

## **Best practice guidelines for video remote interpreting**

To support you, and help answer your questions about our video remote interpreting (VRI) service, we have produced these best practice guidelines.

### **Registered, qualified BSL interpreters – book with confidence**

We only provide registered qualified British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters with a minimum of three years community experience. Interpreters must be registered with the National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPP), or the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI).

### **How to decide if remote interpreting is the best option**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increased demand for video remote interpreting. However, video interpreting is not suitable for all situations and should not be seen as a complete replacement for face-to-face interpreting. Here's what to consider when deciding if remote interpreting is the best option:

- Have all callers agreed to take part in the remote video assignment?
- What is the likely speed of interaction, and visual and acoustic quality of the call?
- How will additional resources (presentations handouts, documents, videos etc) be accessed during the call?
- What is the sensitivity of the content being discussed?

### **Situations where video interpreting is not appropriate**

There are certain situations where remote video interpreting is unsuitable. These include:

- police suspect/witness interviews
- court hearings
- psychiatric assessments
- mental health tribunals
- mental health discharge assessments
- emergency mental health assessments that may involve a person being sectioned
- tribunals or disciplinary meetings
- immigration interviews
- settings with multiple participants involving fast-paced exchanges and no formal structure, such as classroom teaching or board meetings
- highly emotional or potentially volatile settings, including counselling or therapy sessions
- assignments involving an additional disability, such as a visual impairment or learning disability.

### **When can an interpreter withdraw from a video call?**

A BSL interpreter can decline or withdraw from a video call in the following circumstances:

- A participant is abusive to the interpreter.
- There is poor screen resolution or other technical issues.
- A conflict of interest arises.

- The subject matter is inappropriate, or becomes inappropriate during the video call.
- A participant tells the interpreter they are pretending to be someone else and asks the interpreter to continue interpreting.

### **How to prepare for a video call**

1. Provide any background material to our Communication Support team before the assignment so it can be passed to the interpreter in advance of the call.
2. All participants have the right to know there is a BSL interpreter joining the call. The interpreter has a duty to make sure that hearing callers are aware that a third person (the interpreter) is privy to their conversation.
3. Make sure the interpreter is aware of all participants at the start of the video call, including those out of sight of the camera. It may be necessary to lift the camera to show the interpreter where each participant is situated, or verbally introduce each person.
4. When there are several people involved in the call, the chairperson should discuss with the interpreter how the meeting can be managed to allow the video interpreter to do their job effectively.
5. Where a second interpreter is provided to take turns in interpreting, they should be introduced at the start of the assignment and appropriate pauses negotiated to allow for the interpreters to change over.
6. There is likely to be some lag time when interpreting. It is good practice to highlight this at the start of the video call, to manage expectations and avoid any misunderstandings.

### **Protecting confidentiality on video remote interpreting calls**

Remote video interpreters must adhere to the highest levels of confidentiality, in accordance with their professional code of conduct:

- They should work in a quiet, secure area away from communal spaces to ensure total privacy.
- They should make all participants immediately aware if the security and confidentiality of the call is compromised or at risk.
- They are strictly prohibited from recording the video call.
- They must respect the confidential nature of any information gained in the course of their professional activity, except in exceptional circumstances where there is a risk of harm to an individual or they have concerns about the welfare of a vulnerable adult or a child. Video interpreters should refer to the service provider's protocols for raising an alert about a vulnerable person.

## **Working conditions for video remote interpreters**

- Breaks or changes of activity should be included in the interpreters' working time.
- The amount of screen time should be monitored and any periods of work at a particularly high pace or intensity, should also be taken into account.
- Short, frequent breaks are more satisfactory than occasional, longer breaks. For example, a five to 10-minute break after 50 -60 minutes of continuous screen and/or keyboard work is likely to be better than a 15-minute break every two hours.
- The interpreter's work station should be set up to provide a comfortable and safe environment, away from distractions, with sufficient temperature regulation and air ventilation.
- The workspace should have a desk, adjustable chair, computer, height-adjustable monitor, keyboard, mouse, microphone and headset, phone, and webcam.
- The interpreter should be positioned in order to maximise the signing space on screen; the upper body should be centred on screen, with arms, hands and face clearly visible.
- The webcam should be positioned directly in front of the interpreter at eye level.
- The workplace should be free from visual distractions.
- The background behind the interpreter should be a flat, neutral colour that contrasts with the clothes and skin tone of the interpreter.

## **Customer feedback**

We welcome all customer feedback about our services. Please contact [quality.assurance@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:quality.assurance@hearingloss.org.uk)