



Voucher Scheme

Under section 9 of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017

Complaints Policy

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Section 1: Introduction

The Voucher Scheme ('the Scheme') has been established for the purpose of support for access to events, services and activities for Irish Sign Language (ISL) users ('*ISL Users*') under Section 9 of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017, currently being developed and operated by the Sign Language Interpreting Service, funded by Citizen's Information Board (CIB).

Section 2: Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to set out how a person engaging with SLIS can make a complaint about the Scheme, and how such complaints can be handled.
- 1.2. The consideration of complaints is private and confidential and will be treated as such.
- 1.3. The outcome of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant. Should the ISL User also request correspondence in ISL, this will be facilitated.

Section 3: Scope

3.1 Scope of Complaints

- 3.1.1 This policy applies to situations where a person wishes to make a complaint about their experience with the following:
 - a) A successful or an unsuccessful application under the Scheme
 - b) A suspected breach of the Scheme's Fair Usage Policy
 - c) Operation of the Scheme of service by SLIS Staff

For all other items not covered above, persons should submit a Feedback Form.

- 3.1.2 Complaints related to ISL interpreter(s) should be directed in the first instance to the (booking) Agency and to the Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI) in accordance with RISLI complaints policies and procedures.
- 3.1.3 Complaints related to external organisers of social events, services and activities where the ISL User wishes to attend should be directed to the external organisers (following their complaints procedures).

3.2. Who can make a Complaint?

- 3.2.1. ISL Users who have made an application for a request under the Scheme;
- 3.2.2. An ISL User who is concerned about any aspect of the service that has affected them in a way that they perceive to be negative.
- 3.2.3. A representative may complain on the ISL user's behalf with the ISL User's consent;

Section 4: Responsibilities of SLIS Staff

4.1. SLIS will publish this complaints policy and inform ISL users of their right to make a complaint at any stage and provide them with information on how to do this.

4.2. If an ISL User makes a complaint to a SLIS staff member, SLIS will attempt to resolve the matter to the ISL User's satisfaction. SLIS will advise them of their right to make a complaint and provide them with the document "*Voucher Scheme Complaints Policy*".

Section 5: Responsibilities of SLIS Management

5.1. SLIS will ensure that an up-to-date complaints policy is in place.

5.2. SLIS will collate and analyse the type, nature, number and outcome of complaints received and will report monthly to the SLIS Board on all complaints received. SLIS will, where appropriate ensure that any learning from complaints is translated into recommendations for changes to policy or practice.

5.3. SLIS will provide a translated version of the complaints policy into Irish Sign Language.

In response to contact about complaints about the interpreter, the (booking) Agency or the external organisers of events, SLIS will liaise with the (Booking) Agency or the external organisers to support resolution of complaints received.

Section 6: Time Limit and Exceptions

6.1. A complaint must be made as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. It is recommended that complaints be made within 14 working days of the incident(s) occurring. This time limit may however be extended at the discretion of the SLIS National Manager if special circumstances make it appropriate to do so. These special circumstances include but are not limited to:

- a) Complainant illness or bereavement;
- b) Extensive support being required by the complainant which led to the delay;
- c) New, relevant or significant information relating to the incident in question becoming available;
- d) The complaint related to an issue of such seriousness that it cannot be ignored;
- e) It is considered in the public interest to investigate the complaint;

Section 7: Complaint Submission

7.1. To submit a complaint, the complainant can use one of the following options:

7.1.1. Written Complaint Form: Fill out the Form (see Appendix 1). The completed Form can be filled out in the following alternatives:

- a. online at [Voucher - Sign Language Interpreting Services \(slis.ie\)](https://www.slis.ie) or
- b. download the form from the website in docx or pdf format, fill it in and then email to voucher@slis.ie or
- c. by post/in person to Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS), Deaf Village Ireland, Ratoath Road, Cabra, Dublin 7.

