



NIHSC Interpreting Service Access Guidance and Criteria

When to use telephone interpreting

- Primary Care appointments
- When the content to be discussed is relatively simple
- When it is preferable not to have another person in the room i.e. when anonymity or modesty might be a consideration
- When there are health issues such as highly infectious diseases
- When the appointment is 30 minutes or less, especially a primary care appointment
- For quick inpatient sessions i.e. doctors rounds
- For follow up appointments when a face to face interpreter is not essential
- In an emergency situation where time is limited
- To aid the booking of an appointment and establish patient's needs
- When a face to face interpreter cannot be made available

- **NB:** cost is £0.57 per minute*.

When to use face to face interpreting

- For a new patient's/client's initial visit
- When the appointment is over 30 minutes
- When the appointment is sensitive in nature i.e. delivering test results which may be distressing
- Consultations involving two or more participants i.e. family conferences
- When the patient/client has specific communication needs and/or where non-verbal cues are needed
- When the patient/client indicates that they are not comfortable with telephone interpreting
- For any sight translation where a document needs to be read to the patient/client

- **NB:** cost is £20 +£5 prep for 1-60 minutes and £0.33 per minute thereafter (plus mileage)*
- **Out of Hours:** cost is £30 for 1-60 minutes and £0.50 per minute thereafter (plus mileage)*

*Costs for services from NIHSC Interpreting Service and The Big Word are funded by the Health and Social Care Board



Service Exceptions*

It is recommended that the service areas listed below use a face to face interpreter due to the nature of the services, however the requester may determine, based on the guidance, that a telephone interpreter may be sufficient in particular situations.

- Mental Health i.e. Psychiatry, Learning Disability, Psychology
- Social Services i.e. Child Case Conferences, Child Protection
- Domestic Abuse
- Maternity/Fertility Appointments
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Cancer Services
- Family Trauma Centre
- Northern Ireland New Entrant Screening (NINES)

*Please note that this list is not exhaustive and clinical decision should be followed

Contact Details

The NIHSC Interpreting Service is delivered as a Regional Shared Service managed by the Business Services Organisation (BSO). The NIHSC Interpreting Service contact details are as follows:

Address: The Business Services Organisation
2 Franklin Street
Belfast
BT2 8DQ

Email: interpreting@hscni.net

Telephone: 028 9536 3777

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