



**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

# Language Assistance Services

---

**HANDBOOK FOR USERS 2024**

---





**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,  
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**  
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

## **Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Hīkina Whakatutuki – Lifting to make successful**

MBIE develops and delivers policy, services, advice and regulation to support economic growth and the prosperity and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

### **More information**

Information, examples and answers to your questions about the topics covered here can be found on our website: [www.mbie.govt.nz](http://www.mbie.govt.nz)

### **Disclaimer**

This document is a guide only. It should not be used as a substitute for legislation or legal advice. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment is not responsible for the results of any actions taken on the basis of information in this document, or for any errors or omissions.

**ISBN (online): 978-1-991143-80-8**  
**(print): 978-1-991143-79-2**

**JUNE 2024**

### **©Crown Copyright**

The material contained in this report is subject to Crown copyright protection unless otherwise indicated. The Crown copyright protected material may be reproduced free of charge in any format or media without requiring specific permission. This is subject to the material being reproduced accurately and not being used in a derogatory manner or in a misleading context. Where the material is being published or issued to others, the source and copyright status should be acknowledged. The permission to reproduce Crown copyright protected material does not extend to any material in this report that is identified as being the copyright of a third party. Authorisation to reproduce such material should be obtained from the copyright holders.

## Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	3
What Has Changed and Why? .....	3
Why can we not rely on other qualifications, previous interpreter qualifications and short courses attended by our interpreters? .....	3
PLEASE NOTE: .....	4
Glossary .....	5
Interpreting vs Translating .....	6
Guidance Sheet 1: Bilingual Staff .....	7
Guidance Sheet 2: When is it necessary to use an interpreter? .....	9
Guidance Sheet 3: Levels of NAATI interpreter accreditation and interpreting standards. ....	12
Guidance Sheet 4: Identifying Your Client’s Preferred Language .....	15
Guidance Sheet 5: Language List by Country of Use .....	16
Guidance Sheet 6: Which Interpreting Setting - How Do I Decide? .....	22
Guidance Sheet 7: Arranging an Interpreted Interview .....	24
Guidance Sheet 8: Conducting an Interpreted Interview .....	26
Guidance Sheet 9 - The Use of Data to Support Effective Language Assistance .....	29
Numbers of Clients Who Need an Interpreter. ....	29
Type and Frequency of Language Assistance Use: .....	29
Funding .....	29
Training .....	29
Quality Assurance .....	29
Organisational Development .....	30
Translation .....	30
Guidance Sheet 10: Considering What Should Be Translated .....	31
Guidance Sheet 11: Working Out The Most Effective Ways To Provide Translated Information .....	32
Guidance Sheet 12: Preparing Text for Translation into Other Languages .....	33
Guidance Sheet 13: Briefing the Translator .....	34
Guidance Sheet 14: Choosing a Translation Quality Control Process .....	35
References:.....	36

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook is a practical guide to working with the Language Assistance Services Operational Policy from 1 July 2024<sup>1</sup> when the NAATI standards were adopted across all public sector agencies and the services they fund.

The handbook is organised as a series of information notes for staff, usually on the front line, working with people with limited English proficiency (LEP)<sup>2</sup>.

This handbook explains how the policy from 1 July 2024 works in practice. You can use it with the longer policy document for reference. There will be extra resources and training materials available to help everyone understand it.

### What Has Changed and Why?

The main changes are in the way that public sector agencies and those they fund work with LEP clients who need interpreting services. These changes have been brought about by the adoption of the NAATI standards for interpreting.

In the past, New Zealand has not had any set standards for interpreters who work with community languages. This means there was no guarantee the interpreting was accurate or good quality. This could be a big problem for people who do not speak English well (LEP clients) because they might not get the help they need. It could also be risky for both the clients and the organizations using these interpreters, as things might not be understood correctly.

It has also become clear that there are many examples when an LEP client needs an interpreter to get the help they deserve. Mistakes happen a lot when there is no interpreter, and fixing these mistakes can be very expensive in the long run.

The operational policy for language assistance services clarifies when interpreters are needed, what needs to be done to make sure the policy is efficient, cost effective and continually improving, and how this can be done.

### Why can we not rely on other qualifications, previous interpreter qualifications and short courses attended by our interpreters?