7.1.2. Irish Sign Language (ISL): You can submit a complaint in Irish Sign Language (ISL) by sending a video message. ISL complaints should follow the structure of the Complaint Form. ISL Submissions can be emailed to voucher@slis.ie or sent to the Administration Booking Officer mobile number 083 3814255.

7.1.3. ISL Meeting to Complete Form: Alternatively, SLIS can organise a meeting with the complainant via videoconferencing, or in person, with an ISL interpreter or ISL-fluent staff member, to fill out the Complaint Form. To arrange such a meeting, the complainant must contact SLIS by text to number 083 3814255; or by email to voucher@slis.ie; or by video call; or by attending the office at the address above to inform of such intention.

7.2. The Complaint Form (or equivalent video in ISL) should include:

- a) Complainant's name and contact details.
- b) Job reference number
- c) Description about what the issue is, referencing the event and interpreter assigned.
- d) Date the issue occurred
- e) The complainant's desired outcome from the complaints process
- f) Any additional information that is relevant to the complaint.

Section 8: Complaints Procedure

8.1. Upon receiving the Complaints Form or video complaint, the Administration Booking Officer will check the following criteria:

- a) The Complaints Form is complete and includes the required information. If necessary information is missing from the form, the Administration Booking Officer will go back to the complainant requesting the missing information.
- b) If the complaint is made on the ISL User's behalf, then their consent must be obtained from the complainant (see 3.2.3).

8.2 The Administration Booking Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 3 working days and agree with the complainant how they will communicate with them (email, text, and letter). Every attempt will be made to facilitate the complainant's preferred style or method of communication.

8.3. The Administration Booking Officer will ensure that the complainant has a copy of the 'Voucher Scheme Complaints Policy' and is aware of the complaints procedure and timeframes.

8.4. The Administration Booking Officer will also find out whether the complainant required support to pursue the complaint and will insofar as possible try to assist them to source this support.

8.5. The Administration Booking Officer or the SLIS Manager will respond to the complainant within 10 working days with the outcome of their complaint. The complainant has the right to proceed with the complaint to Stage 2.

8.6. SLIS will keep a log of all communications and details and a timeline of actions taken in relation to any complaint.

- 8.7. Details of the complaint will be kept confidential to those immediately concerned.
- 8.8. Data collected during the complaint will be recorded and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Acts.
- 8.9. Throughout the process the SLIS will keep the complainant and the subject of the complaint up-to-date (if the complaint related to SLIS Staff) with developments as set out in this policy and in the Staff Handbook.

Section 9: Complaints Procedure - Stages

9.1. Stage 1 – Local Resolution

9.1.1. If the complaint does not satisfy the criteria outlined in Section 2 the complainant will be informed:

- a) that the complaint cannot be accepted and state the reasons as to why
- b) Provide them with other information such as the Feedback Form or signpost to the relevant organisation's complaints procedures (e.g. the Agency or RISLI etc.)

9.1.2. If the complaint satisfies the criteria outlined in Section 2, the Administration Booking Officer will do an initial review and aim to resolve the complaint at a local level by checking all relevant policies and procedures such as;

- Reasonable Grounds for use of Voucher Scheme – Appendix 1 Fair Usage Policy
- Operational Guidelines
- Fair Usage Policy
- Additional information or documentation relevant to the complaint

9.1.3. The Administration Booking Officer will respond to the complainant to advise that they have the right to have their complaint referred to the SLIS Manager if they are not satisfied with the local resolution offered.

9.1.4. The Administration Booking Officer will contact the complainant, record details of the complaint and explore what the complainant would like to happen. They will then contact the staff member involved, give them a written summary of the complaint and ask for a response. They may then explore whether a solution can be found which would be satisfactory to the complainant. This process will be completed within 15 days. Alternatively, the complainant may request to proceed directly to Stage 2.

9.2. Stage 2 – Referral to the SLIS Manager

If the complainant wishes to proceed directly to Stage 2, the Administration Booking Officer will refer the complaint to the SLIS Manager to initiate a review of the complaint. Other members of the management team (SLIS Board, subcommittee or staff) may be involved at this point.

