

Ophthalmic Services

General Ophthalmic Services Memorandum

13 September 2019
(updated November 2019)

**To all Optometrists and
Ophthalmic Medical Practitioners
providing General Ophthalmic Services**

Dear Practitioner

Access to Interpreting Services

This memorandum gives details regarding access to Interpreting Services. **This MOS replaces MOS/312 (issued February 2018)** and provides additional advice in regard to Interpreting Services for all patients.

Access to Interpreting Services

A. Telephone Interpreting Service

Optometrists who require interpreting services to communicate and perform an eye examination can request the telephone interpreting services, known as '**The Big Word**'. In order to access telephone interpreting services you will need a Practice Access Code and Language code to make a call. Your practice has been provided with the access code in a communication from the Health and Social Care Board in July 2019, please ensure that you retain this access code to enable access to 'The Big Word'.

Please apply the following steps when you require the service:

Step 1: Call **0333 344 9473**

Step 2: Enter your Access Code (followed by #)

Step 3: Enter the Language Code you require, or press 0 for a Customer Care Representative. If you do not know the language you require, press 700 for Language Identifier.

Step 4: Wait on the line and you will be put through to an Interpreter for that language. When connected, outline the nature of your call.

Further information available at:

<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2741.htm>

[Click here for step-by-step guidance](#)

B. Face to Face Interpreting Service

Optometrists who require interpreting services to communicate and perform an eye examination can alternatively request the assistance of an interpreter in person. GOS contractors can register and request the assistance of an interpreter via the link on the FPS Optometry Portal which many practices now have access to (i.e. via the home/Sharepoint page which facilitates access to the Ophthalmic Claims System, eReferral, practice HSCNI email account etc.). A screen shot of the link is noted below



When registering with the service you will be required to enter practice details and information on the 'manager' who is the responsible person. Please note that the Practice name/email and Manager name/email must be different. Should you encounter any difficulties in registration for the service please email interpreting@hscni.net. Further information on NI HSC Interpreting Service can be found at the following link <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2749.htm>

The following points should be considered and applied when making a decision on which type of interpreting service is appropriate:

When to use telephone interpreting	When to use face to face interpreting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Care appointments • When the content to be discussed is relatively simple • When it is preferable not to have another person in the room i.e. when anonymity or modesty might be a consideration • When there are health issues such as highly infectious diseases • When the appointment is 30 minutes or less, especially a primary care appointment • For quick inpatient sessions i.e. doctors rounds • For follow up appointments when a face to face interpreter is not essential • In an emergency situation where time is limited • To aid the booking of an appointment and establish patient's needs • When a face to face interpreter cannot be made available • NB: cost is £0.57 per minute*. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a new patient's/client's initial visit • When the appointment is over 30 minutes • When the appointment is sensitive in nature i.e. delivering test results which may be distressing • Consultations involving two or more participants i.e. family conferences • When the patient/client has specific communication needs and/or where non-verbal cues are needed • When the patient/client indicates that they are not comfortable with telephone interpreting • For any sight translation where a document needs to be read to the patient/client • NB: cost is £20 +£5 prep for 1-60 minutes and £0.33 per minute thereafter (plus mileage)* • Out of Hours: cost is £30 for 1-60 minutes and £0.50 per minute thereafter (plus mileage)*

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

Please ensure that you give consideration to possible waiting times for the service when you identify the need for an interpreter using either service.

If you have any enquiries arising from this please contact Ophthalmic Services ophthalmic.services@hscni.net Tel: 028 9536 2812