

Holly Cairns TD  
Leinster House,  
Dublin 2

12<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**PQ 16956/21 – To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to ensure Irish sign language interpretation services are available to all general practitioners; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Holly Cairns**

Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

One of the actions of the Second National Intercultural Health Strategy (2018-2023) is to review, update where necessary, and promote previously published resources for staff including; the Emergency Multilingual Aid; the Lost in Translation resource, On Speaking Terms: Good Practice Guidelines for HSE Staff in the Provision of Interpreting Services (2009); and Guideline for Communication in Crosscultural General Practice Consultations (2012). Work is ongoing to implement these policies.

Irish sign language interpretation services are available to deaf and hard of hearing patients and patients can arrange for the booking of a sign language interpreter for GP visits and Covid testing through the GP access scheme managed by SLIS. Bookings for interpreters during subsequent healthcare appointments should be made by HSE staff. Full details of the services provided can be accessed at;

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/covid-19-resources-and-translations/covid-19-irish-sign-language-resources/covid19-irish-sign-language-resources.html>

I hope the above is of assistance however if there is a specific area of concern, please provide the details and I will be happy to make enquiries on the matter.

**Yours sincerely,**

*Liam O'Sullivan*

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**Community Strategy and Planning**