9.2.1 The SLIS Manager will consider the complaint and liaise with the Administration Booking Officer on the nature of the complaint. The Manager will clarify the exact nature of the complaint with the complainant.

- 9.2.2 The SLIS Manager has a number of options when dealing with a complaint;
- a) Close the complaint and record reason for doing so
 - b) Informal resolution
 - c) Refer to the board for further consideration or action

The National Manager should conclude the complaint within 30 days of the receipt of the complaint.

9.3. Stage 3 – Informal Resolution

- 9.3.1 Informal resolution is where the SLIS manager engages actively with the complainant and or relevant staff with a view to achieving an agreed resolution to the complaint issue(s).
- 9.3.2 The SLIS Manager will record the form of informal resolution offered and, record the outcome.
- 9.3.3 Where informal resolution was not successful, the SLIS Manager will;
- a) Close the complaint and record the reason for doing so,
 - b) Refer to the board for further consideration or action

Section 10. Appeal Procedures

- 10.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint at Stage 3 (Informal Resolution), the complainant has the right to lodge an appeal.
- 10.2. The complainant must submit their appeal in writing within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of their complaint at Stage 3.
- 10.3. The appeal should be addressed to the SLIS Manager or the chairperson of SLIS and sent to the following address: Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS), Deaf Village Ireland, Ratoath Road, Cabra, Dublin 7 and/or at john.stewart@slis.ie.
- 10.4. The appeal should include the following information:
- a) Complainant's name and contact details.
 - b) Job reference number.
 - c) Detailed explanation of the grounds for the appeal.
 - d) Any additional information or evidence that supports the appeal.
- 10.5. Upon receiving the appeal, SLIS will acknowledge receipt in writing within 5 working days.
- 10.6. SLIS will conduct a thorough review of the complaint, including any relevant documentation and evidence.
- 10.7. The complainant will have the opportunity to present their case either in writing or in person or both. If the complainant chooses to present their case in person, arrangements will be made for a meeting, including arranging an ISL Interpreter.
- 10.8. SLIS will provide a written decision on the appeal within 15 working days of receiving the appeal. The decision of the panel will be final and binding.
- 10.9. SLIS will ensure that the complainant is informed of the outcome of the appeal in writing.

- 10.10. All communications and details related to the appeal will be kept confidential and will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Acts.
- 10.11. SLIS will review the appeals process periodically to ensure its effectiveness and make any necessary improvements.

Section 11: Data Collection

- 11.1. SLIS Administration Booking Officer will record all relevant data about a complaint after closing it. This includes the category or nature of the complaint, action taken to resolve the complaint, the outcome of the complaint and whether the ISL user was satisfied with the outcome.
- 11.2. Information and data gathered on complaints without identifying information (i.e. personal details) will be used in the evaluation of the Voucher Scheme.

Section 12: Review Date

This policy will be reviewed as necessary.

APPENDIX 1

Voucher Scheme

Complaint Form

The ISL version of the form can be found on the online complaints form at www.slis.ie/voucher

If you wish to provide complaint through Irish Sign Language, please send us the video in the same format as the form below to voucher@slis.ie or to mobile number 083 3814255.

1. Detail of service provided to the ISL User.

Date of appointment request	__ / __ / ____
Reference Number	Ref No. ____/____
Does this complaint relate to Voucher Scheme?	Yes No
Does this complaint relate to an ISL Interpreter?	Yes (if yes, please refer to RISLI's complaints Procedures) No (please, continue below)

1.2 If you don't have the Job Reference Number, please fill in these Personal Details

First Name:		Family Name:		
Eircode:		Mobile Number:		
Email:		Text messages only?	Yes No	

2. If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone, please complete the section below:

First Name:		Family Name:	
Email:		Mobile Number:	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?			
Verification. Please note SLIS may verify directly with the complainant.	I confirm I have received permission from the complainant. Signature _____		

3. Detail of service provided to the ISL User.
