

# Coventry Interpretation and Translation Unit (CITU)

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# Code of Practice

for interpreters/translators and professionals working with us

Office hours

**Monday – Thursday**

**9am to 5pm**

**Friday 9am to 4.30pm**

Call

**024 7697 5506**

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**[citu@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:citu@coventry.gov.uk)**



Coventry City Council

# CITU



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## Introduction

### CITU's mission statement:

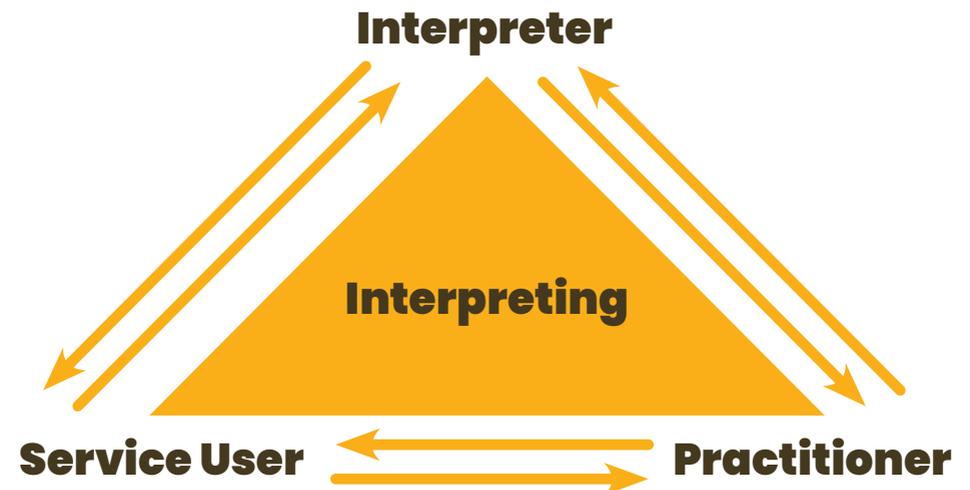
**"Working together to develop and deliver a service that will enable practitioners to provide non-English-speaking people of Coventry access to equal, efficient and appropriate services when language/sensory impairment is a barrier".**

### 1. Aim

- 1.1 The Coventry Interpretation and Translation Unit (CITU) is a resource for the staff of Coventry City Council and other organisations requiring the service of an interpreter (for current charges please contact CITU). There are 2 groups of customers involved in the process – the requester of the service, and the service user (individuals and groups) whose first language is not English or have a sensory impairment.
- 1.2 The aim of this code is to provide clear guidelines on the principles of good practice in providing a high-quality interpreting and translation services.
- 1.3 Good standards of quality and practice in interpreting and translation will be achieved by adhering to the contents of this code, together with theoretical knowledge and practical experience of working with an interpreter. Training courses may be organised for practitioners and interpreters; it may be useful for all staff working with interpreters to undertake the training session 'How to work effectively with interpreters'. See Section 3 for more details on training.

### 2. What is interpreting?

- 2.1 A three-way model of communicating effectively. If any one element is missing, no interpreting will take place! Interpreting is using the spoken word to facilitate communication among speakers of different languages.



- 2.2 The task of interpreting is complex. It involves an understanding of the important issues in communication. It brings together 3 people (or more) of very different interests and backgrounds.
- 2.3 An interpreter interprets what one person has said in their own language that is not understood by another person. This means that the primary aim of the interpreter is to facilitate communication between two people or groups of people.
- 2.4 The ability to communicate effectively with service users and check that they understand everything is essential. Without these skills, the service users' needs cannot be effectively assessed. Similarly, appropriate and sensitive services be provided to them.
- 2.5 Moreover, achieving good levels of customer care and a high quality of personal care for service users requires that we communicate effectively. Therefore, it is imperative that interpreters are provided as an integral part of the services offered.

### 3. What is translation?

Translation can be defined as transferring written text from one language into another, conveying a clear and concise message in true form, taking into account the feelings and emotions of the originator and reflecting the appropriate relevant cultural context.

### 4. Legal framework

- 4.1 Many legislations/laws place a duty on staff to communicate adequately with members of the public and service users who are enquiring about or receiving care services
  - The Mental Health Act 1983 Section 13 (amended in 2007)
  - The Children Act 2004
  - Equalities Act 2010 and Public Sector Equalities duty 2011.
  - Human Right Act 1998
  - Social Values Act 2013
  - Health and Social Care Act 2012
- 4.2 Local authorities that fail to use an interpreter where such a service should be provided may be failing to fulfil their statutory duties. Not providing adequate interpreting services may undermine the service user's rights to be able to understand what is being said to or about them, and also their right to make their views, preferences and choices known.
- 4.3 All CITU Interpreters are DBS checked which is renewed every three years. References are also checked at the time of recruitment.