In the past many interpreters had no qualifications. Some had impressive qualifications, including post-graduate degrees and even PhD qualifications – often these were not directly related to the practical skill of interpreting. Even if they are, they do not share a common curriculum and are largely academic rather than practical. It is also important to remember that only 55% is required to pass and obtain most under-graduate university degrees. To pass a NAATI test, an interpreter needs to get a near flawless result.

---

<sup>1</sup> Please see Language Assistance Services Operational Policy, MBIE July 2024

<sup>2</sup> The term Language other than English (LOTE) is also sometimes used by agencies and clients.

NAATI credentials level the playing field and give agencies confidence that interpreters they select have demonstrated a high level of skill against a common set of standards and that the interpreter can be held to account if necessary.

## **PLEASE NOTE:**

Providing language assistance that meets the aims of the Language Assistance Operational Policy is a complex task that does not lend itself easily to black and white rules. It is the aim of this handbook to help you to make good judgements when you need to communicate with LEP clients.

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 NAATI-credentialed interpreters available?” is often asked. The answer is found in this information – but the best answer will result from:

- a serious attempt to find an appropriate NAATI-credentialed interpreter, or an interpreter who is working towards NAATI, which may mean asking more than one language service provider if they have one available in the language needed;
- a willingness to consider, in the particular circumstances, whether a telephone or video interview using a NAATI-credentialed interpreter, or an interpreter who is working towards NAATI, is better than an in-person interpreting interview with an uncredentialed interpreter;
- a good understanding of the risks, primarily to the client LEP who requires the interpreting, but also to the overall service and to your agency or LSP;
- a good understanding of the law around human rights and equity; and
- a commitment to ensuring that, if a NAATI-credentialed interpreter, or an interpreter who is working towards NAATI, cannot be found and an uncredentialed 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 that must routinely use a NAATI-credentialed interpreter. For example, in health consultations, a NAATI-credentialed interpreter will always be needed whenever informed consent is required.

## 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 <a href="http://www.publicservice.govt.nz/system/central-government-organisations">www.publicservice.govt.nz/system/central-government-organisations</a>
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 or assessed by NAATI as able to accurately and objectively, transfer <b>spoken or signed</b> 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"> <li>• interpreting from English into community languages and from community languages into English</li> <li>• translating from English into community languages</li> <li>• the employment and use of staff who speak community languages to deliver services in those languages.</li> </ul>
Language service providers	Agencies that arrange the supply of NAATI-credentialed interpreters and qualified translators.
The policy/this policy	The policy described in the Language Assistance Services Operational Policy for New Zealand Public Sector Agencies and those they fund 2024
Translator	A qualified professional who converts a text in one language into a text in another language. Texts are often provided as information for LEP clients and may be written (digital or hardcopy), signed (recorded video) or oral (radio scripts or subtitles).

## Interpreting vs Translating

There is often confusion about the difference between translating and interpreting and in which situations they should each be used.

Both practices involve transferring information from one language to another, and while there are similarities between the two, they are not interchangeable. There are some settings where interpreting will be more effective, and others where translation is more appropriate.

### Translation

Translation usually focusses on written texts. Once the information has been written, the translator is given time to translate it. Translation is mainly about creating materials or resources for later use. These may be written (digital or hardcopy), signed (recorded video) or oral (radio scripts or subtitles).

A translation will also often be reviewed by multiple translation professionals or language experts before it is finalised and returned to the customer.

If you need translation services, you can access these through the Department of Internal Affairs Translation Service by contacting them at [translate@dia.govt.nz](mailto:translate@dia.govt.nz).

The Ministry for Ethnic Communities have also released some [guidance](#) about translation, language selection and communicating with culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

### Interpreting

Interpreting is an important way to break down linguistic barriers. Interpreters work with spoken or signed languages so people can communicate effectively when there is no shared language (or lingua franca). Interpreters provide real-time, oral translations across languages to make information and services instantly accessible.

The interpreter's role is to bridge the communication gap between users of different languages. They must keep the original meaning and intent of what is being said, while at the same time navigating their way through often complex and emotional situations.

Interpreting is a challenging discipline requiring extensive training and experience.

### Sight Translation

Another form of language transfer is sight translation. This is effectively a hybrid of the translation and interpreting processes.

Sight translation is where a written text is interpreted in real-time. The interpreter will read the text in the source language, process its meaning, and then interpret the text into the target language then and there. An example of sight translation is where an interpreter is given a medical information sheet that they translate for the patient.

