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VIDEO INTERPRETING BEST PRACTICE

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Introduction

ASLI, the Association of Sign Language Interpreters in the United Kingdom was established in 1987, to provide professional discussion on all issues related to sign language interpreting and the provision of interpreting services. Our aims have been simple: to encourage good practice in sign language interpreting and to support our fellow professionals. Over the years we have sought to achieve this by:

- Providing forums for professional discussion on issues relating to sign language interpreting and the provision of interpreting services
- Promoting the raising and maintenance of standards in interpreting
- Encouraging training and other initiatives
- Providing information to interpreters and consumers
- Promoting research into areas of relevance to interpreters or interpreting services
- Advising and cooperating with others sign language interpreting stakeholders

Video interpreting is considered to be a specialist area of work and therefore requires particular consideration to ensure interpreting practice and standards are protected and maintained. Drawing on experienced practitioners and academics within ASLI's membership, the Video Interpreting Standards Group (VISG) was established in **January 2013**. The remit for VISG was to conduct a nationwide consultation with video interpreting practitioners, video interpreting providers, users of video interpreting services and academics to produce an ASLI-endorsed standards document. This document will be reviewed on **May 2016** to ensure the content remain up to date with current empirical research and good practice.

Acknowledgement

The development of this document would not have been possible without the input of ASLI's Video Interpreting Standards Group (VISG): Helen Fuller, Vicky Lamb, Liana Lloyd, Sean Nicolson, Daniel Roberts, Tracey Tyer, and Tessa Slaughter. The VISG is made up of experience video interpreters who are affiliated to different UK video interpreting providers. It was our collective approach and shared enthusiasm that has led to the development of guidelines that are relevant to the UK video interpreting sector.

During the development of the Best Practice document we sought input from respondents who work in the UK video interpreting sector and from Deaf people who are experienced users of video interpreting platforms. This included Islington CCG and Islington Sign Language Interpreting Service who have been trialling video interpreting services for GP appointments in the Borough of Islington. This document would hold little value if it was not for the considered feedback in the surveys and report which guiding our thinking.

The academic underpinning of the VISG Best Practice document came from Professor Jemina Napier and Professor Graham Turner at the Languages and Intercultural Studies Department at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. We extend our thanks for their support in ensuring we produce a balanced and measured document.

Finally, our special thanks goes to SignVideo for providing the resources and time to enable both authors to meet and work together in bringing all this rich information into one document.

How does Video Interpreting Work?

There are two ways in which VI can be used: Video Relay Service (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI).

Video Relay Service (VRS) connects two parties in two separate locations, the hearing party using a standard telephone connection, and the deaf party using a video link (from an internet enabled device). Examples for using VRS are:

- A deaf person calling their GP to make an appointment, a friend, a relative, a colleague, a business contact, a telephone help desk
- A hearing person contacting a deaf relative, friend or colleague.
- A deaf person using telephone banking, or customer services telephone support.

In essence, VRS opens up telephone networks to both hearing and deaf people to communicate with each other. Callers using VRS communicate, as they would typically do with any other person over the phone. There will be some time lag as the interpreter interprets between the two languages.

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) refers to situations where all participants are in the same location, and a remote interpreter is introduced to the conversation via a web-based video link. Typical examples of where you might see this kind of interaction are:

- Staff team meetings, one to one meetings with a colleague
- Appointments at a local council or government building
- Last minute healthcare appointments
- Classroom settings: one to one support with tutor
- Conferences

Video Interpreting Services in the UK

There are a number of small, independent video interpreting service providers operating in the UK. In Scotland a nationwide publicly available VRS service is available, enabling communication between government departments and the Deaf community. Some independent interpreters are known to provide video interpreting via Skype, FaceTime, ooVoo, Hangout etc.

Unlike the BT Text Relay Service, video interpreting services are not nationally available throughout the UK. Currently, video interpreting services are provided through contracts and individual agreements. For example:

- Companies may contract a VIS to enable customers to contact their call centre
- A deaf employee may be funded to have VI at work
- A deaf tradesperson may be funded to have VI when away from their base
- A vulnerable deaf person may be funded to have VI at home

Best Practice 1: Registered Qualified Interpreters

Video Interpreting call centres should only use registered qualified interpreters with a minimum of three years community experience. Interpreters must be registered with either the National Register of Communication Professionals working with Deaf & Deafblind people (NRCPD) or the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI).

