

Language Assistance Services

OPERATIONAL POLICY FOR NEW ZEALAND PUBLIC
SECTOR AGENCIES AND THOSE THEY FUND 2024



Ministry for
**Ethnic
Communities**
Te Tari Mātāwaka

Ministry for Ethnic Communities

The Ministry for Ethnic Communities is the chief advisor to the government on ethnic diversity and inclusion in New Zealand society. We provide information, advice and services to ethnic communities, and give out funds to support community development and social cohesion.

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Executive Summary

This *Language Assistance Services – Operational Policy for New Zealand Public Sector Agencies and Those They Fund 2024* document is the culmination of a multi-year, multi-agency work programme to increase the quality, quantity and accessibility of Language Assistance Services in Aotearoa New Zealand. It provides an overview of the operational policy requirements as well as best practice guidelines for public sector agencies and the services that they fund.

Background of the Language Assistance Services programme

Following two critical reviews in 2015 and 2016, the report *Fair and Accessible Public Services: The Use of Interpreters and other Language Assistance in New Zealand* made several proposals to address barriers and gaps and improve access to interpreter and translation services in the delivery of public services and publicly funded services.

In 2016 the Senior Officials Group responsible for the all-of-government New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy and the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy agreed the Terms of Reference of the inter-agency Language Assistance Services programme.

The goal of the Language Assistance Services programme to reduce barriers to accessibility of government funded services through addressing the issues of quality, quantity, and accessibility of language assistance services. This has been a multi-year work programme with three key deliverables:

- i. *The Standards Project:* Development and implementation of quality standards for interpreting and an associated mechanism for credentialing;
- ii. *The Procurement Project:* The implementation of a procurement model for public sector agencies to purchase language assistance services through a syndicated contract;
- iii. *The Guidelines Project:* The development of cross-agency Operational Policy and Guidelines to address barriers and improve quality, quantity, and accessibility of Language Assistance Services.

Benefits of the Language Assistance Services programme

Multiple benefits are expected from an integrated effort to improve the quality, quantity, and accessibility of language assistance services, such as interpreting and translations, including:

- equitable access to public services for limited English proficient (LEP) people who can make informed decisions because they fully understand and can be fully understood;
- increased trust in the interpreter workforce as a result of the newly introduced quality assurance through adoption of the NAATI standards and associated credentialing system;
- confidence from service providers that facts are established, clients' needs are accurately assessed, and appropriate assistance and full entitlements are provided;
- meeting all obligations under the law, including for courts and other areas with legislative requirements such as health;
- supporting services to be provided more cost-effectively;
- reducing service involvement and downstream costs by dealing with clients' needs appropriately at the outset and preventing future crises; and
- improving social cohesion by enabling LEP people to access all the government services they are eligible for.

The New Zealand government commitment:

The New Zealand Government has committed to providing accessible and responsive public services through ensuring that information and services are made available in diverse ways that reflect the needs and backgrounds of people seeking those services.

Equitable access to information and public services requires the provision of language assistance, such as interpreting and translations, enable effective communication in English so they can gain the assistance they need, and to which they are entitled, as well as helping to prevent adverse outcomes that can affect individuals, their families and ultimately our communities.

This policy applies to services accessed by people who are eligible for public services in New Zealand. These services include corrections, customs, health, immigration, income support, justice and legal support, and police. This policy does not apply to New Zealand Sign Language or to Te Reo Māori as these are governed by their own frameworks.

From the **1 July 2024** New Zealand government agencies will adopt the NAATI standards and associated credentialing mechanism for interpreters, and the *Language Assistance Services – Operational Policy for New Zealand Public Sector Agencies and Those They Fund 2024*.

It is expected that from this date all participating agencies will transition to using credentialed interpreters or where no credentialed interpreter is available, an interpreter who is working towards their NAATI credential.

Operational Policy Requirements:

To implement this policy, all New Zealand central government agencies with client-facing services will:

- plan for, fund and purchase appropriate language assistance taking account of:
 - government policies and statutory obligations;
 - the client population, their rights, and their need for language assistance to access services;
 - whether language assistance supports the intended outcomes of the services delivered; and
- incorporate provision for meeting language assistance needs in services they fund that are delivered by community organisations and private companies, where appropriate, taking account of: government policies and statutory obligations; the client population, their rights and needs; and the service outcomes sought.
- ensure that all clients who are not able to communicate effectively in English are informed of:
 - their right to communicate in their preferred language;
 - when and how to ask for an interpreter or bilingual staff member;
 - how and where to access written information in their preferred language and where it is available;
 - how to access complaints processes;
- use credentialed interpreters when credentialed interpreting is required;
- provide credentialed interpreters (where required) to clients free-of-charge;
- ensure all relevant staff can identify when to provide a credentialed interpreter, how to work with a credentialed interpreter, and what to do when a credentialed interpreter is not available; and
- use bilingual staff to deliver the service in the client's language, where possible and the provision of translated information, including as part of online resources, that take account of the needs of their clients.

Best Practice:

These guidelines also provide a range of best practice principles and guidance to support agencies and users of interpreting services, including but not limited to:

- advice on the use of bilingual staff.
- The factors agencies should consider in choosing the type of language assistance required.
- how agencies can plan for and purchase language assistance.

Transitioning Interpreter Support: 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

MBIE will continue to engage and work closely with agencies during the transition phase to support and imbed the use of appropriate language assistance services into the delivery of services where language support is needed. This will include provision and support with training, the development of collateral and other resources, and holding regular cross-agency hui to share knowledge, monitor risks and issues.

Support to interpreters transitioning into the new system is currently provided by MBIE. All interpreters who have been funded to progress through their NAATI credentialing will have completed their training by 30 June 2025. This support will end on the 30 June 2025 and the continued development and training will transition to NAATI and NZSTI from 30 June 2025.



This *Operational Policy* document sits alongside the associated *Language Assistance Service Handbook* which is a practical guide to working with the Language Assistance Services Operational Policy from 1 July 2024 when the NAATI standards were adopted across all public sector agencies and the services they fund.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of this Document

This document has been prepared to provide a comprehensive resource for those involved in the provision of language assistance services – interpreting, translation, and access to bilingual staff - for those people with limited English proficiency (LEP). This operational policy for Whole-of-Government language assistance services has been developed to describe requirements for managing, planning, funding, and delivery of these services to LEP clients. This is to ensure that people with LEP have the same access to services delivered by agencies or their providers as other users.

Many critical services, like health and justice, have a legislative requirement to ensure the provision of a competent interpreter for people with LEP. Until now there have been no universally accepted standards for interpreting and no mechanism for testing and credentialing those who are able to demonstrate the ability to meet the standards. As a result, it has not generally been possible to provide an assurance of competence of interpreters, or an assurance of the quality of the interpreting services provided.

The adoption of the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) Interpreter Standards and associated certification mechanism from 1 July 2024 changes that. This operational policy provides the rationale and practical guidance for operating effectively in this changed environment.

This source document is a resource for use by managers, planners, funders, and researchers. A handbook to support those working directly with hiring and using interpreters is drawn from this work, along with a set of resource material for government agencies and language service providers and material for training frontline staff.

The policy includes both interpreting and translation. However, a NAATI credential is not seen as necessary for translators as much of that work is done through translation service providers who are credentialed through the International Standards Organisation (ISO). The ISO 17100 is the internationally recognized standard for companies within the translation industry, which covers the essential processes for providing a translations service.

1.2. Context

Over the last 50 years, New Zealand has become more ethnically diverse. Many New Zealand residents were born overseas. The percentage has increased from 17% (1996) to 27.4% (2018) (Auckland 41.6%) (1). The Asian ethnic group is now 15% (Auckland 28%) of the population. The proportion of people from non-English-speaking backgrounds is also increasing. People of Chinese origin are the second-most common group of migrants after those of English origin. Samoan, Mandarin and Hindi are the most widely spoken languages in New Zealand after English and Māori.

New Zealand is now the fifth most ethnically diverse country in the OECD¹, and Auckland is one of the most diverse cities in the world². While Te Reo Māori (Māori language) and New Zealand Sign

¹ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (the [inter-governmental economic organization](#) with 35 member-countries).

² Chen Mai, 2015, Superdiversity Stocktake Implications for Business, Government and New Zealand, page 53, Superdiversity Centre.

Language (for which there are 23,000 users³) are official languages of New Zealand, English is the shared language in common use.

The ability to speak English is important to participation and inclusion in daily life for recent arrivals, including their connection with and access to services provided across government and in the community. There will continue to be a strong government emphasis on the importance of learning English. This is an integral aspect of the Government's strategic approach to the settlement of refugees and migrants through the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy⁴, and the New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy⁵. However, English language skills amongst new arrivals, and the speed at which they learn English subsequently differ among immigration categories. Some learn English very quickly, while others take much longer. Some may never be fluent. Where there is no common language, interpreters, and the availability of translated information in clients' first languages, bridge the communication gap for service providers and their clients.

Deaf people in New Zealand also may require language assistance services, such as interpretation and translation, when accessing public services. New Zealand is one of only a handful of countries worldwide to recognise its native sign language as an official language; in this case via the New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Act 2006. NZSL is a complete language quite distinct from spoken languages such as English, and therefore the Act supports the provision of language assistance services to Deaf people for whom NZSL is a first or preferred language.

1.3. Background

The operational policy on Language Assistance Services for New Zealand Public Sector Agencies has its genesis in reviews undertaken in 2015 and 2016. The report ***Fair and Accessible Public Services: The Use of Interpreters and other Language Assistance in New Zealand*** made several proposals to improve the quality, quantity and access to interpreter and translation services in the delivery of public services and publicly funded services⁶. At the same time the Department of Internal Affairs reviewed its Translation Service against New Zealand needs for translation services, and the former Office for Disability Issues⁷, on behalf of the New Zealand Sign Language Board, has undertaken scoping and feasibility research towards establishing standards for NZSL interpreting and a system for formal registration. This operational policy will continue to develop over time.

The approved proposals arising out of these reviews included that the guidance should include the use of credentialed interpreters as well as the use of bilingual staff and translation services.

An inter-agency work programme to implement the recommendations from these reports was established as the Language Assistance Services Project. This sought to improve the quality, quantity, and accessibility of language assistance services provision across government for people who speak community languages⁸.

³ From Census: [Data helps people access and use New Zealand Sign Language | 2023 Census | Aotearoa New Zealand](#)

⁴ Immigration New Zealand, 2012, *Refugee Resettlement: New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy*, New Zealand Government available at: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/refugee-resettlement-strategy>

⁵ Immigration New Zealand, 2014, *New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy*, New Zealand Government.

⁶ Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, November 2016.

⁷ The Office for Disability Issues was integrated into Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People on 1 July 2022.

⁸ Community languages are defined in the Glossary on page 28.

The work programme has produced:

- A new model of procurement that enables public sector agencies and government contracted agencies to purchase appropriate language assistance from a pool of language services providers.
- Adoption of the professional standards required as from 1 July 2024 (including credentialing) of interpreters undertaking work for public sector agencies and publicly funded services.
- Guidance to ensure that the investment in developing a credentialed workforce of interpreters is supported appropriately by those who purchase their services.

Multiple benefits are expected from an integrated effort to improve the quality, quantity, and accessibility of language assistance services, such as interpreting and translations. The benefits of improving language assistance services previously identified by stakeholders included:

- equitable access to public services for limited English proficient (LEP) people who can make informed decisions because they fully understand and can be fully understood;
- increased trust in the interpreter workforce as a result of the newly introduced quality assurance through adoption of the NAATI standards and associated credentialing system;
- confidence from service providers that facts are established, clients' needs are accurately assessed, and appropriate assistance and full entitlements are provided;
- meeting all obligations under the law, including for courts and other areas with legislative requirements such as health;
- supporting services to be provided more cost-effectively;
- reducing service involvement and downstream costs by dealing with clients' needs appropriately at the outset and preventing future crises; and
- improving social cohesion by enabling LEP people to access all the government services they are eligible for.



1.3.1. Language Assistance in International Practice

An international standard providing guidelines for community interpreting was published in 2014 after consultation with a number of countries.⁹ The standard emphasises the importance of qualifications and accreditation for community interpreters.

Australia

There are over 10,500 NAATI accredited interpreters and translators holding 15,000+ credentials in 178 languages throughout Australia.¹⁰ There is a well-integrated approach that supports the use of competent interpreters so non-English speakers can access government and other services. This approach includes a clear policy framework, detailed service guidelines for government interpreter users, and well-established accreditation requirements and professional standards for interpreters.

Accreditation is required for government work and must be renewed every three years. A national telephone interpreting service provides 24-hour access to interpreters and has been operating since the mid-1970s. Non-English speakers may contact this service directly to make interpreter-assisted calls, and there is a facility to directly connect callers with interpreters in high-use languages. This telephone service is accompanied by a range of interpreter services at state and territory level provided by government, non-government and private organisations.

Canada

Canada has two official languages, English and French. A Language Portal operates to help Canadians communicate in both languages, and to disseminate language resources. Canadian accreditation arrangements (called certification) differentiate between types of interpreting. Conference and court interpreting are part of established national and provincial accreditation arrangements while the approach to community interpreting, including in the health sector, has been more fragmented.

A national body, the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council is a federation of the provincial and territorial professional bodies who set certification examinations. The Council is responsible for ensuring uniform standards are maintained.¹¹ Procedures for certification differ throughout the provinces. Reciprocity arrangements mean certification in any province is recognised throughout Canada.

United Kingdom

A legislated Public Sector Equality Duty intended to increase satisfaction with public services has applied since 2011 to public authorities and private providers who are publicly-funded.¹² Additional legislative obligations for the health sector in 2012 focused on reducing inequalities and meeting health consumers' communication needs. Codes of practice for the Police and the justice sector outline specific requirements for the use of interpreters.

Two interpreting accreditations, comprising multi-part interpreting examinations, are offered by an independent body, the Chartered Institute of Linguists. As well as these accreditations, many settings also require interpreters to be on the National Register of Public Service Interpreters. This register is the independent voluntary regulator of professional interpreters specialising in public services. To be on the register applicants must have a valid security clearance, be legally able to work in the United Kingdom and meet qualifications and minimum experience requirements. Annual renewal of status is required. Members must adhere to the organisation's Code of Professional Conduct.

⁹ New Zealand did not contribute to the Development of these guidelines.

