

**Working with interpreters**

***Practice* Based Scenario**

**About this document**

This document is designed to take you through a practice-based scenario to help you reflect on what you might do if faced with a similar situation. It can be used to guide your thoughts and prompt discussion with your colleagues. Working through this document counts towards your continuing professional development (CPD). Your reflections on this document are not assessed and you do not have to send your responses to the RCSLT.

You can work through it on your own, with a colleague or supervisor, or in groups, eg as part of an RCSLT Hub or Clinical Excellence Network.

This document is broken into six parts:

1. **The scenario:** for you to read
2. **The issues to consider:** for you to gather your thoughts on practice issues relating to this scenario
3. **Next steps:** for you to plan out what you would need to do next
4. **Prompts for consideration:** RCSLT prompts for further consideration
5. **Sources of further information:** links to professional guidance
6. **Update your CPD diary:** for you to do
7. **The scenario**

**Your next appointment has arrived and it’s clear that the child has difficulty speaking English. The family has brought an acquaintance from their community to help interpret for the family and the child.**



**What do you do in this scenario?**

1. **The issues to consider**

**What do you need to consider?**

Think about the above scenario and its implications and jot down your notes about issues you may need to consider. Please feel free to use extra sheets of paper if you need. Or, if you are in a group, you may like to record on a whiteboard or flipchart.

1. **Next steps**

**What steps do you think you need to take next?**

1. **Prompts for consideration**

It is not advised in the standards to use family members or friends as interpreters for a number of reasons. First, anyone acting as an interpreter would need to be able to understand medical terminology so a family member or friend could not be relied on to provide an accurate interpretation. Second, you could not ensure the impartiality of the interpretation or the right of the family to confidentiality if a family member or friend was interpreting. Finally, you cannot be sure that what is being interpreted is exactly what you said and vice versa.

It is recommended that you think about the following prompt questions and formulate a considered strategy to deal with the problem.

Remember that if you are faced with a similar situation you will need to think about it in relation to the frameworks within which you work, such as the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards, RCSLT professional guidance and resources, local and national policies and also policies of your employer (or your own policies if practising independently).

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and does not constitute legal advice.

**Prompt questions to consider**

1. Does your employer have a policy around interpretation to which you can refer the family?
2. If not, is there other guidance to which you can refer?
3. Is there a safeguarding risk to the child?
4. The child has a right to access the information in their own language.
5. Is there an issue around confidentiality?
6. How can you know if the information is being translated correctly?
7. Could you offer an appointment with an interpreter?

**Possible next steps**

1. It is not recommended to use family or friends of the client as interpreters, but you wouldn’t want the family to have had a wasted a journey. Could you use the session as a general information gathering opportunity then arrange for an interpreter for future sessions?
2. Make sure you explain sensitively why an interpreter is needed (ie to ensure the detailed information is translated correctly and that the child’s right to confidentiality is respected).
3. Ensure that you keep records of what has happened.
4. **Sources of further information**

**The following information in the professional accountability and autonomy, and professional guidance sections of the RCSLT website is also particularly relevant:**

1 - [Promote and safeguard the interests of service users and carers](https://www.rcslt.org/professional-autonomy-and-accountability-guidance#section-5)

2 - [Communicate appropriately and effectively](https://www.rcslt.org/professional-autonomy-and-accountability-guidance#section-6)

[Duty of care](https://www.rcslt.org/duty-of-care)

[Blingualism (working with interpreters)](https://www.rcslt.org/bilingualism-overview)

1. **Update your CPD diary**

Working through this scenario counts towards your continuing professional development (CPD). Once you have completed this scenario, please record this learning and your reflections in your CPD diary.