## Guidance Sheet 1: Bilingual Staff

### Overview

Bilingual staff are employees and contractors engaged with agencies via contracts for service who can perform their normal duties in a community language or languages. It is acknowledged that sometimes 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 (and the community language) 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.

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 NAATI-credentialed interpreter they do not have the skills to act as an interpreter. NAATI-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.

This is quite different from being asked to interpret for another staff member who does not speak the LEP client's language or in an area of the business or service they are not familiar with. 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 NAATI-credentialed interpreter the bilingual staff member cannot provide that service unless they are also a NAATI-credentialed interpreter and there is no conflict of interest.

In line with the operational policy that requires NAATI-credentialed interpreters, bilingual staff should not be asked to perform these roles, unless they are NAATI-credentialed. Even when they are NAATI-credentialed it may still be inappropriate to use them as interpreters and translators.

The **Standards of Integrity and Conduct**<sup>3</sup> (the code) set out the behaviour expected of everyone working in the State Services and provide the basis for ongoing trust in the integrity of the State 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.

Agencies are required to clearly specify the circumstances under which their bilingual employees and contractors may or may not be used as interpreters and translators while undertaking organisational business.

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

<sup>3</sup> [A guide on integrity and conduct - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#)



The services which can be delivered in community languages in this organisation are:

**[Agencies to add details for their organisations]**

It has been determined that bilingual employees and contractors (who are NAATI-credentialed interpreters or qualified translators) **may not be used** as interpreters and translators in the following circumstances while undertaking organisational business:

**[Agencies to add the specific circumstances for their organisations]**

## Guidance Sheet 2: When is it necessary to use an interpreter?

It is not always straightforward to identify whether a NAATI-credentialed interpreter (for example, an interpreter who holds a NAATI credential) is required.

### A NAATI-credentialed interpreter is required when the LEP client:

- a. cannot be understood because they have insufficient English;
- b. does not appear to understand what they are being told because they have insufficient understanding of English;
- c. nods or says yes to all comments or questions (this may be a lack of understanding or a sign of cultural respect);
- d. cannot respond adequately to a question and is unable to explain key information;
- e. may be newly arrived in New Zealand from countries where English is not the primary language;
- f. is attending their first appointment;
- g. appears to be in an emotional state or showing signs of stress;
- h. indicates that they require an interpreter for instance by showing an *I need an interpreter* wallet card or by ringing up and stating *Hello...Mandarin*. That may be all they can say in English. A Deaf person may show the *"Hello! I'm Deaf"* card, may start signing, or will usually know the English word "interpreter" and may write this down as a way of showing such a request.

### A NAATI-credentialed interpreter is also required when:

- a. there is a statutory obligation for a NAATI-credentialed interpreter to be engaged;
- b. the information is complex and must be accurately communicated and able to be fully understood by the client;
- c. the client's informed consent is required for decisions;
- d. there is a risk of client misunderstanding, including of their legal obligations, that could create a risk for themselves or for others;
- e. there needs to be public confidence that information has been accurately and impartially conveyed and understood (such as in Police interviews);
- f. the agency has defined other circumstances that require NAATI-credentialed interpreter use, and these circumstances apply.

**Where no credentialed interpreter is available**, then an interpreter WTN (an interpreter who is in the process of working toward achieving their NAATI credential) should be used.

When a non-credentialed interpreter is used when a NAATI-credentialed interpreter is required, the reason needs to be recorded.

**Some practical ways to check out a client's English are:**

- a. Asking a question that requires an answer to be provided in a sentence. Avoid questions that can be answered with a yes or no, or familiar questions like "Where do you live?" Some useful approaches may be:
  - i. Why are you here today?
  - ii. Please tell me about your family.
  - iii. Please tell me about your medical condition, and any previous treatment you received.
- b. Give a message and ask this to be repeated it back to you in their own words.

Please note that if the client is Deaf then asking them to speak or if they can lipread may be offensive to some Deaf people. It is better to let the client take the lead in guiding the communication supports. If in doubt, secure an interpreter.

If your client cannot respond in a sentence in English, or provide your message accurately in their own words, then you should arrange an interpreter.

**Summary**

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 may be 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.<sup>[1]</sup>

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,

---

<sup>[1]</sup>Chang, 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.

## **Guidance Sheet 3: Levels of NAATI interpreter accreditation and interpreting standards.**

### ***Recognised Practising Interpreter (RPI followed by the language name)***

A Recognised Practising Interpreter 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 an interpreter but have not had their skills tested by NAATI.

