

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE REMOTE SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING SERVICE

24 April 2020

A free remote interpreting service for British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) users in Northern Ireland has been introduced to provide the Deaf community with access to:

- NHS111 (Northern Ireland COVID-19 advice line) and
- all health and social care services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This temporary service is provided by [Interpreter Now](#) and is funded by the Department of Health and the Department for Communities.

To contact NHS111, visit: www.interpreternow.co.uk/nhs111ni

This part of the service is a **Video Relay System** that enables Deaf people to telephone NHS111 via a remote BSL or ISL interpreter.

How it works: *The Deaf person contacts the interpreter via the Interpreter Now app, using their smartphone or tablet, or via the secure video link using a computer. Once they are connected, the interpreter telephones NHS111 on the Deaf person's behalf.*

To contact all other Health and Social Care services including your local GP, visit: www.interpreternow.co.uk/hscni

It can be used to contact:

- Northern Ireland GPs and GP Out of Hours Services
- Hospitals for inpatient or outpatient queries (including independent / private hospitals)
- All health services – e.g. a dentist, optician, optometrist, community pharmacy, etc.
- All social care services – e.g. a social work team, day centre, residential or nursing home (including independent / private care facilities commissioned by HSC), etc.
- Ambulance services
- The Northern Ireland COVID19 Community Helpline: **0808 802 0020**

This part of the service includes two elements:

A Video Relay System: This enables Deaf people to telephone a Health and Social Care service provider via a remote BSL or ISL interpreter.

How it works: *The Deaf person, the interpreter, and the Health and Social Care service provider can all be in different locations. The Deaf person contacts the interpreter via the Interpreter Now app, using their smartphone or tablet, or via the secure video link using a computer. Once they are connected, the interpreter telephones the Health and Social Care service provider on the Deaf person's behalf.*

Video Remote Interpreting: This enables Deaf people to communicate with a Health and Social Care professional in person, via an online BSL or ISL video interpreter.

How it works: *The Deaf person and the Health and Social Care service provider are together in the same location, while the interpreter is online via secure video link on a screen (e.g. a tablet, smart phone, or computer).*

To ensure immediate access to telephone services at this time the Video Relay System will be introduced first. In the coming weeks, we will also wish to make contact with key staff and service leads across Health and Social Care organisations, such as IT departments / services, communications and Equality departments, to set up the Video Remote Interpreting service. Staff from the Health and Social Care Board will make contact with those teams in due course to take this forward.