

Proposed changes to NZSL Video Interpreting and Relay Services

Summary document

We want to know what you think about some changes we're proposing to make to the video interpreting and relay services.

These services are part of the Telecommunications Relay Service, which helps Deaf, deafblind, hearing-impaired and speech-impaired New Zealanders to communicate with hearing people over the phone.

Last year, people who use these services told us that –

- they wanted services that take advantage of technologies that are widely available now, like apps on mobile phones and computers
- they wanted the Video Interpreting Service to be more available.

We've now come up with a set of six proposed changes that we think will mean more modern, more accessible services for users and their whānau.

We want to get your feedback about these proposals.

What are the proposed changes?

Change 1: Get you to register as a user

You would need to register to use the video interpreting and relay services.

You would register by creating a log-in like you do for other services, with your own user-name and password. You would **not** need to provide evidence to prove you have a disability when you register.

Getting users to register would help improve the services for you – for example it could make it easier for you to take incoming calls, and to get important notifications – like when a service is down or during a civil defence emergency like an earthquake.

Getting users to register would also tell us more about who is using the services and how they're using them. That will then help us know whether the services are meeting people's needs.

Change 2: Make the Video Interpreting Service more available

You would be able to use the Video Interpreting Service **7 days a week**.

We would also look at increasing the hours of the service each day – for example, making the service more available at night. This will depend on whether enough qualified interpreters are available. We want to look at allowing interpreters to work for the Video Interpreting Service from different locations – for example, an interpreter could work from a home office instead of a call centre.

We would look at making other improvements, making sure the video system is easy both for users to access and for organisations like government agencies to access.

Change 3: Move to digital text-based relay services

You would be able to use all the text-based relay services on everyday devices like mobile phones, tablets and laptops. This could be through a single app that you download.

These services would allow you to –

- text or type your message and then read the reply
- speak your message and then receive a text reply
- text or type your message and then listen to the reply.

The different services would be presented and branded with a common look. This would help make people aware of all the different services and that they can all be used from everyday devices.

We would look at making other improvements too – for example, allowing free calls to both landlines and mobile phones.

Change 4: Phase out CapTel equipment

To use the CapTel service you currently have to pay \$325 to borrow special equipment. You also need both a broadband connection and a landline phone.

As part of shifting to services available on everyday devices like mobile phones, we're proposing to phase out the CapTel service, which uses special equipment.

After 30 June 2020, new users of relay services would not be able to use CapTel equipment. From that date they would have to use one of the new digital relay services.

If you use CapTel now, you would still be able to use CapTel equipment for a set time after 30 June 2020, to allow you to change over to one of the new services. We want to know how long you think that change-over period should be.

Change 5: Stop using teletypewriter (TTY) equipment

After 30 December 2020, you would not be able to use relay services with TTY equipment. You would need to change over to one of the new digital relay services.

This applies to the three current TTY services: TTY to voice, hearing carry-over, and voice carry-over.

There are now very few TTY users, and the equipment is out of date.

Change 6: Stop speech-to-speech services

After 30 December 2020, you would not be able to use speech-to-speech services. You would need to change over to one of the new digital relay services.

The speech-to-speech services are the least-used of all the relay services. They do not seem to be meeting the different needs of speech-impaired users.

We would look to make sure new digital relay services can help more speech-impaired people – for example we will explore how the services work with technologies that speech-impaired people are familiar with.

We want to know what you think

We want to get your feedback about these proposed changes. Do you have any concerns about them?

How you can have your say

You can tell us what you think in one of these two ways –

- **Video message in NZSL** – If you use New Zealand Sign Language, you can send us a video of you signing your response. Go to the website www.seeflow.co.nz/direct where you will be able to create your video message.
- **Written feedback** – You can send us a written response using the template provided at www.mbie.govt.nz/relayconsultation. You can **email** us your feedback to relayconsultation@mbie.govt.nz. You can also **post** it to us. You will find our address on the website.

Please tell us your **name** and your **email address or street address** when you send us your feedback.

Closing date: We will need to get your feedback by **9am on Monday, 15 April 2019**

Come to a workshop

We also invite you to come to one of the workshops we will be hosting. This will give you a chance to tell us in more detail what you think about the relay services and the changes we're proposing.

We are hosting workshops in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. You can find out more about the workshops at www.mbie.govt.nz/relayconsultation.

We will publish some feedback

We plan to publish some of the feedback that people send us about the suggested changes. Please let us know if you **don't** want us to publish your name, or don't want us to mention any particular part of your feedback.

Because at MBIE we are part of the government, other people will be able to use the Official Information Act 1982 to ask us to show them the feedback we get. When we are responding to these requests, we will take into account whether the people who gave us feedback told us they did not want us to publish their name or their feedback.

We will protect your private information

Any information you give us about yourself will only be used to help us make decisions about these proposed changes to video interpreting and relay services.

Please contact us if you would like us to give you a copy of the information we have about you, or if you want us to correct information that we have about you.

What happens after we get your feedback

After we have got people's feedback, including from the workshops we will hold, we will look closely at it to help us decide what changes should be made to the current services.

We will publish a summary of people's feedback on www.mbie.govt.nz/relayconsultation.

Your feedback will help us ask for proposals from organisations that provide video interpreting and relay services. These potential suppliers will need to show us that they will be able to deliver the new, improved services.