¹⁰ *National Accreditation Translators and Interpreters* <https://www.naati.com.au/> (2024)

¹¹ Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council [CTTIC | Home - CTTIC](#) (2024)

¹² *Public Sector Equality Duty* Equality Human Rights Commission Public sector | EHRC (2024)

Professional membership is offered by the Chartered Institute of Linguists and the Institute of Translation and Interpreting. Both require members to abide by their Codes of Professional Conduct.

1.3.2. Current Provision of Language Assistance in New Zealand

We have very imprecise information on how many people might require language assistance. The census asks questions about language, and we know that 1.9% (4.4% in Auckland) speak one language that is not English. There are another 16% (27% in Auckland) who speak two or more languages but not Māori or New Zealand Sign Language. An unknown number of these people speak some English but not enough to receive services without language assistance. Census (2018) also found that 4,600 Deaf people use NZSL across the country.¹³

Australia has similar numbers of migrants, and their census (2016) asks more useful questions. 3.5% replied that they speak another language and English not at all well, 17% speak another language and English well or very well and 6.4% did not reply.

A reasonable estimate of how many would need an interpreter for delivery of formal services by government would be 5% of the population or 235,000 people. Currently it has been estimated that in the year 2021 there were a total of 250,000 professionally interpreted consultation in hospitals and primary care services. However, the New Zealand Health Survey¹⁴ which is a random sample of the whole population found:

- 209 out of 6,799 adults (3.1%) were interviewed with language assistance from a family member or friend. A further 45 adults (0.7%) were interviewed with language assistance from a professional interpreter.
- 71 out of 2,029 parents/caregivers (3.5%) were interviewed about their child's health with assistance from a family member or friend. A further 17 parents/caregivers (0.8%) were interviewed with language assistance from a professional interpreter.

In New Zealand in the last year the Language Service Providers contracted to provide interpreters to core government services provided telephone interpreters for just over 63,000 interpreting calls. A large gap has been identified between current professional interpreter provision and the level of provision expected if language assistance were provided for every instance of government service provision for people with limited English proficiency.



¹³ From Census: [Deaf community to receive more support in the 2023 Census | Stats NZ](#)

¹⁴ [New Zealand Health Survey | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

1.3.3. Objectives of Language Assistance Services

The aim of the Language Assistance Services work is to continue to steadily improve the quantity, quality, and accessibility of language assistance across government agencies by:

- providing good practice-based, consistent expectations across government and government funded agencies, and the Language Service Providers they use, for the provision and use of language assistance in the planning, funding, and delivery of services;
- ensuring that the staff of government agencies¹⁵ and funded services¹⁶ have the information and practical resources to understand what is expected of them when delivering language assistance and can access appropriate language assistance for clients whenever it is needed; and
- providing equitable access to public services for clients who need language assistance to understand the services available to meet their needs and also for any service for which they need to sign a consent.

2. Operational Policy Statement

The New Zealand Government is committed to providing accessible and responsive public services that make a difference to New Zealand, and to the well-being of all its people. This means ensuring that information and services are made available in diverse ways that reflect the interests and backgrounds of people seeking those services, including their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.¹⁷

Equitable access to information and public services requires the provision of language assistance, such as interpreting and translations, enable effective communication in English so they can gain the assistance they need, and to which they are entitled, as well as helping to prevent adverse outcomes that can affect individuals, their families and ultimately our communities.

Language assistance complements the high priority Government places on learning English for people who are speakers of other languages, and who lack or have limited English-language skills. The ability of this group to use English is important to their participation and inclusion in daily life in New Zealand. However, the Government also recognises that people's English language skills on arrival in New Zealand, and the speed at which they can learn English after they arrive, are affected by a range of factors. Because of this, some people may need language assistance for only a brief time, while others may need it for an extended period to help them to independently access the public services they need.

This policy applies to services accessed by people who are eligible for public services in New Zealand. For visitors to New Zealand, it applies only to the use of essential or emergency public services to which they are entitled. These services include corrections, customs, health, immigration, income support, justice and legal support, and police.

To implement this policy, all New Zealand central government agencies with client-facing services will:

- plan for, fund and purchase appropriate language assistance taking account of:
 - government policies and statutory obligations;
 - the client population, their rights, and their need for language assistance to access services;

¹⁵ This means all central government agencies of various organisational forms, including public service departments and crown entities listed in [Government A-Z | New Zealand Government \(www.govt.nz\)](#)

¹⁶ Funded services are services funded by government and delivered by community organisations and private companies.

¹⁷ [Standards of Integrity and Conduct - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#)

- whether language assistance supports the intended outcomes of the services delivered; and
- incorporate provision for meeting language assistance needs in services they fund that are delivered by community organisations and private companies, where appropriate, taking account of: government policies and statutory obligations; the client population, their rights and needs; and the service outcomes sought.

Central government agencies with client-facing services and funded services will:

- ensure that all clients who are not able to communicate effectively in English are informed of:
 - their right to communicate in their preferred language;
 - when and how to ask for an interpreter or bilingual staff member;
 - how and where to access written information in their preferred language and where it is available;
 - how to access complaints processes;
- use credentialed interpreters when credentialed interpreting is required;
- provide credentialed interpreters (where required) to clients free-of-charge;
- ensure all relevant staff can identify when to provide a credentialed interpreter, how to work with a credentialed interpreter, and what to do when a credentialed interpreter is not available; and
- use bilingual staff to deliver the service in the client’s language, where possible and the provision of translated information, including as part of online resources, that take account of the needs of their clients.

2.1. Application of the Operational Policy

As noted earlier, the term *Public Sector Agencies and those they fund* captures a range of organisational forms, and their associated activities. A list of these agencies can be found here: [Government A-Z | New Zealand Government \(www.govt.nz\)](http://www.govt.nz)

Each of these agencies needs to decide whether language assistance services should apply to some or to all the services they deliver or purchase, based on the considerations identified in the policy statement (government policies and statutory obligations, client population and their rights and needs, and whether language assistance supports service outcomes). For example, in relation to the latter consideration, interpreting in community languages for students in education programmes taught in English is unlikely to support service outcomes. This is because students enrol in these courses to gain learning or qualifications in English, and the Government provides funding for these programmes to support a skilled workforce.

This policy statement and the guidelines that follow apply to all languages used in New Zealand by members of minority groups or communities within a majority language context.

There are two exceptions to the requirement to use NAATI-credentialed interpreters:

- Te Reo Māori interpreters are granted certification through Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (New Zealand Māori Language Commission) and therefore do not require a NAATI credential. The criteria and certification for Te Reo Māori interpreters working in the public sector or elsewhere is set by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori.
- New Zealand Sign Language interpreters are not currently part of the NAATI system. The potential adoption of the NAATI system is being explored and should it be adopted, this Operational Policy document will be updated.

2.2. The Role of Good Judgement

Providing language assistance that meets the aims of this policy is a complex task that does not lend itself easily to black and white rules. It is not the aim of this operational policy to create a culture of dull compliance but to build the capacity for making good judgements in all those charged with managing, planning, funding, researching, and training by providing robust and practical advice and information to decision makers and ensuring effective monitoring of the processes and outcomes.

Despite the excellent uptake of the Interpreter Standards Transition Support and likely easy availability of interpreters in the high demand and rare languages, the question: “What happens if there are not enough credentialed interpreters available?” is often asked. The answer is to be found in this information – but the best answer will result from:

- a serious attempt to find an appropriate credentialed interpreter which may mean asking more than one language service provider if they have one;
- a willingness to consider, in the particular circumstances, whether a telephone or video interview using a credentialed interpreter is more effective than a face-to-face interpreting interview using a non-credentialed interpreter who may or may not be a trained and experienced interpreter.
- a good understanding of the risks, primarily to the client LEP who requires the interpreting, but also to the overall service and to the staff member’s agency;
- a good understanding of the spirit and the letter of the law around human rights and equity;
- a commitment to ensuring that, if a credentialed interpreter cannot be found and a non-credentialed person is used that this is recorded, reported, analysed, and finds its way into the review process so that shortfalls can be identified and remedied in the spirit of on-going quality improvement.

Each agency will need to identify which of the services they provide must routinely use a credentialed interpreter. For example, in health consultations a credentialed interpreter will always be needed when informed consent is required.

2.3. The Forms of Language Assistance for Interpreting

Formal interpreting is generally required for any LEP client accessing services from a government agency. Interpreting should be carried out by qualified and credentialed interpreters where possible. but it is recognised this may not always be practicable, or the circumstance may require an urgent response. The table below provides guidance for prioritising the level of interpreters to used. This will ensure the most qualified interpreter available is used to meet the interpreting needs.

Priorities:

1st	Bilingual staff members able to deliver the service in the language that is shared by the client
2nd	NAATI Credentialed interpreters, either telephone, video or in person
3rd	Interpreters WTN (Working Towards NAATI), either telephone video or in person, who are working towards achieving their credentials
4th	NZSTI members who will be trained but who may not be credentialed (note: many are credentialed)
5th	Other trained and experienced interpreters who are not credentialed

If no interpreters are available and telephone or video interpreting is not possible, alternative language assistance listed below may be sought to support communication, however these forms carry some risk.

- Bilingual staff members that are not qualified interpreters but are able to assist in communicating in the language of the LEP;
- Non trained community leaders, family members and/or friends who are able to assist in the language of the LEP.

Language assistance maybe readily available, sometimes at no cost. The people listed above may be appropriate for very informal, low stakes, short interactions. These options may also be combined with the interpreter options in the table above. For example, staff caring for an LEP patient for a lengthy admission in hospital are required to use credentialed interpreting for significant consultations discussing diagnosis and management. However, it may not be practical or necessary for a credentialed interpreter to be present all the time so they might use informal strategies on other occasions to ask about what the patient might want to eat or drink, or whether they need other assistance.¹⁸

It is not recommended that language assistants are used in situations where health, legal or complex Psychosocial needs are present as this can risk serious harm and poor outcomes.

A central aim of this policy is to ensure that all formal interactions with LEP clients are conducted with either bilingual staff or credentialed interpreters and translation services. Each agency needs to define what formal is synonymous with the mandatory interactions discussed.

3. General Expectations of Agencies

3.1. Legislation and Statutory Obligations

Several New Zealand statutes require the provision of interpreters or translations. Some of these also refer to the use of competent interpreters. For this Language Assistance Services Operational Policy, a “competent” interpreter is an interpreter who has a NAATI credential for the language being interpreted.

The relevant legislative provisions include:

3.1.1. Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers’ Rights 1996, under the Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994, (right 5)

provides that:

- every consumer has the right to effective communication in a form, language, and manner that enables the consumer to understand the information provided. Where necessary and reasonably practicable, this includes the right to a competent interpreter (right 5(1)). No further definition of competent interpreter is provided.
- every consumer has the right to an environment that enables both consumer and provider to communicate openly, honestly, and effectively (right 5(2)).

Associated rights include:

- every consumer has the right to be free from discrimination, coercion, harassment, and sexual, financial, or other exploitation (right 2).

¹⁸Chang, D. T., et al. (2014). "Using mobile technology to overcome language barriers in medicine." *The Annals of The Royal College of Surgeons of England* **96**(6): e23-e25.

- every consumer has the right to have services provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of the individual (right 3).
- every consumer has the right to have services provided in a manner consistent with his or her needs (right 4(3)).
- before making a choice or giving consent, every consumer has the right to the information that a reasonable consumer, in that consumer's circumstances, needs to make an informed choice or give informed consent (right 6(2)).
- every consumer has the right to receive, on request, a written summary of information provided. (Right 6(4))
- services may be provided to a consumer only if that consumer makes an informed choice and gives informed consent, except where any enactment, or the common law, or any other provision of this Code provides otherwise (right 7(1)).
- every consumer also has the right to have one or more support persons of his or her choice present, except where safety may be compromised, or another consumer's rights may be unreasonably infringed (right 8).

3.1.2. Evidence Act 2006

Under this Act, communication assistance means oral or written interpretation of a language, written assistance, technological assistance, and any other assistance that enables or facilitates communication with a person who does not have sufficient proficiency in the English language to understand court proceedings conducted in English; or give evidence in English; or has a communication disability (section 4).

A defendant in a criminal proceeding is entitled to communication assistance to enable them to understand the proceeding and give evidence if they elect to do so. This assistance may be given on the application of the defendant or on the initiative of the judge. A witness in a civil or criminal proceeding is entitled to communication assistance to enable them to give evidence. This assistance may be given to the witness on the application of the witness, or any party to the proceedings or on the initiative of the judge (section 80).

The Act also stipulates that any statement made in court to a Judge or a witness by a person providing communication assistance must, if known by the person making that statement to be false and intended by that person to be misleading, be treated as perjury for the purposes of sections 108 and 109 of the Crimes Act 1961 (section 80(5)).

However, the Act also outlines certain circumstances when communication assistance need not be provided. This includes:

- to a defendant in a criminal proceeding if the Judge considers that the defendant can sufficiently understand the proceeding, and if the defendant elects to give evidence, can sufficiently understand questions put orally and can adequately respond to them (section 81(1))
- to a witness in a civil or a criminal proceeding if the Judge considers that the witness can sufficiently understand questions put orally and can adequately respond to them (section 81(2))

The Judge may direct what kind of communication assistance is to be provided to a defendant or a witness (section 81(3)).

3.1.3. Immigration (Refugee and Protection Status Processing) Regulations 2010, under the Immigration Act 2009

Under these regulations, an independent interpreter means someone that a refugee and protection officer consider is competent to translate English into a foreign language that a claimant or a person whose recognition as a refugee or a protected person is being investigated can understand and speak, and translate that foreign language into English; and is impartial.

Arrangements must be made for an independent interpreter to attend when a refugee and protection officer is to interview a claimant or a person whose recognition as a refugee or a protected person is being investigated; and the first language of the claimant or the person is not English; and the officer considers that an independent interpreter is reasonably required for the purpose of conducting the interview. An interpreter does not need to attend where the claimant or person being investigated requests this and the refugee and protection officer agrees to this request. (Regulation 15)

3.1.4. Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992 (section 6)

A court, tribunal or person exercising power under this Act must ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that the services of a competent interpreter are provided where a person's first or preferred language is a language other than English, including Māori and New Zealand Sign Language, or the person is unable, because of physical disability, to understand English; and it is practicable to provide the services of an interpreter. No further definition of competent interpreter is provided.