Once NAATI can provide a certification test for the language, interpreters who hold an RPI credential will be required to take the Certified Provisional Interpreter test and become a CPI (followed by the language name). This requirement will come into force when the RPI comes up for re-certification after 3 years.

NAATI offers both Recognised Practising Interpreter and Recognised Practising Translator credentials. The NAATI credential for translation is not required.

### ***Certified Translator (CT followed by the language name)***

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.

### ***Certified Provisional Interpreter (CPI followed by the language name)***

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.

### ***Certified Interpreter (CI followed by the language name)***

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.

NAATI can also offer a Specialist Health Credential and a Specialist Legal Credential as well as a Certified Conference Interpreter which is the highest level. These are rarely required in New Zealand and were not offered as part of the transition support.

## NAATI Interpreting Standards

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.<sup>4</sup>

The following list of competencies<sup>5</sup> describe the knowledge, skill and attributes required in NAATI-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 / slang 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 (for example, 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, (for example: 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

<sup>4</sup> [NAATI Certification System - NAATI](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Interpreter-KSA-Paper.pdf \(naati.com.au\)](#)

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. For example, 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 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. Members of the New Zealand society for Translators and Interpreters (NZSTI) also adhere to the NZSTI Code of Ethics.

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 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.

## Guidance Sheet 4: Identifying Your Client's Preferred Language

You should always take steps to find out what your client's preferred language is.

Your LEP client's country of birth is not a reliable indicator of their preferred language since many languages are spoken in some countries (see *Information Sheet 5: Language list by country of use*). Guessing can result in the need to reschedule interviews, and inconvenience for all concerned.

The extreme example would be Papua New Guinea that has four official languages and 850 indigenous languages<sup>6</sup>. The most commonly used official language is Tok Pisin but only around one in seven people speak it as their first language. The Spanish spoken in Mexico is different from the Spanish in other Spanish speaking countries. In general speakers of rare languages will often speak another language that will be used as the language with an interpreter but their fluency in that language may be limited.

Try the following steps to find out what language to use:

- if your client has sufficient English to understand and respond, ask them directly to tell you their preferred language for interpreting;
- visual aids (such as posters available from interpreting services) can allow your client to point to the language they speak;
- a Deaf person will usually know the English word "interpreter" and may write this down as a way of requesting their services.

A list of languages by the Country that uses those languages is included as Information Sheet 5.

If none of the above steps are possible or successful, you may need to contact your agency's approved language assistance provider to identify the language spoken with the assistance of a telephone interpreter.

In many cases, clients will speak more than one language. It is always useful to collect information on other languages spoken, as well as the clients' proficiency in those languages if that is feasible, in case an interpreter is not available in their preferred language when needed.

---

<sup>6</sup> [Misachi J. What Languages Are Spoken In Papua New Guinea? : World Atlas; 2017](#)



## Guidance Sheet 5: Language List by Country of Use

This list indicates the main languages spoken or signed in different countries throughout the world.<sup>7</sup> 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.

The [Ethnologue website](#) provides lists of languages by language, country and map, and could be used to find your client's preferred language if it is not included in the list below.

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
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

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from Department of Family and Community Services NSW, May 2012, *Language Services Guidelines*

Country	Main languages spoken
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
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, Nahuatl (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

Country	Main languages spoken
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
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
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,

Country	Main languages spoken
	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, Nahuati, & 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), Papiamento (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
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

Country	Main languages spoken
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
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

Country	Main languages spoken
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
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, Brazilero
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.

## Guidance Sheet 6: Which Interpreting Setting - How Do I Decide?

This summary is intended to help you choose the best interpreting setting for the communication you are planning with your LEP client. You will also need to consider any guidance provided by your agency about the settings to be used in certain circumstances.

### On-site interpreting

This involves everyone meeting face-to-face, and the interpreter must be booked in advance. All parties are physically present in the same location for on-site interpreting.

On-site interpreting is most suitable when:

- the subject matter is complex or technical;
- a sensitive or upsetting communication exchange may be involved;
- visual information is particularly important to the communication (such as sight translation of consent forms or for non-verbal cues to be observed);
- group meetings are being held;
- the communication will be lengthy;
- the interaction involves New Zealand Sign Language.

