



Interpreting and translating procedure for people from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background

1. Purpose

This procedure provides the Department for Child Protection (DCP) staff with guidance on how to achieve the requirements set out in the [South Australian Interpreting and Translating Policy for Migrant and Non-Verbal \(Sign\) Languages](#), which applies to all South Australian Government agencies.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the [Working with cultural diversity Practice Paper](#) and the [Practice Principles – Cultural Safety](#).

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all DCP staff who interact with people who communicate using sign language or people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds as part of their work including in intake, investigations, assessments, placement, legal proceedings, family support services and out of home care.

It is noted that guidance for Aboriginal interpreting and translating services is not included in this procedure. For guidance on the use of Aboriginal interpreters and translators, refer to the [Aboriginal Languages Interpreters and Translators Guide](#).

3. Authority

3.1 Legislative context

N/A.

3.2 Whole of Government requirements

The [South Australian Interpreting and Translating Policy for Migrant and Non-Verbal \(Sign\) Languages](#) applies to all South Australian Government agencies, including statutory bodies such as DCP, as defined in section 3(1) of the *Public Sector Act (2009)*.

3.3 DCP requirements

- DCP Practice Approach - [Practice Principles – Cultural Safety](#)
- [Working with cultural diversity Practice Paper](#).

3.4 Principles

Children and young people and families from CALD backgrounds have a basic right to understand and be understood in their communication with DCP. Where there are suspected or substantiated child protection concerns, it is particularly important for verbal or written communication, including legal



documents, to be provided in the language that best supports the child or young person or their family to understand what is being communicated.

When it is suspected that proficiency in the English language is a barrier to effective communication, interpreting and sign language services must be offered or provided.

4. Procedure requirements

4.1 Determine if an interpreter or translator is required

DCP staff must assess how well a person can understand and communicate in English to identify if an interpreter or translator is required.

Subject to the above principles, interpreting services are required when informed consent is provided and/or where there is the potential for a decision or action to impact upon a person's life. People may be unfairly disadvantaged if decisions are made by DCP staff where there are language barriers. Engaging a credentialed interpreter is required if:

- requested by the child or young person, their family or their carer
- the person cannot comprehend or respond to basic questions in English
- understanding and responding between DCP staff and the person is difficult or limited
- the person relies on family members, friends or carers to communicate
- the person prefers to speak in their own language
- English is the person's second language, and the situation is stressful or complex.

DCP staff should be aware that behavioural indicators such as nodding their head may not indicate that the client understands the conversation, or their capacity to provide informed consent. To assess that an interpreter or translator is not required, DCP staff must check if the client/family can:

- speak and restate things in their own words to be satisfied that the person is sufficiently fluent in English
- maintain the pace of the conversation
- understand technical terms and any information that may inform their decision making.

DCP staff should not use jargon but find other ways to explain legal and technical terms. Lack of fluency may place the person at a disadvantage compared to someone for whom English is a first language.

4.1.1 If an interpreter or translator is refused

If a person refuses the offer of an interpreter or translator, it is important to understand the reasons, which may include that the person:

- does not know what an interpreter or translator does
- might have had a negative experience with an interpreter or translator in the past
- might not want other people knowing their confidential information
- has misunderstood why an interpreter or translator is needed
- may feel confident communicating in English
- may know the interpreter or translator assigned to the interview and feel uncomfortable
- may be concerned that an interpreter or translator could pose a risk to their privacy or safety
- may be uncomfortable with the gender, religious or ethnic background of the interpreter or translator
- holds fear of persecution because of a perception that the interpreter or translator may be a member of ethnic group/religious group or worked for the government in the person's country of origin
- may not know the interpreting or translating service will be provided free of charge.



These concerns should be discussed with the person. DCP staff must strongly recommend that the interpreter or translator attend at least for any initial discussion and reassure the person that the interpreter or translator:

- is required to maintain confidentiality
- is for the mutual benefit of the person and DCP, as limited or incomplete communication may result in compromised decision making or advice
- can be requested to be an appropriate gender, religious or ethnic background
- costs are covered by DCP and not charged to the person.

4.2 Determine the mode of interpreting or translating

The person's preference for a face-to-face, telephone or video conference interpreter should be respected, where possible.

