

# HOW TO WORK WITH AN ONSITE INTERPRETER



## PREPARATION

- > Book the interpreter as early as practically possible according to the nature of the session. Do allow extra time for the session. As a general rule, sessions with interpreters take approximately half to double the time of a standard session.
- > Ensure the interpreter is provided with the name of the client, the expected duration and nature of the session, and any other relevant information to allow the interpreter to be familiar with the topic and/or terminology.
- > Organise an area where you can talk to the client undisturbed and arrange the seating to allow for easy communication.

## BEFORE THE SESSION

- > It is recommended that the client and interpreter sit separately from each other to avoid the risk of the client asking the interpreter questions prior to session. If possible, have a designated waiting area for interpreters to ensure that they are visible and to ensure prompt commencement of sessions.

## DURING THE SESSION

- > When the interpreter arrives, allow them to introduce themselves to you and the client.
- > Explain your role and the interpreter's role to the client and assure the client that what is discussed in the session will remain confidential between you, the interpreter and the client.
- > Always remember that you are in control of the session. Interpreters do not conduct the session.
- > During the session, speak directly to the client in the first person and not the interpreter. e.g. Say "How can I help you?", instead of "How I can help him/her?"
- > Maintain eye contact with the client throughout the session, speak clearly and avoid using jargon, metaphors, slang, idioms or proverbs.
- > Interpreters do not interpret any lengthy documents or provide any written services e.g. filling in forms or taking statements.
- > Speak in short intervals allowing time for the interpreter to relay the information. Let the interpreter control the length of each segment by signalling to you/the client when to stop.

- > Provide clear explanation when the interpreter seeks clarification and do not add additional information that will exclude the client as everything that is said during the session must be interpreted.
- > Check whether the client has understood the key messages and is ready to end the session. Also provide opportunity for the client to ask any questions.

## AFTER THE SESSION

- > If the client requires another appointment, please make these arrangements with the client while the interpreter is present.
- > It is recommended that the client and interpreter do not leave at the same time to avoid the risk of the interpreter becoming involved with the client.
- > Offer a debriefing if you consider the interpreter is affected by a particularly stressful situation and/or clarify any question you both might have from the session.
- > If required, provide feedback to the interpreting service provider, as this will help VITS improve service quality. Also ensure that you provide positive feedback when the interpreter's service meets or exceeds your requirements.