Please note that:

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

### Telephone interpreting

Telephone interpreting connects an interpreter by telephone with you and your client. During the telephone interpreting process, the interpreter is at a different location from the other two parties who are together in person while the interpreter is placed on a speakerphone, or all three parties may be at separate places and communicating through a telephone conference.

Telephone interpreting is generally more appropriate for:

- call centres
- connecting with an interpreter in an emergency, or when your client drops-in without an appointment;
- shorter, less complex conversations to gather basic information, communicate ideas and give or receive specific information.

However, it can also be considered for more complex discussions with members of small ethnic communities when a telephone interpreter based outside the local community may help them to feel more comfortable discussing sensitive personal matters.

Some of the advantages of telephone interpreting include:

- it is available wherever there is a landline or mobile phone;
- you can connect with an interpreter quickly and often without booking;
- there may be access to a larger pool of interpreters and a wider range of languages than in your local area;
- this approach keeps things confidential for your client, which can make them feel more at ease.

Please note that:

- there is an absence of visual cues;
- it can be difficult to conduct a telephone interview where several different speakers require interpretation.

### **Video-remote interpreting**

Video-remote interpreting uses videoconferencing technology to link an interpreter with you and your client who are usually together. This allows everyone to see and/or hear each other without being in the same room, or even in the same city.

Video-remote interpreting provides some of the benefits of both on-site interpreting and telephone interpreting. However, the necessary equipment and a private room need to be available, and there may be communication challenges during the interpreted meeting depending on the reliability of the communication link and sound and vision quality.

Please note that:

- attention needs to be given to ensuring privacy, that there are no other people able to view the consultation at either end;
- video-remote interpreting may slow down and interrupt conversational flow if the discussion involves technical language or is beyond a short interaction;
- for longer interpreting interactions (for example, a full day), video-remote interpreting may not be a practical option (for example, beyond the technology components)



## Guidance Sheet 7: Arranging an Interpreted Interview

Remember to:

- allow extra time for an interpreted interview - this could be double the usual time;
- try to meet specific requests made by clients for the gender of interpreters or their ethnic or cultural background, wherever this is possible;
- address the needs of victims of family violence and adult and child sexual abuse by considering the gender and cultural background of interpreters for these communications sensitively, and ensure that the same interpreter is not used for victims and perpetrators – an interpreter of a different gender to a victim should only be engaged with the client’s consent;
- refer to information about your agency’s approved language service providers and follow the agreed internal process to get financial authority to make an interpreter booking.

Collect the information you will need when making an interpreter booking, including the factors that are likely to help the interpreted meeting to go more smoothly.

You should try to provide as much information as you can when making a booking so there can be a good match between the assignment and the interpreter (including the chance for the interpreter to decide whether it is appropriate for them to be involved). Language service providers will keep confidential the information you provide to them and NAATI-credentialed interpreters meet the requirement to operate ethnically.

The following list will help you consider all the key factors and assemble your information.

### Client details:

- name;
- preferred language/dialect;
- other languages spoken.

### Interpreter requirements:

- name of specific interpreter requested (if service continuity is appropriate);
- preferred gender if applicable;
- required knowledge or experience (for example, knowledge of courtroom protocol or ability to participate in discussions about sensitive health matters);
- required type of vetting.

### Assignment details:

- specific purpose of appointment (for example: medical consultation, mental health assessment; parent/teacher meeting; police interview of an assault victim; interview about housing assistance); and any associated requirements (such as the type of vetting required for the interpreter);
- type of interpreting sought (consecutive, simultaneous, sight translation);

- the interpreting setting sought (on-site; telephone; video-remote);
- the date and time the NAATI-credentialed interpreter is required (also allowing any time for a pre-session briefing for on-site meetings, where possible);
- the expected duration of appointment;
- the physical address for the appointment (for on-site assignment) or connection process and details (for telephone and video-remote interpreting);
- the name and telephone contact details for the person to whom the NAATI-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.

