

Irish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (IASLI)

Revised Draft Code of Ethics (April 1997)

1.0 Confidentiality

An interpreter shall observe confidentiality and shall not disclose or otherwise make any use of information obtained during the performance of his/her duties, including informal sessions.

2.0 Impartiality/Neutrality

2.1 An interpreter shall act in an impartial way, and therefore shall not counsel, advise or interject personal opinions.

2.2 An interpreter shall generally refrain from providing services in specific situations (e.g. court of law) where family members, close personal friends or professional relationships may affect impartiality.

3.0 Interpreting Skill and Knowledge

3.1 An interpreter shall interpret truthfully and faithfully.

3.2 An interpreter shall not normally accept an assignment that they know is beyond the linguistic ability and/or domain of knowledge.

3.3 An interpreter shall make effort to upgrade and maintain their skills.

4.0 Responsibility

4.1 Interpreters are expected to be flexible and knowledgeable in their language usage

4.2 It is the responsibility of each interpreter to maintain and promote the credibility and dignity of the interpreting profession by upholding the Code of Ethics and acting at all times in a professional manner.

5.0 Remuneration

An interpreter shall be knowledgeable about fees that are appropriate to their professional standing.

6.0 Complaints Procedures

Presently, and complaints against interpreters who are members of IASLI are dealt with by the Executive Committee of IASLI.

Irish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (IASLI)

Guide to the Code of Ethics (*September 1997*)

1.0 Confidentiality

An interpreter shall observe confidentiality and shall not disclose or otherwise make any use of information obtained during the performance of his/her duties, including informal sessions.

Guide

- Where an interpreter has interpreted at a non-public event, confidentiality must be observed for all parties involved. This means that the names of the parties involved, the place of the assignment and any information discussed at such assignments are bound to confidence.
- An interpreter who has interpreted at public meetings may respond that they were interpreting at that event, but otherwise are bound by confidentiality as described above.
- An interpreter may be called on to act as a witness where they have interpreted in a police interview. In such instances, the interpreter is not in breach of the Code, and is obliged by law to cooperate. The interpreter may confirm that fact that he/she was the interpreter present at the interview, but not to content (as this is the responsibility of the interviewer) or client's understanding of the interpretation (as this is for the client to judge).
- An interpreter may discuss an interpreting situation with another while maintaining the anonymity of clients. This may happen only where the interpreter is in need of advice or support from a colleague. In such circumstances, the colleague is then bound by the same code of confidentiality as the original interpreter.

2.0 Impartiality/Neutrality

2.1 An interpreter shall act in an impartial way, and therefore shall not counsel, advise or interject personal opinions.

Guide

- Interpreters shall be seen to be impartial, not taking the side of one party nor the other, in relation to topics being discussed or people present in an interpreting assignment, including breaks.

2.2 An interpreter shall generally refrain from providing services in specific situations (e.g. court of law) where family members, close personal friends or professional relationships may affect impartiality.

Guide

- In exceptional circumstances or emergency situations, where a suitable alternative interpreter is not available an assignment may be accepted provided that all parties have given their consent after having been informed of any implications and potential risk involved.

3.0 Interpreting Skill and Knowledge

3.1 An interpreter shall interpret truthfully and faithfully

Guide

- It is the interpreter's responsibility to ensure that the interpretation rendered is as true to the original as possible. Interpreter expertise in a specific field facilitates a higher quality of interpretation. Preparation can assist the interpreter in maximizing necessary background knowledge. The interpreter also has a responsibility to seek clarification where necessary.

3.2 An interpreter shall not normally accept an assignment that they know is beyond the linguistic ability and/or domain of knowledge.

Guide

- In circumstances where a more suitable alternative interpreter is not available, an interpreter may accept such an assignment providing that all parties are made aware of the situation. If all parties agree that the services of the available interpreter are needed, then the interpreter shall use his/her discretion in accepting the assignment. In some circumstances, it may be valuable to use a relay interpreter (e.g. when working with clients with minimal language skills or with deaf children in traumatic circumstances).

3.3 An interpreter shall make effort to upgrade and maintain their skills.

Guide

- Members of IASLI are encouraged to attend workshops and seminars hosted by the Association and other organizations in an attempt to develop and maintain skills. Further training in specialized domains is advocated by the Association.

4.0 Responsibility

4.1 Interpreters are expected to be flexible and knowledgeable in their language usage

Guide

- Interpreters shall strive to develop their knowledge of both Irish Sign Language and English across a range of registers (i.e. Frozen, Formal, Consultative, Informal and Intimate) and domains (e.g. law, medicine, linguistics, politics etc.)

4.2 It is the responsibility of each interpreter to maintain and promote the credibility and dignity of the interpreting profession by upholding the Code of Ethics and acting at all times in a professional manner.

Guide

- Members of IASLI shall refrain from conduct which might bring the profession of sign language interpreting into disrepute.
- Interpreters shall offer other interpreters moral and linguistic assistance. They should also offer each other professional solidarity when needed and be willing to point out unacceptable behaviour to colleagues.
- Members of the Association shall not accept and still less offer conditions of work which do not meet the standards laid down in the Code, either for themselves or interpreters engaged through them.
- An interpreter shall not cancel an assignment without good reason. If an interpreter cannot attend an interpreting assignment, the parties concerned should immediately be informed and a written explanation provided. After consultation with and agreement from the parties concerned, it is the interpreter's responsibility to find a replacement for the assignment.

5.0 Remuneration

An interpreter shall be knowledgeable about fees that are appropriate to their professional standing.

Guide

- A guide to current interpreting fees is available from the Secretary, IASLI.
- There are circumstances where it *may be* necessary to provide services without charge. The consequences of this should be considered and justified. Such work should be carried out with discretion. When providing gratis services, care should be taken so that the livelihood of other interpreters is not affected.
- Interpreters shall conduct their financial affairs in a professional manner.
- Interpreters may advertise their services providing the information is factual, relevant and neither misleading nor discreditable to the profession. Interpreters must state their qualification and may also advertise the fact that they are members of IASLI. This upholds the conditions of registration as a Registered Qualified/Trainee Interpreter.

6.0 Complaints Procedures

Presently, and complaints against interpreters who are members of IASLI are dealt with by the Executive Committee of IASLI.

Guide

- Where an individual member of IASLI has cause for complaint regarding a client or organisation with whom they have worked, they should forward a complaint in writing to the Chairperson. Action will only be taken with the consent of the complainant involved.

- Clients, hearing or Deaf who wish to forward a complaint against the professional behaviour of a member of IASLI may do so by forwarding a written or video letter of complaint to the Chairperson. Action will only be taken with the consent of the complainant involved.