- 1.A The use of registered interpreters enables video interpreting services to meet their obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and deaf consumers to receive good quality interpreting services and have recourse to a complaints procedure via the registration body. Providers of video interpreting can ensure that interpreters are suitably insured and the interpreter's registration renewal date.
- 1.B Registration shows the qualifications an interpreter has in British Sign Language and interpreting, however their interpreting skills and experience should also be assessed to determine whether the interpreter is suitable for video interpreting.
- 1.C Registered sign language interpreters wanting to work in the video interpreting domain should be able to demonstrate a high level of interpreting skill and have a wealth of experience working within the community since attaining RSLI status (NCIEC, 2008; Taylor, 2009; Brunson, 2011; Wootten, 2015; Napier, Skinner & Turner, 2014a & 2014b).
- 1.D Video interpreters should have worked in a range of settings, domains and have had exposure to working with a breadth of sign language users. Due to the variety and unpredictable nature of video interpreting it is regarded as a challenging area of work and Brunson, in his 2011 paper on video interpreting practice states that, 'the highly demanding and complex work of the video interpreter requires experience and skill'. Therefore, ASLI recommends that video interpreting service providers should expand their recruitment procedures by including skills and aptitude tests for prospective video interpreters, to ensure that only the most appropriate and experienced registered interpreters are employed for the provision of video interpreting.

- 1.F Interpreters should be suitably trained or inducted to work in the area of video interpreting before working in this domain. For example, interacting via a 2D video link requires some modification to language use and how one would typically sign, or understand another person's signing (Keating & Mirus, 2003). Research has shown simultaneous interpreting to be a complex cognitive task (Gile, 1995; Moser-Mercer, 2000) and therefore any modifications to an interpreter's working environment places new demands and can impact on how interpreters deliver their service.
- 1.G Call centre video interpreters work with customers from a wide range of regional and cultural backgrounds. Because culture is indistinguishably tied to language, interpreters must be culturally competent as well as having a thorough understanding of both signed and spoken language variation. Variations can be seen in word/sign meaning, gender, age, speed of production and overall linguistic fluency and proficiency. Managing these differences effectively can be demanding for interpreters and therefore video interpreters need to be adept at managing this (Napier, Skinner & Turner, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d).

Best Practice 2: Assessing the appropriateness of video interpreting provision

Steps must be taken to determine the suitability of a video interpreting service

- 2.A Whilst video interpreting provides a number of benefits, such as quick access to, and efficient use of interpreting resources, video interpreting is not a complete replacement for live interpreting services. A decision to use video interpreting must be undertaken with the agreement from all participants involved in the interaction (NCIEC, 2008; Taylor, 2009; Wootten, 2015; Napier, Skinner & Turner, 2014a & 2014b).
- 2.B It recommended that service providers consult with potential users of the service to determine the suitability of a video service versus a face-to-face interpreter provision (Wootten, 2015).
- 2.C Video interpreting is not suitable for all situations and research has repeatedly shown consideration must be given to the needs of the interpreter and the

clients involved in the call (NCIEC, 2008; Taylor, 2009; Simon et al., 2010; Wootten, 2015). Key measures to determine the suitability are:

- I. The severity and long-term consequence on the individual's life once the call has ended
- II. The number of people participating in the call
- III. The speed of interaction
- IV. The use of additional resources (e.g. power-points, handouts, documents, videos, etc.), which will be used throughout the call
- V. The visual and acoustic quality from the incoming caller or call receiver
- VI. The sensitivity of the content being discussed

2.D ASLI recommends that video interpreting service providers should have guidelines in place that specify when an interpreter can decline or withdraw from a call. For example:

- I. A caller is abusive to the interpreter
- II. Poor screen resolution or other technical faults
- III. A conflict of interest arises
- IV. When the deaf person tells the interpreter they are pretending to be someone else and asks or expects the interpreter to continue interpreting the video call
- V. Subject matter that is inappropriate, or becomes inappropriate for a video relay call.

2.D Situations where video interpreting has been defined as "not appropriate" for video interpreting are:

- I. Police suspect/witness interviews
- II. Court hearings
- III. A psychiatric assessment
- IV. A Mental Health tribunal
- V. A Mental Health discharge assessment
- VI. A Emergency Mental Health Assessment (that may involve an individual being sectioned)
- VII. Tribunals or disciplinary meetings
- VIII. Immigration interviews

- IX. Settings with multiple participants, involving fast paced exchanges of turn and no formal structure, such as classroom teaching, or board meetings
- X. Highly emotional, or potentially volatile settings, such as counselling, therapy
- XI. Settings involving a deaf user with an additional disability, such as a visual impairment or learning disability

(This list was produced following a survey completed by VISG with industry providers, practitioners, academics and users of video interpreting services).

