



BRIGHTON & HOVE
LGBT
COMMUNITY
SAFETY FORUM

www.lgbt-help.com

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORKING WITH BSL INTERPRETERS AT EVENTS

There is a huge demand for British Sign Language Interpreters due to a national shortage of skilled professionals. It is important to book as far in advance as possible, this will ensure appropriately skilled Interpreters can be provided to meet the audience's specific needs.

It is always advisable to ensure all staff, crew, and artistes are made aware there will be Sign Language Interpreters present. It is important to explain Interpreters are provided to ensure the Deaf community can access their performance.

PREPARATION MATERIALS

As good practice we ask for preparation material well in advance of the event. This is fundamental to ensure Interpreters can prepare i.e. learning set list of songs, learning any scripts, jargon, names, this will enable to Interpreter to deliver a quality performance.

The following preparation material is helpful:

- Program of the event
- Timings of each activity in each area; Main Stage, Performance Tents, Workshops.
- Set List of Songs (This is key)
- Any Prepared Speeches, presentations, scripts
- Plan for positioning of Interpreter/s, Lighting, sound equipment
- Site Plan
- Meeting Point / Contact Person on arrival / throughout the day
- Car Parking Details

Confidentiality:

If you are concerned about material which is considered to be sensitive, Interpreters are bound by a strict code of confidentiality and adhere to a code of practice to ensure they are safe to practice.



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ENVIRONMENT

Positioning:

Best practice is to have Interpreters positioned on the same stage, platform as the performers; ideally to one side of the stage. This conventional approach is ideal for main stage work and large productions. The Deaf audience are then able to watch the performance on stage and then turn to focus on the interpreter.

Integrated Approach:

A producer may wish to integrate the Interpreter into their production. The interpreter can 'shadow' the performers on stage and move around with the actors / performers. Please contact us for more information and guidance on this approach.

Lighting:

It is important the deaf audience are able to see the Interpreters clearly. A light should be focused on the Interpreter to ensure their full body is lit, with no shadows on their face.

Day of the Performance:

Lighting check is recommended to ensure the light is positioned correctly, the level is accurate and the Interpreter is clearly visible. It is recommended Interpreters arrive 1-1.5 hours before the performance for a lighting check.

Visual Effects:

If visual effects are being used such as Pyrotechnics, a risk assessment must be carried out by the production team. There are no longer guidance to specify the safe distance for a person to stand, as each make and product model may vary. Please inform us and the Interpreter if any visual effects are planned to be used, we can factor this into the planning to ensure the safety of our Interpreters i.e. some companies will decide not to use the visual effects on one side of the stage during the Interpreted Performance. If the company still wish to use the visual effects, and these are hazardous, the Interpreter must be removed from the area during this time, and be out of danger before the effects take place.

All staff, volunteers and the Interpreter must be in agreement and aware of the safety risks.

Sound Equipment:

An Ear Monitor linked up to the microphones, is key piece of equipment essential for helping the Interpreter to hear all of the dialogue and lyrics at the event.

Additional Equipment:



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Please ensure when using equipment, to think about where it is positioned i.e. LCD Screens, Monitors, and Projector Screens etc, to ensure the Interpreter and Deaf audience are positioned appropriately and clear visibility is maintained.

During the assignment:

The number of Interpreters needed for the event will depend on the following factors i.e. duration, number of stages, tents, number of performances happening on site, size and layout of the site. For large scale events we suggest a pool of Interpreters are used. Please contact us for advice regarding numbers.

Breaks:

Interpreting is an extremely physical and mentally demanding job. For best Practice we recommend Interpreters take a break approximately every 30 minutes when working alone. If there are two or more Interpreters then this is not needed. If an Interpreter is performing a prepared piece i.e. Theatre, Scripted production, the Interpreter is able to work alone and take a break during the set interval. Please speak with the Interpreters directly on the day of the event to discuss appropriate breaks, each assignment will vary depending on the nature of the event.

For further information regarding working with Interpreters and communicating with Sign Language users please contact us by calling 01273 855620 and selecting option 3.



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