



For further enquiries please contact:
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CITU

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A short guide for professionals

Office hours
Monday – Thursday
9am to 5pm
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How to work effectively with Interpreters

Responsibility for ensuring effective communication with the non-English speaking service user rests with you. If you and the service user cannot understand one another, then a professional interpreter must be used in order for the service user to understand what is being said to them and the message you are trying to get across.

Working with interpreters is an important part of communicating with service users who have limited or no English.

In this guide you will find very useful information on working effectively with an Interpreter.

Booking an Interpreter

Please see separate leaflet on the process of booking Interpreters.

Role of the Interpreter

The interpreter's primary role is to facilitate communication between you and the service user or a group of people. The Interpreter will be impartial, will not give advice, will interpret everything that is said during the session, will not add or omit any information and will clarify any linguistic or cultural ambiguities.

Meet with interpreter

For home visits, Interpreters will meet you outside the house and will wait for up to 30 minutes. When you meet the Interpreter, please check their ID badge.

It is always good practice to meet with the interpreter before the session to discuss briefly what you will be talking about and explain the purpose of the meeting.

Please be mindful that you may need extra time for appointments when working with Interpreters.

At the start of the session

- Introduce everyone, including the Interpreter.
- After the introduction, allow the Interpreter to introduce him/herself and their role as an Interpreter, that they are impartial and will treat all matters confidentially and abide by their code of practice.
- The Interpreter must check with the service user that they understand each other well.
- Inform everyone present in the room that they are bound by the General Data Protection Regulations and THAT everything discussed will be confidential.

During the session

- 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.
- Use short, concise sentences and pause frequently to allow the Interpreter time to interpret.
- Please be mindful that a short sentence in English may require paraphrasing in the other language and as a result might take longer to explain.
- Check that the service user has understood everything while the Interpreter is there.
- The interpreter will refer to themselves in the third person ("the interpreter" and not "I").

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.

- Do not ask the Interpreter his/her opinion. The Interpreter's job is to interpret and aid communication, not to GIVE personal opinions. If you need the Interpreter's opinion for cultural, linguistic or other reasons then it is okay to ask.
- Debrief the Interpreter and clarify any questions you have after the appointment.
- If a follow up visit is required, please ring the CITU office to book this and not directly with the Interpreter. If you need the same Interpreter for continuity, please mention THE INTERPRETER'S name at the time of booking. After the session do not contact the Interpreter directly.
- Before the Interpreter leaves, please sign their referral form, enter the end time and any comments if you wish.

Remember

Avoid the use of unofficial interpreters, e.g. Family members, friends, children or others as this can lead to a conflict of interest and to "gatekeeping". They are unlikely to have been trained as interpreters and their involvement could undermine objectivity and confidentiality