

Interpreter services for you as a health service patient

– Right to information in your own language

IS-1976

Tolk for deg som er pasient i helsetjenesten
Språk: Engelsk



Good information and dialogue are important for you to get the right help and treatment. As a patient, you should receive information that is specifically for you. It is important that you can communicate with health professionals about your health, illness and treatment.

The Norwegian Interpretation Act (2022) states that public services must use qualified interpreters when necessary for patients to receive the right treatment. Health professionals such as nurses, doctors, psychologists, etc. must ensure that you as a patient get the help you need.

- You have a right to information about your health and treatment in a language you understand.
- It can sometimes be difficult to understand medical terms and expressions. You may therefore need an interpreter even if you speak a little Norwegian.
- The interpreter can be in the same room as you and the health professional, or join by phone or video link.

The health service must book an interpreter

- The health service has a duty to check whether you need an interpreter. They must also book the interpreter.
- Interpreter services are free for you as a patient.
- At the dentist, adult patients usually have to pay for both the dental treatment and any interpreter required.

Only qualified interpreters should interpret

- A qualified interpreter has formal competence in interpreting.
- Children may not be used as interpreters.
- Family, friends or acquaintances may not be used as interpreters.



How can you get the most out of an interpreted conversation?

- Tell the health service which language and dialect you prefer to speak.
- Let us know if you speak several languages fluently.
- Let us know if you have any special needs, such as impaired hearing.
- Prepare yourself for the conversation. Write down any questions you would like to ask.
- All questions should be directed at the health professional, and not the interpreter.
- Speak up if you do not understand the interpreter.
- Speak clearly and in short sentences. This makes it easier for the interpreter to correctly interpret what is said.
- The interpreter may only translate what is said. The interpreter cannot repeat what was said earlier in the conversation.
- Take notes so you remember what was said.
- Speak up if there is poor audio/video when the interpreter speaks on the phone/video.

What is an interpreter and what are the interpreter's tasks?

- When the conversation begins, the interpreter must present the interpreter's role in both languages.
- The interpreter is neutral and impartial. This means that the interpreter's own attitudes or opinions should not influence how they interpret what is said.
- An interpreter has a duty of confidentiality, and it is a criminal offence to breach the duty of confidentiality. This means that the interpreter cannot tell anyone what was said during the conversation. This also applies after the interpreter has left their job.
- The interpreter may not give you advice or help you answer questions. The interpreter must only interpret what is said, and may not take on other tasks for either the patient or the health professional.
- The interpreter may ask questions or ask you to rephrase if there is something the interpreter does not understand.

Do you have complaints about an interpreter not being used in the health service? Do you have questions about your rights?

Please contact:

The Health and Social Services Ombud in the county where you live
www.pasientogbrukerombudet.no tel. no.: (+47) 40 50 16 00

The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, tel. no. (+47) 23 15 73 00
[LDO - Home page](#), [LDO-English page](#)

Center for Social Justice (OMOD)
kontakt@omod.no and www.omod.no

The Norwegian Board of Health Supervision in the county where you live [The Norwegian Board of Health Supervision oversees child welfare, social and health services | The Norwegian Board of Health Supervision](#) Tel. no. switchboard: (+47) 21 52 99 00

Do you have complaints about the interpreter's quality and qualifications?

Complaints can be addressed to the institution where you are a patient, or to the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi), which is the national authority in the field of interpretation.
[Interpreting in the public sector | IMDi](#)

Acts concerning patients' rights and health professionals' obligations in relation to the use of interpreters

Norwegian Act on Patient and User Rights
[Lov om pasient- og brukerrettigheter \(pasient- og brukerrettighetsloven\) - Lovdata](#)

Norwegian Health Personnel Act
[Lov om helsepersonell m.v. \(helsepersonelloven\) - Lovdata](#)

Norwegian Interpretation Act

(Act on public bodies' responsibility for using interpreters, etc.)
[Lov om offentlige organers ansvar for bruk av tolk mv. \(tolkeloven\) - Lovdata](#)

This brochure is available in many languages and can be downloaded from

www.helsenorge.no and www.helsedirektoratet.no