

Making your communications accessible

How to make your communications more accessible and improve the experience for disabled people.

Make your communications more accessible - from the Office for Disability Issues

Quick tips for writers, communicators, designers and production houses.

The following information tells you how to make your communications more accessible by using plain language and appropriate content. It also details how print can be made more accessible by applying certain design principles.

Some people however can't access printed information. These people include those for whom English isn't their first language and others who have difficulty reading, or who are vision impaired or blind. There are a number of specialised formats that can be used to reach these audiences and they are also outlined.

[Make your communications more accessible \(Word 350KB\)](http://doogle/documents/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/communications/make-your-communications-accessible-2011.doc) [<http://doogle/documents/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/communications/make-your-communications-accessible-2011.doc>]

[Make your communications more accessible \(PDF 297.92KB\)](http://doogle/documents/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/communications/accessible-communications-web.pdf) [<http://doogle/documents/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/communications/accessible-communications-web.pdf>]

Building accessible websites

When our websites are designed well, they enable disabled people to interact with MSD's services on an equal basis with others.

New Zealand Government websites are mandated to meet the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/) through the [NZ Government Web Standards](https://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/nz-government-web-standards/). By following these guidelines when designing web content, we can improve the accessibility of services.

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/) [<https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>]

Digital Accessibility Team

The Digital Accessibility Team's goal is to improve the experience that disabled people have when interacting with MSD online and digital services, for both our clients and staff, by making them easily accessible, regardless of disability.

It's always a great idea to get in touch with them if you're working on any new website, web application or document that will be shared broadly. It doesn't matter whether the website is for the public or for internal staff. We have an obligation to ensure that all websites are accessible.

[Email the Digital Accessibility Team](mailto:accessibility_team@msd.govt.nz) [mailto:accessibility_team@msd.govt.nz]

[Find out how the Digital Accessibility Team can help you](http://doogle/helping-you/disability-inclusive/accessibility-team.html) [<http://doogle/helping-you/disability-inclusive/accessibility-team.html>]

Booking an New Zealand Sign Language Interpreter

This page provides staff with the process to follow when booking a New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreting services.

On this Page:

Introduction

There are two interpreter services: iSign and Connect Interpreting (Connect). Both services have an online portal for booking New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreters and provides a system accessible to both those booking an interpreter and the interpreters themselves.

Sign language interpreters in New Zealand are trained and qualified to interpret between English and NZSL. Their use is supported by the NZSL Act 2006.

Booking Process for iSign or Connect Interpreting

Staff will need to ensure that they have all information required for the booking prior to approaching the SCM/ASCM.

client name

time

date

duration of appointment

location where service will be provided

purpose of the appointment

cost centre number

whether there is a preference for a male or female interpreter

does the client require an interpreter in Te Reo Māori

other hearing or Deaf people attending the meeting **and**

any additional information that may be useful to the interpreter

safety factors e.g. does the person pose a safety risk to the interpreter?

iSign and Connect Interpreters needs as much notice as possible of the need for an interpreter, generally the sooner the better. However if the requirement is very short notice you should still make contact as services may be able to be arranged.

Making an iSign or Connect booking by designated staff

iSign booking

To arrange a booking with iSign:

email bookings@isign.co.nz [<mailto:bookings@isign.co.nz>]

phone 0800934683

This service and contact also operates after hours

Connect Interpreter booking

To arrange a booking with Connect Interpreters use

Auckland

Email book@connectinterpreting.co.nz [<mailto:book@connectinterpreting.co.nz>]

phone 021555181

Urgent after-hours service: 021 54 NZSL (021 54 6975)

National Wide

Email booknz@connectinterpreting.co.nz [<mailto:booknz@connectinterpreting.co.nz>]

phone 021961815

Urgent after-hours service: 021961815

Once the booking has been arranged iSign and Connect Interpreters will then:

Arrange an interpreter and make contact with the Service Centre designated staff member with confirmation of the booking and relevant details.

Contact the client directly with the appointment details.

Note: Work and Income will need to confirm the appointment with the client.

Note: If the booking is no longer suitable or the client wants to change the time of their appointment please contact iSign or Connect Interpreters immediately.

