-capacity-of-sign-language-interpreting-in-ireland/.

_____ *Draft 'Code of Conduct'*, June 2019.

_____ *IRIS Best Practice*, 2020.

_____ *National Register of Sign Language Interpreters - Code of Conduct (Draft)*, May 2019.

Sinnott, Karen. '"What Was Particularly Scary about These Voices Is I Am Deaf and Don't Normally Hear People Talking"'. *TheJournal.Ie*, November 11, 2017. https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/karen-sinnott-voices-deaf-sign-language-3687334-Nov2017/.

Stewart, Kellie, Anna Witter-Merithew, and Margaret Cobb. *Best Practices: American Sign Language and English Interpretation within Court and Legal Settings*, March 2009.

Vidal, Mirta. 'New Study on Fatigue Confirms Need for Working in Teams'. *Proteus: The Newsletter of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators* VI, no. 1 (1997): 1, 4–7. https://najit.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ProteusWinter1997.pdf.

Wescott, Holly, and John Stewart. *Assessing Current Capacity of Sign Language Interpreting in Ireland*. Dublin, 2017. http://slis.ie/research-to-support-capacity-of-sign-language-interpreting-in-ireland/.

Whyte, Aimee K., Alison L. Aubrecht, Candace A. McCullough, Jeffrey W. Lewis, and Danielle Thompson-Ochoa. 'Understanding Deaf People in Counseling Contexts'. *Counselling Today*, 2013.

Williamson, Amy. 'Lost in the Shuffle: Deaf-Parented Interpreters and Their Paths to Interpreting Careers'. *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 8, no. 1 (2016): 4–22.

Witter-Merithew, Anna. 'From Benevolent Care Taker to Ally: The Evolving Role of Sign Language Interpreters in the United States of America'. *Gebärdensprachdolmetschen Theorie & Praxis*, no. 4 (1999): 55–64. http://www.interpretereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/From-Benevolent-Caretaker.pdf.