

Working with iSign Interpreters



What do iSign interpreters do?

Deaf people who use New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) as their first or preferred language require NZSL interpreting services to ensure their communication access and participation.

iSign interpreters enable communication between two languages and can also help bridge cultural differences. NZSL, which is central to Deaf culture, has its own grammatical structure that is very different to English and Māori.

Interpreters can be booked for appointments, meetings, Training/courses, presentations in a variety of settings eg: Hospital, Education, Employment, Funeral, Court, Counselling, Work and Income, IRD, Theatre, media to name a few.

Why iSign?

iSign is the only nationwide NZSL interpreter booking service. iSign subcontracts 100 interpreters from across New Zealand.

iSign staff are committed to providing the best matched NZSL interpreters for each individual job. This takes into account the job location, type of job, any preferences or requirements of the Deaf person/people and the iSign interpreter's skills/experience and availability.

iSign's NZSL interpreting services are provided by qualified interpreters affiliated with a professional body that sets a professional code of conduct and code of ethics, including confidentiality and impartiality.

iSign supports its interpreters with professional development, supervision and mentoring opportunities.

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Tips for effective use of iSign interpreting services

Booking & preparation

- Ask the Deaf person if they have any preferred iSign interpreters.
- When placing a booking request, include:
 - Date of the booking.
 - Start and finish times.
 - Venue including building name with full address.
 - Purpose or type of meeting/event.
 - List participants, including the name/s of the Deaf participant/s.
 - List any interpreter preferences.
- For bookings longer than one hour two interpreters may be required. The iSign Customer Services Officers can advise you on this.
- Provide iSign with preparation material before the meeting/event. This can include an agenda, previous meeting minutes, presentation slides, interview questions, presenter and speeches or other notes – draft material is fine. Preparation material greatly assists the quality of the interpreting services provided. iSign staff and iSign interpreters have strict confidentiality requirements and preparation material provided is treated in confidence.



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At the meeting/event

- Ask the interpreters and Deaf participants to assist in the appropriate positioning of the interpreter/s and Deaf participant/s, considering line-of-vision, lighting and audibility. As a general rule the interpreter/s are placed opposite the Deaf person and next to the speaker.
- Interpreters analyse the meaning of what is expressed in one language in order to produce an equivalent message in another language. Meaning includes tone and expression as well as words and signs.
- The very different grammatical structures of English and NZSL means it takes a little time to analyse the message in one language and interpret it into the other language, thus be aware there is a few seconds time lag.
- The time lag can require careful facilitation of turn-taking, particularly in group situations. A good solution is for the facilitator to ask all participants to raise their hand when they want to speak.
- Interpreters facilitate the communication process. As professionals, interpreters are impartial and not primary participants in the conversation. They are not responsible for what is said, only for the transfer of the message.
- Speak at a normal pace. Speaking too fast or at an unnaturally slow pace makes interpreting more difficult.
- Speak to, and look at, the Deaf person, not to the interpreter.
- The Deaf person watches the interpreter and regularly glances at the speaker to read body language and maintain rapport with the speaker.
- If you hand out written or printed material during a meeting or presentation, ensure the interpreter is also given a copy. Allow the Deaf person and interpreter time to read the material before continuing - the Deaf person cannot look at material and watch the interpreter at the same time.
- If an interpreter is working solo, regular rest breaks will be needed. Please check with the interpreter what rest breaks they need.

