



HOW TO WORK WITH AN INTERPRETER ON-SITE

- Plan your interview beforehand.
- Allow extra time for the interview.
- For matters other than routine, provide the interpreter with background information for preparation purposes.
- Give general information to the interpreter before the interview. Do not discuss case history.
- Establish the interpreter's level of qualification and confirm that it is appropriate for the situation.
- Organise an area where you can talk to the client undisturbed.
- For spoken languages, arrange seating so that the interpreter is positioned to the side of both the client and you. You should be facing the client.
- For sign language, the interpreter should be positioned at your side, or just behind you so that the client can see both of you.
- When the interpreter arrives, allow them to introduce themselves to you and the client.
- Tell the client that what is discussed in the interview will remain confidential between you, the interpreter and the client.
- During the interview, speak directly to the client e.g. Say "How can I help you?" Do not ask the interpreter "How I can help him/her?".
- Speak clearly and avoid jargon.
- Let the interpreter control the length of each segment by signalling to you/ the client when to stop. Note: spoken language interpreting is conducted in a consecutive fashion whereas sign language interpreting is primarily conducted simultaneously.
- Always remember that you are in control of the interview. Interpreters do not conduct the interview.
- Interpreters do not complete any written work e.g. filling in forms or taking statements.
- Do not talk with the interpreter and exclude the client. Everything that is said during the interview must be interpreted.
- Do not request cultural information from the interpreter. Ask the client through the interpreter. The interpreter will assist of their own accord only when communication breaks down completely. (Note: You may request cultural information from the interpreter prior to the interview).
- Explain clearly when the interpreter seeks clarification but do not add additional information as this would also need to be interpreted for the client.
- After the interview, you may seek feedback from the interpreter if necessary. However, if the client is present, this feedback must also be interpreted.
- Offer assistance (debriefing) if you consider the interpreter is affected by a particularly stressful situation.
- It is not recommended that the client and interpreter leave at the same time to avoid the risk of the interpreter becoming involved with the client.