

Hornafjörður municipality - Policy and procedures for interpretation and translation services

Policy

The Hornafjörður municipality's policy focuses on providing all residents with good services and the staff is required to make sure that anyone who does not have Icelandic as a native language is offered interpretation services. This applies in particular to matters involving social services, child protection, health service, the educational system and issues involving rights and liberties. The discretionary power of the individual must be respected at all times when interpretation services are being offered. When municipality staff summons an interpreter the service is always free of charge for the relevant person who does not have Icelandic as native language.

- The municipality's staff shall make sure that they get the informed consent when decisions are taken in matters involving the welfare and rights of individuals, and they must summon an interpreter if there is any doubt concerning this.
- The right of parents with respect to translation and/or interpretation in matters involving the welfare of their children must be explained to the parents. As an example can be mentioned interpretation services at meetings when specialists present their findings, and a translation of the results of diagnoses.
- Children below the age of 18 should never be used as interpreters.
- In the event that a municipal employee has to communicate important information concerning the welfare or rights of a person there is an obligation to offer the services of an interpreter if the employee and the recipient of the service do not share the same language.
- When dealing with delicate and personal matters an interpreter from Alþjóðasetur or other service providers should be called upon, and at the same time the services of an interpreter from within the local community should be avoided.
- Interested residents of the community will be offered to attend a course on interpretation and translations by Alþjóðasetur as a first step in developing accessible services within the municipality.
- The municipality shall offer to those who have completed a course for interpreters to undertake tasks that involve general interpretation and translation services for the municipality.
- The staff shall regularly be offered training in the use of interpretation services in order to ensure the know-how and skills when using the service.

Rules of procedure

Whom to call on

The staff shall use the services of Alþjóðasetur to the extent possible. If calling on other service providers then those must have concluded a framework agreement with Ríkiskaup for interpretation and translation services. The following can be mentioned: Túlkaþjónustan slf., túlka- og þýðingþjónusta Alþjóðahúss ehf. and InterCultural Ísland ehf.

The staff shall provide the interpreter with the following information:

- Who is making the order, for whom, where and when the interpretation is to take place.
- Which language pair is to be interpreted (it is not enough to name the country of origin).
- What is it that has to be interpreted and the expected duration.
- Convey if the service might be better.
- Who is paying and where to send the bill for the services.

The function and role of the interpreter:

- The interpreter must have reached the age of 18.
- The interpreter is subject to professional secrecy in all matters.
- The interpreter does not take sides.
- The interpreter does not express his/her views when he/she interprets.
- The interpreter interprets **everything** that is said during the conversation.
- The interpreter does not answer questions on his/her own initiative.
- The interpreter is not responsible for information being correct or false.
- The interpreter shall indicate if the interpretation can not come under these rules.
- An interpreter is responsible for making an assessment as to whether he/she has the sufficient skills in the relevant language and the professional proficiency to undertake the task.
- An interpreter has a fundamental knowledge of the terms that are connected with the activities and the operation of the organisation that is to be interpreted for.
- The interpreter shall send the bill for the interpretation service stating (the name of the interpreter, ID-kennitala, bank account number, number of hours, for whom the interpretation was done and the date and time), the bill shall then be sent to the relevant organisation.

Ten tips for the users of the interpretation services

- Consider an interpreter as being a cultural bridge or bridge between cultures and prepare the interpreter for the topic of the meeting.
- Study the code of conduct for interpreters and their professional secrecy.
- Organise beforehand the outline of the conversation so that it is clear what is going to be discussed, and what the purpose of the conversation is. Be aware that, and allow for it that a conversation with the aid of an interpreter takes longer.

- Preferably start the conversation with a short synopsis that gives an overview of what you think should be discussed and provide the interviewees an opportunity to make comments.
- Do not shy away from using physical expression in order to place emphasis on your talk. Be more precise in your use of words than you are used to.
- Express yourself in a simple and clear manner. The interpreter has to understand you, therefore you need to allow for the interpreter to get sufficient time to transmit the message simultaneously to the third party.
- Remember to pause sufficiently so that the interpreter gets an opportunity to transmit or absorb what you are saying.
- It is important that you face a pupil and the parents and look them in the eyes when you speak.
Look directly at your interviewees when they speak. Turn variously towards the interpreter or the interviewee according to which of these is speaking.
- Review the conclusions and the information that came up at the meeting so that your interviewees agree on what was said and decided upon at the meeting.

Adopted by the municipal council 13 June 2019.

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