

Organisation name Site or unit		STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE Communication, interpreters and records in another language	
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Review date		Replaces	
Owner		Approved by	
Signature			

Standards > **Standard S6** > **Standard operating procedures (SOPs)**

Standard operating procedure (SOP) · PTR-SOP-010 · Version 1.0 · Approved by the ASF Expert Committee

Supports: System S6 (Patient transfers and referrals), criterion S6.41

At a glance

- Speak to each patient in a language they understand.
- Use a qualified interpreter when the patient or family needs one.
- Record the language and the interpreter used.
- Records that travel to another country are in a language the receiver can read.
- Stop and get help straight away if: a patient cannot understand the crew about the transfer and no interpreter is used.

1. 1. Purpose

To make sure patients understand their transfer and that the receiving team can read the record (S6.41, S6.35).

2. 2. Scope

Applies to	Clinical and support staff in the hospital
Locations	All wards, clinics and departments of the facility
When	Whenever the activity described is carried out

Does not apply to	Activities covered by another document listed in section 15

3. 3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Clinical lead	The doctor or nurse in charge of the area at the time

4. 4. Background

A patient who cannot understand the crew cannot give consent, report pain or follow instructions.
A way to communicate in the patient's language is part of safe transfer.

5. 5. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Competence
Crew lead	Arranges the interpreter	Trained crew
Dispatch lead	Books the interpreter and records the language	Trained dispatcher

6. 6. Materials and equipment

Item	Requirement	Condition
Records and forms named in this document	Current version	Checked before use

7. 7. Safety

- Stop and call for help if a patient is at immediate risk. Do not delay urgent care to complete paperwork.

8. 8. Before you start

- Confirm the forms and equipment named in this document are available and current.

9. 9. Procedure

Step 1. Identify language.

- Ask the patient and family which language they understand best.
- Record it on the transfer log.

Key point: Ask first.

Step 2. Use an interpreter.

- Book a qualified interpreter when needed, by phone if necessary.
- Record the interpreter's name or reference.

Key point: No family as interpreter for clinical information.

Step 3. Translate the record.

- Provide the key handover information in the receiver's language.

Key point: The receiver can read it.

10. 10. Decision points

- No decision points in this procedure.

11. 11. Special situations

Situation	Action
Out of hours	Follow the same steps. Use the on-call contact on the wall of the area.

12. 12. Escalation

- Any serious problem goes to the duty clinical lead at once and to the clinical director the same day.

13. 13. Monitoring

Measure	Target	Frequency	Owner	If not met
Transfers with language recorded	100%	Monthly	Dispatch lead	Escalate to clinical lead
Patients needing an interpreter with one used	100%	Monthly	Crew lead	Escalate to clinical lead

14. 14. Records

Record	Kept in	Retention
Record named in this document	Patient record or the area file	the period set by the facility's records policy years

15. 15. Training

- Staff are trained in this document at induction and refreshed each year, with a recorded competency check.

16. 16. Related documents

ID	Title	Use
<u>HOS-SOP-013</u>	Vulnerable patients and safeguarding	Vulnerability

17. 17. Evidence

Reference	Note
E-009	ASF Expert Committee consensus.
E-006	ASF Policy Framework v1.2. Adapted.
E-009	ASF Expert Committee consensus.

18. 18. Change history

Version	Date	What changed	Approval
1.0	the date of approval	First version	set Expert Committee approval

No e-learning course is linked to this document yet.

19. References

- Accréditation Sans Frontières (2026). ASF Policy Framework v1.2. (E-006)
- Accréditation Sans Frontières (2026). ASF Expert Committee consensus on Standard 1. (E-009)

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Related standard

- [Standard 7: Emergency Dispatch](#)