

BSL/English Interpreters Basic Guidance for Conference Organisers

Quick checklist

Booking Conference Interpreters

- ◆ One person needs to be responsible for the searching, liaison and booking interpreters. If not the overall Conference Organiser, then someone delegated to engage and liaise with interpreters before the conference and who will take responsibility for ensuring conference presenters provide materials before the conference and who will collate and send them to the interpreters.
- ◆ Book as early as possible – leaving it one month before the event will make it very difficult to secure interpreters.
- ◆ Book a team of qualified interpreters with skills to suit your conference. Interpreters need to have information about the content, aims and audience to help them decide if they are willing to accept the booking.
- ◆ How many interpreters? The number required will depend on the numbers of BSL users attending and the format of the conference. Perhaps the minimum two will be required for one day if all the participants will be together for the day. If BSL users have options of attending e.g. parallel workshops then three, four or more may be needed.
- ◆ Will the event include any entertainment, for example songs? If so you will need to ensure one of the interpreters is able to do this. A minority of interpreters are artistic performers. Discuss this with the interpreters when you are engaging the team.
- ◆ Ensure that the booking time for the days of the conference takes into account arriving early for last minute liaising with presenters and logistical issues.
- ◆ The interpreters should have a named contact present on the days(s) of the conference.

Preparation and briefing interpreters

- ◆ At the time of engaging interpreters they need to be provided with information about the overall aims, nature and format of the conference.
- ◆ After booking, as far in advance as possible, provide interpreters with information about the event and the content of presentations. A conference agenda and pack is important. Preparation from all the presenters: notes, viewing slides and biographies. Many presenters finalise their presentations at the last minute but draft and summary materials are very useful for preparation. If a video is to be shown on the day, interpreters will need to be able to preview this. If songs are included as part of the content or for entertainment then recordings or other information will be required. **Please note: adequate preparation material greatly supports the ability to interpret successfully.**
- ◆ On the day of the conference interpreters will need to meet with presenters beforehand to discuss their presentation and for last minute clarification of particular concepts and terminology.

During the conference: making it all work

- ◆ The named liaison person needs to meet with interpreters on arrival.
- ◆ Interpreters will need either a room or allocate space to liaise and prepare interpreting briefs.
- ◆ Check positioning and sightlines for interpreters. Optimum standing/seating position needs to be agreed. Interpreters need to be able to face forward yet be able to comfortably glance sideward to see presenters and projections.
- ◆ Check acoustics with interpreters to ensure they can hear presenters clearly.
- ◆ Check lighting on stage and generally. BSL users need to be able to see interpreters clearly and at all times.
- ◆ Liaise routinely, and as necessary, with interpreters during the day as there can be last minute changes to programmes and activities

Post conferencing: interpreting insights

- ◆ Discuss the event with interpreters
- ◆ Ask for feedback from the BSL users who were participants.