## Guidance Sheet 8: Conducting an Interpreted Interview

### Before the interview:

- A quiet meeting place is required with the appropriate equipment
- Set up the seating for good communication flow.
- In all cases, no matter what type of interpreting is being used, you and your client should sit facing each other.
- For on-site meetings, the interpreter is seated at the apex of the triangle – either to the left- or right-side of both of you. Usually, the NZSL interpreters sit closer to the hearing person than the Deaf client to ensure clear visibility. The NZSL interpreter(s) will confirm with the Deaf client where they would like the NZSL interpreter to be.
- For video-remote interpreting, both of you (facing each other) should be visible to the interpreter on the screen. You do not sit facing the screen. A Deaf client may sit facing the screen, as this is required to clearly see the video remote interpreter.
- For telephone interpreting, a speaker-phone or phone with dual handsets should be on the table between you.
- Depending on the meeting purpose, you may want to have written information products that have been translated into the client's first language, if they are available and applicable.

### At the beginning of the interview:

#### *Through the interpreter*

- Introduce yourself and the interpreter to the client and any of their supporters who are present (and note the interview starting time for your records).
- Explain roles including that it is:
  - the interpreter's role to interpret accurately what is being said, and that they are completely impartial
  - the supporters' role to provide support and that they must speak only to your client and not interfere with the interpreting during the meeting, or ask questions of the interpreter afterwards.
- Set the ground rules including that:
  - all information provided is confidential – personal information is protected by privacy laws and the interpreter works within an ethical code of confidentiality and cannot tell anyone what has been discussed
  - the client can ask questions and raise concerns at any time during the meeting, and it is important that they say if they do not understand something
- Explain to the client the purpose of the interview and how it will proceed.
- Check that the client and interpreter understand each other and are comfortable.

### During the interview

- Look at the client while talking - not at the interpreter, the screen or the telephone. Please note Deaf clients may look at the interpreter while you are talking, as this is how they view the interpretation, but your gaze should remain on the client.
- Speak directly to the client as you would to an English speaker. Always speak in the first person to the client. For example, this means you say to the client “How are you feeling?” rather than saying to the interpreter “Ask her how she’s feeling?”
- Speak in a normal tone but a bit slower than usual, and use short sentences wherever possible.
- Speak clearly and concisely. Avoid using jargon or slang.
- Remember to pause after about two or three sentences to give the interpreter a chance to interpret (unless they are interpreting simultaneously in which case pausing is not required).
- Stop speaking when the interpreter signals (for instance, by raising their hand) or when they start to interpret.
- Be aware that it may take more words than you have spoken to convey the message in another language. Each language is different.
- Summarise regularly throughout the interview, and ask your client to summarise occasionally to ensure they have a clear understanding.
- If you must discuss something with the interpreter, always tell the client what you are discussing and why. In almost all cases the interpreter is obliged to pass on the content of any discussion.

Keep control of the interview. If either party feels uncomfortable, then reschedule. If any of the following occur, stop the interview immediately so any issues can be clarified and resolved:

- the interpreter knows the client<sup>8,9</sup> and this relationship creates a risk to the integrity of communication (the interview should be rebooked);
- the client rejects the interpreter;
- the client does not appear to trust the interpreter;
- the interpreter takes over;
- the client and the interpreter are involved in side conversations and ignore you without explanation;
- the interpreter shows signs of distress about what is being discussed.

<sup>8</sup> This can occur particularly in small communities, and for speakers of rare languages.

<sup>9</sup> In the case of the Deaf community it will be common for the client to know the interpreter. Usually a Deaf client will have a list of preferred interpreters and this minimises the potential for issues.

**Closing the interview**

- Ask the client whether they have any questions.
- Summarise the interview and clarify what will happen next.
- Thank the client (and their support people) and the interpreter.
- Provide information to the client about the complaints process.
- Record the interview finish time for the records.
- Allow the client and their support people to leave separately from the interpreter.

**After the interview**

- Once the client has departed, if the interview has been a difficult or emotional one, give the interpreter a chance to express any feelings or emotions.
- Provide any positive feedback to the interpreter about how their practice assisted the smooth running of the meeting.
- If you have been unhappy with the interpreter's practice during the meeting, raise these unprofessional or unsatisfactory practices with them, and provide the opportunity for them to respond. If not resolved to your satisfaction, consider whether this needs to be raised with the language assistance provider who supplied the interpreter.
- Record any debriefing discussions in the client's records.

## Guidance Sheet 9 - The Use of Data to Support Effective Language Assistance.

We cannot determine the quality of our language assistance provision without collecting appropriate data. At a national level we do not have a clear understanding of how many people require an interpreter to effectively access public services. We know from the census that 1.9% of the population speak one language that is not English, NZSL and te reo Māori. It is likely that around 5% of the population or 235,000 need an interpreter.