3.1.5. New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006

This Act stipulates the recognition of New Zealand Sign Language to be an official language of New Zealand. In addition, it ensures the right to use NZSL in a courtroom and selected other legal settings and specifies the required standard for the use of NZSL interpreters in those settings. Section 9 also provides guidance to government agencies that:

- NZSL should be used in the promotion to the public of government services and in the provision of information to the public; and
- government services and information should be made accessible to the Deaf community through the use of appropriate means (including the use of NZSL).

3.1.6. Oranga Tamariki Act 1989/Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989 (section 9)

where any court hears any proceedings under this Act, or any person takes or proposes to take any action under this Act in relation to a child or young person, the services of an interpreter must be provided for:

- any child or young person whose first or preferred language is any language other than English, or
- any parent or guardian or other person having the care of the child or young person where their first or preferred language is any language other than English.

3.1.7. Māori Language Act 2016

In any legal proceedings, any person with leave of the presiding officer may speak Māori, whether or not they are able to understand or communicate in English or any other language. If a person intends to speak Māori in any legal proceedings, the presiding officer must ensure that a competent interpreter is available (sections 7(1) and (3)).

3.1.8. Electoral Act 1993

When appointing polling officials, a Returning Officer may designate one or more officials as interpreters (section 158 (3)).

3.1.9. Accessibility Charter¹⁹

In addition to legislation and statutory obligations, all core government agencies have signed the Accessibility Charter - a commitment to working progressively to ensure all information intended for the public is accessible to everyone and that everyone can interact with government services in a way that meets their individual needs and promotes their independence and dignity.

This includes ensuring forms, correspondence, pamphlets, brochures and other means of interacting with the public are available in a range of accessible formats including New Zealand Sign Language.

3.2. Planning Language Assistance

Equitable access to services requires a good understanding of the composition of New Zealand's population and actively planning to meet clients' language needs as part of service provision.

National data to support planning is available from the New Zealand Census, and the annual *Migration Trends series*²⁰ that examines trends in temporary and permanent migration and compares recent immigration patterns with previous years. Regional overviews of migrant and labour force data are also available.²¹

Current data sources provide an imprecise estimate of the numbers of people who require language assistance. There are several variables that affect the need for language assistance, particularly the extent of the client's English proficiency and the complexity of the service provision task.

Because of these variables it is important that agencies develop their own data collections that take account of the use of their services and the needs of different client groups to support the more accurate forecasting of language services and their cost. On presentation to the agency every client who is not clearly fluent in English should be asked which language they prefer their service to be provided in.

¹⁹ [The Accessibility Charter - Ministry of Social Development \(msd.govt.nz\)](https://www.msd.govt.nz)

²⁰ Published by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and available at www.mbie.govt.nz/immigration-and-tourism/immigration/migration-research-and-evaluation/

²¹ See 2015 Migrant and Labour Force Trends series available at: www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/immigration/migration-research-and-evaluation/migration-and-labour-force-trends/2015

3.3. Funding Language Assistance

The cost of language assistance should be factored into service delivery for government agencies and funded services. This may involve a range of approaches taking account of delivery models and sector funding.

The need to ensure that credentialed interpreter remuneration reflects the knowledge, skill and experience that credentialed interpreters have may mean there is a considerable gap between the historically low remuneration paid to a largely formally untrained workforce and the fairer remuneration that would be expected from any occupation with similar required levels of knowledge, skill, and experience. Additional funding may be needed to close this gap in some areas.

The potential costs of interpreting and translation services should be considered in developing annual operational budgets, and in business cases for new policies and services. Given the current low uptake of language assistance, budgets should be reviewed regularly and adjusted according to actual usage. Research projects should also consider clients' linguistic and communication preferences, where applicable, so that diverse client groups can contribute to information collection and support the development of robust information for policy and service development.

Where programmes and services are to be contracted to external providers, the composition and language needs of the client group for the out-sourced services should be addressed in procurement processes and funding applications. This will help to ensure that realistic delivery costs are included, and service access is assured.

Developing a good understanding of the actual costs of providing language assistance through either in-house or contracted out arrangements is necessary for cost-effectiveness indicators to be developed.

3.4. Purchasing Language Assistance

In the first instance, best efforts should be made to establish with the client whether an interpreter is required, and accommodate their preference. The service provider is responsible for the decision that they make. As noted above there are statutory requirements when a credentialed interpreter is required to be used if the client needs language assistance. A credentialed interpreter or bilingual staff member will be needed for most significant interactions with people who have limited English proficiency.

To facilitate the use of credentialed interpreters the Government has established a panel of Interpreting service providers covering credentialed interpreting through telephone, video and in person to public sector agencies. This contract includes provisions for quality assurance and ensures that all interpreters employed will either have (or during the transition working towards obtaining) NAATI credential for the language/s they are to interpret. Agencies retain the flexibility to manage interpreting services in the way that best suits their needs and requirements (such as directly contracting or employing interpreters) however these interpreters will need to be NATTI accredited and agencies will be expected to support continued professional development. If other language service providers are contracted, it is important that they are also contracted to supply NAATI credentialed interpreters.

3.5. Promoting the Availability of Language Assistance

LEP Clients (as well as agency staff) need to be aware of the availability of free language assistance.

LEP Clients must be made aware of their right to free language assistance, be supported and feel confident in seeking this, and use it appropriately when required.

Agencies need to have systems for recording the need for language assistance in their client data base.

Agencies need to provide the infrastructure to enable the use of language assistance. This will include internet and/or telephone accessibility, provision of hardware such as speaker phones and extra computer screens with software for video interpreting, and suitable physical spaces/rooms providing sound proofing and privacy.

Agencies should promote the availability of language assistance as part of encouraging LEP clients' independent use of public services and supporting effective communication. Some ways in which availability could be promoted include:

- through community networks;
- by providing information on agencies' websites about the availability of interpreters and translated information either in first languages or through easily identified links to an appropriate call centre;
- by displaying appropriate resources in agency reception areas – for instance, some public services display posters provided by interpreting services that clients can use to indicate their preferred language; and
- by providing clients who need language assistance with wallet cards they can produce stating:

I need an interpreter.
I speak xxxxx language.

3.6. Assessing the need for language assistance

Indicators that language assistance is required include when a staff member cannot understand what the LEP client is saying because the client has insufficient English, or the client:

- has requested an interpreter or shown an “*I need an interpreter card*”;
- does not appear to understand information given in English;
- is difficult for the staff member to understand;
- nods or says yes to all comments and questions – this may be a lack of understanding or a sign of cultural respect;
- shows hesitation in using English, or a preference to speak in another language;
- cannot respond adequately to questions;
- is unable to explain key information;
- is newly arrived in New Zealand from countries where English is not the primary language;
- is attending their first appointment; and/or
- appears to be in an emotional state or showing signs of stress.^{22 23}

²² Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Australian Government Agencies; Language Services Guidelines 2012, NSW Department of Family and Community Services; Language Services Guidelines, State of Queensland; Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Tasmanian Government Agencies.

²³ Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2012, Interpreting in New Zealand Let's Keep Talking: Guidelines to Agencies using Interpreters.

Practical ways to help assess whether language assistance is needed include:

- asking for information that requires the client to answer in a sentence, avoiding questions with yes/no answers, or potentially familiar questions such as “Where do you live?”. Some useful approaches may be:
 - Why are you here today?
 - Please tell me about your family.
 - Please tell me about your medical condition, and any previous treatment you received.
 - providing a message and asking the client to tell you what they heard you say in English and in their own words.
- If the client cannot respond in a sentence in English, or provide your message in their own words, then an interpreter is required.
- If the client is Deaf then you should always assume that an NZSL interpreter is needed, unless the client specifies otherwise. Check with the Deaf person if they have any requirements and preferences before you book the NZSL interpreter.
- NZSL interpreters and booking agencies may request information about a Deaf person to provide an appropriately competent interpreter for a particular client and/or situation.
- Please note: asking a Deaf person to speak or if they can lipread may be offensive to some Deaf people.

3.7. Determining a Client’s Preferred Language

Agencies always need to establish the client’s preferred language since country of birth is not a reliable indicator, and many languages and dialects are spoken in some countries. For instance, someone from India may speak Hindi, Bengali (also known as Bangla), Gujarati, Punjabi, or Urdu (amongst other languages that are used in India). A list of the main languages spoken in each country is included in the appendices.

It may be possible to identify the client’s preferred language by asking them directly if they have sufficient English to understand and respond. Alternatively, visual aids (such as posters provided by interpreting services) may mean that the client can identify and point to the language they speak. If neither of those approaches are possible or successful, a language service provider may seek help to identify the language/dialect spoken with the assistance of a telephone interpreter.²⁴ Deaf clients will usually be able to write the word “interpreter” in English, otherwise seek the services of an NZSL interpreter to be safe.

In many cases, clients will speak more than one language. It is useful to collect and record information on other languages spoken, as well as the client’s proficiency in those languages if that is feasible, in case a credentialed interpreter is not available in their preferred language when needed.

3.8. Choosing the Form of Language Assistance

Staff members need to know the range of language assistance they can use to meet client needs, including how to choose the most appropriate option for a specific situation. The options available are:

²⁴ Using Interpreting Services Victorian Government Guidelines on Policy and Procedures 2014.

3.8.1. Bilingual staff

The ideal option is if the staff member providing the service can provide it in a language that they share with the client. It is easier to develop a trusting relationship if communication is not mediated through a third party. Such a staff member already needs to be fluent in English to be able to fulfil their role in the organisation.

For staff to be employed or contracted to perform their duties in community languages, they must be fluent in the community language. This fluency can be tested through the NAATI Community Language Aide test as well as language proficiency tests similar to IELTS (International English Language Testing System) but for the community language.

Bilingual staff are employees and contractors engaged with agencies via contracts for service who can perform their duties in a community language or languages. Some are specifically employed or contracted to deliver services in community languages because of the agency's client profile. Others may mainly work in English but can also speak community languages fluently so they can occasionally work with LEP clients as part of their duties. Unless the bilingual staff member is also a credentialed interpreter they do not have the skills to act as an interpreter. Credentialed interpreters, however, can also be employed or contracted as bilingual staff as their community language and English skills have been tested through the credentialing process.

Some of the benefits of bilingual staff can include an increased client focus and cultural responsiveness, and these staff may also be instrumental in helping to build ethnic communities' trust and confidence in the agency.

Agencies should clearly identify the circumstances under which services may be delivered in community languages in their own organisation, and in funded services (in conjunction with those services). Considerations should include client needs, workforce language skills and any risks for agencies or clients, including the perceived impartiality of bilingual staff in situations where conflict of interest issues may arise.

There should be provision in employment agreements to remunerate bilingual staff for this extra skill used in their work.

The **Standards of Integrity and Conduct**²⁵ (the code) set out the behaviour expected of everyone working in the Public Sector and provide the basis for ongoing trust in the integrity of the Sector services. The code also protects staff by setting out clear expectations, so that everyone knows their obligations and what is required of them. As part of this, New Zealanders expect agency staff to be impartial and to ensure their actions are not affected by personal interests and relationships.

There should be a clear distinction between a staff member delivering services in a community language and when the role merges into providing interpreting and translation services. Where there is a statutory requirement for a credentialed interpreter the bilingual staff member cannot provide that service unless they are also a credentialed interpreter.

In line with the Government's intention that credentialed interpreters and translators are required, bilingual staff should not be asked to perform these roles, unless they are qualified to do so. Even when they are qualified and can be expected to meet professional standards, it may still be inappropriate to use them as interpreters and translators.

For these reasons, the use of bilingual staff to provide interpreting and translations should be carefully considered. Agencies should clearly specify the circumstances under which their bilingual employees and contractors may not be used as interpreters and translators while undertaking organisational business. This will include interactions covered by statutes that require an

²⁵ [A guide on integrity and conduct - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#)

interpreter. It may also include complex and sensitive communications because of the potential for misrepresentation and conflict of roles.

3.8.2. Credentialed Interpreters

New Zealand has adopted the standards and associated credentialing facility of the Australian National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). NAATI credentials interpreting expertise through testing (Certified Provisional Interpreter – CPI and above) and through assessment (Recognised Practicing Interpreter – RPI for those languages it is unable to test). Approximately 24% of interpreters being supported to obtain their NAATI credential have applied to be credentialed in more than one language (plus English) and some up to six languages.

Interpreters are credentialed in the use of a particular language. Some languages are spoken in many parts of the world such as English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese. In many countries these languages may be the lingua franca (i.e., the common language used by speakers whose native languages may be different) but the people in that country may speak many indigenous languages, and the version of the lingua franca can be significantly different from that used by the interpreter.

Interpreting is highly skilled work. It is the Government’s intention that credentialed interpreters are required to deliver interpreting services.

Interpreting credentials provide assurance that interpreters engaged by government agencies and funded services have the tested, or assessed, ability to meet the NAATI standards in a range of contexts.

The NAATI standards that have been adopted are set around the following competencies or sets of knowledge, skills and attributes that an interpreter needs to demonstrate in order to pass their certification test.

The standards can be met at different levels and in different languages, and are tested by the interpreter being presented with different scenarios where their performance is observed by specially trained examiners.²⁶

The following list of competencies²⁷ describe the knowledge, skill and attributes held by credentialed interpreters:

- **Language Competency** refers to the knowledge of two languages and skill in using these two languages to interpret effectively. This includes Language proficiency enabling meaning transfer, vocabulary knowledge, grammar knowledge, idiomatic knowledge, and language trends knowledge. These form the basis for the interpreter’s rhetorical skill, which is part of the transfer competency.
- **Intercultural competency** refers to the areas of knowledge and skill required by the interpreter that allows the interpreter to identify culturally specific information, appropriately reflect these in the target language and deal with clients in a culturally appropriate manner. This includes cultural, historical, and political knowledge and sociolinguistic skill.
- **Research competency** refers to research tools and methods knowledge, terminology, and information research skill as well as the skill needed to create and maintain a knowledge bank. These knowledge and skill areas are essential for the interpreter to prepare for an interpreting

²⁶ [NAATI Certification System - NAATI](#)

²⁷ [Interpreter-KSA-Paper.pdf \(naati.com.au\)](#)

assignment, to identify the information needed in a particular situation, and to maintain and develop professional skills, e.g., understanding academic research on interpreting.

