BATOD's policy on access requirements

This is a comprehensive guide for the use of communication support at any of our BATOD events (conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings etc.) Communication support includes BSL interpreters, lipspeakers, notetakers and STTR (palantypists).

We hope this will prove useful for you in understanding what preparation needs to be undertaken prior to running a session/talk when you have communication support present.

This guide has been designed with members from DToD (d/Deaf Teachers of the Deaf) in conjunction with BATOD to meet the needs of all members at BATOD events.

The aim is to understand better

1. **when it is appropriate to book communication support, and how many communication professionals you will need**

2. **when and how to book them**

3. **what preparation needs to be undertaken prior to the event**

4. **what arrangements need to be in place at the event for communication support**

5. **how and when AtW can pay for the communication support or whether BATOD pays**

6. **virtual events and meetings**

1. **When it is appropriate to book communication support, and how many you will need**

When organising a workshop, seminar, meeting or conference, plan for communication support as soon as you have the date and venue confirmed. Ideally, have this option on the booking form so that d/Deaf delegates are able to indicate they need access at your event. Have a committee member responsible for organising access and ensuring they receive the booking information when a d/Deaf delegate indicates they have access needs.

For guidance, any event lasting more than an hour and a half requires two BSL interpreters/STTRs.

2. When and how to book them

Communication support is high in demand and low in supply so it is advised to book as early as possible to secure them (i.e. at least 3 months in advance).

BSL Interpreters can be found via 'find a communication professional' on www.nrcpd.org.uk/ Ideally, you will want to book local interpreters to the area of the event to keep travel costs down, but also BSL has regional dialects so local deaf professionals usually prefer to use local BSL interpreters for that reason.

Some d/Deaf ToD members have preferred interpreters, particularly if they are leading or presenting at a workshop/conference. Please liaise with them regarding this.

If you have Deafblind delegates in attendance they may require a BSL interpreter who can do Visual Frame/hands-on BSL. There is no separate register that can tell you which BSL interpreters have this skill so it is best to liaise with the Deafblind delegate as they are likely to have a preferred BSL interpreter to use who matches their needs. Many have one that they already work with as a Personal Assistant.

STTR (Palantypists) can be booked from the following companies: www.aimedia.tv,

www.lipspeaker.co.uk

www.121captions.com

www.mycleartext.com

If you have deafblind delegates in attendance please liaise with them on their preference for the caption colour (eg white or light yellow text on black background, or yellow text on a blue background. Never use red on blue or green).

3. What preparation needs to be undertaken prior to the event

Communication support professionals works best when they have access to preparation material ahead of the event. This means presentation slides (even in their draft format) and a list of terminology that is 'new' for communication support staff not familiar with the topic.

It is ideal to allow communication support professionals to have this at least one week prior to the event for optimum performance.

Please email all your preparation to the workshop/conference/meeting lead person or to the communication support professional directly.

4. **What arrangements need to be in place at the event for communication support**

BSL interpreters: please ensure there is ample room next to the main speaker/s for the BSL interpreters, and that they can be seen clearly. Two chairs should be provided for BSL interpreters, sitting opposite the audience, and near the speaker/s.

Please ensure that seats at the front in the audience are reserved for those needing access to BSL interpreters.

Deafblind delegates need to have ample room at the front for them and their Hands-On BSL interpreter. Please liaise with them for preferential seating prior to Deaf delegates.

STTR: Can sit anywhere as long as they can hear the speaker/s clearly. For this reason, it is ideal to use Soundfield, so that the audience can hear the speaker/s and the STTRs, if at the back, can hear them. Please allow them extra time ahead of the event starting to set-up and ensure technology is working. Check with STTR ahead of the event as to what technology is required for the set up to work (i.e. unencrypted laptop) etc.

If you have deafblind delegates in attendance please ensure their preferred colour for captions is communicated to STTRs (see no. 2).

5. **Understanding how and when AtW can pay for the communication support or whether BATOD pays**

Some d/Deaf ToDs have an AtW budget, which includes training related to their employment. This generally includes the BATOD Conferences and local BATOD CPD opportunities. However, it does not include volunteer roles, i.e. NEC, local BATOD meeting. Budgets and needs will vary from person to person.

(source: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-factsheet/access-to-work-factsheet-for-customers)

Liaise with d/Deaf ToDs requesting communication support whether they are able to use their AtW to cover costs. For BATOD's conferences, the cost of communication support is usually split between the d/Deaf delegates using BSL interpreters, and d/Deaf delegates using STTR. If d/ Deaf delegates use both STTR and BSL, we ask that they cover the fees for STTR only. BATOD will cover fees for communication support for those without an AtW budget.