- 2.E Video interpreting services should have a protocol in place for customers who do not use BSL.
- 2.F During the course of the interpretation a video interpreter may find that the subject matter becomes unsuitable for interpreting via video. The interpreter should advise participants that the session will be ended due to the inappropriate nature of the subject matter. The interpreter should use their professional judgment and refer to service protocols to determine whether this action is appropriate.

Best Practice 3: Preparing for a call

Video interpreters should be permitted to take appropriate steps to prepare for a video interpreted call

- 3.A It is well understood that interpreters are most successful when they are able to find out the context of the video-interpreted event, as this helps them to understand the context of the call and the intentions of the caller(s). (Warnicke & Plejert) (2012). Time must be allowed for the video interpreter to prepare, and get useful information prior to making the video call or the beginning of the video interpreted event. Without sufficient information about the call the quality of service could be vastly compromised (Napier, Skinner & Turner, 2014c & 2014d).

- 3.B Preparation before a call may help reduce the time spent making clarifications and repairs during the video-interpreted interaction.
- 3.C For video interpreted settings, it is essential that the interpreter has knowledge of all participants present in the interaction, including those out of sight of the camera. It may be necessary to take steps such as: lifting the camera to show the interpreter where each participant is situated, or verbally introduce each person. This type of consideration will enable the video interpreter to ensure the deaf person is aware of who and when each person is speaking in the room.
- 3.E When there are many individuals present, the chair of the meeting should discuss with the interpreter how the meeting can be managed to allow a video interpreter to do their job effectively.
- 3.F Pre-arranged video interpreted interactions should ideally be preceded by preparation material, such as an agenda and minutes sent to an interpreter in advance. This is also good practice for face-to-face interpreting.
- 3.G. Where a co-worker is to be engaged, this must also be introduced at the start of the meeting and appropriate pauses negotiated to allow for the interpreters to change over.
- 3.H As with any interpreted interaction, there will be some lag time as the interpreter interprets between the two languages. It would not be uncommon for the video interpreter to provide an explanation of how the call will be managed to avoid any misunderstandings.

Best Practice 4: Role of the video interpreter

The video interpreter must maintain to the standards set out by their regulating body.

- 4.A The role of interpreters working via video is not so dissimilar to working with a registered interpreter onsite. Like a live interpreter, video interpreters have a 'double role' (Wadensjö, 1993). Firstly, they are interpreting from one language to another and secondly they are facilitating an interaction and the

conversational dynamics that arise between two parties. During a video interpreted interaction, the interpreter is usually the only bilingual, fluent individual in a signed language and consequently they may use 'linguistic strategies' (Roy, 1993). They may also take on a number of roles such as 'cultural mediators, interpreters and operators' (Warnicke & Plejert, 2012) throughout the call, as necessary, to ensure that the video interpreted exchange runs smoothly. Current practices indicate that video interpreters who are able to use these strategies, such as using their professional judgment and interpersonal skills, as well as their technical interpreting skills, without restraint, have more success during a video call, which gives a better outcome for all parties involved. These call management skills must be considered when video interpreting service providers create their own practice protocols.

- 4.B All registered interpreters are expected to abide by a code of conduct stipulated by their registering body. For example:

Click here to see the [NRCPD's code of conduct](#)

Click here to see the [NRCPD's national occupation standards](#)

Click here to see the [NRCPD's Professional Standards Advisors](#)

Click here to see the [SASLI's code of conduct](#)

The interpreter must maintain the highest standards of professionalism and integrity and seek to reflect credit on their profession as well as continually maintaining and developing their professional skills and knowledge. ASLI encourages suppliers of video interpreting services to maintain the spirit outlined in the interpreter's code of conduct.

Best Practice 5: Declaring the presence of the interpreter in a call and any other unseen or unheard participants

Video interpreters should take appropriate steps to declare their presence in a call.

- 5.A All participants using a video interpreting service have the right to know there is an interpreter participating in the call. As a professional service the interpreter has a duty to make the hearing caller aware there is a third person (the interpreter) is privy to the content of the conversation.
- 5.C Call handling guidance should be developed to assist the interpreter with introducing the service. Guidance should consider the diverse experiences callers may have with using the service.