- **Technological competency** refers to interpreting technology knowledge, skills in interpreting through communication media, and the range of information and communication technology (ICT) skill an interpreter must possess to prepare for and provide interpreting services, (i.e., Internet, software and hardware-based).
- **Thematic competency** refers to the kind of knowledge the interpreter requires to ensure swift and accurate understanding of the context and content of the assignment, the particular terminology and phraseology used, the interpersonal situation they are entering and its anticipated communication dynamics. Included in this are general knowledge, current events knowledge, subject-matter specific knowledge and institution-specific knowledge, related to the setting, audience, and interlocutors of each assignment. It is essential that the interpreter has this knowledge readily available through prior preparation as the nature of most interpreting work may not allow the interpreter to refer to resources during the assignment.
- **Transfer competency** refers to the knowledge and skills required to reproduce messages using a different language. In the context of interpreting, this usually relates to the transfer of oral or signed language and involves interpreting modes knowledge, discourse analysis skill, discourse management skill, meaning transfer, memory skill and rhetorical skill, interpreting standards knowledge and self-assessment skill. The comprehension and reproduction of the message must occur with immediacy, i.e., the source message must be reproduced in the target language with minimal or no delay depending on the mode of interpreting and any limits inherent in the language pair.
- **Meaning transfer** can be regarded as the actualisation and coming together of all of the competencies an interpreter must have. In the process of transferring the meaning from the source language into the target language, the interpreter must use appropriate terminology, grammatical features, style, and register, and pay attention to the flow and quality of language in achieving complete transfer. This process is increasingly difficult when source and target languages are typologically different, and when cultural concepts reflected in the source language have no direct equivalent in the target language.
- **Ethics knowledge and Professional Ethics encompassed in Ethical competency** refers to both the knowledge of the appropriate codes of ethics and the skills and personal attributes required to apply the relevant codes and act ethically as an interpreter. For the interpreter, the ability to deal with ethical issues is fundamental because of interpreter's continual involvement in human interaction with multiple parties. Ethical competency is an essential part of professionalism in all relationships an interpreter has, including obligations to other participants in an interpreting encounter, to employers or agencies providing work, and to the interpreting profession.

NAATI is of the opinion the attributes of greatest importance in professional interpreting work are:

- attentive-to-detail – careful about detail and thorough when completing work tasks.
- desire-to-excel – motivated to improve and perform work tasks consistently to a high level.
- reliable – dependable and responsible in fulfilling work tasks.
- willing-to-learn – actively and continuously improving knowledge and skills.
- objective – able to put aside personal feelings or opinions.
- respectful – considerate of the feelings, wishes, and rights of others.

- collaborative – able to work effectively and efficiently with others.
- self-reflective – aware of your own limitations (knowledge and skills, behaviours and beliefs and the influence these have on the performance of work tasks)
- problem-solving – able to identify and find effective solutions for issues in order to achieve a goal.
- confident – self-assurance in one's personal judgment and ability.

Each of these Attributes is required in one or more of the areas of competency, and therefore should not be assigned to specific areas. Nevertheless, they are integral to overall professional practice as they determine how an interpreter applies their knowledge and skills.

Of particular importance is the interpreters' knowledge and understanding of the Ethical Code they are working within. The NAATI testing incorporates the NZSTI Code of Ethics²⁸. The Public Sector Code of Conduct, included in the induction module "Interpreting in Aotearoa New Zealand: The Public Sector Context" is also specifically relevant in New Zealand.

3.9. Choosing the Type of Language Assistance

3.9.1. On-Site / In-Person Interpreting

All parties are physically present in the same location for on-site interpreting.

This type of interpreting has advantages when:

- the subject matter is complex or technical;
- sensitive and traumatic communication exchanges are likely to be involved;
- visual information is particularly important to the communication (such as sight translation of consent forms or for non-verbal cues);
- group meetings are being held;
- the communication will be lengthy;
- the client is hearing-impaired but does not know New Zealand sign Language;
- the interaction involves New Zealand Sign Language.

The disadvantages are:

- in-person interpreting costs are higher and include travel costs for the interpreter;
- it is less available in smaller centres and remote areas due to availability;
- the interpreter may need to be booked in advance.

3.9.2. Telephone Interpreting

Telephone interpreting connects interpreters via telephone with agency staff and clients. During the telephone interpreting process, the interpreter may be at a different location from the other two parties who are together, or all three parties may be at separate places.

The advantages of this type of interpreting are that it:

- is readily available wherever there is a landline or mobile phone;
- is possible to connect with interpreters relatively quickly, and often without booking;
- is particularly good for shorter less complex conversations such as scheduling appointments or providing specific information;

²⁸ NZSTI Code of Conduct and Ethics can be found online: <https://nzsti.org/Code-of-Conduct-and-Ethics/19779/>

- gives access to a larger pool of interpreters and a wider range of languages than may be available locally;
- can provide a sense of anonymity where an unseen presence may feel less intrusive for the client;
- is particularly valuable for small ethnic communities if discussing sensitive issues (and a telephone interpreter based outside that community can be used);
- can provide cost-effective access to interpreting because there are no travel costs for the interpreter.
- Can provide access to the international pool of interpreters, although care must be taken to ensure that issues of cyber security, privacy, police checks etc, can be ensured.

The disadvantages are:

- the absence of visual cues;
- it being harder for the interpreter to develop a relationship of trust with the client or the service provider; and
- it being hard to conduct an interview where several different speakers require interpretation.

3.9.3. Video-Remote Interpreting

Video-remote interpreting uses video-conferencing technology to link interpreters with the other two parties who may or may not be together. This allows all parties to see and/or hear each other without being in the same room, or even the same city.

This type of interpreting has advantages:

- visual cues can be observed to some degree;
- access is much better than in person but not as good as telephone; and
- all the other advantages of telephone interpreting also apply.

The disadvantages are:

- the requirement for dedicated hardware, ideally a stand-alone screen or in some settings a portable computer, including support staff who can ensure smooth operation of the technology;
- the requirement for high quality internet connection at both the interpreter interface and the client/provider interface;
- attention needs to be given to ensuring privacy, that there are no other people able to view the consultation at either end.

3.10. Table 1: Types of Interpreting

Types of Interpreting			
	Telephone interpreting	Video Interpreting	In-person Interpreting
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anonymity of interpreter • Availability (for smaller language groups) • Possibility to access an interpreter at short notice. • Cheaper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate between phone and in person interpreter in ease of communication • Not anonymous but can be from different city. • cheaper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative ease of communication including non-verbal • Easier if needing to consult with a family group. • Easier if doing a psychiatric assessment. • Easier continuity • Preferred for New Zealand Sign Language communication
Disadvantages/ Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distancing effect of the phone • Possible background noise • Difficulty in gauging quality of interpreter • Lack of continuity (more likely) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of connection can be a problem. • Confidentiality harder to be sure of (other people in the patient's room) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible issues with confidentiality/comfort if the patient and interpreter are socially acquainted or part of a small ethnic community. • More costly

3.11. Professional Translation

For some circumstances a professional translation of frequently used material will be an ideal form of language assistance, either alone or in conjunction with other modalities. This could be used to make information on service websites more accessible or to provide frequently used information sheets. Using a professional translator means that the agency can be assured of accuracy.

The use of machine translation to translate the whole website will not provide an accurate translation of the material on the website and would not be supported by people who could assist if issues arose.

Use of translated material will of course be limited by the literacy of the client in their own language, which should not be presumed.

3.12. Variables in the Context that Affects Choice of Language Assistance

As noted above, in deciding what language assistance is required in a particular interaction the provider needs to make a judgement on what level of English the client has, and what form of language assistance will be satisfactory for that interaction. This judgement needs to account for the context of the interaction. The following factors can affect the language assistance used.

The language-related needs of each client should be considered individually, also taking account of the context of the proposed communication. When an interpreter is not being used, the client's understanding should continually be assessed during the communication to ensure it is satisfactory.

3.12.1. Language Proficiency

There are very few people who are completely unable to communicate in English or with gesture. People with English as a second language lie along a continuum from no English to fully fluent. Many will have basic everyday English. For some an interpreter will be needed in order to make an appointment. For others they may be fine except with specialised vocabulary. It is common when under stress to lose fluency in a second language, so a person who manages OK in English usually may struggle if they are, for example in a lot of pain. The question of whether communication is adequate needs to be continually monitored. There will be occasions when the language assistance first used is insufficient for the nature of the context and it would be better to reschedule with appropriate assistance. Assessing English competence requires some skill and experience and is not always reliable.

See the Handbook for detail on how best to do this assessment.

3.12.2. Complexity and Significance of Content.

It would be unwise, for example, to discuss the treatment of a patient's cancer without a credentialed interpreter, preferably in person. A credentialed telephone interpreter may be sufficient for an urgent visit but for longer term issues making another appointment with an in-person or video consultation with a credentialed interpreter may be needed.

3.12.3. Urgency of Need for Interpreter

For a routine booked appointment with a client known to have limited English, a credentialed interpreter is required. For an urgent presentation, the assistance most readily available may need to be used.

3.12.4. Cost of Interpreter

In-person credentialed interpreters cost more and if the duration of time they are needed is not predictable, it may be better to use an on-demand telephone credentialed interpreter. For example, when a patient is being seen on a ward round. The cost of paying for an in-person interpreter to wait needs to be considered. If the encounter is anticipated to be very short, then a telephone credentialed interpreter will be more cost effective as there will be no travel cost.

3.12.5. Advantages and Disadvantages of Bilingual Staff Member

See discussion above on bilingual staff. An important skill for a bilingual staff member is the ability to recognise when they need the assistance of an accredited interpreter.

3.12.6. Availability of a Credentialed Interpreter

In-person credentialed interpreters will be readily available for the high demand languages in the main centres. In provincial and rural New Zealand and out of business hours there may be more

limited access to in-person interpreting. Remote telephone or video interpreting is likely to be the best option as credentialed interpreters will be available nationwide.

3.12.7. Availability of Minority Languages or Particular Dialects

Minority languages or dialects will be available for telephone and video interpreting, but it may require finding a language service provider who has these interpreters on their database. It may be more difficult to get in-person interpreting in rural or provincial areas.

3.12.8. Trust in the Interpreter

In some cultural groups, relying on a stranger to interpret can bring up issues of trust, and some people may have had bad experiences in the past with interpreters. For some topics, the client may prefer to choose their own interpreter who they trust. For example, in the health setting, LEP men with a sexually transmitted disease will often bring a trusted male friend to interpret.

3.12.9. Use of Translated Material

In some settings, it may be that translated material or visual material could be used. This would be appropriate where there is provision of routine information or for small tasks. For example, meal selection by a patient in a hospital ward.

3.12.10. Use of non-credentialed trained interpreters

First, it is important to note that not all non-credentialed interpreters are untrained. There will be some interpreters who have been trained in a wide range of contexts and to a range of levels. This training can be more of an in-house induction by a department or service provider through to people with advanced degrees in interpreting. The ability of these interpreters to deliver an interpreting assignment that fully meets the required standards has not been independently tested or assessed and cannot be ensured.

After considering all the circumstances including the English proficiency of the client and the factors listed above, the option of using non-credentialed trained interpreters might be considered.

In doing this, providers also need to consider the risks and benefits of using untrained interpreters:

3.12.10.1. Ad Hoc Family Member or Friend

On occasions, untrained interpreters such as family members and friends, community members or volunteers, and staff members are used to interpret.

Some of the disadvantages of using untrained or non-credentialed interpreters include:

- **Inaccuracy:** changing information because they lack knowledge and do not want to lose face by admitting to this. They may not have the capacity to understand differences in cultural context including idiomatic phrases, service delivery structures, and what can be expected from service providers in New Zealand.
- **Incompleteness:** leaving out things they do not understand, or intentionally omitting swear-words or abusive language so as not to cause offence when that language could be crucial (for example, to an assessment of mental state). Unwelcome news may also not be

conveyed. Client fears may not be reflected in the exchange which in turn may limit proper informed consent for any decisions. Some behaviour that is frowned on may be edited out, or misleading information deliberately provided (for instance, in the case of family violence perpetrators).

- **Lack of confidentiality:** the need for strict confidentiality may not be understood. There can be serious implications for clients from small communities (often former refugee communities) when their personal information is shared, even if this was well-intentioned.
- **Partiality:** the need for strict impartiality may not be understood. They may take the side of the client or the agency and not pass on information they don't agree with. They may also act as an advocate for the client, including advising the client what to say as part of trying to be helpful.
- **Role awareness:** they may lack awareness of the interpreter's role, may misinterpret instructions and may talk about the client to agency staff, rather than enable a direct first-person communication between the client and the agency. In turn, the staff member may end up speaking to the untrained interpreter rather than to the client directly, without being corrected.
- **Accountability:** the client, government agency or funded service may be put at risk ultimately because the untrained interpreter has no accountability in terms of standards.²⁹

Advantages of using untrained or non-credentialed interpreters can be:

- **Family members and friends** can be an important source of support and advocacy. They often accompany clients to appointments and are therefore available for short informal interactions and they may be the only people available in an emergency.
- Where the client does not trust an unknown interpreter to interpret for them. It will be very important to point out the risks in using non-credentialed interpreters who are trained and tested in ethical competence.
- **In the setting of an older person being cared for by an adult child** when there may be some advantages in the adult child interpreting in providing continuity interpreting across multiple providers and being able to remember and reinforce information after the meeting. **The value of their support and advocacy can be recognised as complementary but separate to the role of the qualified interpreter.**³⁰ Where supporters attend interpreted meetings, their role to provide support to their family member or friend should be acknowledged at the outset. Where family members have some fluency in English disagreements over the accuracy of interpreting will need to be handled carefully.

There are significant risks to justice with using alleged perpetrators as interpreters when dealing with issues of family violence, and it is critical that this does not happen.³¹

²⁹ Auckland District Health Board Interpreter Services, Interpreter Services Operations Manual 2006.

³⁰ Using Interpreting Services Victorian Government Guidelines on Policy and Procedures 2014.

³¹ Royal Commission into Family Violence, March 2016, Royal Commission into Family Violence Volume v, Report and recommendations, Victorian Government Printer.

3.12.10.2. Children

Children should not be asked to interpret because they almost certainly will not have any understanding of interpreting ethics or the required interpreting skills, including completeness, vocabulary, and they may misrepresent facts. Their involvement as interpreters can distort relationships within families, and may mean either party cannot disclose full information, particularly involving sensitive family matters.^{32 33}

As with other family interpreters there may be circumstances when a child is the only option available, but these will be very few, and likely limited to either extreme emergency when they are all that is available or very simple interchanges for example in relation to appointment timing.

