We do not allow children to act as interpreters during your treatment or appointments.

It is NHS Lothian policy to discourage relatives or friends from acting as interpreters during your treatment or appointment. Relatives or friends acting as interpreters is not good practice and can cause problems with safe, effective communication and treatment.

If you insist on using an adult relative or friend to interpret we may still involve an interpreter at first to make absolutely certain you understand the risk.

Your decision to refuse the interpreter we provide will be recorded in your health care notes.

You can of course change your mind about this and ask us to provide you with an interpreter. We will do this.

We will not pay for any alternative or privately arranged interpreters.

You will not be able to claim any payment from NHS Lothian for the costs of using an alternative or privately arranged interpreter.

Verbal abuse or violence towards an interpreter is not acceptable. We will deal with such behaviour in the same way as we deal with abuse or violence toward any staff. This includes involvement of the police if necessary.

For further information, please contact: its.enquiries@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk
We want you to have good care. We also want to be sure you can give informed consent for treatment. To do this it is important patients and staff can communicate.

NHS Lothian provides interpreting services to patients who have difficulty in communicating in English. This includes Deaf and DeafBlind patients.

This service is provided free of charge to patients.

Interpreting is carried out by interpreters who are present with the patient (Face-to-Face interpretation), over the telephone (Telephone Interpreting) or by video link.

Face-to-Face interpreters are provided through our partner City of Edinburgh Interpretation and Translation Service.

Telephone interpreting is provided by a company called thebigword. This company provides its services through a UK Government contract.

The decision to use telephone interpreting, video link or face-to-face interpreting depends on the treatment you will need, your physical, emotional or mental condition, and the length of time your treatment or appointment is expected to last.

A member of the team dealing with your treatment or appointment will arrange the interpreter.

To make sure we can support you effectively we need you to do certain things.

1. Let us know you need this help. You may need a friend or relative who speaks English to tell us this the first time you need an interpreter.

2. Be sure to let us know if you will not be coming for your appointment or treatment. If you do not tell us you might be depriving another patient of the help they need.

3. Be sure to tell us if you will be late for your treatment or appointment. Another patient somewhere else might need the interpreter. If you are late the next patient might miss their appointment or not get the help they need.

4. Let us know if you have had any problems with communication. This will help us improve the service.

5. Tell us if communication was good. This also helps us give a good service.