

FAIR USAGE POLICY

VOUCHER SCHEME

UNDER SECTION 9 OF THE IRISH
SIGN LANGUAGE ACT 2017

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1. Introduction

This Fair Usage Policy sets out how the national Voucher Scheme ('the Scheme') may be used. It sets out acceptable usage and limitations of use of the Scheme for Ireland's Deaf community and specifically Users of Irish Sign Language ('ISL Users'). The Scheme will operate for three months, from 1 October 2023 until 15 December 2023, with all interpreting assignments to be completed by 31 December 2023.

This Fair Usage Policy may be updated from time to time and applied to the scheme and to users of Irish Sign Language.

SLIS reserves the right to suspend Users of ISL access to the scheme without liability if there is a potential breach of this Fair Usage Policy or the reasonable grounds of use (see appendix 1). ISL Users can appeal any such suspension following the voucher scheme complaints policy.

2. Purpose and Jurisdiction

Section 9 of the Irish Sign Language Act, 2017 (hereinafter '*the ISL Act*') makes reference to funds to provide and enable access to Irish Sign Language ('ISL') in '*social, educational and cultural events and services (including medical) and other activities*', within the territory of the Republic of Ireland.

The Fair Usage Policy sets out the rights of users of ISL to fair and equal access to ISL interpretation through the Voucher Scheme, and in order that all funding can be allocated.

3. Requirements and Duties

3.1. The Agency

SLIS will procure the provision of Irish Sign Language interpreting services for the scheme from an agency through public tender. The Agency will commit to provide ISL interpreting services to ISL Users for the provision of the Scheme. The Agency will be responsible for sourcing and allocating interpreters to requests made under the Scheme to SLIS, and the Agency will be responsible for arrangements and delivery of interpreting assignments, and reporting on the interpreting provision.

4. Rules

4.1. Acceptable Use

Individuals

Applications are restricted to users of ISL aged 18 years or over. Service Users are understood as Deaf people whose first language is ISL or who need ISL support to engage with services and events on an equal basis as other citizens.

ISL users, or their nominated representative, are responsible for contacting SLIS directly (by post, email, text or via website) to request an ISL Interpreter for a relevant eligible event, service or activity, and provide the necessary details as set out in the application form and Operational Process Guidelines.

The Scheme provides access to social, educational and cultural events and services (including medical) and other activities to all ISL Users.

The eligible applications will be approved according to the priority list below and then on a 'first come, first served' basis until funding is exhausted, subject to a minimum of 30% participation for residents living

outside Dublin and 30% for Dublin residents. A list of ISL Users who are considered as priority is set out below:

- Deaf-Blind Adults
- Members of the Travelling Community
- Ethnic minorities
- Migrants
- Deaf with a disability or with additional needs and
- Deaf people aged 65+ years old.

No requests will be accepted after 15th December 2023.

Location

The Scheme is limited to interpreting, including remote interpreting, for eligible events, services and activities organised within the Republic of Ireland only.

Interpreters

ISL Users may provide a list of three preferred Interpreters. ISL Interpreters must be registered and verified by the Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters ('RISLI')¹. In cases where preferred ISL Interpreters are not available, an alternative ISL interpreter will be provided where possible. Whilst reasonable effort will be made to procure the interpreter of the Service User's choosing, this is not guaranteed and shall not be regarded as the basis of a complaint.

4.2. Limitations

- Deaf minors (children under age of 18)² cannot avail of the Scheme.
- The Scheme may provide a maximum of five assignments per ISL User.
- Individual assignments requests cannot exceed three (3) full days of interpreting.
- Assignments are not transferrable to another ISL User.
- The range of interpreting supports available from other sources as outlined in the Operational Processes will not be considered eligible under this Scheme. Referrals to existing schemes will be made where relevant.
- The scheme will cease when funds are exhausted – and no commitment to interpreting costs can be made thereafter.

5. Breach of Policy

If SLIS have reasonable grounds to suspect that ISL Users are in breach of this Fair Usage Policy, or if Service Users do anything which would put SLIS or its funders in breach of statutory or other obligations, SLIS reserves the right to suspend access to the scheme without liability. More information is available in Appendix 1. ISL Users can appeal any such suspension following the voucher scheme complaints policy.

The Scheme shall not be used, either directly or indirectly:

¹ Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters – for more information go to www.risli.ie.

² Within the meaning of s.3 of Children Act 2001

- In breach of the provisions of the data protection legislation or any directions issued by the Data Protection Commission;
- To transmit, publish, link to, make available, or cause to be transmitted, any material designed to obtain passwords, account information or other information from other ISL Users.

As per section 6 of the Scheme's Fair Usage Policy, the SLIS may disclose any information relating to ISL Users to outside parties where:

- SLIS has a belief that such action is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of the individual;
- Where SLIS has a belief that a Service User has committed an unlawful action;
- Where SLIS has a belief that the legitimate rights of a third party appear to have been interfered with; or
- Where a court or tribunal orders disclosure.

Data will be collected for specific purposes (i.e. operation of the scheme, reporting and evaluation).

6. Data Protection

SLIS regards the lawful and responsible treatment of personal information as very important and therefore ensures that this data is collected, processed, stored and disposed of in full compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (as amended)³.

Some or all elements of the process may be undertaken by third parties. In such circumstances it will be necessary for your information to be shared between SLIS, the ISL Interpreting Agency and ISL Interpreters in order for your application to be processed and fulfilled.

Information provided to SLIS will be utilised in the following ways:

- To administer and facilitate requests for ISL interpreting in a smooth manner;
- To inform the Agency and Interpreters working under requests on the Scheme;
- For management and reporting purposes;
- Some elements of data provided may be used, in aggregated and anonymous form, for research/statistical purposes in order to inform our funders and other interested parties of SLIS's achievements and progress.
- Individual Service Users experience will be used anonymously to help optimise the service delivery

³ Data Protection Act 2018 (as amended) - <https://revisedacts.lawreform.ie/eli/2018/act/7/revised/en/html>

Appendix 1

***Reasonable Grounds'* policy for use of Voucher Scheme Section 9, ISL Act**

You must be a User of Irish Sign Language (18 years of age or over) to apply to SLIS for sign language interpreting to support your access to social, educational and cultural events and services (including medical) and other activities, as set out in the Fair Usage Policy and Operational Guidelines for the Voucher Scheme ('The Scheme') in response to section 9 of the Irish Sign Language Act, 2017.

Users of Irish Sign Language ('ISL Users') must follow the Fair Usage Policy and Operational Guidelines for the Voucher Scheme ('The Scheme').

ISL Users are not permitted to any illegal use or use that will discredit Sign Language Interpreting Service ('SLIS'), Citizen's Information Board (CIB) or the Department of Social Protection (DSP).

SLIS consider your use of the Scheme to be in a breach of Fair Usage Policy if you:

1. Use an ISL Interpreter under the Scheme for purposes other than mentioned in the application form;
2. Use an ISL Interpreter under the Scheme for events other than mentioned in the application form;
3. Threaten, harass or cause distress, annoyance or discomfort to any other person, ISL Interpreter or other person involved in the operation of the service, activity event applied for;
4. Intentionally disrupt or adversely affect any other person's access to, or use of, the Scheme;
5. Transfer an assignment under the Scheme to another ISL User, without the prior approval of SLIS.

ISL Users are solely responsible for any acts and omissions that occur related to their use of the Scheme.

SLIS reserves the right to suspend ISL Users' access to the Scheme if there is a suspected breach of the Fair Usage Policy or the reasonable use grounds listed above.