

National Register of Sign Language Interpreters

Code of Conduct

Sign Language Interpreting Service

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Section 1: What is the purpose of the Code of Conduct?

The National Register of Sign Language Interpreters (“the Register”) is a quality assurance and registration scheme for Irish Sign Language and Deaf Interpreters in Ireland. It is important that Registered interpreters (“interpreters”) read, understand and meet the standards set out in the Code of Conduct (“the Code”).

The Code is an integral part of the register, for both service users and interpreters. The Code lets service users know what they can expect from an interpreter. The term “service users” includes organisations, Deaf or hearing clients and anyone who uses the services of an interpreter.

Anyone can make a complaint about an interpreter if they feel the interpreter has breached the Code or if they have concerns about an Interpreter's actions or omissions. That includes service users, other interpreters, the Registration Panel and others. For more information on how to make a complaint, see the *Complaints and Mediation Process*.

Section 2: Definitions

2.1 Professional Misconduct

Professional misconduct is defined as any act or pattern of behaviour by an interpreter that:

- a) Is in breach of the Code
- b) Conduct which is seriously disgraceful or dishonourable in a professional respect, whether the conduct occurs during the course of their interpreting duties or otherwise.
- c) Conduct which has seriously fallen short of the standards expected amongst interpreters.

2.2 Poor professional performance

Poor professional performance is any failure of an interpreter to meet the standards of competence that may reasonably be expected of interpreters.

The fact that conduct is not specifically referred to in the code does not mean that it cannot amount to professional misconduct or poor professional performance.

Section 3: Professional Conduct

Interpreters must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. In doing this interpreters are expected to:

- a) Interpret to the best of their ability.

- b) Be on time and prepared for assignments.
- c) Not make any personal and/or economic gain whatsoever from any confidential information they may have learned in the course of their duties as interpreters.
- d) Conduct themselves in a manner befitting the profession, including when negotiating work and contracts, getting preparation material, choice of professional clothing and professional demeanour.
- e) Not cancel or withdraw themselves from an agreed assignment without fair and reasonable grounds to do so. For example an interpreter may withdraw their services during an assignment if they feel exploited, discriminated or were misinformed about the nature of an assignment.
- f) Interpreters must cooperate with the complaints process in a timely manner, whether they are the subject of a complaint or when a complaint has been made about another person.
- g) Interpreters must refrain from acting in any way that brings the profession into disrepute.

Section 4: Confidentiality

- a) Interpreters should keep information they gain access to as a result of an assignment strictly confidential. Information about the assignment should not be shared through any medium, such as social media, email, or personal conversations, without the prior consent of the relevant parties involved.
- b) We recognise that very occasionally interpreters may need to reveal such information when engaging with the Complaints & Mediation process or due to legal obligations. For example, if someone is a risk to themselves or others. The Code does not prohibit an interpreter engaging with those involved in an assignment, in order to prepare for an upcoming interpreting assignment or to reflect on the delivery of an assignment. For example, contacting hospital staff prior to an appointment to get relevant information on the medical process or the terminology that will be used. Interpreters must ensure this is done in way that protects the information and the relevant service users.
- c) When necessary, an interpreter may need to disclose some information to another party (for example another interpreter or agency) to provide consistent quality of service or within the recognised structures of professional support and training. Interpreters must ensure this is done in a way that that protects the information and the relevant service users.

For more information using and sharing of personal data, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Section 5: Impartiality

- a) Interpreters must refrain from taking on assignments where they feel they will not be able to put aside personal biases or reactions which may effect the impartiality of the interpretation.
- b) Throughout an assignment, interpreters must endeavour to maintain impartiality and objectivity, and provide a faithful culturally and linguistically appropriate rendering of the interpretation.
- c) Interpreters must refrain from altering messages for political, religious, moral or philosophical reasons.

- d) Interpreters must not unfairly discriminate against service users by allowing personal views affect the services they provide. This includes, but is not limited to, the interpreter's views about a service user's gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.
- e) Interpreters must immediately disclose to the parties involved in an assignment any factor which might jeopardise the impartiality of the interpretation.

Section 6: Accountability for Professional Decisions

Interpreters must exercise sound professional judgement and accept full responsibility for their decisions. In doing so interpreters must:

- a) Not accept any assignment for which they do not have the appropriate training, skills and experience. Interpreters must seek appropriate advice when they are unsure whether they have the appropriate training, skills and experience for an assignment.
- b) Not provide inaccurate information about their qualifications, experience, registration and competence.
- c) Be aware of personal circumstances, conflicts or potential conflicts of interest that could interfere with the effectiveness of interpreting services. Any potential conflict of interest must be disclosed to all parties.
- d) Be open and honest with service users about any mistakes made during the interpretation and take action where possible to rectify errors.
- e) Reduce their work or stop practising if their ability to practice could be negatively affected by their physical or mental health.

Section 7: Working Conditions

To ensure the best quality interpretation, interpreters will:

- a) Aim to ensure that satisfactory working conditions / facilities are in place in order to support effective interpretation. For example, sound, visibility, requirements for co-interpreters/ Deaf interpreter, rest breaks, comfort etc. Where working conditions / facilities are not satisfactory, the interpreter must make it known to those involved and let them know how the working conditions / facilities will impede effective interpreting. In such cases interpreters may withdraw from the assignment.
- b) Endeavour to prepare appropriately for an interpreting assignment. This may include seeking to secure appropriate preparation material or engaging directly with a service user.
- c) Not perform other duties outside their scope as an interpreter while working as an interpreter, without reasonable grounds to do so.

Section 8: Professional Relationships

- a) Interpreters must respect services users' dignity, privacy and autonomy.
- b) Interpreters must treat fellow interpreting colleagues in a spirit of respect, courtesy, fairness, good faith and mutual cooperation.
- c) Interpreters must refrain from any action or utterance which is prejudicial to the interests of the Register and other interpreters. Complaints must be dealt and settled within established processes and procedures. This does not preclude or prohibit the lawful exercise of the right to free expression and reasonable debate.
- d) Interpreters are encouraged to discuss and attempt to resolve, in a professional manner, any minor breach of the Code that arises between two or more interpreters. If the interpreters are unable to reach a resolution, a complaint can be made to the Complaints Committee.
- e) Interpreters must understand the difference between social and professional interactions. Interpreters must maintain appropriate boundaries and ensure that relationships with all those involved are reasonable, fair and professional.

Section 9: Ongoing Professional Development

- a) Interpreters will continue to improve and develop their skills through relevant CPD and education. This will include, but is not limited to, meeting their CPD and work practice requirements for maintenance of registration.
- b) Interpreters must notify the Registration Panel if they are unable to meet their continuous professional development (CPD) or work practice requirements.
- c) Interpreters must keep up to date with developments in practice theory and its application.
- d) Interpreters must apply their knowledge, CPD and training into their practice where appropriate.
- e) Interpreters must embed reflective practice in their development as an interpreter.
- f) Interpreters must strive to interpret to the best of their ability.

Section 10: References

Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (CISLI). 2011. *Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct*. CISLI. <https://cisli.ie/home/codeofethics/> (Accessed 07.05.2019)

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