

Complaints & Appeals Procedure

The Interpreter Initiative is committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone we deal with. In order to do this, we need you to give us any comments about our service, and to tell us when we get things wrong. We want to help you resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.

We will always listen to your complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service.

What is a complaint?

We define a complaint as expression of dissatisfaction with any part of our service.

Our policy covers complaints about:

1. the standard of service we provide
2. the behaviour of our staff, and
3. any action or lack of action by staff affecting an individual or group

Our complaints policy does not cover

1. matters that have already been fully investigated through this complaint's procedure.
2. anonymous complaints without evidence of misconduct.

Our standards for handling complaints

- We treat all complaints seriously, whether they are made by telephone, letter, email, filmed BSL or other format.
- You will be treated with courtesy and fairness at all times. We would hope this is reciprocated and that you will be courteous and fair in your dealings with our staff at all times.
- We will treat your complaint in confidence within the company and with associated partners.
- We will deal with your complaint promptly. We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within five working days and we will send you a full reply within 20 working days of receipt. If we are unable to send a full reply within 20 working days of receipt we will explain to you the reason why, informing you when to expect a comprehensive reply in full.

We are committed to upholding all of your rights and protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and will not discriminate against you because of your:

- age;
- disability;
- gender;
- marriage and civil partnership;

- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Third Party Reporting

Complainants may wish to have a third party act on their behalf. A third party is any person or organisation acting on behalf of or making enquiries for the complainant. Representatives may include:

1. advice organisations,
2. professionals such as social workers, community psychiatric nurses or doctors, solicitors,
3. family members or friends,
4. MPs and elected members of the Council – customers' own MPs and elected members are assumed to have consent to act and information can be disclosed in response to their enquiries,
5. Legal representative who is legally empowered to act on behalf of the complainant and consent to disclose information is not required.

Where a third party is helping a complainant with a particular complaint and written authority is held to that effect, if the representative asks to be kept informed of progress on the complaint we will clarify with all parties involved before doing so.

Confidentiality

All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

How to Complain

You can make a complaint in a number of ways:

- By telephone
- By email
- By letter
- By filmed BSL
- By social media contact
- By online webcam chat (FaceTime, Skype, WhatsApp Video)

We have a two-stage complaints procedure. At each stage it will help us to resolve your complaint quickly if you can give us as much clear detail as possible, including any documents and correspondence and stating that you are making a complaint in line with our procedure.

The stages of the complaint's procedure

Stage 1

This is the first opportunity to resolve a complainant's dissatisfaction, and the majority of complaints will be resolved at this stage. In the first instance, we will try to get your complaint

resolved by the Head of the department against whom the complaint has been made. Upon receipt of your complaint we will contact the relevant person and ask them to deal with your complaint.

Stage 2

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an escalation review by a Senior member of our team, please send your complaint or request via your preferred method and state it as a stage 2 complaint.

Timescales for handling a complaint

Stage 1	Stage 2
Maximum 20 working days with an acknowledgement within 5 working days Full response within 20 working days.	Maximum 20 working days from receiving the complaint with an acknowledgement within 5 working days. Full response within 20 working days.

Appeals

An Appeal should be submitted via email within 28 days of the complaint outcome. We will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within 5 days. An investigation will be conducted by a senior member of staff, if we require further information from you or anticipate a delay in responding, we will contact you.

If a complainant wishes to appeal against a decision in relation to a registered Professional working with The Interpreter Initiative , they may raise this with the appropriate registering body in line with their Code of Conduct and or Complaints Procedure:

NRCPD – National Register of Communication Professionals working with Deaf & Deafblind People

RBSLI – Regulatory Body of Sign Language Interpreters

SRLPDC - The Scottish Register of Language Professionals with the Deaf Community

If the complaint appeal is against a member of The Interpreter Initiative Staff, The Interpreter Initiative may appoint an independent arbitrator to investigate or adjudicate on the matter.

Extending time limits

We aim to complete all complaints within the timescales above; however, if a complaint is very complex it may occasionally be necessary to extend the time limit. If this is the case we will keep the complainant informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and inform them of the new deadline.

Following any stage of the procedure, a complainant has a maximum of 28 days from the date of the final response to request that their complaint be progressed

Remedies

When we get things wrong we will act to:

1. accept responsibility
2. explain what went wrong and why, and
3. put things right by making any changes required.

Comments

Quality of service is an important measure of the effectiveness of our service. Therefore, we believe that learning from complaints is a powerful way of helping to develop the Company and increase trust among the people who use our services. As well as learning from your complaints we are also interested in other ideas you may have on how we might do things better. We would also like you to tell us when we do things well.

You can make your comments by telephoning or writing to any members of our staff, or alternatively you can email us if this is your preferred method, if you are a BSL user we are also able and happy to accept your complaint in the form of filmed BSL. We will always use your comments to help improve our service and the way we do things.

Recording complaints

We log all complaints we receive so we can monitor the types of problems, the best way to resolve them and how long we are taking to deal with them. This also helps us to take a closer look at how we can improve our own service delivery. We will handle your information in line with data-protection legislation.

Contacting us

All complaints and requests for review under our complaint's procedures should be emailed to admin@theinterpreterinitiative.co.uk

Accessibility

The Interpreter Initiative is committed to equal opportunities and our aim is to make our complaints policy easy to use and accessible to all our customers. Staff will provide information on the complaints procedure for anyone wishing to make a complaint and provide any assistance they may require.