### 5. Role of the Interpreter

- 5.1 The role of an Interpreter is to convey the meaning of what is said between the practitioner and the service user. This means that everything said in an interview or discussion will be interpreted, which includes any exchanges between the practitioner and interpreter, the practitioner and other professionals present, the service user and interpreter, and discussions between service users and other family members.
- 5.2 The interpreter has a role in ensuring that each person's reactions and feelings are made explicit and that differences of disability, culture, relationships and beliefs are understood. Good practice requires the interpreter to intervene in such matters, if necessary.
- 5.3 The interpreter should make the practitioner aware if the service user appears not to understand words or concepts. Good practice requires a practitioner to check with the service user at regular intervals whether they have understood what has been said up to that point.
- 5.4 The interpreter is not authorised to act as an advocate or representative for the service user. Where the interpreter feels that the service user does not understand what is being said to them or if they are unable to make themselves understood to the interpreter, then the latter will inform the practitioner accordingly. Should this happen, the practitioner should consider the use of an advocate or representative. The practitioner must not ask the interpreter to act in this role.

### 6. Working in partnership (practitioner/interpreter)

- 6.1 For interpreting to be effective, both the practitioner and the interpreter need to be clear about the aim of the session, their respective roles and the expectations they have of each other.
- 6.2 CITU works in line with Coventry City Council's Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety Policies, and the Complaints procedures.
- 6.3 The practitioner should ask the interpreter to explain to the service user what the information will be used for and who the information will be shared with.
- 6.4 Practitioners should never ask interpreters to leave the 'room' while they discuss confidential matters. This undermines the interpreters' professionalism.

## 7. Valuing interpreters' work

Lack of trust by the practitioner, particularly the concern about interpreters maintaining confidentiality, is a key challenge to good partnership working. At times, a practitioner might think, 'is the interpreter really communicating what I have communicated or is he/she saying something else?'

The perception of interpreters as a barrier rather than a facilitator to communication means that they often feel excluded or undervalued for the work they do. The attitude of practitioners and the power dynamics in these interactions are not seen as conducive to achieving good outcomes. "You are kind of there, but they don't want you there. The other thing I've noticed is that you get treated like you're quite insignificant, you're not important, you know, they talk past you like you're just not there. And that can be... you're not valued for what you're providing." (interpreter).

- 7.1 To that end, please remember that the interpreter is a professional. Practitioners, irrespective of their position, should not tell the interpreter how to do their job. The interpreter is the qualified professional to facilitate communication between the parties and knows their job, just as practitioners know theirs.

## Section 1 – A code of practice for staff working with language interpreters

### 1. Primary responsibility

- 1.1 Responsibility for providing effective communication between each service provider and the non-English-speaking service user rests with the practitioner concerned. They need to ensure, by asking questions or reiterating what the service user has said, that the service user understands, as clearly as possible, both what is being said to them and the message they are trying to get across.
- 1.2 The responsibility of the interpreter is to interpret as accurately as possible what has been said by the practitioner to the service user and vice versa. Although the practitioner cannot be responsible for the accuracy of interpreting in a language he or she cannot understand, the practitioner will be responsible for all the other aspects mentioned in this Code of Practice.
- 1.3 An interpreter plays an important role in bridging the communication gap between practitioners and service users. Therefore, it is crucial that appropriately-trained interpreters be arranged for meetings where interpreting is required.

CITU can be contacted by telephone on **024 7697 5506** or via email: **CITU@coventry.gov.uk**

### 2. The decision to use an interpreter

When deciding whether an interpreter is required, the following should be considered:

- (a) The service user's wishes: the service user has the right to request an interpreter. If they think that they would be able to communicate more effectively through an interpreter, then this should be arranged. Alternatively, if a service user feels that they do not need an interpreter, then this should be respected (and these wishes recorded). However, where the service user does not ask for an interpreter but the practitioner is not confident that effective communication will take place without one being present, it is up to the practitioner to decide whether to involve one or not. This decision should take into account criteria such as statutory duties, assessment of risk and equality of service.
- (b) Statutory duties: if a practitioner needs to obtain or convey specific information and there is any doubt about the service user's ability to communicate effectively in English, then the practitioner has a duty to provide an interpreter.

- (c) Equality of service delivery: if there is any question of a service user receiving a lesser service, in terms of quality or effectiveness to their English-speaking counterparts, then an Interpreter should be used.
- (d) Bilingual practitioner: there may be occasions when the on-going work with the service user is better carried out by allocating a bilingual practitioner. The decision as to whether this is appropriate or not, should be made by the appropriate manager and the decision recorded.
- (e) Confidentiality: All CITU Interpreters are fully aware of the need to maintain confidentiality and data protection. They are bound by CITU's Code of Practice.

### 3. Choice of interpreter

- 3.1 It is important to check what the service user's first/preferred language is and arrange an interpreter who is proficient in that language.
- 3.2 Culturally-sensitive aspects should be considered before booking an Interpreter.

Note: The practitioner should avoid the use of unofficial Interpreters; for example, friends, relatives, children or others. Use of such unofficial "interpreters" can create communication problems, confusion, can act as gatekeepers and often lead to conflicts of interest. They are unlikely to have been trained as Interpreters, and their involvement may undermine objectivity and confidentiality. The practice of using family, friends, or other non-professional interpreters should be avoided.

