

Good practice when requesting and working with interpreters

Requesting an interpreter

The Wales Interpretation and Translation service operating times are 7am-10pm with an emergency service 10pm-7am Monday – Sunday. If you require an interpreter you contact us via:

- WITS Portal (if you have been set up)
- Telephone – 02920 537555
- [British Sign Language \(BSL\)](#)
- Email – WITS@cardiff.gov.uk

In cases where you require and interpreter urgently, please call us.

Please can the below information available prior to making the request:

- Organisation and Department
- Name, telephone number, email address
- Purchase Order number (if applicable)
- Client/Patients name and any identifiable reference number (patient or custody number)
- Nature of appointment (This is so we can ensure the interpreter has appropriate qualification and/or experience to conduct the appointment)
- Date, Time, Language and duration of appointment
- Any special requirement i.e. interpreter gender or specific interpreter
- Location of appointment

BSL – We need as much notice as possible for BSL interpreters due to high demands.

Consider the appointment length, in circumstances where the interpreter is needed for several hours, you will need to provide adequate breaks for the interpreter. This is particularly needed for BSL due to the physical demands of Sign Language.

If the interpreter is needed for a number of people in a group environment or event, consider if more than 1 interpreter is be needed. WITS can offer further advice on best practice.

Once an interpreter has been confirmed, WITS will email a confirmation to the booking officer. **Please ensure you receive this prior to the appointment, if in any doubt please contact WITS**

Following the assignment, the booking officer will be asked to sign a 'Proof of attendance' form and authorise any amendments if applicable IE extended duration.

The booking officer will be sent a breakdown of costs the following day

During the appointment

Interpreters should not be left alone with the client at any time.

Choose a quiet space if you can. Interpreters have to be able to hear and be heard. Often the interpreter will introduce themselves prior to the appointment beginning and explain they are here to help support communication.

If this doesn't happen introduce the interpreter at the beginning of the appointment
The interpreter will adhere to the following principles

- Confidentiality
- Impartiality
- Word for word accuracy
- Non-advocacy
- Please see WITS Code of Conduct for further information

The interpreter may also make notes to aid the interpretation, these will be destroyed after the interview.

If seated, arrange so you and the service user face each other and the interpreter sits between you. This means that you can talk directly to the member of the public/client.

Address the service user directly, for example "What is your name?" rather than "can you ask her what her name is?" Behave as you would if you shared the same language – as much as possible recognising and respecting individual backgrounds.

You are responsible for the meeting.

Do not speak for more than a few sentences at one time

Consider the appointment length, does the interpreter need a break. Remember they are working in 2 languages which can be tiring.

Explain words and procedures, avoid using jargon. Make sure the service user/patient understands what you are saying. Ask if you are not sure of relevant, culture-based facts, attitudes or perceptions.

Ensure you have correct client contact information and if they have any preference on what interpreter they wish to assist them IE Male or Female, specific named interpreter

Summarise what has been decided and clarify the next practical steps to be taken – when, why and how.

At the end of the appointment sign the interpreter's proof of attendance. This is a form requiring your signature once the assignment has been completed by the interpreter. This is to confirm the number of hours that the interpreter has interpreted.

Be aware of any contentious or distressing issues – debrief the interpreter if required. Do not, however, expect the interpreter to offer an opinion about the client or their circumstances.

If you have any concerns you wish to raise with WITS you can contact us on the above contact information.