



CODE OF PRACTICE FOR INTERPRETERS

Bristol City Council's Translation and Interpreting Service is committed to providing a professional translation and interpreting service. As an employee, you are expected to abide by its Code of Practice and Code of Ethics, together known as the **CODE OF CONDUCT**.

The purpose and objective of the Code of Practice is to ensure that there is consistency, competence and impartiality across language and culture, and to ensure that all those who are involved in the process are clear about what may be expected from it.

1 – CONSIDERATION BEFORE AN ASSIGNMENT IS TAKEN

- 1.1 When accepting work the interpreter must ensure that s/he is satisfied that s/he will be available on the specified date and time at the required location, and that they have made appropriate travel arrangements.
- 1.2 The interpreter needs to be competent in the language/dialect of the service user. In exceptional circumstances, when there is any doubt about which minority language/dialect is used, the interpreter must telephone the service provider to ensure full competence in the required language/dialect.
- 1.3 Interpreters need to maintain a professional standard. When more than three people will be present in the assignment, the interpreter must contact the service provider to ensure any issues are talked through prior to the meeting.
- 1.4 The service provider requesting the services of an interpreter will be asked to supply any relevant information. The Translation and Interpreting Service will forward this to the interpreter.
- 1.5 The interpreter has to be neutral. Therefore, interpreters must not accept assignments involving relatives or people with whom they are closely involved at work or at home.

- 1.6 Arriving at the appointments on time is essential. Interpreters need to anticipate any problem that may delay their arrival. It is the interpreter's responsibility to anticipate traffic problems or rush hours, and to make sure their vehicle is in working order.
- 1.7 Interpreters should arrive at the assignment 10 minutes early. If, in exceptional circumstances the interpreter is delayed, the interpreter must phone the T&I Service at least 15 minutes before the assignment is due to begin and give an estimated time of arrival. Interpreters should ensure that they use the cheapest mode of transport to attend assignments. The use of taxis is not permitted for interpreting assignments. This is a costly means of business travel which customers are unwilling to fund. The use of taxis must first be approved by one of the TIS Coordinators or the TIS Manager.
- 1.8 Sanctions will be taken against interpreters who arrive late.
- 1.9 If interpreters are more than 10 minutes late, we will deduct an hours pay from interpreters.
- 1.10 If an interpreter is late more than 3 times in a six month period, s/he will be called in to meet the TIS Manager and forfeit their annual pay.
- 1.11 If interpreters are late more than six times their name will be removed from the register.

2 – AT THE ASSIGNMENT, THE INTERPRETER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPLAINING THEIR ROLE

- 2.1 Appropriate seating shall be discussed and advice taken from the interpreter before the assignment commences. Everyone needs to check they can hear well and that there is not undue noise from outside the meeting place.
- 2.2 The interpreter shall explain to both the service provider and the service user that:
- 2.3 The interpreters will communicate all that is spoken and all that is said. Whatever is not to be interpreted must not be said.
- 2.4 Everyone needs to speak for a short time allowing for regular interpreting.
- 2.5 The service provider is responsible for making sure that only one person speaks at a time.
- 2.6 An interpreted interview takes twice as long as one in the same language.
- 2.7 The service provider is responsible for making sure the work gets done in the arranged meeting time or arranging extended meeting time or arranging to meet again.
- 2.8 The interpreter may intervene/interrupt only in the following situations:

- 2.8.1 To ask for clarification if s/he does not fully understand the concept s/he is being asked to interpret.
 - 2.8.2 To point out if a service user has not fully understood the concept although the interpretation was correct.
 - 2.8.3 To alert the parties to a possible missed cultural inference, i.e. information, which has not been, stated but knowledge of which might have been assumed.
 - 2.8.4 To ask a service provider to modify his/her delivery to accommodate the interpreting process, e.g. if the client is speaking too quickly or for too long.
- 2.9 The interpreter shall inform both clients of the reason for interruption and interpret the explanation.
- 2.10 The interpreter shall only be the medium through which the dialogue takes place. Both the service providers and service users should address each other directly.
- 2.11 The interpreter should not be alone with the client.
- 2.12 The interpreter must abide by the Code of Ethics or be liable to disciplinary procedures.
- 2.13 The interpreter shall not give out his/her personal details.
- 2.14 If for any reason the interpreter's impartiality is being jeopardised, s/he should withdraw.

3 – POST-BRIEFING

- 3.1 At the end of the assignment, the interpreters should stay with the service provider to discuss the quality of the interpreting assignment and to review the management of the meeting.
- 3.2 The interpreter must ensure that the Officer concerned with the meeting has endorsed and signed their timesheet to confirm that the interpreting has been done, and that the Officer is satisfied.

BCC Translation and Interpreting Service - April 2006

Agreement to comply with the Code of Practice for interpreters

Please sign both copies of the BCC TIS Code of Practice for interpreters, to show that you have read and agree to comply with the Code. You should keep one copy and return the second signed copy.

Interpreter's name(s) _____

Interpreter's signature _____ Date _____