Using Interpreters during a Youth Justice Conference

Pre Conference Briefing with the Interpreter

1. **Establish** that the person who has arrived has the language and dialect that was booked.

2. **Explain** tactfully that YJC is a legal process and that the interpreter must not give advice or opinions about anything that is said and they must not counsel or reprimand any of the participants in any way. They must also remain neutral regardless of their personal feelings or any cultural sensitivity.

3. **Instruct** the interpreter not sanitise the interpretation in any way e.g. must not take out bad language. (If they show reluctance about this, explain that we need a full interpretation to understand what the participant is/was thinking).

4. **Ask** the interpreter to try and avoid eye contact with participants – any verbal and non-verbal communication should be through you as the convenor.

5. **Explain** the confidentiality provisions of the YOA (Sec 65).

6. **Instruct** the interpreter on whether the interpretation will be consecutive or simultaneous.

Types of Interpretation

- **If the interpreter is required for the young person or a victim, the interpretation must be consecutive.**
  
  This means that one person speaks at a time and when they have finished speaking the interpreter gives an accurate rendering of what has been said. The speaker should break what they need to say into small parts (no longer than a paragraph). Sometimes an interpreter will take some notes to facilitate accuracy of interpretation.

- **If the interpreter is required for a parent or support person, the interpretation may be simultaneous.**
  
  This means the interpreter will interpret what is said as it unfolds. Ensure the interpreter is seated close to the person requiring the interpretation and that the interpreter speaks softly. Also ensure that the interpreter knows that he/she can revert to consecutive interpretation at any time they feel is appropriate. Allow time and opportunity for the person using the interpreter to ask appropriate questions of the conference.

Difference between an interpreter and a translator

**Interpreter** An interpreter is normally used for the spoken word. The job of the interpreter is to give an oral or verbal interpretation of what has been said. It is not a literal translation but rather, it conveys the words and meaning from the spoken language into the closest equivalent in English.

**Translator** A translation is normally used for the written word. A translation is often more literal than an interpretation.
Extension to convenor script when using an interpreter at a conference

[Convenor to all participants] Our conference today will be conducted in the English language however I need to advise you that we will also be using an interpreter. This is ______________________ (introduce interpreter using first name only) he/she will be interpreting for ________________ and __________________ in the __________________ language (or dialect as applicable).

Today we will use a consecutive / simultaneous (choose) interpretation process.

Please speak in English and direct all comment to the person you wish to address not to the interpreter.

The interpreter has been asked not to make eye contact with participants.

[Convenor, please now choose the appropriate explanation]

A. **Explanation for a Consecutive Interpretation**

A consecutive interpretation means that I will ask you all to break up what you wish to say into short paragraphs (not longer than 3 sentences). The interpreter will then tell ________________ (first name/s of those requiring the interpreter) what you have said.

Please be aware that some the attendees here today speak both languages and it is difficult for them to fully understand what is being conveyed if people talk over each other because this requires them to listen in two languages. Therefore I request that you wait your turn to speak. In addition, accurate interpreting requires a high level of concentration and I would appreciate if you would allow the completion of each block of interpretation before you start to speak again. If you need to say something urgently, please signal to me and I will interrupt the process for you.

OR

B. **Explanation for a Simultaneous Interpretation**

A simultaneous interpretation means that ______________________ (first name of interpreter) will tell ________________ and ________________ (first names of those requiring the interpretation) what you are saying as your story/comment unfolds. Please be mindful that this is a difficult task requiring a high level of concentration and I would ask you not to speak too fast and that you allow each speaker to finish what they are saying before you interrupt. If you need to say something urgently, please signal to me and I will pause the process as soon as it is appropriate.

At some point during the conference we may change from a simultaneous interpretation to a consecutive interpretation however I will advise you if and when this will occur.

[Convenor to then continue addressing all participants]

Please do not attempt to engage directly with the interpreter during the conference. The interpreter’s role is a neutral one and they are unable to give advice or to give or share opinions.

Please be assured that the confidentiality provisions of the Young Offenders Act 1997 also apply to the interpreter. Thank you.

[At end of Conference ensure you check and sign the interpreter’s paperwork and keep a copy to return with your paperwork]