3.12.10.3. Use of Web-based Applications for Interpreting

The use of web-based translation applications (such as Google Translate) for interpreting purposes is widespread in the community because it is free to use and easily accessible wherever there is internet access. The quality of the translation can be impressive, particularly with translation from related languages like English into French. It is much less reliable for unrelated languages.

Machine translation has the same problems as other non-professional language assistance. The major problem with its use is that the provider has no way of knowing how accurate (or not) the translation is. It has advantages to find translation of specific words or if there are frequent short interchanges in addition to using accredited interpreters for longer interchanges.

This is a rapidly changing technology, particularly with the growing application of AI and the use needs to be kept under review.

The limitations of these tools are addressed more fully in Section 5 Translations.

3.12.10.4. No Assistance

This has been the default option in many settings and if the client is significantly limited in their English, then it is not appropriate. However, there may often be times where clients have sufficient English for shorter, less complex interactions.



³² Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Australian Government Agencies.

³³ Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2012, Interpreting in New Zealand Let's Keep Talking: Guidelines to Agencies using Interpreters.

3.13. Table 2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Language Assistance Options

Advantages and Disadvantages of Language Assistance Options			
Type of Language Assistance	Advantages	Disadvantages	Variable
Bilingual staff	Can provide the same service as available to English speakers. Enables relationship between client and provider	Risk of conflict of interest	Language proficiency
Credentialed Interpreter or Interpreter working towards their NAATI credential	Accurate, complete, confidential, no role conflict.	Cost, availability, right dialect, language of lesser diffusion	Continuity, trusted
NZSTI members who may not be credentialed	May be sufficiently accurate and understands ethical requirements	Assessed by NZSTI and competency may not be guaranteed.	Lack of independent testing
Trained non-credentialed interpreter	May be sufficiently accurate and understands ethical requirements	Untested and competency cannot be guaranteed.	Level of competence and lack of independent testing
Professional Translation	Accurate. Useful for standardised information used on several occasions	Cost and timeliness of availability	
Ad hoc family or friend interpreter	Trusted, available, no added cost, likely good language match	Indeterminate accuracy, completeness, risk of adding advice.	Potential for role conflict Confidentiality may be an issue
Machine translation	Always available	Unknown accuracy	Accuracy good for related languages, much less for unrelated languages
No assistance	Less complex interaction, enhances development of relationship between parties	Dependent on provider assessment of whether communication is satisfactory	

3.14. Risks for the Agency and Client of Using an Untrained Interpreter.

As discussed, there are risks to the agency and the client if the language support for an interaction with an LEP client is not provided by a credentialed interpreter. Each agency should specify the circumstances when a credentialed interpreter must be used.

Some key instances when use of a credentialed interpreter is required for a client with limited English proficiency include:

- at initial intake/contact when client information is collected and need is assessed;
- when informing clients of their rights and responsibilities;
- when explaining service options;
- when determining appropriate referrals;³⁴
- the staff member cannot understand the client because the client is Deaf and/or speaks insufficient English;
- the information to be conveyed is complex, and it is important for it to be accurately communicated to and understood by the client;
- the client's informed consent is required for certain decisions;
- there is a risk that the client could misunderstand information, including their legal obligations, and that misunderstanding could create a risk for themselves or for others'
- there is a potential conflict of interest, for instance a police interview of an alleged offender;
- there is a statutory obligation for an interpreter to be engaged;
- the client indicates that they require an interpreter – for example. by showing a '*I need an interpreter*' wallet card or by telephoning and stating "Hello...Mandarin". That may be all they can say in English, or by using NZSL to staff;
- some agencies have defined other circumstances requiring use, taking account of the particular services provided.³⁵

3.15. Staff Training

Agencies and funded services should ensure that appropriate staff have information and training about the range of language assistance that is available and can be utilised by staff members in their communications with clients. Preferably this should occur both as part of induction, and subsequently at regular intervals. It is particularly important that front-line staff members have practical training on how to successfully conduct interpreted meetings with their clients. A selection of staff training resources is available. Language assistance providers are also often willing to provide this training.

The service should specify in their internal policies and staff training those formal instances when a credentialed interpreter is required (as above). In other informal settings service providers must judge whether the language assistance they are using with a particular client is sufficient for the task they are addressing.

The agency and/or the provider is responsible and accountable for the language assistance that they choose.

Information on approved language assistance providers, financial delegations to approve the cost of use (where applicable), and resources to support staff should be readily accessible on agency intranets. The operational guidelines include assistance such as information sheets and links to best practice resources that can be used on agency intranets.

³⁴ Language Services Guidelines 2012, NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

³⁵ Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Australian Government Agencies; Language Services Guidelines 2012, NSW Department of Family and Community Services; Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Tasmanian Government Agencies.

Attention should be paid to proficiency in the use of technological support required, particularly for the use of telephone and video interpreting.

3.16. Feedback and Complaints

Agencies are required to provide mechanisms for clients and staff to give feedback on language assistance. As part of this, agencies should have an agreed process for dealing with complaints about interpreting and translations that can be used by staff and LEP clients.

LEP clients must be informed how they can access the complaints process, and any time-limit for complaints. Some ways of informing them are through a brochure or website information in their first language, or through a standard statement at the end of every interpreted interview.

Where information provided through interpreters or translations is challenged, government agencies and funded services should consider whether the client should have a further opportunity to provide the information through a different interpreter or translator.

Aside from complaints processes, other ways to collect client satisfaction information include questions in standard feedback mechanisms and client satisfaction surveys – which of course will need to be translated to be effective.

3.17. Record-keeping

Public facing agencies are required to collate and analyse information about language assistance, particularly interpreting and translations, so this can be used for planning and providing language assistance in the future, and for reporting and costing purposes. Information agencies may wish to collate annually includes:

- client records (including the National Health Index number for health sector clients) should detail their language service needs, including their preferred language and dialect, any gender or other preferences relating to interpreters, and the type of language service used in their case. Relevant identifying details should also be recorded for interpreters used with each client. It is often useful to involve the same interpreter for ongoing appointments, where this is feasible and appropriate, for instance for ongoing social work appointments or when the client requests this.
- when an interpreter is offered but declined by the client, that should also be recorded with the reasons, and how they were established.
- in all cases, when someone other than a credentialed interpreter is used for a client with significantly limited English proficiency, the decision and associated circumstances must also be fully documented.

3.18. Monitoring and Assessment

Agencies are required to regularly monitor their provision of language assistance to identify lessons learnt and to improve services. Some aspects for monitoring include:

- whether provision has been made for language diversity in data collections and research projects;
- whether language needs and costs have been addressed in procurement processes;
- whether expenditure has been budgeted for the provision of language assistance;
- whether credentialed interpreters and translators were used;

- the number of occasions credentialed interpreters were provided, and the duration of each session;
- the number of occasions credentialed interpreters were not available, the efforts made to obtain one, the reasons for failing to find one, and a description of the person ultimately used;
- the number of occasions involving on-site; telephone; video-remote interpreting;
- the community languages for which credentialed interpreters were provided;
- the cost of interpreting services by setting: on-site, telephone and video-remote;
- whether appropriate frontline staff have received training on how to access language assistance and how to work with interpreters;
- whether complaints have been made by clients about language assistance and the nature of these complaints;³⁶
- the number of times language assistance was provided for formal interviews by either ad hoc interpreters or machine interpreting with the reasons why;
- the types of media used for providing new translated communications by community languages;
- the unit cost of translated material;
- the demand for existing printed material by community language;
- the number of page visits for material in community languages on websites.

4. Interpreting

4.1. Introduction

Credentialed Interpreters provide spoken/signed communications that convey in another language the content and intentions of statements by the original speaker. A two-way communication is required for effectiveness and interpreters assist both parties, not just clients.

4.2. The Credentialed Interpreter's Role

Credentialed Interpreters accurately and completely transfer spoken/signed information from one language to another. They may also be required to provide sight translations of short documents such as consent forms as part of their interpreting role. They need to develop and maintain the trust of both parties.



³⁶ Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Australian Government Agencies 2013.

4.3. Restrictions – What Credentialed Interpreters Do Not Do

As part of understanding the ethical code, maintaining their professional practice and observing role boundaries, credentialed interpreters for spoken languages do not:

- as a rule, wait with clients before assignments, or meet with them during breaks such as lunch recesses during court cases. In some settings and within some cultures waiting with clients might be beneficial to develop trust but care should be taken to avoid talking of anything relating to the coming meeting;
- discuss client related issues with the service provider before the assignment;
- make comments outside of the dialogue to either party;
- explain the meaning of questions or comments to either party – for example, if clients are confused about questions or staff members do not understand responses, interpreters should accurately convey this to the other party;
- provide emotional support to clients;
- express an opinion about the truth of any statements made;
- provide advice about how to answer questions;
- fill out forms for clients – the interpreter’s role is to inform the client what the form says (sight translation);
- interpret for their own relatives or friends, even if they are qualified interpreters, as this is a conflict of interest;
- discontinue interpreting because they consider clients have sufficient English.³⁷

4.4. When an NZSL Interpreter is Required

When a client requires assistance from an NZSL Interpreter, the NZSL Interpreters Code of Conduct applies.³⁸

4.5. Cultural Clarification of Language

There are risks in credentialed interpreters being asked to provide cultural insights into clients’ responses or behaviour outside of the interpreted dialogue. This is because factors such as cultural background, education and religious beliefs can influence differences in cultural practices within groups who speak the same language, and because any insights provided may be affected by the interpreter’s subjective experiences. Requests for cultural insights can also create role confusion for interpreters. It is far better to ask for clarification from the client on any cultural issues identified.

Where issues about cultural language arise during interpreted meetings that may affect communications or their outcome, the interpreter should identify this and ask the client to explain.

4.5.1. Types of Interpreting

The main types of interpreting are consecutive, simultaneous, and sight translations.

³⁷ Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Australian Government Agencies.

³⁸ Office for Disability Issues, August 2018, NZSL Code of Ethics <https://www.odi.govt.nz/nzsl/tools-and-resources/how-do-i-know-if-a-nzsl-interpreter-is-professionally-competent/#codeofethics>.

4.5.2. Consecutive Interpreting

Consecutive interpreting is the most common type and involves the speaker and credentialed interpreter taking turn-about in short bursts of dialogue.

Except for sign language interpreting, consecutive interpreting is the main type of interpreting used with clients in New Zealand public service settings. This is also the type of interpreting recommended by the Supreme Court as best practice for New Zealand courts.³⁹

4.5.3. Simultaneous Interpreting

Simultaneous interpreting is commonly used including during conference presentations and in public service settings when using New Zealand Sign Language. The credentialed interpreter listens to the first words that the speaker says, then proceeds to interpret immediately and continuously as they continue to talk so the speaker and interpreter are speaking simultaneously.

4.5.4. Sight Translations

Sight translations involve the credentialed interpreter providing an oral and instantaneous interpretation of a written text, such as a court order or form. Such translations would normally be provided in conjunction with consecutive interpreting.

4.5.5. Client Refusal

If a client refuses the offer of a credentialed interpreter, it is important to understand the reasons for this and attempt to address the situation. This may happen for a range of reasons even if the client's English is poor. It may be because the client:

- has misunderstood why a credentialed interpreter is needed;
- may think they will have to meet the cost;
- knows the credentialed interpreter assigned;
- is uncomfortable with the credentialed interpreter's gender or religious affiliation;⁴⁰
- does not trust the credentialed interpreter to interpret well.

Every effort should be made to identify and address the reasons for refusal. Some ways to approach this include:

- asking questions to explore the reasons behind the refusal;
- engaging a credentialed interpreter by telephone to assist in establishing the issues and explaining the need;
- explaining the risks if a credentialed interpreter is not used;
- explaining the importance of the credentialed interpreter for effective communication for both parties;
- providing assurances about the credentialed interpreter's confidentiality, impartiality, and accuracy.

When clients continue to refuse a credentialed interpreter, agencies should determine on an individual-case basis whether it is appropriate to proceed without language assistance, or by using trained or untrained interpreters such as family members or friends if clients insist on this.

³⁹ 1 November 2011, Supreme Court judgement in *Chala Sani Abdula v the Queen* (SC 80/2010 [2011] NZSC 130).

⁴⁰ Language Services Guidelines, State of Queensland.

Considerations should include the purpose of the communication, the client's English language competence, and the risks for the agency and client of using a credentialed interpreter in those circumstances (where applicable). Full documentation of the decision is required (see paragraph 3.17).

4.6. Planning an Interpreted Interview

Preparation for an interpreted interview may be needed to ensure its success. This includes allowing extra time when scheduling the interview because of the credentialed interpreter's involvement. The time likely to be needed should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Up to twice the time normally spent may need to be allowed, depending on the purpose of the interview. Some settings require (for example, the courts) orientation to the institution prior to working there.

Staff also need to identify their agency's approved language assistance providers and obtain the appropriate financial authority for interpreter use. Other preparations include arranging a quiet meeting place (and the appropriate equipment, where applicable), and assembling the background information required to make a booking.

4.7. Booking a Credentialed Interpreter

4.7.1. Providing Good Background Information

Language assistance providers generally require a range of specific information so that interpreter bookings can be processed effectively, and so credentialed interpreters can prepare for their assignments. This preparation includes developing glossaries of the concepts and special terminology likely to be used (in both languages) in specialist environments, such as the justice system or medical settings.

Some organisations such as the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Corrections have requirements, related to court protocol, and the maintenance of safety and security, that credentialed interpreters must observe during on-site assignments. These reinforce the importance of agencies providing sufficient information about the assignment from the outset.

Providing the required information also ensures the best match between interpreters and assignments. It also means interpreters can identify in advance whether they want to be involved, or should be involved, because:

- there may be a risk of vicarious trauma⁴¹ from some exchanges (depending on their background);
- they know the client and/or have a conflict of interest;
- they believe they have insufficient skill(s) to reasonably expect to meet the interpreting demands of the assignment – for example, a challenging mental health assessment.

Language assistance providers keep confidential the information provided to them. Credentialed interpreters are required to maintain the confidentiality of all information they receive.

⁴¹ This is psychological distress that may be experienced by interpreters resulting from repeated exposure to interpreting communications about traumatic events, for instance in counselling sessions and family violence cases.

4.7.2. Addressing Client Preferences

Clients may express a preference for a credentialed interpreter of a particular gender, ethnic or cultural background, or one who speaks a particular dialect. There may be circumstances where use of the same interpreter for each interaction is highly desirable.

