

NHS Forth Valley Interpreter Policy

Introduction

NHS Forth Valley seeks to ensure that language is not a barrier to services for people whose first language is not English or those for those people who require Human Aids to Communication. This policy is therefore a commitment to the development of efficient communication strategies to enable NHS Forth Valley to deliver services that are responsive and equitable for all clients.

Policy Statement

NHS Forth Valley recognises that there are members of the community whose first language is not English and that this may be a barrier to accessing services and communicating with staff who work within the health service.

This policy is designed to enable clients to access services fairly and equitably and to ensure that service delivery is responsive to clients needs and of a high quality.

1. NHS Forth Valley wherever possible will:

- 1.1 Consult with client groups and adopt a planned approach to the production and dissemination of information regarding NHS Forth Valley services in English, BSL and other languages.
- 1.2 Arrange and finance interpretation and translation services for NHS patients accessing NHS Forth Valley Services
- 1.3 Plan for interpreter services by incorporating interpreting, translating and multilingual information needs into funding, human resources, training and client services
- 1.4 Work with qualified interpreters and translators to facilitate communication with persons whose first language is not English
- 1.5 Arrange for an interpreter to be provided at the earliest opportunity to explain any procedures and/or future discussions.
- 1.6 Dependant on circumstances, offer the services of the telephone translating service when an interpreter is not available. This must not be used to replace a Human Aid to Communication but should be used as an alternative
- 1.7 Develop a joint approach with members of the local community and with multi-disciplinary staff representatives in the development and implementation of language service planning.
- 1.8 Acknowledge the right of clients to refuse the services of an interpreter but that this will be recorded in NHS Forth Valley documentation

2. Policy Aim

- 2.1 By implementing this policy NHS Forth Valley aims to:
- 2.2 Introduce strategies to illustrate working with qualified interpreters and translators to maximise best practice and to meet the diverse needs of people within the Forth Valley area
- 2.3 Plan services in consultation with the appropriate target group
- 2.4 Establish co-ordinated measures that address the communication difficulties of clients and facilitate equitable access to services and information
- 2.5 To evaluate any services commissioned by NHS Forth Valley on an Annual basis

3. Policy Implementation

NHS Forth Valley will demonstrate their commitment in implementing this policy by:

- 3.1 Developing appropriate policy, practices and structures which seek to ensure that language difficulties are not a barrier to accessing services
- 3.2 Establish protocols for the engagement of qualified interpreters
- 3.4 Develop staff training in cross-cultural skills and how to work with interpreters

- 3.5 Acknowledging that the provision of interpreters is the responsibility of the service provider and not the client
- 3.6 Acknowledging clients entitlements to the services of interpreters, translators whenever reasonably possible.
- 3.7 Ensure that services are linguistically and culturally acceptable to the client including gender and ethnic preferences wherever possible.

4 Arranging the interpreter

- 4.1 Staff must ensure that the following details are obtained from the client to ensure that an appropriate interpreter can be arranged. The Interpreter service will also require details of the date, time and location of the assignment.
- 4.2 It is important to establish the preferred language (Minority Ethnic, British Sign Language, Lip Speaker, Deafblind Communicator) and gender required for the assignment
- 4.3 For Minority Ethnic Clients it is also important to establish the dialect/country of birth preference of the client and request these at the time of booking the interpreter.
- 4.4 Wherever possible and with the clients permission request the same interpreter if it is a long-standing assignment (e.g. anti-natal clinics) to ensure continuity of care and client confidence.
- 4.5 Give interpreting services as much notice as possible and give them a general briefing of the assignment.
- 4.7 Qualified interpreters work by a Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics. Any difficulties with the service provided by the interpreter staff should contact the booking agency and notify the Disability Department.
- 4.8 **To arrange and interpreter please follow the flowchart on Appendix A**
- 4.9 **To work with an Interpreter please follow the guidelines on Appendix B**

Ethical Principles

All interpreters booked by NHS Forth Valley will ensure that they work by their own agencies monitoring process agreed by NHS Forth Valley. They will also comply with their accrediting organisations Professional Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics.

Each of the following ethical principles is to be considered in the context of the health and well being of the user.

Confidentiality

Interpreters treat all information learned during the interpreting assignment as confidential

Impartiality

Interpreters are aware of the need to identify any potential or actual conflicts of interest, as well as any personal judgements, values, beliefs or opinions that may affect the quality and accuracy of the interpreting assignment

Respect for individuals and their communities

Interpreters will support mutually respectful relationships between all 3 parties (patient, provider and interpreter), while supporting the health and well being of the patient and the services and information provided by the healthcare professional as the highest priority.

Professionalism and integrity

Interpreters will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the professional standards and ethical principles of their profession. Patient will have access to the NHS Complaints Procedure if they would like to raise any concerns or identify problem areas

Accuracy

Interpreters will transmit the content, spirit and cultural context of the original message into the preferred language or means of communication, making it possible for patient and provider to communicate effectively.

Cultural responsiveness

Interpreters are alert for possible words or concepts that may lead to misunderstanding and identify and assist in clarifying possible sources of confusion for the patient and or provider.

Sensitivity

Interpreters seek to understand how diversity and cultural similarities and differences have a fundamental impact on the healthcare encounter. The interpreter will endeavour to ensure that cultural, gender sensitivity and cultural responsiveness is respected.

Guidelines for Using an Interpreter

Speak directly to the user

- The interpreter is a professional who is there to facilitate communication between the two parties.
- There is no reason to ask the interpreter to tell something to the user.
- Speak as you normally would, in a moderate rhythm
- Use normal facial expressions and voice tones.

Locate the interpreter in front of the user (or a position comfortable for the client) so that they can both see each other clearly

- **Do not** have the interpreters back to a window as this would mean that the user is looking into the light. (This would not allow a hearing impaired person to see the facial expressions or the hands of the interpreter clearly).
- If possible have the interpreter's back to a blank wall; patterned curtains or wallpaper can cause visual noise (distraction).
- Ensure that there is good lighting in the room as this can aid communication.

Ensure that if there is more than 3 people in the room that it is made clear at the start of the session that only one person speaks at any one time.

- Confusion takes place if more than one person talks simultaneously or if people interrupt one another
- Do not say anything that you don't want interpreted – an interpreter is ethically bound to interpret everything that is seen or heard.
- Remember that the interpreter is a few words behind the speaker. Allow the interpreter time to finish the message before asking questions or starting a discussion.
- At times the interpreter may need to interrupt the speaker or signer to ask for clarification.
- **Avoid** jargon, but explain any specialist words, which can not be avoided.
- Some clients prefer simple, short sentences with pauses to allow the interpreter (language) to interpret fully and accurately - but don't assume.

Interpreter requirements

- Introduce interpreter to all parties.
- Negotiate rest breaks with the interpreter – this should be approx. every 20 – 30 min. If a session is to last more than 2 hours then 2 interpreters may be required.
- If possible, give the interpreter some information about what they are going to interpret before the assignment. This will allow the interpreter to prepare for the assignment. If due to patient confidentiality this is not possible then discuss the proceedings before the interpreter enters the room.
- Have water available for the interpreter.
- If this were a specialist assignment it would be appropriate to book an interpreter with the right experience, qualifications and of the appropriate sex for the assignment.