

## COMMUNICATION SUPPORT UNIT

### WORKING WITH BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE/ENGLISH INTERPRETERS

BSL/English Interpreters facilitate communication between deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL) and hearing people who use English.



When you require using the services of a BSL/English interpreter it is essential to provide as much information as possible prior to the assignment (eg. minutes, background information). This will allow the interpreter to prepare in advance.

During the assignment the BSL/English interpreter will listen to the spoken English and interpret it into Sign Language, or will watch the Sign Language and translate it into spoken English. The interpreter has to listen/watch before they can interpret so there may be a short time delay.

A BSL/English interpreter is not an advocate or a social worker and is not permitted to offer personal advice or opinions. Deaf Action interpreters adhere to a strict code of practice ensuring a confidential and impartial service.

#### When working with a BSL/English interpreter:

- ▶ Send relevant information to the interpreter in advance of the assignment
- ▶ Ensure the deaf person is seated where he/she can see both the interpreter and the speaker
- ▶ Sign/speak clearly and at your normal pace
- ▶ Ensure that only one person signs/speaks at a time, perhaps by raising your hand when you want to speak as this also indicates to the Deaf person who is speaking
- ▶ Address the person directly and avoid phrases such as *"tell him/her..."*
- ▶ Allow regular breaks for the interpreter (approx. 10 minute break every 20/30 minutes) when he/she is working alone



#### Please do not:

- ▶ Ask the interpreter what he/she thinks
- ▶ Attempt to engage the interpreter in conversation during the assignment
- ▶ Refer to people as *"deaf and dumb"* or *"deaf mute"* as these terms are no longer acceptable. The word 'Deaf' is sufficient.