



## **Recommended Telephone Interpreting protocols**

Telephone interpreting is complex and requires all participants to follow strict protocols in order for successful communication to take place. These protocols aim to provide guidelines to improve current telephone interpreting practice.

These guidelines exclude emergency situations.

1. What should happen before the interview?
  - a. Meeting organiser's responsibilities
    - i. Some interactions are not suitable for telephone interpreting. The interviewer should assess the appropriateness for this mode of interpreting
    - ii. The interpreter should be told the nature of the interview and as much detail as possible in order to adequately prepare
    - iii. The interpreter should be given sufficient time before the call to allow them to find a comfortable and private place to sit, making sure they have access to a good telephone and note pad for taking notes
    - iv. Every effort should be made to have a good quality speaker-phone or hands-free telephone or voice over internet protocol (VOIP) connection
    - v. Every effort should be made to have no background noise or other distractions in the room – if this not possible, the interpreting may not be able to take place
    - vi. The interpreter should be given an indication of the expected duration of the interview
  - b. Interpreter's responsibilities
    - i. Interpreters should feel confident to refuse assignments when conditions are not appropriate or when they are not in a position to take the job; or propose alternative arrangements without fear of negative consequences
    - ii. Interpreters should ensure that they are in a private place where confidentiality can be maintained (examples of inappropriate places include public transport or waiting rooms)
    - iii. Interpreters should ensure that they are not distracted by any external noises or other activities (examples of such inappropriate distractions include conducting domestic activities or driving while interpreting)
2. What should happen at the commencement of the interview
  - a. The meeting organiser should introduce every participant to all involved
  - b. The interpreter should introduce her/himself and explain the interpreter's role to the interviewer in English and to the non-

English speaker in the other language – “to interpret everything faithfully using the first person”

- c. The interviewer should explain the protocols stated below to all speakers
3. What should happen during the interview
    - a. Every speaker should wait their turn before speaking. There should not be any overlapping speech
    - b. Every speaker should state who they are before they speak
    - c. If reference is made to anything in the room that the party who is not in the room cannot see, it should be described for their benefit.
  4. For an example of how telephone interpreting works go to:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=co52bLjxOZA&list=PLHSIfioizVW3lZx9iBwMOr-2Y6ggMd8mk&index=1>