Best Practice 6: Protecting confidentiality and privacy of a video-interpreted call

Video interpreters must be stationed in a secure and confined area to ensure total privacy of a call. Interpreters must make all participants aware if the security and confidentiality of the call is at risk or is compromised.

- 6.A Ensuring confidentiality in the video interpreter's work environment is vital.
- 6.B Video interpreters must work confidentially, in accordance with their professional code of conduct
- 6.C Interpreters are required to hold in confidence any content seen or heard during video calls
- 6.D. Video interpreters must respect the confidential nature of any information gained in the course of their professional activity, except in exceptional circumstances where there is a risk of harm to an individual or they have concerns about the welfare of a vulnerable adult or a child. Video interpreters should refer the service provider's protocols for raising an alert about a vulnerable person.

Best Practice 7: Working patterns

The working conditions of a video interpreting call centre should be set at a level that protects and promotes the quality of interpreting service

- 7.A Contracted hours of work should consider the duration and intensity of work and ensure suitable breaks are provided. All resources should be considered to avoid injury, risks of developing disabling conditions or risks to the interpreter's mental wellbeing.
- 7.B Video interpreters are at risk of developing conditions such as repetitive movement injuries, eyestrain, physical and emotional fatigue. Video interpreters can potentially experience vicarious and emotional trauma associated with certain subject matter (Harvey, 2001; Bower, 2015). In addition, due to the breadth and variety of callers, interpreters who work frequently as video interpreters, may be exposed to 'frequent emotional extremes' (Wessling & Shaw, 2014) during one single day's work. ASLI advises that video interpreting providers must establish policies that safeguard the emotional and physical wellbeing of the video interpreter and minimise any negative effects of the VRS working environment.
- 7.C Under standard working conditions an interpreter's performance is known to degrade after a period of 30 minutes (Moser-Mercer, Künzli & Korac, 1998). Interpreter's working in call centre environments have provided subjective reports of mental fatigue after approximately 20 minutes of work leading to perceived increase of errors in production, thus compromising the quality of service they provide (Braun & Taylor, 2011; Moser-Mercer, 2003 & 2005).

Opportunities to pause from the service are not only for the benefit interpreter, but also serve the communicative aims of those the involved on the video call, as a short break as a short for the interpreter will allow a higher level of accuracy to be maintained as the interpreter is less likely to become weary or lose attention.

- 7.D It is widely accepted that interpreters begin to fatigue after 20 minutes of simultaneous interpreting, therefore affecting the quality of the interpretation. So as a benchmark, these guidelines, along with current professional norms, should be followed when planning breaks throughout a video call. Interpreters must be allowed to monitor their own physical and mental wellbeing and be able to transfer to, or swap with an interpreter colleague during a call when they begin to experience the symptoms of mental strain outlined in clauses 7B and 7C

- 7.E Video interpreters will vary in their stamina and confidence in handling the content of calls, so one cannot be prescriptive about the length of time a video interpreter should be on a video call. This will depend on the context, subject and purpose of the call. For example, an interpreter may be on a call where much of the time is spent waiting in a queue, therefore a 30 minute call may involve 10 minutes of interpreting activity. In contrast to this, an interpreter may have spent 15 minutes interpreting an emotionally charged meeting, where someone is making a complaint and expressing their fury. The interpreter's physical, emotional and mental fatigue levels may differ after interpreting these two types of calls and these variables will influence when the interpreter needs to take a break. A degree of flexibility must be employed to accommodate the demands of the unpredictable nature of video interpreting.
- 7.F Together with interpreting breaks, the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) recommendations state that people working at a computer screen should take regular eye breaks. Advice can be read at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/vdubreaks.htm>

Breaks or changes of activity should be included within interpreters' working time. The interpreter's amount of work at the screen should be monitored and should they experience periods of work at a particularly high pace or intensity, this should also be taken into account. Short, frequent breaks are more satisfactory than occasional, longer breaks: e.g. a 5 -10 minute break after 50 - 60 minutes continuous screen and/or keyboard work is likely to be better than a 15 minute break every two hours.

If possible, breaks should be taken away from the screen. Evidence from studies show that informal breaks, away from the screen (e.g. on other tasks), appear to be more effective in relieving visual fatigue than formal rest breaks.

