

Communicating via an interpreter – how to get the best results

It is important to brief both the interpreter and the client fully, on the nature of the assignment, before you start. In order to ensure the best outcome, follow these guidelines as set out in the fifteen steps below:

- We will speak to each other via an interpreter
- The interpreter is impartial and independent from the police (or other named agency)
- If you have any questions please ask me, not the interpreter. The interpreter is not allowed to give advice
- Please do not have a conversation with the interpreter during the interview
- We will speak directly to one another and the interpreter will interpret what we say, using the first person
- We must pause after one or two sentences to allow the interpreter to interpret
- If we speak for too long the interpreter will stop us like this (at this point the interpreter should indicate how he or she will indicate that a pause is needed - the gesture will vary according to different cultures)
- We must try not to speak too quickly
- You may understand English well, but please listen to the interpreting first and then give me your answers, in your own language
- The interpreter may intervene to clarify what either of us says
- You may ask me anything you wish, and I will respond in accordance with my duties and the law
- I will be making notes of what we have both said during this interview, and I shall retain a copy of the notes
- The interpreter will make some notes during the interview to ensure accuracy in interpreting; these notes will be destroyed
- Is there anything you wish me to explain further?
- Do you have any questions before we start?

This briefing is for guidance and written for use by the police; please feel free to adapt it to your particular needs.



Enhanced communication via an interpreter

'Enhanced communication via an interpreter' is a 45-minute film which highlights how to achieve the best outcome when communicating via an interpreter.

Focusing on public sector scenarios, the film is broken down into modules, each covering a particular issue and setting the ground rules. Each module explains the dos and don'ts of communicating via an interpreter in such a way as to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people speaking different languages and belonging to different cultural groups.

The film aims to remind public sector workers that a professional interpreter is trained, qualified, experienced, security-vetted and works in compliance with their professional code of conduct. It highlights the way that an interpreter can assist public sector workers to deliver a first-class service, focussing on the citizen's needs and without distinction as regards their nationality, language or cultural background.

The film can be viewed as a whole or the separate modules can be used individually, to illustrate particular issues. A short version of the film captures the key points and reiterates the main messages.

To view the film, go to www.cambs.police.uk/help/professionalinterpreter/ or for further information contact Katrina Mayfield, Project Manager at katrina.mayfield@cambs.pnn.police.uk



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