

Submission Template

Proposed changes to the NZSL Video Interpreting and Relay Services

We want to know what you think

We want to get your feedback about the proposed changes to the NZSL Video Interpreting and Relay Services.

What do you think about the proposed changes?

Do you have any concerns about them?

Here is a recap on the proposed changes:

- **Change 1:** Get you to register as a user
- **Change 2:** Make the video interpreting service more available
- **Change 3:** Move to digital text-based relay services
- **Change 4:** Phase out CapTel equipment
- **Change 5:** Stop using Teletypewriter (TTY) equipment
- **Change 6:** Stop speech-to-speech services

How you can have your say

- You can tell us what you think by writing in the form below and can then either **email** us your feedback, or print it out and **post** it to us:

Email: relayconsultation@mbie.govt.nz

Post: Communications Policy
Building, Resources and Markets
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
PO Box 1473
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

- If you use New Zealand Sign Language you can also send in a video of your signed response. Go to the website www.seeflow.co.nz/direct where you will be able to create your video message.

Closing date: We need your feedback by **9am, Monday 15 April 2019**

Please tell us about yourself

Name:

Annette Rotherham, President of the New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association- NZSTA. Practising speech language therapist and researcher.

Email or Address:

president@speechtherapy.org.nz

Do you use any of the services?

I have implemented these services for clients with communication disabilities in the past

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

NZ Relay is an underutilised service for people with speech language and communication needs. There needs to be more marketing around this service to Speech Language therapy networks to assist with its uptake. The NZSTA is willing to assist with marketing this service. 1 in 10 people in NZ have a communication disability of some description. This is over 400,000 people. The use of telephone is a common cause of anxiety as the pressure is on talking, is often avoided. This can result in reduced social networks and social isolation, especially for older people at home alone. Social isolation has proven to be a risk factor for depression. This service can reduce that anxiety for many people and provide a back up person to assist if communication breaks down.

Please tick ✓ if you **do not** want us to publish information about you.

We will publish some feedback

We intend to publish some of the feedback that people send us.

Please let us know if you do **not** want us to publish your name, or to publish any particular part of your feedback.

Any information you give about yourself will only be used to help us make decisions about the proposed changes.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment are part of the government, people will be able to use the Official Information Act 1982 to ask us to show the feedback we get.

When responding to these requests we will take into account those who did not want their personal information published.

Questions

Change 1: Get you to register as a user

Q: What do you think about requiring users to register to use the services? Do you have any concerns about this?

I think registering to use is sensible. However please make sure this is accessible for all. People need to be able to use the internet, recall passwords etc. having alternatives to set up will be best for many older people who may not use the internet especially after having a stroke etc.

Change 2: Make the video interpreting service more available

Q: What do you think about our proposals for making the video interpreting service more available? Do you have any concerns about them?

What is meant by “more available?” Increasing access to this service is positive, however as you are planning to cut some services, then it should not be at the expense of those other services such as the speech to speech

Change 3: Move to digital text-based services

Q: What do you think about moving to digital text-based relay services? Do you have any concerns about this?

When transitioning a service, it is important to not cut off the current one too soon, do this gradually, let people get used to the new method as they can be frightened of change.

Change 4: Phase out CapTel equipment

Q: What do you think about stopping the use of CapTel equipment? Do you have any concerns about this?

Again, people have gotten used to a certain system, do this gradually with appropriate support and back up for the people trying new equipment.

People with communication impairments using the speech to speech service are requesting ability to have a screen to see the interpreter. This is a reasonable request. Many people with “aphasia” and similar conditions need to see a person’s face to assist with interpretation of a message and to clarify their message exchange is successful. I understand that this has been raised by the current users of the speech to speech service and the response has been that the laws in the USA don’t allow for this. We request that NZ laws and context apply to the NZ Relay service and that people’s needs come first.

Change 4: Phase out CapTel equipment

Q: What do you think would be a reasonable length of time to allow existing CapTel users to change over to new digital relay services?

12 months

Change 5: Stop using Teletypewriter (TTY) equipment

Q: What do you think about stopping TTY services? Do you have any concerns about this, including the timing for doing this?

Again, people have gotten used to a certain system, do this gradually with appropriate support and back up for the people trying new equipment. Have an option to keep using if that is the preference. What is going to happen to these devices if you replace them? People often keep using old technology as it is really hard to use new things when you live with a disability and everything you do all day takes longer and is tiring.

Change 6: Stop speech-to-speech services

Q: What do you think about stopping speech-to-speech services? Do you have any concerns about this?

Current data indicates that around 180minutes per month is used for this service. That is approximately 4-36 calls per month. Speech to speech users have different needs to hearing impaired people. They make quicker, functional calls and may not be an dependent on the service for social reasons.

Yes I have concerns about stopping this service.

This undermines the people who currently use this service and value it. What will they do without the service?

As I have stated earlier, NZSTA believe this is totally underutilised for the 400000 NZers who live with communication disability and could have potential for many more people to use this service. It has not been marketed appropriately to this population

Final thoughts

Q: Do you have any final thoughts, comments or feedback?

Some NZ research on communication disability and prevalence. In a study by McAuliffe et al., 2019, they surveyed 71 859 older people were eligible (mean age = 82.7 years, 61% female, 89.2% European/other), with 30.6% and 36.2% exhibiting at least some expression and comprehension communication disability, respectively. Māori, Pasifika and Asian people, males and those who were older were more likely to have at least some communication disability compared to their European/other, female and younger counterparts.

Conclusion: Communication disability is common among older adults. With the increased provision of home-based integrated models of care, the impact of communication disability on service seeking and delivery must be recognised and accommodated.