Client requests should be considered carefully and accommodated wherever feasible. It may not always be possible to meet these preferences, and client expectations around this should be managed accordingly.

Generally, it is preferable to use different credentialed interpreters for interviews involving the victims and perpetrators of family violence and adult and child sexual abuse.⁴²

It is important that the gender of the credentialed interpreter used for these interviews and their cultural background is considered sensitively and appropriate arrangements made. A credentialed interpreter of a different gender to a victim should only be engaged with that client's consent.⁴³

4.8. Vetting a Credentialed Interpreter

4.8.1. Police Vetting

Organisations providing services to vulnerable people (this includes children, older people, and people with an intellectual (learning) disability, including language assistance) can ask the New Zealand Police to vet people who want to work or volunteer for them.

The difference between a Ministry of Justice criminal record check and police vetting is that the criminal record check only covers convictions. As well as the person's criminal record, police vetting can also include information on any contact they have had with the police.

4.8.2. Information Required at Booking

The information required at booking is likely to include:

- The client's name;
- the language and dialect required, if applicable;
- other languages spoken by the client (in case an interpreter in the first language is not available);
- whether a specific interpreter is sought by either party, for service continuity reasons;
- the preferred gender of the credentialed interpreter, if applicable'
- the purpose of the assignment (for example, medical consultation, police interview of sexual assault victim, meeting about income support) and any associated requirements (such as the type of vetting required for the interpreter);
- qualifications, knowledge, or experience that may be important to the assignment (for instance, knowledge of courtroom protocol, ability to participate in discussions about sensitive health matters);
- the type of interpreting sought (consecutive, simultaneous, sight translations);
- the interpreting setting sought (on-site, telephone or video-remote);
- the date and time the credentialed interpreter is required (also allowing any time for a pre-session briefing for on-site meetings, where possible);

⁴² Royal Commission into Family Violence, March 2016, Royal Commission into Family Violence Volume V, Report and Recommendations, Victorian Government Printer.

⁴³ Language Services Guidelines, State of Queensland.

- the expected duration of the appointment;
- the physical address for the appointment (for on-site assignments) or connection process and details (for telephone and video-remote interpreting); and
- the name and telephone contact details for the person to whom the credentialed interpreter reports on arrival (for on-site appointments).

A successful interpretation can be facilitated by providing as much information as possible ahead of time, including any written documents available.

4.9. Briefing the Credentialed Interpreter

A well-briefed credentialed interpreter does a better job. Briefing can be divided into two kinds. The first is around ensuring the interpreter is oriented to and understands the role of the agency they are working for. The second is in relation to the needs of the particular client who requires the interpreting.

The credentialed interpreter will need a range of information to understand the requirements of an assignment and prepare for it. For example, with the Ministry of Justice, credentialed interpreters may need to be fully orientated before doing any work in Court. This does not need to be repeated prior to each assignment. Each agency will need to consider what briefing is needed and how best this could be done. While the majority of the general information needed should be provided at the time of booking, additional information can be provided during a briefing.

The purpose of the briefing is for the agency representative or interlocutor (person speaking) and the interpreter to have a shared understanding of the process of the interpreted communication, and their respective roles.

In general, it is undesirable to discuss the goals for the particular client with the credentialed interpreter alone, this is better done with the client present. This will avoid the possibility of undermining the credentialed interpreter's neutral position in the same way as it is undesirable for the credentialed interpreter to be discussing the content of the meeting with the client in advance of the meeting.

Meeting with the client. In many settings it can be helpful for the client and credentialed interpreter to meet ahead of the interpreted meeting to introduce themselves, confirm that the client is happy to work with the credentialed interpreter and that there are no conflicts of interest. This is not allowed in the Court setting.

A briefing in the presence of client and provider should include:

- Introductions;
- the agency and interlocutor's roles;
- expectations, communication (including interpreting style and process) and ethical responsibilities (for example, impartiality and confidentiality);
- purpose, topic, context and general background information to the assignment;
- any specific terms to be used;
- how the discussion will be conducted including any boundaries;
- seating arrangements for the discussion;
- any safety concerns and safety protocols to be used during the discussion; and
- any extra security measures required (for example. encryption, immediate deletion, immediate return of paper documents, etc.).

The extent of this briefing will vary depending on prior experience of the client and the provider. If this is a follow up visit with the same client and provider, it may be very short.

As interpreters may work with people from a range of occupations, it should not be assumed that the interpreter is familiar with the terminology and practices of a specific occupation or sector. The best approach is for providers to speak in plain English and avoid technical terms. There may not be a term in the target language that is equivalent to the English term. For example, schizophrenia is not a concept in the Somalian language. Instead of using the term, describing the features of schizophrenia in plain English is likely to lead to more accurate interpreting.

4.9.1. Conducting an Interpreted Interview

If a support person is attending the meeting with the client, ensure at the outset that their role is acknowledged and clarified in relation to the credentialed interpreter. Some tips for staff on how to conduct an interpreted interview are included in the Staff Resources

4.9.2. Other Contexts for Credentialed Interpreters

Credentialed Interpreters are also needed for transactional purposes relating to scheduling and re-scheduling appointments, gathering information required by support staff prior to a planned meeting and responding to simple telephone enquiries. This will usually be done using credentialed telephone interpreters.

4.9.3. Debriefing

Debriefing with the credentialed interpreter afterwards can be a useful part of the process, particularly for long, difficult, or emotional sessions. A debrief can also be an opportunity for positive feedback, or to raise any issues of concern with the credentialed interpreter regarding their interpreting practice. Where debriefing occurs, a summary of what was discussed should be added to the client records. Care should be taken in any debrief to avoid discussing issues relating to the client. If the interpreter is distressed by an interaction this may be better managed in professional supervision including EAP provided by the LSP, rather than by the service provider directly.



4.9.4. Complaints and Feedback About Credentialed Interpreters

Interpreters undertaking government work are required to be credentialed. This means they have been tested on their knowledge and skills and meet the NAATI standards for interpreting. These encompass professional practice issues such as ethics, confidentiality, competence, impartiality, accuracy, and clarity of role boundaries.

If there are any issues with the performance of an individual credentialed interpreter, these should be discussed directly and privately by the staff member with the credentialed interpreter as soon as possible after the interview. If this discussion does not resolve the issues, then a formal complaint should be made to the language assistance service provider who supplied the interpreter.

If the initial investigation indicated that the credentialed interpreter seems to be incompetent (for example has not accurately conveyed meaning) then the LSP will refer the matter to NAATI to consider. Following investigation, NAATI may decide to require some form of remedial action or remove the interpreter's credential.

As noted earlier in this operational policy document, where information provided through an interpreter is challenged, agencies and funded services should consider whether the client should have a further opportunity to provide the information through a different interpreter.

If there is a complaint about a New Zealand Sign Language interpreter, your first point of call should be the interpreter themselves, or the agency through which the interpreter was booked.

4.9.5. Complaints and feedback about Departmental practices and/or Language Assistance Service Providers.

A process for receiving complaints on agency practices is required and complaints on the performance of language assistance service providers is covered in their contracts with the MBIE as lead agency.

5. Translation

5.1. Introduction

Translation involves creating a structured, written text or, in the case of NZSL translation, a signed video text. This can involve:

- the provision of generalised information in community languages to clients, including through brochures, websites, posters, and other forms of collateral; or
- the provision of personalised information in community languages to clients, including letters or text messages; or
- the receipt of information directly from clients such as in responses to questionnaires or surveys; or
- the receipt of information about clients or official documentation that will be used to aid understanding and inform decisions.

The first two cases focus on ensuring the client has a thorough understanding of the information which may be detailed or complex. Plain English should be used in combination with translation as much as is appropriate. Translations need to provide clients with an accurate understanding as well as be professional. Accuracy and readability are both important for a successful outcome.

The second two cases above require that information is reliably produced and accurately understood so that meaningful and well-informed decisions can be made. Accuracy and reliability are more important than readability for a successful outcome.

5.2. The Translator's Role

Translation is generally the process of accurately and objectively transferring a structured text in one language to an equivalent text in another. Generally, texts are written but may also be spoken (such as that used in audio-visual material) or signed (such as that used in NZSL translation).

Translations cover the transfer of the meaning and significance of a text as well as addressing other factors such as the purpose and intended readership. Concepts, syntax (the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language), vocabulary and grammar will usually differ significantly between languages.

5.3. Considering What Should Be Translated

- Where information is provided in English (including standard letters to clients about their entitlements or appointments), it may also need to be provided in other languages.
- Translation is mostly needed where it is important that the person fully understands the information or where a full understanding will provide a better outcome.
- When deciding whether to provide information in community languages and the appropriate languages and media to be used, consideration should also be given to the extent to which translated information:
 - **will support equitable and responsive services** by addressing the specific communication needs of the target audience
 - **will provide reach** by conveying information to an audience who would not otherwise have access to it because they lack proficiency in English
 - **is a cost-effective approach** taking account of the target audience's language needs, and alternative options for provision.

Translated material can complement other language assistance and support client independence by making information more readily available to some clients, thus improving their knowledge and understanding of key issues such as entitlements, services, procedures, and processes.

At the planning stage, important considerations include:

- **demographic data and information on client need and service usage** to start to identify the potential target audience, and languages
- **the target audience** (including age and gender factors) for the message to determine the appropriate style of communication
- **what other information is available** to the target group and how this is provided
- **the most appropriate languages for translation** taking account of the preferred language of the target audience (which may differ from their country of birth), dialect and regional variations, and writing systems. Language assistance providers will be able to provide advice on writing systems. For instance, some Chinese languages use simplified character sets whilst others use traditional characters.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Effective Translations Victorian Government Guidelines on Policy and Procedures 2014; Western Australian Language Services Policy 2014 and Guidelines.

However, it is also important to be aware that:

- **not all individuals will be literate.**⁴⁵ This may be because cultural beliefs or their global displacement have limited their access to education, or because they are from countries or regions with oral traditions.
- some spoken languages do not have a standard written form e.g., some African languages
- **the written form of language may be a recent development** for some which means there may be little experience of using written texts for information.⁴⁶
- **New Zealand Sign Language does not have a written form**, and so any use of written language alternatives, such as written English, will likely be the client's second or third language.

5.4. Consultation

Agencies should consider consulting with community workers and members of ethnic communities to inform decisions about whether to provide translations, and the approaches to information provision that are likely to be most useful. Perspectives could be sought on:

- the language groups that need, and would use, translated information
- how information on the proposed topic is handled in the cultures that are part of the target audience, and whether there are any associated sensitivities
- the tone and type of language normally used around this issue in the target cultures
- the best avenues for dissemination of information in community languages e.g., in an audio-visual format.⁴⁷

Agencies should also establish whether translations might already be available in other regions and even other countries. For example, the translation of health promotion material can often be duplicated at a regional level due to the previously decentralised structure of New Zealand's health and disability system.

5.5. Considering Appropriate Media

Community consultation can help to identify the most effective ways to disseminate information to individual language groups depending on their profile and preferences. Options for providing bilingual information include:

- information sessions or programme delivery in clients' first languages where sufficient client numbers in key languages make this feasible
- YouTube videos and podcasts for client groups with low literacy in their first language, or where there is a preference for oral information
- Recorded bilingual phone messages, telephone interpreters, translated letters and text messaging for simple messages such as appointment confirmations
- community radio or television
- website information, fact sheets and brochures.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Most former refugees have limited literacy and numeracy skills on arrival in New Zealand.

⁴⁶ Western Australian Language Services Policy 2014 and Guidelines.

⁴⁷ Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Australian Government Agencies; Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Tasmanian Government Agencies; and Western Australian Language Services Policy 2014 and Guidelines.

⁴⁸ Language Services Guidelines 2016, State of Queensland; Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Australian Government Agencies.

5.6. Using Qualified Translators

- It is the Government's intention that appropriately qualified translators are used to the greatest extent practicable. A NAATI translation credential is not required.⁴⁹
- Requirements for the use of qualified translators are particularly important when approaching freelance translators directly for translation.
- Before selecting a translator or a language service provider, consideration should be given to the complexity of the text and any work required to prepare the text for publication.

The risks associated with mistranslation should also be considered as these help inform the number and nature of the quality controls that are most appropriate. Risks may include the volume of translation required, the impact of a false decision based on the information, the reputational risk, and associated costs from publishing a poor translation as well as potential legal implications.

Consideration should be given to how these risks and quality controls will be managed either in-house by working directly with freelance translators or by outsourcing this to a language service provider. It is important to consider the nature of the translation and whether the translator has the skills required to carry the translations out appropriately. Language service providers should be required to provide clarity around the service they are providing in terms of their selection of translators, their quality control measures and how they intend to format and deliver the text.

5.7. Using an Appropriate Quality Control Process

It is the Government's intention that appropriate quality control processes are used for each translation.

The importance of the information in the text, the reputation and risk associated with poor translation should all be considered when choosing a process and level of quality checking carried out on a translation. Most texts can be continually improved through the addition of further checks, reviews, editing and user testing so it is important to maintain realistic expectations about the process being used. In most cases, any review of the text should be carried out by skilled reviews if they are to be effective and time efficient. Language service providers should be able to detail the processes that they use so that realistic expectations of the final quality can be determined.

5.7.1. Bilingual Revision For Translation

A high-quality translation requires at least two important steps. The first is the translation itself. Translator competencies, certified by a professional body, provide assurance that the translator has the knowledge, skill and attributes to translate text from a source language into a target language. Given the complexity of translation, it is strongly recommended that at least two people are involved in any important translation.

The second step is quality assurance. The second person, who should be well-qualified, or even a native speaker in the target language as well as understanding the source language, performs the role of an editor or reviser. This involves carefully examining the source text against the target text to ensure it is fit for purpose, as well as ensuring the quality of the final translation is such that it could have been written in the source text by the original writer. The editor or reviewer also checks for errors and other issues. The role of the editor is therefore different from the role of the original translator in that it is particularly focussed on quality control.

⁴⁹ Separate work is being undertaken as part of the Language Assistance Services Project on the competencies and certification required for translators undertaking Government work.

A person performing the role of an editor or reviser needs to have the same competencies as a certified translator. They also need translation experience in the domain under consideration - for example medical or legal. Use of organisations with ISO:17100 certification will ensure that at least two people (the original translator and an editor/reviewer) have been involved in the translation. In other contexts (for example when approaching freelance translators directly), it will be important to ensure that there are at least two linguists who are qualified translators, with one having additional experience in the domain so that they can act as the editor or reviewer for the translation.