Best Practice 8: Work station

The interpreter's work station should be configured to promote comfortable and safe interpreting, with the least visual and auditory distraction possible

- 8.A The workplace should have a desk, an adjustable chair, computer, height-adjustable monitor, keyboard, mouse, headset, a telephone and web camera. The sign language interpreter should be positioned in a way that fully exploits the signing space on screen. The upper body should be centred on screen, with arms, hands and face clearly visible.
- 8.B The camera should be positioned directly in front the interpreter at eye level.
- 8.C The workplace should be free from visual distractions. The background behind the interpreter should be a flat, neutral colour that contrasts with the clothes and skin tone of the interpreter.
- 8.D The room must be a dedicated and sufficiently soundproofed space. It should be free from distracting noises from outside, and care should be taken to reduce any potential echoes and reverberation that may arise within the room. (Moser-Mercer, 2003; Moser-Mercer, Kunzli & Korac, 1998; Roziner & Shlesinger, 2010).
- 8.E The video interpreter space should have sufficient temperature regulation and air ventilation.
- 8.F The room should only be used for the purpose of video interpreting and should not be partitioned off and shared with other non-video interpreter staff during operational hours. This will mitigate any distractions to the interpreter and preserve the confidentiality of the video interpreting environment.
- 8.G The room must be well lit throughout call centre hours and have even light coverage. The light should be an adjustable, diffuse light, which shines in all directions, and positioned on the face and body of the interpreter. There must be no shadows on the background behind the interpreter.

- 8.H If a video interpreter is working solo these recommendations should still apply. Video interpreting service providers should also establish lone working procedures for those who work alone without a coworker.

Best Practice 9: Optimal audio & video equipment

The interpreter should be equipped with suitable microphone and headset, in a quiet and private location

- 9.A. The video interpreting room should be situated in a quiet location away from busy/communal/noisy spaces.
- 9.B. Video interpreters should use a headset and microphone.

Best Practice 10: Technical support

Video interpreters should be provided with technical support by call centre services. Complex technical situations should be resolved by an appropriate technical expert

- 10.A Basic technical training should be provided to the video interpreter.

Best Practice 11: Employment Standards and Support

Providers should aspire to the best employment standards and support for interpreters working in video interpreting services

- 11.A Any interpreter working for a video interpreting service should have the opportunity for regular supervision to reflect on their practice (Dean & Pollard, 2001).

- 11.B Where a video interpreting service provider contracts freelance interpreters, they should also be provided with support to ensure that the service remains consistent with staff interpreters.
- 11.C Regular continuing professional development should be provided to help interpreters reflect and improve on current practice. Professional development opportunities should be made available to all employees of video interpreting services.
- 11.D Interpreters should be encouraged to balance their interpreting work between video interpreting and on-site interpreting. Research suggests video interpreters who engage in community and video interpreting may find this blend of practice an effective way to reduce their 'burnout levels' (Bower, K. 2015).
- 11. E The interpreter should have the means to communicate with a supervisor, co-worker or senior interpreter throughout the interpreting session.

Best Practice 12: Customer feedback

Video Interpreting Services should encourage customer feedback

- 12.A All users of video interpreting and relay services should have the opportunity to give feedback to the video interpreting service providers on the quality of the services they receive (Wootten 2015).
- 12.B Feedback from customers should feed into the video interpreting service provider's quality control mechanisms and ensure that the video interpreting services provided are commensurate with customers' needs and expectations.

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Further reading

Below is a list of resources on the topic of interpreting via video available online to the general public.

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Telecommunication Relay Service on Wikipedia - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telecommunications_relay_service

Glossary of terms

British Sign Language (BSL) - British Sign Language (BSL) is the signed language used in the United Kingdom (UK), and is the first or preferred language of some deaf people in the UK. BSL, like other naturally evolving signed languages across the globe, make use of space and involves movement of the hands, body, face and head. BSL has its own grammatical structure, syntax and conversational rules.

Best practice - A best practice is a technique or methodology that, through experience through application by practitioners and/or research, has proven to lead reliably to a desired result. A commitment to using the best practices in any field is a commitment to using all the knowledge and technology at one's disposal to ensure success.

Call centre - Is a centralised office where a pool of interpreters are stationed to receive or initiate telephone/videophone calls.

Conflict of interest - Any condition that interferes with the objectivity of an interpreter. Interpreters shall be impartial and unbiased and shall refrain from conduct that may give the appearance of bias. Interpreters shall disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest.