- 3.3 If the service user would prefer a relative or friend to interpret, the practitioner may agree to this in certain circumstances; for example:
  - (a) In a first interview, where the subject is straightforward, brief and uncontroversial.
  - (b) Where the service user's confidence could be undermined by a refusal to accept a relative or friend as an interpreter, the practitioner may wish to arrange for an independent interpreter also to be present.
- 3.4 Consistency of interpreters: where possible the continuity/consistency should be maintained, especially in long-term cases and child protection/adoption cases etc.

### 4. Confidentiality

- 4.1 All interpreters provided through CITU follow a strict code of practice covering their professional conduct, which includes a commitment to impartiality and confidentiality. In this regard, the interpreter will carry an Introduction Card which will be explained at the beginning of the session to all involved.
- 4.2 At the end of the session, the Interpreter may be asked to sight translate for the service user any written summary or decision made by the practitioner. Any such document is subject to confidentiality. Please allow the interpreter time to read/familiarise themselves with the contents of the document before doing the sight translation. Please note that this should be for brief documents and not meeting notes or other lengthy documents.

### 5. Role of the interpreter

- 5.1 The interpreter's primary role is to facilitate communication between the practitioner or a group of people and the service user.
- 5.2 The interpreter must not be asked to:
  - Visit service users at home or at an establishment, on their own.
  - Accompany service users from one point to another, on their own.
  - Provide a befriending service.
  - Undertake the role of an advocate.
  - Assess the needs of a service user.
  - Undertake outreach work with individuals and their families.
  - Accompany service users in their own car or the service user's car.
- 5.3 An interpreter should always be accompanied by a practitioner and should not be left alone with a service user at any point.

### 6. Languages and dialects available

- 6.1 CITU provides interpreters in various languages which reflect the demography of Coventry. For any language requests please contact the CITU team.

### 7. The procedure for arranging an interpreter

- 7.1 All requests for interpreting and translation should be made to CITU. In an emergency, it may be necessary for the practitioner to act immediately, even though communication with the service user is inadequate. In these circumstances, the practitioner should arrange to see the service user with an interpreter as soon as possible to explain and confirm previous actions and decisions.

**Note:** In an emergency situation, if a face-to-face interpreter is not available, please use the telephone interpreting service. Speak to your manager to get the telephone number and access code to use this service. Alternatively, contact CITU during office hours.

- 7.2 Interpreters can be booked by contacting CITU by telephone or email. A service will be provided as quickly as possible; however, this depends on the availability of interpreters in the language required.
- 7.3 When contacting CITU, the following information will be required for any face to face request:
- (a) Name, location and telephone number of the practitioner making the request.
  - (b) Date, time, location (with the post code), brief details and duration of the session.
  - (c) Name of the service user, venue, language, and any other languages they can communicate in.

CITU will take the booking details and provide you with a unique job reference number. The interpreter's name will only be confirmed if requested; otherwise, it should be assumed that the interpreter will attend the booked session. However, if there is any problem sourcing the interpreter, then CITU staff will get back to you, either to change the format of the assignment to telephone or MT (Microsoft Teams), or to change the date and time, if possible. Sometimes, especially in rare languages, CITU may have to source an interpreter from outside agencies which may cost substantially more than the usual charges, but the team will inform you before confirming such bookings.

- 7.4 When making a request for telephone interpreting and MT meetings, CITU will require all details normally provided for face to face booking, except the venue.

For Team meetings and telephone interpreting, name of the interpreter, their telephone number and email address will be forwarded accordingly. Thereafter, it would be the practitioner's responsibility to ring the interpreter for the telephone interpreting session at an agreed time or for MT teams meetings send the meeting invite/link to the interpreter prior to the meeting time.

PS: CITU provides an interpreter's phone numbers and email addresses for one-off appointments only. If you need the same interpreter again, please contact the CITU office.

Under NO circumstances should Interpreters be contacted directly, bypassing the CITU office.

## 8. Procedure for arranging the translation of documents

To request a translation, please contact the CITU team. Documents needing translation must be sent through a secured email. When sending documents for translation, a realistic timescale should be agreed as translators may working on other assignments at the time of your request. Before sending any documents, please check with the service user that they can read the language. For documents over 3000 words or in rare languages CITU are obligated to provide you with a quote which must be authorised by your Line Manager.

## 9. Cancellations

- 9.1 CITU must be given 24 hours' notice when making cancellations, otherwise a charge will incur. Cancellations with more than 24 notice will incur an admin charge.
- 9.2 If the interpreter arrives for the session and it is cancelled due to the service user or practitioner not being available, the full charge will apply. The interpreter's referral form should still be completed (if service user does not attend or is not at home).

## 10. Briefing session

- 10.1 It is essential for the practitioner and the interpreter to agree the basis on which they will work together. It is incumbent on the practitioner to provide a briefing to the interpreter before the process starts or the session commences. 5 – 10 minutes should be allocated for the briefing; however, more time may be required for complex cases. The following issues should be considered:
- (a) The interpreting mode that will be used (see section 2, point 7 - Mode of interpreting). Most interpreters will undertake consecutive interpreting; for example, they will wait until the speaker has finished before they begin interpreting. The practitioner will pause from time to time during lengthy sentences to allow the interpreter to interpret. The interpreter will decide on the best mode, according to the situation. You may find that an interpreter changes from one mode to another during the assignment.
  - (b) Briefing the interpreter on any risk associated with the session, what actions should be taken and under what circumstances.
  - (c) The purpose of the meeting. This may include relevant background information about the case, the legal context, and access to relevant written materials.
  - (d) The practitioner's own objectives and desired outcomes, where appropriate.