Useful data to assess the effectiveness of language assistance includes:

### Numbers of Clients Who Need an Interpreter.

There could be a field on all client data bases to identify:

- a. the native language of each client;
- b. their ethnicity that they identify with;
- c. whether they can speak some English;
- d. whether they need an interpreter.

### Type and Frequency of Language Assistance Use:

- a. maintain a register of accredited interpreters and bilingual staff and the roles they work in;
- b. the number of occasions language assistance was provided, the duration of each session, the mode of interpreting: on-site; telephone; video-remote interpreting, and the community languages provided for;
- c. the qualifications of the interpreter used: NAATI-credentialed, working towards NAATI, a member of NZSTI, trained but not NAATI-credentialed, untrained bilingual, family member, or member of the community.

### Funding

Include information in an appropriate business information system that can record:

- a. whether language needs and costs have been addressed in procurement processes;
- b. whether expenditure has been budgeted for the provision of language assistance;
- c. the cost of interpreting services by setting: on-site, telephone and video-remote

### Training

- a. include information in HR or Contractor Management Systems on whether appropriate frontline staff have received training on how to access language assistance and how to work with interpreters;
- b. provide liaison staff to work with contractors to increase the use of interpreting services

### Quality Assurance

Maintain complaints management systems that can record:

- a. whether complaints have been made by clients about language assistance and the nature of these complaints;
- b. the number of occasions interpreters were not available, and the reasons why; and

- c. the number of times language assistance was provided by either ad hoc interpreters or machine interpreting with the reasons why. This is crucial information to monitor the quality of language assistance.

### **Organisational Development**

Ensure information on whether provision has been made for language diversity in data collections and research projects.

### **Translation**

Ensure business information systems, where relevant, include the ability to collect, store and analyse information on:

- a. the types of media used for providing new translated communications by community languages;
- b. the unit cost of translated material;
- c. the demand for existing printed material by community language;
- d. the number of page visits for material in community languages on websites;
- e. national co-ordination of availability of translated materials to avoid costly duplication.

## Guidance Sheet 10: Considering What Should Be Translated

Where you communicate with your clients in English (including standard letters about their entitlements or appointments), you may be able to improve outcomes for specific communities if you also provide this information in another language. Translations can support client independence by making information more readily available, and improving knowledge and understanding of key issues such as entitlements, services, procedures and processes. Translation is particularly effective at making information more accessible and providing a deeper understanding of the information.

At the planning stage	
What to consider	How this will help
Relevant population statistics that could include age, gender, education level, income level, marital status, occupation, religion, birth rate, death rate, average size of a family. Information on client need and service usage.	You can start to identify the potential target audiences, and languages for translated communications.
The target audience (including age and gender factors)	You can consider the appropriate style of communication.
The purpose of the text (conveying facts, encouraging compliance, persuasive, raising awareness etc.)	You can consider the appropriate style of communication.
Other translated information that is available to the target audience, and how this is provided	What is already available may meet your purpose. You can consider whether it is useful and appropriate to provide the translated information in another way, to complement what is already available.
The most appropriate languages for translation considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the preferred language of the target audience (which may differ from their country of birth);</li> <li>dialect and regional variations;</li> <li>writing systems.</li> </ul>	Your translated communication will be appropriate and effective for the target audience.

Remember that:

- **not all individuals will be literate.**<sup>10</sup> This may be because they have had limited their access to education, because they are from countries or regions with oral traditions, because of cultural beliefs and/or because of their circumstances (for example, refugee status).
- **some languages do not have a standard written form.** For example, New Zealand Sign Language and some African languages.
- **the written form of some languages may be a recent development.** As a result, people who speak those languages may have little experience of using written texts for information.

<sup>10</sup> A significant proportion of former refugees have limited literacy and numeracy skills on arrival in New Zealand.



## Guidance Sheet 11: Working Out The Most Effective Ways To Provide Translated Information

Consultation with community workers and members of ethnic communities can help you to identify the most effective ways of getting the information you want to share to individual language groups.

Some of the aspects that you could discuss during consultation include:

- which language groups would benefit from translated information;
- what channels does a community prefer to use to access information and what channels are they currently using (for example: internet, brochures and other collateral, community organisations, radio etc.);
- how information on your proposed topic is handled in cultures that are part of the target audience and whether there are any cultural sensitivities;
- the tone and type of language normally used around the proposed topic in the target cultures;
- the best avenues to use for sharing the information in community languages (for example, in an audio-visual format);
- whether the translations can be reused and stored in a place where they can be easily found later;
- whether there are any privacy issues to address.

