

Purpose and Scope

Australia is an ever-expanding, culturally diverse country, where over 20% of people speak a language other than English at home. A lack of English language proficiency can present a significant barrier for individuals, inhibiting their ability to participate and access services.

Access4u is committed to ensuring that those with limited English proficiency are supported to ensure equity of access to resources.

Access4u will ensure that interpreters are engaged on occasions where people have difficulty communicating in English or have other requirements such as limited hearing.

Access4u also promises to comply with South Australian and Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination legislation requirements.

The organisation will:

- Provide training for staff to identify when interpreter services are needed;
- Adhere to the specific needs of the individual and ensure access to information is available in their preferred language;
- Ensure the customer is aware that they are able to request an interpreter if needed;
- Ensure equity and transparency in the services that are offered; and
- Value the individual's right to freedom of choice and their right to be actively involved in the decision making surrounding their health.

Responsibilities and delegations

This policy applies to	Governing Body. Staff and Volunteers
Specific responsibilities	<p>The Board – Responsible for ensuring effective governance mechanisms are in place.</p> <p>The CEO and Managers – Responsible for monitoring and ensuring adherence to Policy and related procedures. Ensure due diligence and take reasonable steps to ensure Access4u are meeting their obligations. Ensure objectives of the policy are achieved.</p> <p>Staff – Responsible for adherence to this and related policies, procedures and forms that support this policy.</p>
Policy approval	CEO

Policy context – this policy relates to:

Standards	National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safety Framework
Legislation	<p>National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018</p> <p>National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013</p> <p>Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992</p> <p>The Disability Services Act SA 1993</p> <p>The Disability Act 2006</p>
Contractual obligations	NDIS Code of Conduct

Interpreter services policy and procedure



Organisation policies and procedures	A4u Policy_Customer Participation and Social Inclusion A4u Policy_Customer Rights and Service Charter A4u Policy_Human Rights A4U Policy_Support Coordination v3
Forms, record keeping, other documents	Translation and Interpretation contact list

Definitions

Language services: measures taken to assist people who have a limited ability to communicate in English.

Interpreter: a person who facilitates communication between two parties who use different languages, through translating speech orally or through sign language.

Translator: a person who facilitates communication between two parties who use different languages, through written transfer of messages from one language into another.

Bilingual: a person who is fluent in two languages.

Eligibility Criteria

Access4u deems an individual to be eligible for interpreter services if they experience:

- Difficulty communicating in English;
- Deafness;
- Difficulty hearing;
- Visual impairments; and
- Limited literacy skills.

Procedures

- Language services will be provided free of charge for those requiring them;
- Access4u will adopt a planned approach for disseminating information to ensure that customers who may not be able to communicate in English are made aware of their right to communicate in their preferred language;
- Access4u will use a customer-based approach, which means adhering to the specific language needs of the individual;
- Staff need to be proactive in their assessment of individuals, to identify if an interpreter is necessary; and
- In all circumstances, the needs of the customer will be the primary consideration.

Management of requests for a service

Requests for service by customers are made initially to the customer's Access4u contact and, as necessary, approved by management.

The Access4u Translation and Interpretation contacts list shows our preferred services. If the relevant preferred service is not available use TIS National (phone 131 450).

Rights and responsibilities

Understanding and addressing the link between culture and language will improve healthcare for more linguistically and culturally diverse communities. Disparities in healthcare between cultures can be addressed by increasing cultural responsiveness in healthcare systems. It is important that those involved are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Staff rights

Staff have the responsibility to:

- Provide non-discriminatory services for individuals who are not fluent in English or have other difficulties such as hearing difficulties;
- Understand and recognise when an interpreter may be required;
- Treat the interpreter with respect;
- Ensure that the customer is aware of the interpreter's role;
- Ensure that the interpreter is aware of their responsibilities in regard to privacy and confidentiality;
- Give the interpreter a brief before commencing and allow them to debrief;
- Ensure complaints are handled promptly and appropriately; and
- Consider gender and ethnicity preferences, as well as additional support required.

Customer Rights

Customers have the right to:

- Receive high-quality healthcare regardless of their cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds or beliefs;
- Access transparent and equitable services;
- Request the use of an interpreter;
- Refuse the use of an interpreter;
- Freedom of choice; and
- Active involvement in the healthcare decision making process.
 - Where a customer is unable to engage in the decision-making process, family, carers and substitute decision-makers are involved to ensure the most well-informed decisions are made. Information will be adjusted to ensure it is clearly understood by all substitute decision-makers.

Interpreter Rights

Interpreters/ translators have the right to:

- Be respected as a professional;
- Receive adequate briefing and debriefing surrounding the patient's needs; and
- Safe and healthy working conditions.

Procedures for engaging interpreters

Interpreter Qualifications

The organisation will ensure that interpreters are appropriately qualified with one of the following:

- NAATI accreditation level-professional interpreter;
- NAATI accreditation level-paraprofessional interpreter; or
- NAATI recognised interpreter.

Confidentiality

Access4u stresses the importance of confidentiality and requires that, prior to any session, the translator or interpreter agrees to ensure that confidentiality will be maintained under all circumstances.

Gender preferences

Considering the gender requirements of a person is important, especially in cases involving domestic violence or sexual assault.

Access4u acknowledges that interpreters that of the preferred gender for a particular customer are not always available. However, it promises to suit the individual's needs where possible. For example, if a customer prefers a female, engaging a female telephone interpreter if none is available to visit the customer in person.

Language requirements

In stressful situations, communicating in one's first language is usually preferable and more calming.

Access4u will therefore make its best effort to provide an interpreter in the individual's preferred language. However, it is important to note that this may not always be possible. In situations where Access4u is unable to locate an interpreter in the individual's preferred language, their competency in other languages will be considered.

Unacceptable interpreting practices

Access4u recognises that family members should not act as interpreters in any context. This may inhibit the individual's willingness to disclose personal detail or may distort details due to bias or lack of competence in one of the languages. Using other bilingual staff is also not preferable, unless they have NAATI accreditation.

Reporting and performance monitoring

Access4u is committed to the regular review of, and reporting, on the implementation of this policy; and

Customers who are denied access, or have an unfavourable experience can make a complaint through:

- Access4u's complaint system;
- the NAATI online form; or
- booking an appointment with a NAATI office where staff can record their complaint.