- (e) Any difficult language terminology or concepts that may arise. The interpreter may not be familiar with all the terminology, acronyms and abbreviations used. Remember, you know this but not the interpreter. They will ask for clarification, as per their Code of Practice.
- (f) Clarification on any cultural issues.
- (g) Any difficult behaviour or sensitivities that may be encountered; for example, a female service user may feel uncomfortable with a male interpreter (or vice versa), anger, tearfulness, withdrawal. This should include an option for the interpreter to end or call for a break in the meeting because of tiredness or unacceptable behaviour.

10.2 The practitioner should decide how much detail to include under subparagraphs (f) & (g). In general, the better an interpreter is briefed, the more effectively they will interpret.

## 11. At the start of the session

Introduce everyone, including the interpreter.

After that, allow the interpreter to introduce themselves and their role as an interpreter, to inform those present that they are impartial and they are and will treat all matters confidentially and abide by the CITU interpreter's code of practice. Please note that the interpreter will also give this information in the service user's language.

The interpreter must check with the service user that they understand each other, they will inform everyone present in the room that they are bound by the General Data Protection Regulations and that everything discussed will be kept confidential.

### 11.1 During the interpreting session

Please remember that the practitioner is in charge of the session, and if there are any distractions, e.g. uncontrolled children, other people walking in and out the session, the service user using his/her phone, it is the responsibility of the practitioner to control the situation.

The practitioner should speak to the service user directly (using YOU and not "ask him/her") and maintain eye contact with the service user, NOT with the Interpreter.

In order to achieve the best outcome, the practitioner should set some ground rules and explain to the service user that:

- The interpreter is impartial and independent.
- If they have any questions they should ask you (the practitioner), not the interpreter, and the interpreter will interpret everything.

- The interpreter is not allowed to give advice.
  - They should not have a conversation with the interpreter during the session.
  - The practitioner and the service user should pause after one or two sentences to allow the interpreter to interpret.
  - They may understand English well, but they should listen to the interpreter first and then give their response in their own language.
- 11.2 The practitioner should pace the dialogue to ensure that the interpreter can do their job effectively. They should also be prepared to clarify terms or difficult concepts in order to help the interpreter to be as accurate as possible.
- 11.3 The interpreter's role is to convey the meaning of all that is said. This means that everything spoken during the session will be interpreted, including any exchanges or ideas between any of the parties present.
- 11.4 The interpreter's role is to ensure that each person's reactions and feelings are understood by the other party/parties present, and that differences of disability, culture, relationships and beliefs are clearly understood.
- 11.5 The interpreter should make the practitioner aware if the service user appears not to understand words or concepts during the session.
- 11.6 If written information is given to the service user, the interpreter should check if they are able to understand it. If they do not, the interpreter should inform the practitioner. Written information may need to be translated; however, if the service user cannot read their own language, a verbal translation (a sight translation) will be required.
- 11.7 Interpreters should not be left alone with service users as this may complicate the relationship between the parties concerned.

## 12. De-briefing session

- 12.1 The practitioner should allow time for discussion with the interpreter at the end of the session to enable the interpreter to express any issues they may have had. This may cover all or some of the following areas, as appropriate.
- (a) Assessment and clarification of aspects of the interaction that has taken place.
  - (b) Feedback about aspects of the interpreting process.
  - (d) Clarification of any cultural explanations where appropriate.
  - (e) Terminology used during the session.
  - (f) Arrangements of any follow-up sessions to check if the interpreter is available.

The follow-up session must be booked through the CITU office and not directly with the interpreter. If the same interpreter is required, then this should be mentioned at the time of booking.

- 12.2 An interpreter's details must not be passed on to external agencies because such agencies requesting an interpreter will need to pay for the service. However, if an interpreter is required by a different organisation, CITU's contact details may be passed on.

### 13. Interpreter's Referral Form

For face to face appointments, interpreters are required to have their Referral Forms signed by the practitioner at the end of the session. The practitioner is responsible for entering the end time of the session on the form before signing.

### 14. Translations

- 14.1 CITU also provides high-quality written translations which can be made available in a wide range of languages. CITU's translators use terminology which is easily understood by the target group. The length of time required to complete a translation depends on the complexity of the work, the length of documents and number of words to be translated. Every effort will be made to return urgent work quickly. All requests for translations should be sent to CITU in Word format and with clear instructions on the language required, deadlines set or any other important details. Text should be sent through a secure system. Headed paper will be required for letters to match the original document.

If, at any time, demand exceeds available resources, then CITU will prioritise work on the basis of urgency. A final copy of the translation will be provided in Word or PDF format, unless specified otherwise.

- 14.2 We assure all professionals that CITU adheres to the GDPR while processing information for translation. The data you provide will be used for the intended purpose only.