The process is

1. BATOD books communication support for CPD
2. BATOD pays the communication support directly
3. BATOD invoices the d/Deaf delegates the split cost between d/Deaf delegates
4. Deaf delegates make a claim to their AtW to reimburse BATOD

Where Access to Work cannot be used, BATOD will cover the fees of communication support. Our BATOD Treasurer, will liaise with you regarding this. Please contact the BATOD Treasurer, for more information: treasurer@batod.org.uk

6. Virtual events and meetings

There is an increasing emergence of video platforms to use for virtual events particularly since the coronavirus pandemic began.

Booking communication support for virtual meetings will follow the same procedures as above. Make it clear it will be a virtual event and let the communication support professionals know which video platform you are using.

Some video platforms are favoured over others for ease of access. Popular ones at the moment are Zoom and MS Teams.

It is advised to do a trial run the day before with d/Deaf delegates and communication support staff so that everyone is clear on how to use it and how it works, particularly if d/Deaf delegates, hosts and communication support staff are unfamiliar with video platforms. It may be an idea to use the trial run as a 'training session' on how to use it with communication support staff.

Video platforms need to consider the following to be accessible:

- Ensure you include information to ascertain access needs on your booking form for the event. i.e. when delegates register for the event, they need to be able to let you know if they require a BSL interpreter/STTR and whether they have AtW (Access to Work) if the event is for CPD (continuing professional development). (see 1)

- Is it easy to use for first timers? Consider sending out tutorial information in advance of the webinar/meeting.

- Will d/Deaf ToDs be able to 'pin' BSL interpreters as well as the speaker at the same time? How many maximum can be pinned to the screen at any one time?

- Will d/Deaf ToDs be able to use captions? Please do not rely on automatic captions, as these are not always accurate, and it struggles when speakers

have accents. Consider booking in palantypists, ensure they are familiar with remote captioning.

- If you have deafblind delegates in attendance please ensure their preferred colour for captions is communicated to STTRs (see no. 2).

- Ensure the lighting for presenters is bright enough/clear enough for Deafblind users to see their faces. Deafblind BSL users may have their own Personal Assistant as their hands-on BSL interpreter, please liaise with them to check their access needs.

- Suggest to d/Deaf ToDs the use of assistive listening devices (I.e. Roger pen/ mini mic/compilot etc) to support their listening during meetings/webinars and how to use these for first timers.

- What happens when you screen share – are you still able to see the BSL interpreters/captions/speaker?

- What is the sound/audio like on the video platform? Are there reports/reviews that sound/audio is often poor?

- Consider pre-recording presentations to avoid any technical difficulties on the day.

- Ensure the network connection is secure and strong from the broadcast end, as any freezing in picture/audio over a period of time is very disconcerting.

- Consider how you will run the Q+A session – in written English and also in BSL? Is there a video format to do this? If not, consider a way for those with BSL to be able to submit their questions.

- Is the video platform secure? Can d/Deaf (and hearing) professionals access/download it easily? Consider that various workplaces will block the use of some video platforms for security reasons (i.e. Zoom)

- If the webinar is to be recorded, will it display as it was live?

7. Cancellation policy

- To marry with BATOD's cancellation policy, and most communication support's cancellation policies, if d/Deaf delegates cancel their attendance with less than two weeks' notice, we ask that communication support booked is paid for by your AtW. If d/Deaf delegates cancel more than two weeks before the event, no charges will need to be put forward to your AtW.

Further info:

DCAL guidelines to online remote working:
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dcal/sites/dcal/files/remote_working_guidelines_final_april_2020.pdf

Acadeafic: The COVID-19 pandemic and deaf participation in meetings in the academic workplace
https://acadeafic.org/2020/05/08/participation/

Adding subtitles to pre-recorded videos

YouTube – upload a video to YouTube; it can auto-generate captions, which then must be corrected manually and be corrected version of captions then uploaded.

https://www.premiumbeat.com/blog/how-to-add-subtitles-to-youtube-videos/

iMovie – add captions manually to pre-recorded videos.

Transcript

Google docs voice typing – in Google docs, click tools, then voice typing and then play the video on a different device. It will type up the audio. Play the video a couple of times to go through the transcript to edit and make corrections.

Adding captions manually is time-consuming for teachers; therefore the deaf pupil's classroom assistant can add captions to pre-recorded videos provided by the class teachers or alternatively transcribe a transcript of the video for their pupil to follow using Google docs voice typing.

There are some apps/websites that add captions to videos but many charge a fee e.g clipomatic, quicc.

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