5.8. Risks of Using Unqualified Translators

Agencies who use unqualified translators cannot be confident that the meaning of the source text has been accurately conveyed through the translation. This creates a range of potential risks both for agencies and clients. For instance, the intention of the communication may be negated by a communication style and use of vocabulary which is inappropriate to the target audience. An inaccurate transfer of meaning in translated text may also have serious implications for the clients who receive it, particularly where they act on advice that was not intended.

As well as risks associated with their professional competence, untrained translators do not have any accountability in terms of ethical standards, including expectations of impartiality and confidentiality.

5.8.1. Use of Web-Based Translation Tools

The use of the web-based translation applications (such as Google Translate) by agency staff for translating (or interpreting) is not supported. While these tools may be widely available and easy to use for small amounts of information and casual purposes, their quality varies considerably. They can be effective as a language learning tool but can only provide a general understanding of simple text. Their translations cannot be relied on for accuracy since they cannot address cultural, technical, or nuanced aspects of the communication such as variations in dialect and language, actual meaning and politeness level. The risk of mistranslation is therefore high, creating risks for both agencies and clients.

It is expected that agencies do not endorse the use of web-based translation applications or provide links to automated online translating tools on their websites.⁵⁰

There are currently no applications that can replace the need for human translation, however, there are technological tools that are widely used to enhance and improve human translation. These include translation memory, glossary tools, automated project management tools and text analysis tools. The usefulness of these tools depends on the type of translation that is being carried out. A language service provider will be able to provide information about any of these tools and whether they are appropriate for a given translation.

5.9. Preparing Text for Translation

When preparing material for translation, it is important that agencies remain focused on the target audience, the purpose of the communication and the key messages.

⁵⁰ This guidance is consistent with international practice, as well as Language Services Guidelines 2016, State of Queensland; Effective Translations Victorian Government Guidelines on Policy and Procedures 2014; and Western Australian Language Services Policy 2014 and Guidelines.

Some points⁵¹ to consider include:

- Know who makes up your audience and ensure the purpose of the document is relevant to the language group (including their developmental and educational level).
- Keep the text short - this will make it easier to translate and for the client to understand.
- Keep it simple, use plain English, and explain complex or unfamiliar terms.
- Avoid language that is unique to New Zealand, jargon, and colloquialisms.
- Keep the language active and direct.
- Consider formatting for clarity.
- Ensure the text addresses cultural sensitivities, and images are culturally appropriate.⁵²

As part of finalising the text for translation, it may be useful to use an editor to ensure the source text is clear and accurate. A careful proof-read is also a good idea. It is not the translator's role to correct any errors.

Depending on the topic, agencies may wish to consider whether a bilingual version will be useful to allow an English-speaker to use it with a non-English-speaking client.

Where common words or phrases will be used in a range of translated material, agencies should consider developing an Agency Glossary of Terms for Translations to ensure that these terms are translated consistently each time.⁵³

5.10. Arranging Translations

Agencies should clearly identify for staff the approval processes required for arranging translations, and the language assistance providers approved for providing translations for their organisation. The text of the final product will enable a quote to be obtained – this will take account of issues such as the number of words and the timeframe.

⁵¹ Immigration New Zealand, 2016, Keeping it clear: writing for audiences new to New Zealand available at: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/assist-migrants-and-students/keeping-it-clear>

⁵² Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Australian Government Agencies; Western Australian Language Services Policy 2014 and Guidelines; Language Services Guidelines 2016, State of Queensland

⁵³ Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Australian Government Agencies.



5.11. Briefing the Translator

The language assistance provider will need a range of information to help them understand the requirements. Some of the general information needed includes:

- the name of the organisation;
- the purpose of the translation;
- the audience for the translation (for example, the ethnic group, age, gender and any other details to help determine the appropriate style);
- the style of writing (to align with the purpose and the audience);
- NZSL translation may require the provision of decisions to be made about the appearance of the video (for example, plain background, no background patterns or moving images) and captions or any branding (no captions over text or signers etc.);
- the end use of the translation (e.g., brochure, podcast, website)
- any technical requirements such as the file type needed – noting, unless agency computer systems use bilingual software, there may be difficulties with electronic files;
- additional information including deadlines and copyright arrangements;

The specific job requirements will include:

- the text to be translated and the glossary of terms;
- the languages/dialects for translation;
- any specific qualifications required of the translator (including the type of vetting required);
- independent checking by a second translator/editor.⁵⁴ This involves comparing the translation with the original text and is an important assurance of accuracy. The language assistance provider can arrange this;

⁵⁴ Multicultural Language Services Guidelines for Australian Government Agencies; Language Services Guidelines 2016, State of Queensland

- the need for the translation to be typeset (if using written language) – it is important for this to be undertaken by someone who knows the language and can ensure the layout is culturally appropriate, with content being kept together where necessary, and emphasised appropriately;
- translation of a glossary of terms for future reference;
- identifying the language and title of the document in English on the translation;
- identify any elements of the text that do not need to be translated (e.g., the agency logo, acronyms, and names).

5.12. Design and Production

The written translation may take up a different amount of space from the English text. The language assistance provider used for the translation will be able to advise on this, and the direction in which the translated script will run. These are important considerations for the graphic design.

Including both the language and publication title in English on the front supports ready identification. This is true also of NZSL video translation.

For written translations being included on websites, ensure that the content is included as HTML wherever possible rather than PDF so that search engines can locate the information in a language other than English.⁵⁵

NZSL video translations should play in a window large enough that the reader could clearly see the signing even when played on a mobile device.

A legal disclaimer may be added to a translation that contains personalised information that could have legal implications. The disclaimer may help to clarify which version of the text would be referred to during a dispute. In such cases, the disclaimer should be translated, and the original English text should be provided. Agencies should seek legal advice before using a disclaimer.

5.13. Monitoring Use and Maintaining Translations

Monitor the use of the translations by recording the number of page visits for material on the internet, and the demand by language type for printed material.

Agencies should consider ways to assess the ongoing effectiveness of any translations in relation to their intended purpose. These may include specifically seeking feedback by consulting with target communities, or through surveys with consumers and service providers.

Agencies are expected to review translated material periodically to ensure that the information remains relevant, especially if it is on a website. Where there are changes to original English text, then these should also be reflected in the translated versions.

5.14. Feedback and Complaints

- Language assistance providers who meet the required ISO117100 will have processes to resolve complaints.

⁵⁵ Effective Translations Victorian Government Guidelines on Policy and Procedures 2014.

6. Glossary

Certain terms, used frequently throughout this document, have the following meanings.

Term	Meaning
LEP Client	A user of information or services provided by government agencies or funded services who has limited English-language proficiency (LEP). This includes those who can speak some English, but who may not be confident or who have limited ability to speak or understand English under some circumstances, or in some environments.
Community languages	Languages spoken or signed in New Zealand by members of minority groups or communities within a majority language context. They do not include Te Reo Māori.
Government agencies	All central government agencies of various organisational forms, including public service departments and crown entities, listed on the Public Service Commission's website. See www.publicservice.govt.nz/system/central-government-organisations
Funded services	Services funded by government and delivered by community organisations and private companies.
Credentialed interpreter	An interpreter who has been formally trained and tested as able to accurately and objectively, transfer spoken or signed information from one language to another to facilitate communication between two parties who use different languages as well as meet all the other NAATI standards.
Language assistance	Measures that support clients to deal effectively with government agencies and funded services that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpreting from English into community languages and from community languages into English • translating from English into community languages • the employment and use of staff who speak community languages to deliver services in those languages.
Language service providers	Agencies that arrange the supply of qualified interpreters and translators.
The guidelines/these guidelines	The Language Assistance Services guidelines provided in this document.
The policy/this policy	The Language Assistance Services policy described in these guidelines.
Translator	A qualified professional who converts frozen information (written or signed) from one language to another, accurately and objectively, to facilitate communication between two parties who use different languages.

7. NAATI Levels of Interpreter CREDENTIALING

7.1. Recognised Practising Translator or Interpreter

A Recognised Practising credential is granted in low demand languages and languages of new and emerging communities where testing is not available. Recognised Practising practitioners have completed formal training and have work practice as a translator and/or interpreter but have not had their skills tested by NAATI.

NAATI offers both Recognised Practising Translator and Recognised Practising Interpreter credentials.

7.2. Certified Translator

Certified Translators transfer written messages from one language to another, for the purpose of communication between a writer and reader who do not share the same language.

7.3. Certified Provisional Interpreter

Certified Provisional Interpreters transfer non-complex, non-specialised messages from one language into another, accurately reflecting the meaning.

The description of 'provisional' in the credential name refers to the skills tested rather than the difficulty of the test. The Certified Provisional Interpreter test assesses consecutive dialogue interpreting only.

7.4. Certified Interpreter

Certified Interpreters have more experience than Certified Provisional Interpreters. They transfer complex, non-specialised messages from one language into another. Certified Interpreters are assessed against the skills in the Certified Provisional Interpreter test, as well as the skills of consecutive and simultaneous monologue interpreting and sight translation.

7.5. Certified Specialist Health Interpreter

Certified Specialist Health Interpreters are experienced and accomplished interpreters who are experts in interpreting in the health domain. They have completed training and undertake continuous professional development in specialist health interpreting.

7.6. Certified Specialist Legal Interpreter

Certified Specialist Legal Interpreters are experienced and accomplished interpreters who are experts in interpreting in the legal domain. They have completed training and undertake continuous professional development in specialist legal interpreting.

8. NAATI Standards for Interpreters

The NAATI standards that have been adopted are set around the following competencies or sets of knowledge, skills, and attributes that an interpreter needs to demonstrate in order to pass their certification test.

The standards can be met at different levels and in different languages and are tested by the interpreter being presented with different scenarios where their performance is observed by specially trained examiners.⁵⁶

The following list of competencies⁵⁷ describe the knowledge, skill and attributes required in credentialed interpreters:

Language Competency refers to the knowledge of two languages and skill in using these two languages to interpret effectively. This includes Language proficiency enabling meaning transfer, Vocabulary knowledge, Grammar knowledge, Idiomatic knowledge and Language trends knowledge. These form the basis for the interpreter's Rhetorical skill, which is part of the Transfer competency

Intercultural competency refers to the areas of knowledge and skill required by the interpreter that allows the interpreter to identify culturally-specific information, appropriately reflect these in the target language and deal with clients in a culturally appropriate manner. This includes Cultural, historical and political knowledge and Sociolinguistic skill.

Research competency refers to Research tools and methods knowledge, Terminology and information research skill as well as the skill needed to Create and maintain a knowledge bank. These knowledge and skill areas are essential for the interpreter to prepare for an interpreting assignment, to identify the information needed in a particular situation, and to maintain and develop professional skills, e.g. understanding academic research on interpreting.

Technological competency refers to Interpreting technology knowledge, skills in Interpreting through communication media, and the range of Information and Communication technology (ICT) skill an interpreter must possess to prepare for and provide interpreting services, (i.e. Internet, software and hardware-based).

Thematic competency refers to the kind of knowledge the interpreter requires to ensure swift and accurate understanding of the context and content of the assignment, the particular terminology and phraseology used, the interpersonal situation they are entering and its anticipated communication dynamics. Included in this are General knowledge, Current events knowledge, Subject-matter specific knowledge and Institution-specific knowledge, related to the setting, audience and interlocutors of each assignment. It is essential that the interpreter has this knowledge readily available through prior preparation as the nature of most interpreting work may not allow the interpreter to refer to resources during the assignment.

Transfer competency refers to the knowledge and skills required to reproduce messages using a different language. In the context of interpreting, this usually relates to the transfer of oral or signed language and involves Interpreting modes knowledge, Discourse analysis skill, Discourse management skill, Meaning transfer, Memory skill and Rhetorical skill, Interpreting standards knowledge and Self-assessment skill. The comprehension and reproduction of the message must occur with immediacy, i.e. the source message must be reproduced in the target language with minimal or no delay depending on the mode of interpreting and any limits inherent in the language pair.

⁵⁶[NAATI Certification System - NAATI](#)

⁵⁷[Interpreter-KSA-Paper.pdf \(naati.com.au\)](#)

Meaning transfer can be regarded as the actualisation and coming together of all of the competencies an interpreter must have. In the process of transferring the meaning from the source language into the target language, the interpreter must use appropriate terminology, grammatical features, style and register, and pay attention to the flow and quality of language in achieving complete transfer. This process is increasingly difficult when source and target languages are typologically different, and when cultural concepts reflected in the source language have no direct equivalent in the target language.

Ethics knowledge and Professional Ethics encompassed in Ethical competency refers to both the knowledge of the appropriate codes of ethics and the skills and personal attributes required to apply the relevant codes and act ethically as an interpreter. For the interpreter, the ability to deal with ethical issues is fundamental because of interpreter's continual involvement in human interaction with multiple parties. Ethical competency is an essential part of professionalism in all relationships an interpreter has, including obligations to other participants in an interpreting encounter, to employers or agencies providing work, and to the interpreting profession.

NAATI is of the opinion that the attributes of greatest importance in professional interpreting work are:

- Attentive-to-detail – careful about detail and thorough when completing work tasks
- Desire-to-excel – motivated to improve and perform work tasks consistently to a high level
- Reliable – dependable and responsible in fulfilling work tasks
- Willing-to-learn – actively and continuously improving knowledge and skills
- Objective – able to put aside personal feelings or opinions
- Respectful – considerate of the feelings, wishes, and rights of others
- Collaborative – able to work effectively and efficiently with others
- Self-reflective – aware of your own limitations (knowledge and skills, behaviours and beliefs and the influence these have on the performance of work tasks)
- Problem-solving – able to identify and find effective solutions for issues in order to achieve a goal
- Confident – self-assurance in one's personal judgment and ability.

Each of these Attributes is required in one or more of the areas of competency, and therefore should not be assigned to specific areas. Nevertheless, they are integral to overall professional practice as they determine how an interpreter applies their knowledge and skills.

9. Language List By Country of Use

This list indicates the main languages spoken or signed in different countries throughout the world.⁵⁸ It reinforces the importance of finding out your client’s preferred language.

In this list of languages, you will see an occasional reference to lingua franca. This is a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different.