### 15 Telephone Interpreting and Sign Language Interpreters

Telephone interpreting (mostly during out of hours) and Sign Language service is provided by CITU through external agencies. Most of the departments within Coventry City Council have been provided with telephone numbers and access codes. If you want to use these services, please speak to your line manager. Alternatively, contact the CITU office to get your access code.

Please do not contact any interpreter directly unless booked via CITU office and do not send any documents to interpreters directly.

## Section 1a – Guidelines for Chairs working with interpreters

### 1. Arranging to work with an interpreter

The task of chairing a meeting involving the use of an interpreter is complex and needs to be well-planned. The Chair should arrange to meet the interpreter in advance of the meeting to explain the objectives and format of the meeting, and to agree with the interpreter how they will work together (see interpreting modes below). This decision depends on the needs of the service users who require interpreting, the type and formality of the meeting, and the skills and experience of the Interpreter.

### 2. Optional interpreting modes

- 2.1 Simultaneous whispered interpreting: The Interpreter interprets the sentence into the target language while simultaneously listening to the next sentence. Generally used in formal settings (for example in courts, case conference meetings etc.). If used in meetings, the correct positioning of the service user and Interpreter is very important.
- 2.2 Consecutive interpreting: The speaker stops after every sentence or a couple of sentences and the Interpreter then steps in to explain what is said into the target language. In longer or complex meetings, this mode can be very time-consuming and can affect dialogue.
- 2.3 Consecutive interpreting of summaries made by the Chair: to keep a meeting to a manageable length, the Chair may decide to summarise each issue as it is covered, prior to any decision being made. The Interpreter translates this summary and feeds it back to those attending. Each decision of the meeting should be interpreted accurately.
- 2.4 Monitoring and supportive interpreting: if service users understand and speak some English and wish to address the meeting directly, an Interpreter should be used to monitor the dialogue and, if necessary, clarify or correct understanding.

### 3. Arrangements prior to the meeting

- 3.1 When arranging a meeting, Chairs should:
- Introduce participants to the interpreter – name plates/badges are useful.
  - Ensure that the relevant background information is provided to the interpreter prior to the meeting. Additionally, they should provide all the reports that are to be presented to the interpreter, and for the interpreter to be given the opportunity to clarify any points. All reports should also be translated for the service user(s) in advance of the meeting. The Chair should also ensure that any paperwork

sent to the service user in advance of the meeting is also translated. Finally, the interpreter should be made aware of any difficult language, concepts, or issues that may be encountered during the meeting.

- (c) The length of a meeting can double when an interpreter is used. Chairs should ensure that all participants and administrative services are informed in advance about the duration of the meeting. The Chair should also plan 'comfort breaks' as appropriate. The interpreter will also ask for breaks according to their needs.
  - (d) Check any requirements the interpreter may have; for example water, pen, paper or note pad.
  - (e) If the interpreter uses simultaneous interpreting in conferences, it would be useful for the Chair to make sure that everyone does not speak at the same time.
- 3.2 If the Chair is to meet the service user(s) prior to the meeting, they should outline the purpose of this meeting with the interpreter.

#### 4. Arrangements during the meeting

- 4.1 As part of the introduction to the meeting, the Chair should allow the interpreter to outline their role and the mode of interpreting to be used. The Chair should state that no comments should be made in the meeting that participants do not want to have interpreted.
- 4.2 Depending on which interpreting mode is to be used, the Chair should:
- (a) Ask participants to speak in short, concise sentences for the interpreting process to take place. The interpreter may also ask speakers to slow their speed of delivery or to repeat something which they, the interpreter, missed.
  - (b) Ask the interpreter for feedback on any exchanges between the group of service users/patients or between the service user(s) and the interpreter.
  - (c) Make it clear when the interpreter, as opposed to the service user(s), is being addressed. Allow time afterwards for the interpreter to summarise to the service users(s) what has been said. The interpreter will refer to themselves in the third person ("the interpreter" and not "I").
  - (d) Be prepared to clarify terminology or difficult concepts used by participants in order to help the interpreter to be as accurate as possible.

- (e) Ensure that the interpreter takes a break from the meeting if the service users(s) or the interpreter becomes anxious, distressed or overtired. The interpreter may also ask for a break.
- (g) Offer Interpreters a break at regular intervals (for example, every 2 hours). The interpreter may also ask for a comfort break.

#### 5. Arrangements after the meeting

Ask the interpreter for feedback about the interpreting process and any lessons that can be learned for the future.

## Section 2 – A code of practice for interpreters

### 1. Terms and conditions

- 1.1 Interpreters work for Coventry City Council. Interpreters must bring a referral form to each face to face session and have it signed by the relevant practitioner.
- 1.2 Although CITU interpreters are DBS checked, if there are any changes in circumstances (especially any criminal conviction) it is their responsibility to inform CITU as soon as possible.
- 1.3 Interpreters should only accept work which they have the competence both linguistically and in terms of specialist knowledge or skills to carry out to the standards required by CITU.
- 1.4 Interpreters are obliged to carry out all work contracted to them with impartiality and shall immediately disclose to the practitioner any factors which might jeopardise this.