On-site (face-to-face) interpreters or translators are recommended where communication involves:

- sensitive or complex issues
- a Family Group Conference meeting
- planned interviews or discussions (for example, as part of an investigation)
- situations where, for practical reasons, use of a telephone interpreter is not appropriate; for example, reliance on mobile telephones in rural and remote locations or when working with family member with a hearing impairment.

4.3 Book verbal and Auslan interpreters or translators

DCP staff must strive to engage National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) accredited interpreters and translators at the Certified Interpreter/Translator level at all times. Where a NAATI accredited interpreter or translator is not available, a NAATI-recognised practising interpreter or translator in languages of new and emerging communities may be engaged. DCP staff should consult with [DCP Multicultural Services](#) for advice regarding accessing a NAATI recognised practising interpreter or translator.

It is recommended that DCP staff book at least one week in advance to ensure the availability of interpreters. To book an interpreter or translator, DCP staff should contact the interpreting or translating service on the [recommended provider list](#) (which provides NAATI accredited interpreters and translators) and provide the DCP office reference number (details of the reference number should be obtained from the business manager) and the child or young person's C3MS ID for invoicing purposes.

For translation services, DCP staff should obtain three quotes to consider the most appropriate service for the required translation job.

4.3.1 Emergency telephone interpreter or translator service

An emergency telephone interpreter or translator service is for immediate urgent needs and is provided by the [Translating and Interpreting Service](#) (TIS) of the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs. In order to use this service, DCP offices must quote the client code [REDACTED]. DCP staff can call TIS National's Service Delivery on 1300 655 082 for onsite bookings or for immediate telephone interpreting service, DCP staff should telephone 131 450. DCP staff that require access to TIS Online to pre-book a telephone interpreter, video remote or onsite interpreter will need to email tispromo@homeaffairs.gov.au with the client code, full name, email, job title/section, telephone number.



4.4 Interpreting or translating by family members or friends

There may be instances where, for practical reasons, a person's family member, friend or carer may be asked to interpret simple messages, such as where and when an appointment has been scheduled. Where information is complex, technical or sensitive, it is strongly recommended that DCP staff use an accredited interpreter or translator. Refer to [Fact sheet 5 - Can family and friends provide Interpreting Services?](#) for further guidance.

It is also important to consider whether there are domestic and family violence (DFV) concerns and how the use of interpreters or translators should be best managed in these circumstances. It is inappropriate to use partners, other family members or children as interpreters where there are concerns about DFV. Independent interpreters must be used to ensure the safety of the victim and children and young people. Refer to the [Domestic and family violence Practice Paper](#) for further guidance.

Using persons under the age of 18 to interpret should be avoided where possible, including simple messages regarding appointment times. However, in circumstances when there is no other person available to translate details of appointments or meetings, the DCP case worker should assess whether it is appropriate to use a person under the age of 18 years.

4.4.1 Interpreting or translating by staff

There also may be instances where, for practical reasons, a DCP employee may be asked to interpret or translate messages, noting conflicts of interest may also bring into question a bilingual worker's impartiality.

Provision of interpreting and translating by bilingual workers is only permitted when for simple, non-sensitive interpreting or translation is required. A NAATI accredited interpreter must be used to interpret or translate:

- complex, technical or sensitive information
- discussion that informs or includes decision making or signing of agreements/forms
- discussion where there is a high risk of miscommunication
- in situations where there is a (real or perceived) conflict of interest
- information that may place the person with limited English proficiency or the DCP at risk
- any discussion or information that is legally binding.

Refer to [Fact sheet 6: The role of bilingual staff in your organisation](#) for further guidance.

Consistent with the Part Time Interpreters or Translators (Public Service (SA)) Award, DCP employees staff who are NAATI accredited and registered with Multicultural SA to provide interpretation and translation services, and who are called upon to provide those duties outside the scope of their usual duties may be eligible for an allowance in accordance with the [Commissioner for Public Sector Employment's Determination 3.2. Employment Conditions: Remuneration - Allowances and Reimbursements](#).

4.4.2 Request a specific interpreter or translator

DCP staff may request a specific interpreter or translator where the DCP case worker can demonstrate that engaging the specified interpreter or translator is in the child or young person's best interests or that of their family. A specific interpreter request is more likely to be successful where the DCP case worker can demonstrate that allocating the nominated interpreter or translator:

- is essential to maintaining the quality and continuity of service
- is of clear benefit to the non-English speaking participant

- has interacted with the non-English speaking participant previously, either with DCP or another agency delivering services to the child or young person.

