

Guide to booking British Sign Language interpreters

If you have a deaf patient coming into hospital you will need to contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are responsible for booking all British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters. PALS can provide an interpreter for inpatients and for outpatient appointments. We can also book electronic note takers, lip speakers and deaf/blind interpreter/communicators. PALS do **not** book language interpreters as these are booked through individual directorates in accordance with the Interpreting Policy on the intranet.

To ensure high standards of interpreting we aim to provide interpreters who are members of the Register of Sign Language Interpreters (MRSLI). All interpreters will have an identification badge.

How to book

1. Complete the electronic booking form by going to the PALS page on the intranet.
2. On left hand side menu, select 'interpreting' and open the booking form.
3. Complete with as much information as possible, particularly estimated length of appointment and if there are any tests planned.
4. Submit the form and PALS will then book the interpreter confirming with you by email.
5. The Clinical Site Team can book interpreters outside of PALS hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm) if an emergency patient requires a BSL interpreter.

Important points to note

1. There is a national shortage of BSL interpreters so PALS needs as much notice time as possible to book the interpreter.
2. Cancellation charges are high. If the appointment is cancelled within six days (by patient or hospital) we are liable for the whole fee and for cancellations within seven to 14 days we have to pay a half fee.
3. Interpreters charge more for appointments outside normal office hours and at weekends.

Please contact the PALS office if you have any questions either by email pals@uhd.nhs.uk or by calling 4886/4624.