### 2. Confidentiality and data protection

- 2.1 Interpreters and translators are bound by Coventry City Council's confidentiality and GDPR requirements.
- 2.2 To maintain confidentiality, any notes taken or document received by interpreters that contains service users' details should be destroyed under secure arrangements (e.g. shredder) once the session has ended.
- 2.3 Interpreters must maintain confidentiality at all times and should not divulge or share information acquired during interpreting or translation work.
- 2.4 The duty of confidentiality must not terminate on the completion of assignments and should persist and is on-going, where appropriate, beyond the cessation of employment with CITU.
- 2.5 The duty of confidentiality shall not apply where disclosure is required by law.

### 3. Role of the interpreter

- 3.1 The interpreter's primary role is to facilitate communication between the practitioner and service users.
- 3.2 Interpreters must interpret accurately what is being said without adding, omitting or changing anything. Interpreters must immediately disclose if the service user is related to them or if they have a personal relationship which could create a conflict of interest. Interpreters must not pick up the service user's children. Practitioners should not ask interpreters to do this either.

Interpreters are not allowed to give lifts to service users.

Interpreters are not responsible for disciplining service users or their children during assignments. Interpreters should always bear in mind that they are not in charge of meetings. Practitioners are. If confidential information is being discussed during the session and family members or friends join in, it is the practitioner's responsibility to decide who remains in the meeting.

- 3.3 An interpreter should not interrupt or intervene except:
- (a) to ask for clarification/repeat something they may have missed.
  - (b) to alert both parties to a possible missed cultural reference or inference
  - (c) to signal a condition or factor which might impair the interpreting process (e.g. audibility, inadequate breaks etc.)
- 3.4 An interpreter should not be required to:
- (a) Visit service users at home or an establishment on their own. An interpreter should not invite a service user to their home.
  - (b) Accompany service users from one agency to another;
  - (c) Provide a befriending service to service users;
  - (d) Undertake the role of an advocate;
  - (e) Assess the needs of service users;
  - (f) Undertake outreach work with individuals and families.
- 3.5 If an interpreter is unsure of the situation in which they will be required to interpret, they should seek clarification from the CITU manager before attending the session.

- 3.6 If the interpreter's impartiality is compromised during an assignment, they should withdraw from the assignment.
- 3.7 An interpreter should not accept any form of inducement or reward, whether in cash or otherwise, for their work other than payment from CITU.
- 3.8 It is important that any complaint received by the interpreter be passed on to the CITU manager.
- 3.9 Interpreters must always behave professionally and not discuss their personal beliefs or views (e.g. religious or political) with either the client or the professional before, during or after the assignment.

### 4. Dos and Don'ts for interpreters

#### 4.1 Dos

- Ensure that you know the location of the appointment and how to get there.
- Be punctual and allow extra time for travel especially during heavy traffic.
- If you are unavoidably delayed, then let CITU know.
- Wait outside the house for home visits
- Contact the CITU office if the practitioner hasn't arrived for the session or hasn't sent you a link for the MT meeting or hasn't telephoned you for a booked telephone interpreting session.
- Ask for a briefing before the session.
- Introduce your role; ensuring confidentiality/impartiality.
- Intervene in cases of noise, lengthy speech without pauses, or unclear terminology.
- Stick to your role as an interpreter unless asked, or if you feel it is appropriate to explain cultural differences.
- Carry a notebook and pen for taking notes.
- Ensure confidentiality and always remain neutral/impartial.
- Ask for a de-briefing and report to CITU management, if appropriate.

#### 4.2 Don't

- Guess.
- Add or omit any words to or from what is being said.
- Undertake the role of an advocate.
- Assess the needs of the service users.
- Discuss any sensitive matters with the service user before or after the interpreting session.
- Accept assignments too close together in time.
- Give your personal telephone number or your address to the practitioner or service user.

- Visit service users at their home or at an establishment on your own.
- Get too friendly with the service user.
- Make comments about service users and discuss any other cases with them.
- Take your children to appointments.
- Accompany service users from one agency to another of your own.
- Provide a befriending service to service users.
- Influence service users to ask for you for any subsequent appointments.
- Give the impression that you are the only Interpreter in that language
- Ask practitioners to make “nice” comments about you.
- Book appointments yourself; instead, ask the professional to contact the CITU office.

### 5. Written work and translations

- 5.1 Interpreters may be asked by a member of staff to translate an appointment letter for a service user. Under no circumstances should an interpreter have to draft/write the letter or any other correspondence.
- 5.2 Interpreters should not fill out forms for the service user. Their responsibility is limited to questions and answers. Only in exceptional circumstances should the interpreter fill in the form, and they should only do that with the full consent of the practitioner and the service user. Interpreters should indicate on the referral form if they have fulfilled such a request.
- 5.3 Interpreters should, to the best of their ability, render a faithful translation of the source text.
- 5.4 Interpreters should endeavour to complete any translation work by agreed dates. If, for any reason, they cannot complete the assignment by the agreed date, they must inform the CITU office.
- 5.5 Interpreters should use their judgement to bring to the practitioner’s attention when the source text contains elements that need to be clarified. These can include ambiguities, factual inaccuracies or linguistic errors. Interpreters should contact CITU instead of contacting the practitioner directly, unless otherwise advised.
- 5.6 All CITU Interpreters are bound by the principles of the GDPR while handling/processing any data.

