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## Section 1: Purpose

- 1.1 The Regulatory Centre for Irish Sign Language Interpreters Ireland CLG has been established for the purpose of maintaining the register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters and quality assurance scheme ("the Register"), currently being developed by the Sign Language Interpreting Service.
- 1.2 The Code of Conduct ("the Code") is an integral part of the register, for service users and interpreters. The Code outlines what is expected of registered interpreters. It is important that all registered interpreters read, understand and meet the standards set out in the Code.
- 1.3 Any person can make a complaint about an interpreter if the interpreter has, in their opinion, breached, or failed to follow, the *Code of Conduct*. Complainants can include:
  - i. service users - including Deaf or hearing clients, organisations who have booked an interpreter, or other individuals who use the services of an interpreter
  - ii. other interpreters
  - iii. the Registration Panel
  - iv. any other individual or organisation who is of the opinion that an interpreter has breached, or failed to follow, the *Code of Conduct*
- 1.4 Complaints against interpreters based on an alleged breach of the *Code of Conduct* are handled through the **Complaints Process**. For more information on how to make a complaint, see the *Complaints and Mediation Process*.

## Section 2: Definitions

- 2.1 **Professional misconduct** is defined as any action, omission, behaviour or conduct of an interpreter that:
  - i. amounts to a breach of the Code
  - ii. is disgraceful or dishonourable, either in the course of carrying out interpreting duties or otherwise, if the conduct is of such a serious nature as would bring the profession of interpreters into disrepute
- 2.2 **Poor professional performance** is defined as the failure of an interpreter to meet the standards of competence that may reasonably be expected of interpreters.

## Section 3: Professional Conduct

- 3.1 Interpreters must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. In doing this interpreters are expected to:
  - a) interpret to the best of their ability
  - b) conduct themselves in a manner befitting the interpreting profession, including when negotiating work and contracts, and obtaining preparation material, as well as their professional demeanour and choice of professional clothing
  - c) cooperate with any of the Complaints Processes in a helpful and timely manner, whether they are the respondent in a Complaints Process, or whether they are lodging a complaint against another person
  - d) be punctual and prepared for assignments
  - e) refrain from acting in any way that brings the interpreting profession into disrepute
  - f) refrain from cancelling or withdrawing their services from a confirmed assignment without reasonable grounds for doing so
  - g) refrain from making any personal and/or economic gain arising from confidential information they may have gained in the course of their interpreting work

## Section 4: Confidentiality

- 4.1 Interpreters 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.
- 4.2 Notwithstanding the above, RISLI recognises that occasionally interpreters may be obliged to share confidential information in particular circumstances, which include:
  - a) legal obligations on an interpreter in relation to the protection of children and/ or vulnerable adults, or other individuals at risk
  - b) the interpreter engaging with a Complaints Process, Appeals Process, or Mediation Process
- 4.3 An interpreter may deem it necessary to engage with other parties involved in an interpreting assignment, in order to prepare for an upcoming interpreting assignment, or to debrief or reflect on the delivery of a completed assignment. Interpreters must ensure this engagement is carried out in a way that protects the privacy of the relevant service users, as well as any confidential information gleaned as part of this process. If necessary and appropriate, consent to share information can be documented.
- 4.4 An interpreter may deem it necessary to disclose selected information about an interpreting assignment to another party (for example, a co-working interpreter, or an interpreter agency) for the sole purpose of providing optimum and consistent quality of service to the service users within that setting. Interpreters must ensure such disclosures are carried out in a way that protects the privacy of the relevant service users, as well as any confidential information gleaned as part of this process.
- 4.5 An interpreter may deem it necessary to disclose selected information about an interpreting assignment within structures of professional supervision, mentoring, CPD, or other supportive and confidential settings. Interpreters must ensure such disclosures are carried out in way that protects the privacy of the relevant service users, as well as any confidential information gleaned as part of this process.
- 4.6 For more information on how RISLI uses and shares personal data, please see the *GDPR and Privacy Policy*.

## Section 5: Impartiality

- 5.1 Within any interpreting assignment, interpreters must strive to provide a faithful and accurate interpretation which is also culturally and linguistically appropriate, while endeavouring to maintain impartiality and objectivity.
- 5.2 Interpreters must refrain from altering, editing, adding or omitting information within their interpretation, for reasons other than endeavouring to provide a faithful, accurate, and culturally and linguistically appropriate interpretation.
- 5.3 Interpreters must not discriminate against service users, for example based on a service user's gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, nationality or ethnic origin, race and membership of the Traveller community.
- 5.4 Interpreters must refrain from accepting assignments where they feel they are unable to put aside personal biases or reactions, which may effect the impartiality of their interpretation.
- 5.5 Interpreters must disclose to the service users involved in an interpreting assignment any factor arising within the assignment which could jeopardise the impartiality of their interpretation.

