

# Interpreter accreditation requirements and exemption process

## Voluntary assisted dying

This fact sheet provides information for interpreters, practitioners and healthcare workers on the interpreter accreditation requirements and interpreter exemption application process.

It is essential that people accessing voluntary assisted dying clearly understand what is happening throughout the process.

Some people who wish to access voluntary assisted dying in Queensland may need assistance from an interpreter.

## Eligibility

An interpreter for a person accessing voluntary assisted dying **must**:

- be accredited by the National Accreditation Body for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), or
- have been granted an exemption from the accreditation requirements by Queensland Health.

An interpreter **must not**:

- be a family member of the person, including a:
  - spouse
  - parent
  - grandparent
  - sibling
  - child
  - grandchild

- a person who under Aboriginal tradition or Torres Strait Island custom is regarded as one of the above people
- know or believe they are a beneficiary under the person's will, or that they may benefit financially or in any other way from the death of the person, except for receiving reasonable fees for providing services as an interpreter
- be an owner of, or responsible for the management of, any health facility at which the person is being treated or resides
- be someone who is directly involved in providing a health or personal care service to the person.

Interpreters do not have to participate in the voluntary assisted dying process. An interpreter does not have to provide a reason for their decision not to be involved but should provide their refusal in a respectful and considerate manner.

## NAATI accreditation

To interpret for a person accessing voluntary assisted dying an interpreter must hold a certification at one of the following NAATI levels:

- Certified Provisional Interpreter
- Certified Interpreter
- Certified Specialist Health Interpreter
- Certified Specialist Legal Interpreter
- Certified Conference Interpreter.

Interpreters who hold a **recognised practising** credential are not able to interpret for a person accessing voluntary

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[health.qld.gov.au/vad](http://health.qld.gov.au/vad)



assisted dying, unless they receive an exemption from Queensland Health.

## Additional requirements

Interpreters may be asked to provide sight translation services during the voluntary assisted dying process.

Interpreters who agree to provide sight translation services should be suitably qualified.

If an interpreter is not comfortable or is not adequately skilled, they should refuse the request.

## Interpreter accreditation exemptions

An interpreter who does not have a NAATI accreditation may be granted an exemption by Queensland Health.

### Prior to applying for an exemption

#### Identify the need for an interpreter

At any stage in the voluntary assisted dying process:

- a person may indicate their need for communication assistance from an interpreter
- a practitioner or staff member at a facility may identify that the person seeking access requires an interpreter to complete the process.

#### Organise an interpreter

It is recommended an authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioner, healthcare worker, administration staff member or any

other person involved in providing voluntary assisted dying services, engage an interpreter through their local processes.

Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support Service (QVAD-Support) care coordinators can assist in engaging an accredited interpreter, if required. You can talk to a care coordinator Monday to Friday, 8.30am-4pm, (excluding public holidays).

**Phone:** 1800 431 371

**Email:** [QVADSupport@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:QVADSupport@health.qld.gov.au)

The person organising the interpreter service should request a NAATI accredited interpreter in the required language or non-spoken communication.

### Exemption criteria

Under the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021* (the Act), an interpreter may be granted an exemption if:

- there is no NAATI accredited interpreter available, and
- there are exceptional circumstances for granting the exemption.

### How to apply

#### Step 1: Identify an appropriate person who can provide interpreter services

If a NAATI accredited interpreter is not available, the healthcare worker or practitioner should check if there is another appropriate person who can provide assistance with communication and seek an exemption for that person.

An application for an exemption can be made at any stage during the voluntary assisted dying process.

## Step 2: Exemption letter and supporting documentation

To apply for an interpreter accreditation exemption the practitioner or healthcare worker should email Queensland Health and request the *Interpreter accreditation exemption application letter template*: [VADEXEMPTIONS@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:VADEXEMPTIONS@health.qld.gov.au).

The practitioner or healthcare worker must confirm in the letter that:

- the interpreter has the appropriate skills, experience or knowledge to provide interpreting services for the person seeking to access voluntary assisted dying
- they have contacted an interpreting service provider and been advised there are no NAATI accredited interpreters available
- the person's and the interpreter's details, and the type of interpreter service required.

Practitioners or healthcare workers will need to send the completed *Interpreter accreditation exemption application letter* to [VADEXEMPTIONS@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:VADEXEMPTIONS@health.qld.gov.au).

### Supporting documentation

The practitioner or healthcare worker must provide supporting documentation to demonstrate the interpreter's understanding of the language or non-spoken communication, and ability to provide an accurate interpretation, such as:

- NAATI credentials the interpreter may hold such as a NAATI recognised practising certification
- any other interpreting credentials or qualifications the interpreter may hold, including tertiary, TAFE, or other formal qualifications in the language or non-spoken communication

- any interpreting experience the interpreter may have
  - this includes any supporting evidence of the interpreter's ability to provide sight translation.

## Step 3: Assessment and decisions

Queensland Health will assess each interpreter exemption application on whether:

- there are no NAATI accredited interpreters available in a particular case, and
- there are **exceptional circumstances** for granting the exemption.

Queensland Health may request further information to support an exemption application.

### Exceptional circumstances

**Exceptional circumstances** will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Examples of matters that may be considered as part of exceptional circumstances include:

- the stage in the request and assessment process, for example, the person has completed all stages with an interpreter who is no longer available. The person is seeking an exemption for the non-accredited interpreter to be present at practitioner administration
- if the language to be interpreted has no NAATI accredited interpreters but there is a person who is considered an expert in interpreting in that language and is used in other legal or health situations.

## Step 4: Outcome of the application

The practitioner or healthcare worker will receive an outcome of the application within five business days.

If the interpreter is granted an exemption, they must only provide interpreting services for the specified person seeking access to voluntary assisted dying

The practitioner must:

- give a copy of the exemption to the interpreter
- upload a copy of the exemption to the QVAD Review Board IMS.

## QVAD-Support

QVAD-Support provides advice about voluntary assisted dying.

QVAD-Support is run by care coordinators who are medical, nursing, and allied healthcare workers. You can contact QVAD-Support if you have any questions about engaging an interpreter or the exemption process.

You can talk to a care coordinator Monday to Friday, 8.30am-4pm, (excluding public holidays).

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