4.5 Cancel a service

The full fee may apply for interpreter or translator appointments cancelled with less than 24 hours notice. To reduce cancellation charges, DCP staff should:

- confirm the details of the cancellation policy at the time of the booking
- remind the person of the meeting 48 hours in advance
- inform the approved Interpreting and Translating agency of any cancellations as soon as possible.

4.6 Costs for interpreter and translating travel to regional or remote areas

Onsite interpreters and translators may not be available in regional or remote areas. In certain circumstances (for example, there is no telephone reception in the area or the client refuses telephone interpreting for initial appointments), DCP may cover travel costs for the interpreter. These jobs require pre-approval by the Regional Director, Central Region. Managers should email the Regional Director, Central Region the quotes from the NAATI approved interpreting and translating agency via the central inbox DCPRegionCentralDocumentation@sa.gov.au.

4.7 Payment for interpreter and Auslan services

DCP Finance have established job cost task codes that map to cost centre 8275 (the DCP Multicultural Services team budget) to ensure expenses for interpreting and translating are now able to be recorded in job cost.

Payment of Invoices

Invoices should be sent direct to shared services from the vendor via the APIInvoices@sharedservices.sa.gov.au. Once offices receive the invoice from BASWARE, a [Payment Approval Form](#) needs to be completed and attached to BASWARE. Offices also need to complete coding before sending to Central Region, Directorate Business Manager for approval.

4.8 Complaints or feedback

NAATI certified Interpreters and Translators must comply with the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) Code of Ethics. If an interpreter or translator fails to comply with the principles outlined in the relevant code of ethics, complaints can be lodged with the language service provider. Each provider will have a different process for managing their complaints that is outside of DCPs control. Staff will need to follow the requirements set out by the service provider (depending on which provider they have the complaint with).

If there are issues with the performance of an interpreter or translator, discuss them with the interpreter or translator in the first instance. If not resolved, contact the relevant language service provider to make a formal complaint.

For other issues, such as the interpreter or translator not attending, charging incorrect fees or interpreters with inappropriate levels of accreditation, staff will also need to follow the requirements set out by the service provider (depending on which provider they have the complaint with).

If negotiations to resolve the conflict between the regional office and language service provider are not successful, the office manager should refer the issue to the Regional Director, Central Region.



5. Compliance, monitoring and evaluation

Multicultural Services will retain the monitoring of the procedure including occasions where a client declines an offer and review in accordance with the DCP policy review cycle, or as required.

6. Related documents

Related documents, forms and templates
Payment Approval Form
South Australian Interpreting and Translating Policy for Migrant and Non-Verbal (Sign) Languages
Working with cultural diversity Practice Paper
Domestic and family violence Practice Paper
Practice Principles – Cultural Safety
Fact sheet 5 - Can family and friends provide Interpreting Services?
Fact sheet 6: The role of bilingual staff in your organisation
Determination 3.2 Employment Conditions: Remuneration - Allowances and Reimbursements

7. Glossary

Term	Meaning
Interpreter	A person who facilitates communication between two parties who use different languages. An interpreter conveys a verbal or signed message from one language into another language. This can be done face-to-face or by telephone or video.
Translator	A person who makes a written transfer of message or statement from one language to another.
National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)	NAATI is the national standards body for interpreters and translators in Australia, and is the only agency in Australia that provides accreditation for credentialed interpreters and translators.
NAATI accredited	A level of competence achieved by interpreters and translators, as assessed through an examination process conducted by NAATI.
NAATI recognised	NAATI provides recognition to interpreters and translators who have completed formal training and have work practice as a translator and/or interpreter but have not had their skills tested by NAATI.



Document control

Reference No./ File No.			
Document Owner		Lead Writer (position)	
Directorate/Unit: Central Region		Senior Policy Officer	
Accountable Director: Regional Director, Central			
Commencement date	11 August 2023	Review date	4 August 2026
Risk rating Risk Assessment Matrix	Consequence Rating	Likelihood	Risk Rating
	Minor	Unlikely	Low

REVISION RECORD		
Approval Date	Version	Revision description
7/08/2020	V1.0	Final.
04/08/2023	V2.0	Procedure reviewed as per the DCP policy review cycle.