Country	Main languages spoken
Afghanistan	Dari Persian (official), Pashtu (or Pashto, official), other Turkic and minor languages
Albania	Albanian (Tosk is the official dialect), Greek
Algeria	Arabic (official) French, Berber dialects
Andorra	Catalan (official), French, Castilian, Portuguese
Angola	Portuguese (official), Bantu and other African languages
Antigua & Barbuda	English (official) local dialects
Argentina	Spanish (official), English, Italian, German, French
Armenia	Armenian, Yezidi, Russian
Australia	English, indigenous and other languages
Austria	German (official), Slovene, Croatian, Hungarian (each official in one region)
Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani, Turkic, Russian, Armenian, and other languages
Bahamas	English (official), Creole (among Haitian migrants)
Bahrain	Arabic, English, Farsi (or Persian), Urdu
Bangladesh	Bangla (or Bengali, official), English
Barbados	English
Belarus	Belarusian (or Belorussian), Russian, other
Belgium	Dutch (Flemish, official), French (official), German (official)
Belize	English (official), Spanish, Mayan, Garifuna (Carib), Creole
Benin	French (official), Fon, Yoruba, tribal languages
Bhutan	Dzongkha (official), Tibetan dialects (among Bhotes), Nepalese dialects (among Nepalese)
Bolivia	Spanish (official), Quechua (official), Aymara (official)
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian

⁵⁸ Adapted from Department of Family and Community Services NSW, May 2012, *Language Services Guidelines*, and taking into consideration language names used by both NAATI and ISO639-3

Country	Main languages spoken
Botswana	English, Setswana, Kalanga, Sekgalagadi, and other languages
Brazil	Portuguese (official), Spanish, English, French
Brunei	Malay (official), English, Chinese
Bulgaria	Bulgarian, Turkish, Roma
Burkina Faso	French (official), native African (Sudanic) languages
Burundi	Kirundi and French (official), Swahili
Cambodia	Khmer (official), French, English
Cameroon	French (official), English (official), 24 major African language groups
Canada	English (official), French (official), other languages such as Punjabi, Chinese languages & Spanish
Cape Verde	Portuguese, Criuolo
Central African Republic	French (official), Sangho (lingua franca national), tribal languages
Chad	French (official), Arabic (official), Sara, more than 120 languages and dialects
Chile	Spanish
China	Standard Chinese (Mandarin/Putonghua), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghaiese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages
Colombia	Spanish
Comoros	Arabic (official), French (official), Shikomoro (Swahili/Arabic blend)
Congo, Democratic Republic of	French (official), Lingala, Kingwana, Kikongo, Tshiluba
Congo, Republic of	French (official), Lingala, Monokutuba, Kikongo, local languages & dialects
Cook Islands	English, Cook Island Māori
Costa Rica	Spanish (official), English
Cote d'Ivoire	French (official) & African languages (Dioula especially)
Croatia	Croatian (official), others including Italian, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak & German
Cuba	Spanish
Cyprus	Greek (official), Turkish (official), English
Czech Republic	Czech
Denmark	Danish, Faroese, Greenlandic (Inuit dialect), German, English
Djibouti	French (official), Arabic (official), Somali, Afar

Country	Main languages spoken
Domenica	English (official), French patois
Dominican Republic	Spanish
East Timor	Portuguese (official), Bahasa Indonesia, English, other indigenous languages including Tetum, Galole, Mambae & Kemak
Ecuador	Spanish (official), Quechua, & other Amerindian languages
Egypt	Arabic (official), English, French
El Salvador	Spanish, Nahua (among some Amerindians)
Equatorial Guinea	Spanish (official), French (official), Pidgin English, Fang, Bubi, Ibo
Eritrea	Afar, Arabic, Tigre, & Kunama, Tigrinya, other Cushtic languages
Estonia	Estonian (official), Russian, other languages
Ethiopia	Amharic, Tigrigna (or Tigrinya), Orominga, Guaragigna, Somali, Arabic, English & others
Fiji	English (official), Fijian, Hindustani
Finland	Finnish (official), Swedish (official), Sami (or Saami, Lapp), & Russian-speaking minorities
France	French & regional dialects (Provençal, Breton, Alsatian, Corsican, Catalan, Basque & Flemish)
Gabon	French (official), Fang, Myene, Nzebi, Bapounou/Eschira, Bandjabi
Gambia	English (official), Mandinka, Wolof, Fula & other indigenous languages
Georgia	Georgian (official), Russian, Armenian, Azerbaijani & others
Germany	German
Ghana	English (official), African languages (including Akan, Moshi-Dagomba, Ewe & Ga)
Greece	Greek (official), English, French
Grenada	English (official), French patois
Guatemala	Spanish, Amerindian languages including Quiche, Cakchiquel, Kekchi, Mam, Garifuna & Xinca
Guinea	French (official), native languages (Malinke, Susu, Fulani)
Guinea-Bissau	Portuguese (official), Criolo, African languages
Guyana	English (official), Amerindian dialects, Creole, Hindi, Urdu
Haiti	Haitian Creole, French (official)
Honduras	Spanish (official), Amerindian dialects, English
Hungary	Hungarian (or Magyar), other languages
Iceland	Icelandic, English, Nordic languages, German

Country	Main languages spoken
India	Hindi, English, Bangla (or Bengali), Gujarati, Kashmiri, Malayam, Marathi, Oriya (or Odia), Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Kannada, Assamese, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Hindi/Urdu and many dialects – all official
Indonesia	Bahasa Indonesia (official), English, Dutch, Javanese & more than 500 other languages/dialects
Iran	Persian & Persian dialects, Turkic & Turkic dialects, Kurdish (3 types: Northern Kurdish/Kurmanji, Central/Sorani, Southern Kurdish), Luri, Balochi, Arabic, Turkish & others
Iraq	Arabic (official), Kurdish (3 types: Northern Kurdish/Kurmanji, Central/Sorani, Southern Kurdish, official in Kurdish regions), Assyrian, Armenian
Ireland	English (official), Irish (Gaelic, official)
Israel	Hebrew (official), Arabic, English
Italy	Italian (official), German, French & Slovene speaking minorities
Jamaica	English, Jamaican Creole
Japan	Japanese
Jordan	Arabic (official), English
Kazakhstan	Kazak (state language), Russian (official)
Kenya	English (official), Swahili (national) & numerous indigenous languages
Kiribati	English (official), I-Kiribati (Gilbertese)
Korea, North	Korean
Korea, South	Korean, English
Kuwait	Arabic (official), English
Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyz (official), Russian (official)
Laos	Lao (official), French, English, various English languages
Latvia	Latvian (official), Russian, Lithuanian
Lebanon	Arabic (official), French, English, Armenian
Lesotho	English (official), Sesotho (official), Zulu, Xhosa
Liberia	English (official), some 20 ethnic-group languages
Libya	Arabic, Italian, English
Liechtenstein	German (official), Alemannic dialect
Lithuania	Lithuanian (official), Russian, Polish
Luxembourg	Luxembourgish (national), French (administrative), German (administrative)
Macedonia	Macedonian (official), Albanian (official), Turkish, Roma, Serbian

Country	Main languages spoken
Madagascar	Malagasy (official), French (official)
Malawi	Chichewa (official), Chinyanja, Chiyao, Chitumbuka, Chisena, Chilomwe, Chitonga, other languages
Malaysia	Bahasa Melayu (Malay official), English, Chinese dialects (Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, Hainan, Foochow) Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Panjabi, Thai, indigenous languages (including Iban, Kadazan) in East Malaysia
Maldives	Maldivian Dhivehi (official), English
Mali	French (official), Bambara, numerous African languages
Malta	Maltese (official), English (official)
Marshall Islands	Marshallese (official), English (official), Japanese
Mauritania	Hassanyia Arabic (official), Pulaar, Soninke, French, Wolof
Mauritius	English (official), Creole, Bojpoori, French
Mexico	Spanish, various Mayan, Nahuatl, & other regional indigenous languages
Micronesia	English (official), Chukese, Pohnpeian, Yapese, Kosrean, Uithian, Woleaian, Nukuoro, Kapingamarangi
Moldova	Moldovan (or Romanian, official), Russian, Gagauz (a Turkish dialect)
Monaco	French (official), English, Italian, Monegasque
Mongolia	Mongolian, Turkic, Russian
Montenegro	Serbian/Montenegrin (Ijekavian dialect – official)
Morocco	Arabic (official), Berber dialects, French
Mozambique	Portuguese (official), Emakhuwa, Xichangana, Elomwe, Cisena, Echuwabo, other languages
Myanmar	Burmese, minority languages such as Karen (or S'gaw Karen, Pwo Karen, Pa'o Karen, Karenni, Kayah, Red Karen, Kayan, and other dialects), Lai, Tedim, Haka, Zophei, Mizo & Arakanese
Namibia	English (official), Afrikaans, German, indigenous languages (Oshivambo, Herero, Nama)
Nauru	Nauruan (official), English
Nepal	Nepali (official), Maithali, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Tamang, English, others
Netherlands	Dutch (official), Frisian (official), Papiamentu (official) & Limburgish, Dutch Low Saxon (recognised regional languages)
New Zealand	English (main language of government & business), Māori (official), New Zealand Sign Language (official)
Nicaragua	Spanish (official), English, indigenous languages
Niue	Niuean, English

Country	Main languages spoken
Niger	French (official) Hausa, Djerma
Nigeria	English (official), Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo, Fulani, & more than 200 others
Norway	Bokmal Norwegian (official), Nynorsk Norwegian (official), small Sami and Finnish-speaking minorities (Sami is official in six municipalities)
Oman	Arabic (official), English, Baluchi, Urdu, Indian dialects
Pakistan	Urdu (official), English (official), Punjabi, Sindi, Siraiki, Pashtu, Balochi, Hindko, Brahui, Burushaski, & other languages
Palau	Palauan, English, Sonsoralese, Tobi, Angaur (each official on some islands), Filipino, Chinese, Carolinian, Japanese, other languages
Palestine State (proposed)	Arabic, Hebrew, English
Panama	Spanish (official), English
Papua New Guinea	Tok Pisin (or Melanesian Pidgin, the lingua franca), Hiri Motu (in Papua region), English, 715 indigenous languages
Paraguay	Spanish (official), Guarani (official)
Peru	Spanish (official), Quechua (official), Aymara, many minor Amazonian languages
Philippines	Filipino (based on Tagalog, official), English (official), major dialects Tagalog, Cebuana, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, Ilonggo, Bicol, Waray, Pampango & Pangasinense
Poland	Polish
Portugal	Portuguese (official), Mirandese (official but used locally)
Qatar	Arabic (official), English
Romania	Romanian (official), Hungarian, German
Russia	Russian, other languages
Rwanda	Kinyarwanda (official), French (official), English (official), Kiswahili
St Kitts & Nevis	English
St Lucia	English (official), French patois
St Vincent & the Grenadines	English, French patois
Samoa	Samoan (official), English (official)
San Marino	Italian
Sao Tome & Principe	Portuguese
Saudi Arabia	Arabic
Senegal	French (official), Wolof, Pulaar, Jola, Mandinka

Country	Main languages spoken
Serbia	Serbian (official), Romanian (official in Vojvodina), Hungarian (official in Vojvodina), Slovak (official in Vojvodina), Croatian (official in Vojvodina), Albanian (official in Kosovo)
Seychelles	Seselwa Creole (official), English (official), French (official)
Sierra Leone	English (official), Mende (southern language), Temne (northern language) Krio (lingua franca)
Singapore	Mandarin, English, Malay, Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochew, Tamil, other Chinese dialects
Slovakia	Slovak (official), Hungarian, Roma, Ukrainian
Slovenia	Slovenian, Serbo-Croatian
Solomon Islands	English (official), Melanesian Pidgin (or Solomon Pijin, lingua franca), 120 indigenous languages
Somalia	Somali (official), Arabic, English, Italian
South Africa	IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Afrikaans, Sepedi, English, Setswana, Sesotho, Xitsonga, other languages
Spain	Castilian Spanish (official nationwide), Catalan, Galician, Basque (each official regionally)
Sri Lanka	Sinhala (or Sinhalese, official & national), Tamil (national), English, other languages
Sudan	Arabic (official), Nubian, Ta Bedawie, diverse dialects of Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic, Sudanic languages, English
Suriname	Dutch (official), Surinamese (lingua franca), English, Hindustani, Javanese
Swaziland	English (official), Siswati (official)
Sweden	Swedish, small Sami and Finnish-speaking minorities
Switzerland	German (official), French (official), Italian (official) Romansch (national)
Syria	Arabic (official), Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian, French, English
Taiwan	Chinese (Mandarin – official), Taiwanese (Min), Hakka dialects
Tajikistan	Tajik (official), Russian
Tanzania	Swahili (official), English (official), Arabic, many local languages
Thailand	Thai (Siamese), English, ethnic & regional dialects
Togo	French (official), Ewe, Mina (south), Kabye, Dagomba (north) & many dialects
Tokelau	Tokelauan, English
Tonga	Tongan (national), English
Trinidad & Tobago	English (official), Hindi, French, Spanish, Chinese

Country	Main languages spoken
Tunisia	Arabic (official), French
Turkey	Turkish (official), Kurdish, Dimli, Azeri, Kabardian
Turkmenistan	Turkmen, Russian, Uzbek, other languages
Tuvalu	Tuvaluan, English, Samoan, Kiribati (on island of Nui)
Uganda	English (official), Ganda or Luganda, other Niger-Congo languages, Nilo-Saharan languages, Swahili, Arabic
Ukraine	Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, Polish, Hungarian
United Arab Emirates	Arabic (official), Persian, English, Hindi, Urdu
United Kingdom	English, Welsh, Scots Gaelic & various migrant languages, including Polish, Punjabi & Urdu
United States of America	English, Spanish, Chinese (including Cantonese & Mandarin), French & French Creole, Tagalog, Vietnamese
Uruguay	Spanish, Portunol, Brazilerio
Uzbekistan	Uzbek, Russian, Tajik, other languages
Vanuatu	Bislama (or Melanesian Pidgin English, official), English (official), French (official), more than 100 local languages
Vatican City	Italian, Latin, French, various other languages
Venezuela	Spanish (official), numerous indigenous dialects
Vietnam	Vietnamese (official), English, French, Chinese, Khmer, mountain-area languages (Mon-Khmer & Malayo-Polynesian)_
Western Sahara (proposed state)	Hassaniya Arabic, Moroccan Arabic
Yemen	Arabic
Zambia	English (official), major languages: Bemba, Kaonda, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja, Tonga & about 70 other indigenous languages
Zimbabwe	English (official), Shona, Ndebele (Sindebele), numerous minor tribal dialects.

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