

Telephoning

This is usually the most difficult communication situation to handle, but there are some ways to make the conversation easier. Some people find it useful to keep a checklist like this near to the phone. This helps you to go step by step and may reduce confusion. Find out if your organisation can access Language Line.

Remember...	Information to ask	Information to give (if possible or necessary)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for the person's name if you can't understand the name or the spelling exactly, you could ask for date of birth or postcode if they are on your records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your name
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smile – it is relaxing and so slows your voice and eases your tone 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The days/times you are working for continuity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for the phone number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where your office/clinic is – state the location in relation to known landmarks eg: near a large food shop, train station, school or park etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give your full attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask if you can call this number/send a text to give an answer 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the main thing the person is saying or asking? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for the language they speak and country so you can organise Language Line or an interpreter if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are asking the person to come to your office/clinic, give them a time when you know it is less busy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond with short chunks of information, give a short summary 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear and specific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address (postcode & house number are often easier) if you are going to meet at their home or give venue of a known or neutral place eg: local 'drop in'/community centre/library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signposting information in response to common questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid telephone jargon (eg: 'hold the line' – replace with 'please wait' etc.) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to set up a face to face meeting if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check understanding with short specific questions 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to gauge the urgency of the call – do they need another service? 		