



INforMHAA: Interpreter-mediated Mental Health Act Assessments

Best practices for Approved Mental Health Professionals and Interpreters working together

Part 8. Deciding to stop a MHAA interview

Introduction

There are occasions when serious consideration should be given to whether an interpreter-mediated interview during a MHAA should not go ahead or be stopped. It is the responsibility of the AMHP to make such a decision.

There can be several reasons for such a decision relating to the effectiveness of the assessment affecting the requirement to interview 'in a suitable manner' (See Part 2 Context and key roles, Part 4 When and why an interpreter is needed).

For example:

- The person being assessed appears unwilling for the interpreter to be present, the reasons for this may be unclear or specific to the individual interpreter perhaps because of unwelcome familiarity (the person and the interpreter may be from the same community and are known to each other) or cultural requirements (e.g., the gender or dialect of the interpreter is unacceptable).
- The AMHP is concerned that the interpreter is not able to understand or adequately convey key concepts vital to a MHAA. (See Part 6 Key legal concepts and terms).



- The interpreter appears unsure, hesitant or distressed to an extent that it is interfering with good communication during the assessment.
- The time the interpreter has available is very limited which may impede a fair assessment process.
- Issues connected with the circumstances of the interpreting and/or interpreter are creating risks that are not manageable.

In circumstances such as these, serious consideration should be given to whether the MHAA should be stopped and/or a different interpreter sourced. Our research indicates that AMHPs may be very reluctant to stop an assessment because of practicalities associated with sourcing interpreters and time required. AMHPs may not have considered fully that the implications of interviewing in a suitable manner also includes stopping that interview if the communication skills or practice of the interpreter is not good enough. The decision to stop must be balanced against the needs of the person who may be distressed, and a delay could add to this.

What is good practice in these circumstances?

It is important to reflect on what can be done to prevent getting to the point where stopping an assessment interview becomes a consideration. Therefore:

- Briefing an interpreter beforehand should take place wherever practicable. The briefing allows an AMHP to relay appropriate information to the interpreter and should also be an opportunity to decide if the interpreter understands what is required of them, including the need to understand and convey key concepts and pragmatic matters such as what time the interpreter has. Parts 5 and 6 and resources R7 and R9 in this document provide some helpful background to this.
- If the AMHP has concerns, then consideration should be given to not going ahead with the interview.
- There may also be a need to stop an interview if matters arise whilst the interview is taking place.
- In both instances the AMHP should make this known to the person being assessed, to the interpreter and to anyone else, explain what is to happen next and this decision must be recorded in the AMHP report form.
- The AMHP should ensure that the person being assessed is safe and arrange for a replacement interpreter as soon as is possible.

INforMHAA: Interpreter-mediated Mental Health Act Assessments

Best practices for Approved Mental Health Professionals and Interpreters working together

Document Description

This document is an **extracted section** from **INforMHAA Project Guidance & Resources** for use as a handy reference.

Acknowledgements

This document has been developed through a three-year research study funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research School for Social Care Research (NIHR SSCR), featuring a research team, an advisory board and active participation from service users and carers. The authors of this document gratefully acknowledge the NIHR SSCR for funding the Interpreter-mediated Mental Health Act Assessments study (also known as the Interpreters for Mental Health Act Assessments(INforMHAA) study) that underpins this guidance (Grant reference P172).

Disclaimer

Disclaimer: This document does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the National Institute for Health and Care Research School for Social Care Research.

Licence

The resource is available to use under the Creative Commons Licence:

CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 

This license enables reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format for noncommercial purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator. If you remix, adapt, or build upon the material, you must license the modified material under identical terms. CC BY-NC-SA includes the following elements:



BY: credit must be given to the creator.



NC: Only noncommercial uses of the work are permitted.



SA: adaptations must be shared under the same terms.

To cite this extract, please use the citation for the full guidance and resource document:

Young, A., Tipton, R., Napier, J., Vicary, S., Rodriguez Vicente, N. & Hulme, C. (2023) Interpreter-mediated Mental Health Act assessments: Best practices for Approved Mental Health Professionals and interpreters working together. University of Manchester. Online Resource.

If you are viewing a printed version of this Guidance, there is a digital version of the full Guidance available by scanning the QR code.



Funded by

NIHR | School for Social Care Research

Research partners

MANCHESTER
1824
The University of Manchester

HERIOT
WATT
UNIVERSITY

 **The Open University**

 **University of Essex**

March 2024

sites.manchester.ac.uk/informhaa

DW.3853.04.24