### 6. The advocacy role

- 6.1 The Interpreter is not an advocate and, therefore, should not speak for the service user.
- 6.2 The Interpreter should not provide advice or counselling to the service user during the interpreting assignment. This is the task of the practitioner. If an Interpreter considers that the service user requires further clarification or information on a particular matter, they should inform the practitioner accordingly.

### 7. Mode of interpreting

- 7.1 Discuss with the practitioner which mode(s) of interpreting you, as the interpreter, will use in the meeting.
- (a) **Simultaneous:** where the interpreter speaks at the same time as the person speaking. This mode of interpreting is common at major conferences (e.g. booth work).
- (b) **Whispered Simultaneous:** where the interpreter sits close to the service user and does not pause but has to listen and interpret at the same time. Again, this is normally used in a conference/presentation type setting (or case conferences where there are many participants).
- (c) **Consecutive:** where a whole segment of speech or a coherent section of a statement will be spoken and then put into the target language by the interpreter after the speaker has finished speaking. This is a slower process but ensures an output which is clear and less likely to be disputed.
- (d) **Sight Translation:** where an interpreter is required to provide an oral translation of written text instantaneously. However, this is for short/brief documents such as letters and should not replace written translation of meeting notes or reports.
- (e) **Summary:** to give an overview/gist of what was said.

Both the practitioner and the service user should be encouraged to address each other directly (USING “I” OR “YOU”), to emphasise that they are communicating between themselves and that the Interpreter is the intermediary. The interpreter should refer to themselves in the third person (“the interpreter” and not use the first person “I”).

## 8. Preparation before attending a session

Interpreters should:

- Take all details correctly if appointment has been given to them over the phone
- Inform the CITU office immediately if they have been asked to contact the service user and have been unable to do so or if the service user is not available for the proposed appointment.
- Always wear the City Council ID badge.
- For home visits, wait outside the house
- Always check the language/dialect match.
- Familiarise themselves with the terminology.
- Not delegate the assignment to someone else.
- Dress appropriately and present themselves in a professional manner.
- Introduce themselves according to CITU's introduction statement.
- Interpret everything accurately and completely.
- Remain impartial and maintain confidentiality.
- Withdraw if impartiality is questioned or if there is any conflict of interest.
- Intervene only according to the Code of Conduct (see Section 2, paragraph 3.3)
- Do not answer your phone during an interpreting session. Place on silent mode or switch it off.
- Complete an assignment Referral Form and get the practitioner to write in the end time, any comments they may have, and sign the form.
- Referral Forms should be returned to the CITU office by the end of each calendar month along with monthly top sheet via email (CITU@coventry.gov.uk). Remember this is your responsibility and the CITU admin team should not be chasing you for them.

8.1 An interpreter should only accept an assignment if they are confident that they are competent to interpret to a satisfactory standard in the language required and cope with the language (and jargon) that will be used. The Interpreter should have a brief conversation with the service user to check that they fully understand each other. Ideally, the service user's and the Interpreter's first language will be the same. At the time of introductions, if the service user's language is different from the Interpreter's, the Interpreter should withdraw from the session, and ask the practitioner to book the appropriate language and re-arrange the appointment.

8.2 The following points should be considered when preparing for an assignment:

- (a) Am I appropriately dressed for the session (smart professional attire)?
- (b) Who am I going to interpret for?

- (c) What is the language/dialect of the service user?
- (d) Where and when will the briefing take place with the practitioner? This meeting may take place at the office, home or in a public place. The interpreter should ask for any clarification or additional information that they feel is relevant.
- (e) Where and when is the interpreting session being held? Under normal circumstances, the Interpreter should travel directly to the venue. In the case of a home visit, the practitioner and the interpreter should arrange to meet outside the service user's home. If the practitioner is late, initially knock on the service user's door to check if they are waiting inside, if not ring CITU office.
- (f) Obtain relevant background information, check terminology to be used and go through any relevant papers.

## 9. Cancellations

Interpreters must ensure they attend an appointment once they have accepted it. Only if there is a genuine reason for not attending should an appointment be cancelled. In such cases, the CITU office should be informed immediately.

## 10. Briefing session

Where appropriate, an arrangement should be made for the interpreter to meet the practitioner(s) at least 5-10 minutes before the session to discuss the case. For complex cases, more time may be required.

## 11. During the interpreting session

- 11.1 The interpreter should read out their introduction card and inform the service user and practitioner that they will ensure confidentiality.
- 11.2 At the start of the interpreting process, the interpreter should inform both the practitioner and the service user that they will interpret everything that is said.
- 11.3 Both the practitioner and the service user should be encouraged to ask the interpreter to repeat or explain anything they do not understand.
- 11.4 The interpreter should convey the meaning of everything that has been said, without omission or addition. This applies in any mode of interpreting chosen for the particular assignment.
- 11.5 The interpreter has a duty to ensure that, as far as possible, both the practitioner and the service user fully understand what is being said. If the interpreter realises that something has not been understood, they should explain or clarify but make sure that the other party is aware of what they are doing and what is being said in clarification.