Consecutive interpreting - The process whereby an interpreter waits until a complete thought or group of thoughts has been spoken or signed, in order to understand the entire segment before beginning the interpretation, resulting in a very high standard of accuracy in the interpretation. (Russell, p. 52)

Deaf - refers (starting with an upper case letter) to an individual (or group) who considers themselves to be part of a linguistic and cultural minority, where his/her preferred language is a signed language.

Discourse - a verbal, signed or written exchange; a conversation or communication.

Hearing - The term used to refer to an individual who is not deaf.

Hard of Hearing (HoH): refers to an individual who has some degree of hearing loss who prefers to use a spoken language rather than a signed language.

Interpretation - The unrehearsed, transfer of meaning from a spoken or signed message in one language into another language

Textphone Is a small electronic typewriter, acoustically linked to a telephone system, enabling users to transmit and receive manually typed messages.

National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) - The national regulatory body for BSL/English interpreters in the UK (www.nrcpd.org.uk). In Scotland, interpreters may choose to register with the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (www.sasli.co.uk).

Registered Sign Language Interpreter (RSLI)- A category of registration that signifies the practitioner has met the National Occupational Standards in Interpreting by demonstrating interpreting knowledge and skills that have the potential to meet the needs of consumers in a broad range of general interpreting/transliterating assignments. The Ministry of Justice requires that interpreters working in a court, police station or other legal agency should, where possible, be registered at this level with the NRCPD (or equivalent body).

NB: In the UK this is currently the highest level of registration, however many interpreters will have attended short courses to acquire additional skills and knowledge in a variety of specialist domains.

Simultaneous Interpretation - Is when the interpreter is actively listening or watching a person speak or sign, and at the same time deliver an interpretation from one language into another language. To allow the interpretation take place there will be a time lag between the interpreter's delivery and the person signing or speaking.

Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS) These are video and text based services, which enable Deaf and HoH people to make and receive telephone calls. TRS can use telephone or Internet networks.

Text Relay: Trained operators based in a call centre provide a caption reading and writing service to facilitate a live telephone interaction. Operators connect to a Deaf/HoH person using a specialist device, or software programme. The Deaf/HoH person manually types their message to an operator who then reads the words aloud to a hearing person via a standard telephone connection. The operator also types the words spoken by a hearing person in text format, which is then received by the Deaf/HoH person.

Total Conversation A concept recognised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU: a specialised United Nations information and communications technology agency) and defined as:

“an audiovisual conversation service providing bidirectional symmetric real-time transfer of motion video, text and voice between users in two or more locations. This real time text differs from instant messaging systems because it is the transmission bi-directionally of one character at a time. This gives the user the feel of real-time communication, just like voice or video systems that transport streaming media over IP. The concept is aimed at providing for rich media real time conversation for all people and for varying situations. This includes but is not limited to people that are disabled in some way, e.g. the deaf or hard of hearing, blind etc., but also people who find themselves in a situation where the complementing media video, real-time text and voice together fulfills the conversation needs much better than only voice’.

Translation - The rehearsed conversion of a written text from one language into another language, be it written/spoken or signed.

Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI): Is the registration and membership body in Scotland for British Sign Language (BSL)/English Interpreters.

Video Interpreter (VI): A remote sign language interpreter, who may be based in a call centre or private location, who provides an interpreting service via an audio and video link.

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI): A service designed for deaf people whose language preferences include a signed language. VRI indicates a situation where a deaf person and a hearing person are in the same room and can access a video interpreter (VI) (Key to this definition is the location of all the primary participants; they are in the same physical location and the interpreter is based elsewhere.)

Throughout this document we refer to “Video Interpreting”. When we use this term we are talking about both VRS and VRI. The companies or individuals who provide these services are referred to as “video interpreting service providers”.

Videophone - A videophone is a telephone with a video display, capable of simultaneous video and audio for communication between people in real-time.

Video Relay Service (VRS): A service for deaf people whose language preference includes a signed language. VRS is a form of Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) that enables Deaf persons to use sign language to communicate with hearing people who do not sign, through video equipment and a video interpreter. The equipment enables the deaf person to call a video interpreter (VI) and see them on screen. The video interpreter will make a telephone call to the hearing person and interpret the conversation between the deaf and hearing callers. Deaf people can reach a sign language interpreter via an internet-enabled device with webcam facilities such as:

- desktop computer
- laptop
- smartphone
- tablet
- videophone

Hearing people can access the service using:

- standard landline telephone
- internet telephone
- mobile phone