

Rules for using interpreting and translation services in healthcare



This document was written by the **Welsh Government**.
It is an easy read version of '**Standard Operating Procedure:
Commissioning Interpreting and Translation Services in
Primary and Emergency Healthcare**'.

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The pictures in this document are from Photosymbols:
www.photosymbols.com/

About these rules



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

We are the Welsh Government.



These rules are to help NHS staff in Wales.



They explain how to arrange **translation** or **interpreting** services for patients.



Translation means changing written words into another language.



Interpreting means changing spoken words into another language.

These rules are for GP practices and emergency care. Other services can use them too. For example, dentists and hospitals.

Who the rules help



These rules support people who need extra help to understand or communicate.



Translation and interpreting services help people who speak different languages. And who need information in a different way to be able to understand it.

This includes people who:



- Are D/deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.



- Use British Sign Language.



- Are blind or have poor eyesight.
- Are deafblind.



- Are disabled.



- Have dementia.



- Are neurodivergent. Neurodivergent means people whose brains work differently. For example, autism is a neurodivergent condition.



- Find reading or writing hard.



- Are parents or carers who find it hard to understand or communicate.



- Do not speak English or Welsh as their main language.

The rules apply to adults, young people and children.

What the law says



The **law** says everyone must be treated fairly.



Everyone has different needs. But they must still get fair and equal services, that are right for their needs.

What healthcare services must do

1. Access to services

Everyone should get the same care, no matter how they communicate.



Translation and interpretation services should be free and easy to get.



Patients should never have to pay or bring their own interpreter.



All patients with communication needs should have this need met by health services. This includes carers and parents.

Appointments must be longer if needed.



Staff must record people's communication needs on their file.

It is the patient's right to get these services.

2. Booking an interpreter

The health service must book the interpreter.



Staff must give the interpreter all the information they need.



It is good to tell the patient about the interpreter in advance.

Interpreters must be trained, skilled and able to talk about medical issues.

Services should be given in a way that best meet a patient's needs. This could include:



- Face-to-face meetings.

- Phone or video calls.



- Written information.

3. Time and waiting



- People should not have to wait longer because of their needs.



- Staff should share information about the interpretation services in a way that is right for the person. For example, an Easy Read poster.



- Patients should know that interpretation services are available.



- Patients should be called into their appointment in a way they can understand.

4. People come first



Patients should get support that is right for them.



Staff should ask patients what their communication needs are. And record this on their file.



If a patient wants a family member or friend to support them, this should be on their record.



When possible, staff should ask patients who they want as an interpreter. For example, they may prefer a man or a woman. This is important for private or personal appointments.

5. Keeping people safe



- Interpreters should be qualified and trained to work in health settings.
- They should have a police check.
- They should know about keeping people safe and how to report concerns.



- They should know the laws about Mental Capacity. Mental capacity means being able to understand things and make choices about your life.



- People's personal information should be safe and private.

6. Complaints and concerns



People must be able to share what they think about the services. Feedback can be good or bad.



People should use their own way of sharing this.

Services must give:

- Clear, private ways to give feedback.



- Feedback forms in different languages and formats.

Replies to complaints must be in the person's chosen way of communicating.

7. Translating documents

Some documents must be in a format the person understands.

These might include:



- Test results
- Surgery information
- Care records



Patients must get these for free.

Documents should be available in:



- Easy Read



- Braille



- British Sign Language (BSL)



- Other languages



Health staff should be able to get these quickly. Patients must not wait too long.

It is helpful to have documents that are used often ready in these formats.



Patients must know they can ask for their information in another format. For example, Easy Read.

8. Checking for good quality



Translation and interpretation services should be checked to make sure they are good.



People who have used these services should share what they think about them.

Arranging services



When choosing interpreting and translation service providers, staff must think about:

- Information about local people.
- The law.
- The cost of services.
- Communication problems people face.
- What health services they include.
- What translation services they already have, how often they use them and what for.
- Asking patients for feedback.



More information



Llywodraeth Cymru
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This is 1 of 3 new documents made by the Welsh Government with partners.



The first document is the **Accessible Communication and Information Standards Wales**.

These Standards say what healthcare services must do to communicate with people.



There is an Easy Read document about the Standards here:

www.gov.wales/standard-operating-procedure-commissioning-interpretation-and-translation-services-primary-and



The second document is the **Accessible Information Standard for GPs.**

The AIS helps GP practices give the right help to people who find communication harder.



There is an Easy Read document about the AIS here: www.gov.wales/standard-operating-procedure-commissioning-interpretation-and-translation-services-primary-and



The third document is new **Rules for NHS staff using interpreters and translation services in healthcare.**

These rules explain how to arrange translation or interpreting services for patients.



Translation means changing written words into another language. Interpreting means changing spoken words into another language.

All together these rules and standards will help people:

- Understand their health and care
- Feel confident to ask questions
- Make good choices
- Stay healthy



For more information about the new rules and standards:



Go to our website: www.gov.wales/accessible-communication-and-information-standards-healthcare



Or email us at: hsceyg.equalityteam@gov.wales

Easy Read Health Information



For Easy Read health information try the NHS Wales Easy Read Health A-Z: 111.wales.nhs.uk/easyreads/easyread.aspx

Easy Read Annual Health Checks Information



Public Health Wales has made an easy read resource pack for **Annual Health Checks**.

It has useful information and easy read resources to help you get your Annual Health Check.



You can find it here: bit.ly/EasyReadAHC