Some of the options you can consider for delivering bilingual information include:

- information sessions for client groups;
- programme delivery for client groups 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.

## Guidance Sheet 12: Preparing Text for Translation into Other Languages

Keep a focus on the target audience, the purpose of your communication, and the key messages to communicate as you prepare your text for translation.

Key points to consider:

- 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 clients 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 that the images you use are culturally appropriate;
- consider using an editor to ensure the source text is clear and accurate;
- do a careful proof-read of the final text - it is not the translator's role to correct any errors;
- consider whether a bilingual version of your communication will be useful to allow an English-speaker to use it with a non-English-speaking client;
- remember English and NZSL are very different languages, so do not assume a fluent NZSL user is also a fluent English reader;
- where common words or phrases will be used in a range of translated material, consider developing an *Agency Glossary of Terms for Translations* to ensure that these terms are translated consistently each time.

## Guidance Sheet 13: Briefing the Translator

You will need to brief the language assistance provider carefully to ensure that they understand the requirements of the job.

Some of the **general information** you will need to provide includes:

- the name of your 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);
- the end use of the translation (for example: brochure, podcast, website);
- 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.);
- any technical requirements such as the file type needed – unless agency computer systems use bilingual software, there may be difficulties with electronic files;
- additional information such as deadlines and copyright arrangements.

You will also need to provide the **specific job requirements** including:

- 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 – this involves comparing the translation with the original text and is an important assurance of accuracy;
- the need for the translation to be typeset (if written) – 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. NZSL translations need to be edited by a professional NZSL translation service to ensure visual clarity;
- translation of a glossary of terms for future reference;
- identifying the language and title of the document in English on the translation;
- any elements of the text that do not need to be translated (for example, the agency logo, acronyms, and names).

## Guidance Sheet 14: Choosing a Translation Quality Control Process

The quality control process used for translation should be based on a clear understanding of the purpose of the translation and realistic expectations around what a translator or a language service provider can achieve.

The ISO17100 standard outlines a minimum requirement that all translations should go through at least one bilingual revision to pick up any inaccuracies, mistranslations or poorly worded areas in the first draft prepared by the translator.

Additional checking, editing, reviews and user testing are likely to improve the text further and may be worth considering, particularly for translation with high visibility or impact.

A quick risk assessment may help clarify what quality controls are appropriate:

- what effect would a mistranslation have on the intended outcome?
- are there any legal consequences to mistranslation?
- are important decisions being made based on information in the translation. What is the consequence of a misleading or unreliable translation?
- how many people will read the translation and what is the reputational risk of a poorly worded translation?

Other points to consider include:

- asking the language service provider about the quality controls they intend to use;
- asking for the translator's qualification and whether they are a member of the professional body (for example, the NZ Society of Translators and Interpreters);
- using skilled people for any additional reviews or edits – well-intentioned but ill-informed corrections can cause unnecessary expense and wasted time;
- not all reviews focus on the same thing for example, a review may focus on the readability and appropriateness of the translated information for its audience. Alternatively, a reviser may focus more on ensuring the accuracy of factual information.

## References:

Statistics New Zealand. Quick stats about ethnicity for New Zealand (2018 Census) Wellington New Zealand 2018 [Available from: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries/new-zealand>].

Chang DT, Thyer I, Hayne D, Katz D. Using mobile technology to overcome language barriers in medicine. *The Annals of The Royal College of Surgeons of England*. 2014;96(6):e23-e5.

Lor M, Xiong P, Schwei RJ, Bowers BJ, Jacobs EA. Limited English proficient Hmong- and Spanish-speaking patients' perceptions of the quality of interpreter services. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*. 2016;54:75-83.

Gray B, Hilder J, Donaldson H. Why do we not use trained interpreters for all patients with limited English proficiency? Is there a place for using family members? *Australian Journal of Primary Health*. 2011;17(3):240-9.

Patil S, Davies P. Use of Google Translate in medical communication: evaluation of accuracy. *BMJ*. 2014;349:g7392.

Taira BR, Kreger V, Orue A, Diamond LC. A Pragmatic Assessment of Google Translate for Emergency Department Instructions. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 2021.



**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government