



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Náisiúnta
Folláine, Comhionannas, Aeráide & Sláinte Dhomhanda
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Seomra 1.51

Urlár 1

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25th April 2025

Marie Sherlock

Dáil Éireann

Leinster House

Dublin 2

E: marie.sherlock@oireachtas.ie/ CC: PQuestions@hse.ie

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

Re: PQ 17968/25

Question: To ask the Minister for Health to provide an update on the implementation of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 (ISL) within her Department and its associated public bodies, including details of any ISL strategies that have been developed; and if no ISL strategy has been developed to date, the details of plans her Department has to address this gap in the near future.

I refer you to the above representation you submitted in relation to the implementation of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017.

I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Irish Sign Language (ISL) Act 2017 (herein referred to as the Act) places a duty on public bodies to provide access to public services or statutory entitlements through ISL when requested through the provision of a free ISL interpretation by accredited interpreters.

The HSE National Office for Human Rights and Equality Policy is currently updating the *HSE National Guidelines on Accessible Health and Social Care Services* (developed in consultation with the NDA) to reflect the new responsibilities under the Act and these will be reissued to services once complete. These Guidelines provide practical guidance to all health and social care staff about how they can provide accessible services.

Once the guidance is complete, an action plan will be developed to support services in the implementation of the Act in their everyday practice. Information is already available on the HSE website to support staff to work with an ISL / English interpreter.

Information provision on the HSE website in ISL has increased over the last few years due to the COVID pandemic. HSE Communications are continuing to work on improving the accessibility of all aspects on the website.

The HSE have been supporting SLIS (Sign Language Interpreting Service) to provide remote interpreting services in HSE services for a number of years. This started a pilot with GP services and was expanded during COVID. This service has continued to grow over recent years.

If you require any further information or clarification please do contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Caoimhe Gleeson
General Manager
HSE National Office for Human Rights and Equality Policy
Office of the National Director
Wellbeing, Equality, Climate and Global Health