

The Really Helpful Friendly Guide to Using Language Interpreting from Lifeline Language Services



- where the accent is on you!

Language interpreting is one of humanity's oldest professions.

Better language interpreting comes from knowing what you need, using the right partner and briefing properly.

Understanding the options, what matters and why, ensures **cost-effective solutions** instead of just "solutions" someone wants to sell you.



Call free on **0800 783 4678**

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Better, more cost-effective interpreting

There are wide differences in the format, suitability, and cost of language interpreting.

Our [interpreting, court & legal](#), and [medical interpreting](#) webpages have more information, and you can also download our Guides to [Legal & Insurance](#) or [Medical Interpreting](#).

The usual options are "**Face to face**" or "**telephone**" interpreting; the very different **conference** - or - "**simultaneous**" - **interpreting** is covered separately.

"Presumably telephone interpreting's cheaper?"

It can be, provided the real drawbacks are understood - otherwise it can be much more costly.

In **face to face** ("F2F", aka "*liaison*" or "*escort*") interpreting the interpreter's physical presence provides a much more **supportive environment** to the service user than is possible with telephone interpreting. Information is more readily shared, and the interpreter's access to expression or gesture makes for quicker and more thorough **fact-finding** while **exploratory discussion** is much easier than by telephone. **F2F** is correspondingly far better suited to **medical** or **social care** appointments, or for example **insurance** interviews, than is telephone interpreting.

That's equally true in commercial settings. Professional F2F interpreting provision reinforces **credibility** with visitors and pays them a very **visible compliment** - Oriental or Middle Eastern visitors in particular are often thoroughly unimpressed by being offered telephone interpreting.

Remember too that having your own interpreter gives you access to in-language discussion between visitors - that's vital **commercial intelligence**. The interpreter can also assist with **paperwork** and can accompany you and your guests for site visits.

Telephone interpreting is however a great and very affordable solution for less challenging scenarios and works particularly well in structured and simple Q & A.

"What should I look for in interpreting providers?"

Do make sure they use **properly-experienced, qualified** and **professional** interpreters - media coverage of unqualified inaccurate UK court interpreting shows the importance of getting this right. Look for proof of a sound **track record** over a good period (for example, we've been interpreting for 26 years), and check they have a quality portfolio of qualified and vetted interpreters with good area coverage (again, we have over 2,000 on our books, across the UK)

Inter-personal skills are essential - there's much more to being a good interpreter than a language qualification - and the provider must also ensure appropriate clearance, especially if the interpreter will be working with vulnerable people.

“What does the provider need to know? And what do I need to know?!”

The more information, the better - your provider should be **100% confidential** (but *ask!*).

Essential is **what** and **who** is being interpreted for, the **language**, the **purpose** of the session, and the **when** and **where**, so the optimal interpreter can be identified and properly briefed. Any known **cultural** or **personal** aspects, such as gender or dialect preferences, are also very helpful.

Circumstances may be important; situations such as termination or home repossession put great pressure on the interpreter and professional providers factor this into interpreter selection.

Personal links between interpreter and service user are best avoided; extended families, tribes or clans, or cultural networks such as mosques can compromise interpreter independence so good providers should ask about this, especially in family matters.

How **many** are being interpreted for? In quiet environments an interpreter can handle 5 or 6, but for noisier situations or larger groups technology such as **tour guide** systems may be needed while **conference interpreting** demands quite different solutions.

If you're **presenting**, providing your **content** to the interpreter beforehand so they can research and prepare helps them interpret seamlessly, enhancing your performance.

Remember to consider **timing** in interpreting - as content is **repeated**, things take **longer**.

“What’s the difference between translation and interpreting?”

The press often confuses them, which doesn't help! **Text** is **translated** - **speech** is **interpreted**.

“So does a translator also interpret, or an interpreter translate?”

Some do, but most are only comfortable in their core skill. Typically **translators** have **deeper** knowledge, in specialisms such as petrochem or automotive, and translate only into their mother tongue. **Interpreters** are more **generalist**, working in many sectors both to and from their mother tongue; some will assist with translation in an assignment, but do ask first and remember that the translation should not be treated as “professionally-translated” - most particularly it should not be used where accuracy really matters. Always obtain professional translation in such cases.

“That’s been useful...”

Excellent! Unfortunately, since clients cannot generally assess the quality they're buying, interpreting has attracted less capable providers (and interpreters) and - as the UK court interpreting problems demonstrated - procurement is very much a matter of “buyer beware”.

Hopefully this Guide really will help you obtain **better language interpreting**.

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Interpreting testimonials

Some kind words from interpreting clients:

"The interpreters were both excellent! It was clear ... that they operated in a very professional way, and carefully researched any technical terms that we were using with our Chinese counterparts to ensure that the correct interpretation was used during the seminar"

Motor Sports Association UK

"I didn't expect to find anyone to assist with our urgent interpreter need at 24 hours notice, particularly given our North Scotland location. Only you ... kept me informed and ultimately could confirm you had found the necessary Russian/Croatian/English skills and could accommodate the short timeframe. If we have a similar need in the future, you won't be the first company I contact – you'll be the only one."

Norfrost

"This is a fantastic and professional service that responds immediately to our business needs and the needs of our customers"

Boston Mayflower Housing Association

"In the years Lifeline have been working with us they have consistently proven a reliable and professional supplier. We have never experienced a single problem in over 100 assignments, and my users have always been pleased with the standard of interpreting provided"

NHS Trust

"Your company always provides a fantastic service."

Remploy

"We consider your company to be the benchmark of best practice"

NHS Trust

User-friendly professional, qualified and quality-assured
language interpreting

from

Lifeline Language Services



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Lifeline also provides a full range of complementary language services including TRANSLATION, TRANSCRIPTION, TYPESETTING, VOICEOVER & SUBTITLING.



North & Western Lancashire
Chamber of Commerce

