

Guidelines for working with interpreters

1) Pre-session

- Clarify your role within your organisation.
- Allow the interpreter time to introduce themselves and their role.
- Arrange seating for the most direct communication between you and the client.
Suggested seating arrangement:
 - 1) sit opposite the client with the interpreter at the client's side, or
 - 2) in a circle where more people are involved.
- Explain the purpose and the most likely outcome of the meeting.
- Allow enough time for the interview, as it will probably take twice as long as without an interpreter.

2) During session

- Speak and look at the client not the interpreter. This often does not come naturally. It is better to speak directly, e.g. "How are you today?" rather than "How is he feeling today?" as this is time-consuming and reduces directness.
- Use short sentences and avoid ambiguous or complex grammar.
- It will greatly help if you avoid slang and jargon and allow the interpreter to speak when you have completed one, two or three sentences to encapsulate a section of your message.
- Take extra care in explaining procedures, regulations and reasons for asking for certain type of information.
- Moderate the speed of speech.
- Summarise and check what you have understood.
- Allow the interpreter time to intervene where necessary.
- Be sensitive to the demands and pressures on the interpreter. Interpreting requires enormous concentration, especially liaison interpreting where the interpreter has to switch constantly between languages. It will be even more demanding if the circumstances are sensitive or stressful. Do not expect interpreters to keep going indefinitely; they may need a break halfway or to continue at another appointment.

3) Post-session

- Check with the client that they have understood everything.
- Allow the client to ask supplementary questions or seek clarification.
- Feedback to the Interpreting service co-ordinator if there have been any difficulties.
- Complete and sign the Interpreter's Time Sheet.

Thank you for reading these Guidelines