## Section 6: Accountability for Professional Decisions

- 6.1 Interpreters must exercise sound professional judgement, and accept full responsibility for their professional decisions. In doing so they must:
- a) Only accept interpreting assignments for which they possess appropriate training, knowledge, skills and expertise. When interpreters are uncertain in this regard, interpreters must seek clarification and appropriate advice. This advice can come from the organisation or individual offering the assignment, from more experienced colleagues, or from RISLI. This is especially important in relation to interpreting work which should only be carried out by members of a Specialisation Panel of the Register
  - b) Provide accurate and up to date information about their skills, competence, qualifications, experience, registration status, and membership of any Specialisation Panels
  - c) Be aware of any personal circumstances or conflicts of interest (actual or potential) that could interfere with the effectiveness of their interpretation. Any potential conflict of interest must be disclosed to all parties in advance
  - d) Be open and honest with service users about any errors the interpreter is aware of making during the interpretation, and take appropriate action to address and rectify such errors
  - e) Reduce work or cease practising, if the interpreter's ability to practice may be negatively affected by physical or mental health issues

## Section 7: Working Conditions

- 7.1 To ensure optimum quality of interpretation, interpreters will, prior to and during an interpreting assignment, endeavour to ensure that satisfactory working conditions / facilities are in place in order to support effective interpretation. These working conditions touch on issues such as:
- a) Requirements for co-interpreter(s) due to nature, length or complexity of assignment
  - b) Requirements for Deaf interpreter(s) due to nature, length or complexity of assignment
  - c) Requirements for rest breaks due to nature, length or complexity of assignment
  - d) Visibility of interpreter, and minimal visual distractions for service users
  - e) Background noise

The *CISLI Occupational Health & Safety Policy* can be consulted in this regard.<sup>1</sup>

- 7.2 Where working conditions / facilities are not satisfactory, the interpreter must make this known to the parties present, and let them know that these deficiencies in working conditions / facilities will impede effective interpretation. In such cases where the interpreter is of the opinion that effective interpretation cannot be delivered, they may choose to withdraw from the assignment.
- 7.3 To ensure optimum quality of interpretation, interpreters will, prior to an interpreting assignment, endeavour to prepare appropriately for an interpreting assignment. This may include seeking to secure appropriate and sufficient preparation materials, engaging directly with a service user to discuss the upcoming assignment, researching topics, discussing an upcoming assignment with an experienced interpreter, or other forms of preparation. The approach outlined in above in relation to confidentiality should be observed at all times in this regard.
- 7.4 Interpreters, while booked and working as interpreters at an assignment, should not during that assignment perform other duties, outside their role as an interpreter, without reasonable grounds for doing so.

## Section 8: Professional Relationships

- 8.1 Interpreters must respect the dignity, privacy and autonomy of services users to whom they provide interpreting services.
- 8.2 Interpreters must understand the difference between social and professional interactions. Interpreters must maintain appropriate boundaries and ensure that relationships with all those involved are reasonable, fair and professional.
- 8.3 Interpreters must treat interpreting colleagues in a spirit of respect, courtesy, fairness, good faith, and mutual cooperation.
- 8.4 Interpreters are encouraged to attempt to resolve, in a professional manner, any issue arising between themselves and another interpreter(s), which may represent a minor breach of this Code. If the interpreters are unable to reach such a resolution, and if the breach is serious, then a formal **Complaints Process** can be initiated.
- 8.5 Interpreters must refrain, while at an interpreting assignment or otherwise, from any public action or utterance which may be prejudicial to the interests of RISLI or to other interpreters.

## Section 9: Continuing Professional Development

- 9.1 Interpreters must continually strive to interpret to the best of their ability. Interpreters will continue to improve and develop their skills through relevant CPD and education. This will include, but is not limited to, meeting their CPD and work practice requirements for maintenance of registration.
- 9.2 Interpreters must notify the Registration Panel if they are unable to meet their continuous professional development (CPD) or work practice requirements. See *CPD and Mentoring Policy*.
- 9.3 Interpreters must keep up to date with developments in interpreting practice, as well as interpreting theory and its application, and apply new knowledge, CPD and training into their practice where appropriate.
- 9.4 Interpreters must embed reflective practice in their development as an interpreter. This is facilitated through Unstructured CPD as part of CPD requirements of the Register; see *CPD and Mentoring Policy*.

## Section 10: References

Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (CISLI). 2011. *Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct*. CISLI. <https://cisli.ie/home/codeofethics/> (Accessed 07.05.2019)

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