Other available services for Deaf people

There are other services available for Deaf people if they do not require the assistance of an interpreter:

New Zealand Relay (NZ Relay)

Telephone Typewriter (TTY)

Deaf Link Fax **and**

Dedicated email address MSD_Deaf_Services@msd.govt.nz [mailto:MSD_Deaf_Services@msd.govt.nz]

Translation Services

Payment

Work and Income is responsible for paying any fees for interpreting services for clients.

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Note: In the event that a client does not attend a scheduled appointment the Service Centre is responsible for meeting the cost. Fees may also apply for short notice changes.

Other things you need to know when working with an interpreter

[Things you need to know when working with an interpreter](http://doogie/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/health-disability/interpreter-services-for-deaf-clients/things-you-need-to-know-when-working-with-an-interpreter.html) [<http://doogie/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/health-disability/interpreter-services-for-deaf-clients/things-you-need-to-know-when-working-with-an-interpreter.html>]

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The following guidelines address the needs of people in a mobility scooter visiting our Service Centres.

In the spirit of mana manaaki – a positive experience every time – we want people to find it easy to get the help they need. We should do everything possible (while maintaining safety) to ensure that people using mobility scooters are able to access the services they need.

Things to consider:

Where possible, ensure there is a clear pathway for everyone including people in a mobility scooter wanting to enter, as well as within the service centre

Consider using a seminar room or other part of the office that can give easy access to a person in a mobility scooter

Ensure there are no objects that would block a person moving around the Front of House area in a mobility scooter

People in a mobility scooter should be supported to ride it carefully with consideration for others including children

Mobility scooters must not block escape paths or exit doors

If it is not possible to maintain safety while allowing entry, another means for the client to access our services will need to be arranged.

For health and safety reasons a person must not be lifted out of a mobility scooter and into a wheelchair - this can be harmful to them and you.

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Best practice for working with deaf and hearing-impaired clients

On this page you'll find more about what to consider when working with deaf and hearing-impaired clients.

On this Page:

Overview

The following factors address the practical needs of the deaf and hearing-impaired community:

Sensory Reach

Refers to the need to be spatially orientated and visually aware of surroundings.

Space and Proximity

Allowing enough space between individuals to allow for sign language, chairs without arms and movable furniture incorporates this need.

Mobility and Proximity

Allows for moving between spaces and signing at the same time. In a service centre this can be accomplished by ensuring there are no hazards on the floor and chairs are tucked under desks when not in use.

Light and Colour

Reduce glare and shadows by using the dimmer switches in rooms (if available), closing the blinds, and seating so that you see each other clearly.

Acoustics

Consideration should be given to how to reduce excessive noise.

What to consider

There are many things you can do to assist clients in accessing our services and delivering the best possible client service:

Find out how best to communicate with the person - what works well for one individual may not work well for another.

Arrange seating so it can comfortably accommodate people signing and interpreting - you may need to use a seminar room or a room that can minimise external distractions and noise.

You can also arrange for interpreters to sit next to you in the new security layout, provided they've completed a Health and Safety induction.

Ensure the lighting is suitable, close blinds if it is too bright to minimise shadows and turn on the lights (if necessary).

Get the persons attention first before you start speaking or signing. Speak face to face and maintain eye contact. Speak directly to the deaf person. If using an interpreter, they will sit next to you and sign for you.

Make sure you do not speak too quickly and pronounce your words clearly without exaggerating your lip movements.

A deaf or hearing-impaired person may try to get your attention by knocking on the desk, touching you or another person or tapping, turn and face them and give them your full attention.

Be patient and allow a little extra time for appointments.

An interpreter will relay information back in the same manner as it was signed, i.e. if a message is signed with frustration, that will be reflected back in the interpreter's tone, so you can understand the message being conveyed.

More information is available [here \[http://doogole/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/health-disability/interpreter-services-for-deaf-clients/booking-a-new-zealand-sign-language-interpreter.html\]](http://doogole/resources/helping-clients/procedures-manuals/work-and-income/health-disability/interpreter-services-for-deaf-clients/booking-a-new-zealand-sign-language-interpreter.html), about how to book a New Zealand Sign Language Interpreter.