- 11.6 If the interpreter considers that there may be a risk of any kind of safeguarding issues e.g. verbal or physical abuse to anyone present, they should ensure that the practitioner or staff are aware of any concerns and the reason(s) behind them.
- 11.7 The interpreter should brief the practitioner on any exchanges between family members or between the family and the interpreter. This includes any exchanges where another language is being used, even if the interpreter does not understand it.
- 11.8 During the session, the interpreter should inform the practitioner of any issue that arises. For example, if:
- the service user does not understand any words or concepts that are used.
  - there is not a direct translation of an expression, it may require longer explanation .
  - The interpreter wants to request an explanation of a term or an issue from either side.
- 11.9 During an assignment, it may be necessary for the interpreter to explain in more detail what is being spoken, in order to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding. The interpreter may help the practitioner and/or the service user to understand aspects of culture, which may help to ensure clarity in the interpreting session.
- 11.10 Interpreters should not meet or visit a service user on their own. A practitioner must always be present during interpreting sessions.
- 11.11 Interpreters will carry a notebook and pen in all interpreting sessions. Note-taking is part of good practice for interpreters. However, they may not need to take notes in all sessions. Any notes taken during the session should be given to a member of staff before leaving or be destroyed in front of them.
- 11.12 During a lengthy interpreting session, e.g. a case conference, it is necessary for interpreters to have a break. Interpreters should inform the practitioner when a break is required.
- 11.13 Interpreters should never advise the practitioner how to do their job; all practitioners have their own ways of working and the Interpreter should never comment on this.  
PRACTITIONERS, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR POSITION, SHOULD NOT TELL THE INTERPRETER HOW TO DO THEIR JOB.
- 11.14 Interpreters should not discuss or leave literature about their religion with the practitioner or the service user.

## 12. De-briefing session

- 12.1 The interpreter should discuss any necessary points arising from the interpreting session with the practitioner. The interpreter can help clarify any cultural questions the practitioner may have.
- 12.2 The interpreter must not give their phone number to the service user and must not ask for their number either, irrespective of how emotional a situation might be. Even if the Interpreter feels sorry for a service user, they should not contact them.
- 12.3 The interpreter is required to complete a Referral Form for all face-to-face assignments and have it signed by the practitioner after each session with the end time.

## 13. Feedback

CITU welcomes feedback/comments from all practitioners who work with interpreters. Practitioners can either write their comments on the referral form or can contact the CITU Manager.

## Section 3 - Training

- 3.1 It is crucial that interpreters, and practitioners understand each other's roles and responsibilities. This is to prevent any misunderstandings during interpreting sessions.
- 3.2 Interpreting and translation is a complex procedure that requires qualifications, skill/competence and experience. Extensive knowledge and understanding is needed in procedures and systems as well as knowledge of languages, customs, geography, religions and history.
- 3.3 Interpreters and translators need to have sufficient training to develop and maintain their skills. Practitioners also require training to help them better understand the roles and responsibilities of interpreters and translators.
- 3.4 A number of interpreters have the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI), in one or more of the subject options (Health, Law & Local Government) All interpreters undergo regular in-house and external training to develop their skills further.
- 3.5 Once the name of an interpreter is placed on the CITU list, there is an induction programme for them which covers an introduction to Coventry City Council. The interpreter is also briefed on the Dos and Don'ts for Interpreters.

- 3.6 Successful interpreting and translation is dependent on the practitioner's understanding of the complexities of interpreting and translating (to a high standard). CITU has developed a training session for practitioners entitled 'How to work effectively with Interpreters and translators'. If you would like to arrange for this training to be provided at your workplace, free of charge, please contact the CITU manager. External agencies may be charged for such training.
- 3.7 CITU welcomes new practitioners, and those who have not had experience of the service are invited to attend an induction session at the unit.
- 3.8 The Unit participates in joint training sessions with practitioners using the resources of the Coventry City Council training and development team.



### Referral Form

Job Ref

<b>Name of Interpreter</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Signature</b>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Clients Name</b>	<b>Requested by</b>	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<b>Description of appointment</b>	<b>Venue</b>	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<b>Date of Appointment</b>	<b>* Start Time</b>	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	

#### **To be completed by the Practitioner:**

End Time \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Tick  while considering our overall services:**

Excellent     Very Good     Good     Fair     Poor

Any other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. No: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **For office use only:**

Date of Submission  On System  Total Time

\* Note: Interpreter will be responsible to authenticate the start time from practitioner if it is different from the booking time.

#### **General Data Protection Regulations 2018**

The personal data in this form will be used for the purposes of monitoring the provision of opportunities within Coventry City Council, providing statistical data to Government departments and assisting the Council to meet its statutory duties.

#### **For further enquiries please contact:**

CITU, Friargate, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Coventry CV1 2GN

Tel: (024) 7697 5506; Email: [citu@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:citu@coventry.gov.uk)



For further enquiries please contact:  
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ONE FRIARGATE | FLOOR 9 | COVENTRY CV1 2GN

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Coventry City Council

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